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**VERS UN ORDRE NOUVEAU: THE CONCEPTS OF
NATION AND STATE IN THE DOCTRINES OF THE
FAISCEAU AND CROIX DE FEU/PARTI SOCIAL FRANÇAIS**

**By
SAMUEL KALMAN, B.A., M.A.**

**A Thesis
Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree
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VERS UN ORDRE NOUVEAU

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**AUTHOR: Samuel Kalman, B.A. (Concordia University),
M.A. (McMaster University)**

SUPERVISOR: Dr. Wayne Thorpe

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation reconsiders traditional approaches to the interwar French extreme-right by emphasizing ideology, specifically plans for the transformation of the nation and state. It focuses upon proposals of this type produced by members of the largest extreme-rightist groups in 1920s and 1930s France respectively: The Faisceau and the Croix de Feu/Parti social français.

Preferring to study them in organizational terms or as historical actors within the Third Republic, most historians have de-emphasized the ideological dimension of these groups, subordinating the study of ideology to group composition or political activities. When more fully examined, doctrinal precepts frequently are used to prove or disprove the fascist qualities of various individuals or groups. This work, in contrast, systematically examines the ideological dimension in a way that others have not, focusing upon attempts by the Faisceau and CDF/PSF to develop comprehensive plans for an extensive transformation of the French nation and state. Not only did this project command significant attention from group leaders and members, it was in fact the overarching goal behind their aspiration to power--to install a new regime designed according to group principles.

Integrating existing scholarship, but simultaneously moving in new directions, the thesis also challenges the common assumption that both groups can be treated as monolithic, top-down organizations whose doctrine was that of their leaders. It instead emphasizes the factionalization of the Faisceau and CDF/PSF, that both groups were split between modernizing elements and traditionalist ones. Within the ranks of the Faisceau, for example, authoritarian conservatives like Hubert Bourgin, Jacques Arthuys, and Philippe Barrès consistently challenged leader George Valois's modernizing 'left fascism' regarding the composition and function of the new state, the role of youth within the transformed

nation, and the politics of exclusion. Similarly within the CDF/PSF, economic modernizers, proto-geneticists, and rabid anti-Semites challenged group leader Colonel de la Rocque's social Catholic and combattant faction.

The dual purpose of the thesis is therefore to analyze plans for the nation and state created by various Faisceau and CDF/PSF members, while emphasizing the heterogeneity of doctrine in both groups. Each chapter discusses one aspect of the proposed transformation. Chapters one and two focus upon competing plans within the Faisceau and the CDF/PSF for a new state and economic order. Chapter three examines differing perspectives in both groups regarding new roles for women and families in the new nation, while the place of youth in the nation is examined in chapter four. The fifth chapter discusses the politics of exclusion in the plans of both groups, including the proposed removal of Jews, masons, and foreigners from the nation as 'undesirables'.

This dissertation rests on an analysis of diverse materials, including newly available documents in the Fonds La Rocque at the Conservation historique européenne de vingtième siècle. In addition to CHEVS archives on Faisceau leader Georges Valois and CDF/PSF leader Colonel François de la Rocque, this dissertation draws upon sources from the Archives Nationales (both the F7 police files and the AP/451 La Rocque archive), the Paris Prefecture of Police, the Centre de documentation juive contemporaine, the Bibliothèque Nationale, and the Fondation nationale des sciences politiques. It also mobilizes various nonarchival sources, including published works, group newspapers, tracts.

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Introduction

Historian Philippe Burrin has observed of certain nineteen-thirties intellectuals that "tous liaient la rénovation du pays à la sauvegarde de la paix et des positions de la France; mais ils différaient par beaucoup d'aspects entre eux, par les origines, par les projets, par les valeurs et les héritages politiques".¹ Although Burrin refers to French political figures who adopted fascism as the solution to Republican woes, his words ring equally true for various projects advanced by the French left and right as a whole during the interwar period. Groups across the political spectrum derided the Republican system of government, portrayed as weak, immoral, unjust, corrupt, and unstable. In its place, they proposed to remake the French nation and state in their own doctrinal image.² On the left, from the strike waves of 1919-1920 until the victory of the socialist-led Popular Front government in June 1936, a variety of militant working-class movements strove to transform the French political and economic landscape, either through revolutionary means (PCF, CGTU), or evolutionary and reformist ones (SFIO, CGT). Communists hoped to establish a Soviet-style government in France, Léon Blum sought to rebuild the socialist party--his 'vieille maison'--in order to implement changes to both the nation and state, and syndicalists of all stripes presented ideas for a complete transformation of the production process and society at large. Influenced by both the gospel of rationalization preached by Frederick Taylor and Henry Ford in the United States, and the planiste Marxism of Hendrik de Man in Belgium, leftists from Léon Jouhaux and Marcel Déat to Blum argued for a radical redesign at once ultramodern and informed by the precepts of social justice. These struggles have received

¹ Philippe Burrin, *La Dérive fasciste: Doriot, Déat, Bergery, 1933-1945* (Paris: Seuil, 1986), p. 94.

² Throughout this work, the concept of the 'nation' is used to denote both population and society within a fixed territorial boundary, and an idealized France from which undesirables are excluded. The 'state' refers to the apparatus of government on all levels, including local, regional, and national. It further includes those bodies outside politics, particularly in the realm of finance and economics, which are responsible for the determination of policy. Thus the reform of the nation discussed in this work focuses upon the roles of women, the family, youth, and undesirables, while the construction of the new state is limited to political change and the implementation of a new economic order.

considerable academic attention, and the various programs espoused by revolutionary and reformist syndicalism, socialism, anarchism, and communism, the subject of numerous monographs, are well-known.³

The comprehensive plans of certain right-wing figures, notably technocrats whose vision of state and society was frequently reduced to purely economic factors, have also received attention. For André Tardieu, Ernst Mercier, or the French automobile industrialists, the remaking of the nation was synonymous with corporatist theory and the rationalization of production; society was to be treated like a factory, and government was to operate according to new business principles.⁴ Yet what of the extreme-right? Traditional right-wing groups, such as the Alliance démocratique and Fédération républicaine, were content to work within the Republican framework in the interwar period. The extreme-rightist leagues, on the other hand, pledged to overthrow the status quo, to renovate or reconstruct France according to various plans reflecting their specific doctrinal principles. With the exception of the royalist Action française, little scholarly attention has been paid to these plans.⁵ The ideas of the so-called fascist intellectuals—Pierre Drieu la Rochelle, Robert Brasillach, Marcel Déat, and Gaston Bergery among others—have been extensively

³See, for example: Julian Jackson, The Popular Front in France: Defending Democracy, 1934, 1938 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), especially pp. 52-85; Jeremy Jennings, Syndicalism in France: A Study of Ideas (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1990); Richard F. Kuisel, Capitalism and the State in Modern France (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), chapters three and four.

⁴François Monnet, Refaire la République (Paris: Fayard, 1993); Richard F. Kuisel, Ernst Mercier: French Technocrat (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967); Patrick Fridenson, "L'Idéologie des grands constructeurs dans l'entre-deux-guerres", Mouvement sociale, no. 81 (1972): 51-68.

⁵Books and articles on the subject of the Action française are too varied to list here. On the subject of the group's doctrine and program, see Edward Tannenbaum, Action française (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1961); Eugen Weber, Action française: Royalism and Reaction in Twentieth-Century France (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1962); Ernst Nolte, Three Faces of Fascism (London: Wiedenfeld and Nicolsen, 1965); Colette Capitan-Peter, Charles Maurras et l'idéologie d'Action française (Paris, Éditions du Seuil, 1972); Joel Blatt, "Relatives and Rivals: The Responses of the Action française to Italian Fascism, 1919-1926", European Studies Review 2 (1981): 263-292; Robert Soucy, French Fascism: The First Wave, 1924-1933 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986).

treated, but these figures were marginalized until the German victory in June 1940.⁶ The ideology and goals embodied in the plans of the extreme-rightist leagues, on the other hand, have rarely been subjected to equally close scrutiny. Historians continue to discuss at length the composition, membership, and organization of the interwar French leagues, mainly to assess the degree to which they may warrant the label 'fascist'.⁷ Their activities during the interwar period are described in detail, but the groups are far too often consigned to the role of mere political forces within the Republic. Ideology is usually absent, or presented solely to demonstrate their 'fascist' qualities. Nowhere is this more apparent than in works on the largest extreme-rightist leagues in the nineteen-twenties and nineteen-thirties respectively: The Faisceau and the Croix de Feu/Parti social français. In both cases, plans for the renovation of the French nation and the re-creation of the state were the primary goals. Any and all actions taken within the political and public sphere simply supported the conquest of power, undertaken in order to implement their transformative program. Nor was this transformation mere rhetoric; it was in fact their sole raison d'être.

Originally conceived as an unnamed veteran's organization, the Faisceau was founded on November 11, 1924 by Georges Valois, the economic affairs columnist of the royalist Action française, and director of the Nouvelle Librairie Nationale, the group publisher. Attracting luminaries on the left (Communist mayor of Périgueux Marcel Delagrangé, Philippe Lamour, and Pierre Dumas) and the right (Hubert Bourgin, Jacques Arthuys,

⁶See for example Burrin, *La Dérive fasciste*, *op cit.*; Zeev Sternhell, *Neither Right Nor Left* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986); David Carroll, *Nationalism, Anti-Semitism, and the Ideology of Culture* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995).

⁷Again, the list is too extensive to include here. See, for example: J. Plumyène et R. Lasierra, *Les Fascismes français, 1923-1963* (Paris: Seuil, 1963); Philippe Machefer, *Ligues et fascismes en France, 1919-1939* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1974); Philippe Burrin, *La Dérive fasciste: Doriot, Déat, Bergery, 1933-1945* (Paris: Seuil, 1986); Robert Soucy, *French Fascism: The First Wave, 1924-1933* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986) and *French Fascism: The Second Wave, 1933-1939* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995); Pierre Milza, *Fascismes français: passé et présent* (Paris: Flammarion, 1987).

Philippe Barrès, and Serge André among others), the group published a daily newspaper--Nouveau Siècle--from February 1925 onwards. Following his split with the royalists that October, Valois proclaimed the group fascist at an armistice day rally attended by 4000 supporters, and named it the Faisceau for the first time . From its beginnings until its decline in 1927, the group was the largest and most influential of the extreme-rightist leagues, boasting 40-60 000 members, a daily newspaper, and the Nouvelle Librairie Nationale publishing house, which Valois continued to operate after leaving the Action française, and which was ceded to him outright in November 1926. Most importantly, the group's goal was the implementation of "la Révolution nationale", the establishment of a new political, economic, and social order in France. To this end, various group members put forward a multitude of proposals for the new nation and state, in the pages of Nouveau Siècle, at meetings, and in numerous tracts and published works.

Despite the proliferation of such plans, historians of the Faisceau have paid them little attention. Furthermore, most treat the group as monolithic, equating Valois's thought with that of the Faisceau as a whole, and virtually ignoring other members. In his 1975 biography of Valois, Yves Guchet labels the Faisceau a small link in the intellectual progression of its leader. To Guchet, Valois's thought was Proudhonian in nature, concerned with negating capitalism and moneyed interests, while instituting social justice and individual resistance to the state. Guchet presents Valois as an economic critic, and omits proposed projects for the nation and state. Plans presented by Valois's colleagues are likewise absent.⁸ Similarly, Jules Levey views Valois as a Sorellian syndicalist, an intellectual heir who moved from left to right, yet never abandoned his syndicalist roots. His 1967 doctoral thesis, "The Sorellian Syndicalists: Édouard Berth, Georges Valois, and Hubert Lagardelle", describes the Faisceau as a continuation of Valois's 'Sorellian' project:

⁸Yves Guchet, Georges Valois: L'Action française, le Faisceau, la République syndicale (Paris: Éditions d'Albatros, 1975).

To eliminate moral, economic, and political decadence from France, a task shared with other contemporary disciples of Sorel--Édouard Berth and Hubert Lagardelle. Valois's program is essentially Sorel's, Levey concludes, using will, myth, and violence--totalitarian means to achieve leftist ends.⁹ Subsequent articles on the subject of Valois and the Faisceau, by Clarence Tingley and Jerzy Eisler, come to the same conclusions. Tingley echoes Levey's argument concerning Valois as a "Sorellian syndicalist", while Eisler concludes that Valois was a "left-fascist". Both works centre on Valois rather than the Faisceau, and neither delves into the group's plans for the new nation and state.¹⁰

All four authors essentially argued that Valois, and by extension the Faisceau, was an exponent of 'fascism of the left'. More recent scholars have taken up this claim while increasingly injecting Valois's ideology into the mix. Zeev Sternhell, in his much-debated Neither Right Nor Left, portrays the Faisceau as a group dedicated to the eradication of nineteenth-century bourgeois liberalism. Simultaneously anti-bourgeois and nationalist, Valois sought an ideological third way between capitalism and Marxian socialism, courting the worker while assembling a youthful modernizing elite drawn from the trenches. Although this vision of Valois is essentially correct in political and economic terms, Sternhell leaves out a good part of Valois's thought, and all of the oeuvre of his colleagues. In addition, the Faisceau project for a transformed nation and state is never analyzed in detail, relegated to the background as the author attempts to prove that the Faisceau was but one facet of a larger project: Fascism as the anti-materialist revision of Marxism, a

⁹Jules Levey, "The Sorellian Syndicalists: Édouard Berth, Georges Valois, and Hubert Lagardelle", Ph.D. Dissertation, Columbia University, 1967. Although less 'Sorellian' in argumentation, Levey's subsequent article on Valois merely encapsulates the group's history, paying attention to the Faisceau solely in terms of membership and organization. See Jules Levey, "Georges Valois and the Faisceau: The Making and Breaking of a Fascist", French Historical Studies 8 (1973): 279-304.

¹⁰Clarence D. Tingley, "Georges Valois and the Faisceau: Apocalyptic Politics in Twentieth-Century France", Proceedings of the Annual Meeting of the Western Society for French History, 1976; Jerzy Eisler, "Georges Valois et une idéologie des combattants", Acta Poloniae Historica 48 (1983): 133-163.

phenomenon originating in France and present from Boulanger to Vichy.¹¹ Rejecting Sternhell's thesis, Italian historian Alfredo Salsano instead emphasizes Valois's technocratic leanings, deemed more relevant than his nationalism and socialism. Salsano, however, concentrates almost exclusively on Valois's post-Faisceau writings, and omits his more conservative social thought, reducing his entire oeuvre to Taylorist economics. On this account, the Faisceau becomes a group driven exclusively by modernizing economic impulses.¹²

Similarly Pierre Milza, although admitting that Valois had nationalist tendencies, concludes that Valois was a syndicalist and technocratic revolutionary, and that the modernism espoused by the group clashed with its more conservative rank and file, leading to its 1927 decline.¹³ Taking this argument to its logical conclusion, Valois biographer Allen Douglas claims that the Faisceau leader was a "utopian modernizer". Douglas reduces group ideology largely to Valoisian monetary theory, and regards the project for a new nation or state as almost exclusively centred on production. Although he admits that Valois was reactionary in certain respects, Douglas presents Valois as a St.-Simonian social engineer. But Douglas's work is a biography that offers an overview of Valois's entire

¹¹Zeev Sternhell, *Neither Right Nor Left* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986). See also "The Anti-Materialist Revision of Marxism as an Aspect of the Rise of Fascist Ideology", *Journal of Contemporary History*, 22 (July 1987): 379-400. Sternhell's thesis has been the subject of fierce debate since its appearance in 1983. See Michel Winock, "Fascisme à la française ou fascisme introuvable", *Le Debat*, no. 25 (May 1983): 35-44; Jacques Julliard, "Sur une fascisme imaginaire: à propos d'un livre de Zeev Sternhell", *Annales*, no. 4 (July-August 1984): 84-94; Serge Berstein, "La France des années trente allergiques au fascisme: à propos d'un livre de Zeev Sternhell", *Vingtième siècle*, no. 2 (April 1984): 83-94; Antonio Costa-Pinto, "Fascist Ideology Revisited: Zeev Sternhell and his Critics", *European History Quarterly*, 16 (1986): 465-483; Robert Wohl, "French Fascism, Both Right and Left: Reflections on the Sternhell Controversy", *Journal of Modern History*, 63 (1991): 91-98.

¹²Alfredo Salsano, "Georges Valois e lo Stato Tecnico. Il Corporativismo Tecnocrato tra Fascismo e Antifascismo", *Studi Storici*, 34 (1993): 571-624. Salsano owes a small debt to an earlier work on the relationship between fascism and technocracy: Klaus-Jürgen Müller, "French Fascism and Modernization", *Journal of Contemporary History*, 11 (1976): 75-107.

¹³Milza, pp. 93-109.

career, rather than a study of doctrine or the Faisceau as a whole, and as such it leaves most questions regarding the 'Révolution nationale' unanswered.¹⁴

Whether claiming that Valois and the Faisceau were Sorellian, syndico-technocratic, or positivist in nature, these authors view the group as exponents of "fascism of the left". This view has been contested by several authors past and present, who place the group at the opposite end of the political spectrum. Unfortunately, they do not shed any further light on the group's plans, portraying the Faisceau as ideologically monolithic, and their plans as the product of Valois alone, supported unanimously by his colleagues. To Jean Plumyène and Raymond Lasierra, the group were solidly conservative, much like the Jeunesses patriotes or Action française, combined with a few modernist trimmings taken from anarcho-syndicalism. Valois acted in support of the capitalist status quo, for the hegemony of the bourgeois moneyed-interests and big producers.¹⁵ The group's plans for the future are thus ignored.

This thesis has been greatly expanded by Robert Soucy, in his work French Fascism: The First Wave, 1924-1933. Soucy, in support of his thesis that fascist doctrine in the nineteen-twenties was both widespread in the French extreme-right, and homogeneous in nature, also emphasizes the group's conservatism. He claims that the Faisceau were "frankly imitative of Mussolini's blackshirts", and that Valois represented "economically progressive conservatism", in no way an exponent of left-fascism. Backed by the funding and support of bourgeois conservatives, the group proposed a dictatorship dedicated to the destruction of liberalism and socialism, in favour of a new, reactionary state. Although he does discuss Faisceau plans for the nation and state, he uses few available sources, essentially limits his inquiry and analysis of the 'Révolution nationale' to three of Valois's

¹⁴Allen Douglas, From Fascism to Libertarian Communism: Georges Valois Against the Third Republic (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992). See also "Fascist Violence in France: The Case of the Faisceau", Journal of Contemporary History, 19 (1984): 689-712.

¹⁵J. Plumyène and R. Lasierra, Les Fascismes françaises, 1923-1963 (Paris: Seuil, 1963).

works, and claims that Valois's Catholic and conservative 1906 treatise L'Homme qui vient provided the basis for Faisceau doctrine. Relying heavily on psychological analysis (Valois as a representative of Hannah Arendt's "banality of evil", for example) in drawing certain conclusions, while omitting both the majority of Valois's Faisceau-era work and the entire oeuvre of his colleagues, Soucy's thesis lacks depth.¹⁶

Regardless of their respective positions, none of the historians who discuss Valois and the Faisceau sufficiently concentrate on plans for the transformation of the nation and state according to group principles. All focus primarily upon the history of the group, its organization and membership, and Valois's 'fascism'. That the group was monolithic in doctrine and action, a product of Valois's thought and design, is taken for granted, and there is little mention of other leading Faisceau figures and writers. Despite the group's stated wish to reconstruct France after the 'Révolution nationale', the Faisceau are treated solely as a political movement within the Republic, while their transformative program is omitted. This situation is replicated in discussions on the largest extreme-rightist league of the nineteen-thirties, the Croix de Feu/Parti social français. Although group leader Colonel François de la Rocque and his colleagues continuously emphasized plans to transform France according to group principles, frequently alluding to changes "quand nos idées prendront le pouvoir", historians have primarily discussed their organization and contemporary activities, while neglecting their program.¹⁷ When the subject of group doctrine is raised, the CDF/PSF are portrayed as monolithic, much like the Faisceau, with La Rocque as the ideologue whose doctrine the rank and file followed without question.

¹⁶Robert Soucy, French Fascism: The First Wave, 1924-1933 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986). Using essentially the same sources, right-wing historian Jean-Maurice Duval concludes that Valois and the Faisceau were Gaullist rather than fascist. His 'biography' is an exercise in rehabilitation, however, lacking Soucy's scholarly and objective approach. See Jean-Maurice Duval, Le Faisceau de Georges Valois (Paris: La Librairie française, 1979).

¹⁷It is significant that La Rocque refers to the group's ideas rather than the CDF/PSF itself. Such phrasing indicates the importance which CDF/PSF leaders attached to their transformative program.

Such claims are more difficult to believe in the case of the CDF/PSF because of its size and breadth. Like the Faisceau, the Croix de Feu initially emerged as a veterans' organization, founded by Maurice Hanot dit d'Hartoy in 1927, with membership restricted to those who had fought during the Great War. Although funded by François Coty, the extreme-rightist perfume magnate, both the group's 5000 members and its newspaper Le Flambeau des anciens combattants de l'avant remained largely commemorative. This changed dramatically in late 1930, with the ascension of La Rocque to the rank of Vice-President, replacing the soon to be departing d'Hartoy as the principal decision-maker. La Rocque had already engineered a split from Coty in May 1930, forcing through a mandate which stressed the complete independence of the group. Under his guidance (he became President in 1931), the group entered the turbulent realm of French politics, culminating in their leading role in the infamous 6 February 1934 riots. The group grew dramatically in the aftermath, and by the end of the year counted 150 000 members, and three to four times that number by the summer of 1936. Dissolved by the Popular Front government that June, along with all other extreme-rightist leagues, the group renamed itself the Parti social français and nominally accepted electoral politics to avoid suppression. The party remained among the largest in France until the Second World War, gaining up to one-and-a-half million members by 1938, an ascension interrupted only by the defeat in June 1940 and the subsequent implantation of Petain and Laval's authoritarian Vichy regime.

As both a league and then a political party, the CDF/PSF never hid their ultimate ambition: The conquest of the state to implement the État social français, their equivalent of the Faisceau 'Révolution nationale'. Historians, however, have chosen to view the group as a political entity devoid of any substantial ideological foundation. The earliest historians of the movement claimed that the CDF/PSF were free of doctrine altogether. René Remond concluded that the group represented nothing more than "political boy-scouting for grown-ups and civilian war games", neither a genuine political movement nor extreme-rightist, and

therefore never elaborated a systematic doctrine.¹⁸ Much more severe was the judgment of Plumyène and Lasierra that the CDF/PSF were "l'organisation la plus vide d'idées, la plus statique, qu'ait connue la France des années 30", their 'doctrine' confined to the generalizations contained in La Rocque's Service public.¹⁹

Written in the nineteen-fifties and early nineteen-sixties, these works were soon contested by several historians, all of whom dismissed the notion that the CDF/PSF lacked a doctrinal foundation. Yet their counter-proposal, that the group was social Catholic and moderately nationalist in orientation, was equally simplistic in nature. These authors also stressed the absolute leadership of La Rocque, especially in the doctrinal realm. In addition, some of these works were exercises in rehabilitation, written by former partisans. To Philippe Rudaux, for example, La Rocque simply endeavoured to save France from a regime of splintered political parties. Rudaux, reducing any 'renovation' of the nation and state to a reconciliation of diverse political factions, rejects the notion that La Rocque or the CDF/PSF as a whole developed a transformative program.²⁰ More academic in tone, the works of Philippe Machefer nonetheless concur with Rudaux's assessment of the group's doctrine. Most of Machefer's work examines the group's membership and organization, without seriously considering their conception of the future nation and state. His CDF/PSF were Catholic and conservative, inspired by the papal encyclical *Rerum Novarum*. Working within the system, they rejected the calls for a reconstruction of France prevalent among the extreme-rightist leagues, and hence developed no comprehensive plans for a new nation and state. Although the group leaned towards authoritarianism, La Rocque refused Parti populaire français leader Jacques Doriot's call for a union of the extreme-right (the Front de

¹⁸René Remond, The French Right: From 1815 to De Gaulle (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1971). The original French version appeared in 1954.

¹⁹Plumyène and Lasierra, p. 80.

²⁰Philippe Rudaux, Les Croix de Feu et la PSF (Paris: Éditions France-Empire, 1967). The same argument can be found in Edith et Gilles de la Rocque, La Rocque tels qu'il était (Paris: Librairie Arthème Fayard, 1962). The authors are La Rocque's widow and son.

la liberté), and never seriously considered challenging the Republic, neither during the Croix de Feu years nor in the subsequent Parti social français era.²¹

Following Machefer's lead, subsequent French works on the CDF/PSF have emphasized their political legalism, social Catholic and conservative doctrine, and lack of any transformative program. In his 1970 doctoral thesis Weng Ting-Lung acknowledges that the group's doctrine was more complex than previously noted, yet only briefly discusses their political plans. Lacking an examination of the mass of archival material released in later years, his work is essentially an undetailed overview, in which the group's program is that of La Rocque's Service public and Le Flambeau.²² On the other end of the spectrum, Jacques Nobecourt's weighty and meticulously researched 1996 biography of La Rocque, despite its size and scholarship, gives the reader little information regarding the nation and state. Rejecting any traditional political program, Nobecourt's La Rocque is an amalgam of Maréchal Lyautey, Count René de la Tour du Pin, and papal encyclicals *Rerum Novarum* and *Quadregesimo Anno*. His goal, and by extension that of the CDF/PSF, was

²¹The bulk of Machefer's work appeared in article form: "Autour du problème algérien en 1936-1938: la doctrine algérienne du PSF: le PSF et le projet Blum-Violette", Revue d'histoire moderne et contemporaine 10 (1963): 147-156; "Sur quelques aspects de l'activité du Colonel de La Rocque et du Progrès social français pendant la Seconde Guerre Mondiale", Revue d'histoire de la Deuxième Guerre Mondiale, 57 (1965): 35-56; "L'Union des droites: le PSF et le Front de la liberté, 1936-37", Revue d'histoire moderne et contemporaine 17 (1970): 112-136; "Les Croix de Feu", L'Information historique 34 (1972): 28-34; "Le Parti social français", L'information historique 34 (1972): 74-80; "Tardieu et La Rocque", Bulletin de la Société d'histoire moderne, 15 (1973): 11-21; "Presse et politique dans les années trente: le cas du Petit journal", Revue d'histoire moderne et contemporaine, 23 (1975): 13-45; "Le Parti social français" in René Remond and Janine Bourdin (eds.), La France et les Français en 1938-1939 (Paris: Presses de la Fonds Nationale Sciences Politiques, 1978), pp. 307-326; "L'Action française et le PSF", Études Maurassiennes, 4 (1980): 125-133; "Les Croix de Feu devant l'Allemagne" in La France et l'Allemagne, 1932-1936 (Paris: Éditions du Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, 1980); "La Rocque et la problème antisémite" in La France et la question juive (Paris: Éditions Sylvie Messinger, 1981); "Le Parti social français et la petite entreprise", unpublished paper in CHEVS/60; "Les Syndicats professionnels français (1936-1939)", Mouvement social, no. 119 (1982): 91-112. Machefer also edited a collection entitled Ligues et fascismes en France, 1919-1939 (Paris: Presses Universitaires de la France, 1974). His doctoral thesis, left unfinished at the time of his death, is held in the Fonds La Rocque at the CHEVS archives.

²²Weng Ting-Lung, "L'Histoire et la doctrine des Parti social français", Thèse de droit, Université de Nice, 1970.

to instill Christian principles into the Republic, thus offering a 'fourth way' between communism, fascism, and liberal democracy.²³

Recent scholarship has tended to oppose the vision of La Rocque and the CDF/PSF as political actors loyal to the Republic, and devoted to a social Catholic and conservative program. For William Irvine and Robert Soucy, the group was fascist, and as such developed a far more complex doctrine than previously believed. Unfortunately Irvine's argument, made in a short article, is too compressed to examine the group's ideology in detail, and he is concerned primarily with whether or not the organization was fascist.²⁴ Soucy's work, part of a larger project on fascism in France, describes the group as monolithic, and pays more attention to organizational detail than doctrine. Like Ting-Lung, Soucy mobilizes La Rocque's works, the group's central newspaper, and little else, despite the wealth of archival material available in France. His version of the group's plans for the nation and state is thus highly selective, perhaps due to his overarching goal—demonstrating that the CDF/PSF, like the other extreme-rightist leagues in nineteen-thirties France, was fascist.²⁵

Current scholarship has resisted the fascist/non-fascist debate, instead utilizing material from the French archives to study the group from both a regional and national perspective. Historians such as Kevin Passmore and Sean Michael Kennedy, although they certainly help dispel the myth that the CDF/PSF was La Rocque's one-man show, at least from an organizational perspective, continue to focus on the history and structure of the CDF/PSF at the expense of plans for a new nation and state. Passmore's major work, From Liberalism to Fascism, is a study of the right in the Rhône province, in which the CDF/PSF appears

²³Jacques Nobecourt, Le colonel de La Rocque. 1885-1946 ou les pièges du nationalisme chrétien (Paris: Fayard, 1996). This view is seconded by Pierre Milza in Fascismes français, pp. 133-142.

²⁴William D. Irvine, "Fascism in France and the strange case of the Croix de Feu", Journal of Modern History, 63 (1991): 271-295.

²⁵Robert Soucy, French Fascism: The Second Wave, 1933-1939 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995). See also "French Fascism and the Croix de Feu: A Dissenting Interpretation", Journal of Contemporary History 26 (1991): 159-188.

only in the latter part. His overall thesis, that the fragmentation of conservatism allowed the group to flourish, is supported mainly by an analysis of CDF/PSF membership and activism. Passmore briefly discusses corporatism, the family, and women, but neglects group plans for the transformation of the nation and state. Passmore has most recently turned his eye to the issue of women in the CDF/PSF, but again from the perspective of organization and gender-roles within the group.²⁶

Of all of the works discussed here, Kennedy's is the most comprehensive. His doctoral thesis examines the CDF/PSF as a political force within the Republic, surveying the various auxiliaries and organizations which made up the group's organizational "counter-society", while providing the most detailed information yet on the subject of membership, alongside an informative history of the group's actions from its origins until it was disbanded during the 'années noire' of Vichy. Kennedy argues that the CDF/PSF were a very real threat to liberal-democracy and the Third Republic, but points to the "counter society" rather than the coming state as the determining factor. When CDF/PSF ideology is surveyed, Kennedy echoes older theses, claiming that La Rocque was the initiator of group doctrine, principally derived from standard right-wing thought, exemplified by social Catholicism and the experience of the Great War. Major themes--the new economic order,

²⁶Kevin Passmore, *From Liberalism to Fascism: The Right in a French Province, 1928-1939* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1997); "'Planting the Tricolore in the Citadels of Communism': Women's Social Action in the Croix de Feu and Parti social français", *Journal of Modern History*, 71 (1999): 814-851. Passmore's study on women is not alone; Mary Jean Green has also studied the position of women within the CDF/PSF, drawing primarily on the group newspaper and the 'Bouboule' novels of T. Trilby. See "Gender, Fascism, and the Croix de Feu: The 'Women's Pages' of *Le Flambeau*", *French Cultural Studies*, 8 (1997): 229-239; "The Bouboule Novels: Constructing a French Fascist Woman" in Melanie Hawthorn and Richard J. Golson (eds.), *Gender and Fascism in Modern France* (Hanover: University Press of New England, 1997). Passmore has also written several articles on the issue of fascism and the CDF/PSF: "The French Third Republic: Stalemate Society or Cradle of Fascism?", *French History*, 7 (1993): 417-449; "The Croix de Feu: Bonapartism, national Populism or Fascism?", *French History* 9 (1995): 93-123; "Boy Scouting for Grown-ups? Paramilitarism in the Croix de Feu/Parti social français", *French Historical Studies*, 19 (1995), 527-557.

youth, women, and antisemitism—are either glossed over or discussed in purely organizational terms.²⁷

This thesis aims to study what others have not: Attempts by the Faisceau and the CDF/PSF to develop comprehensive plans for an extensive transformation of the French nation and state. Not only did this project command significant attention from group leaders and members, it was in fact the overarching goal behind their aspiration to power. Neither the Faisceau nor the CDF/PSF were mere anti-communist and anti-Republican pressure groups. To the contrary, they actively advocated the overthrow of the Republic in order to install a new regime designed according to group principles. Group publications and speeches continually referred to this project, reminding readers and members of the importance of looking beyond the Republic. Nor were these plans simplistic and programmatic. Both the *Révolution nationale* and the *État social français* represented the transformation of every facet of the nation and state, from politics and economics to the role of women, families, youth, and 'undesirables'. Furthermore, unlike smaller leagues such as the *Jeunesses patriotes*, *Francistes* or *Solidarité française*, the Faisceau and CDF/PSF programs were massively documented in books, articles, letters, tracts, and meetings.

This thesis is thus a study of ideology, of the Faisceau and CDF/PSF plans for a transformed nation and state, and not their actions within the Republic, a subject which has been more than adequately analyzed in the relevant literature. As such, it is an analysis of an envisioned but unrealized future. But despite their failure to implement their transformative programs, the Faisceau and CDF/PSF plans reveal their true natures. The labeling of both groups, their composition, organization and day-to-day activities, and strategies employed against the Republic are but pieces of a much larger puzzle. Important though they are,

²⁷Sean Michael Kennedy, "Reconciling the Nation Against Democracy: The Croix de Feu, The Parti social français and French Politics, 1927-1945", Ph.D. Dissertation, York University, 1998.

such factors cannot alone provide a complete understanding of the Faisceau and CDF/PSF, who continuously spoke of and looked towards life beyond the status quo.

Neither is this work a comprehensive study of the extreme-right as a whole. All of the leagues developed rudimentary programs, but none matched the time and energy devoted to the future nation and state by the Faisceau and Croix de Feu/Parti social français. The Faisceau and the CDF/PSF were the largest extreme-rightist groups in the nineteen-twenties and nineteen-thirties respectively. With 40-60 000 members, the Faisceau were matched in size only by the royalist Action française, a group whose history after the Great War was one of slow decline and increasing stagnation. Their other principal competitor, the Jeunesses patriotes, headed by deputy and respected businessman Pierre Taittinger, was solidly in the traditional conservative camp throughout the twenties. Only in the nineteen-thirties, with the onslaught of the depression, did the JP evolve into a true extreme-rightist league. Similarly, the CDF/PSF were far and away the largest league in the nineteen-thirties, with up to 600 000 members in 1936, and up to one-and-a-half-million members two years later, dwarfing the combined membership of their contemporary competitors. The second-largest league, Doriot's PPF, contained 60-120 000 members at its peak.²⁸

Moreover, little was written by their rivals concerning the transformation of the nation and state. Valois and his colleagues wrote dozens of books, tracts, and Nouveau Siècle articles on the topic, far surpassing the postwar output of the JP and the AF, which was confined primarily to their daily newspaper. Likewise, a large portion of the wealth of archival material on the CDF/PSF is dedicated to the project for a new nation and state, complemented by hundreds of articles in dozens of group newspapers and a plenitude of tracts. Leagues such as the Soldarité française, Francistes, and even the PPF, never produced comparable material, especially regarding the transformation of the nation and

²⁸CDF/PSF figures taken from Kennedy, pp. 169, 196-198. PPF figures taken from Soucy, French Fascism: The Second Wave, p. 242.

state. Their programs were far more rudimentary, and PPF intellectuals like Drieu la Rochelle and Bertrand Jouvenel developed programs which were essentially their own, predating their affiliation with Doriot. Hence the Faisceau and CDF/PSF most fully and actively envisioned the future among the extreme-right in their respective eras.

This work also seeks to redress the view, held by those authors who briefly examine the doctrine of the Faisceau and CDF/PSF, that both were doctrinally monolithic. The conventional approach, in which the program of the leagues emanated from a leader, and filtered down through the party ranks, who accepted it without question, fails to account for the proliferation of distinctive opinions within each individual group. Despite the major contributions made by Hubert Bourgin, Jacques Arthuys, Philippe Barrès and numerous others to Faisceau plans for the nation and state, historians have viewed the group doctrine as the exclusive product of Georges Valois. Not only did these figures write and speak extensively on the topic, they often promoted a vision of the *Révolution nationale* quite antithetical to that of the Faisceau leader. Valois's modernizing left-fascism was challenged by this 'conservative' faction, while his social conservatism was rejected by more progressive voices. Although they clashed openly only in 1927, after the group's decline had begun, the contrast of views was evident from the group's beginnings in November 1924, affecting every facet of the nation and state project with the exception of economics.

A proliferation of differing views was equally apparent within the CDF/PSF, where many of the group's members and leaders openly advocated platforms which were far more radical than those held by the conservative La Rocque. Technocrats objected to the traditionalist and social Catholic economic discourse of the CDF/PSF leadership, and rabid anti-semites believed La Rocque to be far too moderate regarding the politics of exclusion. The place of youth within the *État social français* was vigorously debated by aristocratic conservatives, modernizers, and even geneticists. When consensus was achieved, on the new economic order within the Faisceau or the place of women and families in society in the

CDF/PSF, special circumstances allowed agreement. Valois's new economic order, for instance, was accepted because he alone possessed expertise in the field.

Such doctrinal decentralization, however, in no way diminishes the central importance of ideology to the Faisceau and CDF/PSF. There was no common set of beliefs present in either group; apart from nationalism and anti-communism, the various factions agreed on little. But in spite of their differences, all of the factions in the Faisceau and CDF/PSF believed the transformation of the nation and state to be of the utmost necessity, to replace the weak and corrupt Third Republic, which was slowly leading France into ruin. This transformation was predicated upon the attainment of power, which was impossible without a sufficiently large organization. Thus the fact that disagreements existed concerning the shape of the new nation and state does not detract from the historical significance of the various plans presented. Differences were put aside because the appearance of unity alone would allow the groups to take power, after which each faction hoped that its unique program would prevail. This situation is similar to that present within the Italian fascist party before Mussolini's 1925-26 consolidation of power, where syndicalists, nationalists, conservatives, and big business all supported Mussolini despite their differing visions of the fascist future.

This thesis undertakes in five chapters to realize its twin purposes: to present the plans of various Faisceau and CDF/PSF members for a complete transformation of the nation and state, while emphasizing the decentralization of doctrine in both groups. Each chapter discusses a separate facet of the nation and state, to be transformed once the group had attained power. The first two chapters examine Faisceau and CDF/PSF plans for the political state and the new economic order, while chapters three through five concentrate on proposed roles of diverse sectors of the nation--women, the family, youth, and undesirables.

The first chapter examines the conceptions of the political state present within each group. Both the Faisceau and the CDF/PSF attempted to forge a 'third way' between capitalism and communism, with markedly different results. Within the ranks of the Faisceau, Valois adopted a hyper-modern and rationalized vision of the state, contested by various members who advocated the formation of a political state akin to that proposed by the traditional extreme-right and the Pétainiste faction under the Vichy regime. Both sets of plans are described and analyzed, from their initiation by Valois and Jacques Arthuys during the Estates-General project in 1923-24, until Valois's leftward turn and rupture with fascist doctrine in 1927. No such divisions appeared in the CDF/PSF, because La Rocque chose to follow an opportunistic path, couching the group's authoritarianism, trench mentality, and social Catholicism in reconciliatory language. All sides realized the benefits of such a strategy, and hence dissent was minimal, allowing the leadership to create plans for the political future. Nonetheless, the political state envisioned by the CDF/PSF was extreme-rightist in orientation, and many of its authors subsequently supported the Vichy regime after the fall of the Republic.

The situation was reversed regarding plans for a new economic order, the subject of the second chapter. Acknowledged by his colleagues as an economics expert, Valois's Taylorist and syndico-corporatist proposals for a productivist society remained unchallenged. In the avant-garde of economic thought, along with figures such as André Tardieu, Ernst Mercier, and Léon Jouhaux, Valois believed in economic modernization and the technocratization of society. The first half of the chapter charts the evolution of Valois's economic doctrine from his espousal of La Tour du Pin's corporatism during his prewar years in the *Action française*, through his gradual postwar adoption of technocracy, and finally his full-blown acceptance, during the Faisceau period, of Taylorism and Fordism as a model for the future French economic order. The section further examines the detailed blueprints for a

productivist syndico-corporativist society, and its realization within the Faisceau des Corporations by Valois, Pierre Dumas, and René Lusignac.

The latter half of the chapter charts the struggle within the CDF/PSF between social Catholic traditionalists, headed by La Rocque, and technocratic modernists, over the character of the new economic order. La Rocque and his contemporaries rejected laissez-faire liberalism, Taylorism and rationalization, and industrial concentration. In their place, they proposed a corporatist economy rooted in social Catholic principles, which would protect the artisan, shopkeeper, and the French family farm from the ravages of capitalism. Following the nineteen-thirties planiste vogue rejected by La Rocque, various members instead turned to Valois-style technocratic modernization and rationalization, lauding figures like Hendrik de Man and Henry Ford, while arguing for the necessity of industrial concentration and productivist principles. The arguments of both sides are analyzed in detail, with attention paid to La Rocque's attempts to eliminate modernist economic discourse, while concomitantly succumbing to the inevitability of ideological pluralism, a product of the group's populism.

Chapter three concerns Faisceau and CDF/PSF plans for women and families within the reconstructed nation. Much like Republican France itself, the Faisceau were split on the issue of women, with progressive voices accepting women's newfound roles as workers, while conservative elements, led by Hubert Bourgin, argued that the only acceptable social role for women was that of housewife and mother. The group was even more fragmented on the issue of the family. Valois adopted the traditional extreme-rightist belief in the 'organic nation', with each family as a cell in a living organism, while various other members proffered geneticist or pronatalist models for the new nation. The latter option was the only solution for the CDF/PSF; the group unanimously adopted pronatalist sentiment that, far from being extreme, was in fact common currency within the Third Republic. The ideas present in both groups are discussed against a dual backdrop: The ideological fight over the

role of women in France on one hand, and the omnipresence of pronatalist discourse within the Republic on the other.

The fourth chapter discusses the role of youth within the new nation. Both the Faisceau and CDF/PSF believed that the indoctrination of youth was crucial to the success of their respective projects. But while Valois and Arthuys envisioned youth as an inherently anti-Republican combattant elite, the engineers of the new France, they nonetheless paid little attention to the younger generation within the group. All planning for education and youth groups fell to the arch-conservative Bourgin, whose vision of the new generation more closely resembled that of the undynamic Action française and the conservative École des Roches, in opposition to Valois's views. The second half of the chapter focuses on the CDF/PSF, examining various group initiatives to indoctrinate youth, their belief in the propaganda value of education in the new nation, and their advocacy of the physical betterment of the nation's youth. The conservative views of La Rocque and the CDF/PSF leadership conflicted with more extreme voices within the group, centred on Gaetan Maire's Société pour la préparation et l'éducation sportive, and its proto-geneticist wish to create a 'new man' through physical and moral education.

The final chapter addresses the thorny issue of the politics of exclusion. In spite of the rejection by many historians of the suggestion that they were exclusionary, the Faisceau and the CDF/PSF were indeed rife with antisemitism, anti-Masonic sentiment, and xenophobia. The notion of the 'enemy' was crucial to the projected nation and state of both groups, their plans for 'les exclus' auguring similar developments under the Vichy regime. Although less rabidly xenophobic than their colleagues, whose opinions variously promoted denaturalization and outright elimination, Valois and La Rocque were nonetheless xenophobic, rejecting the masons as the primary enemy of France, while simultaneously arguing that foreign Jews and immigrants be expunged from the new nation. The chapter describes the wide range of exclusionary sentiment present in both groups, while attempting to position the Faisceau and CDF/PSF within the wider context of contemporary French society.

Chapter 1-Vers un ordre politique nouveau: Renovating State and Government

"La France est gravement malade, de lésions profondes et purulantes", wrote Lucien Rebatet in his 1942 work Les Décombres. "Ceux qui cherchent à les dissimuler, pour quelque raison que ce soit, sont des criminels."²⁹ A collaborator in Nazi-occupied France, Rebatet expresses an oft-repeated sentiment prevalent on the extreme-right during the Third Republic years. The conviction that parliamentary democracy had bled France to death, and that Republicans were criminals out to murder the true France, had been repeated ad nauseam by the far right in a variety of tracts, newspaper articles, and books since the eighteen-eighties. For men like Rebatet, there was but one solution to the electoral malaise: An authoritarian regime, which restored tradition, hierarchy, and elitism to the political sphere. This project attracted both doyens and plebeians of the right to the Vichy regime and the new Nazi European order, seen as the embodiment of all the socio-political criteria for which they had fought so fervently in the preceding decades. Yet if Vichy was the first success of its kind for the French extreme right, it was by no means the only attempt to create, by force if necessary, a new anti-democratic and authoritarian political order.

From its beginnings the Republic was beset by accusations of corrupt practices and ineptitude, charges that emanated from both the right and the left. The arch-conservative Robert de Jouvenel quipped famously before the Great War that "il y a moins de différence entre deux députés dont l'un est révolutionnaire et l'autre ne l'est pas, qu'entre deux révolutionnaires dont l'un est député et l'autre ne l'est pas". Similarly, Anatole France dedicated a section of his Île des Pingouins to the corruption endemic in the Chamber of Deputies and the capitalist system which it served. Anti-parliamentarism was in vogue by

²⁹Lucien Rebatet, Les Décombres (Paris: Les Éditions Denoël, 1942), p. 13.

the turn of the century, and cartoons, popular novels, and cabarets often mocked the opportunism, buffoonery, and incompetence of the deputy.³⁰

For all their complaints, most citizens actively expressed their exasperation in light-hearted satire, or more earnest sarcasm at the expense of the government; few of them actively contemplated the eradication of the Republic. The extreme-right, however, went far beyond mere jest. Maurice Barrès, the prominent author whose works on Alsace-Lorraine and French deracination schooled a generation of young Frenchmen in the redemptive concepts of the soil and the dead, claimed that the deputy had no redeeming qualities. His only concern was the satisfaction of constituent electoral committees, Barrès jeered, which were deemed to be of greater importance than public service.³¹ Worse still, claimed Charles Maurras, leader of the royalist *Action française*, the Republic itself—*le pays légal*—contradicted the will of the people—*le pays réel*. Maurras viewed parliamentary democracy as a conspiracy against the common good, "the regime of windbags", and a malignant affliction which would destroy France if untreated. "There is only one way to improve democracy", seethed the *vieux maître royaliste*: "to destroy it".³²

Barrès and Maurras wrote during a time of weakness for the right, and especially the extreme-right. The defeat of Boulanger, the acquittal of Dreyfus, and the staunchly anti-Catholic policies of the Waldeck-Rousseau and Combes ministries left conservatives in disarray before the Great War. In the interwar period, rightist fortunes improved dramatically. The right enjoyed a postwar political resurgence, electing a Bloc national majority from 1919-1924 in the *Chambre Bleu-Horizon*, and again from 1926-1932 under

³⁰Jean Estèbe, "Le Parlementarisme" in Jean-François Sirinelli, *Histoire des droites en France: Vol. 3. Sensibilités* (Paris: Gallimard, 1992), pp. 336, 340.

³¹Michael Curtis, *Three Against the Third Republic: Sorel, Barrès, and Maurras* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1959), p. 79.

³²Quoted in Ernst Nolte, *Three Faces of Fascism* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolsen, 1965), pp. 107-108. See also Charles Maurras, *Kiel et Tanger* (Versailles: Bibliothèque des Oeuvres Politiques, 1928), p. 199; Charles Maurras, *Enquête sur la monarchie* (Paris: Nouvelle Librairie Nationale, 1924), p. 139. These works were written in 1899 and 1900 respectively.

Raymond Poincaré and André Tardieu. Electoral success, however, in no way diminished right-wing antiparliamentary sentiment. The success of the left, first apparent in the strike wave in 1919-1920, and again with the election of the Cartel des Gauches government in 1924, led both conservatives and the extreme-right to believe that a Bolshevik coup was possible in France. Conservatives such as André Thibaudet warned that a new leftist political class, groomed exclusively at the *École normale supérieure*, desired to create a 'République des professeurs'. Others were far more blunt: The title of Camille Aymard's best-selling 1926 treatise *Bolchévisme ou fascisme. Français il faut choisir* became a rallying cry for right-wing anti-Republicans for the remainder of the interwar period.³³

In the nineteen-thirties the right grew still more restless, as the depression struck France, the Hanau, Oustric, and Stavisky scandals publicly revealed governmental corruption at the highest levels, and Hitler loomed menacingly across the Rhine. With the rise of the French Popular Front and its 1936 electoral victory, right-wing anti-democratic sentiment became widespread. Conservative leaders like Victor Perret of the Republican Federation called for the elimination of the Chamber, because "the great majority of all Frenchmen today condemn parliamentarism".³⁴ A far greater threat to the stability of the Republic were the extreme-rightist leagues, whose hundreds of thousands of members and ominous street presence directly challenged the existing order. The 6 February 1934 riots, in which the leagues, together with veterans associations and the royalist *Action française*, marched on the Chamber of Deputies, shook the French populace. Initially gathered in protest against real and imagined revelations of corruption arising from the Stavisky Affair, the increasingly menacing crowd turned violent, forcing the resignation of premier Edouard Daladier. The next two years were marked by street battles with communists, and mass

³³Estèbe, p. 342-345; Jean-Luc Pinol, "1919-1958: Le temps des droites?" in Sirinelli, *Histoire des droites en France: Vol. I. Politique*, p. 291.

³⁴William D. Irvine, *French Conservatism in Crisis* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1979), pp. 81-88, 101.

meetings denouncing democracy. The banning of the leagues in June 1936 had little effect; most simply transformed themselves into political parties and continued their anti-parliamentary agitation, attracting hundreds of thousands of new members. Little wonder then that one French historian has asserted that "la mutation de l'été-automne 40, où une nation démocratique semble accepter d'un seul coup une dictature contre-révolutionnaire et raciste, a été préparée de longue date".³⁵

The largest extreme-rightist leagues in nineteen-twenties and nineteen-thirties France respectively were the Faisceau and the Croix de Feu/Parti social français. Like their liguier confrères, both groups drafted plans for an authoritarian state, to replace the weak, corrupt, and materialistic Republic. The Faisceau dedicated itself to the overthrow of the Republic, and the installation of an authoritarian and hierarchical 'Dictature des combattants' in its place, directed by new elites composed of war veterans. Defending Catholic morality and French tradition while enforcing social justice, the new dictatorship would eliminate materialism, restoring the values of family, church, and nationalism to France.

Despite a prevailing agreement on these general principles, two opposing sets of expectations existed within the Faisceau. For group leader Georges Valois, the new political order would serve to preserve the traditions and identity of France, mainly through the institution of the family, while simultaneously acting as the hyper-modern agent of governmental and economic efficiency. The state would be run by elites drawn from all classes, working ceaselessly to modernize the nation. Valois's fascist dictatorship was a transitory one, necessary only to create favourable conditions for the implementation of his system. He certainly employed much of the rhetoric of the contemporary extreme-right, espousing the corporatist system of government, referring to the nation as an organic whole, and praising Barrèssian nationalism and Catholic virtue as essential components of any French renaissance. Valois further invoked the experience of 1914 to lend legitimacy to

³⁵Estèbe, p. 345.

his project, often speaking of the need to recreate the fraternity and mentality of the trenches within the new fascist state. Yet he idolized Georges Sorel, Le Corbusier, and Henry Ford as much as Maurras and Barrès, and his proposals were dominated by a planiste spirit more commonly associated with the left than with the extreme-right. His combattant elite, far from reactionary, were expected to make France suitable for the "age of electricity" rather than usher in a conservative authoritarian state.³⁶ Valois's arguments thus rejected many programmatic elements common to the extreme-right during the Third Republic, including the notion that the primary duty of any new regime was to be the imposition of Catholic values and French tradition, and the wariness of 'progressive' ideas, which were associated with the anticlerical and 'socialist' Cartel des Gauches.

Valois's progressive bent was not shared by many of his Faisceau colleagues. The modernism of Sorel and Le Corbusier meant nothing to Hubert Bourgin, Jacques Arthuys, or Philippe Barrès, Faisceau leaders whose politics emphasized the inculcation of tradition, hierarchy, discipline, and order. Valois was brought up in a working-class milieu, beginning his political trajectory on the anarcho-sindicalist left, before joining the Action française in 1906. Although they were his closest confidantes within the group, Arthuys and Barrès both came from traditional right-wing backgrounds, born into conservative, privileged families. The son of a career army officer, Arthuys was a lawyer and highly decorated war veteran, owner of a Roubaix-Tourcoing industrial concern, and a veteran of the Action française. Barrès's father was the extreme-rightist author and deputy Maurice Barrès, veteran of Boulangism and staunch anti-Dreyfussard. The younger Barrès wrote for several conservative newspapers and in 1921 authored a Jungeresque book about the Great War entitled La Guerre à vingt ans. Although he was not a close collaborator of Valois, Bourgin

³⁶The French term combattants is used throughout this work in place of the English 'war veterans'. In the parlance of the French extreme-right, the combattant is more than a mere soldier of the Great War, endowed with the moral authority to lead France, and dedicated to a neo-authoritarian replication of the politics of the trenches in civil society.

was a graduate of the *École normale supérieure*, a *docteur ès lettres*, and a veteran of the *Ligue des patriotes* and the *Action française*. These three men were joined in the conservative faction of the *Faisceau* by founding members Maurice de Barral and Marcel Bucard, decorated war veteran and future leader of the fascist *Francistes* movement.

Apart from the obvious differences in social and political background, the conservative faction expected the *Faisceau* to follow the pattern of the established extreme-rightist leagues. Their fascism consisted of the conquest of state by the paramilitary *Légions*, to be followed by the pouring of old wine into new bottles. Where Valois spoke of political and economic modernity, the *Faisceau* conservatives instead envisioned a permanent nationalist autocracy, the living embodiment of the national will. Employing social Darwinist rhetoric, they believed that a policy of bellicose nationalism was necessary to restore French predominance. Like Valois, the conservatives advocated a combattant elite, possessing moral authority and the right to lead. Yet their elite symbolized heroism, patriotism, and discipline, whose mission was not to construct a new world, but to preserve the old one. They thus dismissed the rationalization of politics in favour of absolute order, aristocratic hierarchy, and the preservation of the past, rejecting the fascist 'revolution' in favour of a moral and physical cleansing of the masses.³⁷

No such divisions existed within the ranks of the *CDF/PSF*, whose political plans straddled the traditional and extreme-right, and bore no resemblance to Valois's socio-political engineering. Like the *Faisceau*, the *CDF/PSF* composed a program for the new state, to be implemented once the group had either seized or been elected to power. Their future state resembled that supported by the *Faisceau* conservatives, an authoritarian construct in the service of French tradition. Despite their frequent public proclamations to

³⁷In a 1972 interview with right wing historian Jean-Maurice Duval, Barrès stated that he joined the *Faisceau* expecting it to be a group of elite combattants dedicated to bringing the spirit of the trenches into politics, with the further goal of restoring French greatness and tradition. See Jean-Maurice Duval, *Le Faisceau de Georges Valois* (Paris: La Librairie Française, 1979), p. 74.

the contrary, the group was rabidly anti-parliamentary, in its liguer and legal manifestations. CDF/PSF members continually derided the Republic and its officials as corrupt, immoral, and self-centred. They thus called for the institution of discipline, hierarchy, authority, and the primacy of the national over individual interest. If the CDF/PSF rejected fascism, they were far from Republican; even as they sent deputies into the chamber after June 1936, the CDF/PSF championed authoritarianism, characterized by the restoration of strong central authority, collective discipline to combat parliamentary 'excess', and restraints on 'anarchic' liberty.

During the Croix de Feu years this vision of the new state was linked to the esprit combattant of the Great War. Once the group adopted its parliamentary guise in 1936, its vision became more closely associated with social Catholic doctrine, and militant anti-communism was present in both cases. References to the 'fraternity of the trenches' abounded in Croix de Feu writings, and the group continually claimed that by virtue of their sacrifice during the Great War the combattants had the moral authority to lead France. After the transformation into the parliamentary PSF, the group emphasis shifted to social Catholic organic nationalism, in the vein of La Tour du Pin and Maurice Barrès. As the leader of a mass party of over one million members by 1938, La Rocque increasingly called for socio-political reconciliation and the 'equality of souls' in an opportunistic bid to seize power and transform French politics. The concepts of hierarchy and authority survived in group discourse, however, albeit concealed in language more appealing to the masses.

1.

On July 23, 1926 the chief press organ of Mussolini's Italy, Il Popolo d'Italia, dedicated its front page to a new French political phenomenon--fascism. It printed in full an article by Faisceau leader Georges Valois, entitled "La Révolution nationale est en marche", alongside the seven resolutions from the group's June conference in Reims. Accompanied

by photos and sympathetic commentary, the generous attention devoted to the group led members to believe that French fascism had gained official recognition and invaluable support from their Italian counterparts. That the Faisceau, which regarded the Duce as the herald of a new Europe in which fascism would invariably replace liberalism and parliamentarism, coveted such attention, was made clear in numerous articles in the group's newspaper devoted to the Italian phenomenon and its leaders.³⁸

Such a quest for the official approval of Italian fascism and its leaders would seem to indicate that the Faisceau had adopted the political vision of Mussolini and his advisors, that the group was but a pale copy of the new Italy. Yet in an autobiographical work published mere months after the splintering of the Faisceau, Valois boldly claimed that the group "n'a jamais eu de rapports avec le fascisme italien, ni directement, ni indirectement". The group's doctrine and vision were their own, he insisted; if anything, they had been adopted by many Italians. But the fascism espoused by the Faisceau was no longer practiced in Italy. He had admired the revolutionary movement of the march on Rome, but six years later abhorred the reactionary imitation into which it had evolved. Thus by mid-1927, as the Faisceau experiment disintegrated, Valois proclaimed his loyalty to the Republic, stating that he had always been so inclined, seeking only to install a "syndicalist" parliament and enable working-class participation in both the nation and the state.³⁹

Faisceau plans for the political state tell a different story. During the Faisceau years, Valois was certainly no supporter of republican government, despite his post-mortem statements to the contrary, and neither were his colleagues. Instead the group advanced plans for an authoritarian corporative state, in which representative assemblies of families

³⁸"La Presse italienne et le fascisme français", *NS*, 24 July 1926. Articles praising Italian fascism were omnipresent in the pages of *Nouveau Siècle*. See, for example, "Une interview avec M. Mussolini", *NS*, 2 July 1926; Philippe Lamour, "Visite à L'Italie vivante", *NS*, 20 Sept. 1926.

³⁹Georges Valois, *L'Homme contre l'argent* (Paris: Librairie Valois, 1928), pp. 264-265; Georges Valois, "À la recherche d'un parti nouveau", *NS*, 5 June 1927. That the concept of electoral politics was anathematic to syndicalists did not stop Valois from frequently using the term to describe political projects.

and producers would advise an all-powerful dictator on political, economic, moral, and societal needs and desires. Taken at face-value, this framework resembled the model adopted by Mussolini and his advisors. Yet the Faisceau's proposed fascist state, while sharing certain assumptions and beliefs with Mussolini and other Italian fascist leaders, was in fact sui generis. Valois's fascism assimilated ideas drawn equally from the left and the right, a programme that Italian fascism rhetorically accepted, but ignored in practice.

The Faisceau leader welded pieces of French extreme-rightist doctrine--corporativism, the nation as an organic whole, the primacy of family and religion--to notions prevalent among revolutionary syndicalists and modernizers of all classes, including the primacy of production and a complete reconstruction of all facets of politics and government. Equally inspired by the experience of the trenches, Fordist scientific management, and the new urban aesthetic of Le Corbusier, Valois's vision of the future was the 'age of electricity' in which the fascist state acted continuously as a modernizing agent, while the family preserved tradition and Catholic virtue. The Faisceau leader's political doctrine did not remain uncontested, however. While accepting his notion of the family, many of Valois's colleagues disagreed with his vision of the state and the role of government. For Hubert Bourgin, Jacques Arthuys, Philippe Barrès, Marcel Bucard, and Maurice de Barral the creation of a fascist state presented the opportunity to defeat communism and French external enemies, while recreating the ethos of the trenches. Led by an absolute dictator who instilled will, discipline, and hierarchy into the nation, France would rediscover nationalism and tradition. The political modernism espoused by Valois, although never openly rebuffed, found no support among the traditionalist faction, and was certainly incompatible with their conservative doctrine in any case.

From the very beginning, while still a member of the royalist Action française, Valois perceived Italian fascism to be a revolutionary movement whose goals mirrored those of the left, even if their political means did not. In his preface to the French edition of Pietro

Gorgolini's work La Révolution fasciste, he claimed that the movement's *raison d'être* was to defeat bourgeois democracy and capitalism, and the plutocrats who exclusively benefited from those systems. Liberalism served only the cause of capital, while fascism—an alliance of intellectuals, war veterans, workers, and peasants—laboured for the greatness of the nation. Mussolini's dictatorship was dedicated to public service in place of class-based interests, forging a corporative political and economic system with the aid of an elite composed almost exclusively of workers. The bourgeoisie, having weakened the nation through ineffective government, gave way to "les forces spirituelles, morales, économique de l'Italie...coordonnés et tendue vers un but national, la grandeur italienne". Royalists, republicans, conservatives, and even ex-communists, on this account joined the fascist party in a united effort to replace the rule of the lira with new heroic values. The old political forms were destroyed root and branch, replacing the liberal plutocratic order of the nineteenth century with a national and heroic state worthy of the modern age.⁴⁰

To be sure, the rejection of liberalism and the pursuit of national greatness were fundamental principles of Italian fascism. Yet Valois's vision of the revolutionary working class elite renovating society was at odds with existing Italian reality. Mussolini's Partito Nazionale Fascista contained 780 000 members by the end of 1923, of whom few supported the extension of power to Italian labour and many rejected revolutionary change in any form. The views espoused by the small faction which promoted a syndico-corporativist state, led by Edmondo Rossoni, Sergio Pannunzio, and A.O. Olivetti, certainly resembled Valoissian fascism, as did the extreme-left populism of Curzio Malaparte, albeit to a lesser extent. But various cliques resolutely opposed these ideas, including the moderate revisionists led by Massimo Rocca—who proposed the incorporation of fascist principles within the pre-existing political system, the authoritarian and imperialist squadristi

⁴⁰Georges Valois, preface to Pietro Gorgolini, La Révolution fasciste (Paris: Nouvelle Librairie Nationale, 1924), pp. VII-XII.

led by Alfredo Rocco—for whom violence and empire would transform Italy, and the promoters of fascism as a cultural revolution, led by Giovanni Gentile. It was the arch-conservative Rocco whose proposals were implemented during the so-called "Napoleonic Year" of 1926, during which the form of the fascist state and government was refined. As Stanley Payne has demonstrated, there was little legal or administrative change. PNF membership and leadership were overwhelmingly middle-class (only 15% of its members were workers), and the oldest partisans bitterly denounced the "embourgeoisement" of the party. Labour remained in the factories under Mussolini's regime, while government and the civil service continued to exist as the exclusive preserve of the middle class.⁴¹

Yet Valois's opinion of Italian fascism did not change. Moved by the rhetoric of the regime rather than its actions, he continued to champion a 'fascism of the left' upon abandoning royalism in late 1924. By 1926 Valois, now the leader of the Faisceau and seemingly unaware of the newfound conservatism adopted in the Italian fascist state, announced that fascism openly opposed the right, fulfilling the needs of the people and defending their interests against the ruling class. While Rocco consolidated the fascist system of government with the full participation of the middle class, effecting few concrete changes and steering political discourse and practice to the right, Valois proclaimed that fascism was the logical conclusion of 1789, when French revolutionary forces attempted to create the first modern state. He theorized that the feudal *ancien regime*, epitomized by old elites who fought only to preserve material gain, had been relegated to the dustbin of history, unable to meet the challenges of a new era. Yet those who succeeded the aristocracy, whether republican, royal, or imperial in nature, failed to construct a just and efficient state, resulting in a century of bourgeois decadence which rivaled the excesses of the *ancien regime*. The true legacy of 1789, patriotic nationalism and a socialism devoid of class

⁴¹Stanley G. Payne. *A History of Fascism, 1914-1945* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1995), pp. 110-121.

conflict, were buried in an avalanche of crass materialism. Fascism aimed to restore both ideals in a modern political context: A movement for all classes, unified by a national consciousness under a great leader, with the organization of liberty in representative assemblies. Such a state, claimed Valois, symbolized "l'État de l'âge industriel qui fera surgir du sol mille et mille richesses nouvelles".⁴² Fascism represented for twentieth century Europe what liberalism and parliamentarism had evoked in 1789, a new and universal political, economic, and social structure exemplifying the avant-garde of modernity. Liberalism and parliamentarism would therefore be replaced by a syndical, corporative, and familial system of political representation.

For all Valois's talk of fascism originating on the left, however, his political doctrine displayed an equal sympathy for the ideology of the French extreme-right, specifically its unique brand of "national-socialism". To the Faisceau leader, individualism, the bane of the previous bourgeois century, was unnecessary in the modern fascist state, where nationalism and socialism provided the guiding principles. Here Valois evoked the thought of Maurice Barrès rather than the Italian fascist left, claiming that French nationalism traditionally opposed financial internationalism, while gallic socialism protected the worker and peasant from bourgeois materialism. Valois claimed that the fascist state would mobilize a socialism freed from the German conception of internationalism (i.e. Marxism), combined with a state-sponsored nationalism which specifically defended the interests of the working-class. Where socialism provided the state with its sense of social justice, fascism added the national discipline of individual (i.e. bourgeois) initiative. The political platform of the right, with its emphasis on order and authority, was deemed acceptable only if the causes of the left, primarily its advocacy of social justice, were maintained. Valois's political doctrine fused this Barrèssian national-socialism with the syndicalism of Georges Sorel, whose "proletarian vigour" had inspired fascism to aid the working class in toppling the 'decadent'

⁴²Georges Valois, "Le Fascisme: conclusion du mouvement de 1789", *NS*, 14 July 1926.

bourgeois Republic. The age of empty talk would be replaced by the "age of construction" in the new fascist state, where the working class revived the dormant creative energy of the bourgeoisie, those who had built railroads, canals, roads, and factories in the previous century.⁴³

On this point Valois was quite clear: Although the bourgeoisie were not useless, they were nevertheless unequipped to lead the nation. This opinion, first formulated in the 1924 work La Révolution nationale while Valois was still a member of the Action française, remained unchanged throughout his political career, even after he abandoned fascism for neo-syndicalism and libertarian communism. That the middle class would direct enterprise was a given; their cardinal virtues, of savings and industry, would be left untouched by the state. They were incapable of governing, however, having managed the state as a business, run according to the rules of commerce to allow financiers and industrialists the greatest potential earnings. Such a system made the bourgeoisie lazy and greedy, and generated class conflict. Fascism, in contrast, would work the rich, imposing discipline and obliging the bourgeoisie to work for the good of the people and the greatness of the nation: "Retirer aux bourgeois le pouvoir publique qu'ils sont incapables d'exercer, afin de placer le pouvoir entre les mains d'un chef national...qui maintiendra les bourgeois dans leur fonction, les obligera à sortir de l'anarchie économique où ils se sont eux-mêmes placés, et leur donnera l'obligation de remplir tous leurs devoirs à l'égard du peuple".⁴⁴

Not all Faisceau members viewed the fascist political project in the same manner as Valois. His views, influenced by Sorel as much as Mussolini, closely resembled those held by the national-syndicalist faction of Italian fascism headed by Rossoni and Bianchi:

⁴³Georges Valois, "Nationalisme et socialisme", NS, 25-26 Jan. 1926; F/7/13211, Tract-"Le Faisceau des combattants, des chefs de famille, et des producteurs" (Paris: Librairie du Nouveau Siècle, 1926), p. 4; Georges Valois, 1er Assemblée des combattants, des producteurs et des chefs de famille (Paris: Nouvelle Librairie Nationale, 1926); Georges Valois, "Origines françaises du fascisme", NS, 27 April 1926.

⁴⁴Georges Valois, La Révolution nationale (Paris: Nouvelle Librairie Nationale, 1924), pp. 62-80, 153-158.

Syndico-corporatist ends to which he appended Barrèssian means. Yet like Rocco and the conservative nationalists, who embraced an different conception of fascism, various Faisceau members envisioned the movement as a vehicle for traditional right-wing sentiment. For Hubert Bourgin, formerly a member of the ultra-conservative *Ligue des patriotes* and publisher of the *Chronique des ligues nationales*, fascist political doctrine was essentially conservative in nature. True, wrote Bourgin, fascism combined revolution and tradition. But revolution affected only the political form of the state, whose content would embody continuity, duration, and conservation, the eternal principles and profound human truths that composed the 'Latin genius'. To Bourgin, Mussolini's inspiration came from ancient Rome, and not contemporary syndicalism or national-socialism. The Duce represented order, discipline, and hard work: The roots of all development, progress, and greatness. In addition, Italian fascism destroyed the corrupt plutocracy, out to ruin Europe by fomenting political and economic anarchy for personal gain. Although the ex-liguer accepted the notion that the fascist conception of politics went beyond class-based interests, he maintained that Mussolini's fascism was at heart a voluntary and organized service of elites under military and syndicalist forms which both intensified production and engaged in a moral and physical cleansing of the masses. Included in this cleansing was the propagation of bellicose patriotism, with which the state severely punished any degradation of 'la Patrie'. National enemies, classified as deputies, speculators, merchants, and the decadent, would be eliminated under the fascist regime.⁴⁵

If Valois's fascism was a synthesis of Sorel and Barrès, Bourgin's was a combination of Charles Maurras and traditional conservatism. Nor was he alone in viewing fascism as reactionary. To Jacques Arthuys, the lawyer and industrialist from Roubaix-Tourcoing who had assisted Valois in the formation of both the Estates-General campaign of 1923 and the

⁴⁵Hubert Bourgin, "Le Discours de Pérouse et la doctrine fasciste", *NS*, 1 Oct. 1926; Hubert Bourgin, "A qui nous aime, à qui nous hait", *NS*, 22 Oct. 1925.

Faisceau, fascism was no abandonment of the past. The fundamental tenets of French civilization and tradition were merely regenerated into new forms by the fascist state.⁴⁶ The seemingly unbridgable chasm between Valois's left-fascism and the cult of tradition and patriotism espoused by Bourgin and Arthuys prevented the establishment of any consensus regarding the form and content of the future nation and state.

Faisceau members of all stripes were unanimous in condemning communism, liberalism, and parliamentarism, however. Italian fascists from left to right, from the expansion of the Fasci di Combattimento in 1920-21 onwards, agreed on these points. But Faisceau anti-parliamentarism and anti-communism were not servile imitations of Italian fascism. In arguing that the new state would be based upon an unbending opposition to communism and parliamentary democracy, Valois and his colleagues reacted to developments in France as much as they adhered to Italian fascist doctrine. The ascension to power of the radical-socialist-led Cartel des Gauches government in May 1924, although not as loathsome to the right as Blum's Popular Front a decade later, nevertheless created fears of leftist government incompetence and the socialization of France. These worries were certainly not allayed by the November interment of Jaurès's ashes in the Pantheon, or the Cartel's February 1925 decision to recall the French ambassador from the Vatican. The Catholic extreme-right, represented in the Faisceau ranks by Valois, Bourgin, and Philippe Barrès among others, found this action particularly odious.⁴⁷

Valois, moreover, saw in the precipitous fall of the franc an opportunity to demonstrate the ruinous consequences of liberal democracy in action. As the franc fell steadily

⁴⁶Jacques Arthuys, "Vers un nouveau siècle", *NS*, 24 April, 1927.

⁴⁷On Mussolini's anti-communism/liberalism/parliamentarism, see Benito Mussolini, "The Political and Social Doctrine of Fascism", *International Reconciliation*, no. 306, Jan. 1935, pp. 8-12. The latter is an English reprint, in extenso, of Gentile and Mussolini's definition from the *Encyclopedia Italiana*. See also Payne, pp. 95-98; Alexander de Grand, *Italian Fascism: Its Origins & Development* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1989), pp. 144-145. For the anti-communist/liberal views of the fascist left, see Edmondo Rossoni, "La Corporazione Fascista" in Francesco Perfetti (ed.), *Il Sindacalismo Fascista* (Rome: Bonacci Editore, 1988), pp. 270-271.

throughout late 1925 and early 1926, bottoming out at 243 per pound in the summer, Nouveau Siècle ran daily broadsides accusing Cartel finance ministers Louis Loucheur, Raoul Péret, Joseph Caillaux, and Anatole de Monzie of incompetence. Caillaux was particularly reviled by the right, with various conservative deputies threatening him with canes and revolvers. The Faisceau joined in the chorus of denunciation. Attacks continued in Nouveau Siècle and the chamber upon the return of Poincaré to power in July 1926, until the devaluation of the franc in June 1928, which effectively ended the monetary crisis. Nor did the fall of the Cartel assuage the right, which viewed the Communist Party, which received 8% of the vote in the 1924 general election, and 9.3% in 1928, and whose regular street actions received lengthy coverage in the Faisceau press, as a constant threat.⁴⁸

Valois referred to communism in apocalyptic language, as a dire threat to French security: "un duel immense est commencé entre la Barbarie et la Civilisation, entre la Horde at la Cité, entre le monde asiatique et le monde européen. Les nations européens, sous peine de mort, doivent se donner les institutions par lesquelles elles seront victorieuses dans cette lutte".⁴⁹ In his 1924 work La Révolution nationale, he contrasted the pillaging communist with the benevolent fascist, at once the defender of European civilization and the rights of the worker:

Le bolchéviste slave, c'est le guerrier du Nord, qui se place à la tête des hordes asiatiques et scythiques et à qui sa doctrine fournit une justification pour partir au pillage du monde romain qu'il nomme le monde capitaliste. Le fasciste latin,

⁴⁸Philippe Bernard and Henri Dubief, The Decline of the Third Republic, 1914-1938 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), p. 97-98, 155. For the right-wing response to Caillaux, see Édouard Bonnefous, Histoire politique de la Troisième République: Vol. 4, Cartel de Gauches et Union Nationale (1924-1929) (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1960), pp. 82-83. Faisceau attacks on Caillaux and de Monzie were a daily occurrence in Nouveau siècle. See, for example: Jacques Arthuys, "Et voici: Le Franc-Caillaux", NS, 11 June 1925; Georges Valois, "Pour sauver le franc", NS, 9 July, 1925; "La Révolution en marche", NS, 6 July 1926; Georges Valois, "Contre l'inflation", NS, 19 July 1926. In each case, Valois's own 'national solution'-the reinstatement of the gold franc--was contrasted with the 'ruinous' fiscal policies of the left. For attacks on Poincaré's financial acumen, see: Georges Valois, "Observations techniques sue le discours de M. Raymond Poincaré", NS, 12 Dec. 1926. Faisceau articles on communist activities are far too numerous to list here. For daily examples, see Valois's column "La Horde".

⁴⁹Georges Valois, "Appel aux producteurs, aux épargnants, aux combattants", NS, 2 July 1925. See also Georges Valois, La Politique de la victoire (Paris: Nouvelle librairie Nationale, 1925), pp. 76-77.

c'est la combattant du Midi, qui veut arracher l'Etat aux mains débiles de l'administrateur bourgeois, protéger le travail contre l'argent, et redresser les défenses de la civilisation abandonnés par les mercantis et les juristes incapables de porter les armes.⁵⁰

The following year, Valois claimed that communism was the tool of the plutocracy, who used its various factions to keep working class dissent visible and controlled. Thus the fascist was better able to defend the working class than the communist, who had sold himself to big business. While the Bolsheviks worked for the capitalists, fascism laboured for heroism and peace, protecting the worker from the 'usurier' who funded the left. Deputies also used the communist party for political ends, Valois concluded, as revolutionary 'puppets' to stave off the rising fascist opposition. Realizing the devious nature of the movement, Europe had "vomited up communism", with the exception of France, whose gullible workers continued to support duplicitous Bolshevism.⁵¹

Valois's critique of communism was not confined to obloquy, however. The man of the left in France was not "the man with the knife between his teeth", he admitted. Communism and fascism were "frères ennemis", both inherently anti-parliamentary/liberal/plutocratic in nature, proposing socio-economic reforms through the renovation of existing political institutions and the installation of a dictatorship.⁵² That communism worked to defeat capitalism and the bourgeoisie was similarly compatible with fascist aspirations. It was the communist insistence on class war, in place of fascist national unity, which raised serious objections. The results in Russia spoke for themselves, Valois argued, including the cessation of production, famine and death, and state-sanctioned violence against any perceived ally of the bourgeoisie. Ignoring improved French economic prospects in the mid-twenties, Valois in March 1926 claimed that communism flourished in

⁵⁰Georges Valois, *La Révolution nationale* (Paris: Nouvelle Librairie Nationale, 1924), p. 151.

⁵¹"La Nouvelle activité communiste", *NS*, 24 Sept. 1926. Other Faisceau members were no less virulent. See, for example, Hubert Bourgin, "La Verité sur le regime Bolchevique telle qu'elle se dégage des documents officiels Soviétiques", *NS*, 15 March 1926.

⁵²Georges Valois, "Fascisme ou communisme", *NS*, 3 Dec. 1925.

France solely as a result of economic instability due to the fall of the franc, unemployment, and poverty. The fascist state, which aimed to eliminate the immiseration of the worker through better production methods and organization, while granting a political voice to labour, removed the need for such extreme solutions.⁵³

Although the Faisceau unanimously rejected communism as unsuitable for France, to be driven from the nation by fascist dynamism and violence, various members were even more hostile to democracy and parliamentarism. Writing in the pages of Nouveau Siècle, Philippe Barrès crudely referred to the Chamber of Deputies as the place "où l'on distille une morphine abrutissante qui mène le pays à la mort", while longtime Valois associate René Johannet announced that it was time for the surgeon to operate, to remove the parliamentary 'sickness' from France. Valois was no less dramatic. "Sachez-vous bien que nous vomissons le parlementarisme", he jeered, "l'élection régime favori des bavards, des médiocres, et des riches". While the combattants had fought at the front during the Great War, he charged, the deputies had sold the nation to the "King of Petrol".⁵⁴

Beyond mere insults, the Faisceau critique of parliamentary democracy pointed to its ubiquitous corruption and inefficiency. To Hubert Bourgin, fraud, intrigue, and party interests were rife within the Chamber and its back rooms, impeding effective government. Deputies were concerned solely with re-election, while powerful monied interests and ambitious prefects intervened behind the scenes, and the lords of industry, banks, and steel

⁵³F/7/13211, tract-"La Conquête de l'avenir"; Georges Valois, "Communistes", NS, 19 March 1925; Georges Valois, "Élimination du communisme par la création économique", NS, 20 March 1926. Valois's gloomy assessment, that poverty and unemployment led to communist success, did not accurately reflect the French economy in the mid-twenties. Despite the fall of the franc, only 243 000 workers were unemployed in 1926, down from 537 000 five years earlier. Furthermore, the industrial production index rose from 55 in January 1919 to 111 in January 1925, reaching 130 in August 1926. Similarly, workers' purchase power, indexed at 394 in February 1921, rose to 464 by October 1925, and 570 a year later. In Alfred Sauvy, Histoire économique de la France entre les deux guerres: T.I. de l'armistice à la dévaluation de la livre (Paris: Fayard, 1965), pp. 218-219, 465, 505.

⁵⁴Philippe Barrès, "Le Sens du pèlerinage", NS, 21 Feb. 1926; René Johannet, "Le Chirurgien et son heure", NS, 21 June 1926; Georges Valois, "La Révolution nationale", NS, 20 Aug. 1925. See also "Décrépidude", NS, 9 Dec. 1925.

imposed their will and agenda upon the greedy 'elected' representatives. Popular government was a hollow myth, Bourgin wrote, masking the reality of utter disorder, electoral victories bought with dirty money, influence trafficking, and broken promises. Bourgin's critique was not entirely groundless: Rampant speculation followed the acceptance of the Dawes plan and resulting currency stabilization, and many elected officials participated in a variety of banking and investment syndicates.⁵⁵

Others voiced concerns over the weakness of the government, and its obsession with sectarianism. Faisceau critics viewed the state as moribund, unable to make war, win the peace, or provide the worker with social justice. The political parties, representatives of the older generation, had failed to win the peace in the manner that the combattants—the generation of 1914—had won the war. For Valois, the divisive parliamentary system was to blame. Deputies were exclusively concerned with deriding the opposition, while ignoring the security and prosperity of France. Fascism presented the nation with a 'new team', for whom power was a responsibility and not a profit scheme: "Parti de gauche, parti de droite, cela fait partie du langage des parlementaires. Nous ne connaissons que les Français et les anti-Français, les hommes qui veulent la grandeur de la France et des Français, et ceux qui ont peur de la grandeur et qui demeurent dans la petitesse, les combattants et les embusqués, les victorieux et les défaitistes".⁵⁶ He left no doubt as to which category best described the politician.

2.

Although the political doctrine of the Faisceau shared certain affinities with Italian fascism, both in its national-syndicalist and conservative variants, their proposed state itself

⁵⁵Hubert Bourgin, "Pourquoi nous sommes antiparlementaires", *NS*, 23 Dec. 1925; Hubert Bourgin, *Cinquante ans d'expérience démocratique* (Paris: Nouvelle Librairie Nationale, 1925), pp. 235-236.

⁵⁶"Discours prononcée le 11 Novembre", *NS*, 12 Nov. 1925; Georges Valois, "La Forme nouvelle de l'Etat", *NS*, 30 Jan. 1926; Valois, *La Politique de la victoire*, pp. 10-12.

was unique, combining elements from both national-syndicalism and conservative authoritarianism. Yet group members were far from unanimous regarding its form and content. The disagreements between Valois, Bourgin, and Arthuys became increasingly visible when discussions turned towards the actual construction of a new political order.

In keeping with his adoption of Sorel and Barrès as the ancestors of fascism, and his belief in the "age of electricity", Valois's proposed state was at once hyper-modern and traditional. The Barrèssian notions of the soil and the dead--the very identity of France--would be preserved within the family, whose representation before the state guaranteed familial interests and preserved tradition. They would be joined by the producers, who strove to remake the French economy, society, and aesthetic, bringing France into the modern world, where industrial values predominated. Valois's vision placed him in clear conflict with most prominent group members, whose state prioritized a conservative agenda. Any 'modernism' present in their discourse and ideas was drawn exclusively from their experience in the trenches during the Great War. Where Valois saw the war years as a rude awakening for 'backwards' France, a chance to bring the nation into the age of electricity, Faisceau conservatives saw the war as a reaffirmation of the need to preserve French tradition at all costs, reinforced by a hierarchical dictatorship which resembled the command structure of the trenches. Both sides understood that elections were absurd, that the necessary dictum, "agir en équipe, avec un chef", could not be voted upon. The entire apparatus, including elected representatives, would be razed to the ground, replaced by the Révolution nationale and the Dictature des combattants. Yet for Valois this process was merely a means to an end, a credo refuted by his colleagues, for whom dictatorship itself *was* the end.

Valois and Arthuys first developed plans for the reform of state during the Estates-General campaign of 1923-24, where both men joined various right-wing luminaries in demanding their reconvention, to save France from economic and political ruin. These

Estates little resembled their antecedents, the representative assemblies of the aristocracy, clergy, and commoners convened to voice their opinions to the king. The six hundred 'notables' gathered by campaign president Eugène Mathon at the Salles des ingénieurs civils in October 1923 were primarily businessmen, wealthy farmers, and independent professionals. Many were members of the Action française, including both Arthuys and Valois, who directed the Nouvelle Librairie Nationale, the group's publishing house, and wrote regular columns on economic affairs for their daily newspaper. Hence the goal of the Estates was not to advise the government, but to plot the eradication of the parliamentary system, and to forge its replacement--a corporatist state in which permanent assemblies of families and producers counseled an authoritarian leader and his ministers.⁵⁷

As described by Arthuys in the April-May edition of the Cahiers des Etats-Généraux, the renewed Estates-General would hold no legal power, merely consulting the state on the drafting of laws, and bringing the needs and desires of the populace to the attention of the leader. In place of the three estates of the ancien régime, Arthuys proposed two general assemblies, for families and producers. Delegates to these assemblies included fathers in the first case, and both owners and non-communist/socialist workers drawn from local and regional corporations in the second. Legations from each assembly came together in the Conseil supérieur des Etats-Généraux, through which families and producers communicated with the state. The council itself debated only questions of national import, meeting once per month. If a given question or problem merited further guidance, the council could bring the matter to the general assembly--the entire Estates-General--for discussion. Special interests, in contrast, were to be the purview of local and regional corporations, representing various types of producers, both agrarian and industrial.⁵⁸

⁵⁷Yves Guchet. Georges Valois: L'Action française. le Faisceau. la République syndicale (Paris: Editions de l'albatros, 1975), p. 129.

⁵⁸Jacques Arthuys, "Une manière de concevoir les Etats-généraux", CEG, April-May 1924, pp. 532-533, 537-543.

Like the Estates of old, those envisioned by Arthuys and Valois retained their consultative capacity, to ensure that the state remained on the correct path. Although the state alone administered the armed forces and diplomatic corps, the police, and the civil service, it was answerable to the Estates (its "financial conscience") in commercial matters. The Estates were further charged with pushing the state to speed up its work, in sharp contrast to the endless argumentation of the parliamentary regime. Taken by itself, such a scheme seems hardly appropriate for a fascist state. Yet Valois added certain details which prefigured his later discourse as Faisceau leader. According to Valois, the criteria for the selection of elite corporative delegates, those most qualified to work with the state in resolving problems of national import, were energy, authority, service, and devotion to the public good. Although the resolutions of the general assembly were binding, the final decision was rendered by the state alone, and would not be voted upon by the Estates. The latter held no legislative power, providing only information and consultation-- necessary for the creation of various laws, while applying the results within the corporations which they represented. It was the responsibility of the state, for example, to ensure that industry functioned according to strict guidelines, did not exploit the worker, and took only its fair share of necessary resources. Although open to arguments about other facets of industrial production, these precepts were non-negotiable; the corporations were expected to obey without discussion. Although Valois described the final product as a 'collective effort' of the Estates and leadership, there were clearly severe limits to any collaboration.⁵⁹

Nor did Valois share the rationale of Mathon and others, that the Estates-General should be a vehicle for a conservative political agenda and the hegemony of bourgeois industrial power. From 1919 onwards, he described the state as both the living incarnation

⁵⁹Georges Valois, "Réponse au Provincial et à quelques contradicteurs de Paris et de Province", *CEG*, May 1923, p. 149-150; Georges Valois, "La Coordination des forces nationales", *CEG*, Oct. 1923, pp. 138-140, 148-150; "Avant-propos", *CEG*, April 1923, pp. 5-7; "La Réforme de la représentation national devant l'Etat", *CEG*, April 1923, p. 19; Jacques Arthuys, "Une manière de concevoir les Etats-généraux", *CEG*, April-May 1924, p. 543; Georges Valois, *La Révolution nationale*, p. 176.

of the nation and the purveyor of social justice. In L'Economie nouvelle, his first postwar treatise, he concluded that:

Nous concevons que l'Etat, indépendant de classes, des groupes et des partis, place au-dessus de tous une même loi qui oblige tous les citoyens au travail et leur interdit de se servir de sa propre force ou de ses propres ressources pour échapper au travail; nous concevons que l'Etat est en mesure, ainsi, d'imposer à tous le respect de l'intérêt national qu'il représente et au nom duquel il intervient lorsque la vie économique menace tel ou tel intérêts sociaux du présent et de l'avenir qu'il est seul à connaître et à pouvoir défendre.

In an October 1923 article in the Cahiers des Etats-Généraux, Valois used Barrèssian terminology, referring to the state as the head of France, the family as the heart, and the nation as the body, integral nationalist sentiments far removed from the pragmatic goals of the Northern industrialists and Western farmers who answered Mathon's call. Rather than supporting the right, Valois's assembly was above politics entirely, rejecting the 'sterile' regime of parties and plutocrats: "Les Etats-Généraux seront une assemblée où il n'y aura ni droite ni gauche ni centre. Selon une formule célèbre, ils seront en dehors et au-dessus des partis. Nul de leurs membres ne siègera au nom d'un parti, ou d'une doctrine politique. Ne sera député aux Etats que le représentant d'une fonction sociale, intellectuelle, ou économique". Furthermore, this national elite would be drawn from all sectors of society. It reflected the 'permanent realities' of the nation, and hence the state called upon families (moral and regional representatives) and producers (both workers and owners) to present themselves. The emphasis upon a state above politics and parties, the continual references to the national interest and duty above and beyond the individual, and the rejection of the notion of class-based interests were common themes in fascist Italy at the time, but quite foreign to the French haute bourgeoisie, for whom the Estates project was inseparable from personal interest.⁶⁰

⁶⁰Georges Valois, L'Economie nouvelle (Paris: Nouvelle Librairie Nationale, 1919), pp. 180-181; Georges Valois, "La Coordination des forces nationales", CEG, Oct. 1923, p. 132, 151; "La Réforme de la représentation nationale devant l'Etat", CEG, April 1923, pp. 12-15; Georges Valois, "Origines de la campagne pour les Etats-généraux", CEG, April 1923, p. 85.

Such ideas brought Valois and Arthuys to the threshold of fascism, effectively terminating their adherence to the royalist doctrine of Charles Maurras and the Action française. Neither mentioned the pretender in their presentations, and Valois wrote in his 1924 work La Révolution nationale that replacing parliamentarians with royalty was insufficient. Rejecting any reactionary return to the pre-1789 political state, he asserted that "constituer l'État national, c'est un des premiers actes de la révolution nationale, et c'est un acte essentiellement révolutionnaire". Although he still shared the royalist goal of destroying nineteenth-century liberalism and parliamentarism in France, Valois's new elites were not aristocrats. Instead the best and brightest from each class would rule, akin to the combattants of 1914, who fought shoulder to shoulder in the collaborative environment of the trenches.⁶¹

The authoritarian tone of Valois's discourse was only heightened after the formation of the Faisceau, while certain details were changed to reflect the group's fascist doctrine, as opposed to the somewhat conservative nature of the Estates-General campaign. To begin with, Valois openly espoused a seizure of power, with the goal of forcing the abdication of parliament, and the installation of a fascist 'Dictature nationale' in its place by the Légions, those Faisceau members who had served during the Great War. Contrary to the dictum of the Estates-General campaigners, there would be no democratic debate in representative assemblies concerning the fate of democracy. This was so because the Faisceau was a group dedicated to the spirit of 1914, wrote Valois, and was composed of war veterans rather than the royalists and industrialists who surrounded Mathon's project. Thus it represented the national unity and greatness for which one-and-a-half million soldiers died during the Great War, a recreation of the classless fraternity of the trenches, which was above sectarian politics. This experience allowed the Faisceau to speak on behalf of the entire nation, which Valois believed to be both anti-parliamentary a priori, and receptive to a

⁶¹Georges Valois, La Révolution nationale, pp. 50-53.

national dictatorship dedicated to the interests of the masses, and the suppression of the plutocracy, 'immorality', and individualism.⁶²

The form of state was also significantly altered. During the Estates-General campaign, Valois and Arthuys advocated the re-organization of France along corporative, regional, and familial lines, as the basis for socio-economic and political life. Although this basic framework remained intact three years later, additional detail was added. The assemblies of families and producers (Valois continued to refer to them as the Estates-General) remained the corporative bodies, still posited as the true representation of national interests. Yet both now encompassed local, regional, and national political organizations. Producers from local corporations were charged with providing generally elected delegates to the regional bodies, which themselves sent such representatives to the national assembly, to advise the leader on all economic matters. They paid taxes to the state, consulted the leadership in commercial matters and legislation, and worked side by side with the state to rationalize organization and maximize technical progress. In return for such effort, the state lent its administrative resources to the corporations, helping to solve various industrial problems and providing external and internal security against the enemies of France. In the hands of Valois and Pierre Dumas, former CGT member and head of the Faisceau des corporations, plans were developed for productivist and technocratic 'syndico-corporations' to enact this program. This assembly of "creative forces" included both workers and owners, and rested alongside similar familial corporative organizations.⁶³

Socio-political issues were the domain of the assembly of families, representing the soil, savings, religion, and the combattants--the spiritual, intellectual, and moral forces of

⁶²CHEVS/V 45, "Manuel de délégué", Aug. 1926, pp. 1-4; "La Révolution nationale", *NS*, 20 Aug. 1925. See also Philippe Lamour, "La Conception fasciste de la législation", *NS*, 28 March 1926.

⁶³Valois's and Dumas's corporative plans are discussed in chapter two. F/7/13209, tract-"Faisceau des combattants et des producteurs"; 1er Assemblée des combattants, des producteurs, et des chefs de famille, (Paris: Nouvelle Librairie Nationale, 1926) p. 95; Georges Valois, "L'Assemblée des producteurs", *NS*, 3 Feb. 1926.

France. Inspired by more traditional extreme-rightist doctrine, the antithesis of the group's technocratic economic proposals, the Faisceau organization of familial interests echoed the sentiments expressed by Barrès and La Tour du Pin in the late nineteenth century, and by Valois's one-time mentor Charles Maurras. The values of the family were essentially those of the state, wrote Valois in a 1926 Nouveau Siècle article addressing the issue of national representation, because the family was the 'natural' form of social bond: "La père, c'est comme l'Etat souverain, mais qui ne prend pas sa décision définitive sans consulter la mère, qui est le foyer, et comme le sol de la société, la stabilité, la prudence, l'ordre, et l'épargne". The family was the cell of the nation in the 'natural and divine order', and a microcosm of the state itself. Where the producers symbolized the modern innovation and creativity of the postwar era, the family represented tradition, keepers of the modest home and the soil of France. Thus the assembly of families protected the 'foyer familiale', national savings, and the health of French children. In balancing the modern and the traditional, Valois concluded, an equilibrium of national forces could be maintained, advancing the interests of all sectors of society.⁶⁴

The assembly of families was further charged with maintaining the place of God in everyday life. If the nation was above parties and classes, wrote Valois in La Politique de la victoire in 1925, then God rested above the nation. All prosperous societies were deeply religious, he claimed, honouring the creator throughout the Cité, from the factory to the rural hamlet.⁶⁵ In the fascist state, Christian principles would govern work, commerce, and communities. Religion, ceasing to be a private affair, would govern national and communal conduct through the assembly of families. In the pages of a 1926 Faisceau tract, Valois insisted that fascist political life be governed by religious ethics, reversing the nineteenth-century immorality which reduced the family to a mere societal footnote, while allowing

⁶⁴Georges Valois, "La Représentation nationale devant l'Etat", NS, 2 Feb. 1926; Georges Valois, "Appel aux producteurs, aux épargnants, aux combattants", NS, 2 July 1925.

⁶⁵Georges Valois, La Politique de la victoire, pp. 54-55, 59-60.

social injustice to take root in French communities. Here the family was sovereign and not the state, for the 'Catholic' values of hard work, sacrifice, and maximum effort were taught by the father.⁶⁶

Delegates to the assembly of families would be drawn from all French communities, enabling regular communication between the nation and the state. By ensuring state action to protect the average Frenchman, such dialogue would prevent the eruption of class conflict. The state and the assembly would also work together to organize education and regulate national morality and society, cleaning unhygienic cities, creating conditions of stability for the worker, and aiding the struggling French farmer.⁶⁷

Regionalism and corporatist political organization were not particularly original concepts in postwar France. On the surface, Valois's fascist corporations recalled the ideal promoted by various contemporary social Catholic intellectuals. For Eugène Duthoit, president of the late nineteenth century *Semaines sociales Catholiques de France*, the state was a mere 'superstructure', arbitrating amongst competing familial, professional, local, and regional institutions. These self-governing bodies, termed the 'infrastructure', actually governed the people. In a similar vein, Valois's nationalist hero Maurice Barrès argued for federative regional assemblies which outwardly resembled those proposed by the *Faisceau*, referring to the region as the true 'laboratory' of social and political transformation. By the nineteen-twenties, such ideas were common currency in the Republic, so much so that Laurent-Thiésy, Radical senator of Belfort, called for the adoption of regional assemblies in the pages of *L'Ère nouvelle*.⁶⁸

⁶⁶Georges Valois, "Aux sources de la vie: la vie spirituelle", *NS*, 9 Feb. 1926; Georges Valois, "La vie spirituelle: les Catholiques du Faisceau", *NS*, 10 Feb. 1926; F/7/13211, tract-"La Conquête de l'avenir".

⁶⁷Georges Valois, "La Représentation nationale devant l'Etat", *NS*, 2 Feb. 1926; Georges Valois, "Appel aux producteurs, aux épargnants, aux combattants", *NS*, 2 July 1925.

⁶⁸On Duthoit, see Jean-Marie Mayeur, *Catholicisme sociale et démocratie chrétienne* (Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1986), pp. 227-229. On Barrès and Laurent-Thiésy, see Guy Rossi-Landi, "La Région" in Jean-Paul Sirinelli (ed.), *Histoire des droites en France. Vol. 1-Politique* (Paris: Gallimard, 1992), pp. 84, 91.

Valois was not proposing federalism, however, but fascism, in which power was retained exclusively by the state, which represented the 'living will' of the nation. For Valois, the duality of the all-powerful leader and state on one side, and the purely consultative associations of families and producers on the other, mirrored the fascist conceptions of authority and liberty. It was the duty of the state to ensure that liberty existed independently of the anarchy prevalent in parliamentary democracy. To Valois, false liberty, the anarchic absolute freedom of the Third Republic, represented decadence and societal weakness. Any true freedom would be possible only through the acceptance of discipline and responsibility, mobilized by the fascist state to maintain the structure of society. Thus although the representative assemblies symbolized political liberty, they accepted without question the duties and demands imposed upon them by the state.

But Valois was not here advocating fascist government in the style of Mussolini, where the state reigned supreme, above reproach or question. In Valois's fascism, the representative assemblies of producers and families prevented an excess of tyranny. Just as liberty was limited by authority, so too would the corporative bodies check the power of the state. Valois thus expressed reservations about full-blown fascism. Nor was this the only limit to Valois's 'autocracy'. He further claimed that the "surgical operation" of the *Légions*, by which parliamentary government would be removed, was necessary only to install a 'transitory' dictatorial state whose purpose was the formation of national and regional assemblies.⁶⁹ Once the corporative system became self-sufficient, the dictatorship itself--the cornerstone of fascist politics--would no longer be necessary.

Valois's belief in the temporary nature of the state stemmed from his 'left fascism'. His leader spoke for the nation and was vested with absolute power, but like Rossoni and Bianchi he believed that the corporative assemblies, and not an autocracy, were to be the driving force behind the creation of a new nation and state, suitable for the age of electricity.

⁶⁹Georges Valois, "L'Autorité et la liberté, ou la souveraineté et la représentation", *NS*, 1 Feb. 1926.

He therefore frequently spoke of 'elites' instead of a 'dictatorship'. Once the corporatist system became self-sufficient, 'new teams' composed primarily of war veterans would direct the nation inside both the corporations and the central government itself, their experience in defending France lending them the necessary moral authority to lead. Young and ardent, these men would permanently replace the 'tired elites' of the Republic, the politicians, merchants, and financiers incapable of meeting modern challenges. Taken from all factions and classes across the political spectrum solely according to talent, the new elite would rejuvenate France. The fascist dictatorship facilitated the implantation of these youthful leaders by demolishing the old and decrepit system where the leaders of the left (Herriot) and the right (Poincaré) were pawns of shady financiers like Horace Finaly and Robert Pinot. Once the fascist "revolution" was accomplished, and the new elites installed in positions of power, the dictator's goal was achieved and he became redundant.⁷⁰

There was another reason for Valois's insistence upon the transitional nature of any fascist dictatorship in France, however. At the first Faisceau conference in November 1925, he demanded an 'efficient' government, in keeping with the rational principles governing the modern world. Party politics, with its endless bickering, was wasteful. The corporations would be required to submit planning and long-term studies to the state, termed the "organ of progress" engaged in the creation of a new world. Fascism would protect the populace against greedy speculators and foreign enemies, but it also faced an internal enemy: Inefficiency, which necessitated formation of an "État moderne, pourvu de ses organes économiques indispensables, et capable de donner, aux forces économiques du monde moderne la discipline nationale et sociale qui les rendra entièrement bienfaisantes". In keeping with his theoretical 'left-fascism', Valois here went far beyond the beliefs of Mussolini and the Faisceau conservatives, leaving behind discipline, will, heroism, and

⁷⁰Finaly was the director of the Banque de Paris et Pays-Bas; Pinot was the head of the Comité des Forges. Georges Valois, "Le Fascisme: la dictature et les dictateurs", *NS*, 3 Sept. 1926; Georges Valois, "La Conquête de l'État", *NS*, 30 July 1925; F/7/13211, tract#5-"La Conquête de l'avenir", pp. 3-4, 13-14.

moralism. In their place, he proffered politics which, more closely resembling the discourse of André Tardieu later in the decade, insisted that the state be run according to the Taylorist mentality which governed the emergent modern industrial sector.⁷¹

3.

Valois's call for a transitional dictatorship, the rule of efficiency, and a multi-faceted elite was not shared by all members of the group. The traditionalist faction envisioned the political transition of France from weak parliamentary democracy to the strong, capable leadership of a staunchly nationalist autocrat, while Valois's fascist state augured the advent of French political and economic modernity. Bourgin and Arthuys had questioned the theoretical foundations of Valois's fascism, embracing extreme-nationalism, moral cleansing, and the cult of tradition, and similarly rejected his conception of a post-dictatorial fascist state.

Although they agreed that class was not the determining factor in choosing a leader, figures such as Maurice de Barral nonetheless contended that either a dictator or a 'directorate' would be a permanent feature of the new regime. Barral's leader, described in his explanatory work Dialogues sur le Faisceau, was a warrior, possessing sang-froid, courage, the taste for responsibility, decisiveness, and ardent nationalism. The leader did not depend upon families or producers, because he embodied a "living synthesis" of all castes and classes, much like the Italian fascist state.⁷²

Barral's projected state, devoid of the modernist sentiment which permeated the Faisceau leader's political discourse, was far less ambitious than Valois's. Valois envisioned the creation of a new France, suitable for the age of electricity. Conversely Barral's

⁷¹Valois speech in 1re Assemblée nationale des combattants, des producteurs et des chefs de famille; Georges Valois, Le Fascisme (Paris: Nouvelle Librairie Nationale, 1927), p. 15; "Discours prononcée le 11 Novembre", NS, 12 Nov. 1925. A discussion of Tardieu's plans can be found in chapter two.

⁷²Maurice de Barral, Dialogues sur le Faisceau: Ses origines, sa doctrine (Paris: Éditions du Faisceau, 1926), pp. 17-20.

priorities were internal and external security. His state confronted a social Darwinist world in which hostile neighbours threatening France's destruction. Strengthening the armed forces was thus an immediate necessity, whose concomitant goal was the restoration of French predominance. Barral further insisted upon the creation of a 'rigorous' justice system, obliging the respect of citizens, and protection of the state from internal enemies. Although he did not directly challenge the leader on this point, Barral dismissed the spirit of solidarity engendered by the corporations as an inadequate half-measure, unable to deliver social peace.⁷³

Barral's version of the future fascist state differed greatly from Valois's because it was based upon a different set of principles. For members such as Arthuys, Barral, Bourgin, Philippe Barrès, and Marcel Bucard, fascism represented the opportunity to forge what historian Antoine Prost calls the "État combattant", the notion held by many war veterans of a fraternal nation undivided by partisan politics and 'sterile' class conflict. These notions were by no means particular to the Faisceau, nor did they divide Valois and his colleagues, who unanimously agreed upon their correctness. Groups such as the Union nationale des combattants and the Union fédérale, claiming between them 1.7 million members, clearly distinguished between the generation of the defeat and the men of 1914, believing that the trench experience created new leaders, whose mission was to bring the 'esprit combattant' into civil society. Veterans groups in the nineteen-twenties called for a union of left and right, the demolition of parliament in its current form, and the replacement of material values with moral and spiritual ones.⁷⁴ Various Faisceau members mobilized extreme variants of these sentiments, advocating a reactionary dictatorship comparable to the experience of the

⁷³Ibid. This is not to imply that Valois ignored foreign policy--he too believed in the necessity of a strong France, to repel hostile neighbouring countries. But Valois did not give priority to foreign policy, instead concentrating on the modernization of French economy and politics.

⁷⁴Antoine Prost, Les Anciens combattants et la société française, 1914-1939. Vol. Mentalités et idéologies (Paris: Presses de la Fondation Nationale des Sciences Politiques, 1978), pp. 128-148.

trenches. Imbued with the Barrèsian notion of "la terre et les morts", their state contradicted Valois's hyper-modern model.

"Nous sommes des hommes neufs", declared Philippe Barrès in the 1 January 1926 edition of Nouveau Siècle, referring to French combattants as an "elite d'orientateurs" who directed the masses. The combattant (the 'type des lignes') had moral and intellectual superiority as a result of his wartime experience, which imbued him with the leadership qualities lacking in the deputy (the 'type d'arrière'). The combattant, having paid in blood for four years, Arthuys thundered in 1926 to a crowd in San Quentin, had earned his place as the head of France, replacing the traitors and parliamentarians who had waited out the war in the neighborhood café or bar. As the class system did not exist in the trenches—all classes had sacrificed equally and displayed comparable heroism—each combattant was superior regardless of social rank. This elite was not Valois's, however, which mobilized youth and talent to 'manage' France. The criterion used by Arthuys was patriotism: Veterans were neither left nor right, he claimed, but French.⁷⁵

Like Valois, Arthuys placed the state above class, claiming that the leader acted for the nation as a whole, but his war-hardened elite viewed fascism as the means to renew French greatness with heroism and moral virtue. Where Valois believed that the youthful combattants used fascism to push France into the mechanized future, embracing rationalized politics and economic efficiency, Arthuys's veterans conserved the past, the "immaterial capital" of glory, virtue, and memory which comprised tradition and the strength of past centuries. Valois's dictator and elites led simply because they were the most proficient; Arthuys's leader commanded obedience based on his moral authority and actions. Their

⁷⁵Philippe Barrès, "Notre voeu", NS, 1 Jan. 1926; Philippe Barrès, "Avant Verdun", NS, 14 Feb. 1926; Jacques Arthuys, Les Combattants (Paris: Nouvelle Librairie Nationale, 1925), pp. 108-109, 198; F/7/13209, Commissaire Central de Police de San Quentin to Minister of the Interior, 21 Nov. 1925.

salvation of France in 1914 and their embodiment of Gallic tradition justified the preeminence of the combattants.⁷⁶

Valois was not blind to the need for tradition and virtue, but his appointed vehicle for their conservation was the family, whose position as guardian of Catholic morality and the soil would be guaranteed by the state and preserved within the assembly of families. The state simply created the conditions for familial and industrial prosperity. For other Faisceau members, prosperity and greatness were inextricably bound to tradition. To Hubert Bourgin, the state imbued all citizens with the cult of 'la patrie', the notion of suffering and sacrifice for France. This meant an active promotion of maternity, the soil, the factory, and a defense of French Catholicism, all of which comprised the political impetus of the fascist regime. Bourgin here fused the social Darwinism of Barral with a political application of Barrèssian theory. Only absolute order and hierarchy guaranteed the perpetuation of the race, he wrote in his 1926 work Les Pierres de la maison, and ensured the security and development of French intellectual and moral forces.⁷⁷

For Bourgin, as for others within the group, the state embodied the politics of what Maurice Barrès termed the soil and the dead. For 'l'homme du vieux Lorraine', these two eternal facts defined the nation. France was the living embodiment of her ancestors: "Notre terre nous donne une discipline et nous sommes les prolongements de nos morts.... La terroir nous parle et collabore à notre conscience nationale".⁷⁸ Thus the preservation of tradition was far more important than any economic or technological advances, and rather than looking to the future, as Valois's elite would do, Barrès's Frenchman is bound to the past as a culmination of his race, nation, family, and history. Every act reflects the thoughts and influence of one's ancestors, the eternal laws which governed life. The lessons of the

⁷⁶Arthuys, Les Combattants, pp. 200-215.

⁷⁷Hubert Bourgin, Les Pierres de la maison (Paris: Nouvelle Librairie Nationale. 1926), pp. 14-20, 56-59.

⁷⁸Maurice Barrès, Scenes et doctrines du nationalisme (Paris: Éditions du Trident, 1987), p. 50.

dead—heroism, acceptance of the supremacy of French Catholicism and the church—formed "la religion des morts", teachings from which no true Frenchman could deviate.⁷⁹ From the late nineteenth-century onwards such sentiments, adopted by, but not exclusive to, French extreme-rightists, gathered adherents from the Catholic church and French conservatism. In addressing pilgrims at Orléans in 1909, for example, Pius X sounded a very Barrèssian note, evoking "la patrie dont le nom sacré eveille les plus chers souvenirs et fait tressailler toutes les fibres de votre âme, cette terre commune où vous avez votre berceau, à laquelle vous rattachent les liens du sang".⁸⁰

The doctrine of 'la terre et les morts', omnipresent in the speeches and writings of the Faisceau conservatives, was often linked to the experience of the combattant during the Great War. Valois's vision of Barrès was confined to the synthesis of nationalism and socialism, with the soil and the dead providing a profoundly Catholic spiritual example for the French family to emulate. Other members adopted Barrèssian thought in the service of bellicose nationalism and the authoritarian state. Marcel Bucard told a Faisceau gathering at Verdun on 21 February 1926 to remember forever the sacredness of the dead, "l'âme immortelle des tués pour la France". The 'infinite beauty' of sacrifice was the lesson to be learned from the meeting, he concluded. Elsewhere Bucard wrote of the 'motherland of the earth', as representative of the entire French nation. Those who died for its survival, he asserted, "give their blood when she is thirsty and their entrails when she is hungry". The patrie was an extension and enlargement of France as a whole, found in the communes and villages, and the defense of national tradition.⁸¹

⁷⁹Ibid., pp. 67-69; Maurice Barrès, *Amori et dolori sacrum* (Paris: Plon, 1921), pp. 267-269; Maurice Barrès, *Colette Baudoche* (Paris: Nelson Éditeurs, 1908), pp. 177-179, 194, 203-204; Pierre Barral, "La Terre" in Jean-François Sirinelli (ed.), *Histoire des droites en France. Tome 3: Sensibilités* (Paris: Gallimard, 1992), pp. 49-50.

⁸⁰Quoted by Pierre Barral in Sirinelli, p. 110.

⁸¹"Au marché couvert", *NS*, 28 Feb. 1928; Marcel Bucard, "Patrie", *NS*, 1 May 1927.

Faisceau members like Arthuys, Bourgin, Bucard, and Philippe Barrès wed these ideas to the experience of the combattant, arguing that the values of the soil and the dead would form the basis for the fascist state. Arthuys here used Joan of Arc, the icon of both the conservative and extreme-right, as a political symbol, invoking her devotion to la patrie, heroism, and the fusion of all classes as examples of the fascist state's expectations of its citizens. Echoing his father's words, Philippe Barrès told a crowd in the Meuse in 1926 that the vision of the combattant was the "sentiment Lorraine", of a government above classes and parties in the service of tradition. The government of the trenches, emphasizing hierarchy, leadership, and strict discipline would be imported into civic and political life. For Hubert Bourgin, this meant the importance of will over doctrine. Where politicians theorized, the Faisceau would act, as they had done in the heat of battle, remaking France politically and spiritually. Bourgin's leader and administration mirrored the officers and poilus, committed to obedience, duty, and disciplined public power. This corps would serve the nation above all else, cleansing the state of economic and political parasites.⁸²

Such actions served to strengthen the state, but they also reflected a social Darwinist world view held in common by Faisceau conservatives. To Barral, the state and nation were two parts of a whole, an organized social body much like a human being. The fascist state would exert energy according to need, flexing its muscles as the situation warranted, much the same as a human body. Valois too referred to the nation in organic terms, claiming that each family was an individual cell within the French body. His state protected the national body, enacting legislation for its defense and creating conditions in which it could flourish. Yet his focus was economic, envisioning the facilitation of syndico-corporative organization

⁸²Jacques Arthuys, "Le Premier mai et Jeanne d'Arc", *NS*, 1 May 1927. On the use of Joan of Arc by the leagues as a symbol of nationalism and Catholic virtue, see Martha Hanna, "Iconology and Ideology: Images of Joan of Arc in the Idiom of the Action française", *French Historical Studies*, 14/2 (1985). F77/13209, Commissaire special to the Director of the Sûreté-Générale, "Rapport sur une réunion privé organisée par le Faisceau à Slenay-Meuse", 6 June 1926; Hubert Bourgin, "Doctrine et volonté", *NS*, 6 Jan. 1926.

to create renewed French prosperity. His geopolitical vision consisted primarily of the 'Latin Bloc', which gathered together Italy, Spain, Portugal, Switzerland, Belgium, and Latin America under French leadership to compete effectively in the world economy. Far from advocating war, Valois claimed that the formation of the bloc would inevitably lead to world peace, through the negotiation of accords for the sharing of global wealth with Germany, Great Britain, and the United States. This concept resembled the foreign policy of the Cartel des Gauches, expounded by Édouard Herriot during his January 1925 address before the chamber on the need for a 'United States of Europe'. Others within the group used more extreme concepts. To Barrès, the state fought for the survival of the French race before the enemy, in defense of the sacred motherland. The new leader and elites required strength and unity to gain respect from the enemy and the adherence of the masses, just as hundreds of thousands gave their lives during the war to preserve the true France.⁸³

Valois likewise believed that the trench experience was a model for the future, noting in his 1921 autobiographical work *D'un siècle à l'autre* that "la guerre a été pour nous tous une prodigieuse école". Like many veterans, he drew a clear distinction between the generation of defeat, whose decadent conception of France weakened the nation, and the generation of the victory, for whom French greatness was a prerequisite to the "birth of the new world". As Allen Douglas notes, Valois owed a debt to French biologist René Quinton, from whom he took the theory of the 'constancy of action', which engendered new forms of life. For Valois, constancy was embodied in the combattant. The troops possessed a unified thought and will in the cause of victory in 1918, and would utilize the same principles to win the peace. The combattant sacrificed everything he owned, including his life, to rejuvenate the nation and bring the classless fraternity of the trenches into civil society.⁸⁴

⁸³NS, 7 Nov. 1926; Maurice de Barral, "Disciplines", NS, 29 Oct. 1925; "Discours prononcée le 11 Novembre", NS, 12 Nov. 1925. For Herriot's proposal, see Bonnefous, pp. 71-72.

⁸⁴Georges Valois, *D'un siècle à l'autre* (Paris : Nouvelle Librairie Nationale, 1924), p. 267; F/7/13209, tract-"La Conquête de l'avenir", pp. 1-2; Georges Valois, "La Conquête de l'avenir", NS, 16 July 1925, Georges Valois, *La Politique de la victoire*, pp. 80-83; Georges Valois, "L'Esprit du

But Valois's elites were neither Arthuys's and Bourgin's standard-bearers of tradition, nor Barral's and Barrès's defenders of race and nation before the onslaught of the enemy. To Valois, wartime experience instead qualified them to "poseront les premières pierres du monde nouveau", preserving whatever traditional elements were useful in the age of technology. For this purpose, the law of the trenches—a national fraternity, animated by the spirit of heroism, under the command of authority—would become the basis for fascist civil society: "Mais le combattant, l'authentique combattant, est un homme qui a le sens de l'intérêt national dans le sang, dans la chair, parce que, pendant quatre ans, tous les actes de sa vie, toutes ses pensées ont été au service de la nation. Et il est marqué ainsi pour toute sa vie. C'est pourquoi il est, il sera le grand ouvrier de la transformation de l'État". Through the constant effort of the combattant, the spirit of the victory would be injected into all aspects of the nation and state, from the economy to the family home.⁸⁵

Valois's heroic spirit of the trenches, and his Barrèssian national socialism, were part of a larger project: The modernization of the state, both politically and aesthetically. In sharp contrast to the nation and state proposed by his more traditional colleagues, Valois in 1926 wrote that "en résumé: esprit démocratique+nationalisme+socialisme=fascisme. Fascisme=fondation de l'État moderne, pour une nouvelle époque économique, pour la grandeur nationale et la justice sociale". His young combattants would invent the forms of the new world, design the future, "and put the rest in a museum".⁸⁶ Quinton's constancy of action here became continuous creation, and no stone would be left unturned by the fascist modernizers, who would redesign every city, town, and factory.⁸⁷

combattant", *NS*, 13 Feb. 1927; Allen Douglas, *From Fascism to Libertarian Communism: Georges Valois Against the Third Republic* (Berkeley: University of California Press), p. 16.

⁸⁵CHEVS/V 44, tract-*Le Faisceau des combattants, des chefs de familles, et des producteurs* (Paris: Librairie du Nouveau Siècle, 1926), p.8; Georges Valois, "L'Année du légionnaire", *NS*, 1 Jan. 1926; F77/13209, tract-"Les Légions: appel aux Combattants"; Georges Valois, *La Politique de la Victoire*, pp. 19-21.

⁸⁶F77/13211, tract-"Le Faisceau des combattants, des chefs de famille, et des producteurs", p. 3.

⁸⁷Georges Valois, "Vétéran ou organisateur du futur?", *NS*, 24 April 1927.

Valois's emphasis on fascism as a vehicle for the project of modernization is most evident in his programme for the physical and industrial geography of France. Convinced that the state should be restructured as much as indoctrinated, Valois and like-minded Faisceau members drafted plans to rebuild France, and especially Paris, to suit the needs of the modern economy and family. The *État combattant* proposed by the Faisceau conservatives, emphasizing absolute hierarchy, discipline, the cult of tradition, and nationalist principles, was declared insufficient. Valois instead proposed the rational creation of working-class stability, through a co-ordinated effort by workers and owners to fight poverty and misery, accompanied by state initiatives in architecture and city planning. The new French city, inhabited by a multitude of large happy families, symbolized both the modern rationalizing impulse inherent in Valois's political thought, and his belief in organic nationalism, that the family was the cell of the nation. Nor was the physical reconstruction of France a minor project: Dozens of articles by numerous writers discussed the issue, and Valois frequently asserted its centrality to the fascist modernization of French politics, economy, and society.

The conservative faction invoked the memory of Joan of Arc and Maurice Barrès in justifying the necessity of a new state based upon tradition and hierarchy. Although he too admitted their influence, Valois, equally influenced by the new modernism of Le Corbusier and various contemporary American urban/industrial development schemes, went beyond simple conservatism in crafting his designs. Le Corbusier's rationalist architecture and avant-garde urban planning probably caught Valois's eye at the Exposition des Arts Decoratifs in 1925, where the flamboyant Swiss displayed his 'Plan Voisin' in the *Esprit nouveau pavilion*.⁸⁸ As Stanilas von Moos attests, Le Corbusier's 'Plan' presented the architecture of the Fordist age, rationally planned and utilitarian, "une forme fermée,

⁸⁸Gerald Monnier, *Le Corbusier* (Lyon: La Manufacture, 1986), pp. 33-34.

complète en soi, une oeuvre d'art au service de la technocratie".⁸⁹ A member of Ernst Mercier's Redressement français, and later a supporter of Hubert Lagardelle's regional syndicalism in the nineteen-thirties, he advocated many of the same concepts as Valois: An American-style economy, Taylorism, the rejection of tradition ("des détritux d'époques morts"), and the notion of society as an organic, living whole.⁹⁰

As art historian Mark Antliff correctly emphasizes, Valois and his colleagues took from Le Corbusier only those elements which corresponded to their own doctrine. But they did not have far to look within his oeuvre. In his 1925 text L'Urbanisme, Le Corbusier berated the modern city, the palace of chaos. Strict order, the precursor to any truly civilized society, was absent in the contemporary urban setting, he complained. Only construction which harnessed the totality of modern industrial and social power could cure this disease, resulting in a 'new era' of humanity. If for Valois the family was the cell of the nation, to Le Corbusier it was the home, whose current form failed to address the needs of modern industrial civilization. Using Valois-style terminology, he claimed that his new city would banish the law of least effort from France. Greater emphasis would be placed on speed and technology, and the new city would be outfitted with an abundance of wider roads and airports.⁹¹

The group press openly lauded both the architect and his plans. Le Corbusier was named an 'animateur' of the group in January 1927, designated as "one of our most outstanding architects", whose genius and rejection of tradition created "the dazzling light of the city of the future". Mere months later, after a meeting between Faisceau members and

⁸⁹Stanislas von Moos, "Ville et Monument: à propos du Plan Voisin" in Le Corbusier: la ville, l'urbanisme (Paris: Fondation Le Corbusier, 1995), pp. 84-85.

⁹⁰Mark Antliff, "La Cité française: Georges Valois, Le Corbusier, and Fascist Theories of Urbanism" in Matthew Affron and Mark Antliff (eds.) Fascist Visions (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), pp. 134, 137, 152; Le Corbusier, Urbanisme (Paris: Éditions Vincent, Fréal & Co., 1966), p. 233. Despite his fascism, Antliff notes, Valois ignored the Italian aesthetic and planiste example, praising its modernity but insisting on the redesigning of nation and state according to specifically French conceptions.

⁹¹Le Corbusier, L'Urbanisme, pp. V, 24, 37, 65-70, 79, 84, 87, 92-95, 109-110.

the Swiss architect, Valois claimed that his concepts expressed the goals of the fascist revolution. Le Corbusier's emphasis on discipline and the rationalization of all facets of national life were especially noted. His 'Plan Voisin' was also reprinted in the pages of Nouveau Siècle, complete with its monumental artwork.⁹²

Like Le Corbusier, Valois blamed the modern city for a host of problems, including working-class misery and the subsequent deterioration of the French family, consequences of rapid population growth and insufficient planning and organization. Working class suburbs spilled out haphazardly into the countryside, composed of shoddy houses more often than not built by the workers themselves. In the words of Georges Ondard, whose article on urban renewal was published in Nouveau Siècle in May 1926: "Imagineriez-vous des équipes de maçons placées aux quatre-coins d'un terrain et qui bâtiraient une même maison, chacune travaillant à sa fantaisie, et sans avoir la moindre idée de ce que doit être l'immeuble entier terminé? C'est exactement ce qui s'est passé dans le département de la Seine". The result was that workers lived in hovels. Private companies were no better, rarely building promised new housing because they insisted that the lots be presold.⁹³

Modern cities were deemed uncondusive to family life. In a Nouveau Siècle piece contributed by Le Corbusier's close friend Pierre Winter, they were deemed dirty and overcrowded, rapidly deteriorating. They possessed neither aesthetic unity nor proper light, fresh air, and hygiene. The worker and his family were thus constantly at risk, in need of space, greenery, and a healthy home environment. The construction of suburban housing, and the inauguration of a national health program, were of paramount importance. Echoing Valois's conclusion that the goal of the fascist state was to clean up the mess, the Faisceau Corporation medicale stated that "le rôle du Faisceau consistera avant tout à dresser le casier

⁹²"Les Animateurs: Le Corbusier", NS, 9 Jan. 1927; "Le Plan Voisin", NS, 1 May 1927; Georges Valois, "La Nouvelle étape du fascisme", NS, 29 May 1927. See also Paul-Charles Biver, "L'Esprit Nouveau", NS, 20 March 1927.

⁹³Georges Ondard, "Pour une organisation rationnelle de la banlieue", NS, May 12, 1926.

sanitaire de la banlieue et à s'engager...à demolir tous les foyers de contamination (tuberculose, maladies infectueuses, etc.) qui sont la cause première d'un état sanitaire lamentable".⁹⁴

Various Faisceau members advanced proposals for a new type of city corresponding to Winter's criteria. Echoing Le Corbusier, Valois himself supported the construction of a new "Grand Paris", with factories and offices in the city centre, and homes on the periphery or in the suburbs. Workers neighbourhoods were especially important, because they contained the seeds of the new order, those who best represented the fusion of nationalism and socialism into the fascist ideal. Valois called for the construction of public gardens, proper housing, and sports fields, to replace industrial grime and pre-empt communist grievances. In conjunction with the industrial corporations and the municipal assembly, a Direction de la région Parisienne would transform the capital section by section. A new Palais des corporations et des régions would be constructed for the assemblies of families and producers, surrounded by corporative houses for each economic group, and one for each region. Each industry would be concentrated in a specific quarter, regulating training and working conditions. Housing would then be beautified street by street, administered in each sector by a Bureau d'habitation. Then and only then, claimed Valois, would "la France et l'Europe possèdent un materiel économique, et toute une organisation économique où les constructeurs du Nouveau Monde viendront prendre des leçons".⁹⁵

Equally influential was the emerging suburban and industrial American model. The 12 May 1926 edition of Nouveau Siècle prominently displayed a drawing of the ideal workers' family and home. The man stands with his arm around his wife, her hands clasped in awe

⁹⁴Dr. P. Winter, "La Ville moderne", NS, 16 May 1926. A statement of approval by the Faisceau Corporation medicale was appended to Winter's article. Winter was the director of the corporation.

⁹⁵Georges Valois, "Le Grand Paris doit être une unité administrative, économique et sociale, pourvue d'une direction propre", NS, 12 May 1926; Georges Valois, "Notre campagne de banlieue et notre mobilisation financière", NS, 3 April 1926; quotation from Georges Valois, Le Fascisme (Paris: Nouvelle Librairie Nationale, 1927), p. 92. This vision was essentially that of Le Corbusier. See Urbanisme, pp. 158-168, 191-194, 263.

as she stares at their large home complete with pristine automobile in the driveway. Surrounded by trees and a spacious garden, with his children joyously playing at his feet, the man and his family resemble the ideal American suburban dream, a fact emphasized by the caption of the picture: "Ce n'est pas plus un rêve...ce sera une réalité". The American model was openly espoused by various group members, and articles in the group newspaper lauded New York and modern architecture. Valois continually emphasized the need for roads and airports, adopting the Fordist dictum that high salaries were necessary for the worker, and that the new suburban homes and cars bought by the workers required highways and rapid transportation. The Faisceau were midwives to the new century, he stated boldly, making French men and women the masters of machines, a nation of builders who were healthy and strong.⁹⁶

By the summer of 1927, Valois's preoccupation with modernization and rationalization effectuated a complete transformation of the purpose and discourse of the Faisceau. Valois had previously disagreed with various group members concerning the content—and to a lesser degree, the form—of the state, eschewing the *État combattant* of Bourgin, Arthuys, Barrès, and Barral, based exclusively on nationalism, the cult of tradition, and the structure of the trenches. Common ground could still be found, however, in the need for the corporativization of politics, and the infusion of discipline, order, and hierarchy within a renewed organic nation. Yet in June and July 1927 articles, concerning the formation of "le parti nouveau", Valois proclaimed himself in favour of a republic. While Bourgin claimed that the syndical state was an anti-communist vehicle dedicated to toppling parliament and its "anarchie sterilisante", mobilizing the united will of the organic nation, the Faisceau

⁹⁶NS, 12 May 1926; NS, 31 March 1926; F/7/13211, tract—"Le Faisceau des combattants, des chefs de famille et des producteurs", p. 6; Georges Valois, "Le Faisceau en action", NS, 22 Sept. 1926; Georges Valois, "Le Grand Paris doit être une unité administrative, économique et sociale, pourvue d'un direction propre", NS, 3 April 1926. On New York and American architecture, see Yvan Noé, "New York et l'architecture moderne", NS, 2 March 1926. Valois was perhaps prescient: He posited that society could only be fully transformed by nineteen-fifty. See "Vétéran or organisateur du futur", NS, 24 April 1927.

leader fell completely to the left. His notion of a provisional dictatorship remained, enacted through a "small vacation from legality", but the final product was a syndical state in which combattants, producers, and families participated in a "syndicalist democracy animated by active minorities". Although he continued to claim that the state would act above parties and classes, in the hands of a leader and a legislative council, constant communication between government and the assemblies was made fundamental to the decision-making process. In November, Valois for the first time openly rejected Italian fascism as a political model. By January of 1928, he jettisoned the idea of a 'Boulangist' dictator, calling for a "République des combattants et des producteurs", and officially ended the Faisceau experiment.⁹⁷ Valois went on to form several neo-syndicalist and libertarian communist groups in the thirties, while many of his former Faisceau colleagues, most notably Bucard, Barrès, and Bourgin, continued to promote fascism or returned to the conservative right.

4.

Although never openly apparent, the Faisceau was an ideological house divided, whose outward unity served to mask simmering disagreements concerning the shape and purpose of the fascist political state. No similar factionalization existed within the CDF/PSF. Arguments which occurred in group discussions on the new economic order, the role of youth, or the exclusion of undesirables from the nation, were not replicated in the political sphere. Taking their cue from group leader Colonel François de la Rocque, the CDF/PSF proposed a complete renovation of the French political system. Although they publicly accepted Republicanism and constitutional democracy, leadership and rank and file alike actually envisioned an authoritarian state, run according to group principles. The CDF/PSF

⁹⁷Georges Valois, "Le Parti nouveau: la discussion", *NS*, 26 June 1927; Georges Valois, "Les Nouvelles formes de l'État et de la vie économique et sociale", *NS*, 17 July 1927; Hubert Bourgin, "L'État syndicale", *NS*, 29 Feb. 1928; Georges Valois, "L'Avenir de la civilisation", *NS*, 27 Nov. 1927; Georges Valois, "Au-delà des vieilles limites", *NS*, 10 Jan. 1928.

promoted its state, instilled with hierarchy, discipline, renewed central authority, and order, and run by battle-hardened elites, as the antithesis of the weak, divided, and corrupt Republic, whose elected representatives were more concerned with material gain than public service.

Unlike Valois and the Faisceau, La Rocque and the CDF/PSF claimed to be ardent Republicans. During his appearance before the parliamentary committee investigating the role of the Croix de Feu in the 6 February 1934 riots, in which the group led a massive right-wing protest to the Chamber of Deputies, forcing the resignation of premier Edouard Daladier, La Rocque voiced the group's displeasure with the current government, but steadfastly rejected any comparisons with either Mussolini or Hitler. Contemporary French problems could not compare to the perpetual crises of Nitti's Italy or Weimar Germany, he claimed, and totalitarian solutions were therefore out of the question. The tricolore was the only CDF/PSF standard: "Nous sommes loyalistes à l'égard des institutions actuelles et nous croyons qu'on ne peut bâtir d'avenir pour notre pays que sur les bases de la constitution telle qu'elle est". That March La Rocque reaffirmed his "profound Republicanism" during an interview for the right-wing newspaper Marianne, claiming that "le progrès est à gauche".⁹⁸

One year later, in a municipal elections circular, the group promoted electoral participation. Although leaders in the Croix de Feu and Volontaires nationaux (the group's civilian/youth wing) were forbidden from running for office, to maintain the group's neutrality, the rank and file could participate if no mention of the CDF/PSF was made. After the Popular Front government banned the league in June 1936, the group went one step further by transforming the Croix de Feu into the parliamentary Parti social français,

⁹⁸APP/Ba 1857, Extracts from the Report of the Parliamentary Commission into the events of 6 February 1934, pp. 1607-1612; CHEVS/LR 11 VI A 2, Philippe Boegner, "L'Heure des ligues? Les Croix de Feu", Marianne, March 1934.

whose press continually emphasized that the group would take power by legal means or not at all.⁹⁹

Despite the group's seemingly favourable public stance towards the Republican system of government, various CDF/PSF leaders and members frequently assailed weak, inefficient, and unnecessarily divisive parliamentary democracy. They unleashed a torrent of anti-Republican abuse in both newspaper articles and speeches during the Croix de Feu years, a trend equally apparent after their transformation into the supposedly parliamentary Parti social français. In a July 1933 article, La Rocque bemoaned the 'artificial' division of France into political parties, claiming that the parliamentary system was a "virus", poisoning France at the expense of the national interest. Parties were variously blamed for French fiscal woes, the splintering of the national collective, and for the corruption inherent in French politics. During a 1935 interview with Georges Suarez in Le Document, he bluntly referred to the government as an enemy of the state, "les agents du désordre moral et administratif, tous les agents de subversion qui s'appelaient hier objecteurs de conscience, qui s'appellent aujourd'hui 'anarchisme', 'communisme', 'front social', etc."¹⁰⁰

The Stavisky affair, which ignited the events of 6 February 1934, was often mentioned by group members as an example of official corruption, and various CDF/PSF leaders frequently prophesied the fall of the Republic, a victim of illegal practices and representational ineptitude. Scandals were de rigeur in the late twenties and early thirties, giving the group's criticisms added weight. The Hanau and Oustric banking scandals, in 1928 and 1930 respectively, implicated several key government figures, including André

⁹⁹AP/451/81, "Circulaire préparatoire à la période des élections municipales", 14 March 1935. Expressions of the group's electoralism were common in their daily newspaper and speeches. See, for example, F/7/12966, "Réunion organisée par la Fédération Est de l'Île de France du Parti social français", 20 Feb. 1937. M. Lecocq, the local CDF/PSF propaganda delegate, explains the group's electoral strategy to the crowd.

¹⁰⁰CDLR, "Professions du foi", Le Flambeau, July 1933; Georges Suarez, "Une entrevue avec Colonel de la Rocque", Le Document, June 1935. See also CDLR, "Commentaires", Le Flambeau, 11 Nov. 1932; Habib, "Fin des partis", Le Flambeau, 2 March 1935; Un Normalien, "Contre la nation", Le Flambeau, 18 Jan. 1936.

Tardieu's justice minister Raoul Péret. These were followed in late 1933 by the Stavisky affair, named after a con artist caught selling faulty bonds from the Crédit Municipal de Bayonne. The affair toppled the Chautemps government, whose colonial minister Dalimier had supported the bond issue. To La Rocque and other CDF/PSF members, the scandals were proof that the government was rotten to the core. La Rocque told readers of the group's daily Pétit journal that the group wished to "désinfecter le milieu parlementaire". In the same spirit one disgruntled member writing in the Volonté du Centre contrasted governmental corruption and deceit with the PSF 'family', which disdained the word 'party' because it evoked "l'idée de compartimentage, de cloisonnements, de divisions artificielles, génératrices de l'esprit partisan, egoïste, stérilisant".¹⁰¹

The group reserved its most extreme malice for the deputies themselves. One 1936 group tract called them profiteers, serving the nation exclusively for salaries and benefits frequently paid by Germany and the Soviet Union. The Croix de Feu aimed to 'purify' the government and administration, through their patriotic and social mystique, and the inculcation of discipline. La Rocque himself dismissed deputies as masters of "bavardage", "tuyaux des salons, tuyaux des cabarets, tuyaux des snobs venus de la loge et potins de cuisine". In focusing on action and effort, rejecting the empty words of the chamber and false electoral promises, he declared, the group possessed the moral authority necessary to lead France. Harsh critiques of parliamentarians continued to appear during the PSF years. Seine-et-Oise deputy Ferdinand Robbé, for example, reminded a 1937 Paris crowd to emulate the fraternity of the war years, when unity rather than personal interest motivated the Chamber of Deputies. Most extreme was one Le Poulennec member who encouraged local

¹⁰¹"À la Salle Wagram", Le Flambeau, Feb. 1934; CHEVS/LR 38, "Déclaration du Lt.-Colonel de la Rocque, radiodiffusés le 24 avril 1936"; CDLR, "PSF et suffrage universel", Pétit journal, 23 Feb. 1939; P.L., "Pourquoi nous sommes pas 'comme les autres'", Volonté du Centre, 11 March 1939.

members to purchase guns and ammunition with their hunting licenses, in preparation for an assault against the 'crapules' politicians and gendarmes.¹⁰²

Despite their critical parlance, the group attempted to forge a coherent political program, a platform first composed in 1931, and relatively unchanged thereafter. As Sean Kennedy notes, all of the themes present in Croix de Feu plans for the 'renovated' state, from the notion of a regenerated French political elite to token legalism embossed with an outward acceptance of constitutional democracy, appeared in various group writings between 1931 and the outbreak of the second World War.¹⁰³ There was no programmatic shift after the formation of the Parti social français. Combining a radical restructuring of parliamentary government with principles which were distinctly authoritarian in nature, CDF/PSF proposals for the state eschewed fascism, while nonetheless adopting certain features more common to a Faisceau-style dictatorship than democracy.

The group viewed the parliamentary system as the necessary legal means to attain power, while rejecting its continued operation once its leaders were elected. La Rocque frequently spoke of the time when "nos idées prendront le pouvoir", and group circulars often emphasized (with Valoissian flourish) a re-establishment of discipline, the creation of a new order, and the building of new institutions better suited to the modern world. Electoral victory was necessary, read one such bulletin in 1936, because "l'illégalisme n'est pas populaire en France". The tract rejected any "coup de force romantique", while reminding the reader that Mussolini and Hitler had been elected by the people, invested with

¹⁰²APP/Ba 1853, tract-"Autour des élections", April 1936, pp. 7-9, 14-15; CDLR, "Sang-froid", Le Flambeau, July 1934; CHEVS/LR 34, CDLR, "Le Chef parle", Bulletin des associations Croix de Feu du Département d'Alger, 15 June 1935; F/7/12966, "Réunion organisé par la Fédération de l'Île de France du Parti social français", 20 Feb. 1937; F/7/14817, Inspecteurs Paux de Police Mobile Le Poulennec et Dousabin to the Prefect du Département des Côtes-du-Nord. See also CDLR in Le Flambeau supplement, "Pour le peuple, par le peuple", 11 April 1936; CHEVS/LR 22, Colonel de la Rocque, Paix ou guerre (Paris: SEDA, 1939), p. 23; CHEVS/LR 46, "Conférence faites par Ybarnégaray", Limoges-3 April 1938, in which PSF deputy Jean Ybarnégaray told a party gathering that a "grand nettoyage" would nevertheless be necessary to remove corrupt men and excessive behaviour from the political realm.

¹⁰³Sean Kennedy, "Reconciling the Nation Against Democracy: The Croix de Feu, the Parti social français, and French Politics, 1927-1945", Ph.D. dissertation, York University, 1998, p.23.

legal means to transform their nations without popular resistance. That the CDF/PSF was inherently anti-parliamentary, with many members displaying a "véritable répugnance pour les élections", was therefore of no concern.¹⁰⁴

Unlike Valois and the Faisceau, however, the group firmly rejected fascism, both publicly and privately. The CDF/PSF program of 1936 derided the "religion of the state" practiced in fascist Italy and Nazi Germany, in which the state controlled the people without consulting them. While Valois and his colleagues proffered a state run by a dictator, in which consultative bodies were denied any real power, the CDF/PSF spoke of the state as an independent arbitrator. La Rocque envisioned an authoritarian elite driven by the 'mystique nationale', embodying the doctrine "est chef qui sert le mieux", but its main purpose was protective rather than transformative. The mission of the state, he wrote in his 1934 work Service public, involved the coordination of interests within the Cité, organizing public services and adapting them to collective needs, while ensuring civil peace and external security. The state protected and guided, wielding "la rude autorité indispensable à l'exécution de sa tâche", but the social body thought and acted, sovereign in economic and social matters. Speaking to the 1936 CDF/PSF national congress, group deputy for Maine-et-Loire François de Polignac made this point abundantly clear, stating that "le premier devoir de l'État est de protéger l'existence des citoyens en défendant la nation contre les ennemis de l'extérieur, en faisant régner la justice entre les frontières".¹⁰⁵

A Faisceau-style assembly of families and producers was never discussed. Instead, the CDF/PSF called for a renovation of existing Republican institutions. The group leadership and rank and file first formulated ideas for the reform of government in 1931, gradually

¹⁰⁴F.R., "Reflexions", Flambeau du Sud-Est, June 1936; CHEVS/LR 13 1 A 4, "Principes généraux d'organisation, de propagande et de coordination", n.d. [PSF]; CHEVS/LR 38, CDLR, "Les 'Croix de Feu' devant le problème des élections".

¹⁰⁵APP/Ba 1980, tract-"Programmes", March 1936; Lt.-Colonel de la Rocque, Service public (Paris: Grasset, 1934), p. 197-198, 202; François de Polignac, "L'Éducation nationale" in Le Parti social français devant les problèmes de l'heure (Paris, 1936).

adding additional detail throughout the decade, culminating in the Spring 1936 comprehensive platform, which foreshadowed the group's parliamentary turn that summer. The first CDF/PSF political plan, published in the 1931 remembrance day edition of Le Flambeau, described the group as the elite of France, united by a desire for political order. In keeping with this goal, the plan demanded continuity in public affairs. The president of the new France would be invested with the responsibility of forming the government, parliamentary work methods would be reformed, and legislative work would be conducted by the constituent elements of French production.¹⁰⁶ La Rocque charged this new elite with the moral and economic consolidation of the state. In a May 1934 interview with L'Ordre, the CDF/PSF leader further proposed a streamlined government with fewer ministers and deputies, lessening the opportunity for corrupt practices: "Accession aux affaires publiques, non de conspirateurs improvisés, mais des chefs énergiques, laborieux, compétents, affranchis de l'emprise et des luttes partisans, étrangers non seulement aux scandales, mais aussi aux erreurs et aux faiblesses de l'après-guerre". The new leaders were to be patriotic men, dedicated to the reconciliation of all citizens "de bonne volonté" on the right and the left, and ethically sound. In his 1934 book Service public, he described the new elite as "des hommes probes, inattaquables dans leur vie privée comme dans leur vie publique, animés de la seule mystique nationale, libérés de toute entrave." Their primary duty was the cleansing of government and administration, rooting out mismanagement and dedicating the state to public service.¹⁰⁷

For the CDF/PSF, the first step towards the achievement of moral and managerial state renewal would be a radical reform of the constitution, to reflect the principles of discipline, a talent-based hierarchy, authority, anti-communism, and collective needs above individual desires. Youth were to be brought into government, remaking the state administration with

¹⁰⁶"Nos motifs", Le Flambeau, 11 Nov. 1931.

¹⁰⁷CDLR, "Redressement", L'Ordre, 1 May 1934; La Rocque, Service public, p. 222.

fresh ideas and energy. At a January 1935 meeting in Paris, La Rocque stated that such reforms were necessary to cure "le pouvoir législatif, qui avait la grippe".¹⁰⁸ To this end, the group presented its first comprehensive political plan in 1936, in various tracts designed to appeal to potential voters, and erode support for the Popular Front. The previous programs of 1931 and 1933, and La Rocque's pronouncements in Service public, interspersed various broad political ideas with economic and social demands, lacking any real depth. Publications such as Pour le peuple, par le peuple and Programmes systematized these ideas, leaving no stone unturned, and provided a political plan which the group continued to espouse after their transformation into the parliamentary PSF.

The 1936 plan expanded upon earlier variations. It endorsed the 1934 recommendations of fewer ministers and deputies and proportional representation. La Rocque now added an age limit for all parliamentary representatives, and proclaimed that none could be lawyers, members of an administrative council, or hold a private or state position outside of the Chamber. A reasonable stipend would be offered to replace lost income, and absenteeism or abstention from voting would be severely punished. The Chamber would further be stripped of its control of expenses, a proposition championed by La Rocque from the outset of his group presidency as a measure to eliminate corruption. Finally, the Président du Conseil would concurrently serve as President of the Republic.¹⁰⁹

True to the group's overriding concern with morality in government, the 1936 plan proposed various measures for combating electoral and ministerial dishonesty. From Service public onwards, La Rocque firmly rejected the practice of parliamentary recommendations, to be replaced by a Commission d'enquête, whose members discussed constituent's requests, thereby eliminating the clandestine pressure which forced deputies

¹⁰⁸APP/Ba 1980, "90% des français et des françaises sont de notre avis", n.d. [1935]; AP/451/121, CDLR, Typed responses to interview questions from the Gazette du Lausanne, n.d. [1935]; CHEVS/LR 41, "Déclaration du parti", n.d. [1936]; F/7/13320, "Meetings organisées par L'Association des Croix de Feu et Briscards", le 25 janvier", 29 Jan. 1935.

¹⁰⁹CDLR, "Pour le peuple, par le peuple", supplement to Le Flambeau, 11 April 1936.

into professional dishonesty. The 1936 plan also called for the vote familial, with women voting in municipal elections, as the family was a 'moral' entity, fervently opposed to unethical candidates and practices. Finally, the plan advocated control of the press to ensure that newspapers were not funded by hostile elements (i.e. the left), which worked against the nation. Parties and publications which agitated against the civic and patriotic duty of each citizen would be censured.¹¹⁰

Taken at face value, the CDF/PSF parliamentary plan resembled the conservative platform advocated by parties like the Republican Federation. Louis Marin's party was equally adamant concerning the need for order, social and political hierarchy, the rule of elites, and an end to parliamentary corruption, and they initially viewed the Croix de Feu as a useful ally. Like the CDF/PSF, the Federation called for the reduction by half of the number of deputies in the Chamber, the vote for women and the heads of families, an end to the introduction of financial bills by parliament, and the right of dissolution for Premiers. Federation leaders themselves believed the CDF/PSF to be a kindred spirit. In the words of Philippe Henriot, ex-Faisceau member and Federation Vice-President, the Croix de Feu "were a useful barrier of resolute men against the threatening violence of revolutionary forces". The two organizations were united in an uneasy alliance from late 1934 until the transformation of the Croix de Feu into the parliamentary PSF, which the Federation viewed as unwanted competition. Although they flirted with the authoritarian and fascist right during the thirties, however, the modérés held fast to their belief that liberal democracy provided the means with which their agenda could best be implemented. The CDF/PSF ideal, in contrast, was far from parliamentary, and the group's future state went far beyond the reforms discussed by Marin and his cohorts.¹¹¹

¹¹⁰La Rocque, *Service public*, pp. 207-208; CHEVS/LR 11 VI A 2, Émile Condroyer, "Les 'Croix de Feu'? Que veulent-ils?", *Le Journal*, 28 Nov. 1935; APP/Ba 1980, tract-"Programmes", March 1936, CDLR, "Pour le peuple, par le peuple".

¹¹¹Irvine, *French Conservatism in Crisis*, pp. 100-101, 119-126, 131-134.

To begin with, the CDF/PSF parliamentary program was opportunistic in nature. Although certain details were added to this parliamentary plan after the transformation into the PSF, the elimination of the council of ministers for example, none of the main points were altered, and the 1936 plan formed the basis of the PSF electoral platform. Its goal was to secure victory for the group, at which time the transformation of the state would begin. The public facade of parliamentary reform masked language and concepts that were decidedly undemocratic. Thus in its 'parliamentary' program, the group continued to maintain that it desired a restoration of ministerial responsibility and hierarchy, the elimination of parasitism, and political planning at all levels of government.¹¹² Moreover, the group exhibited a marked tendency towards authoritarianism, championing the formation of a non-parliamentary government even as its deputies sat in the chamber.

Various members frequently spoke of the "restoration of authority", an indispensable component of the CDF/PSF plan for the reform of state, termed the sole guarantee of personal liberty. As late as 1938, PSF political bureau director Edouard Barrachin told a national congress that the party needed to create a "choc psychologique" through the restoration of authority, to morally cleanse the government, facilitate parliamentary practice, remove agitators paid by foreign countries (i.e. the left) from French soil, and remake national and regional administrations. Nor were such statements mere political posturing. One writer in the Ralliment du Nord flawlessly parroted the CDF/PSF credo in writing that man needed authority to protect society from the dangers of absolute liberty, which lead only to anarchy and weakness.¹¹³

Clearly the group envisioned more than a simple reform of parliamentary composition and practice. Although he rejected the 'quasi-religious' cult of the state in fascist Italy, often

¹¹²AP/451/102, tract-Le Parti social français: un mouvement. une programme (Paris: SEDA, 1936).

¹¹³Anon., Pourquoi nous sommes devenus Croix de Feu (Paris: Gallimard, n.d. [1934]), p. 5; Jean Debay, Remise du fanion à la sous-section Blida-Mitidja, 1934, pp. 16-17; AP/451/117, "Extraits du rapport de M. Edouard Barrachin, Directeur de Bureau politique, sur la politique générale", Third PSF National Congress, 3 Dec. 1938; Diagoras, "L'Homme, cet inconnu!", Ralliment du Nord, 17 July 1937.

referring to multiple leaders for the future CDF/PSF regime, La Rocque nevertheless maintained that collective discipline and strong centralized authority were necessary to guard against excess in government: "Avant de bâtir un édifice nouveau, pour en étayer les fondations, nous voulons que l'autorité rétablisse d'abord, vigoureusement, l'ordre des foyers, dans les administrations, dans nos cités, dans la justice". Members frequently spoke at public gatherings of the need to balance authority and liberty, possible only through a wholesale change of government institutions. In certain instances, the balance was firmly tilted towards the former notion. At one meeting in Saint-Brieuc in October 1936, a speaker told 125 men and children that a dictatorship was unavoidable, in order to eliminate the communist menace and avoid the civil war ravaging Spain, leaving dead priests and nuns in its wake.¹¹⁴

The restoration of authority, renewed discipline, a potential dictatorship, and restraints on 'excessive' liberty went far beyond constitutional democracy. In fact, the CDF/PSF actively promoted authoritarian-style leadership throughout their history, even as they maintained their adherence to parliamentary reform. In Service public in 1934, La Rocque described a leader more compatible with the traditional concepts of the French extreme-right than the Chamber of Deputies: "Quand l'intérêt de la Cité se trouve en jeu, les individus ne comptent pas: ils s'effacent. Les chefs de groupement doivent s'imposer, non dans la popularité, fille de la démagogie, mais par leur personnalité agissante et responsable". The leader existed to impose discipline on state and society, he added in Le Flambeau in May 1935, acting for the collective good while pushing citizens to do the same. Neither Maurras, nor Franco, nor the Duce himself, would have disagreed. For the CDF/PSF, action and will, alongside discipline and obedience, were the cornerstones of the new state. Nor did such pronouncements cease with the banning of the Croix de Feu; they were repeated ad

¹¹⁴La Rocque, Service public, pp. 256-257; Le Flambeau, 2 May 1936; Ybarnégaray speech in Flambeau du Sud-Ouest, 3 July 1937; F/7/12965, M. Kiffer in steno of 18 March 1936; F/7/14817, Inspecteur Paux de Police Mobile Le Poulennec et Douasbin to Prefect of Côtes du Nord, 23 Oct. 1936.

nauseam in print and speeches during the PSF years. Although La Rocque continually refused nomination as the potential leader of a renewed France, clearly a renovated parliament was not the group's only card to play.¹¹⁵

5.

Important as the renovation of government was to the CDF/PSF, it was but one piece of a larger political puzzle. For La Rocque and various group leaders and members the renovation of the state was both a physical and an ideological project. Therefore the renovation of parliament and the introduction of authoritarian principles of government would be contingent upon a modification of the national mentalité. During the Croix de Feu years, this meant the introduction of the authority, hierarchy, and discipline of the trenches. As the living representatives of those who fought for France, the group believed itself to be in sole possession of the moral superiority to transform the state, ushering in a government of national renewal. Once the group was transformed into the parliamentary Parti social français, however, their calls for an État combattant ceased abruptly, replaced by Barrèssian nationalism and a social Catholic political program. Throughout the PSF years the group called for the restoration of Christian values in France, combined with the creation of an idyllic national community based upon social harmony and government-imposed hierarchy and discipline.

Like many anciens combattants groups in France, including the Faisceau, the Croix de Feu adopted the trenches as a political model, inspired by the nationalist cult of the dead. In this regard, they were not dissimilar from the multitude of veterans organizations which

¹¹⁵La Rocque, *Service public*, p. 86; CDLR, "Des Chefs", *Le Flambeau*, 18 May 1935; Un Normalien, "Retour à la franchise", *Le Flambeau*, 13 April 1935; Habib, "Volonté", *Le Flambeau*, Nov. 1933. For PSF examples, see CHEVS/LR 46, "Extraits du discours prononcée par le Colonel de la Rocque, à Jocelyn (Morbihan), le 11 décembre 1938"; BN, tract-Edouard Barrachin, *Le PSF devant le pays*, n.d. For La Rocque's refusal, see AP/451/101, "Pourquoi La Rocque n'est-il pas candidat?", *Bulletin d'Informations* #16, 26 Jan. 1937

existed throughout the interwar period. Rejecting the concept of class, groups like the Union fédérale or Union nationale des combattants (UNC) trumpeted a mythical notion of the absolute fraternity of the trenches, fighting for the survival of France in the face of the enemy. They rejected politics as corrupt, believing themselves to be a moral elite qualified to lead France because of their "baptism by fire". In bringing the 'esprit combattant' into the political realm, the rude lessons of 1914 would replace inefficient parliamentary democracy. Moral and spiritual values, and especially nationalism and Catholicism, family and profession, were placed in staunch opposition to noxious materialism, which had led France to decadence and ruin. They thus proposed a state founded upon fraternity, discipline, hierarchy, and elitism.¹¹⁶

As historian Antoine Prost has argued, this vision of the trenches was a myth, far removed from the horrors of war and the fatalistic attitude adopted out of necessity by the average poilu, whose comrades-in-arms seldom lasted very long. Furthermore, few veterans associations abandoned parliamentarism altogether, instead arguing for the infusion of nationalism and the principles of the trenches into the Republican government. Despite its romantic overtones, the myth nevertheless formed the backbone of the postwar politics of the combattant. Certain groups, such as the right-wing UNC, argued for Catholic nationalism, the restoration of authority and unity, an end to the tyranny of political parties, and a conservative familial, social and economic agenda, just as the conservative faction of the Faisceau had done.¹¹⁷

Their trench mentality clear from the beginning, the Croix de Feu were no different. The group often portrayed itself as the sole guardian of French tradition, termed the 'mystique Croix de Feu'. Writing in Service public in 1934, La Rocque claimed that this mystique was identical to the sentiment displayed by both Joan of Arc and the heroic

¹¹⁶Prost, *Les Anciens combattants*, *op cit.*, pp. 26-32, 128-148, 168-173.

¹¹⁷Antoine Prost, *Les Anciens combattants* (Paris: Gallimard, 1977), pp. 223-228.

soldiers of Verdun.¹¹⁸ The group alone embodied truly French traditions, he wrote, proof that the CDF/PSF was a microcosm of the nation itself. Hence the remaking of the state according to Croix de Feu principles allowed the nation to reclaim its authentic heritage.¹¹⁹

The group mystique also embodied the experience of the trenches, which for the Croix de Feu formed the basis of the future state. The spirit of the victory, through which France had re-discovered its identity, was equally the spirit of effective government. As the living representatives of the war generation, the Croix de Feu possessed the moral authority to act in the national interest, recreating the politics of fraternal unity which guided the war effort.¹²⁰ By destroying the fruits of the victory paid for by the blood and sacrifice of the combattants, stated one member of the group's Comité directeur in March 1936, Republican politicians had placed themselves in opposition to the morally sound Croix de Feu, "une génération d'anciens combattants ayant une conception speciale forgée par quatre ans de guerre". Joined by the younger generation, who never knew the horrors of war but nevertheless shared the group's ideals, the group would remake France in its own image. To La Rocque this meant the final defeat of the 'generation of 1900', the complacent bourgeoisie concerned solely with materialism, and the rise of the 'generation of 1914', "maîtrise de soi, décision expédiente, responsabilité".¹²¹

The group thus adopted the mythical version of the trenches so dear to the anciens combattants of interwar France, a political composite of the France of the future:

Chez nous, il n'est pas question de grade, il n'est pas question de distinction sociale, il n'est pas question de fortune, il n'est pas question de pauvreté, lorsqu'a l'heure H nous franchissons la parallèle de départ, sûrs que nous avons à notre droit et à notre gauche un ami prêt à nous secourir quoi qu'il nous arrive, quel

¹¹⁸Hébert, "Patrie", *Flambeau des Vosges*, July 1939; La Rocque, *Service public*, p. 28.

¹¹⁹F. de Hautclocque, *Grandeur et décadence des Croix de Feu* (Paris: Éditions la Bourbonnais, 1937), pp. 17-20; CHEVS/LR VI A 2, Prugniaux, "Harmonie", *Bulletin mensuel du mouvement Croix de Feu (51e et 100e sections)*, 1 March 1936.

¹²⁰CDLR, "Esprit Croix de Feu", *Le Flambeau*, 4 July 1936.

¹²¹F/7/12965, "Réunion privée organisée par la 10e section du Mouvement social français des Croix de Feu", 18 March 1936; La Rocque, *Service public*, pp. 49-55.

que soit le nombre, la couleur, le métal ou la laine des galons cousus sur ses manches.¹²²

As class and social status were irrelevant at the front, they would be similarly ignored in the state, the government treating its subjects as a collective whole. Because the Croix de Feu were a combattant elite, who understood these central truths, they were granted the power to speak and act for France as a whole, to renovate the French collective and its institutions independently of corrupt, self-serving politicians. The group unanimously agreed that the combattant had the moral right to lead the political transformation of the nation and state. Having given their blood and lives for four years to protect the nation in the hour of need, mused La Rocque, they alone truly understood the notion of public service. Group publications contrasted the honourable sacrifice of the soldier with the greed and corruption endemic in the parliamentary world. One May 1934 cartoon in Le Flambeau showed a deputy/banker with portfolio in tow being grabbed by a skeleton replete with troop fatigues, a caption on the chamber/bourse in the background reading "fermé pour cause de désinfection".¹²³

The CDF/PSF joined the moral authority and sacrifice of the combattant to the Barrèssian notion of the cult of the soil and the dead. La Rocque dedicated his book Service public to the commands and ideas of the dead, claiming that the Croix de Feu message—of fraternity, morality, common will, effort, and sacrifice—transmitted the lesson of fallen comrades to future generations. The Barrèssian theory that each French family was but a continuation of their ancestors, he argued, was identical to the experience of the combattant, who fought to preserve centuries of gallic tradition. As the soldier gave his life for the France of his ancestors, so would the state defend and valorize the national heritage, and with it the effort of the combattant. Writing in Le Flambeau in November 1935, his

¹²²"Ordre et bon sens", Le Flambeau, May 1932.

¹²³AP/451/104, "Note du President-Général", 2 Jan. 1933; CDLR, "Et nous?", Le Flambeau, May 1932; "Le Soldat inconnu ou soluble connu", Le Flambeau, 1 May 1934.

new France resembled Barrès's pastoral Lorraine: "Elle est douce. Elle renferme en son sol le germe de ce qui réjouit les yeux, rapproche les âmes, calme la souffrance, enrichit les foyers, nourrit la pauvreté, commande la richesse, tempère les antagonismes".¹²⁴

Nor was this vision particular to the group's liguier incarnation. In the founding program of the Parti social français, La Rocque exalted the motherland, whose soil represented the French dead. It was the duty of the state to protect the common past, present, and future of the French people, "de favoriser tout ce qui la sert, de la protéger, de la faire respecter".¹²⁵ Because the combattants had fought for France, in the name of French tradition, they understood their duty to the dead, and would act accordingly in constructing the new state. The CDF/PSF project for political renovation was inspired solely by the traditions inherent in the legacy of the dead: "Nulle religion ne vaut si elle n'enseigne et ordonne la culte des morts....C'est, en fin de comptes, de leurs champs sacrés que jaillira l'aurore de tout rénovation. C'est de nos morts que viennent les suprêmes conseils des vivants".¹²⁶

There was one major change in the use of Barrèssian imagery and values after the transformation of the group into the parliamentary Parti social français: It became linked to social Catholic politics, which replaced the concept of an État combattant in PSF parlance from mid-1936 onwards. The restoration of a nation based upon Christian values, whose absence in the Third Republic was bemoaned by CDF/PSF members, became an increasingly important priority for the group as the decade progressed. Where Croix de Feu writings referred to the moral right and duty of the combattant to lead, various Parti social français members, including La Rocque himself, spoke of French politics in

¹²⁴Lt.-Colonel de la Rocque, *Service public*, pp. 244-245; CHEVS/LR 38, "Note du Président-Général", 2 Jan. 1936; CDLR, "La France", *Le Flambeau*, 30 Nov. 1935. For a remarkably similar passage from Barrès's writings, see *Colette Baudoche* (Paris: Nelson Éditeurs, 1908), pp. 112-113.

¹²⁵AP/451/102, *Le Parti social français: un mouvement, une programme*, pp. 36-37.

¹²⁶CHEVS/LR VI B2, "L'Emouvant et noble discours de La Rocque", *La Flamme*, 16 July 1937; quote taken from CDLR, "Les Morts, nos protecteurs", *Petit journal*, 1 Nov. 1937.

increasingly evangelical tones. Fewer references were made to the trenches, while religious themes became a daily topic for discussion in various articles, tracts, and speeches. That this change occurred after the Croix de Feu was banned by the left-wing Popular Front government cannot be ignored, but it is hardly the whole story. La Rocque wished to transform the Parti social français into a genuine mass party, bringing together elements of all classes and political beliefs. Such a party could hardly confine itself to veterans politics and calls for the recreation of the trenches. From 1936 onwards, subtlety was the best policy; just as the group promoted electoralism for opportunistic purposes, so too did it disguise the authoritarian combattant state in social Catholic rhetoric.

The social Catholicism which attracted La Rocque and the CDF/PSF was not the electoral Christian democracy of Marc Sagnier or L'Aubé. Rather the group admired the arch-conservative political views of extreme right-wing figures from the fin-de-siècle period. In claiming to support the 'reconciliation' of diverse social forces, La Rocque and various group members borrowed from social Catholic thinkers La Tour du Pin and Albert de Mun, and were heavily influenced by the papal encyclicals *Rerum Novarum* and *Quadragesimo Anno*. They thus rejected individualism, liberalism, and socialism in equal measure, as the destroyers of natural social fraternity, turning to an organic model of society, in which the state functioned as a family. Like La Tour du Pin, La Rocque and his coevals believed that family and church were the pillars of social order, and that the state assembled all facets of the nation to work in the national interest. The state ensured that the general good was always followed, while defending the welfare and morality of its members. The highest political goal was thus the defense of the 'natural' Christian social order, a realization of La Tour du Pin's belief that "tout ordre social correspond en une mesure plus ou moins complète à une conception religieuse".¹²⁷

¹²⁷René de la Tour du Pin, *Vers un ordre social chrétien* (Paris: Éditions du Trident, 1987), p. 134. See also Kennedy, *Reconciling the Nation....*, p. 39; Matthew Elbow, *French Corporative Theory, 1789-1948* (New York, Columbia University Press, 1953), pp. 47-51, 63-69, 75-79.

Arguments for the injection of Christian principles into the future state predated the formation of the Parti social français. "Travail, Famille, Patrie", the slogan which appeared on the front page of the Croix de Feu newspaper Le Flambeau, unabashedly paid homage to La Tour du Pin and turn-of-the-century social Catholicism. In Service public, La Rocque wrote of "la primauté du spirituel dans les affaires humaines", claiming that "les hommes du mouvement Croix de Feu se sont faits les prophètes et les apôtres". French reconciliation was termed the instrument of group success, which in CDF parlance meant the unification of the diverse political factions in France, "l'union des classes, des religions, des origines dans une volonté commune de sauver le pays". Replacing the moral supremacy of the combattant with Catholic virtue in an article published in Le Mois in the Fall of 1935, La Rocque now referred to the "vague salvatrice et pure du mouvement Croix de Feu", who alone possessed "la formule de régénération".¹²⁸

After the transformation of the Croix de Feu into the parliamentary PSF, religious images increasingly appeared in the group press, overshadowing the previous dedication to the État combattant. Group sympathizer Francis Veuillot, himself a prominent social Catholic, portrayed La Rocque and the CDF/PSF as the embodiment of the church doctrine advocating the patriotic and social reconciliation of all men. The group itself adopted an evangelical tone by the mid-thirties. At the 1938 PSF national congress, La Rocque lauded the 'faithful' who "attendent de l'apostolat Croix de Feu l'élan capable de ressusciter sa foi, sa fraternité". The leader was also frequently portrayed as a Christ-figure by various CDF/PSF authors. Writing in L'Heure française in May 1938, one called La Rocque "un homme qui a souffert pour nous, les membres du PSF et par dessus nous pour la France".

¹²⁸La Rocque, Service public, pp. 108, 224, 244-245; CDLR, "Ou vont les Croix de Feu?", Le Mois, Sept.-Oct. 1935.

His speeches were likened to spiritual experiences, the words of the wise father which gave the PSF "family" a new reason to believe.¹²⁹

Religious iconography was joined by calls for the construction of a new Christian state, the personification of the conciliatory organic nation trumpeted by the group. Speaking to a gathering of CDF/PSF students in May 1938, La Rocque deemed their mission to be construction of a new man, a transformation enabled by the Christianization of all facets of society--political, economic, and social. Every affair or decision of state would be informed by Catholic morality, which dismissed socialism and liberalism as overly divisive. Writing in the group's Algerian newspaper La Flamme, Raymond Gricourt claimed that socialism, whose concept of class war was incompatible with the nation--which joined together those of similar language, race, and ideals--would be defeated by "le transportation dans le domaine politique du testament de Dieu". La Rocque likewise rejected 'bourgeois' liberalism as unchristian, indifferent to the masses and uninterested in the common good.¹³⁰

The CDF/PSF upheld Catholic virtue as traditionally French, and presented itself as the defender of Christian/gallic tradition against the 'foreign' doctrines of liberalism, socialism, and the extreme-right. Rejecting the typology used by the extreme-right since the Dreyfus Affair, and liberal economics in equal measure, La Rocque told an October 1936 gathering in Seine-et-Marne that "nous avons réjété la 'politique d'abord', expression de l'orgueil païen, 'l'économique d'abord', expression du matérialisme barbare". In their place the CDF/PSF cried "sociale d'abord", he stated, an expression of the primacy of the spiritual in the new state. The left fared no better. CDF/PSF sympathizer Jacques Daujat declared

¹²⁹François Veillot, La Rocque et son parti (Paris: Librairie Plon, 1938), p. 55; AP/451/117, "Déclaration du PSF, présentée par le Président du parti", steno of Third national party congress, 4 Dec. 1938; Marcel Vigo, "Impressions d'audience", L'Heure française, 21 May 1938. See also Charles Vallin, Aux femmes du Parti social français (Paris: SEDA, 1937), p. 8.

¹³⁰CHEVS/LR 41, "Déclaration de la Rocque aux étudiants", 11 May 1938; Raymond Gricourt, "Social et socialisme", La Flamme, 13 May 1938; CDLR, "Coopération", Flambeau de Flandres-Artois-Picardie, 9 Jan. 1938,

in August 1939 that Christian civilization was being bombarded by pagan communism, a theme repeated by group authors throughout the decade.¹³¹ France, by contrast, was the "fille aînée de la chrétienté...la charité créatrice, l'entraide, le respect du prochain, exclusif d'aumône, l'amour du travail, purification et ennoblissement des biens du monde, la culte de la famille".¹³²

Like Jacques Arthuys of the *Faisceau*, the group frequently used Joan of Arc as an example of the French Christian ideal, relating the symbolism of her virtue to moral basis of the future state. To La Rocque she was the 'eternal protector' of France, a symbol of reconciliation between the masses and the elite, yet virulently opposed to politics as an abuse of power or the hegemony of moneyed interests. As the embodiment of the CDF/PSF precept "aimez-vous les uns les autres", she represented the end of divisive party politics, which the group assailed as incompatible with traditional French political culture. La Rocque claimed that she had first asked all social strata to bond together into one national body, based upon Christian morality and love of the motherland.¹³³

In this spirit, the new state would be established upon the tenet that "all souls are equal", regardless of class, condition, or culture, the opposite of crass liberal materialism and Marxist economic determinism. CDF/PSF articles frequently repeated La Rocque's phrase "aimez-vous les uns les autres", referring to both social peace and political virtue. To François Veillot, this meant the popular inculcation of the lessons of the evangelicals, that all French men, women, and children would serve spiritual forces, in a nation and state governed by the 'paix chrétienne". All were equal in the eyes of God, and would be viewed similarly by the state. Hierarchy and authority, however, were to be maintained. In an

¹³¹"Le Discours du Colonel de la Rocque", *La Flamme*, 1 Jan. 1937; CHEVS/LR 22, J. Daujat, "Quelques principes", *Service de presse régionale du PSE*, 1 Aug. 1939; Jacques Nobecourt, *Le colonel de la Rocque, ou les pièges du nationalisme chrétien* (Paris: Fayard, 1996), p. 640.

¹³²CDLR, *Union-Esprit-Famille* (Paris, 1938), p. 12.

¹³³CDLR, "Sainte Jeanne d'Arc: fille du peuple", *Petit journal*, 8 May 1938; "L'Appel de La Rocque", *Flambeau Normand*, 14 May 1938. Various authors similarly quoted Charles Péguy in this regard. See for example Daniel-Rops, "Jeanne d'Arc et Péguy", *Petit journal*, 14 June 1939.

article on the Croix de Feu in the Catholic journal Orientations, sympathizer Jacques Daujat emphasized that although all souls were equal, social hierarchy was a fait accompli, the price of fraternity, the cult of tradition, and the primacy of the family. Hence despite the group's rhetoric, the 'grand famille PSF' did not herald true equality.¹³⁴

Yet the group did not envision the Italian fascist arrangement, in which fraternity meant solely the consolidation of middle-class political power. La Rocque and the CDF/PSF instead proffered the "fusion spirituelle des classes". Taking dead aim, like Valois, at the indifferent bourgeoisie, for whom the state existed only to protect their fortune, La Rocque argued in Service public for the elimination of all parties and special interests.¹³⁵ Even after the group itself became a parliamentary party, he derided the notion of class as un-Christian, claiming that the new CDF/PSF state was : "La communauté d'idéal patriotique, une recherche permanente du progrès sociale, si hardi soit-il, une volonté de remédier à l'inégalité obligatoire des conditions par l'égalité absolue des âmes, par le culte de la hiérarchie du mérite, par le mépris des hiérarchies sans mérites". The commandments of Christian civilization demanded the return of elites, taken from all classes, who recognized the supremacy of collectivity and tradition (from the 'house of our fathers') rather than money. Opportunity would be open to all classes, he wrote in May 1936, as part of the "perfectionnement de la condition civique et professionnelle".¹³⁶

Apart from linguistic nuances, there was little difference between the Croix de Feu État combattant and the inculcation of a 'Christian' hierarchy and elite into French political culture. La Rocque and his followers merely substituted the phrase 'commandments of Christian civilization' for 'experience of the trenches', a more proper turn of phrase for the

¹³⁴AP/451/102, Le Parti social français: un mouvement. une programme, p. 5; R. Yvon, "L'Ordre nouveau par le PSF", Espoir Lorrain, 5 June 1937; Veuillot, La Rocque et son parti, pp. 64-68; CHEVS/LR 11, Jacques Daujat, "Chronique: les catholiques et la politique: les Croix de Feu", Orientations, March-April 1936.

¹³⁵La Rocque, Service public, pp. 125-128.

¹³⁶CDLR, "Thèmes de propagande", Le Flambeau, 21 Aug. 1937; CDLR, "Sous l'invocation de Jeanne d'Arc", Le Flambeau, 16 May 1936.

mass-based Parti social français. In both cases they evinced organic nationalism, according to which the state was duty-bound to restore civic peace, and mobilized hierarchy and elitism within an authoritarian political system. Talk of fraternity and reconciliation also obscured the more sinister component of their political plans. For the proposed political state could only function if its political 'enemies' were expunged from government and the nation. Like the more conservative elements within the Faisceau, the CDF/PSF situated this threat squarely on the left, arguing that socialism and communism could not be reconciled with the new system. The group's thought was purely Manichean on this point: Either the proposed CDF/PSF renovation was enacted, or the Godless communist hordes would raze France to the ground, as they had previously done in the Soviet Union under Stalin and in Spain under the Popular Front.

Unlike the Faisceau, they were unanimous in this belief. Valois wrote of a potential rapprochement with leftist forces, arguing that the communist was not the 'man with the knife between his teeth', in opposition to conservative members who opposed leniency of any kind towards Marxists. His benevolence towards the left stemmed partially from his belief that certain leftists (revolutionary syndicalists, for example), were not doctrinally dissimilar from the members of the Faisceau. But Valois's gesture was equally motivated by the weakness of socialism and communism during the twenties. The scission at the Congress of Tours in December 1920, when the communist majority quit the socialist party to found their own and to join the Third International, left Blum's organization politically moribund. Thorez's fledgling party, which attracted only 900 000 votes (8% of the total) in the 1924 elections which vaulted the leftist Cartel des Gauches to power, packed little punch in the chamber or on the street. Blum and the socialists gained 101 seats in the Chamber in 1924, but only through an alliance with the centrist Radical party, on whom they were dependent for any real electoral success. A similar split quickly emerged at the Lille congress of the CGT in June 1921, leading to the formation of the communist-dominated

CGTU shortly thereafter. Left with a minority of the rank and file, CGT leader Léon Jouhaux spent the remainder of the decade fighting for the formation of a national economic council, and promoting a reformist agenda, comprised mainly of scientific management and increased wages for the workers. Only in 1936, following the rapprochement between the socialist and communist parties, did the CGT and CGTU reunite. Clearly Valois spoke from a perceived position of strength, and could afford to be charitable.¹³⁷

By 1934, when the Croix de Feu first came to national prominence as a serious political force, the situation was remarkably different. Following the massive street actions provoked by the Stavisky affair at the Palais Bourbon on the night of 6 February 1934, which led to the resignation of Premier Edouard Daladier, and created fears of an extreme-rightist coup d'état, the left found renewed vigour. By the summer of 1934, following the adoption by the Soviet CPSU of the 'Dimitrov line' on left-wing unity, the socialist and communist parties banded together to form the Front commun, pledging to collaborate in the fight against fascism and the extreme-right in France. They also gained electoral momentum, bringing the Radical party into the Popular Front in July 1935. The following June, the alliance won 334 seats in the chamber, and Léon Blum became the first socialist premier in French history. La Rocque and the CDF/PSF saw this as a disaster, as the first step towards a Soviet-style regime. Not surprisingly, the group did not 'tendre la main' as had Valois, but launched an all-out verbal and written assault against the left, both warning the country of the perceived threat and occasionally acting with tragic results. In late 1936, for example, hundreds of CDF/PSF demonstrators engaged in protracted street battles with communists outside a left-wing rally at Parc-aux-Princes stadium in northern Paris, in which dozens were wounded on both sides.¹³⁸

¹³⁷Philippe Bernard and Henri Dubief, *The Decline of the Third Republic* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), pp. 152-156.

¹³⁸Maurice Larkin, *France Since the Popular Front* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988); pp. 50-52.

For the most part, the group's assault was verbal, and group authors rarely distinguished between communism, socialism, and the trade unions, which were all jumbled together into one category--the political enemy. Writing in Le Flambeau in June 1936, just as the Blum's Popular Front government was settling into the Matignon, La Rocque unleashed a thinly disguised torrent of abuse directed at the 'enemies of reconciliation': "Mais la reconciliation rencontrera des ennemis; il serait illusoire de se le dissimuler. Elle éliminera des forces nocives. Elle chassera les bénéficiaires des régimes corrompus. Elle écartera les serviteurs, les imitateurs, les stipendiés de l'étranger, elle proscritra leur influence clandestine ou avouée, sur la destinée de notre race". Elsewhere he made clear that the primary political enemy was indeed the left, referring to "nos ennemis--les hommes du drapeau rouge".¹³⁹ Communist and socialist party members were frequently denounced as traitors in the CDF/PSF press, paid for and sent to France by the Soviet Union to start a civil war. This menace to French tradition and property could only be halted by the CDF/PSF, whose political plans corresponded to the very morality and politics which the left sought to stamp out.¹⁴⁰

The group frequently issued apocalyptic statements concerning 'communism' and the Popular Front, describing the consequences of a 'Soviet' victory in France. Mere months before Blum's victory, Le Flambeau ordered readers to: "Restons calmes. Restons fermes. Sauvegardons chaque maison, chaque foyer par notre présence vigilante, fraternelle, protectrice. Démasquons les ménées criminelles des excitateurs. Bafouons les fausses idoles". Voicing concern about governmental inactivity in the face of the calamity, he complained that revolutionary action was a daily occurrence under the Popular Front:

Chaque dimanche, des cortèges parcourent villes, villages, campagnes derrière un drapeau étranger, derrière des pancartes chargée d'inscriptions haineuses: des

¹³⁹CDLR, "Pour et contre", Le Flambeau, 6 June 1936; CDLR, "Programmes", Le Flambeau, April 1934; "Congrès régional du Sud-Ouest".

¹⁴⁰Flambeau du Sud-Ouest, 3 July 1937; AP/451/103, tract-Qu'est-ce que le PSE, Dec. 1936, pp. 11-12.

parodies religieuses, militaire, bafouent ce que nous croyons, honorons, servons. Un peu partout, des groupes de jeunes gens décorés de rouge insultent d'inoffensifs passants, brutalisent les consommateurs plaisables de terrasses, assaillent les marchands de journaux.

In response, the group promoted the CDF/PSF state as a necessity, to save France from the Popular Front "complot satanique". As late as January 1938 La Rocque assured members that the CDF/PSF were "implantés maintenant dans chaque rue, dans chaque maison, dans chaque village". The choice was simple: Either the CDF/PSF would renovate the state, barring the road to communism, or the Marxist nightmare would consume France.¹⁴¹

A major part of the group critique of the left concerned its status as the 'enemy of Christian civilization'. To one speaker at a CDF/PSF rally in 1937, the CDF/PSF embodied the response to communism of "Dieu et de 1 500 000 morts qui n'avaient pas voulu que leur sacrifice fut vain". French citizens could stand only for one or the other, he concluded. The opposition between believers and the left was omnipresent in group literature and speeches. In Algeria in July 1937, La Rocque told a crowd that "nous voulons que notre protection s'exerce vis-à-vis de ceux qui ont la volonté sincère de remettre la France en ordre, de battre le communisme et ses alliés, qui sont les ennemis de la civilisation chrétienne dont nous sommes les serviteurs". Communism was portrayed as the submersion of the individual within the collective, obedient to a central power. The CDF/PSF information bulletin claimed in February 1937 that family and religion were both destroyed under the rule of the left, which burned churches, massacred priests, and forced mothers to work in dingy factories along the road to global domination.¹⁴²

The group undertook various propaganda initiatives in order to combat the left, while simultaneously attempting to persuade the French population that a CDF/PSF government

¹⁴¹"Trêve du peuple", *Le Flambeau*, 14 March 1936; CDLR, "Formules", *Le Flambeau*, 5 Sept. 1936; CDLR, "Le PSF dans la cité", *Flambeau de Flandres-Artois-Picardie*, 23 Jan. 1938, Jean Ybarnégary in *L'Espoir de l'Est*, 13 Nov. 1937.

¹⁴²F/7/12966, note of 24 Feb. 1937; "L'Emouvante et noble discours de La Rocque", *La Flamme*, 16 July 1937; AP/451/101, "Schema de conférence #1-le communisme", supplement to *Bulletin d'information* # 20, 23 Feb. 1937.

was far more appealing than the Popular Front. One such attempt, a comic strip entitled "Francoeur et Labusé", portrays both the dangers of communism and its antidote--the CDF/PSF. Francoeur is a noble artisan, unemployed upon returning from the trenches because foreign revolutionaries have taken his place at the factory. He ends up in a CDF/PSF soup kitchen, where he meets 'real men' and feeds his family. Upon coming into contact with "ces hommes propres et simples", Francoeur again finds the fraternity of the front and becomes a member, finding a good job and a stable home. Labusé, his former comrade-in-arms, falls under the spell of Legras, a leftist deputy. He becomes an extremist, surrounded by foreigners in "organisations étrangères". By chance, he meets Francoeur at a street demonstration, is saved from certain imprisonment, and takes up the service of France. The moral message was clear: Although the left claimed that their political solution would lead the worker to happiness, it was a prescription for illegality and nothing more, while the CDF/PSF provided a healthy environment for French labour, a fact reflected in its political program.¹⁴³

Group authors and speakers also used negative propaganda, attempting to wean the populace away from communism, socialism, and the Popular Front by describing the disastrous effects of leftist governments throughout Europe. Various members lauded Franco's nationalist troops, supporting his war against the socialist 'desecration' of Spain. Franco had the "droit de belligérence", wrote one author in the Flamme Tourangelle, who championed Franco's defense of Christian virtue against the treasonous Marxist cowards in government, and recommended the "poteau d'exécution" as a means of their disposal. Warning that a similar fate was in store for France should the Popular Front triumph in Spain, CDF/PSF writers often listed the 'crimes' of the Iberian Popular Front, from the killing of priests to the suppression of patriotic newspapers. Claiming that a loss for Franco or the CDF/PSF could mean the defeat of Western civilization, La Rocque painted a

¹⁴³AP/451/82, Comic strip-"Francoeur et Labusé".

graphically violent portrait of Popular Front activities in Spain: "La violation des cimetières, le sac d'églises, l'immolation des femmes, d'enfants, et de paysans accomplis par les contingents 'réguliers' ne laissent aucune doute: le Bolchevisme a déclanché ses vagues d'assaut à travers la péninsule ibérique.¹⁴⁴

Group activities reinforced the image of the CDF/PSF as the saviour of France against the left, with the Spanish experience often serving as a case study. In the CDF/PSF film La France est à nous, an educational piece about the "tragic history of the Spanish revolution", Asiatic Bolsheviks are shown marching through Spain. The program guide instructs the viewer that "les meneurs à la solde de Moscou vont partout semant la haine, faisant appel aux sentiments les plus vils, abusent (sic.) les masses à qui ils font miroiter, sous les couleurs fallacieuses, le 'paradis Sovietique". The film itself is a documentary portraying false liberty becoming anarchic (France), and Marxism corroding all that it touches (Spain). The guide continues: "On assiste angoissée, à la destruction systématique de la civilisation: déportation, immeubles éventrés, trésors pillés et saccagés, églises violés, prêtres fusillés à bout pourtant, assassinats de femmes et d'enfants". Spain is terrorized by a bloody Soviet dictatorship, and Franco is portrayed as the national liberator, triumphant in the second part of the film, "la croix du Christ protège, à nouveau, l'Espagne veraissante". That the film was political propaganda for the CDF/PSF is made clear in the guide, which offers a warning to the French populace that the 'forces of evil' in France remain unchecked, ending with "gloire à La Rocque, apôtre de la réconciliation qui, refusant d'adhérer à toute formation tendant à diviser les Français, sut nous épargner les horreurs de la guerre civile et permit le redressement indispensable à notre salut".¹⁴⁵

Use of the Soviet case, a further example of the Marxist destruction of a people, was also prevalent. The group's information bulletin devoted a November 1936 article to André

¹⁴⁴René Pierumet, "De quoi s'agit-il?", Flamme Tourangelle, 25 Feb. 1939; "Fascisme rouge: hypocrite et barbare", Le Flambeau, 2 May 1936; CDLR, "Repères", Le Flambeau, 15 Aug. 1936.

¹⁴⁵AP/451/103, program for "Ciné-PSF propagande".

Gide's exposé Retour de l'URSS, detailing the author's condemnations of Soviet society. Similarly, a November 1938 article in the Flamme Tourangelle argued that Soviet Marxism had created a new and brutal bureaucratic aristocracy in Russia, fueled by statism and tyranny far worse than the old Tsarist regime.¹⁴⁶ Group authors left no stone unturned in 'unmasking' the evils of Soviet oppression, comparing them unfavourably with the traditional French politics of the CDF/PSF. La Rocque bombarded his audience with bloody imagery in discussing the Marxist 'system' of government at a Provençal regional congress in June 1937:

J'entends autour de moi la rumeur menaçante des communistes qui veulent nous inféoder à Moscou. Le régime des Soviets, qui s'est illustré par les propagandes les plus délétères à l'intérieur des autres pays, par un absolutisme égalant celui des tsars, par le massacre des millions des moujiks, par la tyrannie de quelques individus sur une masse énorme et atone de sujets sans personnalité ni droit civiques, ne saurait, sans déshonneur, exercer le moindre ascendant sur la vie intérieure de la nation française.¹⁴⁷

Luckily the CDF/PSF, the example of discipline, were present to combat the hatred and disarray which separated women from their husbands and children.

6.

Faisceau and CDF/PSF plans for the new state represented political trends apparent throughout the Third Republic years. In opposing liberal democracy, socialism, and communism, both groups sought a political third way apart from the Republic they detested, and the rule of the left which they abhorred all the more. For the Faisceau, the answer was both modern, in the case of Georges Valois, and antimodern, for the conservative faction of Bourgin, Arthuys, Barrès, and de Barral. Lacking the divisiveness which characterized Faisceau political schemes, the CDF/PSF were united in choosing the latter option.

¹⁴⁶AP/451/101, "L'URSS jugée par un de ses amis", Bulletins d'Informations no. 7, 24 Nov. 1936; "Notre programme sociale", La Flamme Tourangelle, 26 Nov. 1938.

¹⁴⁷CHEVS/LR 46, excerpts from CDLR speech at the PSF regional congress in Provence, 6 June 1937.

Although they promoted different means, adopting authoritarianism in place of fascism, the political ends of the CDF/PSF and the conservative faction of the Faisceau were one and the same: A hierarchical, disciplined, and organic state, in which authority in the service of tradition, morality, and patriotism predominated. In so choosing, both became the heirs of the traditional extreme-right, from the Bonapartists and Boulangists to Barrès and Maurras. Yet unlike the Faisceau, whose political impact was negligible, the CDF/PSF grew from a league into a mass organization with over one million members by 1938. Given the chance to attain power and realize their program, La Rocque and the CDF/PSF became cautious, concealing their authoritarian program behind a veil of conciliatory social Catholicism.

Valois too was influenced by the theories of Maurras and Barrès, but chose a different path, wedding social conservatism to political and economic modernism. This is not to imply that he was not representative of the extreme-right: After all, the Vichy regime attracted synarchists alongside social Catholic conservatives and xenophobes. But from the beginning Valois was an exponent of 'left fascism', a composite of the syndicalist and planiste left on one hand, and Barrèssian nationalism and the doctrine of the trenches on the other. Although he gathered together corporativism, the organic nation, and the primacy of family and religion into his project for a new state, the Faisceau leader insisted that the government be run according to the principles of scientific management, that the state be transformed according to the aesthetic principles of Le Corbusier, and that the Sorellian syndicalist ethic of the primacy of production drive a constant effort towards political modernization and renewal.

He thus came into conflict with his more conservative colleagues, veterans of extreme-rightist groups who did not share his proclivity for hyper-modern solutions. For Valois, fascism was revolutionary, auguring the complete transformation of France as a socio-political construct. His classless society of producers would reproduce the bourgeois revolution of 1789 for the twentieth century, simply rejecting the stale materialism and

individualism of the nineteenth century in favour of collective construction in the age of electricity. Tradition and Catholicism, the Barrèssian notion of the soil and the dead, and organic nationalism would be preserved within the family and protected by the state, but the state itself represented the modern values of the industrial age, derived from the experience of the Great War. Valois's fascist dictatorship was but a means to an end, to demolish the old parliamentary system in favour of rationalized government, termed the 'organ of progress', and a corporatist structure animated by young and ardent elites.

Valois's economic modernism would find support from various key Faisceau members, including Pierre Dumas and Paul-Charles Biver, and was not contested by more conservative elements within the group, who respected his expertise in such matters. But as veterans of the Liges des patriotes, Action française, and similar organizations, Faisceau conservatives like Bourgin, Arthuys, and Philippe Barrès, rejecting Valois's progressive plans for the new state, sought the renewal of conservatism. Schooled by Maurras and Barrès, they displayed no interest in the ideas of Sorel, Le Corbusier, or the rationalization of government and society. While Valois sang the praises of modern France and the age of electricity, the Faisceau conservatives continued to promote the political agenda envisioned by the older extreme-right: The imposition of discipline, hierarchy, order, and authority, and the fight against communism and immorality. Their fascism was a revolution of form and not content, calling upon renewed elites instilled with voluntarism to accomplish old-fashioned ends.

Their fascism, like that of Valois, reflected preconceived notions rather than Italian realities. True, their concept of the leader as a 'living synthesis' of the will of the people did not differ greatly from the conception proposed by the Duce. Similarly, the notion that the combattant possessed the moral right to lead, and the values ascribed to them—patriotism, obedience, discipline, and a social Darwinist world view, were present in Mussolini's creed. Yet the politics of the Faisceau conservatives were identical to those of the French extreme-

right. Their ideal state would function according to the dictum of the soil and the dead, exalting the traditions of the French ancestors, the cult of the fallen hero, social Catholicism, and extreme nationalism. The conservatives answered Valois's adoption of Sorel and Le Corbusier by lauding Joan of Arc, a metaphor for the lost values of a past age, reawakened during the Great War.

Taken at face value, the CDF/PSF resembled the conservative faction of the Faisceau. Although greatly divided concerning other facets of the future nation and state, group leadership and rank and file unanimously heralded a new political order informed by conservative authoritarianism, social Catholicism, and the primacy of the combattant. Yet La Rocque and the CDF/PSF leadership were consummate opportunists. Faced with the constant threat of a government ban of the leagues, even after the Parti social français was formed, the group proclaimed itself to be ardently republican. Neither did the group wish to be associated with fascism, for unlike the Faisceau conservatives, they did not believe that such a system provided a suitable vehicle for the political transformation of France.

Their public reformist discourse was a facade, however. Much like their fellow liguers, the CDF/PSF completely disapproved of the parliamentary system, and of liberal democracy in general. Deemed corrupt and incapable of action or reform, the deputies were constantly lambasted in the CDF/PSF press and publications. Rejecting the fascist 'religion of the state', the group nevertheless proposed an authoritarian regime in which discipline and hierarchy prevailed, and a government run by elites dedicated to the suppression of 'excessive' liberty. Their "restoration of authority", and insistence upon the primacy of the collective good over individual and material desires, echoed ideas prevalent among Boulangists, Bonapartists, and the extreme-rightist leagues throughout the Third Republic. Nor did the transformation of the group into the parliamentary PSF change their political program or conception of the state. The CDF/PSF continued to advocate authoritarian solutions well into the Vichy era.

The same was true of their doctrinal basis for the new state. Here again La Rocque was opportunistic, changing the group's tone to suit a wider audience once the mass-based PSF was formed. Like the Faisceau conservatives, Croix de Feu members called for the creation of an *État combattant*, because the *combattant* alone was morally fit to lead. La Rocque and his followers firmly believed in the myth of the trench experience, that the fraternity, hierarchy, and order of the troops could be implemented in the political sphere. Hardly novel, such language placed the CDF/PSF firmly in the extreme-rightist camp, where figures like Maurras enlisted the same concepts in the service of the *ancien régime* rather than the trenches.

Like the Faisceau and other similar-minded extreme-rightist leagues, however, the CDF/PSF existed solely to transform the French nation and state according to group principles. With only 40-60 000 members, numerous for an extreme-rightist group in the nineteen-twenties, but minute in practical political terms, the Faisceau never abandoned its position to reach a wider audience, because the possibility of success was slight at best. Conversely by July 1936, the CDF/PSF were a mass organization with hundreds of thousands of adherents, and as such their public stance reflected a perceived potential to attain power and achieve their ultimate objective. By the Summer of 1936, the goals of their proposed state--nationalism, Catholicism, family, and profession--were couched in the reconciliatory language of social Catholicism, complemented by the tenets of Maurice Barrès. More palatable to a mass audience, the credo that "all souls are equal" and the defense of Christian civilization against Godless Marxism allowed the group to proclaim itself representative of the true, non-leftist France, the sole protectors of French tradition.

Chapter 2-Vers un ordre économique nouveau: The Traditional and the Modern in the New Economy

The interwar period in France was indelibly marked by internal conflict. From the armistice of November 1918, which ended the Great War, until the renewal of hostilities in the Fall of 1939, various factions within government, industry, and society at large debated every facet of national policy. Proponents of hawkish militarism clashed with cautious appeasers over the terms of the Versailles settlement, the wisdom of the Ruhr action in 1923, and the methods for containing both Hitler and Stalin a decade later. Domestic politics were no less volatile, from the battles between the Bloc nationale and the Cartel des Gauches in the twenties, to the near-polarization of society and its elected representatives in the thirties, as the Popular Front government and exponents of the communist, socialist, and syndicalist left clashed with supporters of the moderate and extreme-right in the chamber and the streets. No stone was left unturned in these stormy debates. A seemingly harmless subject, such as educational reform, was transformed into a partisan issue, less a discussion of the future of French youth than a stream of accusations.

One of the crucial battles of the interwar period took place in more staid surroundings—in the boardroom, the pages of the financial press, and the committee meeting. Although it has received less scholarly attention, the issue of economic modernization was one of the most prominent of its kind in contemporary France. Lacking the violence and intensity of the skirmishes between the left and right, discussions of the relative merits of scientific management, Taylorism, and the rational organization of production were nevertheless volatile, pitting traditionalists who utterly opposed any radical alteration of the national economy against modernists who acclaimed the new methods as the saviours of increasingly moribund French industry. In the twenties, this battle was rather lop-sided. Most owners refused any significant change, occasionally adopting a severely-limited corporatism in furtherance of a platform historian Charles Maier calls "bourgeois defense",

a tactic designed to rebuild the pre-1914 social order and defend the traditional French small shop. Those industries which did adopt full-blown corporatism were more modern in orientation, but they were few and far between: The Entente internationale de l'acier in November 1925 adopted production quotas, and Louis Renault and several colleagues in the automobile industry proselytized at length on the virtues of the American production system. Although corporatist solutions and industrial concentration figured prominently in the plans of German heavy industry, few owners in postwar France shared the opinion of André Citroën that "il faudrait créer un ministère de l'industrie nationale qui obligerait les industriels à se spécialiser". Working-class organizations were equally hesitant; while the reformist faction of the CGT espoused productivism, most on the left agreed with the editors of *L'Humanité*, which called strikes in May 1926 actions against "l'américanisation de la production".¹⁴⁸ Although the decade ended with the ascension of neocapitalist André Tardieu to the premiership, the fierce opposition of the Radical party in the Chamber denied him the majority needed to implement modern state-planning and industrial organization.

The playing-field was far more level by the mid-thirties. Caution ruled the day during the first half of the decade, as the depression engendered both a universal return to liberal economic doctrine and the more conservative monetary policy of deflation. But by 1936, productivist solutions again resurfaced in the form of the economic plan. Adopted by the CGT, the Popular Front government (many socialist and radical planistes found positions within its ministries), and rightist organizations like L'Ordre nouveau, planisme represented state-sponsored productivist solutions to industrial malaise.¹⁴⁹ Yet while these factions agreed wholeheartedly upon the planiste form, they were far from unanimous regarding content. Figures such as Marcel Déat, Ernst Mercier, and Léon Jouhaux advocated

¹⁴⁸Charles Maier, *Recasting Bourgeois Europe* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975), pp. 6, 8-15, 530-531, 540-545; Patrick Fridenson, "L'Idéologie des grands constructeurs dans l'entre-deux-guerres", *Mouvement sociale*, no. 81, Oct.-Dec. 1972, pp. 53-54, 64.

¹⁴⁹The term productivism is here taken to mean the primacy of industrial production over profit, and a commitment to modern economic methods such as Taylorism and Fordism.

Americanization and the adoption of scientific management, while more conservative elements preferred a corporatism reminiscent of the system advocated by social Catholic thinkers Albert de Mun and René de la Tour du Pin. Despite the existence of support from both the left and the right, economic planning and modern industrial techniques were not universally accepted until the end of the Second World War.¹⁵⁰

Both the Faisceau and the CDF/PSF were among those interested in re-shaping the French economy during the interwar period, forging plans for a new economic order which were crucial to their projected reconstruction of French state and society once they attained power. Their experiences in this regard, however, were remarkably different. The Faisceau economic program was essentially that of Georges Valois. Other members wrote and spoke about economic matters, but continually referred to Valois as the group authority on the topic, repeating arguments from his postwar book L'Economie nouvelle and his articles in Nouveau Siècle. Moreover Valois's new economic order was strictly productivist, and he advocated technocratic solutions in which all social organization served the needs of production. Like the industrial minority of the twenties, he also espoused corporatism, but only as a vehicle to modernize the French economy through the implementation of Taylorism and scientific management. Although he retained the cause of social justice from his prewar infatuation with La Tour du Pin, he severed all ties with social Catholic and Maurrassian doctrine by 1924, a process directly related to his wartime experiences and an increasing belief that the future of the national economy depended upon the French adoption of the American system of Taylor and Ford. He professed admiration for the accomplishments of Mussolini and fascist Italy, but Valois's program of high salaries, low prices, and the worker-as-consumer came from Detroit rather than Rome. Valois and the

¹⁵⁰See chapter four of Richard F. Kuisel, Capitalism and the State in Modern France (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983).

Faisceau were thus among the minute faction arguing for modernization at a time when most owners looked approvingly to the prewar laissez-faire model for inspiration.

The situation was quite different for the CDF/PSF a decade later. Little conflict between traditionalists and modernizers existed in the twenties, because the latter had no true voice in a setting in which representatives of supposedly modern industries, such as Robert Pinot of the Comité des forges, denounced 'American' practices. By the mid-thirties, as the planiste vogue bloomed, the conflict which erupted between the conservative and progressive factions took root in the CDF/PSF, whose plans for the new economic order were diverse rather than monolithic. On one side, La Rocque and various traditionalists within the group proposed plans for a corporatist economy directly influenced by social Catholicism. Their goal was at once anti-liberal and anti-capitalist, envisioning the protection of the artisan, shopkeeper, and farmer, and rejecting modern industrial techniques. In their view, Taylorism and scientific management were anathematic to French business practices, which emphasized the small shop and enabled the reconciliation of workers and ownership in the workplace. Directly opposing the traditionalists was a more modern faction, more akin to Valois than La Rocque. Like Valois and the planistes of the mid-thirties, these members believed technocracy and the rational organization of production to be necessary for the French economy. Arguing that the artisanal tradition was a relic from the past, figures such as Bertrand de Maud'huy, Luc Tournon, and Marcel Canat de Chizy instead adopted the American model so dear to Valois, envisioning a new economic order based on Taylorism and Fordism, rather than La Tour du Pin, to preserve French economic competitiveness. Although they advocated a corporatist structure, their corporations were not La Rocque's anti-capitalist protectors of artisanal virtue, but modern economic units in which scientific management and highly specialized production techniques prevailed.

Both groups were thus embroiled in a nation-wide debate concerning the nature and future shape of the French economy, representative of opposing sides in a conflict which

continued throughout the interwar period, culminating in the implementation of state-planning in France after the second world war. Far from embodying the economic doctrine of the extreme-right, Valois, the Faisceau, and the CDF/PSF modernists shared their vision of a modern, highly organized, and technocratic French economy with leftists such as Jouhaux and Henri de Man, centrists within the radical party and the automobile industry, and rightists such as Mercier and Tardieu. Although they were proponents of social Catholic corporatism, hierarchy and discipline in the workplace, and anti-Taylorism--opinions traditionally shared by the extreme-right--La Rocque and the CDF/PSF traditionalists were equally contemporary. Their defense of small business and its practices, and their calls for worker-owner reconciliation seconded similar views held by members of the CGPF, the Comité des forges, and the majority of French businesses, 99% of which employed fewer than one hundred workers in nineteen thirty-six.¹⁵¹

1.

On March 18, 1928 Georges Valois signaled the end to the Faisceau experiment by publishing a "Premier manifeste pour la République syndicale". Although the political framework of the piece was the polar opposite of the authoritarian solutions espoused by the Faisceau, signalling a return to the left that he had abandoned two-and-a-half decades earlier, Valois's economic doctrine remained virtually intact. The message was unchanged: It was the duty of the productive classes to contribute the greatest possible effort in order to preserve France's pre-eminence on the world stage.¹⁵²

Valois had long been active in this regard, seeking to create a syndico-corporatist state in the modern economic mold. As a young Action française activist before the war, he

¹⁵¹Statistics taken from Alfred Sauvy, *Histoire économique de la France entre les deux guerres: T. 2. De Pierre Laval à Paul Reynaud* (Paris: Arthème Fayard, 1967), p. 486. It is worth noting that 82.84% of businesses in 1936 employed *five workers or fewer*. Hence La Rocque's views were far from abnormal in nineteen-thirties France.

¹⁵²Georges Valois, "Premier manifeste pour la République syndicale", *NS*, 18 March 1928.

took the lead in several royalist attempts at economic organization, culminating in the *Cité française* declaration of 1910 undertaken with his revolutionary syndicalist mentor Georges Sorel, and the December 1911 formation of the *Çercle Proudhon* study group with the young Edouard Berth. More critical than substantive, both initiatives lambasted the French bourgeoisie and the Republic without offering concrete alternatives, reflecting Valois's prewar devotion to La Tour du Pin-style social Catholicism and the anti-Republican side of Sorellian thought. This world-view was abruptly transformed in August 1914, however. Like so many of his generation, the experience of modern warfare alerted Valois to hitherto unimagined human potential. Valois admired the systematic organization of the trenches, emphasizing discipline, teamwork, and sacrifice, in which individual interest was subordinated to the common good. In 1919, he discovered the economic corollary to this sentiment, which would remain central to his thought throughout his postwar career: Taylorism, combined with a technocratic corporative structure of economic organization, which he adopted as the scientific basis for his proposed economy.

Valois's prewar arguments for a new economic order were vague at best, anti-semitic and anti-capitalist rants which delineated problems rather than proposing solutions. Speaking at a royalist gathering in February 1910, at the beginning of the *Action française* campaign to attract working-class supporters, he bemoaned the lack of help available to the struggling labourer, blaming the mutual hostility of the workers and owners for the problem. Neither revolution nor exploitative capitalism were viable, Valois stated, because they benefited only "men with Jewish names", who dominated both socialism and the laissez-faire economy. Yet at the time he elaborated no 'third way', content to offer scathing criticisms without presenting viable alternatives to prewar liberal economic principles. Two years later, in the pages of the *Cahiers du Cercle Proudhon*, he provided a rudimentary 'Proudhonian' alternative to both systems: The destruction of the modern 'capitalist' economy, substituting a genuinely national variant for the subordination of all human values

to the law of gold. But Valois continued to reject precise planning for his new economic order, on the grounds that such proposals were inevitably construed as utopias, offering false hopes to the masses in the manner of socialism. All that one could do was support the monarchy, which would destroy the rule of the Jewish capitalist 'plutocrats' and organize the economy according to the principles of social justice.¹⁵³

Combining the social Catholic writings of La Tour du Pin with the regenerative prescriptions of Maurrassian monarchism, Valois's new economy mirrored traditional French society, in which work was the focal point of men's lives, "the most precious activity of man". The specialized guild system, which he posited as the ideal form of commercial activity, served the material and moral interests of the worker and the nation as a whole. Man belonged to a family, corporation, and social class, but freely communicated with other classes, as part of a harmonious economy in which the worker and owner knew their rightful place. This 'Christian' social order, defined by hierarchy and corporative discipline, had been destroyed by liberalism and its lust for gold, in which profit replaced dignity and social peace. Only the mutual constraint of both sides, wrote Valois in his 1913 Catholic philosophical novel Le Père, could allow the restoration of this natural order. The rich would use their gold and command of labour for the good of the Cité, while the poor received security and their daily bread in return, with the leader ensuring that both performed their duties and eschewed personal interest.¹⁵⁴

An almost verbatim restatement of the arguments of La Tour du Pin and De Mun, the prewar economic writings of Valois betrayed the influence of Maurras and his fellow royalists. Yet in August 1914 Valois, like the rest of his generation, enlisted in the French army, serving at the front until seriously wounded in 1916. The experience of modern

¹⁵³F/7/13195, "Conférence royaliste de MM. Arnal et G. Valois", Le Nouvelliste, 7 Feb. 1910; Georges Valois, "Sorel et l'architecture sociale", Cahiers du Cercle Proudhon, April-May 1912, p. 111; Georges Valois, "Notre première année", Cahiers du Cercle Proudhon, April-May 1912, pp. 158-161.

¹⁵⁴Georges Valois, "La Bourgeoisie capitaliste", Cahiers du Cercle Proudhon, Dec. 1912, pp. 220-221; Georges Valois, Le Père (Paris: Nouvelle Librairie Nationale, 1924), pp. 196-197.

warfare shook Valois's faith in the social Catholic economic system. The concerted effort necessary in battle, the overarching organization, and the classless fraternity of the trenches convinced him that the reconstitution of ancien-regime corporatism was both impossible and unproductive. Though the state socialism of the union sacrée had failed, he wrote in 1917, the war had shown the need to balance individual and collective interests. The government had erred in directing the economy without proper organization and specialization, but the collaboration of all classes had succeeded in leading France to victory. Most importantly, such organization and collaboration could not succeed while utilizing the mores of the small guild workshop. Where Valois had previously argued in favour of medieval corporatism, he now adopted productivism. In the modern, mechanized world the economy would be run by Syndicats professionnels, in which workers and owners collaborated for maximum production mobilizing competence, speed, and careful planning at the minimum possible cost. As in the trenches, trained and disciplined personnel, directed by specialists and a technically-able administration which constantly studied industrial problems, would run the postwar economy.¹⁵⁵

Productivism had always been present in Valois's work. His first treatise, L'Homme qui vient, written in 1905 but published after he joined the Action française a year later, introduced the theme central to both the technocratic economic plans of the Faisceau and Valois's lifelong work: "la loi du moindre effort". According to this 'Loi Eternelle', those who exerted themselves to their full capacity survived and thrived, while those who existed solely for pleasure and adopted decadent behaviour withered and died out. Man, Valois proclaimed, had a duty to produce rather than enjoy the fruits of his labour. Yet human nature inclined individuals to seek the exact opposite, the minimum effort required in order to survive. Such tendencies could only be defeated by the "man with the whip", a figure that

¹⁵⁵Georges Valois, La Chéval de Troie (Paris: Nouvelle Librairie Nationale, 1918), pp. 249, 251-255.

Valois called the "chef de l'industrie", who impelled the producers. Where man once exerted himself in war, expanding and conquering, the new captain of industry would replace the general, adapting the warrior effort to the modern battlefield of the factory.¹⁵⁶ After 1919, Valois added a technocratic edge to the law, arguing that it was the motor of all economic progress, continually pushing industry to improve the means of production. By refusing to submit to this maxim, the old-fashioned patronat and politicians condemned the French nation and economy to decadence and the use of outdated methods.¹⁵⁷

Valois's first economic plan, revealed in his postwar effort L'Economie nouvelle, expanded upon the productivism of L'Homme qui vient. Critiquing the law of supply and demand, he claimed that the latter was constant, rather than flexible as the classical liberal economists believed. The Marxist concept of value was equally false in its assertion that quantity rather than quality of work was the determining factor. Valois was neither an anti-capitalist reactionary nor a conservative defender of artisanal virtue, however. Instead he explained that value was not determined by the quality of the finished product, but by the leadership of the owner, which manifested itself in rationally organized production methods and a clear sense of purpose. Value was thus based upon human effort, combining the skills of the worker and the progress-minded owner. The new economy would dispense with the bourgeois fiction that taste determined value or price, with the state acting to inculcate the utilitarian value of commodities while keeping decadence at bay.¹⁵⁸

The incentive for the owner was his profit, driving him continually to improve and innovate. But the owner, who viewed profit as his sole commercial *raison d'être*, lacked the necessary motivation to spur technical progress, a consequence of short-sightedness derived from his belief that such progress was unnecessary to maximize earnings. The conservative

¹⁵⁶Georges Valois, L'Homme qui vient: Philosophie de l'autorité (Paris: Nouvelle Librairie Nationale, 1906), pp. 145, 158-160.

¹⁵⁷See Georges Valois, L'Économie nouvelle (Paris: Nouvelle Librairie Nationale, 1919), pp. 126-134, 142-143; Georges Valois, "À l'Union des corporations françaises", Action française, 4 Oct. 1925.

¹⁵⁸Valois, L'Economie nouvelle, pp. 78-85, 112-115, 145-147.

patronat, bereft of the ability to administer and enrich the nation, needed to realize that rationalization was a modern economic necessity. Specialized technicians, the motor force of such innovation, acted as the motivators of the patronat, charged with maintaining high skill and production levels.

Valois further argued for the improved treatment of the worker, equally important to the success of the modern economy. The modern worker would be paid according to production, assured of a wage sufficient to raise a family and proper living conditions. Although a rigid hierarchy was to be maintained in the factory, owners and employees would exercise "mutual constraint", their needs protected by the syndical organization of society. All facets of a business, from prices to wages, were to be enacted by these corporative bodies: "Dans ce régime, tous sont syndiqués, pour vendre, pour acheter, pour produire, pour travailler, les prix de toutes choses, les conditions du travail, et sa rémunération, les conditions de la production sont réglés par les accords syndicaux entre syndicats intéressés". Although little detail was forthcoming, Valois clearly expected technical progress and the maximization of commercial activity to be assured by the respect of corporative discipline and hierarchy, collective contracts, and syndical accords. The spirit of the soldier at the front would be perpetuated by workers and owners, he proclaimed, giving the French factory the same prestige as her armed forces. The Marxist notion of the bourgeoisie and the worker would be replaced by a new concept born of the trenches: The 'productive' class, defined solely by metier.¹⁵⁹

With his emphasis upon hierarchy and discipline, worker-owner collaboration, and his espousal of corporatism, the Valois of L'Economie nouvelle appeared as a slightly more modern version of La Tour du Pin, eschewing modern capitalism in favour of social Catholic justice in the workplace. As late as 1923 Valois wrote that the capitalist economy (specifically supply and demand, and free trade) was inherently anti-Christian, and urged

¹⁵⁹Ibid, pp. 156-158, 168-172, 181-183, 204, 245.

French Catholics to correct its abuses through the moral and religious discipline recommended in the papal encyclical *Rerum Novarum*.¹⁶⁰ Certain authors have indeed placed Valois in the Action française camp even during the Faisceau years, arguing that he displayed the same "socio-economic conservatism", and never deviated from his prewar philosophies. Thus to Robert Soucy, Valois proposed to defend upper-class status despite his anti-bourgeois rhetoric and his credo of 'Nationalism plus socialism equals fascism'. Similarly, Plumyène and Lasierra write that his combination of nationalism and socialism represented anti-capitalism, severed from proletarian internationalism, and hence served the very bourgeoisie that he charged with complacency. While such statements are fair assessments of Valois's prewar and immediate postwar thought, they ignore his subsequent doctrinal evolution.¹⁶¹ By 1924, he moved from a reactionary position compatible with the prevailing ideology of the Action française towards emerging doctrinal strains adopted by such figures as Ernst Mercier: Technocracy, epitomized by an adherence to modern productivist corporative bodies and the rational organization of production proposed by Frederick W. Taylor and Henry Ford in the United States.¹⁶² The Valois of the Faisceau years jettisoned the old-fashioned corporatism of *L'Économie nouvelle* in favour of the modern industrial economic model, in which scientific management and the rule of experts prevailed, a natural corollary to his Le Courboisier-inspired utopian state. Social justice in the vein of De Mun or La Tour du Pin was still present, alongside anti-capitalist sentiment,

¹⁶⁰Valois, preface to Nel Aries, *L'Économie politique et la doctrine Catholique* (Paris: Nouvelle Librairie Nationale, 1923), pp. X-XI. This work is a systematic attempt to demonstrate the compatibility of Valoisian economic thought with Catholic doctrine.

¹⁶¹Robert Soucy, *French Fascism: The First Wave* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986), pp. 164-165; J. Plumyène and R. Lasierra, *Fascismes français, 1923-1963* (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1963), p. 39.

¹⁶²The definition of technocracy used here is that of Gerard Brun: A society whose principal goal is the direction of all social energy to production, in which politics is subordinate to economics. See *Technocrates et technocratie en France (1914-1945)* (Paris: Éditions Albatros, 1985). For Valois's praise of Mercier and the *Redressement français*, see "Notre politique ouvrière", *NS*, 1 May 1927. Discussions on collective action were held between the Faisceau and Mercier's group, but did not come to fruition. See Georges Valois, *L'Homme contre l'argent* (Paris: Librairie Valois, 1928), p. 239.

but both were contingent upon increased production capacity, itself a product of the new modernist economy.

2.

Valois and the Faisceau remained faithful to one tenet of nineteenth-century social Catholic economic organization: Corporatism. Yet their corporations were not the medieval relics described by La Tour du Pin, De Mun, or Maurras, emphasizing social harmony in the setting of the small workshop. To be sure, hierarchy, discipline, and worker-owner reconciliation were still heavily emphasized by Faisceau corporative planners, but Valois's syndicates and corporations gave a new, distinctly modern content to the older social Catholic form. Influenced by revolutionary syndicalists such as Georges Sorel and the fascist 'revolution' in Italy, various Faisceau writers proposed a corporatism that was technocratic and productivist, in which the national good outweighed individual interest. As Sorel had done, Valois argued for an organized productivism, in which the worker would re-energize and spur the flaccid bourgeois to participate in a collective effort of national construction. Infused with Sorellian theory, La Tour du Pin's corporations became modern economic vehicles for ever-greater national production, akin to those proposed by Edmondo Rossoni in the early years of the fascist movement in Italy. Like Rossoni, the group devised comprehensive plans for the remodeling of the state along economic lines, to be planned, directed, and enforced by various governing bodies. Termed the syndico-corporative state, the new economic order would be rationally planned, dividing industry and the nation along economic, rather than socio-political lines. National, regional and local corporations and syndicates would replace the existing economic structure, encouraging production for the nation above all else and eschewing the divisive tactics of socialism.

Immediately following the war, Valois acted to realize this program, but lacked the standing necessary to attract the French economic elite. His first postwar effort, the

Confédération nationale de la production--an attempt to gather together the nation's industrial leaders under the banner of a renewed national economy--proved unsuccessful. Established in May 1918, the initiative received scant attention, failing to attract more than a handful of minor engineers, bankers, and industrialists. The group was quickly overshadowed by the rival Confédération générale de la production française (CGPF), founded by such luminaries as Etienne Clémentel, Louis Loucheur, and André Tardieu. Where Valois and the royalists preached conservatism, the CGPF (and especially its ultramodern branch, the Société d'études et d'informations économiques) appealed to specialists and techniciens rather than old bourgeois money. Undaunted, Valois tried again in March 1920, initiating the Confédération de l'intelligence et de la production française (CIPF), this time with the full backing of his royalist colleagues in the Action française. But again his success was severely limited. While his other organizational effort, the Semaines économiques, gathered together experts for trade conferences in various metiers (currency and publishing were the most notable) and enjoyed a high public profile, the CIPF languished in obscurity, prompting the Paris police to call it an "organization on paper only", able to attract small delegations in Paris or the provinces, each containing a smattering of members.¹⁶³

In 1923, Valois changed its name to the Union des corporations françaises (UCF), simultaneously introducing the principles of hierarchy and rigid leadership, and proposed a reconvention of the Estates-General, in the modern guise of an economic parliament. The latter would better represent the true France, that of the producers and the heads of families, he reasoned, placing regional, moral, intellectual, and familial interests at the forefront of the nation. To the UCF fell the task of organizing the economy for the pursuit of the national interest instead of individual profit. France would become economically self-sufficient, divided by profession along corporatist lines, with inter-corporative accords determining

¹⁶³Douglas, pp. 46-48; Brun, pp. 17-19; F/7/13211, report of April 1926.

prices, salaries, and benefits. In this way the workers, the "éléments constitutifs de la nation" would be guaranteed security, the welfare of their families, and salaries and benefits administered by the state. In keeping with the Valoissian notion of corporative hierarchy from L'Économie nouvelle and his experience in the trenches, the chain of command would be absolute.

Although the Estates-General campaign attracted attention from prominent royalists and non-royalists alike before splintering in 1924, the UCF suffered the same fate as the CIPF, attracting little support while going virtually unnoticed by the French industrial world. Frédéric François-Marsal, former Minister of Finance, director of the Banque de l'Union Parisienne, and chair of the Semaine de la Monnaie wrote for the Cahiers des États-Généraux, as did Eugène Mathon, the social Catholic baron of industry from Lille-Roubaix-Tourcoing. No such recognizable figures entered the UCF, and Valois left the project behind upon exiting the Action française.¹⁶⁴

The idea of a corporative organization of production was not particularly novel. Valois himself had argued similarly in L'Économie nouvelle, outlining a local, regional, and national corporative framework. The underlying principles had been significantly altered, however, as Valois increasingly adopted a modern industro-centric worldview. By the 1923 formation of the UCF, as Valois began to adopt American scientific management as his cause célèbre, his emphasis upon old-fashioned corporatism withered. In welding the corporative structure to modern economic principles, such as the rationalization of production, he effectively abandoned social Catholicism in favour of emergent modern economic thought. Corporative thinking, long the exclusive preserve of reactionary forces, began to be adopted by the modern industrialists with whom Valois sought to join forces.

¹⁶⁴F/7/13211, report of April 1926; Douglas, pp. 46, 49, 53-60. The notions of hierarchy, discipline, and state protection of the worker actually predated L'Économie nouvelle, first discussed--albeit briefly--in an October 1918 speech given at the Cercle commerciale et industriel du France. See Georges Valois, La Réforme économique et sociale (Paris: Nouvelle Librairie Nationale, 1918), pp. 39-40.

Where corporative social hierarchy had previously meant the acceptance by the worker of an inferior position in return for stability granted by the small-shop conservative owner, emergent technocratic forces used the same arguments to press for the economic rule by those most educated and technically able. It was this concept which drove Clementel's plans for the CGPF: That collective effort and industrial concentration directed by a national economic council were necessary to regain French economic predominance. Employers and owners would work together for the national economic good in a centrally planned and rationally organized modern economy. Although rejected by leading industrialists such as Robert Pinot, the head of the powerful Comité des Forges, who held to the traditional paternalist doctrine, even the most reactionary recognized that production methods could not remain static.¹⁶⁵

Valois was among those interested in the new corporatism. Although he kept intact the basic corporative framework discussed in L'Economie nouvelle, he quickly abandoned most of its social Catholic underpinnings. By 1923, UCF pamphlets referred to the French nation as a collective industrial entity, where individual prosperity was dependent upon national economic performance. Corporatism now meant the concentration of production in a new 'super-syndicalism', in which entire industries were represented, as opposed to the CGT's syndicalism for the worker alone. The concept of irreconcilable economic classes was rejected in favour of Valois's theory of mutual constraint, in which workers would give maximum effort for maximum production in return for higher wages and the eight-hour day. All conflict between different categories of producer (owners/management, technicians, employees, workers) would be resolved within the corporations, which defended the common interest of their adherents. The President of the corporation made all decisions,

¹⁶⁵Georges Valois, L'Economie nouvelle, pp. 269-272, 279, 281-283; Matthew Elbow, French Corporative Theory, 1789-1948 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1953), pp. 63-75; Jennings, pp. 22-23; Charles Maier, Recasting Bourgeois Europe (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975), pp. 21, 33, 75, 82-83.

however, after consulting with the corporative executive committee.¹⁶⁶ These two central UCF tenets, authoritarianism and syndicalism, formed the basis for his next effort, the Faisceau des corporations (FC). When combined with the Faisceau emphasis on Taylorism and the rationalization of production, these doctrinal components became the foundation for the proposed fascist and syndico-corporatist state.

Many UCF members left to join Valois in the Faisceau, mostly veterans eager to build the *État Combattant*. Although some were workers, the defectors mainly comprised representatives of emergent modern professions: Engineers, factory managers, and owners of technologically advanced industrial concerns. Valois moved quickly to organize the contingent. The FC, formed as a successor to the Action française-dominated UCF, was established in December 1925 with Valois as President, Pierre Dumas--the ex-CGT activist and Faisceau expert on syndicalism--as Vice-President, and René de la Porte dit Lusignac--ex-socialist and junior bank executive--as Secretary-General. Like the UCF, the FC formulated an economic plan to combat the 'disorder and ruin' in the French economy, the result of 'decadent' commercial and industrial institutions. It had considerably more success than the UCF, however, attracting 6000-9000 members by October 1926, many of whom represented the technocratic elite long courted by Valois. Out of 2500 Paris FC members in April 1926, over 1000 came from industrial or high commercial professions.¹⁶⁷

The structure and platform of the FC, upon which a new economic order would be built, reflected its technocratic bent. According to the Faisceau membership guide, local, regional, and national corporative bodies would be formed, charged by the Director of the FC--from whom all economic policy emanated--with rationally organizing the French economy and industry locally and regionally.¹⁶⁸ At bottom, the FC mirrored Valois's plans

¹⁶⁶F/7/13209, Pamphlet-"Union des corporations françaises", 1923.

¹⁶⁷F/7/13208, report of 12 Dec. 1925; F/7/13211, report of April 1926; Pierre Dumas, "Chronique des corporations", *NS*, 20 Dec. 1925; F/7/13208, report of 13 Oct. 1926; F/7/13210, report-"Effectifs du Faisceau", Oct. 1926.

¹⁶⁸CHEVS/V 45, "Manuel de délégué", Aug. 1926.

for the political state, wherein the Assembly of Families would act as a communal and regional representative body for political purposes, and the corporative Association of Producers would express the needs and goals of the national economy. The chief aim of both associations was the implantation of the Faisceau's Révolution nationale on French soil. Each would advise the national leader on political, social, economic, and moral matters, voicing the concerns and desires most directly related to them. In the case of the Association of Producers, which gathered together corporative representatives of owners, workers, employees, technicians, and farmers, the role was purely economic: Consulting the state on the renovation of the existing socio-economic order, to be replaced with a more modern and benevolent model which would restore French greatness. In this way the new syndico-corporative order would symbolize the industrial age, claimed Valois, so anathematic to the current parliamentary state founded on liberal economic doctrine. Like the Faisceau political state, the new economic order embodied the spirit of the victory born of the trenches, combined with Valois's espousal of Taylorism and industrial modernity.¹⁶⁹ In this spirit, all Faisceau writers took pains to emphasize that the corporative system which they envisioned had no relation to similarly-named bodies proposed by La Tour du Pin and De Mun, which flourished under the Ancien Regime. Writing in Nouveau Siècle in February 1926, Antoine Fouroux called such corporations impractical in the modern world. Only their spirit would remain--fraternity, discipline, and a sense of social justice--while the form would be updated to serve the needs of the age of electricity.¹⁷⁰

Corporations were established in 1926-27 in many professions, with priority given to modern industry. By April 1926, twenty-two corporations of producers had been formed, ten of them in commerce and heavy industry, reflecting Valois's belief in scientific management and modern production, including "Machines, Electricity, Automobiles, and

¹⁶⁹F/7/13211, Tract-Georges Valois, Le Faisceau des combattants, des chefs de famille, et des producteurs (Paris: Éditions du Faisceau, 1926), p. 9; "Notre but", Faisceau Bellifontain, April 1926.

¹⁷⁰Antoine Fouroux, "L'Ingénieur dans l'organisation corporative", NS, 21 Feb. 1926.

Aeronautics", "Engineers", and "Banking and Stock Exchange". These were joined by various 'Corporations de métiers', comprising liberal and intellectual professions such as medicine and the arts. All corporations were sub-divided into 'Unions professionnelles' of workers, technicians, employees and ownership/management, representing the various facets of the production process. Thus the Corporation du bâtiment contained unions of architects, painters, civil engineers, designers, and many others, all divided according to skill. Each corporation was also given a mandate based upon the needs of the profession. In the Corporation de la banque et de la bourse, for example, technicians and workers from the bank and stock exchange, financial publicists, and bank executives were grouped together. Their corporative goal was the standardization of banking practices and regulations to allow better service, while organizing each bank more rationally and efficiently. Employees would enjoy corporative protection, guaranteed fair wages in inflation-proof gold francs, dignity, and job security. Caisses de compensation would also be established within each corporation, doling out funds for family allowances, pensions, unemployment insurance, and training programs. The corporation was further responsible for the screening of young entry-level candidates for job suitability and skill compatibility, and the retraining of those workers whose positions were made redundant through rationalization of the workplace.¹⁷¹

Organizational plans for national corporations were developed by the group's Conseil technique, which included Dumas as its President, Valois, Arthuys, Bourgin, Barrès and representatives of all FC branches. Under the guidance of Dumas, the plan further expanded the principles of syndico-corporative organization described by Valois in L'Économie nouvelle. The council was charged with the development and administration of the corporative economic order on the regional and local levels, including both the corporations themselves and the professional unions. Local corporations were given their

¹⁷¹F7/13211, report of April 1926; "Les Corporations", NS, 24 July 1926; APP/Ba 1894, report- "Faisceau des corporations", 27 July 1926; Paul Duman, "La Corporation de la banque et de la bourse", NS, 1 March 1926. Duman was the President of the banking corporation.

own leadership structure, the Conseil de direction, including a President, 3-4 Vice-Presidents, a treasurer, and a secretary. Above this local apparatus lay the regional corporations (Fédérations régionales de la corporation), composed of six to eight delegates from each local corporation. At the top was the national corporative body, containing delegates from each regional corporation. In this way, claimed the Conseil technique, a true representation of professions was achieved, and the national and regional corporative bodies functioned as economic 'parliaments'. In practical terms these were simple advisory bodies, giving reports on topics of professional interest and supplying necessary statistics, as the sole decision-making authority rested with the President of the local and regional corporations and the FC itself, and with the head of the new fascist state at the national level once the group attained power.¹⁷²

The task of planning the integration of the existing FC into the new fascist state fell to Dumas, who elaborated upon the role of the corporation, defined in a series of 1926 Nouveau Siècle articles as a grouping of all personnel involved in the making of a particular finished product. Their main role would be the organization of the state once it had been conquered by the Légions. The FC would prepare the presentation of social and economic interests before the state, determining the role of the producers—those who created and distributed wealth—in the new economic order. It also functioned as a means of expression for the needs, desires, and complaints of industry and commerce, a system for solving these problems, and the driving force behind Valois's desired rational organization of labour.¹⁷³

Such a system was rudimentarily mapped out by Valois in L'Economie nouvelle. Yet Dumas completely expanded Valois's corporatist framework, adding systematic detail. Like the existing Faisceau corporative bodies, the new corporations were to be local, regional, and national in scope. Although the state was not directly represented in the corporations

¹⁷²APP/Ba 1894, "Faisceau des corporations, direction technique".

¹⁷³Pierre Dumas, "Vers une organisation totale et rapide", NS, 12 Sept. 1926; Pierre Dumas, "La Corporation moderne", NS, 23 May 1926.

themselves, it regulated corporative activity, and remained the ultimate authority on all economic matters.

Local corporations would administer the affairs of their prescribed area (Town/Canton/City district) independent of the regional and national corporations in all matters except economic and commercial policy, but subject to the regulations and discipline of the state. Their duties included propaganda, recruitment, and the handling of minor local problems and complaints. Each local corporation would include among its members the Unions professionnelles, representing the needs of each individual metier involved in creating the finished product--professional syndicates which determined salary, work hours and pace, and standardized labour practices in areas such as hygiene or safety. The Unions grouped together owners, managers, technicians, and workers, each of whom was given a specific role. Owners were responsible for primary materials, the organization of credit, import/export flow, tariffs, and the rationalization of production. Technical matters were left to the technicians, the engineers and directors perfecting machines and tools while achieving the maximum benefit from the available human and material resources. For salaried workers and employees, the professional union afforded the opportunity to participate in the regulation of the workday, salary levels, workplace health and safety, and the organization of apprenticeship. Social insurance (for accidents, illness, and death), family allowances, and pensions would also be regulated by the professional unions, subsidized by employee and ownership contributions. Finally, worker housing and transport fell under the union's purview. They would further be charged with informing the local corporation of their specific needs. In this way, the tailors, whose methods were slower and more meticulous, would not be expected to produce like the clothing factories, which possessed new machinery and adopted Taylorist principles.¹⁷⁴

¹⁷⁴Pierre Dumas, "La Corporation moderne", *NS*, 6 June 1926/20 June 1926/ 4 July 1926; Lusignac, "Je vous présente les corporations en action", *NS*, 1 Aug. 1926.

Atop the local bodies were the regional corporations, composed of delegates from each professional group in the local corporations. Charged with the administration of each département, they determined policy and allocated resources to the local corporations, and were the link between the national and local bodies, relaying the needs and concerns of the smaller districts to the Conseil nationale de la corporation and the state. Each regional corporation possessed its own leadership committee, which maintained inter-corporative ties with other, related professions. This complex web was managed by the FC (the national corporation), composed of delegates from the various regional corporations, whose tasks were the formulation of national economic policy and the arbitration of inter-corporative disputes.¹⁷⁵

Atop the corporative bodies lay the state. Although business was conducted solely by the corporations, which were self-regulating, the state possessed liaison organizations in each region, whose delegates were empowered to collaborate with the syndicates and corporations in the management of the economy. According to Valois, the state would work with the corporations on the national and regional level to determine commercial policy, ensuring that mutual constraint, high salaries, low prices, and fair treatment of the worker were maintained. Although forbidden from direct intervention in local or regional economic affairs, the state would ensure that production levels were suitably high, and that inter-corporative trade was problem-free, to protect the national interest. Plans for expansion, centrally developed and rationally organized by the state, would then be implemented under its guidance. National project logs were to be kept, to ensure proper employment distribution and forecasts for future exports and domestic market shares. Finally, it supervised the maintenance of the national infrastructure, including transportation and distribution. On the international level, the state was expected to negotiate accords for the

¹⁷⁵Pierre Dumas, "La Corporation moderne", *NS*, 4 July 1926; Pierre Dumas, "Nos créations nouvelles", *NS*, 15 Aug. 1926.

importation of primary materials and the export of finished products, taking the place of the trusts as the national broker. No direct interference was permitted, yet the state was expected to lend its counsel and prestige to negotiations between French and foreign commercial interests, ensuring that companies were sufficiently stocked. As the national representative body, the Association of Producers would be consulted on all major decisions.¹⁷⁶

The direct goal of this organization was twofold: To shake the French bourgeoisie out of their complacency while simultaneously addressing the issue of class conflict. Valois retained one facet of social Catholic economic doctrine from his prewar years: The concept of social justice. Capitalism was inhuman and unjust, thundered Valois in the fashion of La Tour du Pin, as it encouraged the exploitation of the worker. The liberal economy, admonished the authors of a July 1926 economic plan in Nouveau siècle, existed only to enrich the bourgeoisie, atomizing and immiserating the working class in the process. The former were decadent, the shell of an elite for whom the organization of production was anathematic. Worse still, the law of least effort combined with greed led the modern French middle class to deride all but profit.¹⁷⁷

To Valois, the bourgeois Republican status quo was analogous to the situation in 1789, with one social class reserving power exclusively for itself. Capitalism and the bourgeois liberal economy had emptied the soil of men, herding them into industrial cities where they existed as an impoverished, deracinated proletariat. The modern worker was a nomad, wandering from one menial job to another, a victim of alcoholism and misery. It was thus

¹⁷⁶"Discours prononcée le 11 Novembre", NS, 12 Nov. 1925; CHEVS/V 21, Tract-Georges Valois, La Politique économique et sociale du Faisceau (Paris: Editions du Faisceau, 1926), pp. 18-19, 28. For an older, less developed version, see Georges Valois, "La Coordination des forces nationales", Cahiers des États-Généraux, Oct. 1923, pp. 141-144.

¹⁷⁷"Le Fascisme économique", NS, 29 July 1926. This plan was repeated verbatim in F/7/13211, Le Faisceau des combattants, des chefs de famille, et des producteurs; CHEVS/V 21, Tract-La Politique économique et sociale du Faisceau, pp. 9-10; Georges Valois, Le Fascisme (Paris: Nouvelle Librairie Nationale, 1927), p. 34; Georges Valois, "Notre politique ouvrière", NS, 2 April, 1926.

necessary to impose discipline upon the bourgeoisie, claimed Valois, ending the reign of individual interest. Profit, the motor of activity and spirit of invention, would be retained, but the exploitation of the workers would be eliminated. Socialism, the purveyor of senseless class warfare, would be denuded of all but the sense of social justice and social interest, which bonded society together and encouraged socio-economic organization. National and social discipline would be applied to individual initiative, allowing social and Christian principles to prevail in industry.¹⁷⁸

Such conditions enabled the worker to live with stability and dignity, and to raise a family, the basis of all national life according to Valois and the Faisceau. According to Marcel Delagrangé, the former mayor of Périgueux and ex-communist who joined the group in 1926, French labour had earned such security in the mud and blood of the trenches and the sweat and grime of the factories during the Great War. The worker had nothing to defend in 1914 except his country and a superior civilization; he now demanded the fruits of human progress, including fair wages and an education for his children. Continuing in this vein, Valois proposed that the worker was prepared to produce to the best of his ability in exchange for fair treatment, taking pride in his craft, and forming an elite dedicated to professional honour. Unlike his nineteenth-century counterpart, however, the modern worker did not owe his entire life to the owner. The patron was the leader in the workplace, but outside the factory walls the labourer was 'his own man', the head of a family and an equal member of society.¹⁷⁹

The syndico-corporatist system was thus the vehicle for both the defense of the worker and the advancement of his interests. Valois's ideal French labourer actively participated in

¹⁷⁸Georges Valois, "Aux républicains", *NS*, 21 June 1926; Georges Valois, "À L'Union des corporations françaises", *Action française*, 20 Sept., 1925; Georges Valois, "Le Fascisme économique", *NS*, 29 July 1926.

¹⁷⁹Marcel Delagrangé, "La Classe ouvrière et les leçons du passé", *NS*, 17 July 1927; CHEVS/V 21, Tract-Georges Valois, *La Politique économique et sociale du Faisceau*, pp. 9-10; Georges Valois, "La Bel ouvrage et l'honneur ouvrier", *NS*, 2 Oct., 1926.

corporative life, becoming initiated into the complexities of modern production. Within the new industrial Cités, the worker received a large representation at all corporative levels save the state, which was above parties and classes. In order to fulfill these duties, he was the beneficiary of a lifelong education, accruing new sets of skills and administrative abilities. To ensure that class conflict remained dormant, collective contracts were to be drawn up by representatives of owners and workers, under the watchful eye of the state, to allow social justice to prevail, while safeguarding the interests of ownership. Owners who neglected their workers would be answerable to the state, which rejected class interests in favour of fair and loyal reciprocal treatment within the corporations.¹⁸⁰

Valois and other Faisceau members predicted the victory of communism or socialism should France fail to adopt this syndico-corporatist system of economic organization. The French worker did not follow Marxist doctrinaires willingly, argued Valois. They were left with no clear alternative because of their socio-economic victimization, battered by the mercantile state and the dictatorship of moneyed interests. Nor was revolutionary syndicalism an alternative, wrote Dumas, because the CGT was ill-equipped to resist counter-measures initiated by employers. Their response had been capitulation, attempting to attain power by supporting electoral candidates and reaching a modus vivendi with the bourgeoisie. Ensuring better wages and benefits for the worker, the primary goal of the CGT, was compromised by this strategy, leaving the group in the service of two irreconcilable masters. The CGTU was no better, a pawn of communists in Moscow which argued for the Marxist solution of unremitting class war. Hence fascism was the only viable solution to revolution.¹⁸¹

¹⁸⁰F/7/13209, "Appel aux travailleurs français", n.d.; Georges Valois, *Le Fascisme*, pp. 117-119; Georges Valois, "La Politique économique", *NS*, 27 Dec. 1925.

¹⁸¹Georges Valois, "Premier Mai", *NS*, 30 April 1925; Pierre Dumas, "Le Travailleur français, dupé par la CGT", *NS*, 28 Feb. 1926; Pierre Dumas, "Le Problème ouvrier ou Faisceau des Corporations", *NS*, 12 May 1926; Pierre Dumas, "Le Parti communiste et le mouvement ouvrier", *NS*, 10 Jan. 1926.

3.

The syndicates and corporations described by Valois and Dumas administered justice through a confrontation of interests refereed by production councils containing owners' and workers' representatives. Valois's theory of mutual constraint remained, as the Faisceau plan demanded that workers produce the maximum possible output. Yet Valois's older versions of the owner and worker, labouring for the good of the nation, were here replaced by their American industrial counterparts. The owners continuously worked to improve the means and methods of production, while according high salaries and a multitude of fringe benefits to the worker, with concomitant low prices to increase consumption.

To be sure, neither La Tour du Pin nor Charles Maurras would have approved of such a plan. But Valois had learned the power of modern techniques and the true human capacity for effort during the war. The fascist economy, he declared, was to use the principles of the trenches and new technology to fight a new economic conflict. In this way the French economy, stagnant because it adhered to the nineteenth-century precepts of liberalism, would awaken. A new economic order, symbolizing the new century, would allow the reconstruction of prewar French commercial power, and then move beyond it, incrementally increasing its future capacity.¹⁸²

In Valois's view, corporatism itself was useless without a renewed commitment to production en-soi. Throwing off the yoke of social Catholicism, by 1924 he adopted the technocratic position that all change in the modern world was induced by economic forces. Machines enabled massive increases in production, while oil and electricity exponentially increased transportation capacity. Capitalizing on these advances, the new fascist economy would create a "Cité industrielle du siècle de l'électricité", mobilizing the combined forces of French production to transform the entire national economic landscape, from factories to

¹⁸²CHEVS/V 21, Tract-*La Politique économique et sociale du Faisceau*, p. 8. For Valois's comments on the subject while still at the front, see *Le Cheval de Troie*, p. 133.

roads and housing. This work would be accomplished by a 'great economic team' composed of bankers, industrialists, technicians, workers, merchants, and farmers, a renovation on par with the era of Louis XIV or the nineteenth-century infrastructure creation program. Nor was his vision confined to France alone. Only the 'rational and concerted' exploitation of European riches could provide security against American economic imperialism and Asiatic communist barbarism, putting the elite of all nations to work in order to restore European predominance, while defeating the unemployment, poverty, and ramshackle housing which abetted the spread of communism.¹⁸³

Valois's chosen vehicle for success was American scientific management. While still enamored of the theories of Maurras and La Tour du Pin, Valois had taken tentative steps towards Taylorism, promoting rationalized production in a series of 1919 Action française articles describing its successful application in American factories. Lauding its ability to increase production and efficiency, he advocated the use of the system within the new corporative economic order, stating that: "Dans l'économie nouvelle enfin, le chef d'entreprise n'est plus libre d'accepter ou de refuser les progrès techniques. Que son ambition soit satisfaite ou non, il faut qu'il conforme rapidement aux modifications rendues nécessaires." Valois cautioned, however, that the worker must not be treated like a robot, but permitted instead to retain the use of his intelligence and dignity. Yet any remaining doubts had disappeared by 1924, when he published the Taylorist manual L'Organisation scientifique des usines by American E. Nusbaumer at the Nouvelle Librairie Nationale.¹⁸⁴

The principles of scientific management and an openly technocratic doctrine permeated the economic plans of the Faisceau. Rejecting the corporative system of the ancien regime,

¹⁸³Georges Valois, "Ce que nous sommes", NS, 7 Dec. 1925; Georges Valois, Le Fascisme, pp. 84, 87-88; "La Paix", NS, 30 Aug. 1926; Georges Valois, "L'Equipe des grands producteurs", NS, 21 March 1926; F/7/13211, Le Faisceau des combattants....

¹⁸⁴Georges Valois, "La Méthodisation de la production", Action française, 14 April 1919; Georges Valois, "L'Economie de temp et d'effort", Action française, 28 May 1919; Georges Valois, L'Économie nouvelle, p. 193; E. Nusbaumer, L'Organisation scientifique des usines (Paris: Nouvelle Librairie Nationale, 1924), *passim*.

the laissez-faire freedom of the nineteenth-century, and the communist redistribution of wealth, Valois argued that higher production was alone capable of raising the status of the worker while maintaining the property and rights of ownership. This emphasis would be combined with the political power gained by the worker in the new fascist national and communal assemblies, the association of private property with productive function, and the rule of competence in place of class-based roles in the workplace. Taken as a whole, Valois hoped that these developments would eliminate class conflict. Furthermore, in the new economic order, owners unable to properly direct their concerns could either acquire the necessary modern skills in engineering and management, or cede their businesses to those more able. No longer, Valois thundered, would bourgeois egoism and ancient commercial institutions be allowed to impede progress.¹⁸⁵

The impetus clearly lay with ownership, viewed by the Faisceau as the directors of commercial policy, the only force capable of enacting changes which the government, possessing a vested interest in the status quo, would never effect. Taking up this strand of thought, industrialist and Nouveau Siècle columnist Paul-Charles Biver bemoaned the lack of interest displayed in new management methods and production techniques by ownership. The war had forced French industry to seek out new and innovative means of production, yet aside from isolated individuals or groups such as Ernst Mercier's Redressement français, few of the notoriously conservative owners would accept renewal and modernization. This stance was at odds with the war generation, he asserted, who had received a veritable education in management and technique in the trenches, and thus demanded owners and managers who were engineers and creative administrators rather than profiteering reactionaries. Hence the economic climate in 1927 was identical to that of 1914, Biver boldly stated; the will and action displayed by troops in Verdun and the Marne demanded economic victory a decade later, necessitating a total reorganization of production

¹⁸⁵Georges Valois, "Notre politique ouvrière", NS, 1 May 1927.

and a fresh conception of the workplace on the part of ownership. These new needs impelled the owner continually to renovate the production process, studying its various facets and seeking a deeper understanding of modern economic realities.¹⁸⁶

Despite Valois's assertion that the primary obstacle to European economic prestige was the United States, the group enthusiastically took up the American capitalist mantle with a St-Simonian flourish, presaging the neocapitalist trend of the latter part of the decade. Like Valois, neocapitalist proponents such as Mercier and André Tardieu preached the gospel of scientific management for the workplace and derided the complacent bourgeoisie for their lack of initiative. But such men were a "ginger group", as economic historian Richard Kuisel notes, in no way indicative of the doctrinal norm. Most French owners followed the dictum of René Duchemin, the President of the national employers federation, the Comité générale du production français, that traditional French methods were more than adequate for modern business needs. Rejecting any 'servile imitation' of American practices, Duchemin defended the traditional *modus operandi* of the French family firm, arguing that industrial concentration or rationalization of production would ruin the French economy.¹⁸⁷ Only a fraction of the patronat, such as the Comité national de l'organisation française (CNOF), a small technocratic lobbying group founded in 1926, or Mercier and the Redressement français, opposed the prevailing orthodoxy. Despite the unceasing efforts of such groups to promote the cause of rationalization, their disgust with the inefficiency of state-run enterprises (such as the PTT) and their endorsements of productivism and scientific management went unheeded by most owners.¹⁸⁸

Like Mercier and the CNOF, Valois and company recognized what the CGPF did not: That American firms were in a far stronger position than their French counterparts. France

¹⁸⁶Paul-Charles Biver, "L'Education du patronat", *NS*, 1 May 1927. Biver was also the head of the Paris branch of the Faisceau des corporations.

¹⁸⁷Kuisel, pp. 84-92.

¹⁸⁸Brun, pp. 17-19.

would either adapt to the new system, or fall prey to cheaper and better-produced American goods. The Faisceau leader continued fervently to argue for high wages and low prices, to stimulate consumerism and thus increase production, and voiced his approval for Mercier and Henry Ford, taking the latter's methodology as the model for the new economic order. Ford was named an 'animateur' of the group in the pages of Nouveau Siècle, which boasted that his workers were the highest paid in the world and the company's sales the greatest of any global auto-maker. Speaking at the Salle Wagram in May 1926, Valois contrasted the Ford wages of six dollars per day, and the low 15 000 franc price-tag of the model T, with the paltry salaries and exorbitant prices offered by Renault and Citroen. It was this system, he argued, that provided the antidote to socialist class war by allowing the worker to participate in company profits. Praise was equally forthcoming for the assembly-line production system. One Nouveau Siècle columnist lauded the company's "perfection de transport dans l'usine", marveling that a motor was finished in a mere ninety-seven minutes, a technique that, if adopted by the gallic patron, would allow France to conquer the European automotive industry.¹⁸⁹

Valois also tied the Fordist methodology to his law of least effort. Mirroring the description of the natural human impulse to idleness in L'Homme qui vient, Valois in 1926 applied the concept to business ownership, stating that the same natural economic rule inspired some patrons to seek the largest possible profit for the least work. This phenomenon encouraged ownership to drive the workers to maintain ever-greater production targets using primitive machines for the least possible pay. That the worker balked at this arrangement was understandable, he concluded, for his family was impoverished as a result. Labour's response, the socialist goal of collectivization of property, was equally deficient, sure to result in the suppression of economic activity due to

¹⁸⁹Valois, Le Fascisme, p. 154; "Les Animateurs: Henry Ford", NS, 13 March 1926; CHEVS/V 21, La Politique économique et sociale du Faisceau, pp. 6-8, 10-14; Mercure, "Notre industrie automobile et l'exemple de Ford", NS, 14 Feb. 1926.

a lack of initiative. Ford's five-day working week and high salaries provided the impetus for increased worker productivity without jeopardizing the profit motive, essential to securing the concerted effort of ownership.

It was the owner's responsibility to invest in the necessary technology, machines to save as much time as possible, and to remunerate the worker accordingly as production levels rose. Workers who displayed initiative would be rewarded, benefiting from guaranteed promotions based on demonstrated ability, and as a result would loyally serve the company, realizing that their fortunes were tied to the business. The employee would concurrently deliver maximum productivity through maximum effort. Profit could not come from lower wages, stressed Valois, because such a scheme discouraged technical progress, the spirit of invention, and economic creativity. The true owner was a leader, who regarded the workers as valuable employees, and was in turn respected by them.¹⁹⁰ Although hierarchy in the workplace would be maintained, the owner had as much responsibility as the worker or technician, charged with instilling energy and creative fervour into the workplace: "La tâche essentielle est de toujours inventer du travail et de trouver des méthodes de travail nouvelles, alors la création peut s'établir dans une création continue".¹⁹¹

Such new methods required continuous re-education for the worker, because the implementation of new technology radically altered the workforce. But Valois also wished to move beyond the nineteenth-century vision of the worker as a slave to the machine, breaking his back in its operation:

Le fascisme veut pour les classes ouvrières la plus forte instruction générale possible, et le plus haut enseignement technique, afin que les progrès de l'économie générale soient rapidement applicables--afin que, de plus en plus, les bras de l'homme sont remplacés par la machine, --afin que l'ouvrier

¹⁹⁰Georges Valois, "La Politique des hauts salaires", *NS*, 30 Sept. 1926; Mercure, "Les Hauts salaires en France", *NS*, 6 June 1926; J.B., "La Politique des hauts salaires aux États-Unis", *NS*, 17 April 1927.

¹⁹¹CHEVS/V 21, tract-Georges Valois, *La Politique économique et sociale du Faisceau*, pp. 6-8, 10-14.

devienne de plus en plus le conducteur intelligent des machines, servantes de l'homme.

This elite of workers would display a dedication to industrial production, exhorting the captains of industry to ever-greater levels of invention and technical progress. Those owners who resisted the new methods, parasites with no socio-economic value, would be removed by the state, "précipita dans le néant".¹⁹²

Valois originally used this philosophy to counter the Marxist suppression of the profit motive. But by the mid-twenties, his position increasingly resembled that of the Confédération générale du travail, an ironic twist considering Valois's and Dumas's fervent criticism of France's largest syndicalist organization, the Faisceau's professed arch-enemy. Valois promoted Léon Jouhaux's espousal of Taylorism for the CGT, frequently repeating his slogan "maximum production in minimum time for maximum salary" . Like the syndicalists, Valois and company also supported the eight-hour day, with Pierre Dumas--the head of the Faisceau des corporations--proclaiming that production no longer depended upon the work schedule. Once again the emphasis was upon the role of technology in the workplace, and Dumas warned the patronat that in the new factory, in which workers were expected to perform simpler and ever-more rapid tasks, longer days would inevitably result in accidents and fatigue. His attempt to distance the group from the syndicalists, seen as Marxists by the Faisceau, was quite weak. Dumas claimed that the shorter workday was no victory for the workers at the expense of ownership, as the CGT proclaimed, but merely 'fascist common sense' because longer hours were counter-productive.¹⁹³

Valois answered the conservative critics of scientific management and technology, who argued that both dehumanized the worker, by pointing to the impossibility of turning back

¹⁹²Georges Valois, "Aux travailleurs français", *NS*, 1 May 1926.

¹⁹³For Valois's comments on Jouhaux see, for example "L'illusion révolutionnaire", *Action française*, 29 Sept. 1919; Georges Valois, *La Réforme économique et sociale*, pp. 26-33; Pierre Dumas, "Les Huit heures", *NS*, 21 Aug. 1926; F/7/13209, Prefect of the Marne to the Minister of the Interior, Report of 21 June 1926 on a Faisceau meeting in Eparney.

the clock to the previous century. Here, too, his arguments were remarkably similar to the syndicalist position held by Georges Sorel, Paul Delesalle, Alphonse Merrheim, and Jouhaux. To Valois, the new technology outstripped the old-fashioned goal of profit. Echoing Sorel's concept of the factory of the future, he rejected the notion that the mechanization of the workplace would diminish the physical and intellectual capacity of labour as it had in the nineteenth-century; that electricity replaced oil meant efficiency, not the roboticization of the worker. Broadening these themes, Biver demonstrated the potential of rationalized production for labour in Nouveau Siècle, urging its adoption for the new economic order. The old back-breaking and mind-numbing labour of the last century would be rendered obsolete, he hypothesized. With a minimum of effort and corporate expense, the new worker could produce and earn more, while the workday lessened. Nor would profit diminish, because standardization automatically lowered prices and reduced costs, while facilitating exports. New markets were thus established, which required the subsequent rationalization of all national production and the 'science' of the market--specialized advertising and publicity.¹⁹⁴

The owners would be aided in their task by the workers, who would restore the lost creative fervour of the French bourgeoisie. Like his mentor Sorel, Valois believed that the worker was inherently productivist, constantly pressuring the middle class to construct the Cité of the future. As the ancient Greeks had awakened the slumbering world to modern culture and creativity, the proletariat shook the idling bourgeoisie: "La pression ouvrière exerce un rôle civilisateur qui est celui qui doit jouer un rôle considerable dans l'état de demain". Spurred by the fraternal experience of the trenches during the Great War, the

¹⁹⁴Jeremy Jennings, Syndicalism in France: A Study in Ideas (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1990), pp. 158-160; Georges Valois, La Politique de la victoire (Paris: Nouvelle Librairie Nationale, 1925), pp. 65-68; Paul-Charles Biver, "La Crise de la chômage condamnent l'État Parlementaire", NS, 9 Jan. 1927. Valois acknowledged his debt to revolutionary syndicalism, specifically Pelloutier, Delesalle, and Sorel in D'un siècle à l'autre: Chronique d'un génération (Paris: Nouvelle Librairie Nationale, 1924), pp. 108-114, 134-135.

worker demanded modern production methods, higher wages, and better working conditions suitable to the age of electricity. Like the great team of St-Simonian constructors of the nineteenth-century, who built railroads and factories, the postwar labourer demanded the construction of automobiles. But where Sorel's revolutionary worker used violence as a means to bridge class divisions and re-energize the bourgeoisie, a tactic proven false by the failure of the Russian Revolution according to Valois, the fascist worker found his ideal in the state. Above the fray, but sympathetic to the worker's demands, the state imposed national discipline on the bourgeoisie, maintaining the hierarchy desired by the middle-class while simultaneously restraining capitalist excess by granting security to the worker.¹⁹⁵

This was the essence of Valois's fascism, a definition which he claimed to have received from the example of Mussolini. The Duce, Valois opined, had acted similarly to the monarchs of the ancien regime. He sponsored the construction of modern factories and engendered an Italian economic resurgence, while raising the working class standard of living and forging an alliance between state and people. Others within the group agreed wholeheartedly, praising Mussolini's corporatism, technocratic beliefs, and his benevolence to the Italian worker in *Nouveau Siècle*. To Jacques Boulanger, Mussolini had wiped out the deficit while creating new modern industrial sectors such as hydroelectricity, and applying modern production techniques to the automobile industry and agriculture. Valois also presented a technocratic Duce, seemingly closer to Ernst Mercier or Louis Renault than Italian fascist reality: "Et c'est vous, Italiens, qui avez été les premiers à construire ces routes magnifiques qui sont un des signes de la civilisation moderne, ces routes automobiles qui auront dans l'avenir une signification égale aux chemins de fer au moment où ils ont été créés".¹⁹⁶

¹⁹⁵CHEVS/V 21, Tract-Georges Valois, *La Politique économique et sociale du Faisceau*, pp. 25, 55-60; Georges Valois, *Le Fascisme*, pp. 7-9, 14, 17-19.

¹⁹⁶Jacques Boulanger, "L'Oeuvre de fascisme en Italie", *NS*, 12 April 1926; CHEVS/V 21, Tract-Georges Valois, *La Politique économique et sociale du Faisceau*, p. 22.

Influenced as he was by Sorel, Taylorism, the experience of 1914, and the social Catholic concept of justice for the worker, the Duce that Valois imagined in 1925-26 was decidedly left-fascist in orientation and creed. Throughout 1925, articles in the *Faisceau* press continually described Italian fascism in this matter, emphasizing its syndico-corporatism and the benefits which it accorded to the worker. In an article lauding the creation of the *Confédération générale de l'industrie* and the fascist corporations, Antoine Fouroux enthusiastically endorsed their new roles in contract arbitration. Class collaboration was now assured by local syndicates, he wrote, which would crush the anarchistic practices of liberal capitalism and revolutionary dissent on the left, giving security to the worker and putting the middle-class to work for the nation. In an article on the social and economic doctrine of Italian fascism, Fouroux was even more blunt, arguing that fascism protected the worker from the whims of the bourgeoisie. The suppression of communism did not necessitate the death of social justice, but merely the institutionalization of discipline, with which the state would safeguard the rights and interest of all sectors of Italian society.¹⁹⁷

Such a plan was in fact present in early Italian fascist doctrine, embodied in the person of Edmondo Rossoni, the ex-revolutionary syndicalist who headed the Fascist Labour Confederation until his dismissal in 1928. The *Faisceau* press continually lauded Rossoni as an exemplar of the fascist economic ideal, the prophet of class collaboration and corporative organization.¹⁹⁸ Valois and Arthuys met the fascist union leader in Italy in September 1926, and were suitably impressed, hatching plans for an international conference on fascism and corporatism, to be held in Geneva.¹⁹⁹ Like Valois, Rossoni argued against both socialism and liberalism, writing that capitalism must serve the nation

¹⁹⁷Antoine Fouroux, "La Doctrine économique et sociale du fascisme", *NS*, 7 May 1925; Antoine Fouroux, "La Revolution fasciste", *NS*, 22 Oct. 1925.

¹⁹⁸See, for example, "Les Ouvriers Italiens contre la lutte des classes", *NS*, 4 June 1925; "La Revolution fasciste est antilibérale", *NS*, 22 Oct. 1925.

¹⁹⁹Douglas, p. 127-128.

rather than the individual. Class conflict would be replaced by class collaboration in the new fascist state, and the bourgeoisie would strive to perfect the means of production, while the state ensured a just repartition of benefits. Hierarchy would be maintained, but both workers and owners would serve the general interest by rationally increasing production: "Il Sindicalismo dev'essere prima di tutto una disciplina produttiva, cioè una systema razionale di organizzazione che serva a perfezione la produzione ed in ultima analisi ad aumentare la ricchezza di una collettività, collettività delimitata naturalmente nei confini della nazione". The corporatist system ensured that all of the necessary preconditions--social justice, productivism, the nation above the individual, discipline and hierarchy--would exist in the new economic order.²⁰⁰

But as Renzo di Felice has observed, there existed a clear difference between Fascism-as-Movement and Fascism-as-Regime, a reality unrecognized by Valois and his colleagues. The revolutionary ideals of Fascism-as-Movement, which envisioned the construction of a modern and cosmopolitan revolutionary state, was predominant before Mussolini came to power, uniting a conglomeration of syndicalists, Corradinian nationalists, squadristi, and fascist technocrats like Guiseppe Bottai. An economic version of such a plan, Rossoni's syndico-corporatism came into conflict with Fascism-as-Regime, the conservative consensus which "tende a fare del fatto fascismo solo la sovrastruttura di un potere personale, di una dittatura, di una linea politica che per molti aspetti diventa sempre più eredità di una tradizione".²⁰¹ Mussolini, for whom the conquest of power was the primary goal of the fascist enterprise, sided with the establishment--those socio-economic factions prepared to offer support to the Duce's cause in return for the suppression of fascism's revolutionary potential.

²⁰⁰Francesco Perfetti (ed.), *Il Sindicalismo Fascista: Vol. I, Dalle Origini dello Stato Corporativo (1919-1930)* (Roma: Bonacci Editore, 1988), pp. 270-281, 283.

²⁰¹Renzo di Felice, *Intervista sul Fascismo* (Roma: Arnoldo Mondadori Editore, 1992), p. 29.

In the economic sphere, the ambitions of Rossoni, Bianchi and other syndico-corporatists were thus squelched in the same manner as those of the violent and revolutionary squadristi, who were merged with the army during 1923. The Duce compromised the position of the syndicalist faction in November 1923, when the Palazzo Chigi agreement recognized Confindustria as the sole representative of Italian business while rejecting the fascist unions. Dependent upon the state for any real power, the aspirations of Rossoni and his confrères to establish their proposed new economic order were moribund by 1924.²⁰² The ultimate architect of the 1928 fascist Labour Charter was Alfredo Rocco, who broke the fascist unions while concurrently implementing an owner-biased labour-relations process. Syndico-corporatism was never brought to fruition; the corporations created throughout the thirties, administrative tools rather than representatives of "interclassimo", bore no resemblance to those proposed by Rossoni.²⁰³

Valois eventually recognized the souring of the fascist 'revolution' in Italy. During their visit in September 1926, he and Arthuys openly argued with Italian experts (including Arnaldo Mussolini, Benito's brother) about the future direction of the Italian economy. Undeterred, Valois hosted an international meeting that November in Paris supporting the formation of a fascist 'Latin Bloc', where speakers included the aging futurist Filippo Marinetti. Yet Marinetti was no fascist reactionary, and Valois's break with the Duce came the following year. Valois, disapproving of hesitation over the implementation of an elected corporative chamber, publicly criticized Italian fascism for the first time in July 1927. By December, the floodgates opened, with Valois clamoring that "l'Italie a fait une révolution qui a voulu aborder le problème, mais qui semble arrêtée maintenant par l'envahissement des

²⁰²Martin Blinkhorn, *Mussolini and Fascist Italy* (New York: Methuen, 1984), pp. 18-19, 23-24; Alastair Hamilton, *The Appeal of Fascism* (London: Anthony Blond, 1971), p. 40; Maier, pp. 428-429, 547, 553, 557-577.

²⁰³Blinkhorn, p. 24, De Felice, pp. 33-37. For an account of the failure of economic modernization in fascist Italy, see Roland Sarti, "Fascist Modernization in Italy: Traditional or Revolutionary?", *American Historical Review*, 75 (April 1970): 1029-1045.

éléments réactionnaires". By 1928, Valois jettisoned fascist terminology altogether, adopting the notion of the "République syndicale", a construct wholly immersed in scientific management and the primacy of technology.²⁰⁴

4.

Plans for a new economic order were equally common within the ranks of the CDF/PSF. The group's leadership and rank and file prioritized commerce and industry, unsurprising for a group whose membership drew heavily from workers, employees, and businessmen. The case of the CDF/PSF was quite distinct from that of the Faisceau, however. Where Valois's economic theories were unanimously accepted by Faisceau leadership and members as authoritative, La Rocque's social Catholicism was openly opposed by proponents of scientific management, Taylorism, and planisme--the very foundations of Valois's doctrine. Far from being doctrinally unified like the Faisceau, CDF/PSF leaders and the rank and file devised plans for the new economic order of a diametrically opposed nature.

These positions corresponded to the conflicting contemporary views on the nature and direction of the interwar French economy that had been present since the heyday of the Faisceau. New business leaders in emergent modern sectors, such as oil, electricity, and automotive production argued for the acceptance of rationalization and the principles of scientific management, along Taylorist and Fordist lines, as the guiding organizational principles in postwar industry. Industrialists such as Louis Renault or Ernst Mercier sought to make French products more competitive on the world market in this way, ending the protectionist mentality that had long been present in both government and the national popular consciousness. Such views encountered serious resistance from most French

²⁰⁴Douglas, pp. 127-128; "La Réunion de 2 Novembre à Cirque du Paris", *NS*, 7 Nov. 1926; Georges Valois, "Les Nouvelles formes de l'état et de la vie économique et sociale", *NS*, 17 July 1927; Georges Valois, "Un Nouvel age de l'humanité", *NS*, 31 Dec. 1927.

employers and bankers, who saw no reason to change the beneficial status quo. This reaction reflected the French economic landscape of the period, in which the small family firm and the medium-sized concern ruled the day. In 1931, for example, 80.32% of all French firms employed five or fewer workers, while only 6.44% employed greater than twenty, trends apparent throughout the interwar period.²⁰⁵

Yet by the mid-nineteen-thirties the technocrats of Valois's time, obsessed with the implantation of Taylorism and Fordism on French soil, gained a certain measure of popularity in business and political circles. The focus of the budding productivists had also evolved, from the application of rational organization and Taylorist principles in French industry to a reform of state and society using the same principles. Men such as Marcel Déat, André Tardieu, and Mercier believed that the state should be run by administrative experts or 'managers', "Political Engineers" in the words of neo-socialist Déat, a new St-Simonian ruling elite for modern times. A proliferation of economic plans appeared espousing such positions, rejecting liberalism and parliamentary government as a failure. Yet industrial concentration along German or American lines did not take place in France until after the second World War, and throughout the nineteen-thirties two distinct economic doctrines continued to clash. Neocapitalists, such as Mercier or Tardieu, and left-wing planistes like Hendrik de Man and various members of the CGT, offered modern solutions which accepted the need for rationalization and technical progress. They proposed a national economic council to rule in place of parliament, and a syndico-corporative economy in much the same vein as that proposed by Valois and the Faisceau. According to the neocapitalists and planistes, high salaries and low prices would de-proletarianize the workers, making them consumers. This American-style arrangement was predicated upon the acceptance by the working class of hierarchy, discipline, and productivism. Taking the opposite approach, corporatist theorists rejected the progressive

²⁰⁵Sauvy, p. 486.

and modernized economy in favour of tradition. Rather than Taylor and Ford, these men continued to champion the paternalistic French tradition and the small workshop as the model economic unit. This division was replicated within the CDF/PSF, with La Rocque and the traditionalist faction proffering a conservative social Catholic economy, while exponents of modern solutions voiced approval for neocapitalism.²⁰⁶

As in the Faisceau, representatives of 'modern' concerns were plentiful within the ranks of the CDF/PSF. Pierre Milza has estimated that 25% of the group's membership in mid-1934 came from the bourgeoisie and the elite cadres, as opposed to 16% from the petit bourgeoisie. By October 1936, after the group's transformation into the parliamentary PSF, the representation of the former remained steady at 24%, and would remain above 20% throughout the decade. These trends were equally apparent in the provinces, with managers and employees comprising 23.8% of CDF/PSF membership in the Midi, 21% in the Nord, 14.4% in Vernon, 46% in Prébendes, and approximately 20% in the Rhône.²⁰⁷ By 1938, 84 of the 202 members of the group's Comité directeur were drawn from engineering, industry, or banking, as were many of the group's parliamentary contingent. Two deputies--Fernand Robbe (Seine-et-Oise) and Jacques Bounin (Nice)--were engineers, Eugène Pebellier (Haute-Loire) was a graduate of the École des Mines, Marcel Deschaseux (Vosges) the director of the Compagnie des Thermes in Plombières, Paul Creyssel a lawyer specializing in political economy, and Charles Vallin a bank executive.²⁰⁸ Ernst Mercier, electricity magnate and leader of the technocratic Redressement français and La Rocque's employer in

²⁰⁶Klaus-Jürgen Müller, "French Fascism and Modernization", *Journal of Contemporary History*, 11 (1976), p. 83; Fridenson, pp. 53-68; Kuisel, pp. X, 98-119; CHEVS/LR 60, Philippe Machefer, "Le Parti social français et la petite entreprise", unpublished paper, 1981, pp. 12-15, Brun, pp. 69-78, 81, 117-130, 137-139.

²⁰⁷Pierre Milza, *Fascisme français: Passé et présent* (Paris: Flammarion, 1987), p. 138; Machefer, "Le Parti social français et la petite entreprise", p.4.; Weng Ting-Lung, "L'Histoire et la doctrine du Parti social français", Thèse de droit, Université de Nice, 1971, pp. 104-106; Christine Jaubertho, "Des Croix de Feu au Parti social français, la dérive vers la république", Mémoire de maîtrise, Université de Toulouse, 1993, p. 139; Sean Michael Kennedy, "Reconciling the Nation Against Democracy: The Croix de Feu, the Parti social français and French Politics", Ph.D. diss., York University, 1998, p. 205; Passmore, p. 275.

²⁰⁸Kennedy, pp. 203-204.

the late nineteen-twenties, was a dues-paying member until the summer of 1935, when his growing sympathy for the Soviet Union impelled the CDF/PSF leader to sever ties with him. Industrial magnate François de Wendel displayed interest in the group, and in the early thirties the CDF/PSF leadership attempted to curry the favour of André Tardieu, ex-President of the Republic and the proponent of modern industrial solutions to French economic stagnation.²⁰⁹ Furthermore, large industrial concerns such as Renault were viewed as primary targets for group recruitment.²¹⁰

Despite the abundant ties to heavy industry and commercial concerns within the ranks of the CDF/PSF, many within the group openly opposed modern industrial methods. Unlike Valois and his colleagues during the Faisceau years, group leader Colonel de la Rocque and like-minded members followed the tenets of social Catholic corporatism, envisioning the new order as a return to tradition, and utterly opposing Taylorism, Fordism, and state economic planning. Group sympathizer Jacques Daujat perhaps best described La Rocque's position on such economic matters as "conforme aux conceptions chrétiens". To Daujat and fellow sympathizer François Veuillot, his proposed economy--termed the profession organisée--represented the views of the Catholic church, as expressed in the papal encyclicals *Rerum Novarum* and *Quadragesimo Anno*, and the social Catholic doctrine of De Mun, La Tour du Pin, and the *Semaines sociales des Catholiques de France*.²¹¹ La Rocque himself was suitably vague, writing in his 1934 book *Service public*

²⁰⁹APP/Ba 1857, Excerpts from the Report of the Parliamentary Commission into the Events of 6 February 1934, pp. 1603-1604; Interview with Gilles de la Rocque and Jacques Nobecourt, June 1997; Jean-Noël Jeanneney, *François de Wendel en République: l'argent et le pouvoir, 1914-1940* (Paris: Seuil, 1976), pp. 567-568.

²¹⁰F/7/13241, note of 18 June 1935; CHEVS/LR 38, "Déclaration du Colonel de la Rocque, radiodiffusée le 24 Avril 1936"; "Congrès régional du Sud-Ouest", *Flambeau du Sud-Ouest*, 22 May 1937; "Notre activité", *L'Ouvrier libre*, 27 April 1937. This publication was the newspaper of the CDF/PSF worker; Philippe Rudaux, *Les Croix de Feu et le PSF* (Paris: Éditions Franc-Empire, 1967), p. 193.

²¹¹Jacques Daujat, "Chronique: Les Catholiques et la politique", *Orientations*, March-April 1936; François Veuillot, *La Rocque et son parti* (Paris: Librairie Plon, 1938), pp. 70/78. La Rocque's anti-capitalist and anti-rationalization terms and ideas both clearly betray the influence of La Tour du Pin and De Mun. See Elbow, pp. 69-79, 88-93; René de la Tour du Pin, *Vers un ordre social chrétien* (Paris: Editions du trident, 1987), pp. 22-24, 31-32, 37-41, 108-111, 117-120, 126. That the profession organisée was

that the profession organisée was a corporative construct which would prevent the abuse of the working class while simultaneously defending the position of business owners. The state would be divided into different categories of producers, from diverse economic regions, which would govern themselves on the local, regional, and national levels. Like La Tour du Pin, he rejected any political role for the corporations, in which hierarchy and collaboration would replace the current 'Bolshevik-Republican' syndicalism of class conflict.²¹² The main function of La Rocque's corporations was moral: The elimination of the frenzy for material gain in which rampant speculation and false materialism rather than the national interest held sway. In the new Etat social français, La Rocque proclaimed, personal interest was to be subordinated to the general good. The social Catholicism which Valois left behind by 1923 was thus enthusiastically adopted by the CDF/PSF leader as the basis for the group's proposed national economy.²¹³

Following La Rocque's lead, various members designed plans for the organization of the new economic order along corporatist lines in the tradition of La Tour du Pin and De Mun. Despite proclamations in the group's program and elsewhere that the CDF/PSF Profession organisée was not corporatist in nature, intended to separate their economic model from those in fascist Italy and nazi Germany, their proposed economic bodies were indeed corporations. The syndicate was to be the basis of all economic activity, devoid of any political sentiment and dedicated to renewed worker-owner collaboration. These bodies would be managed by a Conseil régional économique, which united and co-ordinated all facets of production. A Conseil nationale économique co-ordinated the regional branches,

inspired by social Catholicism was plainly stated by Charles Vallin, who wrote that it derived from "l'école sociale Catholique" and papal encyclicals. See "La Profession organisée et le corporatisme", Petit journal, 21 Jan. 1938.

²¹²La Rocque, "Intérêts limités", Le Flambeau, 28 Nov. 1936. La Rocque's use of 'profession organisée', a term originated by La Tour du Pin, should not be confused with its meaning to nineteen-thirties technocrats, for whom it signified a planned, ultra-modern economy and society. See Brun, pp. 110-111.

²¹³Lt.-Colonel de la Rocque, Service public (Paris: Grasset, 1934), pp. 141-145, 238-240.

and served as a guide to the state's legislative and executive powers. All were to be self-regulating, guided by a state which acted solely as an arbitrator, pledging non-intervention in industrial affairs. Unlike the Faisceau corporations, the Conseils were not vehicles for industrial concentration, but represented all French financial and economic interests, from artisans to industrialists.²¹⁴

Traditionalists in the group believed the creation of a labour charter to be the necessary first step towards the establishment of the profession organisée. According to the CDF/PSF published program, the charter would establish and prepare collective contracts for each profession, operating Labour Tribunals which would arbitrate conflicts between owners and workers. The charter would also regulate the length of the workday, establish paid holidays, a minimum wage, and social insurance and pension schemes. Unlike the similar initiatives of the Popular Front, however, the CDF/PSF charter would provide for the state organization of workers' leisure time, and outlaw any and all strikes or workplace dissent, the former permitted only when owners ignored arbitration rulings. In such instances, a vote by secret ballot would be taken by members of a given syndicate, once all avenues of discussion were exhausted. Violence and sabotage would be severely punished, and no strike action could be taken for political reasons or by civil servants.²¹⁵ Contract arbitration would be effected through an eight-man "Tribunal administratif des professions" (composed of government figures, legal advisors, and trade specialists), which would enforce the final decision of an intersyndical conciliation committee if the owners and

²¹⁴André Maurois, "Les Besoins de l'État moderne", Le Flambeau, June 1934; "Pour le peuple, par le peuple", special supplement to Le Flambeau, 11 April 1936; Le Parti social français: une mystique, un programme (Paris: SEDA, 1936), pp. 19-21; Charles Vallin, "La Profession organisée et le corporatisme", Petit journal, 21 Jan. 1938.

²¹⁵Le Parti social français: une Mystique, un programme, pp. 17-18, 21-22; AP/451/124-"Projet de décret-loi sur l'organisation professionnelle", 30 June 1938; "A la veille de la grève générale", L'Ouvrier libre, Dec. 1938; AP/451/117, "Etudes sur la grève", 1er Congrès du groupe patronale, 19-20 May 1939, pp. 25-29; AP/451/117, "Extraits du rapport de M. Pierre Forest sur le syndicalisme", from the Third PSF national congress, 1 Dec. 1938. Forest decreed that strikes would be redundant in the new Etat social français, because the corporative system generously benefited both parties.

workers syndicates failed to reach an agreement. The security of the worker and the artisan, important as it was to the group, was not without its price: In the Etat social français envisioned by La Rocque and the traditionalists, social and economic peace required government regulation.

No such social restrictions were to be placed upon the owners, but they too were to be bound by economic restraints enforced by the state. Owners would be responsible for the reeducation of unemployed workers, the establishment of caisses de compensation to deliver pensions, social insurance payments (for illness, and work-related injury or death), and a family allowance to ensure that mothers stayed at home and raised large families in keeping with the group's pronatalist bent.²¹⁶ Each company would be required to make regular contributions to their local and regional caisses, varying according to the size of the business and its profitability. It was the duty of the corporation to care for the worker and his family throughout his life, La Rocque told his audience at the first annual PSF national conference, from the first day in the factory through old age. The group's information bulletin reminded readers that any owner who did not meet this obligation betrayed both CDF/PSF workers and the party itself, and that the penalty was a disciplinary committee hearing and possible expulsion from the group.²¹⁷

The goal of these 'social' responsibilities of business was the "réintégration de l'esprit social de l'entreprise". Owners, commented Pierre Kula, the head of the CDF/PSF Groupe patronale, were to take an active interest in the welfare of their employees: "Il faut qu'elle banisse des familles ouvrières ce fléau et cette angoisse: l'impression de l'abandon". Echoing sentiments expressed fifty years earlier by La Tour du Pin and De Mun, Kula proposed that the goal of such action was the creation of a social Catholic economy, an established hierarchy in which each worker understood his role and acted with discipline, in

²¹⁶AP/451/124, "Projet du decret-loi sur l'organisation professionnelle", 30 June 1938.

²¹⁷"Le Discours de la Rocque", *Le Flambeau*, 26 Dec. 1936; AP/451/101, *Bulletin d'information* #83, 28 July 1938.

return for the promise of fair treatment and the co-operation of ownership with labour. This harmonious production process would be inculcated through family and the education system, in which owners would learn their social responsibilities, while the worker gained both a love of manual labour and a proper character. The worker, artisan, and owner would thus become conscious of their specific social roles, enabling them to "travailler dans la joie".²¹⁸

Nor did the CDF/PSF conception of hierarchy in the workplace aim to disempower the worker on the job. A report on the "Fonctions et droits respectifs du travail et du capital" referred to the standard business as a "Société à participation mixte du travail et du capital", in which the profit set aside for caisses de compensation was representative of the worker's share in the company. Workers were to be seen as co-owners rather than menial labourers, the report concluded. La Rocque agreed, calling for the promotion of all sufficiently talented workers to higher positions for the good of the business, and telling a crowd at the Vélodrome d'hiver in 1937 that the new economic elite would include all who demonstrated an advanced aptitude, regardless of background. The CDF/PSF program further called for worker bonuses akin to stockholder dividends, to be paid out according to productivity levels.²¹⁹ Traditionalists within the group firmly rejected the standard minimum wage, however. In its place, they proposed the 'salaire réel', sufficient to maintain a family and a home, but pegged to specific conditions and cost of living in each region, allowing the corporations (rather than the owner) to determine the necessary remuneration.²²⁰

²¹⁸AP/451/125, Pierre Kula, "Contribution à l'étude de la profession organisée". This argument was frequently repeated in CDF/PSF workers publications. See, for example, Jusot, "Reconciliation sociale", *L'Ouvrier libre*, Feb. 1939.

²¹⁹AP/451/124, "Fonctions et droits respectifs du travail et du capital", pp. 8-10; *Petit journal*, 18 Dec., 1937; AP/451/102, Tract-*Le Parti social français: une mystique, un programme*, p. 15.

²²⁰A. Langlade, "Pouvoir d'achat", *Le Flambeau*, 13 June 1936; APP/Ba 1902, "Les Croix de feu et la grève", 6 June 1936; AP/451/102, tract-*Le Parti social français: une mystique, un programme*, pp. 13-14.

Such attitudes reflected the traditionalist use of small businesses and workshops rather than modern heavy industry as their preferred economic model. This led the group in 1937 to establish a Confédération générale des commerçants, artisans et petits industriels, affiliated with the PSF Bureau politique, to act as the foundation for the future defense of small businesses and craftsmen.²²¹ One year later, at their 1938 annual conference, the group extended these efforts by passing a motion demanding the imposition of severe limitations on department stores. To La Rocque, the prosperity of France depended upon the stability of the artisan and shopkeeper: "Nous souhaitons tous sauver les libertés essentielles, mais il nous faut comprendre que ces libertés, qui font le bonheur et l'honneur de la France, sont liées au maintien de la petite propriété, du petit commerce et de l'artisanat". The traditional practices of the artisan and shopkeeper, emphasizing apprenticeship and owner-worker collaboration, were destroyed by rationalization and standardization. Quantity had replaced quality of work, La Rocque complained, as French business slavishly copied American methods, rejecting pride in workmanship and gallic tradition.²²²

The traditionalists frequently designated the artisan and shopkeeper as the true middle class, a sentiment which reflected both the preponderance of the small shop in France and the support for the CDF/PSF demonstrated by those in the traditional professions. In the words of Fernand Robbé, the PSF deputy for Seine-et-Oise, the group's vision of the classes moyennes was limited to the lower middle-class. For the CDF/PSF this meant the skilled worker who owned a small house earned by the sweat of his labour, or the small manufacturer who directed his own workshop. The bourgeoisie were never seriously considered by the group. La Rocque referred to the upper middle-class as opportunists,

²²¹CHEVS/LR 41, "Instructions à donner aux Présidents de Fédération au sujet de la Confédération générale des commerçants, artisans et petits industriels".

²²²*Petit journal*, 26 June 1939; AP/451/117, "Motion votée à la suite du rapport sur le commerce", 2 Dec. 1938; La Rocque, "Achèvements", *Le Flambeau*, 18 Jan. 1936. This same argument appears in Pierre Murat, "La France?...Enfin une tradition et un idéal", *La France sera sauvée par le PSF* (Colour magazine/supplement to *Petit journal*), Oct. 1937.

caring only for their profit at the expense of the artisan, while others blamed the bourgeoisie and the capitalist system for the decline of small business in France, which could not compete with the larger, richer trusts. In the words of one columnist writing in the Volontaire 36, the group's Lyon newspaper, the bourgeoisie would only rediscover their "qualités foncières de la race" under the Etat social français, through the adoption of artisanal principles.²²³

In their defense of the workshop over the factory, the traditionalists actively sought to transform industry by infusing it with artisanal principles. Lauding the continual contact between workers and owners in smaller concerns, and noting the respect shown by the small business owners for their employees, the Commission d'études sociales of the PSF Groupe patronale urged medium and large concerns to adopt a similar pattern. In a report on owner-worker relations in the new economy, the Commission personally directed senior management in heavy industry to keep spirits high in the factory and to encourage initiative. The greatest change was to take place in the role of ownership, however, now assigned the role of social benefactor to the worker. Owners were instructed to frequently visit their businesses in order to establish a personal relationship with the employees. No longer a faceless demagogue, the CDF/PSF patron donated his time for meetings with workers and management, and provided the mandatory social assistance. The Commission further decreed that exceptionally talented workers benefit from technical education in all facets of the production process, including sales and production techniques. Finally, mixed worker

²²³Sauvy, p. 487; Kennedy, p. 205; Flambeau de Sud-Ouest, 3 July 1937; CDLR, "Classes moyennes", Le Flambeau, 20 March 1937; André Roche, "Bourgeois, mon frère", Volontaire 36, 6 May 1938. For criticism of bourgeois opportunism see: L. Cleri, "Grandeur et misère des petites entreprises", Le Flambeau, 27 June 1936; Louis Recoules, "Qualité", Le Flambeau, 11 Jan. 1936; AP/451/117, "Extraits du rapport sur le commerce et l'industrie présenté par M. Eugene Pebellier, Député de la Haute Loire", 2 Dec. 1938.

and management committees were to be established in each concern, to maintain standards and improve conditions in such areas as hygiene, apprenticeship, and leisure.²²⁴

The group's moral emphasis further extended to trade itself. The liberal economic system had failed, argued a group report on the profession organisée in 1938, revealing the dangers of unfettered free trade, whose conditions had led France into economic anarchy, leaving low salaries, high taxes, and decadence in its wake. In order to rebuild French prestige, businesses would become extensions of family and community, acting for collective rather than personal profit. Management would thus be collective, with key decisions made by committees comprised of owners, managers, and workers delegates. Regional corporations set prices and salaries at acceptable levels, controlled the quality of the product, and trained the workers—especially the unemployed—in apprenticeship schools. Working with the government, the Conseil nationale économique ensured the good faith of business leaders and managers, fining corporations or removing corrupt and self-serving owners as necessary.²²⁵ State control was to be limited, however. The Commission d'études sociales recommended self-regulation as the best corporative strategy, with the state as guarantor rather than executor of industrial ententes and regulations.²²⁶ Others argued for more extreme solutions. One group member called for the immediate suppression of all derelict or anonymous businesses and their owners, to be replaced by 'responsible' men.²²⁷

Not surprisingly then, the group also vilified the capitalist system, blamed for both the misery of the French worker and the weakness of the nation's economy. "Sommes nous

²²⁴AP/451/117, Commission d'études sociales, "Les Conditions de rencontre entre les syndicats ouvriers et patronaux" in 1er Congrès du groupe patronale, May 1939, pp. 16-21. This argument was frequently repeated in the CDF/PSF press throughout the group's history. See for example "Pour une action", Le Flambeau, Oct. 1931; "Le Droit de rémontrance et la marche des entreprises", Temps nouveaux, 5 Dec. 1936; François Derval, "Critique et l'éloge du patronat", L'Espoir Lorrain, 20 March 1937.

²²⁵AP/451/124, "La Profession organisée", 25 April 1938.

²²⁶AP/451/117, Commission d'études économiques, "Le PSF et les ententes professionnelles" in 1er congrès du groupe patronale, May 1939.

²²⁷AP/451/124, Pierre d'Izarny Garafas, "Etude sur un ordre économique nouveau", May 25, 1936. Report submitted by the author to CDF/PSF leadership.

anticapitalistes?" asked Charles Vallin at a CDF/PSF meeting in Mortagne. His response betrayed a clear bias towards traditional middle-class values, particularly those of the artisanal class: "Presque! Nous voulons défendre le capital familiale, ce produit du travail lentement accumulé et augmenté par l'épargne, auquel l'est attaqué le capitalisme, auquel il faudra permettre de se continuer et de se transmettre". This philosophy and its laissez-faire twin had been necessary during the French revolutionary era, having led to the technical and financial progress of the nineteenth century. But "le remède est devenu poison", Vallin claimed, as free trade turned the world into an economic jungle where only the strong (those possessing sufficient capital) survived.²²⁸ In his 1934 work Service public, La Rocque referred to capitalism as irresponsible and parasitic, to blame for horrid working conditions, demoralized workers, and immoral materialism, as well as the Marxist menace—the reaction to its practices. Industry must be put to work for the nation, he wrote, and run according to the principles of discipline rather than covert banking interests.²²⁹ Yet the group did not envision the destruction of capitalism as did the Marxists. Rather liberalism itself was to be jettisoned, while the capitalist system would simply be modified, infused with traditional morality. In the words of CDF/PSF deputy Paul Creyssel, it would be "corrected", its excesses controlled by the state. Liberalism's chief tenet of individualism, that the personal interest was higher than the common good, would be eradicated.²³⁰

The group's critique of capitalism extended to modern industrial doctrine and techniques. Blaming industry for the deracination of the workers, recently torn from the natural surroundings of rural France, La Rocque claimed that modern industry was as dangerous as alcoholism to the health of the labouring masses. Taylorism represented nothing more than misery and impoverishment for the factory labourer, unemployment, and

²²⁸Volontaire de l'Ouest, Oct. 1936.

²²⁹La Rocque. Service public, pp. 139-140; CHEVS/LR 38, La Rocque speech in Bulletin du liaison du mouvement Croix de Feu en Algérie, 15 May 1938.

²³⁰BN, Tract-Le Parti social français devant les problèmes de l'heure, pp. 37-40.

unhygienic and back-breaking working conditions. Higher wages and the eight-hour day, following the American example, were not viable solutions, because such initiatives merely papered over the growing gap between technical progress on one hand and moral or spiritual progress on the other. The worker needed only a salary sufficient to raise a family and a healthy working environment, supplemented by protection from the whims of the financial oligarchy represented by the large anonymous trusts. Man should not become a mere consumer as in America, he continued, for this simply aided the cause of parasitic monopolies and the 'cancer' of intensified production which had led the world to the economic impasse of overproduction and depression.²³¹ La Rocque also rejected the American 'standard of living', whose goal was purely individualistic. Taylorism gave the worker modern comfort and conveniences, from the automobile to the cruise ship, encouraging him to reject the collective good in favour of 'Malthusian individualism'. This, La Rocque opined, was not the traditional French business practice, where quality superseded mass production and robotic factory workers:

(N)ous inclinerons les appétits de chacun devant la double obligation de la prospérité, de la sécurité des enfants. A ces derniers, nous refusons d'apporter des aliments médiocres fabriqués en série, nous voulons apporter la saine, l'exquise nourriture de notre sol. Nous voulons faire de notre pays ni un immense atelier de Robots, ni la clientèle normalisée d'un immense magasin de prix uniques.²³²

Others extended La Rocque's argument, claiming that the machine both reduced the worker's initiative and made his labour obsolete. Machinism, reported the Comité d'études sociales at the first annual congress of the Groupe patronale, robbed the worker of his skill and the traditional pride in the quality of his work, while simultaneously ignoring his need for both a family and dignified housing.²³³ Various group members also assailed the forty-

²³¹Tract-Parti social français, *1er Congrès agricole* (Saint Briec: Les Presses Bretonnes, 1939), pp. 14-15; La Rocque, *Service public*, pp. 231-232; CHEVS/LR 38, "Déclaration du Lt.-Colonel de la Rocque, radiodiffusée le 24 Avril 1936"; La Rocque, "Ou vont les Croix de Feu?", *Le Mois*, Sept.-Oct. 1935.

²³²*Volontaire* 36, 3 March 1939.

²³³AP/451/117, Tract-*1er Congrès.....*, pp. 14-16. The same argument was made in Pierre de Charant, "Patrons d'hasard", *Flambeau de Franche-Comte et Territoire de Belfort*, 15 March 1938.

hour working week granted by the Popular Front in the Matignon agreement. The PSF information bulletin blamed the reduced schedule for unemployment, claiming that it decreased production by making French goods uncompetitive on the world market. No international accord recognized the forty-hour week, and hence foreign countries which produced cheaper goods were the prime beneficiaries at the expense of French companies. The only solution, claimed one CDF/PSF pamphlet on the subject, was the variation of the legislated hours according to profession and region, under the supervision of the regional corporations and the authority of the state.²³⁴

Criticisms of modern industrial life and techniques were by no means purely confined to the treatment of the worker. Various CDF/PSF members decried the depopulation of the countryside, a phenomenon which they linked specifically to the preponderance of modern industry in France and governmental acquiescence in the elimination of the paysan. To one author in the Flambeau des Vosges, machinism had ravaged the countryside, emptying a multitude of French villages. The 'paysan déraciné' and the local artisan had been lumped in with the working masses, breaking their ties to tradition and family. The PSF, he claimed, had but one solution to the problem: "(I)l faudrait supprimer la machine". The labourer must be returned to his human and Christian rhythm of life, looking as fondly upon his workplace as his ancestors gazed upon the family farm.²³⁵

According to the traditionalists, the paysan represented the unity of the French people, crucial to the national identity. To Gilles Marguerin, agricultural affairs columnist for the Petit journal, the French farmer was the guardian of the soil, the lifeblood of France:

"Parcourez nos campagnes, pénétrez dans les cimetières de village. Vous n'en trouverez

²³⁴AP/451/101, supplement to Bulletin d'information #81, 1938; J.P. Basdevant, "La France va-t-elle au suicide?", Le Flambeau de Bourgogne, 1 June 1937; AP/451/102, Fiche-"La Loi des quarante heures-le chômage", April 1939; Tract-"Le PSF et la loi de 40 heures"; Charles Masson, "Les 40 heures et la production", Le Flambeau, 24 April, 1937; AP/451/107, Tract-Le Parti social français: une mystique. un programme, pp. 9-10.

²³⁵"Travail", Flambeau des Vosges, Feb. 1939.

guere où la piété des vivants n'ait érigé le monument en memoire des disparus de la dernière tournante, restauratrice d'une unité toujours maintenue". The love of the soil was a crucial component of the CDF/PSF spirit and doctrine, he claimed, embodied by La Rocque and those within the group who understood "l'appel de la terre". Such Barrèssian imagery abounded in CDF/PSF newspapers, portraying rural life as pure and natural, in stark contrast to the factory and industrial cité. One example in the Flambeau de Sud-Ouest linked Catholicism and the soil in a moral critique of technocracy: "Il y a encore, dans ce pays, des Paysans racés, des Paysans dans l'âme qui, sans mésestimer les droits légitimes du progrès, sont restés intégralement, profondément attachés au sol natal et veulent que la cloche qui a carillonné les premiers balbutiements de leur baptême, accompagne aussi de son glas, leur entrées dans l'au-déjà".²³⁶

Industry was designated as the chief culprit in the eradication of the peasantry. La Rocque alleged that city-based conglomerates emptied the countryside to further the needs of big business. The Chambres agricoles were gutted at the impetus of the trusts, he thundered, the first step towards the ruination of rural life. The CDF/PSF press regularly lashed out at city dwellers for ignoring the plight of the French farmer. One article in an April 1937 edition of Le Flambeau asserted that the paysan could expect nothing from the "intellectuel cosmopolite de l'Hôtel Matignon", men who were not truly French. The CDF/PSF was different, claimed the author, as it had been formed by farmers instead of politicians. Others attempted to counter the 'false' image of the big city prevalent among rural denizens, that the lights and glamour were worth the abandonment of the pays natale. The leisure pursuits and big-city job were unhealthy, clamored one in the Volonté Bretonne, while farm life, unblemished by modern industry, was far more hygienic: "On voit souvent

²³⁶Gilles Marguerin, "Salut aux terres françaises", Petit journal, 2 Jan. 1939; Jean Desguerets, "Esprit rural et esprit Croix de Feu", Le Flambeau, 12 Oct. 1935; CDLR, "Aux agriculteurs", Petit journal, 19 Dec. 1937; Edouard Gourdet, "La Terre nous parle", Flambeau de Sud-Ouest, 15 Jan. 1938.

de pauvres jeunes filles, pâles et amaigries, revenir de la ville pour mourir à la ferme natale".²³⁷

The CDF/PSF remedy for the woes of the French farmer was similar to its prescription for the artisan and shopkeeper: The Profession organisée. The 'Marxist nationalization of agriculture' embodied by the Office de Blé of the Popular Front was to be avoided at all costs, but productivism was believed equally inefficient, as it would engender overproduction and a resulting price collapse. Agricultural loans, at low rates, would finance a moratorium on rural debt—which the group blamed on governmental and industrial neglect of the farmer, refertilization of the soil, and improvements in tools and production. This "assurances paysannes" allowed farmers to retain agricultural workers, stemming the exodus to the factories. The creation of a rural stock exchange and trade police would suppress parasitic middlemen and the trusts, while professional organizations stabilized the market and prices. These regional bodies would further ensure the access of the greatest number of people to smaller farms, but limit the fragmentation of inherited land in large families. They would also regulate the costs of materials, set price limits, raise wages to compete with industry, and administer Caisses de compensations identical to their urban counterparts. A national agricultural council would create tariffs to protect the farmer until rural recovery was complete. These organizations were to be run by those who understood the needs of agriculture, the farmers themselves, rather than city-dwelling bureaucrats. The group rejected state control of agriculture as un-French; the gallic farmer could never allow his land to be subject to governmental whims.²³⁸

²³⁷CDLR, "Agriculteurs", Le Flambeau, 8 June 1935; A. Guérault, "Sauvons la profession agricole", Rénovation républicaine, Aug. 1939; Pierre Lecerf, "Avec nous, le paysannerie", Le Flambeau, 24 April 1937; E.V., "La Terre et vos enfants", Volonté Bretonne, 5 Dec. 1938.

²³⁸AP/451/82, Tract-"Cultivateurs"; AP/451/102, Tract-Le Paysan sauvera la France avec le PSF, n.a., n.d., pp. 27-38; Tract- Parti social français, 1er Congrès agricole, 16-17 Feb. 1939 (Saint-Brieuc, Les Presses Bretonnes, 1939), pp. 5-11, 16-19, 25-28, 45-47, 52, 60-62.

The traditionalist vision of the new economic order was plainly based on a return to the past. Although various members of the faction claimed that their plans did not reject economic modernity, their unceasing defense of artisans, shopkeepers, and farmers, and the 'French' way of life which these professions symbolized, paints a different picture. The hatred of Taylorism, disdain for scientific management, and professed anti-capitalism of such members was a far cry from Valois's productivism. La Rocque and others of his ilk designed a corporatist system with the professed aim of halting 'harmful' progress. These plans represented more than utopian projections; they were put into action after the transformation of the group into the Parti social français in two distinct but related forms: The Syndicats professionnels français for the worker, and a Groupe patronale directed at ownership.

5.

Much like Valois and the Faisceau, La Rocque and the CDF/PSF leadership believed that the implantation of their new economic order could begin even before power was attained. For once the worker and owner were reconciled, adapted to the harmony and social Catholic virtue of the corporations, the support needed to establish the Etat social français would materialize. Thus, beginning in the summer of 1936, the CDF/PSF sponsored two initiatives aimed at re-educating the worker and owner, and creating patriotic economic cadres dedicated to social justice. Yet La Rocque's indoctrination process was quite different from Valois's. The Faisceau leader was a productivist, and hence eager to promote rational organization by immediately gathering ownership and labour under the same roof, in the Faisceau des corporations. La Rocque, by contrast, concentrated not on the gospel of production, but on altering economic attitudes, and therefore formed two groups--the Confédération des syndicats professionnels français in June 1936 for the worker and the Groupe patronale in March 1939 for ownership (technicians were never

considered, in keeping with his anti-Taylorism)—to convert both sides to the group economic doctrine. These initiatives were referred to by various group members as CDF/PSF syndicalism.

Most important to the CDF/PSF was the adherence of the workers to the program of corporatism and reconciliation, the segment of society whose support was crucial to the success of the new order by virtue of their growing demographic predominance. La Rocque and his colleagues thus presented their syndicalism as a proposed alternative to the doctrine and programme of the CGT.²³⁹ This tactic also arose in response to the events of May and June 1936. The election that summer of the socialist-led Popular Front government precipitated wildcat strikes and factory occupations on a hitherto unimagined scale: 12 142 strikes involving 1.8 million workers in June alone, dwarfing the previous annual high of 1.3 million, during the postwar wave of 1920. Throughout France factories were occupied, including 1144 in the Nord by June 9, and all major works in Le Havre by the same date.²⁴⁰ One day later came the Matignon agreements, the first act of Léon Blum as France's first socialist Premier, in which ownership ceded the forty-hour week, paid vacations, mandatory collective bargaining, and a pay raise which averaged twelve per cent.²⁴¹ As scandalized as the patronat were, the horrified French right believed that socialism had triumphed in France. Describing the scene a posteriori, fascist intellectual Robert Brasillach wrote that "les fenêtres étaient décorées avec des drapeaux rouges, ornés de faucilles et de marteaux,

²³⁹ Although Philippe Machefer claims that La Rocque and his coevals were influenced by the ideas of Auguste Deteouf, who advocated an apolitical conception of syndico-corporatism within a profession organisée, such a link is rather tenuous. La Rocque never referred to Deteouf in his writings, and while the CDF/PSF leader would most certainly have agreed with Deteouf's emphasis on social stability and the preservation of the French farm, there was a technocratic edge to the neo-liberal's writing that was incompatible with the traditionalist doctrine of the CDF/PSF leader. An advocate of industrial concentration and productivism, and the director-general of the mechanical engineering firm Thomson-Houston, Deteouf was no defender of the artisanal economy. See CHEVS/LR 60, Philippe Machefer, "Le Parti sociale français et la petite entreprise", unpublished paper, 1981. For an analysis of Deteouf's neo-liberal and productivist beliefs, see Kuisel, pp. 105-106.

²⁴⁰ Julian Jackson, *The Popular Front in France: Defending Democracy, 1934-1938* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1990), pp. 85-88.

²⁴¹ Maurice Larkin, *France Since the Popular Front* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988), p. 55.

ou d'étoiles, ou même, par condescendance, d'un écusson tricolore". During the wildcat strikes in June, an irate Louis Marin, leader of the conservative Fédération républicaine, asked if France was still ruled by a "legal regime", shouting that "there was...an unheard of moral damage; brutal force reigns over justice and law". La Rocque and the CDF/PSF agreed wholeheartedly. The front page of Le Flambeau on 20 June 1936 painted an apocalyptic picture of the new 'government' and its partisans:

Dans la ville une sorte de terreur s'est repandue. Quelques bandes de jeunes gens, d'agitateurs inconnus, anonymes, ont ordonné la fermeture des magasins, l'évacuation des chantiers. La force publique devenait invisible. Un peu partout, le drapeau rouge remplaçait le drapeau tricolore ou le flétrissait de son voisinage.²⁴²

To La Rocque the choice was clear: Either convert the worker and begin construction of the new economic order at once, or face the implementation of a Marxist regime in France.

This situation was remarkably different from the one facing Valois and the Faisceau in the mid-twenties. The failure of postwar strike action led to the predominance of Léon Jouhaux and the reformist faction within the weakened CGT, leaving only the communist CGTU, whose members abandoned their reformist colleagues after 1921, to pursue a revolutionary agenda throughout the decade. Worse still for the left, the scission at Tours in 1920, precipitated by the refusal of Blum and his minority to follow Maurice Thorez into the Soviet camp and accept Moscow's conditions for participation in the Third International, left the socialist party in tatters. During the Faisceau years, Blum attempted to rebuild the 'vieille maison', compromising with the Cartel des Gauches and presenting little threat to the stability of the Republic. Support for the communists, excluded as they were from governing coalitions, was slight when compared to that of their German brethren. Although he frequently warned readers of Nouveau Siècle about the dangers of the communist 'horde',

²⁴²Robert Brasillach, Une Génération dans l'orage (Paris: Plon, 1968), p. 160; Louis Marin quoted in William D. Irvine, French Conservatism in Crisis: The Republican Federation of France in the 1930s (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1979), pp.85-86; "Des CDF a une action politique", Le Flambeau, 20 June 1936.

Valois's adoption of the American 'worker-as-consumer' model was motivated by the gospel of production rather than an imminent threat from the left.

The CDF/PSF, by contrast, needed French non-agrarian labour, which represented 38.3% of the working population in 1936, in order to enact the *Etat social français*.²⁴³ Although far less prevalent within the ranks of the group, comprising approximately 20% of their supporters from 1936 onwards, these numbers were still significant, not least because the implementation of the CDF/PSF state necessitated the elimination of their leftist rivals.²⁴⁴ They thus developed detailed plans for a new syndicalism to compete with both the CGT and the Popular Front, responding to the events of May and June 1936 by trying to wean French labour away from the left.²⁴⁵

First and foremost, the aim of these proposals was to add a unique CDF/PSF brand of syndicalism to the corporatist structure of the *État social français*. According to Pierre Forest, the group expert on syndicalism and labour, the first condition of working-class unity was patriotism. The worker who received a fair share from the owner at the urging of the state and corporation possessed a stake in the nation. Hence social justice was predicated upon social order, opposing internationalism and the colonization of the working class by communists and the CGT in favour of a 'syndicalisme nouveau'. The notion of class war only succeeded where the immiseration of the worker remained unchecked, a problem easily resolved by the implementation of the *profession organisée*.²⁴⁶

In keeping with the social Catholic corporative system adopted by the traditionalist faction, each syndicate would include representatives of ownership and labour, replacing the CGPF and the CGT with the doctrine of social reconciliation. They were to become cells

²⁴³Larkin, p. 3.

²⁴⁴Weng Ting-Lung, pp. 304-306.

²⁴⁵CHEVS/LR 60, Machefer, "Le Parti social français et la petite entreprise", p. 4.

²⁴⁶Petit journal, 4 April 1938; AP/451/102, Pierre Forest, Le Parti social français et le syndicalisme: Rapport présenté au 2^e congrès national du Parti social français (Lyon, 1937), pp. 10/13/15; "Union des classes", Flambeau de Sud-Ouest, 17 July 1937.

"with the goal of defending the common interests of [their] adherents", deriving from the original Christian spirit which equated the notion of work with that of brotherhood, antithetical to the inhumanity of modern enterprise and its technical evolution. The syndical association of workers within the profession organisée would organize the technical instruction of labour, work to lower the prices of staple goods, administer the caisses de compensation, and elevate the status of the worker.

Much like the Faisceau the CDF/PSF also rejected the use of syndicates for political ends, claiming partisan aims to be incompatible with the truly French syndicalism of Proudhon and reformist Auguste Keufer, the positivist and anti-communist proponent of compromise within the CGT.²⁴⁷ The group viewed syndicates in the CGT mold as misguided because they were political in nature, adopting over-arching revolutionary goals at odds with the confederation's professed desire to better the life of the worker. Writing in the Liberté du Maine, Michel Doumange called Jouhaux's organization "un parti politique camouflé en syndicat", whose aim was nothing less than the communist revolution in France, and whose leader was the servant of Moscow. The CGT were anti-national and anti-patriotic, claimed one group memorandum on syndicalism, and thus would be dissolved under the Etat social français. Forest himself concluded that support for the CGT was illusory; the worker voted for his factory representative with the CGT man standing over him, and naturally voted 'properly'. CDF/PSF syndicates were instead to be organized by profession, he claimed, because the working-class was splintered into factions according to metier.²⁴⁸

²⁴⁷In March 1936, the reformist CGT and communist CGTU reunited as part of the Popular Front initiative in France.

²⁴⁸Michel Domange, "Du profession au politique", Liberté du Maine, Dec. 1938 (2e quinzaine); AP/451/102, "Fiche-Le Syndicalisme", April 1939; Pierre Forest, "Syndicalisme professionnel", Volonté Bretonne, 5 Feb. 1939; AP/451/102, "Fiche-Le Syndicalisme", April 1939; AP/451/102, Pierre Forest, "Le Parti social français et le syndicalisme: Rapport présenté au 2e congrès national du Parti social français", Lyon-Dec. 1937, p. 1-5, 20-22, 32-33, 42-45.

A CDF/PSF syndical organization, called the Syndicats professionnels français (SPF), appeared in June 1936, in response to the perceived engagement of the CGT in the massive strike action which culminated in the Matignon agreements. La Rocque claimed that although he had personally founded the group, they were given complete freedom: As a CDF/PSF syndical organization, they were expected to be above politics, in direct contrast to the CGT. "La Rocque est le Père des SPF", he told the a crowd at the third PSF national congress in December 1938, "mais ce sont des enfants majeurs. Les Présidents de Fédérations [of the PSF] n'ont rien à voir là-dédans". Yet La Rocque's position vis-à-vis the SPF was far from neutral. The socialist newspaper Le Populaire reproduced a group circular in September 1938 which proclaimed that Roger Vitrac, the SPF secretary-general, was answerable to La Rocque, a verdict shared by the Sûreté de France. Nor were these opinions unsubstantiated. Vitrac sat on the CDF/PSF Comité financier, authored a regular column appearing in a variety of group newspapers, and wrote to La Rocque of the "devotion" extended to the group leader by all members of the SPF Bureau confédéral. Finally, Jean Mermoz, La Rocque's good friend and right-hand man, was a member of the SPF aéronautique and was often praised in their numerous publications. It is thus difficult to agree with Philippe Machefer's dictum that the SPF were merely "inspired" by the CDF/PSF.²⁴⁹

Though the group did form an 'official' workers organization in the Spring of 1938, the Propagande ouvrière et commerciale, the SPF were the focal point of CDF/PSF labour recruitment activities, and the POC never attained the level of success enjoyed by the SPF. Like Valois's and La Rocque's corporations, the SPF was a local, regional, and national

²⁴⁹AP/451/117, "Rapport Forest, intervention de la Rocque"; Jean-Maurice Herrmann, "Les Syndicats professionnels français ne sont qu'un instrument politique", Le Populaire, 29 Sept. 1938; 4 MZ/67 (Archives Départementales des Yvelines), Chemise SPF; CHEVS/LR 21, "Comité Financier, séance du 17 Novembre 1938; CHEVS/LR 20 I R. Vitrac to La Rocque, 28 Oct. 1937; SPF de l'aéronautique, Jan. 1937; CHEVS/LR 14 IV 2, "Mermoz", 1 Aug. 1937; Philippe Machefer, "Les Syndicats professionnels français (1936-1939), Mouvement sociale, no. 119, Avril-Juin 1982, pp. 91-94.

organization, with elected delegates at each level representing the interests of ownership and labour. Yet unlike the Faisceau des corporations, the SPF succeeded in attracting a fair percentage of the French working-class. By June 15, 1936 they claimed 2000 cells throughout France, and one million members three years later. At their 1938 congress, Vitrac further stated that 41.9% of all factory delegates were SPF in orientation. The Petit journal itself claimed that in the January 1939 factory elections, over one-third of the successful candidates were sponsored by the SPF, only ten fewer than the CGT. Although such numbers were artificially inflated, some success was clearly achieved by the new organization. SPF affiliates appeared across the country, from Paris, Lyon, and Lille to Marseilles, Alger, Montpellier, Mulhouse, and Bordeaux, in a wide variety of industries grouped into 16 regional bodies, each with its own press, service de placement, and collective contracts.²⁵⁰

Despite the anti-leftist slant within the union, and its success in attracting a segment of French labour, the SPF were not created exclusively to fight the CGT and CFTC. Like the Faisceau des corporations, the SPF were to be the basis for the realization of the profession organisée, faithful to the principles of La Rocque's Service public. The union's goal echoed La Rocque and Kula's vision of class collaboration,

d'étudier directement en son sein, puis en collaboration avec les organisations syndicales patronales correspondantes, les moyens propres à assurer à l'homme, par son travail, les conditions d'existence en rapport avec ses possibilités, ses capacités professionnels, son rôle familial dans la société...protéger la profession et assurer la défense des intérêts matériels et moraux des travailleurs intellectuels et manuels.²⁵¹

Working in tandem with ownership, the SPF would study various economic problems and design proper solutions, ensuring professional organization and effort on the regional and

²⁵⁰CHEVS/LR IV 2, "SPF", 15 June 1937; "Chez Renault", SPE, 15 Aug. 1938; "Discours du Wisshaupt", Automobile, Mar. 1939; Pierre Forest, "Les Travailleurs indiquent", Petit journal, 24 Jan. 1939; AP/451/125. Tract-"CSPF: Travailleurs français, syndiquez-vous", undated [1936?]; SPF de l'aéronautique, Jan. 1937; Banque et crédit, May 1937.

²⁵¹AP/451/102, "Fiche-Le Syndicalisme".

national levels. In keeping with La Rocque's defense of the artisanate, the SPF would also defend the French worker's family and implement an apprenticeship system. Once put into place, Forest stated, this plan aimed to destroy the communist 'virus politique' which had infected labour through the CGT and communist party, a domination clearly demonstrated by the actions of May 1936.²⁵²

True to the traditionalist faction's dictum that the collaboration of labour and ownership was crucial to French economic success, the SPF embraced corporatism as the solution to the estrangement of the worker under the capitalist system. Echoing La Rocque, they lauded the corporations of the ancien regime, in which worker and owner toiled side-by-side, in constant personal contact. True to the CDF/PSF leader's vision, SPF leaders blamed industrial concentration for the alienation of labour, as it forced the worker to emigrate to a strange city where he slaved in an anonymous factory, chained to a machine and rejected when he was no longer of use. Owners exploited him, ignoring his need for a family and proper housing, and denied him a wage sufficient to support them.²⁵³

This system could only be reversed by the suppression of the trusts and monopolies, and the creation of professional ententes to regulate labour. These contracts would be state-sanctioned, fixing working conditions and salaries. But as Armand Millot, secretary of the SPF Transport union, made clear, no grudge would be borne against the owners, despite their past flagrant abuse of the worker: "Nous n'attendons pas considérer nos patrons comme des ennemis qu'il faut réduire à l'impuissance par une lutte sans merci. Nous tenons à collaborer d'une façon intelligente et ne pas venir la menace à la bouche poser des revendications inacceptables et la plus souvent laissés en suspend (sic.) à cause de leur

²⁵²Pierre Forest, "La Confédération des syndicats professionnels français", *Petit journal*, 23 Dec. 1937.

²⁵³AP/451/125, Tract-"CSPF: Travailleurs français, syndiquez-vous", pp. 8-9, 13-15.

exagération". Working-class liberty would be defended "to the last drop of blood", claimed Millot, but within predefined limits imposed by hierarchy, authority, and discipline.²⁵⁴

As such rhetoric clearly demonstrates, far from siding with the worker, SPF leaders like Millot made few substantial demands. On the issue of wages, the SPF militants' handbook derided the concept of an equal salary for all workers accomplishing the same tasks in a given industry. In its place, the author proposed a 'salaire sociale' for the married, contingent upon the size of the worker's family, and a 'salaire économique' for the bachelor. Each consisted of the minimum needed to create a home, in material and moral security, continually adjusted to the cost of living. Where Valois and the Faisceau championed the worker as consumer, gaining a high salary in return for the acceptance of rational organization, the SPF tied the wage directly to worker productivity, the piece-work system of the artisanal workshop. Furthermore, where Valois's state was in constant consultation with the national corporations, acting as the final arbiter in cases of irreconcilable differences between ownership and workers, the SPF handbook rejected all political intervention, arguing that syndical supervision would suffice to settle disputes.²⁵⁵

Following the CDF/PSF lead, the SPF prohibited strikes and rejected the forty-hour week. Examples of workers toiling ceaselessly above and beyond the legal limit abounded in SPF publications. In a 1936 article entitled "Son de cloche", a group of workers at the M.J. Rooy typewriter workshop in Paris, presented with the sorry state of the company's finances, go behind the government's back and work forty-eight hours a week (the pre-Matignon norm) to save the factory. The paper condemned CGT workers for their non-participation, ending the article with the words "Stakhanovisme? Non! Collaboration!" The SPF aeronautics newspaper lambasted the forty-hour week and paid holidays, arguing that

²⁵⁴CHEVS/LR 14 IV 2, "CSPF Cahier du militant", June 1939, pp. 50-57; Armand Millot, "Nos idées, nos buts", *Les Professionnels de la S.T.A.*, April 1937.

²⁵⁵CHEVS/LR 14 IV 2, "CSPF Cahier du militant", June 1939, pp. 26-29, 39-45; AP/451/125, tract-"CSPF: Travailleurs français, syndiquez-vous", pp. 16-18.

they resulted in a higher cost of living and a lessening of national productive capacity. Much more necessary, insisted the SPF handbook, were apprenticeship and professional orientation in schools. In the new state, a set number of workers would be allowed entry into each profession, trained by instructors, and developed physically and morally. Thus no gluts could occur in various sectors of the economy, and the growing legion of the unemployed would be retrained and re-employed. Worker re-education, retirement with pensions, the elimination of 'abusive' foreign labour, and a family allowance allowing women to remain in the home were deemed sufficient to complete the elimination of unemployment and recovery of the economy.²⁵⁶

The establishment of the profession organisée involved the co-operation of owners as well as labour, and consequently the CDF/PSF formed a Groupe patronale (GP) in March 1939 to mobilize ownership. Conceived as the basis for the new economic order, alongside the Propagande ouvrière et commerciale, the new association was most notable for its formation of an 'idéologie du patronat'.²⁵⁷ Like the SPF, the GP embodied the economic doctrine of the traditionalists, espousing corporatism and the defense of the artisanate while rejecting Taylorism. Under the guidance of Pierre Kula and Louis Escande the association amassed delegates from twenty-six industries, of which only eight were representatives of heavy industry (chemicals, gas, electricity, and similarly large concerns), while twelve were artisanal in nature (small business, hairdressers, and clothing, for example).²⁵⁸

The closing resolutions of their first congress in May 1939 revealed a doctrine complementary to the wishes of La Rocque. The delegates passed motions in favour of the Profession organisée and SPF-style syndicalism, supporting the amelioration of the state of

²⁵⁶"Son de cloche", *L'Informateur du Syndicats professionnels français des industries chimiques et branches connexes*, Dec. 1936; A. Mahoux, "La Danger des grèves", *CSPF de l'aéronautique*, Jan. 1937; CHEVS/LR 14 IV 2, "CSPF Cahier du militant", June 1939, pp. 11-13, 15, 17-19; CHEVS/LR 20 K, "Discours de clôture du 2me Congrès national de la CSPF, prononcé par Roger Vitrac.

²⁵⁷Nobecourt, *Le colonel de la Rocque 1885-1946. ou les pièges du nationalisme chrétien* (Paris: Fayard, 1996), p. 658.

²⁵⁸"Réunion du 20 Mars au P.J.", March 1939.

the French working family, and the introduction of social peace and reconciliation into the economy. Escande, director of the group's Commission d'organisation et de propagande, championed a corporatist structure for the new economy, to replace the less organized Groupe patronale, including local, regional, and federal delegates representing sections, professions, and federations, headed by a Comité directeur. Each owner would belong to the Chambre syndicale professionnelle in his industry, and a Chambre syndicale régionale which grouped his profession with analogous ones. The latter was responsible for social and labour-related issues, such as the application of laws and work regulations, and the negotiation of collective contracts. Larger technical questions would be resolved by the national syndicate, which allocated resources and materials, organized fuel and transportation, and administered trade policies. Regional and national syndicates were to be grouped in federations, in the provinces and Paris respectively. The Confédération générale, composed of delegates from the national syndicates, administered economic and social interests concerning the nation as a whole.²⁵⁹

Three permanent commissions were established to organize this transition, for études sociales, études économiques, and organization/propaganda. Although it was never achieved, Escande also called for the inauguration in 1940 of a Comité professionnelle centrale, composed of delegates from industry and commerce throughout France, to work with the CDF/PSF Comité exécutif and provide detailed economic reports. Finally, Escande called for the formation of Syndicats professionnels patronaux, composed of delegates from the Chambres syndicales, to produce "un patronat animé de l'esprit social"--presumably working alongside the SPF. These syndicats also functioned as documentation centres, gathering statistical information about imports, exports, production, unemployment, and resources within the profession. In keeping with La Rocque's anti-Taylorist bent, they were

²⁵⁹AP/451/117, "Patrons et professions" in *1er Congrès du Groupe patronale*, pp. 8-10. For a more technical version of this plan, with slightly different terminology, see AP/451/124, "Charte patronale".

also to keep a watchful eye on technical progress and its effects on the market or production, and organize apprenticeship programs.²⁶⁰

The Syndicats patronaux, like the SPF, were organized as representative bodies, to be put to work within the corporative system under the Etat social français. To Escande, such organizations guaranteed economic stability while simultaneously providing representation for the national and regional Conseils professionnel et économique. The GP itself symbolized "l'organisation professionnelle préparatoire", foreshadowing economic regionalization by preparing personnel and adjusting business practices. Such organization sounded quasi-Taylorist, but the association's Comité centrale d'organisation sociale sounded an opposite note in its inaugural Charte patronale. Rejecting any planned 'économie dirigée', which suppressed individual initiative in the name of an economic utopia, the charter stated that such a system could only be implemented under an economic dictatorship. Initiative and liberty were the basis of all progress; quashing them would be tantamount to adopting Stalinism. Instead, the current egoistic economy would simply be modified, retaining profit while ensuring that each concern prioritized the profession and the nation in the 'politique économique d'ensemble'.²⁶¹

The SPF and GP were the first attempts at actualizing the doctrine of La Rocque and the traditionalists, the means to enact the corporativization of the French economy. Their doctrines and concerns mirror those of La Rocque and Kula: Owner-worker reconciliation, the construction of a corporatist society, the defense of the artisanate and middle-class values, and non-Taylorist socio-economic organization. Production was a major concern, and neither the SPF nor the GP believed that economic modernity could be fully reversed, but both strove to restore the social Catholic order championed by La Rocque while combating the Marxist threat. Others within the group were not so convinced, however, and

²⁶⁰AP/451/117, "Patrons et professions", "Rapport de la Commission d'organisation et de propagande" and "Résolution de clôture" in 1er Congrès du Groupe patronale, pp. 10-12, 64-68, 79.

²⁶¹AP/451/125, "Réunion du 20 Mars au P.J.", March 1939; AP/451/124, "Charte patronale".

sought a more modern third way between liberal capitalism and Marxism, which they believed more appropriate to the industrial age than social Catholicism.

6.

Despite the clear bias towards La Tour du Pin-style corporatism and the defense of the artisanal class displayed by La Rocque, the GP, and other traditionalists within the CDF/PSF, an opposing and more modern stream of thought prevailed. Representative of forward-looking professions such as engineering and heavy industry, these progressive voices envisioned a new economic order similar to that proposed by Valois and the Faisceau, based upon the theories of Henry Ford and Frederick Taylor rather than De Mun or La Tour du Pin. Rejecting corporatist solutions which defended artisans and small business, these modernists regarded the transformation of the owner into a progress-minded industrialist as the key to the prosperity of the Etat social français. Espousing planisme and technocracy, both of which were incompatible with La Rocque's social Catholic economic doctrine, they openly challenged the traditionalists within the group.

Conflict first materialized in the summer of 1935, in what became known as the 'Affaire des Maréchaux', which resulted in the departure of a group of Volontaires nationaux disillusioned with the CDF/PSF's perceived lack of action or concrete plans, a dearth they blamed squarely on La Rocque. Included among the dissidents were Bertrand de Maudhuy and Pierre Pucheu, both of whom later joined Doriot's Parti populaire français and (in the case of Pucheu) the Vichy synarchy, and Claude Popelin, a rising young star of the extreme-right in the thirties. Their resignation followed La Rocque's refusal to accept their plan, largely economic in nature, for the new CDF/PSF state.²⁶²

²⁶²The Volontaires nationaux was the section of the CDF/PSF reserved for members too young to have fought in the Great War. That the split was due to conflicting socio-economic doctrines was made quite clear by Pucheu in Bertrand de Jouvenel, "Scission chez les Croix de Feu", Vu, 17 July 1935.

Despite the assertion of La Rocque's biographer Jacques Nobecourt that "(e)ntre Service public et le document des 'maréchaux', les mots pouvaient être identiques et les différences minimales", the division between the two sides is quite apparent. La Rocque held faithfully to the corporatism of the social Catholic movement, emphasizing co-operation, reconciliation, and the defense of the artisan, shopkeeper, and farmer against rationalization. Pucheu and Maudhuy, in contrast, found their inspiration in the "Plan of July 9, 1934", the manifesto of a group of reform-minded syndicalists from across the political spectrum. Its signatories argued for the replacement of liberal capitalism with a 'self-conscious' economy, in which the state functioned as arbiter. True, social service and the joy of creation would replace the profit motive, yet production was still the primary goal, to be infused with hierarchy and morality but not procedurally altered. Maudhuy, who had participated in the drafting of the plan, increased its technocratic bent, arguing for state control over the economy and the rule of government-appointed experts, answerable to the state, in all commercial matters.²⁶³ Published in La République on Sept. 21, 1935, the plan rejected La Rocque's tenet that the worker needed only a salary sufficient to raise a family, opting instead for a proto-American system in which the purchase power of the worker would be steadily raised and a maximum work week of forty-eight hours instituted in order to end overproduction and high unemployment. National planning would thus replace laissez-faire liberalism in a new "économie organisée", in which the primary emphasis would clearly be placed on heavy industry.²⁶⁴

Nor were the maréchaux alone in their espousal of planisme. As economic historian Richard Kuisel has noted, plans were omnipresent in nineteen-thirties France. Although

²⁶³Nobecourt, pp. 350-355. This view is also advanced by Sean Michael Kennedy, who writes that the traditionalist and modern factions "were certainly in keeping with one another", in Kennedy, p. 73; Kuisel, pp. 100-101; Philippe Machefer, Ligues et fascismes en France (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1974), p. 23.

²⁶⁴"Plan des volontaires nationaux qui ont quitté le mouvement", La République, 21 Sept. 1935. Various right-wing luminaries, including Bertrand de Jouvenel, Georges Suarez, and Pierre Drieu la Rochelle contributed regularly to this publication, which was edited by Pierre Dominique and Émile Roche.

many simply poured old wine into new bottles, echoing past ideas without adding any novel element, the planistes entered high-level government posts during the course of the decade, and organizations as diverse as the CGT, the CFTC, the neo-liberals, and various socialists and radicals in Léon Blum's Popular Front ministry formulated comprehensive economic plans.²⁶⁵ The CDF/PSF were no exception to the planiste vogue; had not La Rocque and the traditionalists espoused corporatism, antiquated but nonetheless a socio-economic plan? But beyond corporatism, the CDF/PSF leader displayed little patience with economic planning. La Rocque lambasted the planistes for paying undue attention to economic matters at the expense of 'la vie sociale': "L'inquietude générale a engendré le grouillement du 'planisme'. Demandez à un 'planiste' de faire une étude sur l'éducation, sur la diplomatie, sur l'art militaire, sur la musique: il vous parlera d'économie".²⁶⁶

Certain corporatist tenets, such as the need for hierarchy and co-operation, were still present in the dissidents' plan. Others within the group looked to more extreme solutions, however, turning their back on social Catholicism. One proposal argued that all French production should be state-directed, in order to wrest control of the world's economy away from 'Anglo-Saxon super-capitalism' and the 'super-socialists' of the Marxist international. Certain members looked to the plans of Hendrik de Man and the neo-socialist left. Lauding de Man for stripping Marxism of its dogmatic materialism, one author in Le Flambeau approvingly presented de Man's plan, including the suppression of monopolies, the stabilization of labour through syndicates and collective contracts, the signing of European commercial accords, and social insurance regulations. Still others voiced approval for neo-socialists such as Albert Thomas and Marcel Déat, adopting the principle that all societal

²⁶⁵Kuisel, p. 98. For a comprehensive overview of various plans proposed throughout the decade, see chapter four of the same work.

²⁶⁶CHEVS/LR 43, La Rocque, "Reconciliation sociale", La France sera sauvée par le PSE; La Rocque, "Effort sociale", Le Flambeau, 5 Oct. 1935. For a similar argument, see Un Normalien, "Nouvelle idole", Le Flambeau, Dec. 1934.

plans rested upon regularized production and continued technical progress, linked with the cause of social justice.²⁶⁷

By the time the group transformed itself into the Parti social français in the summer of 1936, any links to the doctrine of the traditionalists were severed completely by the progressive faction. Members such as Luc Tournon or Marcel Canat de Chizy followed the neocapitalist trend of the thirties, rejecting corporatism in favour of technocracy. To the neocapitalists, Taylorism and the formation of large industrial combinations were seen as necessary steps towards economic prosperity. High wages and low prices were also necessary, to increase consumption. In exchange for his participation in scientifically managed production, the worker would receive job security, salary increases, less onerous work, and more leisure time along the lines of the emerging American model. Like Ernst Mercier or André Tardieu, the modernist contingent of the CDF/PSF believed that Henry Ford provided the answer to the Marxist threat, and that small business, an antiquated concept, would inevitably give way to large integrated firms. State intervention was acceptable, but only to prevent excess individualism and to regulate production.²⁶⁸

The argument in favour of rationalization and the adoption of modern economic principles of trade and organization was fleshed out in a series of articles which appeared in the Flambeau du Bourgogne throughout 1937, written by engineer Luc Tournon. To Tournon, economic Darwinism rather than social Catholicism was the remedy for French business woes: "La lutte économique se poursuit chaque jour entre des nations ou entre des groupements de nations, pour satisfaire aux besoins de leur populations et aussi de conquérir les marchés mondiaux. Les nations qui développeront ensuite dans la liberté leurs puissances matérielles et morales; les vaincues végéteront ou disparaîtront". France

²⁶⁷AP/451/125, "Projet d'un discours sur le profession organisée", July 15, 1937; Jean-Pierre, "Le 'Plan de travail' d'Henri de Man", Le Flambeau, 13 April, 1935; AP/451/125, "Note sur le Profession organisée", n.a., n.d. (1937). Planisme also appears, in simplified form, in early newspaper articles. See, for example, "Situation Économique", Le Flambeau, Jan. 1932.

²⁶⁸Kuisel, pp. 86-87. 89.

would either develop a highly modern and efficient economy, eliminating waste and maximizing production on a national level, or be swallowed by the competition and relegated to global second-class status. Production could only rise to necessary levels if the market and infrastructure—transportation capacity, for example—grew constantly, and capital served the national good. In order to obtain the maximum productive effort, economic liberty, the protection of property in all forms, and the rational organization of industry (including capital, labour, and resources) would need to be guaranteed by the new state.²⁶⁹ Although he paid lip service to La Rocque's theory of class collaboration and owner-worker reconciliation, Touron's message was clear: Modern economic realities demanded technocratic solutions. La Tour du Pin-style corporatism was both inefficient and unrealistic; if the new economic order within the *Etat social français* was to be viable, it would above all depend upon technology and the precepts of scientific management.

True, Touron declared, machinism had robbed the worker of his initiative, skills, and sometimes his employment, condemning him to repetitive tasks, and weakening the artisanal class. Yet the traditionalist argument, that modern industry was immoral, ignored the role played by rationalization in the progress of both the economy and humanity, and the truism that technical progress and production were a constant struggle. Far from enslaving the worker, the machine had liberated man from harsh labour, and provided a safer working environment, "chasser de l'atelier les incommodités et les dangers, faire circuler l'air et la lumière, faire regner la propreté et l'hygiène, rendre le travail plus gai". Nor could technology eradicate work, for men would always be required to operate the machines; by eliminating waste, it had merely reduced the workday and provided opportunities for greater leisure and higher wages.²⁷⁰

²⁶⁹Luc Touron, "L'Organisation politique de la production", *Flambeau du Bourgogne*, 14 March 1937.

²⁷⁰Luc Touron, "La Condition de l'ouvrier", *Flambeau de Bourgogne*, 15 Sept. 1937; Luc Touron, "La Rationalisation et le progrès", *Flambeau de Bourgogne*, 1 May 1937.

Touron admitted that there were dangers inherent in the rationalization of the economy, but dismissed them as preventable. Scientific management did not give license for the control of the workers by a select technocratic elite, nor should it lead to economic warfare. Syndicalism was still necessary for the workers, he claimed, alongside ownership ententes and an orderly economic structure throughout France. Men should not be made obsolete by machines or automated by them.²⁷¹ Nor should agriculture be ignored, and the few remaining artisanal shops be run out of business. To prevent such excesses, Touron proposed a national economic plan, in which trade regulations and the distribution of materials would be preset, to co-ordinate the rationalization and standardization of the national economy, and simultaneously maintain the independence of French business. High salaries and low prices would be instituted to encourage increased consumption levels. In order to effectuate this transformation, the owners and management would by necessity become specialists in the Taylorist mold, "s'attache à la sélection professionnelle, à l'étude des temps de travail, de la fatigue humaine, de l'hygiène des ateliers, de la rémunération equitable". Labour would also become specialized, emphasizing teamwork and specific professional skills.²⁷²

The corollary to such measures was an emphasis upon mass production. Here Touron approvingly quoted Henry Ford, echoing the American liberal business ethic in complete opposition to La Rocque's corporatist mentality: "Nous n'avons rien construit pour le plaisir de construire. Nous n'avons rien acheter pour le plaisir de l'acheter. Nous n'avons rien fabriquer pour le plaisir de fabriquer. Toutes nos initiatives ont toujours été prises en vue de satisfaire nos clients et nos salariés". The assembly-line method, involving the collaboration of all workers, technicians, and managers, would become the standard in

²⁷¹Luc Touron, "La Rationalisation et le progrès", *Flambeau de Bourgogne*, 1 May 1937.

²⁷²Luc Touron, "Qu'est-ce que la rationalisation", *Flambeau de Bourgogne*, 15 April 1937.

Arguments for competency and specialization were not exclusive to Touron. See AP/451/124, anon., "Fonctions et droits respectifs du travail et du capital".

France, as omnipresent in Michelin and Citroen as in American factories. Such production methods reduced prices and increased product availability, claimed Touron, and hence increased consumption and guaranteed prosperity.²⁷³

Like Touron, Marcel Canat presented a modern technocratic economic vision, in stark contrast to La Rocque's social Catholic corporatism. An engineer by trade, Canat was a columnist for the Volontaire 36, the CDF/PSF organ in Lyon.²⁷⁴ Where Touron had been vague regarding details of the transformed economic state, Canat used his column to devise a complete blueprint for the future economic order. Like La Rocque, Canat argued for the creation of regional and national economic bodies to regulate French business. Yet unlike the CDF/PSF leader, the young engineer recognized the permanence and desirability of modern industrial organization and techniques.

To Canat, the basis for all economic organization were mixed 'corps professionnels', containing representatives of labour, technicians, management, and ownership, categories more applicable to heavy industry than the small workshop. Although their primary duties were the preparation of collective contracts and the arbitration of labour disputes, the Corps were also charged with regulating regional and professional working conditions, fixing prices and quotas, organizing apprenticeship, and implementing social insurance. Class collaboration would be insured by the presence of an equal number of labour and ownership delegates, and by the mandatory adhesion of the workers to syndicates. The latter were to be non-political (i.e. non-socialist), but Canat specifically rejected the state monopolization of them along Italian fascist lines, arguing that true co-operation could not be achieved by state coercion.²⁷⁵ Unlike the corporate delegates proposed by the traditionalists, however, Canat's representatives, including the workers, were to be specialists

²⁷³Luc Touron, "Notre économie politique", Flambeau de Bourgogne, 1 Nov. 1937.

²⁷⁴Passmore, pp. 240, 272-273.

²⁷⁵Canat, "Les Corps professionnels", Volontaire 36, 14 May 1937; Canat, "Syndicalisme", Volontaire 36, 30 April, 1937.

in their fields, because modern rational organization demanded it. An improved education system would increase the capacity of the worker, enabling him to adapt to new work environments by learning the required skills. Canat's worker was no automaton performing the same short and repetitive task at a machine for eight daily hours, but rather "ils seront collaborateurs du patronat et de l'intelligence technique".²⁷⁶

Above the Corps professionnels Canat placed the Conseils économiques régionaux (CER), composed of workers and ownership delegates elected by the Corps. Their main role was to direct the regional economy from above, and to arbitrate commercial or labour disputes. The CER would issue regional statistical reports and initiate studies of various local economic problems, legislating on a wide variety of issues, from pensions to commercial accords. Their role was to be strictly economic, replacing the CGT and Chambers of commerce and industry as the sole representative of the national economic interest, and they would be subject to the authority of the state in all political matters.²⁷⁷

Atop this framework lay the Conseil nationale économique (CNE), protecting the rights of the worker while rationally organizing the French economy. The CNE would approve and regulate all labour contracts and commercial accords, and initiate interprofessional and inter-regional ones on the national and international level. As a regulatory body, the CNE would also ensure the equalization of supply and demand to deter overproduction and resulting unemployment, eliminate disputes over tariffs and prices, and organize a Comptoir nationale du commerce extérieur to supervise international trade. It was the bridge between business and government, guiding and informing the adoption of policies regarding trade and commerce, and consulting with the state on all matters of production and distribution. Although the state had the power to impose its will should the need arise, Canat clearly leaned towards self-regulation for business, and the CNE would be

²⁷⁶Volontaire 36, 18 March, 1938.

²⁷⁷Canat, "Les Conseils économiques régionaux", Volontaire 36, 7/14 Jan. 1938.

composed of various corporative representatives, functioning as an independent economic parliament.²⁷⁸

That Canat considered the CNE to be primarily the tool of big business is most clearly seen in its proposed composition. Over half of the delegates were to be drawn from heavy industry and banking. Furthermore, eight of the twenty professional sections which he assigned to the CNE were related to commerce or heavy industry, as opposed to five from agriculture, two for clothing, and two for the arts. In describing the role to be played by the CNE in the new order, Canat was even more specific, writing that the primary goals of the committee should be increased production and improved worker-owner relations, and placing special emphasis upon projects for industrial accords, production controls, and the trade balance.²⁷⁹ The defense of small business and artisans was never discussed.

7.

Both the Faisceau and the CDF/PSF, professing themselves to be outside the Republic, demanded a radical reorganization of nation, state, and society which rejected liberalism, conservatism, and Marxism in equal measure. Their claims for a new economic order were no less bold, and both groups continually presented their plans as original, antithetical to the weak Republican capitalist system which had led France to the verge of economic collapse. Valois and his colleagues continually reminded Nouveau Siècle readers that they were the first fascist organization in France, and that their economic alternative was fascist in nature, and hence quite novel. La Rocque and various CDF/PSF authors presented the Etat social français and the message of economic reconciliation as equally innovative, ideal solutions to French economic malaise. Yet their respective economic doctrines were surprisingly common, shared by many non-extreme-rightists who instead favoured the Republican

²⁷⁸Canat, "Le Conseil nationale économique et l'état social", Volontaire 36, 25 Feb. 1938.

²⁷⁹Canat, "Le Conseil national économique", Volontaire 36, 18 Feb. 1938.

system of government, a nationally-planned society, or—worse still—a socialist or syndicalist state.

Such was the case of Valois, who by the mid nineteen-twenties found himself among the economic avant-garde, alongside industrialists and doctrinaires ranging from Léon Jouhaux to Louis Renault, and from André François-Poncet to Ernst Mercier. The economic doctrine of the Faisceau was essentially that of its leader. Although broadened at times by Pierre Dumas, most group authors at best embellished Valois's thought, paraphrasing his work and citing his authority in economic matters. Like so many of his generation, Valois was profoundly affected by his time in the trenches. He owed his personal transformation into a proponent of technocracy to the Great War. Entering the conflict as a convinced Maurrassian and advocate of social Catholicism, he was quickly introduced to a new society. Despite the tinge of idealism present in his description of the fraternity and discipline during wartime, Valois believed that the trenches provided the blueprint for the society of the future, a logical extension of the political *Etat combattant*. Thus the new economic order paralleled his perception of the organizational principles of the French army. Class collaboration replaced the rapport between officers and soldiers, but the structure and principles of the trenches, such as hierarchy and discipline, a highly organized and rational society, and the emphasis upon specialization remained unchanged. This schema provided the basis for Valois's entire postwar economic program, from the earliest rough outline of a syndico-corporativist society to the Faisceau des corporations, and he continually referred to the trenches as his inspiration. Where Jacques Arthuys and Philippe Barrès wrote of the *Etat combattant* as a continuation of the war in civil society, a strong France forged anew by the battle-hardened combatant, Valois spoke of a new economic war. Eschewing the terminology of virility adopted by his confrères, he instead argued that the war generation demanded not struggle, but modern industrial techniques and an unceasing effort to ensure French economic predominance. The artisanal virtues of the

small shop, championed by Valois in the Cahiers du Cercle Proudhon, were meaningless in a conflict waged according to the rules of mass production. It is therefore no coincidence that the postwar Valois was the champion of the 'age of electricity', in which modern, concentrated industrial production ruled the day.

But there was an equally important secondary influence upon Valois's postwar thought, without which his wartime experiences could not have found their economic expression. In looking to the American industrial model, epitomized by Taylor's scientific management and Ford's rational organization of production, productivism became Valois's economic doctrine. This theme provided the constant thread throughout Valois's career, developing from the primitive productivist doctrine of the law of maximum effort in L'Homme qui vient, through the vague syndico-corporatism outlined in the postwar L'Economie nouvelle, and culminating in the organizational efforts of the Faisceau des corporations and the plans for a new economic order created by the Faisceau. While he shared a concern for social justice with La Tour du Pin and De Mun, Valois was thoroughly impressed with modern capitalist production techniques, which he deemed both the economic realization of the work of the combatant and the salvation of backwards French industry. His vision of the worker and owner were identical to those proposed by Jouhaux, Renault, and Mercier in France, and by Henry Ford in the United States: Maximum effort in minimum time for maximum benefit. High salaries and low prices encouraged consumption, gained the loyalty of the worker, and drove the patron continually to improve the means of production. Far from being fascist in nature, this system was the basis of American economic success, and was enthusiastically adopted in France after the second world war. As a member of the interwar minority advocating economic modernization, Valois joined representatives of heavy industry, future deputies and financiers, and members of the CGT in the commercial avant-garde.

The key difference was that Valois, in keeping with his concept of the authoritarian state and the organic nation, expected production and effort to be in service of the collective

rather than the individual. He opposed liberalism, because it encouraged laziness in the patronat and immiserated the worker, allowing communism and its ideology of class warfare to flourish, and serving the law of profit rather than the nation as a whole. Yet even though his ends were anti-Republican, completely opposed to the practices of laissez-faire capitalism, the means he proposed were quite common: The corporatist system of economic organization, adopted to ensure that the selfish patronat attended to the needs of the nation rather than the bottom line. Valois rejected the medieval corporations long championed by the French extreme-right as the embodiment of national principles, deeming them insufficient to meet the needs of a modern economy, instead favouring the new corporatism adopted by various industrialists in emergent modern sectors in postwar France, Italy, and Germany. His industrial organization, like those proposed by Germany's Hugo Stinnes, Italy's Edmondo Rossoni, and a variety of French technocrats, involved industrial concentration, the rational organization of production, and the specialization of labour.

It is thus difficult to accept Valois's dictum that his economy was fascist. Valois and others within the Faisceau constantly referred to the economic 'revolution' taking place in Italy, the herald of a new European organization suitable for the age of electricity. Too late did they realize that their vision of Italian fascism was false, that the Duce was no combination of Sorel, Saint-Simon, and Henry Ford, but a reactionary who gave free rein to Confindustria while squelching revolutionary sentiment in favour of the status quo. In his search for contemporaries, Valois might have instead looked to the industrial boardrooms of the automotive, steel, and electricity industries, where men like Ernst Mercier and Louis Renault agreed wholeheartedly with his Taylorist prescription for the stricken French economy.

Similarly to Valois, both the traditionalist and modernist factions of the CDF/PSF represented contemporary strains of economic thought. But unlike the Faisceau, the group

was divided concerning the character of the economy within the *Etat social français*. While the economic doctrine of the *Faisceau* reflected the tenets of their leader, La Rocque's ideas were frequently contested. Much like business and commerce in the interwar Republic, the CDF/PSF was clearly not of one mind regarding the form and content of the new economic order. Klaus-Jurgen Müller's assessment of the French economy in the twenties and thirties could just as easily be applied to the CDF/PSF: "At that time, the French economic structure was marked by considerable discrepancies between the traditional and modern sectors; also by discrepancies between the few areas of partial concentration and the many sectors where individual enterprises still acted very much on their own behalf; and, further, by conspicuously loose and rudimentary organizational structures".²⁸⁰ The CDF/PSF found itself in this position because, as Kevin Passmore observes, the group was populist in nature, attempting to bind together diverse social and economic elements within French society under its own banner, in order to attain power.²⁸¹ For the ultimate goal of the group was the transformation of French state and society into the *Etat social français*, without which the group had little reason for existence. Their situation was thus quite different from the one facing Valois and the *Faisceau*, who never attracted a membership large enough to produce such competing interest groups.

Both Müller and Passmore claim that the CDF/PSF represented the interests of the emerging modern economic sectors, such as engineering and industry. Yet La Rocque's discourse and that of the traditionalists as a whole, betrays a very different slant. For the traditionalists, it was the artisanal class and the family firm that were to be protected at all costs from large industrial concentration. La Rocque viciously attacked modern solutions--such as Taylorism and the assembly-line model, while counter-proposing social Catholic corporatism, a system designed to protect workers' rights, owners' property, and the French

²⁸⁰Müller, p. 89.

²⁸¹Passmore, p. 210

farmer from the harmful effects of technical progress. In essence, the traditionalists wanted to turn back the clock to the era of the family farm, the village, and the supremacy of the family business. Their solution to the failure of liberalism was to halt economic progress, and in many instances to dismantle its 'excessive' features. Furthermore, traditionalist plans for an alternative syndicalism following the electoral victory of the Popular Front betray an interest in the potential support of the working class, and the belief that the CDF/PSF provided the only effective alternative to a socialist state. Where Valois, with the experience of the trenches fresh in his mind, was motivated by the Great War in constructing his ideal economy, La Rocque and the traditionalists were preoccupied a decade later with the Marxist threat. A mass-based political party by 1936, the CDF/PSF threw off the combattant mantle and embraced economic pragmatism. In order to implement the *Etat social français*, the group needed the support of French labour, the largest sector of the population in mid-thirties France.

Although artisans, farmers, and workers represented a significant portion of the CDF/PSF membership throughout the latter half of the decade, they by no means monopolized an organization that, at its 1938 height, contained up to one-and-a-half-million members. Given the belief among many industrialists that liberalism and the Republic had failed to protect the French economy, it is not surprising to find strains of modern economic sentiment within the CDF/PSF. If lower-middle class adherents hoped that the group would reverse their deteriorating social and economic status, businessmen viewed the CDF/PSF in an opposite light: As the anti-liberal and anti-protectionist vehicle through which a technocratic and rationalized economic order would triumph in France. Men such as Touron and Canat thus adopted positions in direct contrast to the La Tour du Pin-inspired corporatism of La Rocque and the traditionalists. Like Valois, they used the framework provided by corporatism, of national and regional regulating bodies, to create plans for a complete transformation of the French economy in which American methods

would be used to bolster the global economic competitiveness of France. Much like such neocapitalists as Mercier or Renault, Touron, Canat, and the marechaux represented the emerging economic modernism against which La Rocque and the traditionalists were fighting on behalf of the status quo and, in some aspects, a lost order.

Chapter 3-La Politique du foyer: The Role of Women and the Family in the National Community

One of the key debates within France during the interwar period concerned the roles of women and the family. Although it seldom garnered front-page headlines, the mobilization of women during the Great War as workers on the home front performing tasks previously exclusive to men created a postwar demand for an end to established gender roles.

Previously women had been wives and mothers, cultivating the foyer familial in silence, but the experience of working life and the death of one-and-a-half million future husbands in battle permanently altered the face of both the French family and the workforce. As a result, conservative elements in society anxious to return women to their previous maternal duties clashed with more progressive voices which argued for the extension of career opportunities and political rights to women. By the nineteen-thirties, as Hitler's militarism cast a shadow upon France, the government increasingly took the lead in reinforcing traditional gender roles and strengthening the family, but women continued to receive an education and skills in increasing numbers.

It was in the midst of this maelstrom that the Faisceau and the CDF/PSF forged their respective social doctrines. In their ideological squabbles regarding the nature of the state and the new economic order, both groups involved the nation only in the abstract sense. French society never really entered into the equation during debates on the merits and disadvantages of scientific management or the shape and function of the Etat Combattant. Whenever 'the people' or 'the workers' were mentioned, they were portrayed as a generic whole, whose loyalty and energy were to be harnessed by the state in return for political stability and economic prosperity. Furthermore, despite numerous factional conflicts regarding the form which the new state and economic order were to take, all sides agreed that sweeping changes were necessary, to be decreed and enforced by the newly powerful authoritarian state.

As they had done for politics and economics, various members of the Faisceau and CDF/PSF presented blueprints for a new social order, in which women and the family were to play prominent roles. Yet these roles were to be constructed on the local rather than the national level. The state would determine the duties and tasks of these social categories just as it formulated policy regarding the structure of the new state or the role of the worker within the national economy, but the sweeping and coercive changes from above would be replaced by persuasion. Once again, however, the social tenets formulated by both groups were mostly quite common, mirroring opinions held by many ordinary French men and women, just as much of their political and economic doctrine mirrored prevailing opinions.

Akin to the debates concerning the state, various Faisceau views on the subject of women clashed. Certain members displayed a remarkably modern acceptance of women and their new-found roles as workers, while others adhered to the older stereotype of woman as housewife and mother. Although their position on the family was more cohesive, formulated by Valois and mostly accepted by the rank and file, dissenting opinions remained. The result was a basic contradiction, in which progressive discourse²⁸² flourished despite the presence of more conservative voices within the group. Furthermore, the doctrine of the progressive element conflicted with the organic nationalist plans delineated by Mussolini's Italy, proclaimed as the model for a new Europe by France's first avowedly fascist group. Further clouding the issue was the fact that Valois, the leading figure in debates concerning all other aspects of Faisceau doctrine, remained virtually silent on the question of gender. The debates within the group, however, replicated the sparring

²⁸²This phrase is used in context only. Obviously the views expressed would not today be regarded as forward-looking. Yet in a country where women had no political or civil rights to speak of, and only gained the right to vote in 1945, the position of certain Faisceau members was quite progressive. They were not feminists, however, because they still adhered to the notion that many women preferred the life of a housewife and mother to the working-world, and encouraged them to remain in the home if possible. Yet in arguing for a full extension of rights to women, including the right to a career, they became aligned with the modern side in the growing debate over the role of women in society.

factions present within French society as a whole, where demands for women's rights encountered staunchly conservative opposition.

Yet, paradoxically, the Faisceau vision of the family owed much to traditional extreme-rightist thought. Valois's concept of the organic nation, in which each family was a living cell, went much further to the right than the conservative pronatalist organizations, or even the burgeoning geneticist philosophy then popular among right-wing doctors and scientists. Thus the same group which argued for increased opportunities for women adopted the opposite stance where the family was concerned: That it was the duty of all French adults to have children, so that the French national 'body' would remain healthy. Adding even more confusion to the mix, many of the justifications adopted by the rank and file to bolster this view were geneticist in nature, corresponding to prevailing scientific theories of the day rather than extreme-rightist solutions.

The CDF/PSF, despite adhering to more 'standard' extreme-rightist views on politics and the economy, were also remarkably mainstream regarding both women and the family. Their rhetoric regarding women would not have been out of place in the conservative Republican Federation or a local peasant's league. Furthermore, their notion of the family and detailed plans for its revitalization were distinguished almost exclusively by pronatalist sentiments, a ubiquitous position in interwar France, where the Radical party and even the Socialists rallied to the defense of the family and the French population, and the communist party replaced its older ideal of the working woman with the *mater familias*. Unlike Valois and company, the CDF/PSF displayed absolute continuity in their attitudes concerning women and the family, remaining in the pronatalist camp and eschewing the terminology employed by the contemporary extreme-right.

It is important to note, however, that neither the Faisceau nor the CDF/PSF ever adopted the methodology of systematic indoctrination practiced by nazism and Italian fascism. To be sure, both women and the family were deemed crucial components of the

reconstructed French nation, yet the chosen vehicle for their revitalization was not state-sponsored coercion. Although Valois's organic nationalist concept of the family was quite similar to that of Italian fascism, especially in its use of crypto-biological references, the overall tone of group discourse was moderate. Valois and his colleagues never proposed a state policy for the severe repression of women as did both Mussolini and Hitler, and although the family was constantly termed the 'cell of the nation', few members actively played the pronatalist card.²⁸³ Proposed state-directed family policies were never elaborated upon, and no organization along the lines of Mussolini's National Agency for Maternity and Infancy was ever envisioned. Likewise, CDF/PSF initiatives were dissimilar to those undertaken by Italy and Germany, for their proposals were strictly based upon social Catholicism and economic realities. In this regard, they could have been the Radical party, for their proposals were variously implemented by the Chambre Bleu-Horizon, Laval and Tardieu, and Daladier in his Code de la famille. Both the Faisceau and the CDF/PSF plans for women and the family therefore leave the scholar in an awkward position, as they were commonly expressed in interwar France, while both groups were reactionary in other aspects of their proposed nation and state.

1.

As in the realm of politics, Faisceau plans for the 'new' society were marked by doctrinal conflict. The role of women in the new nation and state was frequently discussed within the pages of Nouveau Siècle and in the writings of various group members, but no clear consensus emerged. The newspaper's position seemed at times to be outright modern,

²⁸³This is not to imply that the orders of the dictators were unconditionally obeyed. Their pronatalist initiatives actually failed more often than they succeeded, and reality (that women needed to work in many instances) often forced both regimes to make concessions. But their intentions, to enforce women's 'natural' role as mothers, was clear. See Detlev J.K. Peukert, Inside Nazi Germany (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987), pp. 70, 99, 177-78; Victoria De Grazia, How Fascism Ruled Women. Italy 1922-1945 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), chapters three and four.

yet certain members remained wedded to traditional and conservative thinking, arguing that the women's place was in the home, and that the family (as 'cell' of the nation) was above individual wants and needs. In their view, women were to be housewives and nothing more, providing babies for the needy French nation and state in which the concepts of women and family were inextricably bound to one another. The progressive elements within the group countered with the argument that the presence of women in the workplace was an irreversible fact of modern life, and that the family must be re-defined to suit this new reality.

The Faisceau debate concerning the role of women and the family in the future nation and state unfolded at a time when traditional gender roles were being called into question by increasing numbers of women, while the patriarchal political and economic elites together with the man on the street demanded their re-enforcement. Following the armistice, parents feared that their daughters would be left impoverished due to the death of one-and-a-half million young men on the battlefields of the Great War, worries which resulted in increased educational opportunities for girls, embodied in Minister of Education Leon Bérard's 1924 standardization of schooling for both sexes. The Ministry of Public Education also offered vocational guidance to young women from 1922 onwards to complete this process, co-ordinating their efforts with those of schools and individual families. By asserting that modern women were both capable and prepared for any job, including the civil service or liberal professions, vocational guidance counselors aided the disengagement of the work force, a process begun at the turn of the century when working class women first looked outside of the home for employment opportunities.²⁸⁴

Such reformers were not outright feminists, however, and never urged women to abandon their maternal 'duty' in order to freely live the professional life. Despite

²⁸⁴Mary Louise Roberts. "Rationalization, Vocational Guidance and the Reconstruction of Female Identity in Postwar France". *Proceedings of the Annual Meeting of the Western Society for French History*, 20 (1993), pp. 367-369.

proclaiming that women could perform any task, leading French vocational counselor Louise Mauvezin argued that "the destiny of the majority of women is to become wives and mothers". Furthermore, Mauvezin urged women to work at home if at all possible, even when in dire financial need. Her message was for 'la femme seule', the unfortunate by-product of the human destruction wrought by the war.²⁸⁵ Nevertheless, it was this new way of thinking about the problem of gender that inspired the progressive faction of the Faisceau, who argued that women could break the traditional mould, even if most would become wives and mothers rather than careerists.

Furthermore, when compared with the opinion held by most Frenchmen, that women's proper roles were as mothers and housewives who should not be permitted to expand beyond this dual role, these attitudes and ideas were genuinely progressive. Most French commentators, especially men, viewed women's 'usurption' of male social roles as improper, a fact echoed by conservative Faisceau writers such as Hubert Bourgin. As Siân Reynolds has demonstrated in her work on gender and politics between the wars, the hostility shown to women in the workplace by their male counterparts stretched across class boundaries, a phenomenon extending from the factory floor to the labour unions and management in many cases. The political restrictions placed upon them were equally harsh. Not only were women unable to vote in France until 1945, but they were expected to remain at home and passive by France's patriarchy, who denied them political rights. As Reynolds notes regarding the attitudes of the French government and bureaucracy:

When conventional terminology defines women as economically inactive, it is both concealing the importance of domestic labour and other unpaid work within the economy and ranking those people who carried it out as unpersons. Within such a perspective, while partnership in a small firm or firm might be viewed as a continuation of domestic labour, under the guidance of the chef-de-famille, and therefore assimilable, women's employment outside the household would commonly be perceived as an alternative to--and

²⁸⁵Ibid., pp. 370-371.

basically a deviation from—a norm only recently constructed and given value: the full-time housewife.²⁸⁶

Women were socialized to accept these realities from an early age. In 1923, director of primary education Paul Lapie renewed Jules Ferry's dictum that girls were to spend twice as much time doing manual instruction as boys, which meant sewing, knitting, and crocheting, so that "girls could learn to darn 'as their mothers did'". Likewise, drawing for girls was not geometrical—as it was for boys— but consisted rather of decorative design and embroidery. Science was mostly home economics, to "inspire girls with the love of home, making them feel that what appears to be the humblest of operations in domestic life is connected with the highest principles of natural science". Such sentiments were not exclusive to Catholic schools, and laic schools expounded the view that the best career for a woman was that of a housewife. Breast-feeding techniques appeared on school-leaving exams, along with cooking, cleaning and child care, a format unchanged until after the second World War. Although it was acknowledged that women had to work in certain cases out of financial necessity, the only careers open to women possessing a post-primary education were seamstress, shopkeeper, or teacher. Regardless of her chosen post-primary program of study, a girl was expected to complete six hours per week of home economics, in place of French language instruction and science.²⁸⁷ The message was clear: Even if a woman worked, she would still be expected to tend house.

Into this new conflict came the *Faisceau* with its sparring progressive and conservative/traditional factions. The more tolerant must have included Nouveau Siècle editor Jacques Roujon, for the front page of the party newspaper frequently trumpeted women's accomplishments around the world. Tennis champion Suzanne Lenglen received a front page splash in June 1926, shown "en pleine action" diving for the ball while excited

²⁸⁶Siân Reynolds, France Between the Wars: Gender and Politics (New York: Routledge, 1996), pp. 106-107.

²⁸⁷Linda L. Clark, Schooling the Daughters of Marianne (Albany: SUNY Press, 1984), pp. 82, 86, 90-91, 94-103, 107-109, 120-123.

fans leaned over the stadium railing in anticipation. A photograph of 'Mme. Brian-Garfield' at work in a hospital operating room adorned the front page on October 23, 1926, where she was proudly proclaimed to be the first female surgeon ever to practice. Another front page photo, this time under the heading "feminisme", portrayed English member of parliament Margaret Bondfield presiding over the inaugural congress of female trade unions at Portsmouth. These pictures were not offered as negative examples, nor was there any derogatory remark or tone displayed. Women were simply cast as modern professionals at the top of their chosen fields.²⁸⁸

Progressive rhetoric was also present in Claude Aragonnès's weekly columns for and about women. Aragonnès, a cousin of French philosopher Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, voiced approval of the new postwar woman, frankly stating that "things have changed a bit since the days when a young girl had to wait in her chair to be invited to polka".²⁸⁹ That women worked was a fait accompli. Due to the gender disparity resulting from the human destruction of the Great War many girls could not even hope for marriage. With the old-fashioned dream of a career as a housewife and mother receding, he acknowledged that women increasingly had to make do for themselves. In a discussion of the Grand revue inquiry into "les Jeunes Filles d'Aujourd'hui", Aragonnès claimed that preventing women from exercising a profession was tantamount to an act of cruelty in a postwar France deprived of eligible bachelors due to the one-and-a-half million war dead. Such rhetoric in no way differed from the views expressed by parents of the day, fearing for the future of their daughters if they should be unable to marry.

²⁸⁸"Mlle. Suzanne Lenglen, impératrice du Tennis", NS, 14 June 1926; "La Première femme chirurgien", NS, 23 Oct. 1926; "Feminisme", NS, 14 Aug. 1926.

²⁸⁹Aragonnès, "La Choix d'un carrière (1)", NS, 6 July 1926. This quote displays a remarkable similarity to the feminist observations of the day, as displayed in the feminist newspaper Le Fronde, for example, which applauded that "the time is gone when a young lady of a good family had only to know how to embroider, sing, dance, and play music". Quoted in Roberts, p. 369.

His reasoning was not exclusively demographic, however. For those women fortunate enough to find a husband, he argued, a few years of living on one's own became a virtual apprenticeship in cooking, cleaning, and general household management. Thus the career woman actually made a better mother and wife. Furthermore, rather than condemning them to menial positions, Aragonnès argued that women should be trained in a wide array of fields, many previously exclusive to men. Echoing the sentiments of the vocational counselors, he insisted that rather than accepting secretarial or teaching positions, the best and brightest would be librarians, archivists, museum curators, work in public administration at the Ministry of Labour or Hygiene, and even in the League of Nations if they possessed a law degree or a Doctorate. Nursing, pharmacy, and chemistry were also proposed as potential careers. Although he did not believe that women should manage male workers, he felt that the commercial professions should be opened to them. The new businesswomen would become industrial designers or corporate secretaries, the latter contingent upon the knowledge of several languages and corporate law. Finally, although he was no feminist, arguing that women still preferred the married life of home and children, Aragonnès adopted the progressive (for 1926 France) position that married women should exercise their profession if their husband lost his job, providing much-needed financial security for the French family.²⁹⁰

For these reasons, he also rejected the stereotype of the female student as the "scandale de la bourgeoisie", a black sheep of the family who lived the bohemian life. Better education for women neither created flappers nor encouraged feminism, he argued, but prepared a young woman for the necessary career choice. One quarter of university students were women, but most still enrolled in the faculties of letters and education, or gynecology and children's medicine, and thus were choosing jobs better suited to the female

²⁹⁰Aragonnès, "Les Jeunes filles d'aujourd'hui", *NS*, 11 May 1926.

temperament and tastes.²⁹¹ Although reasoning that feminine studies would differ from the masculine curriculum, emphasizing "the feminine arts necessary for domestic life", Aragonnès insisted that women were to be intellectually prepared upon graduating.²⁹² Their political and civic education was essential, because women were no longer a mere appendage of their husband in the postwar world. Furthermore, they were to be granted the equal rights and protection under the law befitting their more independent status, and the option of entering politics in the new Faisceau state.²⁹³

Aragonnès reserved his highest praise for farm women, not only as wives and mothers but as business partners. Although farm wives were preoccupied with domestic duties and light work, and solely responsible for cooking and serving at mealtimes while the men worked in the fields, this was purely a consequence of the male position as the physically stronger sex. The agrarian woman, more than just a housewife, was an integral part of the working farm. The farm needed specialized female labour, Aragonnès argued, easily trained through the *École nationale féminine d'agriculture* in Rennes and the *Union pour l'enseignement agricole et horticole féminin*.²⁹⁴ Above and beyond cooking and raising children, women helped balance the books and ordered necessary goods, as sales, profits, and hiring were too much of a burden for the male head of the household to manage alone. As in many working class families, he claimed, the agrarian woman organized the home, and made decisions concerning the farm as a whole.²⁹⁵

Although modern in tone, Aragonnès's writings nevertheless concluded that whatever else they could accomplish, women would always be first and foremost mothers and housewives: "Si donc la femme aujourd'hui étend ses connaissances et ses capacités, il faut que ce soit dans un esprit de l'association plus complète avec l'homme. Si les tâches se

²⁹¹ Aragonnès, "Les Etudiantes", *NS*, 20 April 1926.

²⁹² Aragonnès, "Bachelières", 5 Aug. 1926.

²⁹³ Aragonnès, "Les Jeunes filles d'aujourd'hui", *NS*, 11 May 1926.

²⁹⁴ Aragonnès, "La Choix d'un carrière (2)", *NS*, 20 July 1926.

²⁹⁵ Aragonnès, "Paysans de chez nous", *NS*, 14 Sept, 1926.

multiplient, qu'elle en prenne sa part, mais qu'elle n'oublie pas l'essentielle, son premier devoir. La nature, le bon sens, et le suffrage universel des maris demandent que la femme au foyer pense au foyer d'abord".²⁹⁶ The best career for a woman was still within the family home, as mother to her children. In this regard, Aragonnès was no different than Louise Mauvezin, his doctrine simultaneously progressive and traditional in nature. Aragonnès's morals, moreover, were decidedly Catholic and conservative, and he repeatedly berated young women who left the country to work in Paris as receptionists or salesgirls because they viewed farm life as harsh and dirty. Yet these criticisms were motivated by a fear of materialism and the gradual replacement of morals with money rather than fear of feminine empowerment.²⁹⁷ Although he was no feminist, Aragonnès's career woman were a far cry from Lapie's girls who learned the art of keeping house and little else. Given the opposition in both government and society towards women's newfound roles, his views were benevolent in comparison despite his prescription of family and motherhood.

Nor was he the only member of the Faisceau to adopt such a stance. Pierre Dumas recognized female industrial labour as a permanent feature in the factory. With a negligible birthrate and the shroud of the million-and-a-half war dead hanging in the air, he argued, France was on the verge of becoming swamped by foreigners who were increasingly filling holes in the French labour force. Acceptance of the female worker could effectively solve the problem of the labour shortage, while preserving the French character of the nation. Dumas recognized the changing role of women in modern France, writing that the corporatist Faisceau state would extend the rights and duties of working men to female labourers, adding that the standard salary scale and level of respect would also be applied to them. Far from portraying women exclusively as guardians of the family home, he claimed that they had worked since time immemorial in France: had not the women now working in

²⁹⁶Aragonnès, "L'Activité féminine", *NS*, 23 March 1926.

²⁹⁷Aragonnès, "Encore aux champs", *NS*, 28 Sept. 1926.

mechanized clothing factories once done the same work by hand? Shopkeepers had always been aided by their wives, and secretaries had always been female, as had many teachers after the turn of the century. Thus, to Dumas, it was only natural that women should play a role within the nation and state equal to their stature at work. He invoked the example of delegations at the Faisceau's June 1926 Reims conference, which included female corporative representatives alongside their male counterparts, as indicative of this trend.²⁹⁸

Antoine Fouroux went even further, arguing that women had been forced into a form of corporate prostitution by capitalism, earning lower wages than did foreign labourers. In answer to those who viewed the presence of women in the workforce as immoral, Fouroux pointed to the hundreds of thousands of fathers and workers who had died on the battlefield, leaving behind women whose only option for survival was paid labour. State pensions for widows were deemed insufficient, and remarriage regarded as an impossibility due to France's lop-sided demography. Soon, Fouroux warned, women would have to turn to old-fashioned prostitution in order to make ends meet.²⁹⁹

Despite the progressive bent displayed on the front page of the group newspaper and in many of its articles about women, certain elements within the Faisceau maintained a more conservative social position regarding gender roles. Various writers took issue with women's new-found freedoms, attacking the ills of feminism and the moral indecency into which it propelled potential wives and mothers. Unlike Mauvezin, Aragonnès, or Dumas, they wished to turn back the clock to a time when being a woman was synonymous with remaining in the home and bearing children, the only natural and moral roles for the 'weaker sex'. In an article entitled "Vieilles filles", Louis Masset publicly pitied those women who had been "condemned by the war to celibacy". Only by becoming nursery employees or maternal assistants could they experience their natural role: "Des baisers d'enfants, des

²⁹⁸Pierre Dumas, "La Femme qui travaille doit prendre place dans nos organisations", *NS*, 11 July 1926.

²⁹⁹Antoine Fouroux, "Salaire féminin vital ou prostitution?", *NS*, 27 Aug. 1925.

caresses d'enfant, voilà le magnifique amour qui s'offre à vous, jeunes filles qui gémissiez d'être privée d'amour". While lauding the fact that women had discovered careerism, Gaetan Bernöville warned that feminism was in fact a destructive social element. As it posed the question of women only in an individual sense, feminism placed personal pleasure and freedom above the needs of the nation, which were couched in collective and familial terms. "If feminism is developed in the sense of individualism", he warned, "it will lead to nothing less than the destruction of society". A woman's sole vocation was that of mother, compatible with both Catholicism and the future of the French race. Some writers justified these claims by questioning women's intelligence and abilities. In an article on the family as the 'cell of the nation', for example, Jeanne Loviton claimed that a women's true place was in the home because tending house was her only natural talent.³⁰⁰

The loudest exponent within the group of traditional women's roles was Hubert Bourgin. The conservative and traditionalist Bourgin rejected the notion of a modern education for women, positing that they should be trained as mothers alone. A masculine education was of no use to them, as its goal was to train national leaders and heads of families, and most women would take up domestic life upon graduation. Therefore the training of an elite of mothers was to be the pedagogic goal of the state's education program for women, and Bourgin called upon the state curriculum committee to regain "the right path" in the training of young girls.³⁰¹

In sharp contrast to Aragonnès's more 'modern' woman, Bourgin's vision of the 'second' sex was quite sinister. As a Catholic ultra-moralist, he viewed women as innately corrupt, a feature that was only heightened through education. His typical woman resembled the biblical Eve, a figure directly contrasted with the virtuous mother:

³⁰⁰Louis Masset, "Vieilles filles", *NS*, 10 Jan. 1926; Gaetan Bernöville, "Féminisme", *NS*, 31 July 1927; Jeanne Loviton, "L'Esprit féminin et l'esprit fasciste", *NS*, 21 Dec. 1925.

³⁰¹Hubert Bourgin, "Les Femmes savants, et les Autres....", *NS*, 10 Sept. 1926.

Tu n'es pas la poupée de luxe qui gaspille l'argent dur à gagner. Tu n'es pas la femme à la mode, qui, serve des intentions les plus saugrenues, n'a pas d'autre spontanéité que celles des réflexes mécaniques, ni d'autre imagination que celle qui renchérit sur les excentricités impersonnelles et innove dans le faux. Tu n'es pas la nocusse d'en haut, d'en bas, perverse, grossière ou crapuleuse. Tu n'es pas la désœuvrée qui cherche, par la vice ou la curiosité, à chasser l'ennui résultant du vide et de l'âme. Tu n'es pas la dévergondée qui amuse, dégoûte ou fait peur.³⁰²

The only truly good woman stayed at home, wholesome and healthy, while performing her supreme duty--Maternity. Bourgin praised "our grandmothers" as icons of womanhood, "ces femmes modestes, sans ambitions, sans prétentions", those who could run a household, clean and cook, and raise decent children. They performed this labour solely for the Motherland, like Joan of Arc or Saint-Geneviève.³⁰³

Bourgin reserved his greatest ire for feminists, those who appeared before parliamentary committees or marched in the streets demanding rights and work for women. Believing them to be funded by "Jewish elements" and Soviet-Bolshevik in inspiration, he called for their immediate dispersal. A woman was simply not capable of becoming an engineer, a doctor, or a lawyer, and should instead be forced to do her duty, defending the race against degeneration. The mother alone protected French blood and ancestral virtue in Bourgin's world-view, transmitting the national character and values to each successive generation. Thus the responsibility for the development of tomorrow's leaders depended on female subservience.³⁰⁴

It is somewhat ironic that a group which patterned itself so closely upon the doctrine and formation of Mussolini's Italy experienced such inner contention on the issue of women. While the fascist revolution in Italy, in the words of Victoria de Grazia, "fell back on the traditional authority of family and religion to enforce biologically determined roles as mother and caretakers", the majority of Faisceau writers accepted and actively promoted

³⁰²Hubert Bourgin, *Les Pierres de la maison* (Paris: Nouvelle Librairie Nationale, 1926), pp. 61-62.

³⁰³Ibid., p. 65. That neither Joan of Arc or Saint-Geneviève ever cooked or cleaned was never considered by Bourgin.

³⁰⁴Ibid., p. 68-71.

women's rights and freedoms despite the presence within the group of traditional notions on the subject.³⁰⁵ This irony is furthered by the fact that the CDF/PSF, a group divided on almost every other major facet of their proposed nation and state, were absolutely united in their conservative stance regarding women. To be sure, the occasional article praising 'modern' women appeared in their party press, but most CDF/PSF writings on the subject agreed wholeheartedly with both Bourgin and Mussolini: Women were predestined to be housewives and mothers, duties which they performed for the good of the nation.³⁰⁶

2.

Although the Faisceau had no separate large-scale organization for women, the CDF/PSF founded a Section feminine du regroupement nationale autour des Croix de Feu (SFRN) on February 22, 1934. This affiliate was responsible for propaganda and social assistance programs ('service social'), such as soup kitchens, children's recreation centres, and the distribution of alms to the needy. These activities, like motherhood and marriage, were considered part of the woman's "natural domain".³⁰⁷ The group considered this ancillary organization to be a priority, and consistently urged intensified recruitment of women into the SFRN, which encompassed 525 cells by the Autumn of 1935. In September of that year the SFRN, along with all other non-combattant sections of the CDF/PSF, was incorporated into the new Mouvement sociale français organization, which replaced the previous Regroupement nationale autour des Croix de Feu.³⁰⁸ With the

³⁰⁵de Grazia, p. XI.

³⁰⁶Only one clear example exists of a Nouveau Siècle-style laudatory piece. The 21 May 1939 edition of the Petit journal contained a page two article about pioneering women, including Amelia Earhardt, tennis champions, and government ministers.

³⁰⁷Charles Vallin Aux femmes du Parti social français. (Paris: SEDA, 1937), P. 5.

³⁰⁸See for example: F77/12966, "Réunion organisée par la Comité local du 7^{me} Arrt. du Parti social français", 12 Feb. 1937. La Rocque made this priority clear in one of his first acts as Croix de Feu president, in CHEVS/LR 46, "Extraits littéraires de notes prises par un de mes intimes à la suite des conférences que je lui ai faites, sur mes projets civiques, en Decembre 1931". Although precise membership numbers are unavailable, the number of sections is drawn from Nobecourt, pp. 287-288.

transformation of the group into the Parti social français came further changes: The SFRN was atomized, as each local section was given its own women's group split into Action civique and Action sociale subdivisions.

The notion that women could adopt a profession outside of the SFRN was soundly rejected, however. Despite paying lip-service to the notion of the career-woman, CDF/PSF members viewed the idea as dangerous to both the economy and society. Pierre Kula wrote that the upheavals regarding the status of French women caused by the Great War had disrupted the natural order. The party bulletin agreed, claiming that working mothers were not as healthy as those who remained in the home. Infant mortality was higher in families in which both parents worked, and the exposure of the pregnant mother to disease in dingy and crowded factories was deemed the chief culprit. Worse still, reported the Bureau d'études sociales du PSF, working women were ignorant about household matters, and their children were frequently exposed to the danger of juvenile delinquency. Furthermore, their houses were filthy and their children unhealthy due to a lack of maternal care. Working mothers were therefore urged to abandon their jobs if at all possible, for the sake of their children.³⁰⁹

This message was brought directly to the SFRN on every occasion possible. Speaking at an SFRN meeting in March 1934, Pasteur Durleman advised women to: "Croyez au foyer. N'appartenez pas, comme tant de nos contemporains, à ces milieux interlopes où l'on ne croit pas à la beauté, à la splendeur des tâches les plus modestes de la vie domestique, en apparence la plus effacée, mais qui est, en vérité, la chose la plus sacrée qui soit". Women were urged to have as many children as possible, a burden which constituted their service and sacrifice for the French nation. Kula proposed 'housework schooling' for all young

³⁰⁹AP/451/117, Pierre Kula, "Essai sur un politique des allocations familiales" in Premier congrès du Groupe patronale (tract), p. 8; AP/451/101, "La Retour de la mère au foyer", Bulletin d'information # 70; La Presence de la mère au foyer", L'Ouvrier libre, Sept-Oct. 1938. These same points were made practically verbatim in "La Mère au foyer", Le Haut parleur du Val et Loire, April 1939. The latter cited examples of children forced to cook and clean for the entire household due to a lack of parental attention and care.

women, to teach them the tricks of the trade, from washing and sewing to cooking.³¹⁰ Education about the care and hygiene of infants was especially encouraged by the CDF/PSF, which they labeled a "question capitale pour l'avenir de la race", words that echoed the renewed preoccupation with natal care that swept the French medical community after the Great War. Classes on how to raise children, including the latest medical techniques and healthiest methods of natal care, were recommended for mothers to prevent careless deaths or infections.³¹¹

Following Kula's suggestion, women's schooling in the new CDF/PSF state was to be largely practical. While young boys were taught leadership skills and given rigorous physical exercise, girls would learn the art of composing menus. Boys were taken by CDF/PSF youth groups on visits to the factory or farm, to give them a taste of their future; girls on the other hand practiced choral singing and mastered the art of pottery.³¹² Within the confines of CDF/PSF youth organizations, girls were also taught fashion, cooking, household economy, and stenography, while group periodicals pictured women sewing accompanied by a caption explaining what "la ménagère doit savoir". Stereotypical gender roles were continuously reinforced from an early age, in an effort to reverse the societal trend towards working women, and to deter thoughts of independence or the single life. Women were deemed the "professors of housework" by the CDF/PSF Cercle des jeunes filles youth organization, which pledged to instill the ideal of family into all of its young

³¹⁰"Section féminine du regroupement national autour des Croix de Feu", *Le Flambeau*, April 1934; AP/451/117, "Essai sur un politique....", Pierre Kula, in *Premier congrès du Groupe patronale*, p. 47.

³¹¹See for example Dr. P. Rudaux, "L'École des mères", *Petit journal*, 14 Feb. 1938. On the new developments in social hygiene and their impact in the French medical community see William H. Schneider, *Quality and Quantity: The Quest for Biological Regeneration in Twentieth-Century France* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), especially chapter five.

³¹²AP/451/106, "Conseils d'ordre général pour les Moniteurs et les Monitrices des groupes de 14 à 16 ans".

adherents.³¹³ Having received a 'feminine education', the final product of such training would be the perfect mother and housewife:

La femme y acquiert le sens de la vocation. Elle se prépare à son rôle de mère, le plus beau des métiers.... Au PSF, on lui redonne le goût des humbles devoirs domestiques, on lui révèle la dignité du service des siens; on lui enseigne les choses pratiques qui feront d'elles la foi du foyer, spécialement l'art de la cuisine à qui nos aïeux faisaient une belle place. La future maîtresse de maison apprend également le ménage, la coupe, la couture, la puériculture, les soins médicaux, l'hygiène et enfin le secret de l'élégance peu coûteuse dans la France à le monopole.³¹⁴

Women were also expected to be the guardians of moral decency and patriotism in the family home. To Charles Vallin, women were not only the best propagandists in both the family and the community, but created the very atmosphere of a Christian country, acting as the conscience of the nation and the state.³¹⁵ Echoing the sentiments professed a decade earlier by Hubert Bourgin, La Rocque himself wrote of "la gracieuse cohorte de nos filles [qui] tracera le rôle de la femme, citoyenne et gardienne du foyer, entendra la Flamme sacrée de la foi patriotique".³¹⁶ The nation and the soil of France, which represented the heart of the people, could only be properly preserved by the mother within the confines of the family home. As one author chided in the Liberté du Maine, a family needed more than bread to survive: the "Patrimoine Française" was integral to the CDF/PSF nation, and only a mother could ensure its transmission to the young.³¹⁷ Scandal, immoral behaviour, and anti-national sentiment were believed to be preventable through maternal intervention. National ills could be circumvented as long as a woman remained in her place, allowing men to run the country while she ran the household.

³¹³AP/451/104, "Cercle des filles de Croix de Feu"; Tract-L'Oeuvre social dans le mouvement Croix de Feu (illustrated supplement to Le Flambeau, May 1936); AP/451/93, "Section féminine", Oct. 1935; AP/451/106, "Instructions spéciales pour le Groupe d'action sociale".

³¹⁴Hélène Bailleux, "Le PSF et la jeunesse", Flambeau de Flandres-Artois-Picardie, 9 April 1939.

³¹⁵Vallin, pp. 3,5.

³¹⁶CDLR, "Aux Fils et Filles de Croix de Feu", Le Flambeau, Aug. 1933. See also AP/451/93 "Note du Président-Générale", Jan.2, 1936.

³¹⁷"Les Femmes et le PSF", Liberté du Maine, May 1938 (deuxième quinzaine).

The CDF/PSF also spoke out vehemently against all vestiges of feminism, which was portrayed as the polar opposite of the good Christian housewife. Feminists were cast as the destroyers of tradition, family, and the motherland, and accused of collaborating with the enemies of the nation. Vallin called feminism a "fanatical religion", assuring his readers that the movement was inspired by communism, which pitted the female proletarian against the male capitalist. Jean-Marie Gautier was equally hostile in the Flamme des Deux-Sèvres, insisting that "nous ne sommes pas des feministes, parce que le féminisme est une imbecilité qui ne s'accorderait pas avec notre réalisme. 'La femme égale à l'homme' qu'est ce slogan de bataille? C'est une équation absurde, qui laisse entendre que l'un est revendicatif auprès de l'autre, que la femme doit lutter contre l'homme pour conquérir l'égalité (!). Vanité." The author reminded his readers that under the CDF/PSF Etat social français women would be returned to their proper place. In direct contrast to the Faisceau notion that many modern woman had to work as a consequence of the postwar demographic imbalance, Gautier argued that women were 'victims' of nothing more than a horrid mistake which had allowed them to adopt male roles during the war.³¹⁸ Others appealed to the feminine character and the delicacy of the 'weaker sex' in criticizing feminism. It was not a woman's place to descend into the street, "de jouer les suffragettes", argued one female member. Such women forgot their familial and national duties, and were mostly revolutionaries who sang the Internationale at rallies. The feminists' rough and rugged character and appearance were often contrasted with the proper French lady, who was courteous, kind, and elegant at all times. "Est-ce le rôle de la femme, être de délicatesse et d'harmonie, de se joindre à la foule hurlante de haine, qui lui défigure le visage et la fait

³¹⁸Vallin, p. 1; Jean-Marie Gautier, "Vous Mesdames", La Flamme des Deux-Sèvres, May 1939. See also Jos Levet, "La Famille", L'Ouvrier libre, March 1939.

rassembler à une furie?" asked L'Espoir Lorrain. Such violent behaviour was not in keeping with a woman's natural state, which was docile and nurturing.³¹⁹

This rationale was further used to deny women access to the realm of politics. Novellist and member Colette Yvar told a crowd at the Salle Wagram in 1933 that "les femmes, monsieur, n'aiment pas la politique", urging women to remain in their normal sphere of activity, the family home. Even when discussing the possibility of extending the vote to women, a proposition that was part of the CDF/PSF national plan, the group took pains to point out that political participation in no way contradicted femininity. The Flamme des Deux-Sèvres called the woman's vote a corollary to group beliefs, as women were naturally inclined towards the security and prosperity of France. A woman would inevitably cast a ballot in favour of those candidates who supported family and foyer; giving them the right to vote could only strengthen the nation.³²⁰

Not all CDF/PSF women were so docile concerning the vote and the rights of women, however, and some demanded that women be viewed as equal to men in all facets of national existence. To Mme. Desmons, a PSF Délégué civique fédérale, it was essential that women not only be given the right to vote, but full civil and political rights as well: "Les nécessités des lois sociales de protection de l'enfance et de la femme à la vie elle-même vivant souvent seule et assument de grosses charges, lui font réclamer impérieusement l'éligibilité et le droit de dire leur mot dans les affaires sociales. C'est la justice!" Women were too often exploited in the working world, denied the salary, respect, and protection due to them, creating intolerably harsh conditions for the mothers of France's future generations. Desmons reasoned that if women were to be called upon to protect the well-being of the family and ancestral morality, they would have to be recognized as equals under the law.

³¹⁹Arlette Michel, "Femmes françaises", L'Espoir de l'Est, 16 Oct. 1937; Jacqueline Benoit, "Visage des femmes", L'Espoir Lorrain, 24 April 1937.

³²⁰"À la Salle Wagram", Le Flambeau, Dec. 1933; "Votre devoir civique Mesdames?", La Flamme des Deux-Sèvres, April 1939.

Nor was she alone in voicing this conclusion. In November 1938, the Volonté Bretonne published eight letters written by young girls supporting the female vote, including one who asserted that the ballot-box was only the tip of the iceberg. Fully capable of performing all of the tasks currently assigned to men, women were also more honest and diligent. Women, the writer asserted, did not steal millions of francs for corrupt purposes while national defense and the French air force became dilapidated in the nation's hour of need! The CDF/PSF leadership itself acknowledged such views, noting in a tract that: "Cependant, le travail de la femme française est indispensable à nos administrations, à nos services publics, à nos ateliers, à nos hopitaux, à nos campagnes. La femme française impose aussi le respect et l'admiration dans les carrières liberales". Such supportive words, however, were rare; more typical was an author in the Flambeau Morbihannais who proclaimed that it would be a 'catastrophe' if women ran either businesses or the country. This, the author imparted, was CDF/PSF 'feminism'.³²¹

3.

Although both the Faisceau and the CDF/PSF differed in their views of women's societal roles, they agreed wholeheartedly on the primacy of family. Yet their respective rationales for this judgment were quite different. While the Faisceau referred to the family in organic/biological terms, as the 'cell' of the nation, the CDF/PSF adopted a staunchly pronatalist position. The Faisceau's vocabulary was that of the traditional extreme-right, which viewed France as a living organism, and consistently referred to the nation in crypto-biological terms. Some pronatalist sentiment was present, but such ideas were not an integral part of group doctrine. The CDF/PSF position--which regarded the decline of the birthrate as the key factor-- appears just as extreme, but was in fact quite common. Their

³²¹S. Desmans, "La Femme et la politique", Flambeau de Lorraine, 1 April 1939; Annaick, "Le Coin des jeunes filles", Volonté Bretonne, 5 Nov. 1938; CHEVS/LR 9 G, Tract-"Appel aux femmes françaises pour l'honneur et la paix"; "Feminisme", Flambeau Morbihannais, 5 July 1933.

belief that families were necessary to keep the nation alive by strengthening both the French population and its collective potential, was shared across the political spectrum in the nineteen-thirties.

The clearest definition of the Faisceau family was offered by Maurice de Barral, who proclaimed it to be the constitution of a social group whose existence and development were subordinate to a specific national modus operandi and spiritual position, emphasizing service, justice, and solidarity. Each member had a proscribed role, sacrificing for the family and the nation as a whole. The heads of the family (Barral included the mother here, who was responsible not simply for raising the children, but regarded as a key decision-maker) led, while the children followed. This model also functioned at the regional and national levels, where the leader took the place of the parents, and the citizens were the designated children. Valois further assigned specific gender roles within the family, writing that the mother bound the father to the soil of his ancestors by convincing him of his national role as the great motor of human activity, labouring for the family's survival. The nation was thus a collective of families, who were gathered together in local, regional, and national assemblies. Those who did not marry and create a family (excluding war widows, priests and the like), were considered non-members.³²²

The Barrèssian notion of the soil as the lifeblood of France, binding its inhabitants together into a living whole in which each French family was a cell, was an integral part of the Faisceau's familial doctrine. To Hubert Bourgin, it was the provider and nurturer of these cells, engendering "la solidarité des champs et des foyers". All institutions, from the constitution and the law to the government had arisen from 'la terre', produced by its children the French people. As it was the pillar of the Cité/Maison called France, the defense of the family was tantamount to the protection of the living nation. Valois assigned

³²²Maurice de Barral, *Dialogues sur le Faisceau* (Paris: Éditions de Faisceau, 1926), pp. 11-12; Georges Valois, "Aux chefs de famille", *NS*, 19 June 1926.

this task primarily to the mother, who kept both the father and the children on the right path, instilling the values of thrift, sacrifice, and patriotism into the family. Without such values, and the mother's diligent eye, man would revert back to his primordial state, engaged in a life comprised solely of sleep and consumption, rejecting his role as a producer.³²³

The father too was a central component of the familial system, providing both leadership and an example for his children. Valois's father/leader was the educator, whose passion was turned towards family, society, and nation, all of which were inextricably bound to one another: "Elle n'est pas sans prix pour la politique: que celui-ci sache que lorsque, dans une nation, il y a correspondance entre l'ordre national, l'ordre familial et l'ordre spirituel et moral, lorsque la discipline des passions est fait selon les méthodes de la paternité, au nom de l'amour, la tâche du conducteur de peuples est singulièrement facilitée".³²⁴ Tilling the soil and raising a family were the national and moral duties of the father, essential to the vitality of the French collective.

Using an almost Freudian analysis, Valois declared that the nineteenth century had been symbolized by the revolt against the father, that families had been destroyed in the name of anarchy. Valois, declaring this rebellion was absurd, counter-proposed that every village, town, or province was in a sense familial. Because the nation was an organic whole, neither man nor his institutional creations could exist without family, yet the entire corpus of nineteenth century legislation and its executive apparatus had worked against this principle. No honour or rights had been extended to society's most crucial component, resulting in the subsequent degeneration of the nation.³²⁵ The new Faisceau nation and state would produce a revolutionary revision of the constitution and laws in order to save the family.

³²³Bourgin, *Les Pierres.....*, pp. 56-59, 85; Valois in *Première assemblée nationale des combattants, des producteurs et des chefs de famille* (Paris: Nouvelle Librairie Nationale, 1926, pp. 11-12). This tract contains the text of the Reims meeting.

³²⁴Georges Valois, *La Père* (Paris: Nouvelle Librairie Nationale, 1924), p. 9. This quote is taken from the 1924 preface and not the book itself, which was written before the war.

³²⁵*Ibid.*, pp. 10-12.

Individualism, the metaphysic of the Third Republic, could not co-exist with the necessary social collective, and as such would be eliminated. The 'total' revolution of 1789, with its rights of man and citizen, would be replaced by an opposing one, dedicated to placing individual passions into the national framework, within which they would be subjected to rigorous discipline. Valois believed that this accomplishment had been partially achieved during the Great War, when men had acted as a collective unit in the trenches, experiencing a unity based solely on unconscious fraternity rather than class or profession.³²⁶ This fraternity represented the living nation (what Action française leader Charles Maurras had termed the *pays réelle*), as distinct from the strictly legalist state enshrined within the Third Republic (the *pays légale*). All Frenchmen thus formed a second family, that of the nation as a whole, into which all who willingly sacrificed and worked for the common good belonged. The establishment of the family unit provided both a coherent expression of this fact and assured the continuation of the French nation.

It was a short step from the notion of the nation as a collective family to the biological view of the nation as a living organism. The family, in Valois's vision, was literally the cell of the national body, which alongside the region was an extension of the family home, just as the profession was an extension of the "atelier familiale". Hence the proposed Faisceau state was to be organized strictly by family and corporation.³²⁷ Schooling would encourage the moral and material prosperity of the family, who along with the church would be responsible for continuing this process in the home and community. Christian morality would be expressed in all aspects of daily life, epitomized by justice in the economic and social spheres, and enforced by families within the new Estates-General.³²⁸ To ensure that the voice of the nation was dominated by families and not individuals, the 'vote familiale'

³²⁶Ibid., pp. 13-15.

³²⁷F/7/13211-Tract#9, Georges Valois, "Le Faisceau des combattants, des chefs de famille, et des producteurs", p. 5. On the composition and functioning of the new state, see Chapter One.

³²⁸"Discours prononcée le 11 Novembre", *NS*, 12 Nov. 1925.

would replace the Republican system, allowing families a number of votes corresponding to their number of members.³²⁹ Valois further declared that this system had the added benefit of increasing the French birth rate, although here he thought more of potential support for the new regime than of the pronatalist concerns with geo-politics and French weakness. The desired result was a healthy national 'body', whose component parts were coordinated with each other and assimilated into the whole.

There was a certain amount of pronatalist sentiment within the ranks of the Faisceau, however, although it never challenged Valois's crypto-biological view of the family and nation. Unlike CDF/PSF pronatalist sentiment, most Faisceau writings on the subject tended to emphasize biological imperatives rather than moral or geopolitical realities. Valois himself chose to publish Germaine Blondin's pronatalist *Belle d'Avoine*, about the joys of motherhood and the need to counter the low birthrate, at the Nouvelle Librairie Nationale, while others used the party press to raise the issue. In January 1926, for example, F. le Balleux warned that: "C'est une vérité évidente, mais qu'on ne saurait trop répéter, que la vitalité d'une nation depend essentiellement du nombre et de la qualité physique, morale, et intellectuelle des enfants qui lui naissent". The high birthrate was a necessary precondition for French survival and future success; without it the nation would wither and die.³³⁰

A few Faisceau pronatalists adopted traditional conservative rhetoric concerning the birthrate, while simultaneously positing genetical-biological solutions to the problem. In so doing, they combined the Barrèssian slant adopted by Valois and de Barral with new popular trends in science. While the CDF/PSF paid lip-service to social hygiene and positive eugenics without adopting them as key doctrinal components, various Faisceau

³²⁹Georges Valois, "La Famille", *NS*, 8 Feb. 1926. The family vote traced back to the conservatives of the 1870's, and was adopted by pronatalists in the interwar period. See Andrés Horacio Reggiani. "The Politics of Demography, 1919-1945", *French Historical Studies*, 19 (3), Spring 1996, p. 733. Valois, however, did not use the term in this sense. Where the Alliance nationale argued that the family vote was owed to large families because of their greater financial contribution to the nation, Valois instead focused on the health of the national 'body'.

³³⁰F. le Balleux, "Politique familiale", *NS*, 24 Jan. 1926.

writers expounded ideas similar to current genetical-medical thinking. Such trends had gained a more widespread acceptance in the aftermath of the Great War, for as William Schneider attests: "The war losses and added fear of depopulation made social hygiene a popular idea that appeared to tie eugenics to the even broader range of medical and health reform programs that emerged in the postwar years".³³¹ A scant four years before the Faisceau was founded, the *Chambre Bleu-horizon* created the first Ministry of Hygiene. In 1924, this was joined by the National Office of Social Hygiene, an outgrowth of the wartime Rockefeller Foundation campaign against tuberculosis in France, which by this time had added the "preservation of the race" to its mandate. Private initiatives in this area also abounded, such as the *École de Puériculture* founded by the French red cross and the Ungemench gardens housing project in Strasbourg, both aimed at producing healthier French children.³³²

Most of these initiatives were pronatalist in nature. Faisceau writers were more interested in quality than quantity, however, a natural corollary to Valois's view of the nation as a biological entity. To Claude Aragonnès, the density and health of a country's population were their two greatest resources, both of which had been diminished during the war. The low birthrate, a high infant mortality rate, alcoholism, and disease (tuberculosis and syphilis being the most prominent) constituted a medical disaster, a near fatal blow made harsher by the male population loss suffered during the war. These losses became even more pronounced upon considering French population statistics, which revealed an infant mortality rate higher than those of England and Germany. Aragonnès therefore

³³¹Schneider, p. 284. It is important to note that Schneider differentiates between 'positive' eugenics, concerned with social hygiene, disease prevention, and improved natal care, and 'negative eugenics' in which racialist ideas abounded and whose goal was the perfection of man. It was the former which gained widespread acceptance in France after the war, and many of the ideas presented under its auspices are today commonly accepted practice in pediatric medicine.

³³²*Ibid.*, pp. 120-126, 135, 139-142.

warned that the France of the future would become a colony of foreigners providing necessary industrial labour unless the population rose significantly.³³³

Although these arguments corresponded to similar views expounded by orthodox pronatalists, his solutions were genetic rather than legislative, and went far beyond the purview of nineteen-twenties thought on the subject. Aragonnès proposed a national system of social hygiene, to be given priority status alongside the ministries for economics and national defense. A full examination of the living and workplace conditions of the working class would be conducted under the auspices of the new ministry, with a further emphasis placed upon heredity and contagion. Its goal was the prevention of illness in daily life, with proper hygiene brought into the homes of all workers and farmers, aided by propaganda within schools, factories, and workshops. Mothers would be taught how to feed their children properly and uncover symptoms of illness by specialized female social workers and nurses during the course of home visitations, and in nutritional clinics or factory and school infirmaries.³³⁴

Some Faisceau members took this plan to extremes; one of them called for a new 'Infirmière hygiène sociale' to uncover "physical and mental incapacities" in children, which would then be progressively eliminated.³³⁵ Included in these categories were children whose performance at school was below average, and troublemakers at home. Such children were believed to be a threat both to their families and the nation, and the author proposed their immediate removal. The theme of the incurable delinquent child as a threat to the social order often appeared in Faisceau writings. One cartoon in Nouveau Siècle showed a young boy in tattered clothing, his face sullen and downcast, being observed by two bourgeois men in a food market. The menacing caption, "Je me demande quand il

³³³Aragonnès, "Une Bataille à gagner: sauver la race", NS, 28 Nov. 1926.

³³⁴Ibid. Here again, despite the emphasis on maternity, Aragonnès writes that these new occupations would be perfectly suited to women in search of a career.

³³⁵S.G., "A Propos des services sociaux", NS, 4 Sept. 1927.

deviendra sérieux...ce matin encore, il a essayé d'assassiner son grand-père et il a mis le feu à la maison", transmitted a clear message: If parents could not take proper care of their children, then the state would be forced to do it for them. Such language resembled the terminology used by more extreme postwar geneticists, who argued for restrictions on marriage and childbirth for those of inferior physical or mental stock.³³⁶

Dr. Lestrocquoy, the vice-president of the Faisceau Corporation des médecins, agreed with the harsh language used by his Faisceau colleagues, writing that military and colonial problems, and an invasion of foreign workers into French factories and fields, would be the inevitable consequence of a low birthrate. Lestrocquoy bemoaned the loss of religious sentiment that accompanied childlessness, pointing to Brittany and the Nord as examples of regions and départements that were properly populous and Catholic. He further criticized governmental unwillingness to pay family allowances per child and the concomitant rejection of food subsidies and medical care for large families, pointing to Michelin's allocation familiale of one thousand francs per month for each child as a model for all of France. Such a plan allowed mothers to stay at home with their children, Lestrocquoy concluded, and would exponentially increase family sizes as a result.³³⁷

Lestrocquoy's ideas bordered on pronatalist sentiment, but such examples were few and far between. In most cases where generic pronatalist sentiment was present, it was used to bolster Valois's crypto-biological view of the organic nation. Certainly the argument for economic aid to the working family was not incompatible with such a view, taking as its goal the strengthening of the national 'cell'. In any case, when one considers the acceptance by certain sections within the group of the changing position of women in society, it becomes

³³⁶"La Jeunesse criminelle", *NS*, 1 Feb. 1926; Schneider, chapter six.

³³⁷Dr. Lestrocquoy, "La Problème de la natalité", *NS*, 19 July 1926. It should be noted, however, that employers such as Michelin were not acting altruistically. As Susan Pederson has demonstrated, they viewed the allocation familiale as a method of controlling wages. The extra amount paid per month allowed them to cap wages, deter absenteeism (due to potential loss of the allocation), and avert strikes. See Susan Pederson, *Family, Dependence, and the Origins of the Welfare State, Britain and France 1914-1945* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), Chapter Five.

all the more difficult to place the Faisceau in the pronatalist camp. To be sure, Valois and his colleagues regarded family as the pre-eminent social unit, and wanted women to bear as many children as possible, but they were by and large too realistic in outlook to expect that all would (and could) marry. Furthermore, those who adopted a scientific rather than ideological argument, such as Aragonnès or Lestrocquoy, were concerned with the quality and health of French children, and as such bolstered Valois's organic view of the nation rather than pronatalism. That the Faisceau view was completely atypical of popular sentiment becomes even clearer when considering the example of the CDF/PSF, whose doctrine of the family mirrored that of various groups across the political spectrum, from the Radical party to the conservative Alliance nationale. If Valois looked to Mussolini or Barrès for inspiration regarding family doctrine, CDF/PSF members needed only to read any current newspaper.

4.

The CDF/PSF position was remarkably conservative, falling within the category of what historians call the "mouvement nataliste"—that is, overwhelmingly concerned with the low birthrate during the interwar period, and its consequences for France. In arguing for a renewal of the traditional women's roles as mother and housewife, and for the need to give the family (as a moral entity rather than 'cell of the nation') the pre-eminent position within the nation and the state, the CDF/PSF were in fact espousing the position taken by French society as a whole throughout the interwar period. The battle cry of the highly influential Alliance nationale pour l'accroissement de la population française that "il faut faire naître" could have been the CDF/PSF social policy slogan.³³⁸

³³⁸Françoise Thébaud. "Le Mouvement nataliste dans la France de L'entre deux-guerres: L'Alliance nationale pour l'accroissement de la population française", *Revue d'histoire moderne et contemporaine*, Avril-Juin 1985, p. 276.

Nor was the low birth rate a minor part of their doctrine. Dozens of newspaper articles were written about the phenomenon in the CDF/PSF press and group tracts continually devoted space to the topic, as did regional and national congresses. Women were continually exhorted to give up working outside the home, in order to care for the foyer familiale, and to have as many children as possible. The duty of the state included the support of large families with supplemental incomes and family allowances, while adopting the family and not the individual as the bulwark of the nation. France would either have more children, or be lost, left old, infirm, and childless amongst the new familial dynamism of Germany, Italy, and the United States.

It is crucial to stress that although this program sounds extreme, it was actually quite commonly accepted at the time. This is not to say that all pronatalist groups were alike. To be sure, the leaders of the Alliance nationale, a parliamentary lobbying group, incorporated concepts of extreme nationalism and anti-individualism into their platforms, opinions that never would have been acceptable to more mainstream political parties. Yet the group contained many members unsympathetic to the fascist cause, including the Archbishop of Paris Cardinal Verdier, Protestant leader Pastor Marc Boegner, and the Grand Rabbin of France Isaiah Schwartz.³³⁹ The Alliance also attracted the support of Radical and Socialist governments, and the Ministry of Public Health paid its propaganda costs throughout the thirties.³⁴⁰ Nor was this support particularly new. Five of its members were ministers in

³³⁹Reggiani, p. 745.

³⁴⁰Pederson, p. 369. Thus the claim of certain authors that the CDF/PSF program betrays the influence of Mussolini and Hitler ignores the fact that all of the major political parties adopted a conservative pronatalist stance. The most recent example of this train of thought is Cheryl Koos. "Gender, Anti-Individualism, and Nationalism: The Alliance Nationale and the Pronatalist Backlash against the *Femme Moderne*, 1933-1940, *French Historical Studies*, 19 (3), Spring 1996: 699-723. That Ferdinand Boverat and Paul Haury, the leaders of the Alliance Nationale, were infatuated with fascist familial policy is not in doubt, but their conclusions could have been almost anyone's. In assuming that pronatalist demands were fascist or extreme-rightist (and helped lead France down the road to Vichy), Koos underestimates just how heavily such sentiments had entered the political mainstream. As Françoise Thébaud has written on the same subject, in words applicable to large sections of the French population: "L'Allemagne Hitlérienne reste, comme l'Allemagne de la République de Weimar, l'ennemi dangereux de la France, mais cette répulsion...se double d'un sentiment de fascination envers un régime capable de mener à bien une politique nataliste". In Thébaud, p.296.

the postwar Bloc nationale government, many others were among the best French physicians, and its journal Alliance and propaganda initiatives reached millions of ordinary French men and women.³⁴¹

There were few objections raised to pronatalism on either the left or the right in interwar France. Figures as seemingly irreconcilable as Briand, Daladier, and Clemenceau all expressed strongly pronatalist sentiments during the twenties and thirties. Furthermore, the government's Conseil supérieur de la natalité, founded in 1920 to fight French Malthusianism, included among its ranks members of the Académie française, doctors, academics, and former parliamentarians, many of whom were of centrist or centre-leftist inclination. Many Deputies of all political colours also belonged to the Groupe parlementaire pour la protection de la natalité et de la famille. Laws enacted in 1920 and 1923 made abortion and contraception illegal, but were supported by an overwhelming majority in the Chambre Bleu-Horizon. By 1932, Adolphe Landry, Minister of Labour under the Laval government and one of France's leading pronatalist activists, made family allowances mandatory in legislation that criminalized employer non-participation in the national caisses de compensation. Even the pièce de resistance of pronatalist legislation, the 1938-39 Code de la Famille, was drafted not by the right, but by the Radicals in 1938, including Breton, Daladier, and Reynaud. Most importantly, at a time when even the communist daily L'Humanité featured a regular family page devoted to the women's role as a mother rather than a worker, the Alliance nationale (the largest interwar pronatalist group, with 35 000 members by 1930) was not alone in promoting items which found their way onto the CDF/PSF agenda, including the family vote, improved housing and family allowances. Feminist groups, such as the Union française pour la suffrage des femmes led by Cécile Brunschvicg, argued for increased family allowances precisely because such

³⁴¹Marie-Monique Huss. "Pronatalism in the Inter-War Period in France", Journal of Contemporary History, 25 (1990), p. 43.

action would accelerate the lagging birthrate. It is obvious then that the extreme-right did not possess a monopoly on pronatalist sentiment.³⁴²

The CDF/PSF press belaboured the question of the birthrate to such a degree that its family policy was almost exclusively pronatalist. Unlike Aragonnès or Lestrocquoy of the Faisceau, who adopted geneticist rhetoric and viewed governmental intervention as desirable for qualitative reasons, the CDF/PSF simply wanted more French babies. La Rocque took the defense of the family as his (and the group's) top priority, stating that the population crisis had robbed the nation and the soil of its people. The CDF/PSF state would take the necessary steps to reverse this downward trend: "Le vrai problème ne résoudra point, sinon dans l'atmosphère spirituelle, morale, affectueuse, protégée de nos foyers. C'est autour d'eux, pour eux, par eux que le PSF, aujourd'hui, et l'état social, demain, développeront, au service de la famille, l'effort rendant à la Patrie ses enfants, ses serviteurs et ses soldats". Louis Dupuy warned Petit journal readers in March 1939 that France lost four people each day while Italy grew by 50, Germany gained 60, and 100 Japanese babies were born. To Dupuy, the low birthrate was leading the French nation to its grave. One of the group's monthly bulletins in Paris claimed that the French population was disappearing fast, crying out that "la France est en train de devenir un pays de vieillards". Fewer producers, consumers and taxpayers meant that private enterprise and public finances were in dire jeopardy, while national defense withered away at the precise moment at which a hostile Germany waited to invade from across the Rhine.³⁴³

The CDF/PSF response to such threats was twofold, on one side Catholic and moral and on the other economic. Like the Faisceau, they regarded the family as the basis of all societal organization, a 'faisceau indivisible' from which the nation (the greater French

³⁴²Huss, pp. 41-42; Reggiani, pp. 732/734; Pederson, p. 368.

³⁴³CDLR, "La Grande misère de la famille française", Petit journal, 27 Dec. 1938; Louis Dupuy, "Famille et natalité", Petit journal, 4 March 1939; CHEVS/LR 11 VI A1, A.W., "Un Peu de démographie", Bulletin mensuel du mouvement Croix de Feu (51e et 100e sections), 1 May 1936.

family) emerged. Yet in contrast to the organic familial nationalism of Valois and the Faisceau, the CDF/PSF rendered an almost exclusively Catholic and moral depiction. To one author in the Flambeau de Charentes et du Périgord, producing a large family was one's ethical duty: "C'est une question de morale, car fonder une famille, avoir plusieurs enfants est une devoir civique et patriotique essentiel que les Français ont trop appris à oublier, comme ils ont oublié d'ailleurs la plupart de leurs devoirs". The good father was a true patriot, but also a good citizen, the obscure hero living a decent life and helping French society to flourish.³⁴⁴ Family was the only 'proper' way of life, an ideal to be followed as part of the 'mystique' of the CDF/PSF: "Chaque jour, l'homme et l'enfant, en puisent dans les vertus traditionnelles et familiales, se forment dans les gestes habituelles, dans la continuité des efforts, dans les silences et les sacrifices".³⁴⁵

To Henri Andriot, a member of the CDF/PSF executive committee, the nation was a moral unit rather than a biological one. In his report on the family at the first annual Social Congress of the PSF in May 1939, he told the audience that the familial outlook of the group was solely a product of the traditions bequeathed to France by Christian civilization. Where Valois had spoken of the restoration of the national body, Andriot complained that morality had eroded in France to the extent that marriage was not taken seriously as an institution and divorce had become a mere legal formality. Moral discipline rather than Valois's national-biological evolution was required, so that children would be taught the true spiritual values which governed life. At the same congress, the PSF Bureau d'etudes sociales echoed these sentiments in picturing the family as the necessary basis of society, but adding that society as a whole and not the state would be responsible for its moral implementation. In matters such as the divorce, the state would intervene, forbidding it in all but the most extreme cases, but parents alone raised their children and were responsible for

³⁴⁴A.C., "La Dénatalité française", Flambeau de Charentes et du Périgord, 6 Feb. 1938.

³⁴⁵AP/451/134, "Extraits du rapport sur l'enfant", presented by the Bureau des etudes sociales, Premier congrès social du PSE, 16-17 May 1939.

transmitting the appropriate values. The state would also enact stronger preventative laws against abortion, referred to as the worst of all crimes by the Flambeau de Lorraine, and would lead the fight against pornography and alcoholism. The language used was strictly moralistic; at no point was 'degeneration' mentioned. Good Catholics simply did not engage in such practices.³⁴⁶

Though they only formed a Comité d'action familiale in 1939 to fight the low birth rate with meetings, youth groups, films and other activities, the group put forth solutions to the decline of the family throughout the decade.³⁴⁷ Although moral regeneration was not viewed by the CDF/PSF as an affair of state in the direct sense, group members believed that the resurrection of the French family could be aided by means of legislation. Hence the call from the Bureau d'etudes sociales for stricter divorce laws and higher taxes on bachelors.³⁴⁸ Through such laws, and the use of propaganda, claimed the Ouvrier libre, the 'religion of the family' would take root in the population, instilling them with the desire to perpetuate the race and family name. In the new CDF/PSF state, the family would become the focus of limited state planning and regain the rights which it had lost to the individual under the Republican system.³⁴⁹

The Republic was to blame for the current French weakness, as it placed individualism and materialism above the common good. According to the Flamme Tourangelle, bachelorhood or families with only one child were preferred by the governmental authorities, who sought to maintain "les moeurs laïco-matérialistes" for their own profit, even at the expense of the national well-being.³⁵⁰ The Flambeau du Sud-Est contrasted this

³⁴⁶AP/451/134, "Discours sur la 'défense de la famille'", presented by Henri Andriot, Premier congrès sociale du PSE, 16-17 May 1939; CHEVS/LR 22, "Extraits du rapport sur 'les questions familiales'", presented by the Bureau d'etudes sociales, Premier congrès sociale du PSE, 16-17 May 1939; "En écoutant la radio", Flambeau de Lorraine, 27 May 1939.

³⁴⁷CHEVS/LR 11 A, "Plan générale d'action familiale et nataliste du PSF", 16 Feb. 1939.

³⁴⁸CHEVS/LR 11 VI A 1, A. Wolff, "Un peu de démographie (suite)", Bulletin mensuel du mouvement Croix de Feu (51e et 100e Sections), 1 June 1936.

³⁴⁹M. de la Palisse, "Déficit de naissances", L'Ouvrier libre, Feb. 1939.

³⁵⁰Volmar, "Le Coupable", Flamme Tourangelle, 8 July 1939.

ideology with the role of the family in preserving the French race and traditions, arguing that the low birthrate and depopulation of the countryside, abetted by the lure of materialism, had produced a deterioration of paternal authority and subsequent deracination among the population. Instant gratification had replaced morality, leaving France with "un agglomeration d'individus qui s'engloutirent dans la masse anonyme". As all French genius and virtue sprang from the family and the sacrifice and discipline which it engendered--the cornerstones of a proper Christian society--the new CDF/PSF nation would actively work for their restoration. Once again, however, the focus was solely a moral one, with the reconstitution of familial authority largely confined to the private sphere, where the father and not the state was in command.³⁵¹

To others within the CDF/PSF ranks, a lack of economic ethics was to blame. For Pierre Sutter, the liberal individualism and doctrine of materialism had engendered class war and the unemployment crisis, both of which effectively corroded the working class family. While the bourgeoisie looked upon children as an impediment to the accumulation of wealth, the worker simply could not afford them. Sutter proposed as potential remedies the family vote, in which a number of votes were cast proportional to the size of the family, and the *salair familial*. La Rocque extended this argument to the countryside, stating that governmental inaction since the war on housing, hygiene, and economic issues had cost France its rural population. But despite his seemingly financial explanation, the CDF/PSF leader placed moral causes above material ones in the final analysis, claiming that the sacrifice of the common rural home and the village church to electoralism and individual

³⁵¹"Les Croix de Feu et la famille", *Flambeau du Sud-Est*, June 1936. This argument was not exclusive to the CDF/PSF. A variety of Social Catholic groups, influenced by Albert de Mun and *Rerum Novarum*, used the same arguments, condemning both liberal individualism and capitalist materialism for the destruction of the family and morality. See Pederson, p. 394.

desires had ultimately destroyed the familial institution. The Republican 'cult of ease' had replaced discipline and sacrifice, as the state was no longer defending the family.³⁵²

The second group focus was purely economic. Unlike the Faisceau, CDF/PSF plans for the resuscitation of the French family were almost exclusively financial in scope. Pierre Kula, head of the PSF Groupe patronale, argued that material well-being was just as crucial to the health and development of the French family as its moral fibre. The family would certainly be enshrined by the nation and state in the moral sense, but needed bread as much as virtue.³⁵³ The PSF leadership agreed, placing the material defense of the family into its 1936 program, in which it called for the *salaire familial* and an increased family allowance. Only with such guarantees could the wife/mother stay at home and raise children, which would lessen unemployment as women left the workplace for the *foyer familial*. Furthermore, all 'Malthusian legislation' which favoured only 'anonymous capitalism' would be struck down in the new state. Inheritance laws would be amended to minimize taxation, and the rights of mothers would be legally encoded. Large-scale industrial expansion would be carefully monitored to insure that the employees/fathers were treated fairly, no longer condemned to wander from site to site in search of work due to frequent layoffs. Finally, the family vote (allowing each family a number of votes equal to their number of children and cast by both parents in concert) and the women's vote would be implemented to restore to the family its rightful leadership position within the nation. The language used made clear the seriousness with which the group took the issue: "La famille a une âme qui doit être défendue".³⁵⁴

³⁵²Pierre Sutter, "Intégrons la famille dans la vie sociale", *Le Flambeau*, 12 June 1937; CDLR, "Discours de clôture", in *Premier congrès agricole*. Saint-Brieuc: Les Presses Brétonnes, 1939, p. 14; CDLR, "La Grande misère de la famille française", *Petit journal*, 27 Dec. 1938.

³⁵³AP/451/117, Pierre Kula, "Essai sur un politique des allocations familiales", *Premier congrès du Groupe patronale (19 et 20 Mai 1939)*, p. 35.

³⁵⁴AP/451/102, tract-*Parti social français: une mystique, un programme* (Paris: SEDA, 1936), pp. 31-35; "Pour une politique française", *Le Flambeau*, 19 Nov. 1936.

Business owners were frequently assailed for failing to meet CDF/PSF standards. La Rocque abused the Matignon accords for non-acceptance of familial rights, asking why laws on apprenticeship and the *salaires familiaux* had not been included. Although he applauded the gains made for working women, using the example of on-site day care centres, the leader nonetheless observed that such actions were morally weak, as children and their mothers were supposed to remain at home.³⁵⁵ La Rocque's critique was echoed by Dr. Philippe Encausse, who complained that the accords had been written exclusively for bachelors, a fact uncontested by either the government or the CGT. Any assistance for the working father was deemed a pittance, immediately erased by the rising prices of staple goods, which meant that a family of four now needed the money formerly required to feed six in order to survive. Although he lauded the recent raise in family allowances by the Caisse de compensation de la Région Parisienne to two-hundred francs per month per child, Encausse warned that such action was an inadequate solution for long-term French needs. French births numbered half of those in Germany per annum, France was now losing 40 000 inhabitants per year, and the French race stood in danger of becoming extinct if no further compensation was forthcoming.³⁵⁶

Owners were thus encouraged by the CDF/PSF to move far beyond the Matignon agreements. At a meeting in Lyon in 1936, La Rocque called for a true minimum wage, to be much higher than that proposed by the CGT and sufficient to raise a large family, rather than the mere bachelor's wage currently paid out by French industry. Factory and business proprietors were to be encouraged to hire fathers rather than bachelors, with the former being allotted a fixed superior number of positions within each concern. In La Rocque's

³⁵⁵AP/451/102, tract-*Union-Esprit-Famille* (Paris, 1938), p. 13. The text is an in extenso annotation of La Rocque's January 1938 speech at the Vélodrome d'Hiver.

³⁵⁶Dr. Philippe Encausse, "Il faut sauver la famille française", *Le Flambeau*, 24 Oct. 1936. Encausse's figure of 200 francs per month given by the CCRP is well above the actual amount, which was 30 francs per month for the first child at the time he was writing, rising to 200 for each additional child after the second one. See Pederson, p. 270

view, the national interest alone would dictate business practices in the new *État social français*. As the family was both the national priority and its essential component, the increased wage and secure employment would be strictly enforced by the national and regional authorities to keep women at home: "Nous voulons la femme mariée, la mère de famille puisse quitter définitivement l'usine, l'atelier, le bureau, le magasin, ou elle n'est pas à sa place, pour retourner à son foyer".³⁵⁷ Pierre Kula agreed, calling the notion that a bachelor and a father of four should earn the same wage absurd: "Dans une société normalement constituée et démographiquement prospère, la famille nombreuse—d'au moins 3 enfants—devrait être la règle, le célibat étant une situation d'attente (hors les situations particulières de célibat volontaire, notamment dans les ordres religieux), la famille de progéniture nulle ou réduite sans exception". Wage equalization that made the father an inferior, and family allowances which were lower than the actual cost per child, were to be immediately rectified under the new CDF/PSF regime.³⁵⁸

The crowning achievement of CDF/PSF policy in the new state was to be a complete revision of the *salaires familiaux*. Various schemes were proposed by members, all of which raised the then-standard subsidies considerably, while extending the plan to agriculture. For agricultural workers, whose average wage was sixty per cent of that of industrial workers, commentators replaced the existing equation with a scale of one thousand francs per annum for the first child, rising substantially for each subsequent one:

TABLE 1

NUMBER OF CHILDREN

SUGGESTED AMOUNT

³⁵⁷CHEVS/LR 20 H, "Réunion du 15 Septembre 1936", Salle Blanchon. Lyon. La Rocque offered no figures for the new minimum wage.

³⁵⁸AP/451/117, Kula, "Essai....", pp. 36-37. This same argument was used in an article entitled "Travail FAMILLE Patrie" by an anonymous author in the *Flambeau des Vosges*, July 1939.

1	1000 Francs/yr.
2	1500 Fr./yr.
3	3000 Fr./yr.
4	4500 Fr./yr.
5	5500 Fr./yr.
6	6500 Fr./yr.
7	7000 Fr./yr.

By contrast, the supplement for the industrial worker was to be determined by means of a percentage of the total annual wage bill, driving up the total allocation considerably³⁵⁹:

TABLE 2

NUMBER OF CHILDREN	SUGGESTED AMOUNT
1	10% of Wage Bill
2	25%
3	50%
4	75%
5	100%

Writing in the Flamme des Deux-Sèvres, one author proclaimed these scales sufficient to offset the cost of the birth itself, and the subsequent clothing and feeding of each child. The total cost of the plan was estimated at one and a half billion francs per annum, to be paid for by a four per cent tax on foreign goods, and a small tax on French agricultural produce.

³⁵⁹All general wage information based on figures in Alfred Sauvy, Histoire économique de la France entre les deux guerres. Tome 2 (Paris: Librairie Arthème-Fayard, 1967), pp. 510-522. Table 1 information taken from Ch. des Dorides, "Les Allocations familiales en agriculture", La Flamme des Deux-Sèvres, April 1939. Table 2 information taken from Beyland, "Questions sociales et familiales", Ralliment du Nord, 24 June 1937.

The rest would be taken from the existing caisses, which would remain as dispensers of the enlarged fund.³⁶⁰

This plan was aimed specifically at offsetting the lagging birthrate and at reconstituting the French family. To Jacques Nadaillac, the salaire familial was akin to the wage that women would earn in the workplace, a substitute enabling her to 'work' at home raising children. Abortion, bachelorhood, and individualism were certainly to blame for France's precarious position, he chided, but were not the exclusive causes of the population decline. Nor was the CDF/PSF proposal to be final, for increasing births meant more consumers, which would allow the government to raise funds needed to further increase the supplemental amount. Putting these words into action, the group took their principles into the Chamber, where in 1938 the PSF deputies tabled a motion to make domestics and cleaning women the first recipients of the new 'woman's wage'.³⁶¹

The CDF/PSF also argued in favour of special housing allowances for families with a single wage-earner. Pierre Kula, stating that a stable family unit was only feasible if housed in a proper environment, envisioned a sur-allowance above the regular monthly familial allotment. As the future CDF/PSF state would enact legislation aimed at restricting a woman's right to work, the amount would be considerable. Nadaillac added the idea of the marriage loan, to be paid back in annual installments with interest. Aimed exclusively at the agrarian worker, who in many cases did not earn a strict wage per se, the loan would provide five thousand francs to a French citizen of ten years naturalization. The lending period was to be ten years at five per cent interest, which would diminish with each subsequent child, with the principle itself decreasing upon the birth of the fourth child.³⁶²

³⁶⁰Ch. des Dorides, "Les Allocations familiales en agriculture", La Flamme des Deux-Sèvres, April 1939.

³⁶¹Jacques Nadaillac, "Les Allocations familiales" in Premier congrès agricole. Saint-Brieuc: Les Presses Bretonnes, 1939, pp. 36-43; CHEVS/LR 29, Chambre des Députés/n.2501, "Proposition de résolution tendant à inviter le gouvernement à déposer un projet de loi en vue d'instituer des allocations familiales en faveur des gens de maison et des concierges".

³⁶²Kula, "Essai sur un politique....", p. 49; Nadaillac, pp. 50-54.

5.

Despite the seeming extremity of their discourse, the vast majority of CDF/PSF members never displayed sympathy for nazi or fascist plans regarding the family. Neither La Rocque nor the rank and file mentioned Mussolini or Hitler in this context, relying solely upon moral and economic solutions, many of which were implemented (ironically enough) during the later stages of the Third Republic. The idea of the *salaires familiales* was legally adopted in 1932 by the Tardieu government, with the CDF/PSF simply demanding increased allotments. Furthermore, the allowances were finally raised significantly not by the right or the Vichy regime, but by Edouard Daladier's Radical government in November 1939, as part of his final *Code de la Famille*. Nor was pronatalist morality exclusive to the CDF/PSF or the extreme-right; it was the law of July 1920 voted by the *Chambre Bleue* Horizon that rendered abortion and contraception illegal, measures reinforced by Daladier's initiative. Even the Popular Front government of Léon Blum established a ministry for the protection of childhood under Suzanne Lacore, whose scope included social hygiene.³⁶³ The CDF/PSF were no aberration, and certainly not extreme or fascist in this regard. If anything, they were simply a sign of the times.

These similarities also made the CDF/PSF distinct from the *Faisceau*. Valois's vision, of an organic living France, was indicative of that adopted by the traditional extreme-right. The Barrèsian notion of the unity between the French family and the soil, combined with Maurras's theory of the integral nation, is present in the *Faisceau* doctrine of the family. Although certain members used geneticist theories to both uphold the validity of Valois's analysis and to implement his program through proposed state action, they never deviated from the extreme-rightist analysis put forth by their leader. La Rocque and the CDF/PSF,

³⁶³Huss, pp. 42-43, 55-56. On Blum's pronatalist leanings during the Popular Front ministry, see Pederson, p. 371.

by contrast, were conservative and Catholic in their moralistic stance, envisioning families as ethical units, the backbone of *Christian* civilization rather than the *fascist* nation-state. There would be no national-biological evolution within the *État social français*, but rather a state-sponsored and community-directed effort to morally cleanse society. Unlike Valois's proposed state, which would enforce the regeneration of the family by dictatorial means, the extent of pro-family legal initiatives in the planned CDF/PSF state were limited to divorce and abortion, which were to be eliminated for moral purposes. The main thrust of activity would take place in the home, the school (directed by the state), and the church, a troika which would impose the necessary moral education upon the young. These solutions would not have been out of place in the traditional rightist camp, and if the church is replaced by the party meeting, even the PCF--whose newspaper encouraged women to stay at home and raise large families throughout the thirties--would have been forced to agree. Unlike the family policy of the *Faisceau*, that of the CDF/PSF was in no way specific to the extreme-right.

One might argue that this was simply a case in which an extremist position moved to occupy the centre. Such a notion can be easily countered with two points. Firstly, neither the French extreme-right nor the fascists/nazis used only the birthrate and an unspoken fear of female empowerment in arguing for their familial doctrines. Rather, they wanted to strengthen the race, a corollary to their respective doctrines of the glorification of war and continental dominance. The CDF/PSF leadership had no such plans in mind, the Republic even less so.³⁶⁴ Second, the extremity of the fascist and nazi plans was in no way duplicated within the confines of the Third Republic. Where Mussolini and Hitler ordered women to remain home and raise large families, the Republic made abortion illegal and

³⁶⁴Certain elements within the group adopted such a platform, with some advocating the use of eugenics in social planning while others proposed a racial cleansing of the nation, but these ideas were in no way sanctioned by the group leadership. See chapter five for eugenics and youth, and chapter six for the extreme views of certain members regarding race.

divorce difficult (in no way different from the situation in other democratic countries at the time), but mainly offered only incentives to French fathers and mothers. Thus despite demonstrating a right-wing slant regarding the issues of women and the family during the interwar period, the parties of the French centre and left in no way sympathized with the fascist program, but rather expressed the wishes of a patriarchal state and society which, despite experiencing its first feminist challenges, wished to preserve the power of men within a democratic political system.

The Faisceau, however, were a curious case. By a strange paradox, the same group which claimed to worship the fascist party of Mussolini, arguing for ministries of social hygiene and state-legislated family law, contained a number of more progressive views concerning women within its ranks. Valois, so prominently heard regarding economics, was virtually silent regarding the subjects of women and feminism, which he perhaps viewed as less important than the installation of state-sponsored corporatism. In his place two conflicting bodies of opinion existed, led by Aragonnès (for the modern woman) and Bourgin (for the woman in the home) respectively. Neither group elaborated a Mussolini-style discourse on the subject of women, with the conservative Bourgin opting instead for an almost biblical misogyny instead of the 'duty' of women to the fascist state. The major planks of Italian fascist social policy— duty and pronatalism—were in fact entirely absent from the Faisceau discourse. Various group writers simply recreated the divisions of the era, regarding the status of French women, within their own ranks.

Nor did arguing that women should be confined to the home make one a 'fascist'. After all, the views espoused by the CDF/PSF on the question of women's role in society were, like their pronatalism, quite common. As numerous writers on the subject amply demonstrate, the archetype of woman-as-housewife/mother was the norm in a country in which women were not allowed to vote and had few civil or political rights until the last days of the Second World War. Thus a group that was extreme-rightist on a number of other

counts (the state, youth, or the politics of exclusion for example) and also quite divided in their approaches to the same issues, was united regarding women and the family precisely by holding views which appeared across the entire French political spectrum during the interwar period.

Chapter 4-Pour une jeunesse saine et patriote: The Physical and Moral Transformation of Youth in the État combattant and the État social français

The interwar era in France was in many ways the epoch in which youth came to prominence for the first time. Dozens of groups formed across the political spectrum which catered exclusively to a younger clientele. Youth began to assume political and social stances of their own, often encouraged by adult leaders of established political parties and groups. Most importantly, youth were extremely visible during the interwar period, both in physical and ideological terms. Despite the relatively low proportion of young men and women in the various new groups—less than fifteen per cent of those aged fourteen to twenty belonged to a particular association—the proliferation of new organizations succeeded in attracting the young at an age when the struggle for an identity or a career, or the attraction of an ideology or adventurous lifestyle, loomed large. Combined with the turmoils of the Third Republic, primarily its perceived inherent instability and political gridlock, such struggles led many to turn their back on the 'old ways', seeking their own solutions to particular problems. Many interwar French youths, rejecting the past as sterile, viewed themselves as a new force, possessing the will and ability to deliver a moribund France from its impasse. Inspired by the German Wandervogel and the Portuguese youth movement, they returned to nature, seeing themselves as a new knighthood, an elite alone capable of regenerating the nation and the state.³⁶⁵ As a newly radicalized bloc disenchanted with the status quo, youth were also a primary target for recruitment by various groups across the political spectrum.

Representative of this trend were the Association catholique de la jeunesse française and the Scouts. Both groups emphasized moral revivalism, and the need for youth actively

³⁶⁵W.D. Halls, *The Youth of Vichy France* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981), p. 132; Aline Coutrot, "Le Mouvement du jeunesse, un phénomène au singulier?", in Gérard Cholvy.(ed.), *Mouvements de jeunesse Chrétiens et Juifs: Sociabilité juvénile dans le cadre Européen, 1799-1968* (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1985), pp. 114-117, 120; John Hellman, *The Knight-Monks of Vichy France* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1993), pp. 5-7.

to take control of their own lives in order to better society. The ACJF, an umbrella organization comprising the Jeunesses Chrétiennes groups (ouvrières, agricoles, étudiants, maritime) for both boys and girls, the Union Chrétienne des jeunes garçons/filles, and the YMCA, appealed directly to French youth in a staunchly anti-Marxist tone, emphasizing the spiritual regeneration of the nation. Although not explicitly political, the Éclaireurs de France and scouts, with their emphasis on hierarchy, uniforms, and physical accomplishment, were equally adamant that youth should be inculcated with virtue, healthy in both body and spirit. Neither the ACJF nor the Scouts were politically motivated per se, yet both attempted to train the future leaders of France. Most importantly, their appeals were successful in numerical terms, as the Scouts counted 125 000 members by 1939, while the ACJF membership rolls topped half a million.³⁶⁶ Thus Christian social groups proved to be the most attractive to the youth of this period. The communist Pionniers rouges and the socialist Faucons rouges never gained a comparable number of adherents. The Jeunesses socialistes were likewise only moderately successful, attracting 55 000 youths by 1935. Similarly, Marc Sagnier's Sillon had petered out by the thirties, and its former leader went on to form the more successful, but non-ideological, French youth hostel movement.³⁶⁷

The extreme-right too sought to draw youth into their fold during the interwar era. Unlike the ACJF or the scouts, however, their organizations rejected the Republic, adopting the goal of training a young vanguard to defeat democracy and usher in an authoritarian

³⁶⁶Gérard Cholvy, "Les Organisations de jeunesse d'inspiration Chrétienne ou Juive, XIXe-XXe siècle", in Cholvy, pp. 44-46; Philippe Laneyrie, *Les Scouts de France* (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1985), pp. 51, 80, 86; Rémi Fabre, "Les Mouvements de jeunesse dans la France de l'entre-deux-geures", *Mouvement sociale*, no. 168, juillet-septembre 1994, p. 11; Yves-Marie Hillaire, "L'Association Catholique de la jeunesse française, les étapes d'une histoire (1886-1956)", *Revue du Nord*, no. 261/262, avril-septembre 1984, p. 913; Oscar L. Arnal, "Towards a Lay Apostolate of the Workers: Three Decades of Conflict for the French Jeunesse ouvrière Chrétienne (1927-1956)", *Catholic Historical Review*, Vol. LXXIII (2), April 1987, *passim*.

³⁶⁷Christian Delaporte, "Les Jeunesses socialistes dans l'entre-deux-geures", *Mouvement sociale*, no. 157, octobre-décembre 1991, p. 33; Pascal Ory, *La Belle illusion: Culture et politique sous le signe du Front Populaire* (Paris: Plon, 1994), p. 769-772.

state. The success of the Camelots du Roi and the Institut d'Action française, the Maurrassian 'youth' initiatives founded in 1908, set an example which all extreme-rightist leagues sought to follow. By the nineteen-twenties and thirties, each had a youth wing, complete with various centres, meetings, and uniforms incorporating primary, secondary, and university students. Youth were recruited almost exclusively from the Parisian middle-classes and often from the university milieu, the former assigned to the shock troops while the latter agitated within the confines of the school. All were instilled with extreme nationalism (which often devolved into xenophobic sentiments) and urged to adopt the militaristic values of sacrifice for the nation, discipline, and violence against 'the enemy'.³⁶⁸

The Faisceau and the CDF/PSF displayed a similar interest in youth. Yet unlike the Action française or the Francistes, neither Valois, La Rocque, or their respective groups viewed youth as mere street troops, to be mobilized against the state in the interests of the counter-revolution. Nor was their ideal young Frenchman the socially conscious working-class ACJF youth or the physically fit and virtuous scout. Rather both groups took the spirit of the youthful age—the concept of youth as a new elite vanguard, and the dissatisfaction of the younger generations with a decadent past represented by the sterile Republic—and combined it with their own socio-political aspirations. Like other organizations of the day, both believed the question of youth, representing the future national elite, to be of paramount importance. But Faisceau and CDF/PSF youth would be taught nationalist and militarist values not merely for agitational purposes, but as the ideological basis of the new nation and state in which they were to play a leading role. Only by mobilizing the energy and talent of the best and the brightest of the younger generation, they argued, could the French nation regain the world predominance which had been lost as a consequence of the destruction wrought by the Great War.

³⁶⁸Bertram M. Gordon, "Radical Right Youth Between the Wars", Proceedings of the Fifth Annual Meeting of the Western Society for French History, 1978.

Once again, however, both groups were divided on the question of what function the younger generation was to play within the new nation and state, and how they were to be guided along the right path towards the assumption of this role. Furthermore, their respective approaches to the question of youth were markedly different. The Faisceau vision of youth was two-fold. Anciens combattants Valois and Jacques Arthuys viewed the younger generation through the lens of the Great War. They pictured youth as the young soldiers who had served France on the front lines, sacrificing themselves as a fraternal whole for the nation. The task of the jeune combattant was now to win the peace as they had emerged victorious from war, by toppling the decadent republic and then forging the new fascist state.

Although both men discussed the political state, the new economic order, and the role of the family in detailed terms, neither Valois nor Arthuys designed a program for youth. Content to issue slogans rather than create concrete plans, the actual blueprint for the role of youth within the new nation and state was delegated to Hubert Bourgin who, while Valois had begun his ideological slide towards fascism by the early twenties, had remained the disciple of Maurras and Barrès. The lycée professor's plans focused exclusively on education. His future French elite would be taught traditional subjects by morally sound instructors in an atmosphere more reminiscent of Arnold of Rugby than Mussolini's Italy, in which the soil and social Catholic ideals were of supreme importance. The tension between the two views, although it was never openly expressed, is clear: Valois and Arthuys were in favour of a modern combattant youth, while Bourgin wanted the younger generation to be good Christians and Frenchmen.

Conflicting plans for youth also existed within the ranks of the CDF/PSF, yet their situation as a whole differed from that of the Faisceau. As a larger entity, they approached the question of youth from several different directions, emphasizing specific learned values such as the cult of tradition and the motherland, and the notions of leadership, discipline,

will, and militarism. These traits corresponded to those of Valois's soldier-producer, and the CDF/PSF likewise wished to mold youth in the image of their combattant fathers, but group plans for the next generation were much more complex. They devised detailed plans for a new national education system and argued for a complete reform of the teaching profession, envisioning an overhaul of the entire school system and curriculum accompanied by a radical reorganization of the state's role in education. This would be combined with a strenuous national physical education program to create a physical, moral, and intellectual elite of workers, fathers, and soldiers capable of leading France and living exemplary lives according to the principles of social Catholicism.

Although there were disagreements within the group about the content of the system, the diametrically opposed factions within the Faisceau were absent in the CDF/PSF. The ideological uniformity present in discussions about women and the family was not evident in this instance, as various group members squabbled over details in most cases, the doctrinal framework established by La Rocque, Jean Daujat, and Jean Mierry was never seriously challenged. Despite minor disagreements, all sides agreed that religious values were to be restored, youth made healthy and disciplined, and morality encouraged in both school and the foyer familiale. Dissent regarding youth came only from those in favour of a more extreme notion: The concept of human engineering through physical education and sport. Such ideas were already present in the discourse of certain members, such as Joseph Nadaillac and G. Henriquet, admirers of nazi eugenics who proposed sterilization programs and genetic criteria for children.³⁶⁹ Some within the group argued for a similar program regarding youth, thought necessary to reverse the 'degeneration of the race'. To these men, youth were raw material, to be sculpted by the CDF/PSF into a new type of French man and

³⁶⁹See CHEVS/LR 11 VI A 1, A Wolff. "Un peu de démographie (suite)", Bulletin mensuel du mouvement Croix de Feu (51e et 100e Sections), 1 June 1936; Jacques Nadaillac, "Les Allocations familiales" in Premier congrès agricole. Saint-Brieuc: Les Presses Bretonnes, 1939., pp. 50-53; Gillette Ziegler, "La Dénatalité:", Petit journal, 7 June 1938; G. Henriquet, "La Loi au secours de la race", Flambeau de Lorraine, 27 May 1939.

woman. Where La Rocque wanted strong and moral men, those who favoured more harsh physical training wanted the perfection of the race instead.

1.

Just as the Faisceau were divided regarding the political state, and the roles of women and the family in the nation, two distinct voices again emerged on the subject of youth, represented by war heroes Georges Valois and Jacques Arthuys on one hand, and the conservative academic Hubert Bourgin on the other. Valois and Arthuys represented the mentality of what Robert Wohl has called the Generation of 1914, those who came of age during the Great War. Both men took part in the nationalist revival in France in the years before the conflict, a precursor to the explosion of youth movements in the twenties and thirties. Like many young intellectuals at the time, they saw the events of 1914 as the harbinger of national regeneration, in which the decadent France of the prewar period would be replaced by a higher spiritual order. To these men, the Great War demonstrated the innate superiority of action over reason, along with a natural human preference for national unity rather than class consciousness. Elitism, sacrifice and fraternity were seen as the highest spiritual values to which man could aspire.³⁷⁰ Most important to Valois and Arthuys was the youth of the combattants who, instilled with the virtues of the trenches, desired to bring their warlike mentality into the civic arena, to win the peace as they had won the war. This was not the rhetoric of the scouts or the ACJF. To Valois and Arthuys, youth were the vanguard of the fight against Republican decadence and would lead the way into the fascist future.

Following the logic of notable youth movements of all political stripes during the interwar period, both Valois and Arthuys addressed the younger generations from a

³⁷⁰Robert Wohl, *The Generation of 1914* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1979), pp. 215, 231.

doctrinal perspective, primarily by mobilizing the theme of generational conflict. Represented in the Faisceau press by parliamentarians of all stripes from Poincaré to Caillaux, the 'vieux équipe' was blamed for all vestiges of French weakness, while the young were cast in the dual role of the principal victims of 'old men' in government and their democratic modus operandi and the saviours of France in her hour of need. But as a mouvement des Anciens Combattants, the Faisceau also viewed youth as the heroes of 1914-18, representing the values of the trenches. Hence the characteristics attributed to youth were militaristic, such as physical ability, virility, and the mentality of the warrior. They were the soldiers and producers of the future, whose baptism had taken place in the heat of battle, which had constituted for the younger generation of French men their first true life experience of any kind. These youthful combattants symbolized renewed French greatness, which they demonstrated with their energy, intelligence and blood. The National Revolution was to be the creation of these combattants alone, a duty for which they had prepared in the trenches.

This vision was an integral part of the group doctrine from the beginning. Speaking at the first Faisceau meeting in Paris, in November 1925, Arthuys called youth a "new harvest" and "the voluntary avant-garde of an immense renaissance movement", embodying the spirit of the victory. They had sacrificed their bodies and souls for France, placing the nation above themselves in direct contrast to the democratic individualism of the Republic. Arthuys further argued that youth had become an indissoluble fraternity during the war. While fighting in unison the young soldiers had experienced the love of the nation that springs from the "depths of the race", a product of the ultimate bond--the national soil. To Arthuys, this served to demonstrate that French survival depended upon a reconstitution of the national collective of which the younger generation, steeped in the values of fraternity, will, hierarchy and sacrifice which they had discovered in the trenches, were now living representatives. The wartime experiences of the youth made them impatient, ready to

resume the battle of the Marne against the weak and decadent Republic. The war would not be over, Arthuys thundered, until the 'leeches' in government were removed from French soil by the younger generation as the Germans had been before them, to be replaced by 'L'État Combattant'.³⁷¹

The latter point was the crucial one for the Faisceau, who viewed youth as both eager to exercise power and inherently anti-parliamentary and anti-Republican. Youth, Valois professed, were interested solely in action. Thus the experience of warfare operated as a line of experiential demarcation. Speeches and debates were anathema to the young men of 1914, and the deputies who prattled on in the Chamber were symbols of the old way of thinking. This 'vieux equipe' were representative of the generation of the defeat of 1871, in direct opposition to the youthful generation of the victory, having come of age during the Franco-Prussian war and its disastrous aftermath during the 1870s. Valois believed that they were conditioned to accept French weakness as a *fait accompli*, and that this attitude had governed their conduct during the Great War, a conflict which they had experienced solely through debates in the Chamber of Deputies and newspaper articles. They had not fought for the nation at the front, and therefore did not share the youthful values of absolute authority, hierarchy, and had not experienced the concerted effort of thousands to win on the battlefield. Nor did they appreciate the positive revaluation produced by will, heroism, and national discipline. Despite their lack of effort and sacrifice, the older generation had retained the levers of power after the war as custodians of a washed-up nation. Youth, by contrast, perceived only a people rejuvenated by victory, climbing towards greatness through a collective effort. Valois believed that the generation of 1914 wanted to cast aside the older caste of war profiteers, mercantilists, and 'embusqués', ready to both lead and be led, waiting to rise up and take power upon receiving the signal: "Elle a compris, elle comprend mieux

³⁷¹"Discours prononcée le 11 Novembre", *NS*, 12 Nov. 1925. On Arthuys's notion of the État Combattant, see Chapter One.

de jour en jour qu'elle a été victime des vieillards de la défaite et que l'on ne verra vraiment le nouveau visage de la France que lorsque les générations de la victoire auront pris le pouvoir".³⁷²

The Faisceau thus specifically linked themselves to the hopes and ambitions of the younger generation. As only the new fascist mass movement could vanquish the 'vieux équipe' of the Republic, youth were by inclination and necessity fascist:

Brève, rapide, aimant peu le discours, pleine d'appetit pour l'action, elle attend, dans un apparent détachement, qu'on l'appelle pour une grande entreprise. Elle attend le chef national et les équipes de chefs. Elle veut les commandements. Elle attend qu'on lui donne l'ordre de donner l'assaut à un monde pourri, où des embusqués, des profiteurs de guerre, des mercantis, des concessionnaires, des maîtres chanteurs, des escarpes, des invertis, des marlous font figure de conducteurs de peuple ou forment le cortège des maîtres de la vie publique.³⁷³

Should they remain passive, the nation would be relegated to second-class status. For the generation of 1871 represented failure, their legacy visible throughout Europe in the communist menace, the plummeting franc, the rule of foreign plutocracy, and the political and financial predominance of New York, Frankfurt and London over the Latin nations. Worse still, trumpeted Philippe Barrès, those in power, too weary to contemplate the use of force in order to staunch the threat, ignored the menace across the Rhine: "Les cloches pangermanistes de Cologne saluent triomphalement notre déroute morale et l'abandon, par nous consenti, d'une incomparable victoire. Nos meilleurs amis Rhénans restent désespérés, à la merci de l'indéfaticable adversaire qui va préparer sur le Rhin, sur *notre* rive du Rhin, sa prochaine guerre".³⁷⁴ It was the burden of the nation's youth to act for the salvation of France before it was too late. As Arthuys sternly warned, there was no third

³⁷²F/7/13211, Tract #5, Georges Valois, "La Conquête de l'avenir", 1926; George Valois, *La Politique de la victoire* (Paris: Nouvelle Librairie Nationale, 1925), p. 93; Georges Valois, "L'Arrivée des nouvelles équipes et la jeunesse", *NS*, 5 Oct. 1926.

³⁷³Valois, *La Politique....*, p. 93.

³⁷⁴Philippe Barrès, "Le Mal": Veulerie. La Remède: Jeunesse.", *NS*, 2 Feb. 1926.

way, one was either in favour of the Révolution nationale that the combattants and the 'jeunes producteurs' were creating, or one was for fatigue, disorder, and decadence.³⁷⁵

The Faisceau model of creative and energetic youth were the Italian fascists, whose dynamism Valois and others frequently compared to their flabby Republican neighbours. To Valois, fascist Italy represented "the cry of the new Italy, young and ardent, who grow with a stunning quickness, and who want to live". Its youth were living expressions of the Italian creative genius, harnessed by Mussolini who gave them a soul, a doctrine, and the will to elevate the nation to a superior level. In the East such a young society also existed, in the form of communism, a phenomenon equally at odds with the venerable 'legitimate' democracies. Yet communism was flawed, a system where the masses starved and the bureaucracy ruled, a virus which spread across the globe slowly while inexorably destroying those nations it seized. If France was not to fall victim to the barbaric hordes from Russia, Valois opined, the younger generations must adopt fascism, since democracy was crumbling and no longer afforded sufficient protection to the nation.³⁷⁶

By positing fascism as both a movement of youth and the only effective barrier against the threat of communism and the decadence of the old guard and Republican institutions, Valois and Arthuys mobilized arguments identical to those expressed by Mussolini and the Italian fascists. Such ideas would become the ideological impetus for Drieu la Rochelle, Robert Brasillach, and the so-called fascist intellectuals a decade later, auguring the ideology of Vichy. But unlike these men, the ideologues of the Faisceau made no appeal for the formation of a new and virile order of youth. This is not to say that Valois and Arthuys rejected the notion that young males possessed the qualities of heroism, sacrifice, and virility that Mussolini and the later French fascists ascribed to them. They simply did not engage in any systematic attempt to create such an order. Despite the similarity of the respective

³⁷⁵Jacques Arthuys, "L'Urgence de la révolte", *NS*, 14 Feb. 1926.

³⁷⁶Georges Valois, "L'Ancienne et la nouvelle Europe", *NS*, 18 Sept. 1926.

criticisms of Valois, Mussolini, and the French fascist intellectuals of the thirties, Valois's and Arthuys's plans for youth within the renewed nation and state remained vague. Unlike the CDF/PSF, who drew up precise plans for the reconstitution of a young leadership elite, the Faisceau leaders rarely went beyond ambiguous slogans.

That youth were never considered to be a priority by the group leadership is amply demonstrated by the lack of attention paid to mass recruitment within those Faisceau organizations specifically dedicated to the younger generation: The Jeunesses fascistes and the Faisceau universitaire [FU]. Unlike the other leading extreme-rightist groups of the day, the Action française and the Jeunesses patriotes, the Faisceau did not direct propaganda specifically at youth, a fact that the Paris police attributed to the exclusive attention paid by the group's leaders to the Faisceau des corporations and economic matters. The Jeunesses fascistes [JF] was to encompass all members aged twenty and younger, but its membership never rose above a few hundred Parisian students, a far cry from the 1000 Camelots du Roi who roamed the streets of Paris at the time. Like the Camelots and Phalange universitaire, their role was confined to recruitment, the dissemination of group propaganda, fund-raising activities, and the distribution of Nouveau Siècle. The JF lacked the violence of the Camelots and the military style of the Phalange, however, and the non-existence of police records regarding their activities strongly suggests that they rarely saw street action.³⁷⁷ The Faisceau universitaire, headed by the young lawyer Philippe Lamour, received more attention from the group, at least meriting a semi-regular column in the group's newspaper,

³⁷⁷F7/13208, "Chez les fascistes", police report, 26 May 1926; F7/13208, untitled Sureté Générale memorandum, 6 Jan. 1926. This document mentions the presence of youth in the sections of St.-Quinton, Reims, Chateau Thierry, Etain, and Verdun. The number of members was relatively low, however. Only a portion of the paltry 110 legionnaires in Chateau Thierry were youths, for example. See CHEVS/V 45, Faisceau 'Manuel de délégué', Aug. 1926; Allen Douglas, From Fascism to Libertarian Communism: Georges Valois Against the Third Republic (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992). As Douglas elsewhere attests, the Faisceau were victims more often than perpetrators. See "Violence and Fascism: The Case of the Faisceau", Journal of Contemporary History, 19 (1984): 689-712, p. 115. On the comparative example of the Camelots du Roi, see Eugen Weber, Action Française (Stanford: Stanford University press, 1963), p. 64. Weber points out, however, that many of the CDR were well past their prime, including some in their sixties.

yet it was able to attract only 500 members in Paris, and slightly over 100 in Toulouse.³⁷⁸

Valois and his colleagues remained preoccupied with economic and political matters, neglecting recruitment despite the group's failure to attract young newcomers.

Despite their lack of initiative towards youth and the resulting low level of interest displayed by Parisian students--the principal target of irregular FU recruitment campaigns--the Faisceau concocted elaborate plans for the rejuvenation of French schools and universities in which Faisceau students were to play a pivotal role. Rather than detailing the roles for youth within the new nation and state, the group's platform consisted entirely of proposals for educational reform which were conservative rather than fascist in nature.

Faisceau plans for the intellectual and physical reorganization of the French system of higher education were representative of fairly common concerns. Indeed, universities were in a state of utter neglect both in Paris and the provinces during the interwar period. Professors often maintained positions in the faculté while eschewing all pedagogical responsibilities, bothering only to grade the entrance examinations or to issue certificates and degrees for those graduating. This lucrative practice, fiscally underwritten by the state, was upheld despite the fact that many professors never once stepped into the lecture hall during their tenure. Worse still, low state subsidies prevented the expansion and modernization of already inadequate library and laboratory facilities, and the consequently low enrollment (some facultés in the provinces contained only a handful of students even after the Great War) provided the government with the rationale to further restrict funding. As Theodore Zeldin notes, by the Second World War "the universities were still shackled by the outdated ambitions of Napoleon and still enslaved to the secondary schools".³⁷⁹ The Lycée graduate either attended one of the specialized post-secondary schools, such as

³⁷⁸F/7/13208, untitled Sureté Générale memorandum, 19 March 1926; F/7/13210, Commissaire Speciale de Toulouse to director of the Sureté Générale, 5 July 1926.

³⁷⁹Theodore Zeldin, *France, 1848-1945. Volume 2: Intellect, Taste, and Anxiety* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1977), p. 326.

the *École Normale Supérieure* or the *École Polytechnique*, or received a nominal education at a university.

Given this situation, Faisceau plans for educational reform owed more to Maurice Barrès than to Mussolini, and much of the platform which the group favoured was traditional in nature. The architect of the Faisceau plan was Hubert Bourgin, himself a veteran of conservative associations. Bourgin was a graduate of the prestigious *École normale supérieure* at the Rue d'Ulm, an agrégé and Doctor of Letters. Upon leaving the ENS he found employment at the *Lycée Louis-le-Grand* in Paris, and authored several specialized works on the topic of education. He had been a member of the Proudhonian wing of the SFIO before the war, and served under Albert Thomas during the conflict, only to resign due to his mounting patriotism and his disapproval of the defeatism and political wrangling of the socialists during wartime. Hence unlike Valois or Arthuys, Bourgin was not an ancien combattant. A veteran of the *Ligue des patriotes* and the *Action française*, his 'fascism' was nebulous at best, as clearly demonstrated in his view of women as natural mothers and housewives prone to immoral behaviour.³⁸⁰

Bourgin envisioned the Faisceau universitaire as the future fascist elite, in direct contrast to the theoreticians produced by Republican schools. Here he seemingly adopted the Valoissian notion that the FU student never separated thought from action, combining speculative intelligence with the practical creative process. As their role would be to train the future renovators and innovators of the fascist nation and state, all instructors would necessarily be men of action rather than empty talk: The professor as educational engineer. In the new state, all study would serve to propel national activity forward, even in such passive disciplines as history or literature. The educator in the fascist state would train the

³⁸⁰Douglas, p. 75. For a discussion of Bourgin's views on women and the family, see chapter three.

young mind towards the mobilization of creative energy and instinct, so that these factors alone would express themselves in place of abstract thought.³⁸¹

Bourgin was no ideological carbon-copy of Valois, however. The legitimacy of this elite rested upon ancestral morality, region, and soil, instead of their position as a new leadership endowed with virility, will, and productivism:

Les étudiants sont les fidèles disciples de leurs maîtres et les continuateurs de leur pensée. Ils sont les héritiers des vertus ancestrales, sanctifiées par l'immense sacrifice d'hier, et les continuateurs des familles. Ils sont les représentants, les responsables aussi de leurs régions, appelés à les revivifier par les énergies pulsées au centre de l'intelligence nationale, appelé aussi à faire converger sur ce centre, parfois oublié, toutes les lumières émanant des éternelles sources provinciales.³⁸²

Where Valois and Arthuys focused upon the construction of a new fascist nation and state based upon the doctrine of renovation and innovation, the old Normalien looked instead to the intellectual purification of the nation. In adopting such a curricular bent, Bourgin hoped to dispel the 'intellectual decadence' permeating twentieth-century higher education. The abandonment of 'positive duties' in favour of empiricism, careerism, and political party doctrine had in his view resulted in the jettisoning of reason and morality, and the de-emphasizing of creative ability in French pedagogy. Criticism of this state of affairs came regularly from the left and the right but to no avail, as these political groupings preached reform for strictly electoral reasons. Thus to the more traditional Bourgin, the Faisceau would elude the traps of partisan politics and bickering, creating a new system in which 'modernized bohemianism' was replaced by action in thought. In Bourgin's mind, the first tangible step towards this goal would be the restoration of the university as a corporative body, with its hierarchy, discipline, and dignity. The clientism and sectarianism that divided the Republican Facultés would be eradicated, a move accompanied by an elevation of the material and moral situation of both professors and the administration.³⁸³

³⁸¹Hubert Bourgin, "Le Rôle des Faisceau universitaire dans la nation", *NS*, 6 March 1927.

³⁸²Hubert Bourgin, "L'État et la corporation", *NS*, 10 Feb. 1926.

³⁸³Hubert Bourgin, "L'État et la corporation", *NS*, 13 Feb. 1926.

None of these points were particularly original, as any contemporary reader of Maurras, Barrès, or even Renan and Le Play would attest. The inference regarding professorial absenteeism was clear, equally so for the chronic shortage of funds that plagued French universities. Yet the preoccupation with morality and old-fashioned corporative discipline is unmistakable. The conspiracy which he alleged as the force behind French educational weakness further betrayed the influence of the Maurrassian extreme-right. Bourgin contrasted his proposed system with the Republican one, deriding the sacrifice of schooling to the political ends of diverse electoral, doctrinal, and sectarian interests. Modern universities, he cried, were mere fiefdoms for parliamentary patrons and the Masons, whose goal was to form Republican loyalists rather than to educate. To this end, all instructors from the primary school teacher to the elite professoriate of the *Écoles* were socialist and cegetiste: "The final result is that today instruction and education, in the French state, are taught for the most part by men who are declared citizens of the International state of Geneva or the nationalist and revolutionary state of Moscow". This was not as apparent in the *Lycées* or the technical schools, explained Bourgin, because only the university appointment was a stepping-stone to a political career. Echoing the traditional rightist sentiment of *'la République des professeurs'*, he pointed to Steeg (former head of the *École normale supérieure*), and Painlevé (former Mathematics instructor) as examples of those who had committed treason by using the French university for 'Republican careerism' alone. The Republican professor, usually a masonic agent, had a vested interest in omitting instruction against vice and democracy. Such men could never teach youth the virtue of experience, or the primacy of the soul and instinct over the rational and bookish idea.³⁸⁴

Bourgin's conspiracy-laden criticism of the education system ended with a stern warning that the international plutocracy who ruled France would not be satisfied until the entire system had been run into the ground. The paucity of resources devoted to university

³⁸⁴Hubert Bourgin, "L'Université et la politique", *NS*, 30 July 1926.

education, with the resulting reduction of the number of chairs in each school and the elimination of certain classical programs, was part of their plan to reduce the quality offered and allow the banks and financial interests to buy the universities themselves. Those who did not support the Faisceau—who alone possessed the truth and fought for the youth of France—risked destroying both the younger generations and the nation.³⁸⁵ Bourgin pointed to the student demonstrations then disrupting universities throughout France as proof that the students at least understood the danger of the parliamentary regime and its masonic and plutocratic allies. He therefore called for the immediate establishment of a 'corporation des étudiants' to do their duty by serving the Cité and rising above the Republican turmoil.³⁸⁶ This framework would also include a corporation devoted exclusively to education, which would purge all suspect (i.e. Republican and communist) teachers, while assuming responsibility for the adjudication of the school curriculum on all levels. Both bodies would be completely independent, with no ties to the state, ending the Republican 'monopoly' on education.³⁸⁷

Bourgin reserved their greatest ire for the primary school system, however. Here he echoed Barrès's notion from Les Déracinés that children were being indoctrinated with false scientism and immoral Republican orthodoxy in school rather than receiving a moral and national education more befitting French youth. Bourgin assailed the lack of morality in the primary classroom, charging that children were taught the Kantian categorical imperative rather than the common shared realities of material and spiritual life. The call for 'neutrality' in the education statute was merely an excuse for Republican and socialist school-teachers to eradicate religion, region, nation, and soil from the school in favour of positivism and

³⁸⁵Hubert Bourgin, "Le Nouveau Siècle au service de l'université et de l'intelligence Françaises (1)", NS, 26 Nov. 1925.

³⁸⁶Hubert Bourgin, "La Corporation des étudiants et le salut de la France", NS, 3 Dec. 1925.

³⁸⁷Hubert Bourgin, "Le Faisceau et l'enseignement national", NS, 25 June 1936. On this point, the Faisceau as a whole were agreed. See Maurice de Barral, Dialogues sur le Faisceau: ses origines. sa doctrine (Paris: Éditions du Faisceau, 1926), p. 13.

science.³⁸⁸ Echoing the rightist notion then being used to promote the reinstatement of classics in both the primary and secondary streams, he called for a renewed balance between the modern and the ancient subjects in schools, lashing out at the Radicals, who had supported the elimination of Greek and Latin in favour of additional science courses. As the object of a national education was the formation of Frenchmen, Bourgin argued, these subjects were indispensable, forging character and discipline: "Il doit fournir une instruction élémentaire impeccable, imposer une discipline totale, universelle, du corps et d'esprit, constituer les habitudes de conscience et d'activités nécessaires à une peuple sain, laborieux, et bien policé".³⁸⁹

Yet Bourgin was no Charles Maurras, dreaming of a return to pre-revolutionary France. He recognized the changing nature of technology and society, and the role which they would necessarily play in the new state. Although he never espoused Valois's Henry Ford/Le Courboisier-inspired modernist economic and political model, Bourgin acknowledged that the future needed "producers, technicians, and leaders, capable of understanding, of wishing, and of realizing the transformations of which the present is composed". In this regard, the primary school was pivotal, as it would prepare the producer for his future profession. As such, the curriculum would necessarily provide a physical and moral, rather than a strictly intellectual education. Dogma and politics would be replaced by the pedagogy of strength and skill, what Bourgin called the acquiring of a "cerebral and muscular culture" through "moral and physical gymnastics". Having completed this process, the students would be evaluated based on ability, and directed either into the

³⁸⁸These sentiments permeate Bourgin's writings. The best summery of them pre-dates the formation of the Faisceau by three months. See "Le mercantilisme dans l'enseignement national", Cahiers des États-Généraux, Aug. 1924, pp. 231-241. Bourgin faithfully copies Barrès, almost to the letter. See Maurice Barrès, Les Déracinés. (Paris: Plon, 1924), pp. 33, 36-37

³⁸⁹John E. Talbott, The Politics of Educational Reform in France, 1918-1940 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969), pp. 80-85, 99; Hubert Bourgin, "Le Faisceau et l'enseignement national", NS, 25 June 1926.

secondary schools whose mission was to form the national elite for private enterprise and the public administration, or to the technical and trade schools.³⁹⁰

Once again, however, Bourgin was more moralist and conservative than fascist regarding primary and secondary education. Despite paying lip service to the need for science and technology in the classroom to create workers for the nation, he reserved his greatest concern for the 'laicization' of the primary school. The need to teach religion, spirituality, and tradition, which Bourgin regarded as the precursors of national and hierarchical values, had never been greater. Here he sounded almost like the 'vieux grand-père' castigating the young rascal caught misbehaving, as he chided the reader that only through the adoption of a moral curriculum could proper discipline be imposed and respect for instructors and parents restored. In an age when families protested even the vestige of discipline in the classroom, he cried, it was not surprising that Soviet teachers abounded in French schools.³⁹¹

True to such traditional concerns, Bourgin took as his model school the *École des Roches* in Verneuil. Founded in 1899 as an institution faithful to Le Play's principles of social science, the school was both dedicated to French humanism and characterized by the imposition of discipline and virtue. Its self-imposed role was the formation of a French physical and moral elite.³⁹² If anything, the school resembled a 'petit Uriage', foreshadowing the Vichy-inspired project run by de Segonzac from 1940-42. Bourgin most admired its dedication to physical activity, regaling *Nouveau Siècle* readers with descriptions of the gymnastics, fitness, and hydrotherapy sessions taken by every student in the afternoon. Classes were held in the mornings, leaving the rest of the day for physical activity, which culminated in the extra-curricular practice of team sports.

³⁹⁰Hubert Bourgin, "L'Université et le devoir présent", *NS*, 18 Sept. 1927.

³⁹¹Hubert Bourgin, "La Discipline", *NS*, 20 Aug. 1925.

³⁹²Laneyrie, p. 47.

Bourgin was equally impressed by the moralism at work within the school. Instructors and their families ate together with the students, and professor's children participated in the afternoon fitness activities, lending the institution an atmosphere of absolute fraternity and the inculcation of family as a social ideal. Furthermore, all students were given a strict moral preparation, which Bourgin lauded as leading to the voluntary acceptance of discipline, moral creation, and continued spiritual renewal. Each class also received religious instruction, to ensure their correct formation as Christian children. It was the transmission of these ideals, claimed Bourgin, that prepared the student for his future duty as a worker, producer, father, and soldier.³⁹³ Perhaps inspired by his visit to the *École des Roches*, less than three months after returning Bourgin announced the formation of a scout section within the *Faisceau sportif*, in a *Nouveau Siècle* article entitled "L'éducation physique et morale de notre jeunesse". Scoutism, he claimed, prepared youth physically and morally for the "cité moderne" and trained future soldiers. In this way the "propagators of the race" would be taught their primordial duties: will and work.³⁹⁴

Bourgin was not an isolated conservative intellectual presence within the *Faisceau*, and other writers took up his themes regarding youth within the pages of *Nouveau Siècle*. Gaëton Bernoville, the author of the newspaper's column on religion, derided the Republican materialism that had destroyed religious sentiment in contemporary France. True, he wrote, the legislation restricting the church's power enacted by Émile Combes in 1902 was somewhat to blame for the current state of affairs. But Republican careerism, which taught that the acquisition of money was the ultimate ambition in life rather than knowledge, was equally to blame. The value of hard work for its own sake was absent in modern times. Like Bourgin, he relied on traditional and conservative arguments to prove his point, declaring that film, dancing, and immoral women had replaced social and political issues in

³⁹³Hubert Bourgin, "Comment L'École des Roches conçoit et donne l'éducation morale", *NS*, 13 Aug. 1926.

³⁹⁴Hubert Bourgin, "L'Éducation physique et morale de notre jeunesse", *NS*, 5 Nov. 1926.

the minds of the young. Bernoville's example of a beneficial experience for the teaching of religious views to youth was Robert Garric's Equipes sociales study circle, a Catholic social action organization whose ideas were a far cry from those of Valois or Mussolini.³⁹⁵

The ultimate expression of social conservatism regarding youth within the pages of Nouveau Siècle was the children's serial comic "Fanfan et Marinette", which appeared in late 1925 and early 1926 in the weekly 'Page de la famille'. The title characters were both war orphans, whose fathers had died heroically at the front, and the storyline was laden with conservative moral messages. Although both Fanfan and Marinette were supposed to be children, they were drawn as slightly smaller adults, and dreamed of marrying each other and starting a family. The familial theme was emphasized to young readers in combination with proscribed gender roles. Fanfan writes to Marinette that "quand je serai grand, je m'emmènerai dans une maison que je me bâtirai; il y aura de beaux meubles dedans et à l'entour un beau jardin. Et tu seras ma femme". The traditional example of home and hearth was similarly held up as the normal expectation for youth. Marinette is portrayed as a virtuous housewife, folding Fanfan's clothes and leading them both in prayer. Throughout the story, religion and the doctrine of the combattant are also present, and young readers received the message that both were essential components of a moral life. The children are frequently seen praying when faced with difficulty, always with hands crossed and on their knees in a supplicatory position, while Fanfan often refers to God as his protector. Allusions to the greatness of the soldier are also omnipresent, and Fanfan continually alludes to his future as a 'soldier' and communes with his father, "qui es(t) mort en héros pour que ton petit garçon puisse vivre dans un pays libre". Finally, he is always accompanied by his faithful dog named Poilu, the term used to denote a soldier in the trenches.³⁹⁶ The lesson for children was clear, that they were expected to raise a family,

³⁹⁵Gaëton Bernoville, "Les Enquêtes sur la jeunesse et la vie religieuse", NS, 8/15 Sept. 1926.

³⁹⁶See NS, 20 Dec. 1925, 3 Jan.-7 Feb. 1926.

fervently believe in Christian teachings, and revere those who fight to preserve France.

Young girls were given the added responsibilities of becoming both housewife and mother.

The Faisceau was an ideological house divided concerning youth, just as they were factionalized when discussing the new roles of women and the family. Valois and Arthuys painted a portrait of youth as the societal avant-garde, bringing the energy and values of the trenches into the new nation and state, where they would continue the work begun as soldiers at the front. These new constructors of the future were directly contrasted with the old Republican personnel and values, and the decadence which they both represented and caused. To Valois, youth were naturally fascist, and he looked to Mussolini's Italy as a role model for the younger generations in France. Yet it was the conservative Bourgin who developed all of the concrete plans for youth, while Valois and Arthuys spoke in vague slogans. Bourgin, whose main preoccupations were a return to traditional morality, the restoration of discipline, and a very conservative nationalism, proffered ideas which betrayed the influence of Maurras, Barrès, or Le Play far more than those of Mussolini. His youth were also producers and constructors, but the nation and state towards which they worked were typical of the old-fashioned right wing, in which elitism and Christian social doctrine were paramount. Valois and the remaining Faisceau leaders, by contrast, seemed unconcerned with the actual recruitment of youth into the group, preferring to concentrate almost exclusively on economic and corporative concerns.

2.

The CDF/PSF were less divided than the Faisceau regarding the place of youth within the new nation and state. Leadership and rank and file alike agreed upon the primacy of youth, believing that the younger generation were to be the architects of a renewed France, and for the most part outlined similar formative programs. Unlike Valois and company, however, the group devoted significant human and material resources to defining the role for

youth in their proposed nation and state. Far more successful than the Faisceau, the CDF/PSF funded several highly successful youth organizations, used to indoctrinate students and children with the group ideology. Once again, however, the question of what ideas were to be transmitted and how they were to be disseminated within the new nation and state led to a certain level of disagreement among the group leadership and rank and file. Furthermore, the precise role which youth were to play within the new France, although never openly debated, was the subject of various plans which occasionally differed in their conclusions. The unified policies held by the group leadership and rank and file regarding women and the family did not exist concerning youth, where ideas ranged from the traditional and conservative to eugenicist in nature. From this variety of perspectives, the CDF/PSF attempted to indoctrinate youth via meetings, articles, and tracts, while simultaneously proposing a plethora of educational and fitness initiatives aimed at producing a new national leadership elite for the coming *État social français*. In so doing, the group as a whole again revealed the decidedly anti-Republican stance that characterized the projected CDF/PSF political state.

Certain segments of the CDF/PSF leadership and rank and file were slightly pessimistic about the capabilities and world view of nineteen-thirties youth. Valois and his confreres were active during a time when the heroism of the Great War was still relatively fresh in the popular memory. French woes like the fall of the franc could be solved, various Faisceau writers argued, if only youth could wrest control of the state away from the Republican menace. Many CDF/PSF writers, by contrast, did not see the younger generation in such a promising light. Speaking at a meeting of the Fils et filles des Croix de Feu in 1933 at the Salle Wagram in Paris, the youth group's secretary-general Charles Goutry complained that the youth of today had no faith or aptitude for sacrifice and heroism. They in no way resembled their fathers and older brothers who had willingly sacrificed everything to defend the nation, instead contributing only a 'sterile' skepticism to

society. The attainment of personal pleasure was their sole priority, above the common good. The younger generation, he bemoaned, had no sense of spirituality or idealism, eschewing Republican democracy, Catholicism, and communism in equal measure.³⁹⁷

La Rocque also derided the rampant pessimism which had captured contemporary youth, but he specifically blamed the Republic for shackling its young. In attempting to start a career the young encountered nepotism and cronyism with each step they took, and hence looked to the foreign models of communism, nazism, and fascism for salvation, rather than to French tradition.³⁹⁸ Various group members, while equally alarmed at the vogue of foreign ideologies among youth, could not refrain from comparing the treatment of youth in the Republic to that in Italy or Germany. French youth, wrote a M. Laventureux in a party bulletin, were being squandered and like himself were beginning to view the benefits accorded to the young in foreign countries in a more favourable light: "Après le terrible hiver 1931-32, je les retrouverai moins aigris que je ne l'aurai cependant pensé; beaucoup d'entr'eux voyaient déjà luire une aube nouvelle derrière Hitler: l'apparition de la jeunesse Hitlérienne, mouvement destiné à sauver les jeunes Allemands du communisme".³⁹⁹ Writing in the Flambeau in June 1936, Drieu la Rochelle--soon to become a convert to fascism himself--declared that youth were on the march against parliamentarism and capitalism in every European country except France. The 'irresponsible bourgeoisie' would be overthrown by either communism or the Croix de Feu, he trumpeted, and French vitality depended solely upon the latter option. Like Arthuys and Valois a decade earlier Drieu envisioned no third way: "En face de cela, par tout l'Europe du Nord au Sud et de l'Ouest à l'Est (sauf en Angleterre) sous des régimes qui tendent de plus en plus nombreux et décidées, à l'autorité et à la discipline--fascisme ou communisme--le plus admirable et

³⁹⁷Le Flambeau, July 1933.

³⁹⁸CDLR, "Manifeste Croix de Feu", Le Flambeau, 4 April, 1936.

³⁹⁹CHEVS/LR VI A 1, A. Laventureux, "Jeunesse", Bulletin mensuel du mouvement Croix de Feu (51e et 100e sections), 1 April 1936.

formidable effort pour réveiller la race humaine, l'arracher au cancan des villes, démolir tout ce qui est étroit et laid et sale, rétablir le contact avec la nature".⁴⁰⁰

Despite such pessimistic assertions about the political orientation of French youth, the CDF/PSF leadership and rank and file believed that such choices were purely a manifestation of anti-Republican sentiment, combined with a belief that there was no uniquely French solution to democratic weakness and decadence. Given the CDF/PSF as an alternative to communism or foreign fascist dictatorships, young French men and women would switch sides, because both their anti-Republicanism and their sense of morality would then be adequately addressed. To La Rocque, the goals of French youth were identical to those of his group, "partagée de l'horreur des improvisations désordonnés, des méthodes révolutionnaires et le dégoût des systèmes périmés des vaines théories. Elle veut, à la fois, protéger le sol national et le revivifier". The CDF/PSF, like youth, actively opposed the "old guard". Furthermore, wrote Maxence van der Meersch in the Flambeau du Sud-Ouest, contemporary youth differed dramatically from the first postwar generation in their realism. The young men and women of the nineteen-twenties had been driven purely by materialism, whereas family, security and a strong work ethic had replaced this fantasy in the subsequent decade: "Car, volontiers, elle se tourne, vers des principes supérieurs, spirituels. Elle a vu les méfaits de matérialisme. Et, par ailleurs, le plaisir et l'argent ne l'ont pas à l'avance désechée.... Si la jeunesse d'une race est l'image de son avenir, oui, nous pouvons avoir foi dans les destins de notre peuple".⁴⁰¹

Thus the CDF/PSF conception of youth differed substantially from that of the Faisceau. They shared neither Bourgin's moral pessimism regarding youth nor (despite being a mouvement des anciens combattants) Valois's and Arthuys's notion of the jeune combattant continuing the effort of the trenches by constructing a fascist state. Instead, La

⁴⁰⁰Drieu la Rochelle, "Pour sauver le peau des français", Le Flambeau, 27 June 1936.

⁴⁰¹CDLR, "La Génération qui monte", Petit journal, 15 Dec. 1938; Maxence van der Meersch, "La Jeunesse", Flambeau du Sud-Ouest, 7 Jan. 1939.

Rocque and his group saw French youth as a physical and moral elite which would transform Republican France into a nation and state run according to the principles of social Catholicism and reactionary authoritarianism, in what the group called the *État social français*. The group believed that youth would entrench the CDF/PSF political and economic program, once the group attained power. Such a position was also the logical corollary to their views concerning women and the family, that the new nation would be governed by traditional French morals and principles, and the citizen's duty would encompass hard work and raising a family. This future national elite would be created by the CDF/PSF itself, a necessary precondition to the construction of a new nation and state. The group would remake youth into national leaders through a thorough transformation of their physical, intellectual, and moral character from an early age. The form of this concerted effort was fourfold : CDF/PSF youth organizations, the elaboration of their doctrine to the young both within these organizations and in group newspapers and activities, educational reform, and physical fitness.

Because they attracted a far greater number of supporters than the *Faisceau*, La Rocque and the CDF/PSF had significantly larger human and material resources to devote towards youth. They also made the recruitment of the young and their ideological and physical incorporation into the group a priority. Thus while the *Faisceau universitaire* and *Jeunesses fascistes* contained barely a thousand members between them, and *Faisceau* leaders concentrated their effort on attracting leading financial figures into the *Faisceau des corporations*, the CDF/PSF consistently attracted thousands (and later tens of thousands) of young members into a myriad of organizations.⁴⁰²

⁴⁰²Precise membership lists do not exist, but CDF/PSF student meetings, camping expeditions, and youth gatherings regularly attracted hundreds to thousands both in Paris and the provinces. Although Paul Chopine's estimate of 32 000 *Fils et Filles des Croix de Feu* by 1932 is excessive, there was clearly much interest in the group's youth wing. Charles Vallin's estimate that there were 30 000 CDF/PSF students in various group organizations in December 1938 seems much more plausible. See AP/451/117, "Extraits du rapport sur l'activité du parti présenté par M. Charles Vallin, Député de Paris, Directeur de la Propagande du PSF", 3e Congrès Nationale du PSF, 3 Dec. 1938.

First and foremost was the CDF/PSF youth wing, named the Fils et Filles de Croix de Feu, founded in June 1930 by the group's first President, Maurice Hanot dit d'Hartoy and run by Pozzo di Borgo. In 1935, when membership had risen dramatically, the group was divided into three sections--'A', 'B', and 'C'--corresponding to age and gender. Group 'A' contained all children under the age of 13, while groups 'B' and 'C' represented boys aged thirteen to sixteen and girls aged thirteen to twenty-one respectively. Young men went on to join the *Volontaires nationaux*, which contained all male members between the ages of sixteen and twenty-one, while women could join the *Section feminine* if wishing an active role in the group, or the *Mouvement social français*--the CDF/PSF charity and social work umbrella organization--for a more nominal expression of sympathy.⁴⁰³ Children at all levels could pursue a wide array of activities. Boys were taken on visits to factories and farms, and given the opportunity to exercise in natural surroundings, while girls were taught the art of keeping house and choral singing. Both were eligible for the *Colonies de vacances*, an initiative of Pozzo di Borgo which took hundreds of children to the seaside, countryside and the mountains each summer, from the Savoie to Brittany.⁴⁰⁴ These were not the woodland outings of the boy scouts, however, but closer to the propagandistic *Chantiers de la jeunesse* of the Vichy regime. As one writer depicted the colonies: "Voici les colonies de vacances proches. Elles emporteront dans toutes nos provinces de France une jeunesse ardente, joyeuse, qui fera sonner bien haut l'idéal du PSF et sa doctrine de réconciliation et d'apaisement qui se traduira par des chansons et des rires clairs".⁴⁰⁵

⁴⁰³CHEVS/LR 36-"Reglement générale de l'association 'Les Fils et Filles de Croix de Feu'", 17 Feb. 1935; Jacques Nobecourt, *Le Colonel de la Rocque 1885-1946, ou les pièges du nationalisme chrétien* (Paris: Fayard, 1996), pp. 194-195. Many students were introduced to the movement through the VN, such as the young François Mitterand, whose story typifies the recruitment process. See Pierre Péan, *Une jeunesse française: François Mitterand, 1934-1947* (Paris: Fayard, 1994), chapters 1-3.

⁴⁰⁴APP/Ba 1857-Report of the Commission into the Events of 6 February 1934, p. 1635; CHEVS/LR 41-"Colonies de vacance: Été 1937"; *L'Heure française*, 10 July 1937.

⁴⁰⁵CHEVS/LR 41, *Service social*, April 1938. The Colonies also reinforced the CDF/PSF view regarding gender roles. Here one mother's comment tells the whole story: "Ma fille est revenue engraisnée, joyeuse, disciplinée, ayant appris plus en chant, gymnastique, ménage que pendant tout une année de l'école". In "Colonies de vacance", *L'Auvergne nouvelle*, 9 Oct. 1936.

The CDF/PSF sponsored various other, more specialized youth organizations, most of which served to prepare them for the 'renovation nationale', during which the group would acquire control of the state and rebuild the nation in its own image. Special 'Foyers agricoles Croix de Feu' were created in October 1935, with the goal of making instructional and recreational activities available for young rural members. More ambitious was the Travail et loisirs program created by La Rocque's friend and CDF/PSF youth icon Jean Mermoz in 1936, and run by the Colonel's trusted confidante Antoinette de Preval, director of the CDF/PSF Service sociale. Its purpose was the protection of working-class children with two working parents from the dangers of the street. The program provided day-care, nurseries and a wide variety of activities for children such as excursions to the opera and the symphony, yet also served to further the potential indoctrination of working-class children. Linked with Travail et loisirs was the 1934 physical education initiative entitled La Société de préparation et d'éducation sportive (SPES), created in 1934 by Gaëten Maire and run by Jean Mierry, a rising young leader in the Volontaires nationaux. The SPES was unquestionably a preparatory program for training the future CDF/PSF national elite. Under its auspices, Maire established twelve Centres d'éducation physique (CEP) in Paris and the provinces aimed specifically at youth, including libraries, weekly talks on subjects such as hygiene, morality, and the colonies, and the screening of films and documentaries about physical fitness. At the third national party congress in December 1938, Charles Vallin estimated that 2000 lessons per month were given at the CEPs under SPES guidance. Finally, there was the Aero-Club Jean Mermoz, which trained future French aviators, taught airplane mechanics, and developed a love for the excitement of flying among youth, under the direction of M. Poireau.⁴⁰⁶

⁴⁰⁶AP/451/104, Section feminine, "Reglement des Foyers agricoles Croix de Feu", Oct. 1935; Philippe Rudaux, *Les Croix de Feu et le PSE*. (Paris: Éditions Franc-Empire, 1967), p. 209; Nobecourt, p. 658; Weng-Ting Lung, "L'Histoire et la doctrine des Croix de Feu et du Parti social français", Unpublished Thèse du Droit, Université de Nice, 1971, pp. 91-94.; AP/451/104, Section feminine,

Jean Mierry was also the guiding hand behind the Groupe universitaire PSF and eighteen Centres sociales universitaires in Paris, constituting the most ambitious group effort at youth indoctrination. Each centre provided a reading room complete with party tracts and newspapers, and a billiards room which included ping-pong tables and a piano. Such an "atmosphère de saine camaraderie" was thought healthier than the smoky and dingy cafés where trouble and immorality awaited the student. A subsidized restaurant enabled the financially strapped student to purchase a warm and healthy meal, and a library provided a number of academic volumes for afternoon or evening study. Needy students were also encouraged to apply for special group burseries and prizes, and given lodging if lacking a proper room of their own. These amenities were augmented by weekly conferences composed of talks given by PSF members (young lawyers or doctors, for example) and student commissions on the Profession organisée, designed to aid the aspiring professional in choosing a career. During these meetings corporative problems were discussed by students working together in professional groups (lawyers, business students, etc.). These activities had a political side, since students were encouraged to reject the national decadence of the Republic in favour of the action-oriented approach to life characterized by the CDF/PSF. The overall goal of such initiatives was to aid the social formation of youth through a combination of 'entr'aide intellectuelle' and 'entr'aide matérielle'. The final component of the program for the CDF/PSF student was charity, in the form of group-sponsored factory visits and volunteer work done by student members in working-class neighborhoods.⁴⁰⁷

"Centres d'éducation physique avec foyer-bibliothèque", Oct. 1935; AP/451/117, "Extraits du rapport sur l'activité du parti, présenté par M. Charles Vallin, Député de Paris, Directeur de la propagande du PSF", 3 Dec. 1938; F7/12966, "Réunion organisée par la section de Saint-Georges du 9^{ème} Arrdt. du Parti social français", 24 Feb. 1937.

⁴⁰⁷AP/451/104, "Centre sociale universitaire", Oct. 1935; Rudaux, pp. 204-205; André Blanchet, "Visite au Centre universitaire à Paris", *La Flamme*, 22 April 1938; CHEVS/LR 41, Jean Bernard, "Le Centre universitaire", *L'Étudiant sociale*, April 1938.

Each of these organizations served to indoctrinate the child or student with the CDF/PSF ideology. They were aided in this purpose by newspaper articles, youth propaganda, and mass rallies aimed specifically at the younger generations. The goal of these undertakings, insisted the group's Bureau d'études sociales (BES), was to instill the CDF/PSF mystique in the young. The BES urged adult members of the group to attend meetings regularly with their children, and encourage them to read extensively about the group's beliefs. Youth, the Bureau concluded, were merely awaiting an authentically French 'apostolat concret' whom they would follow.⁴⁰⁸ What, then, were youth being taught by their saviours in the CDF/PSF? Mirroring La Rocque's conceptions of the political state, the lessons were nationalist, militarist, and conservative, simultaneously old-fashioned and yet informed by the experience of the previous generation of combattants in the trenches.

First and foremost came the concept of discipline, taught continuously both in various CDF/PSF physical fitness programs (such as the SPES or the Colonies de vacances) and more directly in printed form. A Flambeau article entitled "La commandement et la bienveillance" instructed the young reader that the conduct of any successful collective was governed by freely-given discipline. Quoting Maréchal Foch, the author contrasted the true leader, who makes his will known to others and whose orders are always carried out, with the Republican system which instilled the current climate of disorder, utilizing personal interest alone as the driving force behind the chain of command. Such articles frequently appeared on the special children's back page of the group newspaper. For example, a November 11, 1932 article reminiscent of Valois's and Arthuys's vision of the jeune combattant urged children to utilize the disciplinary style with which their fathers won the Great War: "Fils des Anciens Combattants de l'avant, quand vous monterez vers l'inconnue avec vos pères, sachez qu'à ce moment les regards de la foule heureuse, admiratrice sont

⁴⁰⁸CHEVS LR 22, "Extraits du rapport sur l'enfant" présenté par le Bureau d'études sociales, 1er Congrès Sociale du Parti social français, 16-17 May 1939.

pour nous du 'rabiote'. Car le véritable sacrifice ne laisse pas sa trace s'effacer, il est chez les plus nobles consenti une fois pour toutes. C'est ce qui crée notre unité, c'est ce qui fondra la vôtre. Votre discipline sera intime: elle sera comme l'esprit et la flamme, transmissible, indivisible, totale".⁴⁰⁹

Discipline alone was insufficient, however. Youth were to serve and sacrifice everything for the greatness of the motherland, continually placed above the individual by group authors, an ideal above both material gain and personal desires to which youth were expected to dedicate their lives. Speaking to a crowd of CDF/PSF members and their children at the Salle Wagram in August 1932, youth leader Laignel called for a recreation of the fraternity and unity of the trenches, in which the love of the nation would replace class loyalty. One teenaged member echoed his sentiments: "Après avoir tout perdu, vos frères d'armes, votre sang, votre or, voici que vous avez reconstitué le plus beau crédit du monde: votre France à vous".⁴¹⁰

La Rocque himself elaborated on these themes on the Le Flambeau youth page, where he preached the absolute obedience of order, will, and faith in the collective as "leur culte peut seul rendre sa vitalité à la race, à la patrie sa grandeur". Discipline meant the acceptance of responsibility and initiative, and an end to the current passivity in youth. Children would be taught to exercise their will in the new nation, to regenerate the "Robust Gaul of our ancestors". Most important was the implanting of the notion of the collective self, which La Rocque called the natural French order. To save the race, each youth would be taught his personal role, upon which the nation as a whole depended, and from which he must not deviate.⁴¹¹ Speaking to a group of university students at Magic-City in May 1935, La Rocque made this point abundantly clear: "You are intellectuals, or are becoming

⁴⁰⁹Trézien, "Disciplines", Le Flambeau, 11 Nov. 1932; Trézien, "La Commandement et la bienveillance", Le Flambeau, 1 Feb. 1933.

⁴¹⁰Un 'Fils', "Servir", Le Flambeau, 11 Nov. 1932; Le Flambeau, Aug. 1932; Un 'Fils', "Avec le sourire", Le Flambeau, Nov. 1932.

⁴¹¹CDLR, "Méditation", Le Flambeau, Sept. 1932.

intellectuals; from this fact, you have and will have a great duty to fulfill towards society. If you work only for yourselves, you do not interest me". Contrasting the bourgeoisie who did not understand their social role with the current ardent youth, he called upon the new generation to do their duty to the nation and state so as to win the peace as their fathers had won the war.⁴¹²

The role ascribed to this youthful elite was two-fold. Portrayed most immediately as the vanguard of the movement towards the *État social français*, youth would usher in the new France. Writing in the pages of *Le Flambeau*, Trézien called them the 'reserve corps' of the CDF/PSF, those who would be the new combattants. They would use the principles of their fathers in the trenches--the will to truth and heroism--to beget a new society based upon hierarchy, discipline, and strong leadership. As a logical extension of this role, CDF/PSF youth were expected to recognize and defeat the enemy--principally the socialist and communist left--in all its vestiges, from the PCF or ARAC to the *Secours rouge internationale* and the *Jeunesses socialistes*.⁴¹³ The group rewarded children of all ages for acting in the best interest of the organization and the nation. It awarded a bronze medal to one youth who, "attaqué par une dizaine de communistes, a résisté victorieusement et poursuivi jusqu'au bout sa mission en dépit de la fureur de ses adversaires". Various children earned the gold medal for breaking up 'anti-patriotic meetings', being a "véritable apôtre de la mission Croix de Feu", and showing an exceptional understanding of the concepts of order and authority.⁴¹⁴ Such activities made it abundantly clear that the CDF/PSF youth were not to be confused with the JOC or the French boy scouts.

⁴¹²F/7/13963, "Réunion privée organisée par la Groupe universitaire du Mouvement social français des Croix de Feu", Magic-City, 21 May 1935.

⁴¹³Trézien, "Réalités", *Le Flambeau*, Jan. 1933; AP/451/93, "Des insignes qu'il faut connaître". The latter was a comprehensive list, for CDF/PSF youth to memorize, of the symbols used by leftist parties and organizations.

⁴¹⁴"Citations", *Le Flambeau*, 1 Aug. 1933. For a similar example directed at university students, see: *Étudiants: il dépend de vous*, (Paris: Imprimerie Artistique Moderne, n.d. (PSF)), pp. 1-2, 6, 8-11, 15-16, 20-23.

Above and beyond the notion of the CDF/PSF youth as the vanguard of the 'renovation nationale' lay a second conception, much more traditional and conservative in scope: That of youth as the future leaders of France itself within the new CDF/PSF society. From this view, the role of the CDF/PSF was to assemble the gifted individuals who would put their talents to work in building the future France, and who would replace the old and tired generations currently in charge. In a manner which would have raised no objections from the Fédération républicaine or the aristocracy, this new caste were described as "ce qu'il y a de meilleur et aussi de plus digne d'être sélectionné parmi un ensemble".⁴¹⁵ In words that Hubert Bourgin would have applauded, Professeur Sargent from the Academy of Medicine told a gathering of CDF/PSF students in Paris that this select few, elevated by talent or by birth to a position of superiority, had the duty and the right to rule the nation as administrators rather than soldiers.⁴¹⁶ In this regard, a strong work ethic was the lesson to be learned from the Front Generation, a message continually emphasized by CDF/PSF leaders at youth gatherings. The characteristics that made a good soldier, such as will and moral courage or the primacy of action, would also serve the elite who administered the nation and the state. These young men would be the Lyauteys and Napoleons of their chosen fields, the generals directing economy, government, and society with the deftness that had brought military glory to the motherland.⁴¹⁷

As Bourgin had done a decade earlier, La Rocque and the CDF/PSF leadership looked to educational reform as the solution to the moral and physical flabbiness of modern youth, the vehicle with which to train their new national elite. Like Bourgin too, CDF/PSF leaders and the rank and file lamented the loss of the 'cult of the traditional' in French Republican education, what La Rocque called a system dominated by 'negators'. Lacking the spiritual

⁴¹⁵"Centre universitaire: Le Rôle des élites", *Flambeau du Sud-Ouest*, 25 Dec. 1937.

⁴¹⁶"Une confirmation, un point de départ: La Réunion de rentrée des étudiants de Paris", *L'Étudiant sociale*, Jan. 1939.

⁴¹⁷*Le Flambeau*, Aug. 1932, speeches by CDLR and Pozzo di Borgo; André Maurois, "Réflexions sur le commandement", *L'Étudiant sociale*, Jan. 1939; AP/451/82-Tract, "Étudiants françaises".

and professional apprenticeship necessary to train such a corps, France produced no capable leaders, he proclaimed. Its teachers, emissaries of Moscow sent to sow the seeds of revolution rather than educate according to national needs, were the worst culprits. "Nous ne voulons pas que l'École Publique, où vont nos enfants, soit une école de démoralisation systématique", the writers of a group tract proclaimed in agreement, "où des maîtres révolutionnaires leur enseignent la haine et le mépris de la France et de son glorieux passé".⁴¹⁸

The first step towards a renewed national (rather than international and republican) education system would be the return of spirituality to the primary and secondary classroom. Here the group stance was much closer to that of Barrès and Paul Bourget, more akin to Bourgin's Catholic and conservative young man than Valois's fascist youth as soldier-producer⁴¹⁹ To the CDF/PSF, the atheism and anti-religious sentiment embedded in the curriculum of the state schools would be removed in the new France. Despite the fact that no action of consequence had been taken against the Catholic schools since the Combes era, even by the ultra-laic Cartel des Gauches and Popular Front, various group members insisted that the defense of religious instruction was absolutely necessary. CDF/PSF leadership and rank and file further asserted that both instructors and schooling for the young would be the choice of the father rather than the state, to protect the traditional Catholic education system. The issue concerned the formation of 'decent' Frenchmen, Academician Edmond Jaloux wrote in the Petit journal, for it was the duty of a child's parents to ensure that he or she was given a moral education, in order to assure his/her

⁴¹⁸Lt.-Colonel Francois de la Rocque. Service public. Paris: Grasset, 1934, pp. 117-118, 227; Anon, Pourquoi nous sommes devenues Croix de Feu (1934), pp. 4-5.

⁴¹⁹For a discussion of Bourget's Le Disciple and Barrès's Les Déracinés as archetypes of the extreme-rightist views on Catholicism and education, see the chapter on education and the right by Françoise Mayeur in Jean-François Sirinelli (ed.), Histoire des droites en France: Tome 3-Sensibilités (Paris: Gallimard, 1992), pp. 701-702.

future development into good citizens and patriots.⁴²⁰ The defense of church schooling, however, was merely a pretext for the installation of a rigid CDF/PSF curriculum, in which all "non-patriotic" education would be jettisoned in favour of an emphasis upon family, Catholic values, and the nation in the classroom. Republican schooling, complained one author in the Flambeau de Flandre-Artois-Picardie, operated as a factory which churned out "robots", and existed only to train a loyal electorate rather than an elite.⁴²¹ The new nation and state would need a new education system which reflected CDF/PSF values, and properly prepared the ruling elite.

This necessitated a total reform of the teaching profession. Rejecting the religious neutrality of the Ferry laws as a tool used to further the masonic enslavement of Christian France, Georges Alexandre, CDF/PSF municipal councilor for Deux-Sèvres, called for the immediate dismissal of all 125 000 lay teachers of whom 96 000 were socialists and communists taking orders from Moscow.⁴²² Training in the Republican Collèges des instituteurs did not adequately prepare teachers, he complained, but merely indoctrinated them, rooting out all religious and national sentiment. In this way morality was replaced by sociology--Durkheim's "deformed thought" in the words of one Flambeau author--and viewed as the antidote to 'fascism' by both the Republic and the CGT-dominated teacher's union who resoundingly rejected the concept of a 'national' education.⁴²³ As part of the reconstruction of France, La Rocque foresaw the removal of the CGT from education, allowing the vast majority of non-socialist educators, currently bullied by "subversive forces" into teaching an anti-patriotic curriculum, to regain its footing.⁴²⁴ Only by restoring

⁴²⁰"Pour le peuple, par le peuple", supplement to Le Flambeau, 11 April 1936; "Les Épidémies morales", Edmond Jaloux, Petit journal, 7 Nov. 1938; AP/451/106-Tract, "Pour nos chers vieux", n.d. [1936?]; CHEVS/LR 20 H, "Réunion du 15 Septembre 1936", Salle Blanchon-Lyon; Ory, pp.624-625.

⁴²¹Léon Diagoras, "Le PSF et l'école", Flambeau de Flandres-Artois-Picardie, 11 Sept. 1938

⁴²²Georges Alexandre, "De l'enseignement", Flamme des Deux-Sèvres, July 1939.

⁴²³Pierre Brissac, "Libérer les instituteurs, c'est libérer l'intelligence française", Le Flambeau, 19 Sept. 1936. For an equally rabid attack on "socialist" teachers in the same issue, see P. Menand, "Traîtres à la France et semeurs de haine".

⁴²⁴CDLR, "La Problème de l'éducation", Le Flambeau, 23 May 1936.

order in the classroom, which in practice meant purging all Republican and leftist elements and replacing them with instructors who understood the primacy of national and Christian values, could the future leaders of France be properly formed.

The new state's moral watchfulness extended to the curriculum itself, which was to become more traditional in scope, in stark contrast to Blum and Zay's moves away from Greco-Latin studies in primary and secondary education. Like Bourgin a decade earlier, Charles Vallin clearly enunciated a conservative pedagogical position for his group, telling an audience in Lyon that: "Le seul droit de l'État et son devoir, c'est d'imposer à tous les éducateurs laïque ou libre, le respect des lois de l'État... et surtout le respect des grands principes sur lesquels repose l'existence de la famille et l'existence de la patrie".⁴²⁵ In the words of Auguste Bailly, youth were to be filled with French traditions and ideas, "impregné d'un tel idéal". The state would act to preserve Latin and Greek, and literary classics such as La Fontaine and Racine, bringing to life genuinely French qualities and talents. Such classics were to be studied not for their intellectual value, but because all supported a natural order of society and the universe, rejecting base individualism and encouraging "des plus pures qualités de la race, dans la totalité de cette construction nationale qu'accomplissait le roi".⁴²⁶ Denuded of their latent anti-intellectual bent, such traditionalist sentiments would not have seemed out of place in one of Bourgin's articles for *Nouveau Siècle*. Nor would the Travail et loisirs recommended reading list for school-children have caused a stir: Dumas, Balzac, and Hugo nestled alongside more 'modern' works by Alphonse Daudet and Anatole France.⁴²⁷ Alongside the strong pedagogical emphasis on tradition and responsibility went moral formation. Echoing Bourgin's complaints about the decline of moral standards, Gillitte Ziegler decried the fact that students did not read Barrès or Péguy

⁴²⁵AP/451/108, "Réunion de 15 Septembre 1936". On Blum and Zay's attempts at modernizing the curriculum, and the resulting upheaval, see Ory. pp. 693-694.

⁴²⁶Auguste Bailly, "Aux sources", *Le Flambeau*, 11 May 1935.

⁴²⁷AP/451/171, "Les Éditions des loisirs".

in the classroom, leaving the young with no appreciation for the importance of France in the world and no experience with distinctly French forms of thought.⁴²⁸

Other members voiced more practical concerns, addressing the masses rather than the chosen few who would lead the new France to greatness. Like Valois and Arthuys rather than Bourgin, these writers were concerned with technology rather than will and discipline. Writing in the Flambeau only two months after Popular Front education minister Jean Zay made apprenticeship obligatory for artisans and instituted professional courses and exams to be administered by the *Chambres de metier* for students entering industry or commerce, a M. Cathelineau called the current measures insignificant. Not only did Republican education lack a moral component, but it trained artists and philosophers rather than the artisans and farmers who represented the bulk of the French population. In a country where forty-five per cent of the labouring class worked in agriculture, Cathelineau argued, schooling should prepare the student for his true career, through a technical education which concentrated on the skills of the worker rather than on rhetoric.⁴²⁹ Included in such a program, added PSF Ardennes activist Marcel Aucouturier, should be the scientific skills necessary in the modern factory and farm. Where Zay proposed professional courses for students aged fourteen to seventeen who were destined for industry or commerce, complete with factory-schools for the worker, Aucouturier included agriculture and removed the role of the state. All schooling was to be free, concerned first and foremost with scientific and technical progress, and directed by a "Commission nationale de l'enseignement".⁴³⁰

Both the defense of tradition and a recognition of the necessity for technology-based learning found their way into CDF/PSF plans for a new Grand Ministère de l'Éducation Nationale. Just as the Ministry of Defense ensured the security of the nation and the

⁴²⁸Gillette Ziegler, "L'École et la Patrie", Petit journal, 14 Feb. 1939.

⁴²⁹J. Cathelineau, "L'Apprentissage contre le chômage des jeunes", Le Flambeau, 1 May 1937.

⁴³⁰Marcel Aucouturier, Au service des Croix de Feu (Charleville: Impression des Ardennes, 1936), p. 162; Marcel Aucouturier, Programmes socialistes et programmes sociaux (Imprimeries A. Chaduc. 1938-1939 [sic]), p. 14. No further details about the CNE were put forth.

Economics Ministry defended French business, so too would the new Education ministry defend the "French soul", linking the arts, scientific research, the protection of children, technical and physical education, and health and hygiene. For all intents and purposes the new Ministry would adopt a dual role, training the future elites and workers while simultaneously seeking to indoctrinate youth. Presented by PSF deputies Stanislas Devaud and François de Polignac at the third national party congress, the purpose of the plan was to defeat the "Bolshevization" of youth and education under the laic Republican system.⁴³¹ The scholastic form, composed of the primaire, post-primaire, and secondaire levels, would remain unchanged in the new state. It was the content which would be significantly altered, to 're-educate' the masses.

The architect of the final CDF/PSF plan for educational reform was philosopher and CDF/PSF sympathizer Jean Daujat, who presented his completed proposal in a 1939 Étudiant sociale article entitled "L'Université dans l'État social français". Daujat began by stating that French traditions and values, and the motherland herself, were currently nothing more than a "rotting corpse". Only by creating a new French man could the situation be rectified, a phenomenon best initiated through the re-education of the nation's youth "parce que c'est elle qui est le plus perméable, le plus capable d'être formée et parce que c'est elle qui sera cette France de demain pour laquelle nous travaillons". Such action would break the Republican/masonic stranglehold on education and restore the "French soul". Despite the seeming hypocrisy of such a statement, Daujat proclaimed that the new education system would nevertheless be free of any totalitarian impulses, respecting personal, confessional, and professional liberty, while the state would simply control the educative process through regulatory measures to ensure that the common good was maintained. All

⁴³¹ AP/451/117, "Extraits du rapport sur l'enseignement par Stanislas Devaud, Député de Constantine, et François de Polignac, Député de Maine et Loire, 3 Dec. 1938.

initiatives would be controlled and conducted by the French social state, aiding and orienting them in the process of creating the "France of tomorrow".⁴³²

In practical terms this meant a national curricular monopoly in which the state would propagandize through the classroom. Like Bourgin, however, Daujat here thought more in terms of upholding traditional morality than the construction of La Rocque's new nation based on principles of discipline, will, and leadership. He circumscribed for the new Ministry of Education the defense of morality (especially against pornography and Malthusianism) and the fight against "immoral" propaganda as the primary directives in this regard, for both educators and students alike. Protection and encouragement would be given to all subjects that contributed to French civilization, whether scientific or artistic in nature. Like La Rocque, however, he also prescribed the development of physical health in youth as a top priority for the new education system, necessary for the intellectual and moral health of the nation as well as its physical well-being. Furthermore, and quite unlike the Republican Ministry of Education, this new body would control and shape all media which affected the 'French heart and soul', including books, the press, theatre, cinema, and radio, to remove the corrupt political influences which had infiltrated them. These would be replaced by the virtues of the motherland and the Christian morality of family and decency.⁴³³

Daujat assigned a dual role to the new system, combining the wishes for an elite education of both La Rocque and the group leadership with the demands for a more technical education asserted by Aucouturier and others. The new enseignement primaire, in the hands of either the parish priest or a local corporative body according to its religious orientation, would instill in the child all necessary knowledge of life in France, from history and geography to language instruction and morality. To the secondaire would fall the task of forming the elite, its primary function being to teach judgement, reason, and

⁴³²Jean Daujat, "L'Université dans L'Etat social français", *L'Étudiant sociale*, Feb. 1939.

⁴³³*Ibid.*

understanding. True to such a conservative vision of secondary education, Daujat criticized the number of baccalaureate degrees awarded in contemporary France, arguing that only those possessing truly gifted intelligence could qualify under the new system. Strict entrance examinations were to be taken by all potential candidates, with those successful applicants of meagre means receiving state subsidies, as under the Republican system. Like Aucouturier and Cathelineau, Daujat proposed to leave post-primary education unchanged, its object being to train the workers, artisans, and agricultural workers in the skills which they would require in their respective professions. Yet unlike the Republican arrangement, state-run Catholic schools were to be given one half of all funding by the new state, to encourage religious instruction, and both diplomas would be considered equal by both the new state and the corporations. In line with the traditionalist elements such as Bailly and Ziegler, Daujat also proposed that the curriculum should contain heavy doses of Greek and Latin, as France was the product of Greco-Roman civilization, and intensive language and literature studies together with philosophy and history. Despite recalling the archaic Napoleonic system in its tone, Daujat's program nevertheless conceded the importance of mathematics, biology, and the physical sciences for the curriculum, to be offered at both the secondary and university levels.⁴³⁴

Daujat's scheme was remarkably similar to the conservative and traditional plan put forward by Bourgin in the *Faisceau* press. Similar, too, was Daujat's concept of the 'modern' university, although the CDF/PSF gave considerably less thought to post-secondary education than did the *vieux Normalien*. While four million French children attended primary schools by 1939, only slightly more than five percent participated in the secondary stream, and only 76 405 attended university or one of the *Écoles normales*.⁴³⁵ Thus the CDF/PSF focused their attention on the lower intellectual strata, which were in any

⁴³⁴*Ibid.*

⁴³⁵Zeldin, p. 292, Ory, p. 46.

case better suited to transmit the group's doctrine and form worker-citizens for the new État social français, yet were still capable of teaching will, discipline, and sacrifice for the motherland, the essential traits of the new leadership elite. La Rocque and the party leadership were not interested in creating intellectual leaders, preferring the development of physical fitness, virility, Christian morality, and nationalism to physics or philosophy. The true leader was a man of action, for whom words and ideas should not exist pour-soi.

Hence the greatest group concern regarding universities was their perceived raison d'être as propaganda centres for leftist and Republican values. Equally disturbing to them was the decadent curriculum being taught by professors, who rejected French and Italian humanism—studies appropriate to a Latin institution of learning—in favour of foreign German methods. The only proposed solution was again Daujat's, who suggested the agglomeration of all post-secondary institutions into a 'Université nationale', a corporative body which would assume responsibility for monitoring both the curriculum and the professoriate, establishing common rules of organization and sponsoring a wide array of national student conferences and contests in all fields.⁴³⁶ Such vague assertions were a far cry from Bourgin's belief that the universities were to be the focal point of a renewed France from which ardent and youthful leadership cadres would emerge. Worse still, Daujat failed to address perceived structural weaknesses in a system which desperately needed fixing. Universities were simply of little consequence in a new nation and state in which the intellect served the state but did not lead it.

Hard work, will, and proper moral fibre, however, could not be maintained from behind a desk. Thus the CDF/PSF made physical education and sport for youth an absolute priority, holding to the dictum that a sound mind was predicated upon a sound body. To be sure, they were not the only group to uphold this doctrine in nineteen-thirties France.

⁴³⁶Statements and motions of the inaugural PSF national conference/18-20 Dec. 1936 in *Le Flambeau*, 26 Dec. 1936; *Le Parti social français devant les problèmes de l'heure*, 1936; Jean Daujat, "L'Université dans l'État social français", *L'Étudiant sociale*, Feb. 1939.

Sports and fitness groups mushroomed during the decade, with hundreds of thousands of ordinary French men and women forming or joining football, gymnastics, or cycling clubs. Much of this activity came as a result of initiatives taken by the socialist-led Front Populaire government, the CDF/PSF's political nemesis, from 1936 onwards. It was Blum's ministry which created France's first Conseil supérieure des sports in July 1936, whose goal was to transform the weakened urban-industrial masses into healthy French citizens. Minister of Sport and Leisure Leo Lagrange, who instituted the Brevet sportif populaire certificates of merit and made physical education in schools mandatory, paid special attention to youth. By the late nineteen-thirties French youth were camping, cycling across the country, and joining the scouts and éclaireurs in ever-increasing numbers, encouraged by both governmental directives and grass-roots concern for the physical fitness of the young.⁴³⁷

But the CDF/PSF were not interested in simply making French youth fit enough to be deemed healthy by the state. Their paragon of the healthy French male was CDF/PSF youth icon Jean Mermoz, the war hero who won the Chevalier de la Legion d'Honneur at 21, commanded an air squadron at 30, and had successfully negotiated the Atlantic in high style flying his own aircraft. He was the epitome of the leader and the soldier, the dual roles of the future CDF/PSF youth elite, and hence far more relevant to the group than a neighborhood footballer. To La Rocque, Mermoz embodied the virtues of the ultimate Frenchman: military discipline, physical prowess, and moral piety.⁴³⁸ The future national elite were expected to be in perfect shape, and CDF/PSF leaders believed that it would be the new state's duty to facilitate the transformation.

This point was made abundantly clear by several sections of the group on numerous occasions. To the Travail et loisirs national committee, sport was of purely utilitarian, rather

⁴³⁷Julian Jackson, *The Popular Front in France: Defending Democracy 1934-1938* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), pp. 132-133; Ory, pp. 650-665, 725, 731, 769-772.

⁴³⁸Raoul Follereau, "L'Archange", *Volonté Bretonne*, 5 Feb. 1939; "Les Puissances d'exemple", *Le Flambeau*, 4 April 1936.

than strictly entertainment, value. Even after Lagrange's reforms, the committee moaned, only the strong--those least needy--engaged in physical activity. The weak majority did not develop at all, especially the youth of the industrial banlieues, who became victims of alcoholism and disease at an early age. Only through the institution of a rigorous scholastic policy of physical education could this trend be reversed: "Conçu sous une forme vraie, mesurée et utile, avec une idée morale, directrice, il constitue un élément de vitalité et de virilité par excellence et, à ce titre, fait partie de l'éducation".⁴³⁹ The idea was to create strong men rather than champions.

Far from being a mere tool for expansion of the physique, the committee continued, such educative preparation was indispensable towards instilling the new national doctrine in young men: "Cette éducation du corps sert également à inculquer à l'enfant les vertus qui sont à la base de la communauté telles que la discipline, l'ordre, l'esprit d'altruisme, de camaraderie et d'équipe. Dans le cadre sportif, elle exige le courage, de la virilité, de dévouement et le sens de la responsabilité".⁴⁴⁰ Thus the intellectual, moral, and physical formation of the new leadership corps was assured, and each child was considered as an individual national cell, to be nurtured and developed to its fullest potential.

Through physical education, youth in the new CDF/PSF nation and state were to develop 'l'esprit national' from an early age, and in turn France would obtain "enfants musclés et cultivés, sains de corps et de l'esprit".⁴⁴¹ For teenage boys the participation in a variety of sports and fitness activities would become mandatory in the école secondaire, a 'véritable patriotique crusade'.⁴⁴² At the second annual PSF national congress in November 1936, Dr. Philippe Encausse extended these proposals to include the mandatory attainment of the Brevet sportif populaire as a requirement for admission into any career or government

⁴³⁹AP/451/171, "Travail et loisirs: Assemblée générale du 2 Janvier 1939".

⁴⁴⁰Ibid.

⁴⁴¹"Les Croix de Feu", *La Flamme Catalane*, 1 March 1936.

⁴⁴²CHEVS/LR 11 VI A 1, A. Laventureux, "Jeunesses (suite)", *Bulletin mensuel du mouvement Croix de Feu (51e et 100e sections)*, 1 May 1936.

post. All 38 355 communes in France were to receive proper playing fields and sports facilities, and all morally suspect physical education instructors were to be removed from their posts immediately.⁴⁴³ The goal of such initiatives was the creation of a generation with the strength and stamina of champions; a swimming diploma, for example, was to be granted only to those capable of swimming thirty-three metres in fifty seconds.⁴⁴⁴ Such rigorous demands recalled the 'natural method' of physical education designed by Georges Hébert far more than the renewed emphasis on sport favoured by Lagrange.

The SPES was expected to act as an extra-curricular adjunct to scholastic programs, instilling in youth a strong sense of conscience, discipline, service, and a sense of obedience.⁴⁴⁵ Thus the bad habits encouraged in Republican schools and factories would be removed root and branch. To SPES director Gaëtan Maire sport was both a physical and moral activity, encouraging collective activity and negating individualism while turning the weak into robust youth. Physical education, in emphasizing teamwork and camaraderie, counteracted the Republican vices of materialism and individual gain, creating strong workers, managers, fathers, and soldiers for the nation.⁴⁴⁶

This work was to be accomplished in three phases. First the development of the body was stressed, including exercise for muscles and respiration. Thus the physically inadequate youth could slowly enlarge his previously unused capacity. This would be followed by a strict educational regimen, teaching an understanding of the human potential for development of strength, speed, resistance, and defense. Here the goal was "le perfectionnement des gestes naturels...en vue de l'établissement de la meilleure performance". Finally, the application stage was reached, during which a collective

⁴⁴³Dr. Encausse, "Rapport sur l'éducation physique et sportif", *Petit journal*, 26 Nov. 1937.

⁴⁴⁴*L'Oeuvre sociale dans le mouvement Croix de Feu*, May 1936. This tract was an illustrated supplement to the group newspaper.

⁴⁴⁵AP/451/151, "Cours pour monitrices des jeunes".

⁴⁴⁶Gaëtan Maire, "Education physique et sport", *L'Ouvrier libre*, April 1939; AP/451/152-untitled SPES information pamphlet.

mobilization of physical ability was to be initiated. Maire's description of the final product absolutely rejected any individual and intellectual thought or act, a synthesis of the entire vision held by La Rocque and the CDF/PSF leadership of the young future leader within the new nation and state: "Il fait appel à une discipline librement consentie, un désir de réalisation d'ensemble, une application constante débarassée de toute idée partisane ou exclusive, dans un esprit de franche camaraderie et de confiance totale, permettent un échange de vues nous menant progressivement à la mise en point définitive".⁴⁴⁷ Such ideas were far indeed from the initiatives of Lagrange and the Front Populaire.

Despite the fact that Maire frequently proclaimed the SPES to be an organization solely interested in the propagation of physical exercise, seeking only to better the health and hygiene of French youth, there was certainly a more sinister side at work. His anti-individualism and use of the SPES to spread the group doctrine were not uncommon tactics in interwar France. The latter was used by the French communist party in its various youth clubs with a similar goal in mind, the transformation of youth into communists working to build a new nation and state, while the former was standard fare along the European right.⁴⁴⁸ Valois and Arthuys spoke of youth as a collective, adhering to the doctrine of the Front Generation and constructing the new France using discipline and will. Bourgin, like Maire, argued for an institutional base from which to train youth, albeit positing the school rather than the extra-curricular sports club.

Yet Maire and many CDF/PSF authors went much farther than the French left or right. They in fact proposed the creation of a 'new man', through the utter transformation of youth on all levels--intellectual, moral, and especially physical. Maire and like-minded CDF/PSF authors never approached the proto-racialist theorizing of French eugenicists in the thirties.

⁴⁴⁷AP/451/151, G.A. Maire, note of 10 July 1938.

⁴⁴⁸For Maire's claims see AP/451/151, G.A. Maire, note of 10 July 1938 and AP/451/152, "Note sur le but et le programme des SPES", 15 June 1938. For the comparable case of the French communists, see Ory, pp. 78-79.

Although xenophobic sentiments existed elsewhere in the group, concepts such as René Martial's 'inter-racial grafting' theory, in which foreign traits were alleged to weaken the French population by infiltrating its stronger blood type, found little sympathy in even the most extreme group proposals regarding youth.⁴⁴⁹ Nor did these authors advocate the genetic racial manipulation keenly endorsed by the nazis. Maire and his coevals went much farther than La Rocque, however, whose concept of elite formation consisted of education, training, and fitness. His proposed elite was a combination of Lyautey and the Front generation, Christian principles, and old-fashioned conservatism.

Those in the CDF/PSF who disagreed adopted the opposite position: That the nation and state would be best served through the creation of a physically and intellectually flawless youth. Maire and the SPES wished to remove all traces of physical and mental weakness from France, strengthening the nation by manipulating the population through selective physical training. Nor was this process to be introduced gradually. Rather it was to be physically implemented by the new state, involving the mandatory training of the human body and mind in order to achieve the maximum human potential from each citizen. In doing so, they went well beyond the vision of La Rocque's new nation and state, where healthy youth would learn old-fashioned discipline, will, and physical abilities, and where educational reform was to be the main thrust of group effort .

SPES propaganda instead claimed that: "Notre but essentiel est avant tout non pas de chercher à faire des champions, mais beaucoup plus sainement et beaucoup plus utilement de *faire des hommes* (my italics)".⁴⁵⁰ These instructions were delivered to the monitors and monitrices responsible for administering SPES programs in Paris and the provinces. Such principles were consistently used by various CDF/PSF writers to describe the process through which the new nation and state would be born, with special references continuously

⁴⁴⁹Schneider, pp. 242-248. For an analysis of those within the CDF/PSF who adopted xenophobic discourse, see chapter six.

⁴⁵⁰AP/451/151, "Réunion de travail pour les moniteurs sportifs SPES".

made to youth. To Francis Georges in Le Flambeau, it was the mission of the CDF/PSF to create a new breed of Frenchman, who would lead the nation into a glorious future through faith and will: "C'est la mission dans un temps où des brusques transformations font craquer les vieux cadres et nous précipitent vers un avenir ouvert aux créateurs, où il n'y a plus de place pour ceux qui n'ont eu ni la clairvoyance, ni la volonté de prévoir et de dominer des événements qui les dépassent". How these supermen were to be conceived and propagated within society was left to the reader's imagination.⁴⁵¹

Others within the CDF/PSF were far less vague. As one author stated, in sounding the alarm about the French need for an organization comparable to the Hitler Youth, "[i]l faut songer à l'avenir du race!".⁴⁵² An author in the Flambeau de Bourgogne took this argument to its logical extreme, stating that all education in the new CDF/PSF nation and would be physical training, because "éducation dans son ensemble, signifie donc éducation de nos sens, éducation de nos centres cérébraux, éducation de nos organes moteurs". This training would parallel biological evolution, leading to the complete development and transformation of the human body. The goal was nothing less than the perfection of man, whose physical and moral qualities would be exploited to the highest level possible. Youth were to be the focus of this program, in which the causes of enfeeblement to the human 'capital' would be eliminated.⁴⁵³ This would be achieved, announced a group tract, without genetic experimentation. The regeneration of the race would proceed through a rational organization of physical education, in which the new state would organize sports and manage leisure for youth.⁴⁵⁴ Such action was necessary, lamented Pierre Apesteguy in the Petit journal, because the modern life of the factory, excessive leisure, and the automobile had created "une nette dégénérescence de l'être humain".⁴⁵⁵

⁴⁵¹Francis Georges, "La Drame de la jeunesse", Le Flambeau, 1 May 1937.

⁴⁵²Artiste, "Education nationale", Le Flambeau, 14 March 1936.

⁴⁵³"Éducation sportive", Flambeau de Bourgogne, 14 March 1937,

⁴⁵⁴AP/451/103-Tract, Que veut le Parti social français, Dec. 1936.

⁴⁵⁵Pierre Apesteguy, "Le Sport obligatoire pour l'enfance", Petit journal, 31 Aug. 1937.

The SPES was the tool with which the new state policies would be implemented. According to Dr. Encausse, such work had already begun on the youths currently being trained by the organization. Speaking at the second national congress, he stated of the SPES, for whom he acted as a consultant: "Nous attachons une grande importance au contrôle médico-psychologique des sujets qui nous sont confiés. Les fiches médico-psychologiques sont établies en collaboration, dans un esprit de camaraderie et d'estime réciproques par le toubib et l'éducateur physique".⁴⁵⁶ The purpose of such work was made clear by Maire, in a memorandum which explicitly rejected the methodology of the eugenicists in favour of physical education and a propagandistic school curriculum, but nevertheless enthusiastically adopted their goal:

La dégénérescence physique est comme la tare des peuples civilisés qui négligent la culture du corps. Pour la combattre, partout l'Europe s'organise contre la culture intellectuelle intensive dont l'excès déséquilibre les forces organiques. Cette foi nouvelle émeut médecins, pédagogues, philosophes, sportsmen [sic] et politiciens. Les sociétés comme les hommes subissent le contre-coup de leur mauvaise hygiène. Comme les familles où l'éducation morale et intellectuelle a été vicieuse, des Etats entiers sont mal élevés, lâches et pusillanimes. Pourtant l'expérience montre que ces anomalies mentales et psychiques ne sont que des vices éducatifs qui se corrigent par l'éducation physique et la pratique des sports virilisants.... Il faudrait que l'enfant soit considéré surtout comme la graine d'un pays et l'espoir de la nation plutôt que comme un futur électeur....aux hommes chargés de cette réorganisation...qu'ils sont imbus des idées le plus fausses sur la dégénérescence physique inéluctable et héréditaire et qu'ils ignorent à quel point *la matière vivante est plastique* et ardente vers la régénérescence [italics mine]".

Europe as a whole had risen up against the primacy of intellectual culture through which "l'excès déséquilibre les forces organiques". Mental and physical anomalies would be sought out and "corrected" in the new nation through the auspices of the SPES.⁴⁵⁷

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⁴⁵⁶Dr. Encausse, "Rapport sur l'éducation physique", *Petit journal*, 26 Nov. 1937.

⁴⁵⁷AP/451/151, G.A. Maire, note of 10 July 1938.

The Faisceau and CDF/PSF plans for youth were not without precedent. The Republic itself acted in the same way, using schooling, mandatory army service, and even sports to take youth under its wing. With so much time spent under the influence of its loyal servants, went the theory, young men and women would inevitably support the status quo. It was this concept which drove Jules Ferry in 1882 to weaken the stranglehold of the Catholic church on education, an organization which he viewed as a bastion of anti-Republican reaction. Ferry knew that the way to ensure the fidelity of the masses was through the indoctrination of their children, and acted accordingly. After their time in the schoolhouse the young were stripped of their family and shipped off to the army or to higher education for finishing touches, a captive audience already softened up by their primary and secondary school teachers.⁴⁵⁸

But this carefully implemented scheme went awry during the interwar period. Youth, unable to vote in most cases and always unable to seize the reins of power, fought back by banding together in various ways to protest Republican decadence and French weakness. Faisceau and CDF/PSF plans for youth represented distinctive attempts to harness this energy, redirecting it towards the construction of a new French nation and state to be built according to group principles. Valois and Arthuys, influenced by what they had seen and experienced on the battlefield, optimistically believed that the world had permanently changed as a result of the war and that youth were irrevocably different, having abandoned the Republic and democracy en masse. Fascism, which symbolized the union, fraternity, struggle, and spirit of the trenches, had merely to present itself as a viable option in order to succeed, while communism, the only other available choice, was antithetical to the young soldier because he had fought for the nation and not his class.

⁴⁵⁸Yolande Cohen, Les Jeunes. le Socialisme et la guerre: Histoire des mouvements de jeunesse en France (Paris: Éditions l'Harmattan, 1989), pp. 19-20.

This doctrine embodied an optimism that was bound to remain unrealized, not least because Valois and Arthuys made no attempt to define their terms. What precise part were youth to play within the construction of the new nation and state? Valois simply spoke in language full of vague assertions, slogans, and avoidance. Primarily concerned with the establishment of a new economic order, Valois tackled the youth question only in the most general terms, similar to his writings about women and the family. Furthermore, the vision of the combattant espoused by Valois and Arthuys was itself a fiction. As Robert Wohl writes:

Intellectuals from these [middle] classes dreamed of a spiritual revolution that would eliminate the exploiters and the exploited and fuse all sectors of a society into a unified and conflict-free community.... The 'generation of 1914' was therefore first of all a self-image produced by a clearly defined group within the educated classes at a particular moment in the evolution of European society. It was both an attempt at self-description by intellectuals and a project of hegemony over other social classes that derived its credibility and its force from circumstances that were unique to European men born during the last two decades of the nineteenth century.⁴⁵⁹

The postwar generation shared their concerns about national decadence and an uncertain future, but were not ready to 'win the peace' as they had won the war. The architecture of Valois's entire project in its political, economic, and social terms rested upon the utopian notion that youth were inherently fascist because fascism best represented the values which an entire generation of young men had carried home from the trenches. In other words, it rested on assumptions which were not shared by the young soldiers on whose behalf Valois was speaking.

The one Faisceau member who attempted to fill in the blanks in the group's youth policy was Hubert Bourgin, a non-combatant whose interests were conservative rather than fascist in nature. The so-called 'fascist professor' was exclusively concerned with the restoration of discipline and hierarchy in society, and the reintroduction of Catholic virtues and hard work in youth. Where Valois worshipped the machine gun, Bourgin idolized the

⁴⁵⁹Wohl, p. 209.

strap. Bourgin, like Barrès and Maurras before him, wanted to return to the days before the Ferry laws and Republican youth policy. His ideals were embodied by the family farm and the village church, symbolic of an idyllic life which Frenchmen had lost to the decadent, immoral, and individualistic Republic. In an effort to combat this malignant development he proscribed a strict moral and physical regimen for contemporary youth, to train them for their future responsibilities as workers, fathers, Catholics, and patriots. Such traditional attitudes corresponded to the tenets of both conservatism and the extreme-right, but were a far cry from Valois's modernizing fascism, with its emphases on productivism and rationalization of politics, economy, and society.

Like Bourgin, the CDF/PSF were for the most part conservative and traditional in their vision of future generations. But they were much more ambitious. With over one million members by 1938, group leaders believed that the *Etat social français* was within reach, and viewed the initiation of youth as a crucial component of its success. They thus possessed an entire array of agencies for the complete indoctrination of youth. Where Valois was vague, La Rocque left no stone unturned: A completely revised education system, the celebration of family life, a new and mandatory national physical education program, and youth activities and clubs were among the initiatives which the group either funded during its existence or proposed for the future. The CDF/PSF goal, common to most adherents despite disagreements regarding specific details, was the transformation of Republican youth into loyal members of the *Etat social français*. Young men and women were to become fervent nationalists, believing Catholics, ardent devotees of physical education, and the building-blocks of the future nation and state.

La Rocque and his followers were not optimists like Valois, who believed that youth were already prepared both physically and spiritually to begin the assault on the Republic and the construction of a new order. Rather than Bourgin's strict education alone, moreover, the CDF/PSF deemed propaganda necessary to remind the younger generation constantly

of their duty. In this way, the group were more modern than Valois. Although their doctrine was quite conservative in places, they understood the resources at the disposal of the modern state to inculcate its population. Youth, as the most susceptible members of society, were to be the primary targets. It is not surprising then that Gaetan Maire and others made the leap from indoctrination to perfection via the elimination of human weakness through physical, moral, and intellectual education. In the view of La Rocque, Daujat, or Mierry, children were to be morally and ideologically formed by the new state; Maire's proposals simply extended the group's plans into the physical sphere.

It is important to stress, however, that neither the Faisceau nor the CDF/PSF were alone in insisting that the state had a responsibility to ensure the proper formation of youth. Just as Aragonnès's more modern outlook on women and CDF/PSF pronatalism mirrored sentiments apparent within the Republic itself, their policies regarding youth were simply more extreme versions of pre-existing ideas. As John Hellman points out, many of the new interwar youth groups were staunchly Catholic, and gave youth a sense of community and "healthy" attitudes that differed from those present in Republican dogma.⁴⁶⁰ Similarly many of the scout leaders who preached the gospel of physical prowess and moral regeneration during the interwar years eventually served the Vichy regime in the Chantiers de la jeunesse, their doctrine having prefigured Vichy. In the words of Philippe Laneyrie, such a drift simply reflected the tenor of the age:

C'est essentiellement un mouvement *réactionnaire* au sens étymologique du mot, c'est-à-dire qu'il définit contre la laïcité et contre la politique anticléricale de la III^e [sic.] République, contre le matérialisme (Marxiste aussi que capitaliste), contre les moeurs laxistes de la société libérale, contre divers ingrédients de la civilisation urbaine triomphante, contre les phénomènes de massification, contre la démocratie érigée en système.⁴⁶¹

This statement could have applied equally to both the Faisceau and CDF/PSF. In an era in which anti-Republican youth doctrines abounded, it was the extremity of their solution, a

⁴⁶⁰Hellman, pp. 7-8.

⁴⁶¹Halls, p. 133, Laneyrie, p. 109

complete transformation of youth by both nation and state and vice versa, which differentiated them. It was this very extremity which was taken to its natural conclusion by certain members of both groups, who combined a belief in the new authoritarian nation and state with the oldest calling-card of the traditional extreme-right: The notion of the enemy.

Chapter 5-La Politique d'exclusion: Jews, Masons and Foreigners Within the New Nation and State

The issues of race, ethnicity, and national composition have always been major components in French extreme-rightist thought, and neither the Faisceau nor the CDF/PSF were exceptions to this rule. The question has been one of composition: Who was to be included, and alternatively who was to be excluded from the nation. Although neither group had a defined racially-based ideology in the sense of Drumont or Hitler, both nonetheless viewed the issue as one of paramount importance within the creative process whose end result was to be a new state and a new national order.

It is surprising, then, to find most literature on the groups almost silent vis-à-vis the issues of race and nationality. Current writings on both the Faisceau and the CDF/PSF are inadequate because they either ignore or grossly underestimate the gravity of what can be termed the politics of exclusion within these groups.⁴⁶² Neither group contained a simple handful of anti-semites; nor was the left exclusively portrayed as the enemy. Both instead systematically expressed a virulent hatred for the other, an entity composed of Jews, masons, and foreigners, all of whom were believed to embody values that ran counter to those of the fatherland. Despite the presence of only 200 000 Jews and 50-60 000 masons in Interwar France⁴⁶³, these elements were deemed an immediate threat to the welfare of the French nation and state, an enemy actively sowing destruction from within her borders. The Jew was the master of international finance, who had slipped into the highest corridors of

⁴⁶²The reader is referred to the introduction for a complete overview of the relevant literature.

⁴⁶³Both Lazare Landau and Pierre Birnbaum estimate the Jewish population in France by the thirties, including recent immigrants, to have been no more than two hundred thousand. In Lazare Landau, *De l'aversion à l'estime: Juifs et Catholiques en France de 1919 à 1939* (Paris: Le Centurion, 1980), pp. 41-44; Pierre Birnbaum, *Une mythe politique: La 'République juive'* (Paris: Fayard, 1988), p. 157. Pierre Chevalier notes that there were only 50-60 000 masons during the Interwar period in his *Histoire de la Franc-Maçonnerie Française*. (Paris: Fayard, 1975), pp. 28-29. Finally, Michael Marrus and Robert O. Paxton estimate the presence of two and a half to three million foreigners in *Vichy France and the Jews* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1981), pp. 34-35.

power, the member of a foreign race which had successfully invaded France unbeknownst to the general populace. The masons were no longer a secret society, but in control of political parties and the police. Both were joined in the pantheon of enemies by the communist and the newly powerful foreigner, who had colonized France and stolen French jobs and privileges away from her native sons. To create conditions of prosperity and security, all of them would be excluded from the nation, by violent means if necessary.

Nor was this doctrine a mere repetition of the Maurrassian *Quatre États Confédérés*. Certainly Maurras and his contemporaries, men like Drumont or Maurice Barrès, had taken up the exclusionary cause, arguing for a tangled conspiracy theory in which Jews, masons, foreigners, and Protestants were all secretly plotting against France in tandem. Yet the sheer violence and scope of the *Faisceau* and CDF/PSF attacks make them unique. For the theme of excluding undesirables was a major component in the ideology of both groups, consuming vast spaces in articles, tracts, and speeches. In this respect, they came close to espousing views that seemed more appropriate to mid-to-late-thirties Berlin than interwar Paris. True, by 1937-38 anti-semitic and xenophobic sentiment had increased across the French political spectrum. But the *Faisceau* constructed their ideological matrices during a lull in such feelings, from 1924-1927, while the CDF/PSF publicly took up the crusade beginning in 1932, well before it became a cause célèbre. Furthermore, even though their antisemitism and xenophobia increased noticeably in 1936, after the transformation into the parliamentary PSF, their tone and proposed solutions set them apart from all but the most extreme racial ideologues, such as Gringoire or Je suis partout.

However, as noted in previous chapters, there was no unique vision of the situation. Valois and La Rocque represented a milder variant of antisemitism, for example, while other members in both groups ran the gamut from aristocratic antisemitism, in which insult rather than injury was the chosen weapon, to extreme ultra-racialist stances. Adding confusion to the exclusionary mix were contradictory statements regarding the enemy and their fate made

by both leaders. Even in the case of foreigners, where there was no disagreement within the Faisceau or the CDF/PSF regarding their enemy status, proposed solutions to the 'problem' varied wildly. Yet the leadership and rank and file in both groups agreed that the ultimate remedy was exclusion, the forceful ejection of undesirables from France as their presence was believed fatal to the health of the nation.

1.

On the subject of the so-called "Jewish question", the public stance of the Faisceau rejected anti-semitic sentiment. To Valois, fascism united men of all confessions through love of God, country and one's fellow man, and the "national school" of fascism was proclaimed to be open to all of the spiritual families of France. Writing in Nouveau Siècle in September 1927, Gaeton Bernöville declared that "we can say today that antisemitism in France is dead". The era of Drumont and the Dreyfus Affair was officially over, with only a few minor incidents in Paris and the provinces as the remains of their legacy. Catholic intellectuals who were studying the Jews, Bernöville wrote, finally understood that it was unchristian and inhumane to pose the Jewish question, and that antisemitism was a dated doctrine. Bernöville listed prominent Jewish authors of the day, including Edmond Fleg, André Spine, and Israël Zangueil, while lauding new Jewish clubs such as the Union universelle de la jeunesse.⁴⁶⁴

Nor did members of the Faisceau confine such statements to writing alone. When faced with a member who loudly accused "the Jews" of being the culprits during a presentation against parliament and the banks, Valois decried such sentiments in no uncertain terms, stating that: "Vous venez de dire un mot, mon cher camarade, les Juifs! Il faut bien dire que ces Juifs sont parfois des gens qui ne sont pas Juifs, pour les

⁴⁶⁴F/7/13211, Georges Valois, Tract #9: "Le Faisceau des combattants, des chefs de famille, et des producteurs", p. 7; "La Question juive", Gaeton Bernöville, NS, 18 Sept. 1927. See also Maurice de Barral, Dialogues sur le Faisceau: ses origines, sa doctrine (Paris: Éditions du Faisceau, 1926), pp .9-10.

soutenir”.⁴⁶⁵ He finished by voicing opposition to any violent action directed at Jews in France; killing them all or sending them to Palestine was simply unacceptable, he stated.

Despite the frequency of such rhetoric, there were few Jews in the Faisceau. Jean Mayer and the Parisian lawyer Jacques Marx were both marginal members and occasional contributors to the Nouveau Siècle, but neither held any position of importance.⁴⁶⁶ True, Victor Mayer, a Jewish shoe manufacturer from Paris, was a financial backer, as was an engineer named Salomon, but they too were uninvolved in the group’s affairs, and had no hand in the construction and propagation of Faisceau doctrine. Although Robert Soucy uses their presence to demonstrate the lack of anti-semitism in the Faisceau, stating that it was avoided for fear of a loss of funding, such a view exaggerates their importance. The only other mention of Jewish members came in the form of a letter in the appendix to Valois’s book La Politique de la victoire, in which a “jeune Français israélite qui aime Dieu et sa Patrie” named Solomon Nathan agrees with Valois that youth are reactionary.⁴⁶⁷

One Jewish figure who did play a more significant role in the Faisceau, albeit briefly, was René Groos, a charter member of the Action française, and a rabid anti-semite. During his tenure with the Faisceau as the literary critic for Nouveau Siècle in late 1924, Groos professed his hatred for his people in a book, Le Problème juif (published by Valois at the Nouvelle Librairie Nationale). Indeed, the Faisceau membership rolls contained a number of established anti-Semites. Mathilde Dubert, the only woman to write for the group’s newspaper, had formerly been a contributor to Edouard Drumont’s virulently antisemitic Libre parole. As well, Jean Delettre, a member of the Faisceau staff, was a former Camelot

⁴⁶⁵CHEVS/VA 21, “Grande réunion privée” sous le présidence de M. Georges Valois, 2 Nov. 1926.

⁴⁶⁶Clarence D. Tingley. “Georges Valois and the Faisceau: Post-Apocalyptic Politics in Twentieth-Century France”, Proceedings of the 1976 conference of the Western Society for French Historical Studies, p. 387; Richard Millman, La Question juive entre les deux guerres (Paris: Armand Colin, 1992), p. 90.

⁴⁶⁷Robert Soucy, French Fascism: The First Wave, 1924-1933 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986, pp. 97-98; Georges Valois, La Politique de la victoire (Paris, Nouvelle Librairie Nationale, 1925), p. 126.

du Roi who had been heavily involved in a campaign of harassment against Jewish merchants.⁴⁶⁸

In fact, there was little other mention of Jews or Jewish activities altogether. Under the headline “Les Juifs protestent contre la terreur rouge”, Nouveau Siècle publicized a youth lecture being given by local Jewish groups to foreign Zionist groups about the Soviet terror and its mass arrests and government-sanctioned murders.⁴⁶⁹ There were also mentions of veteran’s synagogue services listed in the newspaper in June, to mark the anniversary of Verdun, and again in September and October on the occasion of other war memorial services.⁴⁷⁰ Yet both of these instances were more closely linked with the group's anti-communism and memorialization of the fallen combattant than with specifically pro-Jewish sentiments, and are the only examples of their kind.

Despite their public rejection of antisemitism, however, the notion continually found a place within the doctrine of the Faisceau. Pierre Dumas, the group expert on syndicalism and labour, stated at a public meeting that Cartel des Gauches electoral propaganda was being funded by Soviets, English workers, and international bankers such as the “Hungarian Jew” Horace Finaly, the Director of the Banque de Paris et Pays-Bas.⁴⁷¹ Nor was he alone among Faisceau members in supporting such a theory. Commenting upon socialist party leader Léon Blum’s inability to impose party discipline at the Conseil national of the socialist SFIO in November 1925, Antoine Fouroux saw only one possible cause: Blum was a Jew, allied with Finaly, and hence would be soon stripped of his leadership. Fouroux believed that the distaste for Blum’s Jewishness was symptomatic of a problem endemic in the party itself, which was dominated by Jews whose mastery had been

⁴⁶⁸Soucy, p. 108

⁴⁶⁹NS, 8 Oct. 1925.

⁴⁷⁰For details, see Millman, La Question juive, p. 94

⁴⁷¹F/7/ 13209, Metz Police Commissioner to Director of the Sureté Générale, “Au sujet d’une réunion privée de propagande de la section de Metz du ‘Faisceau’ à Metz”, 27 Mars 1926 This was a further elaboration upon his long-held notion that the Cartel was being led by Jewish, Masonic, and foreign interests. See “L’organisation ouvrière”, Pierre Dumas, Cahiers des États-Généraux, Dec. 1924.

apparent for decades. Jean Jaurès, for example, founded L'Humanité with the money of twelve Jewish bankers, and proceeded to overcome the Guesdist faction while steering the party into parliamentary opportunism. Fouroux also argued that French socialism was the product of “Judeo-German” mysticism, which upheld the Marxist concept of class rather than the natural French belief in 'la Patrie'.⁴⁷²

The antisemitism of Dumas and Fouroux paled before that of Franz van den Broeck d'Obrenan, an ex-member of the Action française and one of the main financial backers of the Faisceau. D'Obrenan's racialist doctrine was outlined in his 1926 book Introduction à la Vie Nationale, which was not only published by the Valois-controlled Nouvelle Librairie Nationale, but dedicated to him as well.⁴⁷³ There can be no doubt as to the seriousness with which Valois took the work and its author, as Nouveau Siècle carried prominently placed advertisements for the book.⁴⁷⁴ This occurred despite the fact that the book was an antisemitic caricature worthy of Drumont (an author whom Valois himself had previously quoted with approval ⁴⁷⁵) taking the form of a dialogue between an ordinary Frenchman (M. Dupont) and a stereotypical Jew (M. Pollack).

D'Obrenan began by citing Renan to the effect that Jews were a secret society in the same vein as the masons. France and Europe had literally fallen under the spell of the “Jewish international”, whose aspiration was to rule them both.⁴⁷⁶ This was a consequence of the position of Jewry in the world, as descendants of the biblical Cain, the archetype of the wanderer, which placed them in staunch opposition to the French character of Abel,

⁴⁷²“Pourquoi Blum a été battu au Conseil national”, Antoine Fouroux, NS, 12 Nov. 1925, “D'un mythe révolutionnaire du 1er Mai à l'organisation de la justice dans la nation”, Antoine Fouroux, NS, 30 April 1925.

⁴⁷³The dedication reads as follows: “À Georges Valois: Qui a su, malgré l'orage, tirer de la fondrière la cloche de Varennes, embouché jusqu'a l'essieu. Le soleil est revenu; qu'importent les picques des mouches?” Van den Broeck D'Obrenan, Introduction à la vie nationale (Paris: Nouvelle Librairie Nationale, 1926).

⁴⁷⁴See for example page two of the 11 May 1926 edition.

⁴⁷⁵Valois, La Politique de la victoire, p .111.

⁴⁷⁶D'Obrenan, pp. 12-15.

representative of the sedentary Farmer. The latter owned the earth, adopting the Latin way of life, involving ownership and communion with the soil:

Cette double conception de la fortune moyenne--possession de la terre, rentes ou pensions sur l'État--sont plus que jamais à la base de notre edifice sociale. Elles expriment un besoin de stabilité, d'ordre, de perennité, de vie régulière qui marque un violent contraste avec le vagabondage, le goût du jeu, le messianisme et l'appetit de destruction des juifs.

This dissimilarity extended to their preferred system of state, with the Jew needing an autocratic government structure, as in the bible. To D'Obrenan, this explained their leading role in the creation and propagation of the Soviet system of government which bred dishonesty and corruption, termed the 'Asiatic' conception of slavery, and which was the opposite of the traditional Latin way of life.⁴⁷⁷

Nor were the French greedy speculators, a quality which d'Obrenan believed to be specifically Jewish. The Frenchman had simple needs, such as a home and a quiet and secure old age, and nothing more. The language and description used here by d'Obrenan evoke the Barrèssian notion of 'La Terre et les Morts', with M. Dupont expounding about

la fonctionnaire qui attend sans lassitude l'heure de la retraite, l'artisan qui rêve d'une maison au village natal qu'il n'abandonnera qu'a l'heure où le cimetière mêlera ses cendres à celles des parents, le paysan, le petit commerçant, tous ont le même but limité et tous comptent y arriver par une même voie: l'économie.

M. Pollack answers ominously that the Jew is a natural nomad, the contrast to the Barrèssian notion of the ideal Frenchman. The Jews had moved out of the desert and into civilization, becoming bankers and merchants, all part of a greater plan in which "[u]n banquier naît à Francfort...envoie un fils à Londres, un autre à Paris, une autre à Vienne: la finance internationale est créée".⁴⁷⁸ The end result is to be the plunder of all nations, and their eventual destruction at the hands of international Jewry. Government and finance have

⁴⁷⁷Ibid., p. 26, 32

⁴⁷⁸Ibid., pp. 37, 42-43.

become the realm of Jewish power, and the Jews bankrupt the state, buying it piece by piece, with the eventual goal of complete ownership and control. This secret plan, M. Dupont relates, is detailed in the Protocols of the Elders of Zion, a document which has “pénétré aussi profondément les ambitions et les plans secrets de vos coréligionnaires et nul n’a prédit l’avenir avec autant de précision et de sûreté”.⁴⁷⁹

One of the most powerful Jewish tools was Marxism, a rabbinical philosophy, messianic and materialist, whose believers were almost exclusively Jewish, and led by “le Juif Torrès”. The communist phenomenon was the legacy of the ghetto experience, claimed D’Obrenan, created by Jews in Eastern Europe to gain the revenge promised by God against the unbelievers. Their hatred of ‘hostile’ civilizations combined with an ‘apocalyptic zeal’ turned a lower middle-class community of shopkeepers and salesmen into ardent socialists, who eventually seized control of the Russian revolutionary movement. The revolution was therefore nothing more than a manifestation of the promise of God, that one day all of humanity would be Jewish.⁴⁸⁰

D’Obrenan ends his portrait with violent sentiments: “Mais nous disons, en le démontrant, que la seule attitude raisonnable est aujourd’hui l’action totale, l’action brutale, l’action massive, l’action intelligente, l’action qui polarisera les énergies, réveillera les bonnes volontés, dispersera les ennemis”. Only those who had fought in the Great War would be spared, as they were “plus Français que Juifs”, proving with their blood and lives that they followed France rather than the decrees of international Jewry.⁴⁸¹

In publishing such a work and advertising it prominently in the group newspaper, Valois made clear his sympathy for d’Obrenan’s virulent beliefs. His own writing from the Faisceau period was not as harsh as d’Obrenan’s, but he made many of the same points

⁴⁷⁹Ibid., p. 39-41, 47-48.

⁴⁸⁰Ibid., pp. 60-64, 71-74, 127. D’Obrenan here refers to Parti communiste français leader Maurice Thorez.

⁴⁸¹Ibid., pp. 141, 55.

nonetheless. Valois too adopted the theme of the Jew 'contre la Patrie', yet only for 'foreigners', which in practice meant any Jews whom he viewed as ideologically unsound. Thus in 1927 Valois wrote that: "D'autre part, il n'a pas échappé à beaucoup de Français que si, à l'étranger, des Juifs riches ont donné des concours au Bolchévisme, en France l'attitude des Juifs de France à l'égard des Soviets a été pleine de réserve, défiante, souvent hostile." Clearly, to be Jewish and yet still considered French one could not be on the left in political or social terms. For Valois, the Jew must be a pious family man and respect the nation over money, and only in such a case would the state protect his religious traditions. The Jew, in Valoissian doctrine, sought only economic and social justice (hence their attachment to socialism). This drive would be diverted from the purely economic realm, with Jews fighting for the welfare of the nation rather than personal gain.⁴⁸²

Writing in Action française in March 1925, six months after he founded the veteran's organization which would become the Faisceau, Valois invoked the biblical story of the golden calf to describe the history of the Jewish people.⁴⁸³ The Jews had constructed a new version in the contemporary world-- a modern, plutocratic, and international economy. Its followers included both Jews and 'Judainized Christians', whose goal was gold for gold's sake. Like Moses in the bible, Karl Marx was the Jewish prophet fighting the golden calf, preaching that only through suffering could the Jews once again become the chosen people, while attracting thousands of ghettoized Eastern European Jews along with sections of the Western bourgeoisie as adherents. The Jews, due to their nomadic status, did not understand the law of nature and the necessity of attachment to the soil, and hence were easily driven to excess, the opposite of the prudent French paysan. Industrial production, the chosen economic vehicle for Jews, led to a frenzy for gold, brought on by limitless opportunities. Unlike d'Obrenan, however, Valois foresaw a more peaceful remedy to the

⁴⁸²Georges Valois, Le Fascisme (Paris: Nouvelle Librairie Nationale, 1927), p. 55-62.

⁴⁸³Valois maintained a regular column in the royalist paper until November 1925, when the Faisceau became exclusively a mouvement des anciens combattants.

Jewish character, through the implementation of a Christian economy which would emphasize moderation as a first step toward a hopeful mass conversion of Jews, “pour laquelle tout chrétien doit prier”.⁴⁸⁴

Writing in Nouveau Siècle, Valois thus called for an injection of religious spirit into the economy, in which Jews would work for justice, alongside Catholics and Protestants, to neutralize the plutocracy, the modern form of the golden calf. Instead of Marxist utopias, the Jews should follow the human and universal Christian justice, which guaranteed fair prices, wages, and salaries through moral obligation. Valois here agreed with Hubert Bourgin, who had called for the inculcation of the values of family and profession into Jews via the school curriculum, arguing that the state would direct what he called the Jewish ‘creative fervour’ towards the good of the nation rather than Marxism. Valois believed that Jews continually sought change, and that since the modern world was in a state of constant social and economic evolution, the Jew would prove useful through a state mobilization of the “esprit révolutionnaire d’Israël”. Since fascism, like socialism, was primarily concerned with social justice, the Jew would simply switch allegiances, being allotted a key role in fighting for fair prices, salaries, and benefits.⁴⁸⁵

Unfortunately, according to Valois, those Jews who were part of the international financial plutocracy were unsalvagable. Valois spent his career waging a one-man war against this supposed conspiracy, the leadership of which he continually attributed to Jews. During his Action française years he called them “Le Bourgeoisie juive”, an economic international who wormed their way into financial predominance throughout Europe. The

⁴⁸⁴“Le Puits de Jacob”, Georges Valois, Action française, 29 March 1925. This theme was also taken up in the pages of Nouveau Siècle, in an article that was practically a verbatim restatement. See “Communistes”, 19 March 1925. In the latter, Valois called Karl Marx “the last prophet of Israel”, and stated that truly French Jews rejected his doctrine because they were not nomads, as were their Russian brothers. He clearly stated that communism was a Judeo-Slavic creation, however.

⁴⁸⁵“La Révolution nationale II: la révolution économique”, Georges Valois, NS, Aug. 27, 1925. See also La Politique de la victoire, pp. 38-39, and F/7/13211, Tract#5-Georges Valois, La Conquête de l’avenir, 1926; Hubert Bourgin, Les Pierres de la maison (Paris: Nouvelle Librairie Nationale, 1926), p. 146; “L’État national, la révolution économique, et Israël”, Georges Valois, NS, 25 Feb. 1926;

socialist movement was an excuse to build a private army to protect Jewish interests, as were the masonic lodges, who along with the Jewish bourgeoisie controlled parliament and the army. Furthermore they had trained a whole new caste--the "Bourgeoisie judaïsante"--by corrupting their good Catholic morals and substituting in their place the American capitalist values of the primacy of profit and individualism. Both bourgeois types having perverted and exploited the impoverished French worker, were ruining the nation through their lack of morality,. The Jewish people were thus 'foreign leeches' out to steal French money, using control of the state, the press, the army, and the education system to do it. At the head of the conspiracy to control France were the financial powers, led by "men with Jewish names".⁴⁸⁶

Valois adopted the same position after the war, writing that revolutionary sentiment and Wilsonian internationalism were being mobilized by German-Jewish financiers for the purposes of economic colonialism, which could only be defeated "sous la loi des soldats qui sortent du sol, et c'est dans ces périodes qu'Israel tremble et prie dans les ghettos". All of the financiers Valois named throughout the twenties were Jewish, with Horace Finaly, Dumas's "Hungarian Jew", as the ringleader. Although Allen Douglas has minimized Valois's campaign against Finaly, claiming that he acted only because of the banker's links with Edouard Herriot and the Cartel des Gauches government, the Faisceau leader's critique of Finaly was far from economic. Despite the fact that Finaly was a naturalized citizen and an officer of the Légion d'Honneur, Valois referred to him as a foreigner, continuously making reference to his Jewishness.⁴⁸⁷

⁴⁸⁶"La Bourgeoisie capitaliste", Georges Valois, Cahiers du Cercle Proudhon, Dec. 1912, pp. 229-245; Georges Valois, La Monarchie et la classe ouvrière (Paris: Nouvelle Librairie Nationale, 1924), p. 295, 297-305; F/7/13195, "Conférence royaliste de M.M.Arnal et G.Valois, Le Nouvelliste, 7 Feb. 1910

⁴⁸⁷"Sur deux questions morales et politiques", Georges Valois, Action française, 15 March 1920; Allen Douglas, From Fascism to Libertarian Communism: Georges Valois Against the Third Republic (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), pp. 70-71; La Religion laïque contre les combattants et les producteurs", Georges Valois, Action française, 22 March 1925. This argument appeared again numerous times in the Faisceau press, although Valois substituted the concept of mysterious and unknown names for Jews in his thesis. All of the names which he did list, however, were Jews.

Valois indeed saw Finaly as the main backer of the Cartel des Gauches, and the man in control of a large part of French industry through his ownership of the Banque de Paris et Pays-Bas. But Valois further accused him of collusion with Standard Oil and of using this connection to move into the French colonies, where he already controlled Morocco under Marechal Lyautey's nose. In all of these plans he was aided by a legion of revolutionaries, engineers, politicians, journalists, generals, and ambassadors. Finaly and his mysterious foreign partners had aided the development of Prussian power, the Great War, internal strife in France and the Russian revolution. All of the named accomplices were Jewish: "All the world remembers the interventions of New York bankers, Otto Kuhn, Jacob Schiff, and others, in favour of Lenin and of Trotsky, and in favour of a united Germany".⁴⁸⁸ Sassoon had done the same, working from his base of power in Great Britain.⁴⁸⁹ These men had agents everywhere, including politicians who adopted measures contrary to the national interest, Masonic industrialists, and of course the press and intellectuals.

Once again, clear criteria for the Jew as enemy emerged through the critique of Finaly. That Finaly was a 'Hungarian' Jew, wrote Valois, was of secondary importance. If he had served the French state no one would have questioned him, yet his lust for money and power led to a betrayal of the nation, and as such he was an "occult dictator", who should be dealt with in the most severe manner possible.⁴⁹⁰ His Jewishness became an issue because he did not serve the national interest (i.e. the national interest according to Valois), and the Jew was only acceptable if he thought and acted in a correct manner. Thus in 1926 the group's newspaper applauded on its front page Octave Homberg's opposition to the Bérenger-Mellon accords and supported him for the presidency of the Valois-organized

⁴⁸⁸"Chronique de la semaine", *NS*, 2 April 1926. That the notion of supporting Lenin and the Kaiser at the same time was quite antithetical seems never to have been considered by the author.

⁴⁸⁹"La Réunion du 2 Novembre au Cirque du Paris", *NS*, 7 Nov.1926

⁴⁹⁰"Horace Finaly", Georges Valois, *NS*, 5 Sept. 1926

Semaine de la Monnaie the following year, while Finaly had to be expunged from the nation.⁴⁹¹

One is tempted to argue that Valois was only selectively antisemitic, that the issue was one of adherence to Faisceau doctrine, and not one of religion or race. Yet Valois singled out Jews for criticism, rarely extending his argument to include Christians. However benevolent the tone, the stereotype of the Jew was still clearly in evidence, and Valois only differed in his proposed solution from rabidly antisemitic Faisceau members like D'Obrenan. A negative analysis of the Jewish character and a clear enunciation of the threat which the Jews posed to the French nation and state appear throughout his oeuvre. He was also quite willing to tolerate more severe opinions, as evidenced in his publication of D'Obrenan's work, and Fouroux's articles. Clearly Valois did not have a 'Road to Damascus' experience regarding antisemitism upon forming the Faisceau. The proposal of Allen Douglas, that "anti-Jewish politics were absent from Faisceau ideology and tactics", is contravened by prolific evidence to the contrary.⁴⁹² Far from leaving such sentiments behind with the Action française, he continued to be anti-semitic, as did various key members of the group.

As in the case of the Faisceau the CDF/PSF central leadership publicly rejected antisemitism. Group leader Colonel François de la Rocque continually spoke of an ideal "fraternity of men", all of whom had different philosophical and religious views, yet would rally around "the cult of patriotism and love for French ways".⁴⁹³ Responding to concerns about antisemitism in the group voiced by the Comité d'entente des associations d'anciens

⁴⁹¹Millman, *La Question juive...*, p. 87. Although Homberg succeeded another Jew, Raphael Georges-Levy, it should be noted that Valois organized the Semaine but did not have absolute control over it, and the project was entirely independent of the Faisceau. A wide range of figures, including deputies and industrialists took part, and Valois was only one of three Vice-Presidents.

⁴⁹²Douglas, p. 253.

⁴⁹³For La Rocque's proclamations against religious differences in the CDF/PSF see *Le Flambeau*, Oct. 1931; APP Ba 1857, Excerpts from the "Rapport fait au nom de la commission d'enquête chargée de rechercher les causes et les origines des événements du 6 Février", p. 1620.

combattants et volontaires juifs de France in 1934, the ligue's newspaper Le Flambeau replied that such rumours were the work of Croix de Feu adversaries, with La Rocque adding emphatically in an adjoining letter that "les Croix de Feu n'ont jamais fait d'antisemitisme". Later that month, while answering similar concerns from the newspaper of the Ligue internationale contre l'antisemitisme [LICA], La Rocque expressed his support for the group, and dismissed any notion of division by race, confession, or class within the ranks of the Croix de Feu. He listed instances where the group had opposed antisemitism in Le Flambeau, and personally authorized the publication of the letter.⁴⁹⁴

Yet the questions did not disappear. In October of 1935 a Croix de Feu Chef de Propagande answered a letter from a member wanting to know the precise attitude of the group toward the Jews by quoting La Rocque's book Service public on the subject of France as a 'magnificent synthesis' of all races. The member was reminded that men of all confessions, and even non-believers, were welcome in the group. Furthermore, the author asserted, the Croix de Feu would never support any attempt to slander or persecute Jews. Little more than a month later, it was again La Rocque's turn to defend the group, this time in the form of a letter to Grand Rabbin Maurice Liber pledging to root out antisemitism in the CDF/PSF.⁴⁹⁵

The group continued to defend itself after their transformation into the parliamentary Parti social français, beginning with Jacques de Lacretelle's 1936 publication of a portrait of the Croix de Feu leader as a man completely devoid of any anti-semitic or xenophobic sentiment. Then in 1938, La Rocque's friend Henri de Kerellis used the leader's public stance against antisemitism as proof that the CDF/PSF were more benevolent towards Jews than Mussolini and the Italian fascists. Finally, the party bulletin in April 1938 urged

⁴⁹⁴"Nos documents", Le Flambeau, 1 March 1934; "Une lettre du Colonel de la Rocque", Droit de vivre, 25 March 1934.

⁴⁹⁵AP/451/93, "Mouvement Croix de Feu/service de la propagande", Paris-25 Oct. 1935; CHEVS/LR 48, La Rocque to Grand Rabbin Maurice Liber, 4 Dec. 1935. See also the letter from La Rocque published in Le Journal in CHEVS/LR 11 VI A 2.

speakers to refrain from any and all anti-semitic rhetoric in speeches. But such pronouncements were limited to the Paris contingent, and even then only the highest leadership personnel publicly disavowed antisemitism.⁴⁹⁶

Furthermore, few Jews were actually members or sympathizers of the CDF/PSF, and almost all of them from Paris/Île de France. Before La Rocque's ascension to the group presidency, Le Flambeau mentioned honours given to a M.Lévy, then president of the 10me section. Similarly, during the Croix de Feu years, a M.Marx was president of the 16th section and a member of the Comité Directeur. La Rocque's personal secretary Edouard Carvalho was half-Jewish, as was Doctor Raymond Benda, La Rocque's personal physician, but the few remaining Jewish-Parisian members were mainly of minor significance.⁴⁹⁷

Almost all activities held for and with Jewish war veterans occurred in the Paris area as well. Rabbin Kaplan of the synagogue at Rue de la Victoire was a sometime-sympathizer until 1936, holding ceremonies there in conjunction with the Croix de Feu and La Rocque, and also speaking at group functions. Kaplan consistently ran into trouble with Jewish organizations, however, and was forced to stop holding the annual ceremonies in 1937, due to criticism from LICA that he was easing the triumph of fascism in France through his

⁴⁹⁶Jacques de Lacretelle, Qui est la Rocque? (Paris: Flammarion, 1936), p. 24; CHEVS/LR 18 V, "L'Époque", Henri de Kerellis, L'Époque, 28 April 1938; CHEVS/LR 41, "Au sujet des campagnes antisémites", Bulletin d'informations, #75, 30 April 1938. In only one instance did a regular member publicly pronounce his displeasure with anti-semitism and xenophobia: A M. Pinçon from the 8me section called for the collaboration of Catholics, Protestants, Jews and Muslims for the good of the Patrie. See F77/12966, "Réunion organisée par le comité local du 8me Arrt. du Parti social français", 16 Feb. 1937.

⁴⁹⁷Le Flambeau, Dec. 1929 and Feb. 1930; "Nos documents", Le Flambeau, 1 June 1932. Marx resigned by 1935 according to Paul Chopine. See his Six ans chez les Croix de Feu, (Paris: Gallimard, 1935), p. 125; CHEVS/LR 48, Edouard Carvalho to Gilles de la Rocque, 3 Dec. 1971. He lists Blumenthal and Seligmann, La Rocque's pilots as other Jews involved with the group. On Benda and La Rocque, see Claude Popelin, Arènes politiques (Paris, Fayard, 1974), p. 37. Richard Millman lists a Léon Kosciuszko, as Vice-President of a Paris section, but does not name it. He also states that Grand Rabbin Maurice Eisenbeth was CdF #13725, yet he left the group in 1932. See "Les Croix de Feu et l'antisémitisme", p. 50. Machefer lists Jean Bonnard (Secretary of the Centre Universitaire and President of the Fédération de Paris-Sud), and André Bloch (Carvalho's cousin and member of the 6th section). See his "La Rocque et le problème antisémite", pp. 96-98. Finally, a memo from the German occupation government lists the President of the Alpes-Maritimes section, an employee of the Rothschild bank, a Paris municipal councilor, and a PSF-sponsored candidate in Nice. See CDJC XLVI-32 and XLVI-37.

acceptance of the Croix de Feu, and that he was an anti-semitic when outside of Jewish circles. As the pressure mounted, he eventually backtracked, stating in 1937 that the group had been invited on orders from the Consistoire Israélite de France⁴⁹⁸ Few ceremonies occurred in other French locales, and then only very early in the group's existence.⁴⁹⁹

Such activity served to mask a harsher reality: That the leadership and rank and file of the CDF/PSF were overtly anti-semitic to varying degrees. The earliest instance of the group's active entry into the public sphere was their involvement in riots protesting the March 1931 play "L'Affaire Dreyfus", a Jacques Richepin adaptation of a German portrayal of the struggle surrounding Dreyfus's trial. The Croix de Feu believed the piece to be an example of German treachery, a recreation of the divisions present within France at the turn of the century, which had mainly revolved around the issue of antisemitism. They not only called for the play to be banned, but they also joined the royalist and anti-semitic Action française in the streets, stating that they could not 'allow' the nation to be ripped apart by such scandal again.⁵⁰⁰

Like many Faisceau members, La Rocque himself was quite vocal in his refusal to accept foreign Jews into the French nation. During the course of an interview given to Le Journal in 1936, La Rocque qualified his rejection of antisemitism by juxtaposing the good

⁴⁹⁸Interview with Gilles de la Rocque and Jacques Nobecourt in July 1996. For a complete stenograph of a meeting at the synagogue, see APP Ba 1853, memo of 14 June 1936. La Rocque sat with a member of the Rothschild family, and rightist lawyer Edmond Bloch, and Kaplan lauded the group in his speech as being "sans distinction d'opinion". For Kaplan's activities at Croix de Feu meetings, see "Section féminine du Regroupement national autour des Croix de Feu", Le Flambeau, April 1934. He was a featured speaker at the meeting. For criticism of Kaplan, see "Soyez républicains, on vous poindra! Soyez fascistes, on vous oindra!", Droit de vivre, 25 March 1934; "Les Croix de Feu à la synagogue", Droit de vivre, June 1935. Also Paula Hyman, From Dreyfus to Vichy: The Remaking of French Jewry (New York: Columbia University Press, 1979), pp. 227-228.

⁴⁹⁹"Maurice Genay, "À l'occasion du 16e anniversaire de la victoire de la Marne", Le Flambeau, Aug. 1930; E. Anxionnat, "Les Croix de Feu et Briscards à l'anniversaire de la Marne", Le Flambeau, Oct. 1930; "À Meaux le 11 Septembre", Le Flambeau, Sept. 1932, "À Tours", L'Univers Israélite, 29 Nov. 1935.

⁵⁰⁰AP/451/83, La Réleve, March 1931; "L'Affaire Dreyfus", Le Flambeau, April 1931; Maurice Genay, "Notre action, nos buts", Le Flambeau, May 1931. Although there was never any official link between the two, La Rocque later acknowledged that he had allowed Action française members into the Croix de Feu, claiming only to reject their royalist beliefs. See APP/Ba 1857. Transcript of the 1934 parliamentary inquiry into the events of 6 February 1934.

Jews, those who had fought for France in the Great War and were seen as consistently patriotic, “à ce que deux ou trois Israélites de marque, en relations directes avec certaines puissances financières internationales veulent la guerre, ne déclenchent pas une vague de réprobation dont leurs coréligionnaires seraient les victimes”.⁵⁰¹ Later that year after railing against Léon Blum’s “équipe juive”, whose mission in France was to encourage her destabilization for the benefit of foreign powers, La Rocque made the distinction even more clear: Those Jews who were patriotic and anti-Marxist were the only ones acceptable in France, and the Croix de Feu would happily open its ranks “aux inombrables Israélites patriotes qu’il appartient de manifester leur aversion pour le Marxisme”.⁵⁰²

Yet La Rocque attached strict criteria to any national acceptance of Jews. When speaking on Blum’s politics to a crowd in Alsace, he was faced with a member who yelled “à bas les Juifs!” Just as Valois had done in similar situations, La Rocque appeared to denounce such sentiments, stating: “Je ne veux pas entendre des ‘à bas’. J’ai dit ce que j’ai dit, et ceux qui n’approuvent pas la pensée chrétienne qui anime le PSF n’ont qu’à foutre le camp!...Malgré M.Blum, je salue les Juifs”.⁵⁰³ To be included in the group, however, the Jew had to pledge allegiance first and foremost to Christian civilization. Because they worked against this conception, Blum and his group of “parasites from all civilizations” had not only betrayed France, but the Jewish people as a whole. Hence only by accepting the PSF doctrine could the Jew truly belong to the nation, while non-acceptance made one a foreign parasite.

Similar qualifications were made in a discussion on the issue in the group’s monthly bulletin, which in 1937 loudly proclaimed “Nous ne sommes pas antisemites!” The PSF, the author claimed, worked within the tradition of Christian civilization, respecting all

⁵⁰¹CHEVS/LR 38, “Déclarations de La Rocque”, *Le Journal*, 17 March 1936. La Rocque continued to defend all patriotic and veteran Jews while rejecting immigrants, even during the Vichy era. See *Disciplines d’action*, (Clermont-Ferrand: Éditions du Petit Journal, 1941), pp. 97-99.

⁵⁰²La Rocque, “Répérés”, *Le Flambeau*, 15 Aug. 1936.

⁵⁰³AP/451/103, Tract-“Qu’est-ce que le P.S.F.?”, Dec.1936, p. 13.

religions on the condition that they accepted French values first and foremost. France was in fact a living fusion of different races and traditions, and the nation simply demanded acceptance of their customs and beliefs in return for recognition. Yet once again, immigrant Jews were seen as despicable, and the language used in this case was uncompromising in its tone:

Cela étant dit, il faut bien ajouter qu'il existe dans certaines régions, notamment en Alsace et en Algérie, des éléments Juifs récemment immigrés, non assimilés, volontairement étrangers à la communauté nationale dont ils se réclament cependant. Les Juifs patriotes le savent et sont les premiers à le déplorer, à en souffrir. Avec eux, nous condamnons cette invasion larvée, incontrôlée....Nous considérons comme des étrangers tous ceux qui, par leur attitude, leurs sentiments et leur conduite se tiennent à l'écart de la nation, même s'ils ont pu acquérir la citoyenneté Française. (Italics mine)⁵⁰⁴

Thus Jews were encouraged to reject their foreign brethren if deemed non-French by the PSF, or else suffer the consequences. Naturalization was no guarantee of citizenship, but merely an earned benefit continually renewed on the basis of loyalty to 'la Patrie'. Such arguments passed far beyond La Rocque's French/foreign criterion for Jews. In a similar vein, Stanislas Devaud, the PSF parliamentary deputy for Algeria, proclaimed that Renan had been correct: The nation was not a race, but a soul. Jews could only have the French soul if they genuinely wanted to become part of the "grande famille nationale", and even if naturalized they would have to adopt a "French" morality to do so. They had failed to meet this standard, choosing to remain a "racial bloc" incompatible with the rest of the nation.⁵⁰⁵

Many in the group took this argument to its furthest extreme, arguing that the Jew was at heart a foreigner who could never assimilate no matter how hard he tried. CDF/PSF supporter and member of the Académie française Jacques de Lacretelle argued in his novel

⁵⁰⁴AP/451/101, "La P.S.F. et la question juive", *Bulletin d'information* #18, 9 Feb. 1937.

⁵⁰⁵Le Parti social français devant les problèmes de l'heure, PSF Premier congrès national, Dec.18-20, 1936, pp. 219-224. La Rocque himself agreed with the latter point, stating at the same rally that as they voted democratically as a bloc for the parties of the left, Jews were in conflict with the PSF révolution nationale. See *La Flamme*, 28 Oct. 1938.

Silbermann that the Jew was fundamentally different both mentally and physically, a fact which precluded assimilation on any level, leading to an inner conflict within Jews between the desire to do so and their inherited Jewish nature. Such theorization often led to violent responses from group members. In January 1935 the newspaper Droit de vivre reported that a speaker at a Croix de Feu meeting had encouraged a massive expulsion of Jews to Palestine, and the seizure of Jewish property, as all Jews were foreign to France.⁵⁰⁶

Outside of the leadership and the Paris section, a completely different type of antisemitism existed. Hostility towards immigrants was quite common in nineteen-thirties France, and Jewish refugees often bore the brunt of this anger. French Jews themselves worried about the presence of their recently-immigrated Eastern European brethren, hoping that the effects of the influx would not undermine their own secure existence.⁵⁰⁷ But native French Jews were left unscathed by all but the most extreme anti-semites. Given this state of affairs La Rocque, who made a clear division between French and foreign Jews and professed acceptance for those who adhered to the CDF/PSF doctrine, or even Devaud or Lacretelle, who lacked a real hostility to Jews as long as they remained elsewhere, were in no way outlandish. The rank and file, however, especially in the provinces, displayed a more violent antisemitism. The Flambeau de Lorraine, for example, reminded its readers that Christ had condemned the so-called "chosen people" to ceaseless wandering throughout the world, and hence the Jew could never settle down and find a home, even in his place of origin. Furthermore, they were merchants and money-grubbers by nature, and had their hands in every financial pie.⁵⁰⁸ Such beliefs were based exclusively on the view that all Jews belonged to a common racial 'type', and that all were a threat to the nation, proto-Drumont stylings in which expulsion was often regarded as insufficient.

⁵⁰⁶Landau, pp. 74, 79, 81-82, 84; "Le Colonel repondra-t-il?", Droit de vivre, Jan. 1935.

⁵⁰⁷Marrus and Paxton, pp. 42-54.

⁵⁰⁸"Le Drame Palestinien", Flambeau de Lorraine, 8 July 1939. See also "Laïcité", Flamme Tourangelle, 26 Nov. 1938.

To begin with, CDF/PSF members continually wrote of a huge conspiracy in which the Jew attempted to both undermine the nation for his own personal ends, and in which all Jews, foreign or otherwise, were implicated. In a voice worthy of Drumont, the Jews were called “our masters”, rigging elections and directing a cartel which secretly controlled France, whose members included anti-fascist committees, the masons, large Sociétés anonymes, the press, technicians, the Bourse, and the banks who profited from the fall of the franc. To the Volonté Bretonne, Jews literally ran European affairs, whether the revolution in Russia, or the rise of the German SPD to power in the twenties. They called themselves the ‘chosen people’, but were really ‘yids’, using Marxism as a plot to buy up French property piece by piece. These “barbe-à-réfugies” were seen as the opposite of the good Bréton peasant, who was a hard-working patriot. Few Jews had fought in the war and earned the right to be considered French, while most were German-inspired ‘agents-provocateurs’ who worked for Hitler and wanted all Frenchmen to speak Yiddish.⁵⁰⁹

The Jew was also characterized as greedy, never tiring of robbing the Frenchman blind. Pierre Melon of the PSF in Lyon menacingly described the Jew as the source of all French scandal and larceny:

Oh! il y aurait acheteur, au quart ou au cinquième du prix. La ‘bande noir’ Israélite, toujours à l’affût des terres du paysan français serait là, l’argent à la main, prête à acheter à des prix de faillite ou à consentir de ruineuses hypothèques. Tous les Staviskys, amis de ministres créeraient des offices, des banques, des sociétés de crédit où chacun pourrait le plus facilement du monde, s’endetter et se faire exproprier en un tour du main.⁵¹⁰

In the CDF/PSF rank and file’s antisemitic vision, Jews did this dirty work through the 200 families that controlled France, took their directives from Moscow, and were the mortal enemies of the group, who alone defended French traditions. This ‘wall of money’ was in fact a financial oligarchy, which funded France’s enemies with its profits, especially Blum

⁵⁰⁹Le ‘Goin PSF’, “Memez tra?”, Volonté Bretonne, 20 April 1938. For a similar argument, see an article protesting Jewish businesses in Volonté du Centre, 28 May 1938

⁵¹⁰Pierre Melon, “Avis à la France”, Volontaire 36, 15 April 1938.

and his Popular Front government: “Cependant, le gouvernement Blum plaça en Angleterre, il y a quelques semaines, un emprunt de 4 Milliards de francs. Vous n’en connaissez peut-être les souscripteurs: MM. Lazard Frères, Rothschild et Fils, etc.” These “deux cent rupins” were the root of all French problems, and thus implicitly their elimination could lead France out of the doldrums.⁵¹¹

The biggest danger was deemed French unawareness of what was happening, that this massive conspiracy to rob the ordinary Frenchman of his liberty and livelihood was going virtually unnoticed among the population at large. The Jews, masons, communists, and foreigners had entrenched themselves in France to attain unspoken goals, cried Marcel Aucouturier, and the French workers would be made to serve the 200 families and their partners in international finance if the revolutionary activity inspired and controlled by Jews was allowed to continue unopposed. Had not the “evil forces” of Judeo-masonry already brought the Popular Front to power, he alleged?⁵¹² The CDF/PSF were touted by Aucouturier as the only force capable of preventing this terrible fate. According to the Flambeau de l’Est, the ringleaders were foreign Jews “of fresh date”, allied with Marxists and the masons. Immediate and severe action was prescribed to rid France of the “wheelings and dealings of the Jewish race”, and it was the Jews themselves who were seen as responsible for antisemitism, a direct result of their improper behaviour. The PSF were not antisemitic, the newspaper stressed, simply “anti-Dreck-Juden”.⁵¹³

In a replication of the Faisceau portrayal, the “Dreck” were more often than not accused of being communists, a charge used as an excuse to call for immediate action against the Jews in France, foreign or native. Like Valois and d’Obrenan before them,

⁵¹¹“Parti social français”, Temps nouveaux, 5 Dec. 1936, Jean Murols, “Incohérences financières”, Le Flambeau, 6 March 1937, APP Ba 1980. Adrien Lesur, “Physionomie électorale”, Bulletin mensuel du mouvement Croix de Feu du XVIIe Arrondissement, 1 May 1936.

⁵¹²Marcel Aucouturier, Au service des Croix de Feu (Charleville: Impression des Ardennes, 1936), pp. 234-237; Marcel Aucouturier, Programmes socialistes et programmes sociaux (Imprimerie A. Chaduc, 1938-39), p. 9.

⁵¹³“Antisemitismus und Rassenhetze”, Flambeau de l’Est, 30 April 1938.

various CDF/PSF members emphasized the 'Jewish' character of Marxism and its founders in France and abroad. The 'Jewish' socialism from the East was continually compared unfavourably with the genuine French variant, typified by Proudhon. The latter, claimed one PSF author, had seen communism as a glorification of an absolutist police state in which one class would dominate another, and had hence vigorously opposed the "Judeo-Marxist-German" socialism of the communist party.⁵¹⁴ As with the Faisceau, others viewed the racial origins of Marxist theory rather than its political goals to be the determining factor for exclusion. Such was the case of an anonymous author in the Flamme Tourangelle, who claimed that Marx had created a new religion based on German-Jewish character traits.⁵¹⁵ It was this dogma, claimed P. Budan in the Flambeau de Charentes et du Périgord, that had attracted Jean Jaurés, "profondement imprégné de culture Allemande qu'il a pu s'agenouiller devant un dieu Israélite et Germain". He had fallen victim to Marxism, which was Judaic and cosmopolitan, and hence anti-Christian in character, "une conception inapplicable aux données fondamentales de notre race".⁵¹⁶

The personification of the Jew as a natural socialist was of course Léon Blum. Blum and his Popular Front ministry were made responsible for all of the ills that befell France, and also positioned as representatives of the bitter reality that Jews were slowly but surely gaining complete control of the nation and state. For CDF/PSF members, he was thus symbolic of the reasons for proposed Jewish exclusion from the nation. Although Richard Millman has argued that the PSF campaign was a political one, directed at the socialist rather than the Jew, it outlasted Blum's two ministries, ceasing only with the outbreak of the war, and was extended to Jews as a whole. Blum was not the symbol of a Jewish Marxist, but a target because he was seen to be a Marxist *Jew*, and hence a foreign element, despite

⁵¹⁴"Il y a social, socialisme, et Marxisme", Volontaire 36, 3 Feb. 1939.

⁵¹⁵"Socialisme et Marxisme", Flamme Tourangelle, 26 Nov. 1938.

⁵¹⁶P. Budan, "L'Universal echec du Marxisme", Flambeau de Charentes et du Périgord, 12 Dec. 1937. See also B.P., "La Réforme de l'État", La Flamme Vendéenne, 1 Sept. 1938.

the fact that he was a French citizen by birth, came from an old Franco-Jewish family, and was a graduate of the prestigious *École normale supérieure*.

Typical of the Blum-as-Jewish stereotype were comments made during a speech by Charles Vallin at a September 1936 meeting in which he openly joked about Blum's Judaism. To the delight of his laughing audience, Vallin quipped that "J'ai l'impression qu'un jour viendra où Monsieur Léon Blum, déjà débordé de toutes parts, sera obligé lui aussi de prendre le chemin de l'exil. Quel rocher l'accueillera? Peut-être pas Sainte Hélène...Peut-être le Mont Sinai...qui sait? (rires)". But Vallin was not content simply to stereotype, continuing in a much more hostile tone: "Eh bien que Monsieur Blum, que Monsieur Rosenfeld et les autres nous fichent la paix avec leurs grands ancêtres. Qu'ils nous laissent, nous Français, nous occuper entre nous de nos propres affaires et qu'ils se mêlent de leurs (applaudissements)".⁵¹⁷ To Vallin, the Jew clearly had no business in France, and belonged elsewhere. Others agreed, calling Blum an alien in disguise. Ybarnégaray warned an audience in Limoges to be wary of Blum and "les hommes de sa race".⁵¹⁸ To a M. D'Alloué from Bécon-les-Bruyères, this native French Jew was "M. Blum, vous venez de Luisgerg, en Prusse Orientale, votre pays d'origine et votre nom est 'Karrefoucaschtang'!"⁵¹⁹ PSF newspapers frequently displayed prominent cartoons in which Blum wore a rabbinical hat and coat, with long hair and a beard, and the peyot worn by Chassidic Jews, adorned with captions such as "Blum, alias Karfunkelstein".⁵²⁰

Such characterizations were not exclusive to the CDF/PSF. Newspapers such as Action française, Gringoire, and Je suis partout regularly wrote derisively about Blum,

⁵¹⁷CHEVS/LR 20 H, Parti social français, "Réunion du 15 Septembre 1936", Salle Blanchon-Lyon.

⁵¹⁸CHEVS/LR 46, "Conférence faite par Ybarnégaray", Limoges, 3 April 1938.

⁵¹⁹F/7/12966, "Réunion organisée par la section de Bécon-les-Bruyères du Parti social français", Salle Mermoz, 18 Feb. 1937.

⁵²⁰Citation from Liberté du Maine, Aug. 1939. See also the Volontaire 36 of 16 Dec. 1938, and La Flamme of 20 May 1938, in which Blum is seen at his desk embezzling government funds, with a Jewish star painted on the wall above a safe, beside which is a picture labeled 'papa' of a crudely drawn Jew with a bulbous nose, scraggly beard, and yamulcah. The cartoons appeared frequently in a variety of regional group publications. The nickname appeared regularly in Gringoire. See Birnbaum, pp. 139-140.

calling him "un-French" or "Le Juif Errant". His essay "On Marriage", in which he advocated sexual freedom, left him open to all manner of accusations, from pederasty and homosexuality to femininity. Even André Gide privately noted Blum's 'foreign' and 'Jewish' character traits.⁵²¹ Yet most of these commentators functioned on the fringes of the extreme-right, such as Brasillach and Céline. To be sure, Blum was regularly criticized in the popular press, but as a socialist and not as a Jew. In focusing on the latter rather than the former, the CDF/PSF rank and file allied themselves with the most extreme anti-semites of the Third Republic.

Nor was Blum their only ministerial victim. The men of the Popular Front were seen as a symbol for all that was un-French, a theme group members elaborated using a cryptobiological lexicon resembling that of the nazis. At a rally in Constantine, La Rocque compared the Front to a degenerative illness, calling them a "microbe de pus" which had attached itself to the healthy flesh of France. The CDF/PSF Provençal newspaper was even more explicit, referring to the group as the sole antidote against the Popular Front disease: "Décomposés et putrides, ils sont réfractaires à toute désinfection, et ne peuvent qu'être rejétés au néant avec toutes les précautions prises pour nous défendre contre les déjections et les excréments". Yet the author remained hopeful, happily announcing that "le chirurgien est prêt à faire le nécessaire pour une intervention indispensable et toutes les amputations nécessaires seront vite pratiquées pour sauver les partis saines du pays". French "blood poisoning" was to be averted through the ejection of the harmful foreign invaders.⁵²²

Blum was also held responsible for rekindling anti-semitic propaganda in France because he was a Jew in a position reserved for 'real' Frenchmen--the head of the government. Despite Blum's attempts to prove his French roots in a 1936 Populaire article

⁵²¹Tony Judt, The Burden of Responsibility: Blum, Camus, Aron and the French Twentieth Century (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), pp. 74-77; Birnbaum, pp.139-140.

⁵²²"L'Emouvante et noble discours de La Rocque", La Flamme, 16 July 1937; "Aurore", L'Heure française, 10 July 1937.

entitled "I am French", CDF/PSF members joined such rabid anti-semites as Pierre Gaxotte and Marcel Jouhandeau in asking how a 'camel dealer' from the Syrian desert could become Premier.⁵²³ As P. Thibaud commented in the Liberté du Maine: "Mais, il se trouve que Léon Blum, l'homme le plus représentatif du parti socialiste et du front populaire, est juif. Il se trouve de plus, que par une inconcevable maladresse, M. Blum s'est adjoint un entourage en grande majorité juif, et qui s'est révélé aussi néfaste que le chef lui-même: Jules Moch, Blumel, Boris, etc." Blum was characterized as an unwitting German agent by Thibaud, causing dissent in France at a time of crisis and playing into Hitler's hands in the process, aiding the dictator who had already sent thousands of Jewish refugees into Alsace-Lorraine to stir up trouble. Thibaud warned that the situation had become detrimental to French Jews as it was no longer possible to distinguish them from their foreign counterparts.⁵²⁴

The Jewish electorate were found equally guilty, having voted for the Popular Front en masse. In his speech to the 1936 party congress, Devaud claimed that Jews had been unjustly awarded a disproportionately high percentage of the vote despite their demographic insignificance. They had proceeded to vote as a bloc for the Popular Front solely because Blum was Jewish.⁵²⁵ They were aided in their task by foreign newspapers, such as "le New York Times, d'obédience Juive", who printed flattering stories about the French Popular Front to win international sympathy for its cause.⁵²⁶

⁵²³Judt, p.77.

⁵²⁴Ph.Thibaud, "Réflexions sur la propagande Hitlérienne", Liberté du Maine, May 1938 (2me Quinzaine). For just such a purpose, the Volonté du Centre published a list of all Jews in Popular Front ministries, obviously designed to serve as both a warning and a hint for possible future action. See "La France aux français", Volonté du Centre, 2 Jan. 1937. The article was a reprint taken from the Dec. 25 edition of the rabidly antisemitic Gringoire newspaper.

⁵²⁵Le PSF devant les problèmes..... pp. 219-224.

⁵²⁶AP/451/101, Bulletin de documentation (P.S.F.)#44, Semaine du 1er au 8 Juin (1937). This issue also referred to "Le Juif Finaly" and his resignation from the Banque de Paris et les Pays-Bas. La Rocque himself insinuated in Metz in 1938 that the Jews themselves were responsible for antisemitism, as they engaged in such un-French activities. See "Mehrere tausend Personen jubeln La Rocque in Nice und in Metz", Flambeau de l'Est, 30 April 1938. La Rocque stated that any strikers, as well as unwanted Jewish refugees, would be expunged from the nation.

The most significant difference of opinion between La Rocque and the rank and file on the issue of antisemitism came regarding the issue of nazi Germany. That two or three Jews were involved with international finance and wanted war for their own ends, La Rocque argued, was no reason to punish all Jews as Hitler had done. Rather the few who were guilty were to be reprimanded and deprived of citizenship, and La Rocque clearly stated that the Croix de Feu would never agree to the exclusion of all Jews from the French nation, especially those who were patriotic and had fought for France in 1914.⁵²⁷ He responded to Kristallnacht in November 1938 with bewilderment at the scope of the violence, asking of the reader “could you imagine France with intellectual, cultural, and racial totalitarianism?”, and emphasizing that Hitlerian racism was not the answer to French problems.⁵²⁸ Writing on the same topic in the group’s information bulletin three days later he was equally adamant, decrying the nazi plan vis-à-vis Jews as a foreign model:

Pour nous, la question ne se pose pas sur le plan ‘anti-semite’ ou ‘philosemite’, mais sur le plan strictement français. Nous considerons comme des étrangers tous ceux qui, ‘juifs’ ou ‘non-juifs’, par leur attitude, leur sentiments et leur conduite, se tiennent à l’écart de la nation, même s’ils ont pu acquerir la citoyenneté française....Mais le racisme est la divinisation d’un espèce physique. Il exclut l’assimilation, persécute les familles et détruit les édifices religieux. Il est donc à l’opposé de la civilisation chrétienne et de la tradition, de la nature française. Apres avoir formé l’un des aspects de la révolution soviétique, il est maintenant l’un des articles d’exportation que l’Allemagne voudrait nous imposer. Restons nous-mêmes.⁵²⁹

Once again, various members of the group publicly disagreed, taking the opposite position and approving of, or sympathizing with, Hitler and the nazis. True, wrote one, nazi brutality was like a return to the barbaric ages of yesterday, but one could not welcome the children of Israel with open arms, giving them leave to occupy all parts of the country, and all of its top posts. If outright violence was not the answer, then at least a severe control

⁵²⁷APP Ba Boite “Croix de Feu”, no title (detailed history of the organization), p. 252 (quote from CDLR speech).

⁵²⁸Text of CDLR speech, *Flambeau Normand*, 19 Nov. 1938.

⁵²⁹AP/451/101. “L’Agitation antisemite”, *Bulletin d’informations* #90, 22 Nov. 1938.

over immigration, a new national police force with complete independence of action and 'above compromise', and a regulation of professions by nationality were necessary.⁵³⁰ Marcel Aucouturier voiced much more approval, writing that the nazis had cleaned up their country and that German youth were again healthy, now that the Jews and communists had been relegated to their proper position: below true Germans. Algerian member Pierre-Louis Ganne went so far as to blame the Jews themselves for their fate in Germany, alleging that Hitler's actions had been a response to 'Jewish racism'.⁵³¹

The most pronounced exponents of the doctrine of the Jew-as-unassimilable and its violent corollary were to be found in the Alsatian sections. The Flambeau de l'Est, the CDF/PSF Alsatian newspaper regularly contained anti-semitic diatribes, criticizing Jewish immigrants and characterizing Jews as inferior 'economic vultures'.⁵³² During the 1936 electoral campaign for the provincial legislature, the Croix de Feu in Alsace distributed tracts about how the Jew "empoisonne ta race!", stealing from and murdering good Frenchmen. A year later, the local PSF section chiefs jointly demanded the mass expulsion of all Jews in Alsace during their annual meeting in Strasbourg. Finally, a November 1938 resolution adopted by the PSF Bureau Politique d'Alsace in Mulhouse condemned "Jewish nationalism" as a serious threat to France, and opposed any and all moves towards the nationalization of German Jews.⁵³³

By far the greatest opposition to La Rocque's conditional antisemitism came from the Algerian sections. Algerian Jews had been given French nationality and the right to vote by the Cremiaux decrees of 1870, but much local opposition to the sizable Jewish population

⁵³⁰F. Dehl, "Question juive toujours", Flambeau de Flandres-Artois-Picardie, 27 Nov. 1938. Exactly how many Jews were to be targeted and whether French citizens were to be included was not discussed.

⁵³¹Marcel Aucouturier. Au service....., pp. 109, 125-127; Pierre-Louis Ganne., "Non, la France ne verra pas son sang pour la revanche du Judaïsme internationale", La Flamme, 18 Nov. 1938.

⁵³²Sam Goodfellow, Between the Swastika and the Cross of Lorraine (Dekalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1999), pp. 145-146.

⁵³³Claude Mislin, "Les Croix de Feu et le Parti social français en Alsace (1930-1939)", Diplôme d'IED, Institut d'Études Politiques de Strasbourg, 1981-82, pp. 33-35.

and its perceived wealth remained. Certain historians, led by Richard Millman, minimize the antisemitic element within the local CDF/PSF, arguing that any actions against Algerian Jews were the work of a minority within the group. Millman lists Devaud's wife Marcelle, Grand Rabbin Maurice Eisenbeth, Lucien Bensimon in Constantine, and M.Lévy in Oran. Eisenbeth, however, left the group in 1932, shortly after the late 1931 establishment of the local chapters by Paul Chopine. The list is anything but impressive, and some critics have speculated that Millman has deliberately tried to minimize antisemitic sentiment among all interwar ligues, and especially the CDF/PSF.⁵³⁴ Certainly the level of hatred revealed in the writings of local members was intense and pervasive, and the regularity and prioritization of antisemitism within them demands further explanation. The sections were not composed of 'aristocratic' anti-semites who simply did not associate with Jews, or insulted them in a stereotypical fashion. Rather violence, combined with calls for immediate and total exclusion, were encouraged on a regular basis within the Algerian CDF/PSF ranks.

Despite the fact that La Rocque had gone to Constantine in May 1938 to restate publicly the official position that the Croix de Feu was inter-confessional and that all who served France deserved citizenship and a place in the French nation, his words went unheeded.⁵³⁵ Jews were declared homogeneous, voting with pro-Semitic prejudice for the parties of disorder and treason on the basis of each candidate's race⁵³⁶ Bernard Lacache's LICA, for instance, was deemed the worst of the Jewish 'racists', seen as the largest ally of Blum, the Popular Front, and their financiers such as "Rothschild dit Mandel". The LICA

⁵³⁴ Millman, *La Question juive*...., pp. 192-195, and also "Les Croix de Feu et l'antisemitisme", pp. 54-56. For a criticism of his thesis, see Vicki Caron, "The Antisemitic Revival in France in the 1930's: The Socioeconomic Dimension Reconsidered", *The Journal of Modern History*, 70 (March 1998), p. 26.

⁵³⁵CHEVS/LR 38, April 17 CDLR speech in *Bulletin du mouvement Croix de Feu en Algérie*, 15 May 1938. This same issue contained an antisemitic diatribe on the second page. La Rocque did voice his support for the segregation of Algerian Jewry, for their own protection. See *La Flamme*, 10 Feb. 1938. As William Irvine notes, however, his ambiguity seemed to offer support to the boycott of Jewish businesses. See William D. Irvine, "Fascism in France and the Strange Case of the Croix de Feu", *Journal of Modern History*, 63 (1991), pp. 292-293.

⁵³⁶Pierre-Louis Ganne, "Un dernier mot sur la question juive", *La Flamme*, 1 Aug. 1937.

were variously accused of imitating Hitlerian methods, of accusing the CDF/PSF of antisemitism on orders from Moscow, and of being in league with international finance as controlled by “MM. Baruch, Kuhn, Loebe et co. de New York et leurs collègues et coreligionnaires de Londres et d’Amsterdam”.⁵³⁷

Jews were further seen by the Algerian wing as responsible for inspiring separatist sentiments among the indigenous Muslims, having first cemented an alliance with their communist servants and local independence movements. According to one local PSF writer, Jewish support for the separatists was inextricably linked to the preservation of their wealth and exclusive status in Algeria. All cries of “a bas les Juifs” and “vive Hitler” heard at rallies were a mere recognition of these activities, which provided ample proof that the Jew was the enemy of France.⁵³⁸ To encourage their suppression, La Flamme published the names and addresses of Jewish factory owners who supposedly abused and underpaid their workers, calling them ‘criminals’. The newspaper also demanded that Premier Édouard Daladier dissolve the ‘triple international’ of Jews, masons, and communists, implying that the Jews, and not the country’s elected leader, were actually in charge. Finally, they published stories of Jewish-communist activity in Algeria, designed to demonstrate the extent of the ‘problem’, such as the story of a local professor badgered by Marxist-Jewish groups who sang the Internationale in the classroom, part of a ‘witch-hunt’ which led to the instructor’s dismissal.⁵³⁹

⁵³⁷“Nous souhaitons malheur à L’Angleterre”, La Flamme, 22 April 1938; “Les racistes à l’action”, La Flamme, 29 April 1938; Pierre-Louis Ganne, “Sommes-nous encore en démocratie?”, La Flamme, 3 June 1938; Pierre-Louis Ganne, “Logique”, La Flamme, 25 Nov. 1938; La Flamme, 22 Dec. 1938. For similar attacks against American Hebrew magazine and Alger républicain see “Ce qu’il y a derrière la course à l’alliance Russe”, La Flamme, 16 June 1939; “Heureux les imbéciles”, La Flamme, 20 Jan. 1939.

⁵³⁸Maviel, “Le problème Algérien”, L’Heure française, 10 July 1937.

⁵³⁹“Un savoureux manifeste”, La Flamme, 22 April 1938. The article was a reprint of an anti-semitic tract from “Les Ouvriers espadrilleurs” which had been distributed in Oran; Maxence, “Faux départ”, La Flamme, 2 Dec. 1938; “L’Incroyable odyssee d’un professeur français poursuivi par la vindicte de communautés juives”, La Flamme, 19 March 1938.

The local sections, moreover, did more than talk. While the Paris Croix de Feu leaders were taking part in ceremonies at the Rue de la Victoire synagogue with Rabbin Kaplan, the Algerian sections participated in street actions against local Jews. During the pogrom of August 5, 1934 in Constantine which culminated in 25 dead, 26 injured, and 200 stores destroyed and pillaged, Croix de Feu sections incited the crowd and then watched the action unfold against local Jews.⁵⁴⁰ Furthermore, following the electoral victory of Blum and the Popular Front in 1936, Croix de Feu deputies in Constantine called for violence and pogroms against Jews, and the local leadership in Oran collaborated with the fascist Parti populaire français in antisemitic activity.⁵⁴¹ Such excursions were graphically described by a member in his memoirs:

Contre les emblèmes à tête de mort se dressa le drapeau tricolore chargé des trois flèches, du bonnet rouge et de faucille et du marteau. Il pleuvait sur la Temple. Toutes les tripes [sic] 'vraiment republicaine' frémirent et s'unirent pour la lutte sous le signe maçonnique et fortement épaulés par la Légion des métèques de tous puils et les troupes de choc des aspirants moujiks. Et des Juifs, qui n'en ratent pas une.⁵⁴²

There was clearly a deep chasm between the views of La Rocque and those of his party. The Croix de Feu leader consistently made clear the group's position of non-violence towards Jews. Nor did he distinguish between foreign Jews and other immigrants; all French citizens were French, and all foreigners were foreigners, who (as shall be seen below) were viewed as a threat regardless of race. Yet many within the group, including certain members of the inner circle, such as Vallin, Ybarnégaray, and Devaud made no such distinctions. Worse still, the further afield one looked, the more antisemitism and calls for violence against Jews flourished. Much like the Faisceau, there were multiple positions in the group, from selective exclusion to outright elimination.

⁵⁴⁰CHEVS/LR 33, General notes, "Affaire du Constantine, Aout 1934".

⁵⁴¹Michael Ansky, *Les Juifs d'Algérie: du décret Crémiaux à la Libération* (Paris: Éditions du Centre de documentation juive contemporain, 1950), p. 71.

⁵⁴²CHEVS/LR 34, "Sous l'insigne des Croix de Feu: Alger 1930-1945", signature illegible.

2.

Antisemitism was but one facet of the politics of exclusion adopted by the Faisceau and CDF/PSF. The freemasons were also derided as malevolent, a secret society controlling the levers of power from behind the scenes, actively working against the national interest. Although they agreed that the masons constituted a dire threat to France, however, the remedies proscribed by the two groups greatly differed. Members of the Faisceau, including Valois himself, argued for selective expulsion, that those unwilling to embrace the nation and reject their affiliation with the lodges would be banished. The CDF/PSF, by contrast, were unanimous in declaring that no exceptions could be made. Only through the outright elimination of the masonic cabal could national health be restored.

On this last point in particular the CDF/PSF were quite different from the Faisceau. To begin with, certain Faisceau members were quite selective regarding the masons. To Jacques Arthuys, Valois's right-hand man, some masons were seen as socially acceptable, especially if they were war veterans, a notion that placed him in the same position that La Rocque had taken regarding the Jews. Arthuys saw the masonic *modus operandi* as the problem, that they were at heart a secret international organization, anti-religious to boot, and "detestable" to all who possessed a true French heart and spirit.⁵⁴³ Yet the question was one of loyalty, and if the individual mason chose France over his order, he presented no apparent danger to the nation. The notion of the mason as a 'potential' enemy, however, was omnipresent within the group. In February 1926, the group's newspaper warned readers that the masonic lodges and the Ligue des droits de l'homme (seen as one of the principal arms of the French masonic movement), attempting to have the constitution changed in order to outlaw the movement, were plotting against fascism in France.⁵⁴⁴ Hence one group tract referred to the lodges as "la dictature occulte des bas tripoleurs".⁵⁴⁵

⁵⁴³Jacques Arthuys. "Le Faisceau, la Franc-Maçonnerie, et le 'Front républicain'", *NS*, 27 Dec. 1925.

⁵⁴⁴"L'Offensive contre le fascisme", *NS*, 5 Feb. 1926.

⁵⁴⁵F/7/13210, Tract-"Tu n'est pas Communiste? Non, mon camarade tu n'est pas Communiste".

The most virulent anti-mason in the group was Hubert Bourgin, whose arguments were frequently violent and reactionary. Bourgin warned Nouveau Siècle readers not to underestimate the masonic danger to France. He presented the lodges as part of a tangled web of intrigue containing agents in every corner of the country, including many who were married to members. To Bourgin, it was thus not a wonder that the Great Lodge spoke out against dictatorship; it had already forged a masonic one in France!⁵⁴⁶ Bourgin also stressed that the masons were involved in government, the political parties and parliamentary committees, and held key administrative posts, not to mention their control of the press, high finance, and the banks. The eight hour law had been a masonic creation, pushed through by their CGT agents, as had the war against Catholicism in France, the victory of the Cartel des Gauches, and the fall of the franc. Even the Radical party was seen by Bourgin to be in their pockets.⁵⁴⁷ The lodges hand-picked their emissaries, mediocre men who would pose no challenge to their order. They thus violently opposed the fascist elites, the last bastion of the Patrie, who alone in France possessed the will and ability to stop the masonic terror.

The entire democratic apparatus was seen by Bourgin to be a masonic plot: “Le jeu politique de la démocratie échappe aux doctrinaires et aux contemplatifs, aux hommes d’étude et de réflexion, parce qu’il leur manque le secret. Secret de société secrète: le jeu politique est aux mains de la franc-maçonnerie”. Alongside the revolutionary ideology of socialism, democracy as a political doctrine enabled the “occult oligarchy” of freemasonry to ensure the dominance of “bourgeois Machiavellianism”, a doctrine expounded in government, the constitution, and especially in the school system.⁵⁴⁸ The latter case was especially dangerous, argued Bourgin, as it allowed for the creation of a uniform curriculum throughout France, set by masons themselves through the auspices of their “puppet

⁵⁴⁶Hubert Bourgin, “La Franc-Maçonnerie et la dictature”, NS, 26 Feb. 1926.

⁵⁴⁷Hubert Bourgin, “Reims”, NS, 5 July 1926; “Le Discours de Pérouse et la doctrine fasciste”, NS, 11 Oct. 1926.

⁵⁴⁸Hubert Bourgin, Cinquante ans d’expérience démocratique (Paris: Nouvelle Librairie Nationale, 1925), pp. 299-301. What exactly was meant by this term was never explained by the author.

ministers” in government. Bourgin was especially fearful of the move by the Radical-led Cartel des Gauches government from 1924 onwards towards the establishment of the ‘école unique’, in which all schools would be made to follow strictly republican guidelines and standards. He (and many others on the right) believed this to be the first step towards a dismantling of Catholic education, a maneuver which could only strengthen the power of the lodges over the church. This action would be further supported by new ‘bachelor’ taxes on fathers with fewer than two children, claimed Bourgin, with the proceeds distributed to masonic allies and friends in parliament, so that a steady stream of young minds would be pedagogically driven into masonic hands.⁵⁴⁹

Valois agreed that the masons were mobilizing opinion against the fledgling fascist movement, through their political emissaries in the Cartel des Gauches and international finance. He pointed to the ‘masonic’ assassination attempt against Mussolini in 1926, an action taken to restore the citizenship and finances of expelled Italian masons, as proof. Valois saw the masons and international finance as working in tandem to keep the French parliamentary apparatus running, as it was through this foundation that they effectively ruled France. His writings portrayed masonic intervention everywhere, from the police who were supposedly searching for Italian fascist agents in France in order to crush the movement, to the accusations of republican sympathy leveled against the Faisceau by Action française.⁵⁵⁰

Other members were equally adamant about masonic crimes perpetuated against the French nation. Philippe Barrès remarked at a May 1926 meeting that the masons, whom he accused of owning and operating the entire parliamentary system, had decided behind closed lodge doors to return Herriot to power, negotiating this deal with the President

⁵⁴⁹Hubert Bourgin, “L’Ecole unique et le reste, aux ordres de la Franc-Maçonnerie”, *NS*, 15 Oct. 1925; John E. Talbott, *The Politics of Educational Reform in France* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969), Chapter 3, esp. pp. 65-70

⁵⁵⁰Georges Valois, “La Finance internationale, la Franc-Maçonnerie, et le fascisme”, *NS*, 9 Nov. 1926; Georges Valois, “Le Coup manqué de la finance internationale et de la Franc-Maçonnerie”, *NS*, 10 Nov. 1926.

personally.⁵⁵¹ As usual, the most conspicuous exponent of exclusionary thinking was d'Obrenan, who insisted that such acts were perpetuated for monetary reward and the retention of positions of power: "Tyrans de la société, cheminant d'étape en étape sans vision nette d'un but suprême, jonglant avec les grands mots et victimes des logomachies qu'ils créent eux-mêmes, les parlementaires habilent leurs calculs secrets d'oripeaux brillants et s'appliquent à paraître sincères".⁵⁵²

On the whole, there was a certain level of disagreement concerning the masons within the leadership of the Faisceau, with Arthuys indicating that the masons could potentially find a place in the new nation, if they severed all ties with the lodges, while Bourgin, Barrès, and D'Obrenan adopted less compromising stances. Such differences of opinion were not to be found within the CDF/PSF, where both leadership and rank and file viewed the masons as unsalvageable national enemies. They were positioned as partners of the communists, foreigners and—in the eyes of some members—the Jews, in a conspiracy to rule France. Accordingly, the lodges were alleged to secretly control the centrist and leftist political parties, French and international finance, and the banks, all for the purposes of implementing their own political machinations and retaining power. Only one remedy was proposed to the masonic question by the CDF/PSF: Utter exclusion.

Throughout their history, La Rocque took action to ensure that the group was free of any masonic influence. He urged section leaders and the rank and file to raise the issue if fellow members were suspected of being masons. Furthermore, he ordered that all potential members sign a statement approving of the Croix de Feu decision to suppress them.⁵⁵³ The group also had links to prominent anti-masonic groups, counting among its sympathizers

⁵⁵¹F/7/13208, note of 15 May 1926.

⁵⁵²D'Obrenan, p. 115

⁵⁵³Philippe Rudaux, *Les Croix de Feu et le PSE* (Paris: Éditions France-Empire, 1967), p. 125.

Dr. Cousin from the Union anti-maçonnique de France, and Henri de Kerellis, the virulently anti-masonic editor-in-chief of the Echo de Paris newspaper.⁵⁵⁴

To La Rocque, the masons were an 'occult' group, a secret society who practiced dark liturgical rites. They alone were held responsible for the division of France into political parties, and for the continuous corruption of honest Frenchmen: "Tout le reste de leur activité n'est que procédés, combinaisons, conspirations tendant vers leurs fins, ou infiltrations et provocations cherchant à ridiculiser et à lancer sur de fausses pistes les braves gens dressés contre leurs essais de basse dictature". All of this activity was directed by hidden 'camouflage' organizations which together formed a "cabale quasi-démonique", led by high-ranking members of the government and French finance and banking. As the group was a cult like any other, membership was for life; and upon entering, the member was forbidden to leave.⁵⁵⁵

More importantly, the masons continued to dominate French political life. CDF/PSF members variously ascribed the 1870 defeat at Sedan, the rise of Gambetta, the Dreyfus Affair, and setbacks during the Great War to masonic meddling. Deemed the "forces of evil" by the group press, they were accused of exerting absolute political control from behind the scenes.⁵⁵⁶ This phenomenon was made more dangerous by the fact that the masons were virulently anti-French. The group saw the masons as loyal only to their order,

⁵⁵⁴Henry Coston, Partis, journaux et hommes politiques d'hier et aujourd'hui, Special edition of "Lectures Françaises", Dec. 1960, p. 70 (note).

⁵⁵⁵La Rocque, "Cabale sanglante", Le Flambeau, 13 April 1935.

⁵⁵⁶"L'Anti-France", Flambeau Morbihannais, 5 June 1934; "Appel aux intellectuels", Volontaire de l'Ouest, Nov. 1936; F/7/12965, no title, 16 March 1936; AP/451/82, propaganda poster. The latter proclaimed "La République des Camarades; Déclaration du Consent du Grand Orient: Au Dessus des Gouvernements qui Passent la Maçonnerie Armature de la République Reste....", accompanied by a graphic which portrayed lady liberty in chains. Certain members even argued that the lodges represented a double-threat; that they had divided into two complementary sections, the Jewish-Marxist and the Parliamentary-Opportunistic, to better designate specific roles in their grand plan. See P. Budan, "La France Judéo-Maçonnique, où le métèque est roi", Flambeau de Charentes et du Périgord, 12 June 1938.

thus making the state and its laws a secondary priority to any lodge directives, in direct contravention of CDF/PSF nationalist principles.⁵⁵⁷

Thus the entire Republican apparatus was seen as a masonic construction in need of immediate renovation, including government administration, the professional associations, and the municipal legislative assemblies. Speaking at a 1935 rally, Centraux member Pierre Loyer saw the imprint of the masons in almost every ministry and government initiative. Lodge member Ludovic-Oscar Frossard had run the ministry of Labour, and masons covertly controlled social insurance and the Mutualité. Louis Doignon, Grand-Master of the Grand Loge de France in 1933 and director of the Interdepartmental Service for Social Insurance in Seine-et-Oise was upheld as another example of masonic governmental penetration.

Furthermore, asserted Loyer, the masons controlled the working class through their socialist partners. The masons pretended to befriend the worker through this alliance, he warned, but were in reality working towards the establishment of state-run capitalism, to enslave the people as Stalin had done in Russia. Thankfully a new scandal was discovered almost every day--Stavisky, Oustric, Hanau and dozens more corrupt enterprises aimed at making money for the lodges--which demonstrated the extent of the public menace. Loyer warned that masonic corruption and governmental control would continue unabated until France as a whole took firm action:

Avec la complicité de maçons en place dans les ministères, et en abusent, par eux, l'autorité de l'État, monter une immense et puissante institution privée, mais officieusement soutenue par la puissance publique. Mettre aux 'leviers' de cette institution quelques bons amis sûrs et faire souscrire en grand le bon public confiant. Tenir ainsi, par leurs propres souscriptions, toute une catégorie des citoyens, par exemple, les anciens combattants, que l'on détourne ainsi des organisations honnêtes qu'ils avaient constituées eux-mêmes et faire de la sorte d'une pierre deux coups: gagner des électeurs, remplir les caisses noires et les poches de camarades.

⁵⁵⁷Res Publica, "Un force occulte: La Franc-Maçonnerie", *Volonté du Centre*, 11 Dec. 1937; De Peyrecave, "L'Ennemi public #1", *La Flamme*, 16 Dec. 1938.

Loyer concluded by urging resistance, stating that the Croix de Feu would bar the road to the establishment of Stalinist statism in France by the “foyer de pestilence” and their socialist servants.⁵⁵⁸

Various group members adopted Loyer’s analysis, applying it to different levels of bureaucracy and government. René Vallande, for example, informed readers of Le Flambeau that the masons were attempting to gain control of Algeria, having added new Inspector-General F. Berthoin to their list of men in the colonies, which included the Minister of the Interior, and the Governor-General and Secretary-General of Algeria, who had been given the mission of breaking apart the empire.⁵⁵⁹ La Rocque also agreed with Loyer’s position, telling the newspaper Candide in 1934 that the masons were the “enemies of order”, who took advantage of weak governments to worm their way into the corridors of power.⁵⁶⁰ The Croix de Feu elite stood opposite the parliamentary anarchy perpetuated by the masons and their corrupt men and institutions. Backed by a physical and moral force capable of creating a “moral atmosphere” which men of all stripes would follow, the group would single-handedly expose and drive out this false republic⁵⁶¹

The main arm of masonic political control was seen to be the Radical party. According to the CDF/PSF, the radicals were the means through which the masons dominated politics, enabling a despotism of the bourgeoisie and the financiers to take hold. Radical Premiers Chautemps and Sarraut were presented as examples of wolfish masons in sheepish radical clothing. The latter was seen as especially Janus-faced, having been the beneficiary of a successful campaign to have Laval removed from office, and having been responsible for

⁵⁵⁸CHEVS/LR 36, Tract-Pierre Loyer (Ingénieur des Arts et des Manufactures), Vue d’ensemble sur la politique intérieure et extérieure. Conférence fait le 23 Novembre 1935 à la réunion des membres de l’union des Croix de Feu-Centraux, pp. 3-8.

⁵⁵⁹René Vallande, “Colonies”, Le Flambeau, 29 June 1935. That so illogical an act should occur, in this case the destruction of the French empire at masonic hands for no apparent gain, was never discussed.

⁵⁶⁰CHEVS/LR 11 VI A 2, Georges Blond, “Une demi-heure avec le Colonel de la Rocque”, Candide, 27 Dec. 1934.

⁵⁶¹BN-Lb 57 16185, Tractes et documents, “Volontaires nationaux: note du secretariat général”. No date given, but Croix de Feu, not PSF.

Hitler's reoccupation of the Rhineland and the rise of the Popular Front while acting on masonic orders.⁵⁶² Nor was Sarraut exclusively to blame: According to the group's monthly bulletin, the entire party had followed their masonic masters into an alliance with socialism and communism by entering the Front Commun/Populaire. Their democratic and anti-Catholic agenda was further taken as an example of masonic duplicity. Volmar, writing in the Flamme Tourangelle, called the Radicals "ces assassins haut placés", who used laic education and universal suffrage to retain power over the "Troisième République Maçonnique". He reminded the reader that it was the radicals who were responsible for the death of religion in France, at the behest of the lodges. The radicals were also believed to have been acting on masonic orders when they voted for the dissolution of the ligues in 1936, and later that year when they failed to oppose the wildcat strikes mobilized to topple the existing government.⁵⁶³

The final area of perceived masonic activity was financial, involving their supposed use of international finance to fund their efforts in France. Where Valois and the Faisceau had seen Jews as the principle beneficiary of international financial plotting, the CDF/PSF accused the lodges of committing treason for such greedy motives. Marcel Aucouturier railed at Jewish-masonic international financiers who attempted to ruin the franc, so that the ensuing chaos would act as a cover for the masonic exploitation of France for personal profit.⁵⁶⁴ La Rocque agreed, calling for the dissolution of the 'masonic-led' Trust companies whose actions were based exclusively on personal interest, rather than the well-being of the nation as a whole.⁵⁶⁵

⁵⁶²AP/451/102, Tract-Marcel Aucouturier, Programme du Parti social français (Ardennes: Imprimerie P. Anciaux et co., 1938); Aucouturier, Programme sociale...., p. 8; F/7/12965, memo of 16 March 1936, speech by M.Leonardi.

⁵⁶³CHEVS LR 11 VI A 1, "Esprit social", Bulletin mensuel du mouvement Croix de Feu, 1 Feb. 1936; Volmar, "L'Orthodoxie du râtelier", Flamme Tourangelle, 1 July 1939; Volmar, "La Foi laïque", Flamme Tourangelle, 5 Aug. 1939; La Nouvelle tactique de la Franc-Maçonnerie", La Flamme, 1 Nov. 1936. The author of the latter article implies that the Radicals were behind the strike initiative.

⁵⁶⁴Aucouturier, Au service des Croix de Feu, pp. 83-85, 94

⁵⁶⁵La Rocque, "Trusts", Le Flambeau, 18 July 1936.

CDF/PSF members believed that the chosen vehicle for masonic enrichment was global conflict, a first step towards world revolution in which the masons would emerge as the dominant world power. Thus La Rocque saw them as responsible for all French diplomatic failures from 1918 onwards, including the major treaties. The masons and Bolsheviks wanted to spark civil war in France, he argued, resulting in a violent dictatorship. Faulty diplomacy was merely the first step.⁵⁶⁶ Others pointed to the crisis-ridden international politics of the day, blaming the lodges for French diplomatic blunders and military weakness. Pozzo di Borgo, for example, stated that the Franco-Soviet pact and French lack of support for Mussolini's Ethiopian campaign had masonic fingerprints all over them, and claimed that the ensuing conflicts would deflect attention from masonic fiscal corruption.⁵⁶⁷ Masons were also variously seen as responsible for conscientious objection during the Great War, the evacuation of the Rhine, the Spanish civil war, and the 1938-39 fight to save 'masonic Czechoslovakia'. Czech leaders Benes and Masaryk were called the 'sentinels of masonry in Central Europe', aided by the 'Masonic League of Nations' whose disarmament plan had germinated within the lodges.⁵⁶⁸

Because they alone possessed the truth and sought to dismantle the French masonic apparatus, the CDF/PSF believed themselves to be the victims of masonic persecution. The group frequently accused the masons of using the Front Commun/Populaire and the Ligue des droits de l'homme to attack them, the true France, in order to distract the nation from their activities.⁵⁶⁹ La Rocque specifically referred to the government inquiry into the events

⁵⁶⁶BN, Tract-"Mouvement Croix de Feu: Section de Saint Gaudens", no date; AP/451/104, "Note du Président-Général", 2 Jan. 1933.

⁵⁶⁷F/7/12965, note of 18 March 1936. Loyer came to the same conclusions, in *Vue d'ensemble*, p. 7. Before his involvement with the CDF/PSF, Di Borgo was a benefactor of Drumont's virulently antisemitic, anti-masonic, and xenophobic *Libre parole* newspaper. See Frederick Bust, *The Pope of Antisemitism: The Career and Legacy of Edouard-Adolphe Drumont* (Lanham: University Press of America, 1986), p. 171.

⁵⁶⁸F/7/12965, note of 2 June 1934, Ybarnégaray speaking; "Nouvel assaut, nouvelle folie", *Volonté Bretonne*, 5 Feb. 1939; Loyer, pp. 13-16.

⁵⁶⁹Anonymous Tract-*Pourquoi nous sommes devenus Croix de Feu*, 1934, pp. 6-7. See also "L'Anti-France", *Flambeau Morbihannais*, June 5, 1934; "Truelle et faucille", *Le Flambeau*, 22 June 1935;

of the infamous night of 6 February 1934 as proof of this conspiracy, arguing that it had been a failed masonic smear campaign, that “les parasites, les inutiles ont gaspillé leurs frais occultes, leurs fonds secrets: La Rocque, traître à la chose publique, n’a pas été décété d’accusation”.⁵⁷⁰ The CDF/PSF were presented as the only barrier between the nation and masonic-inspired violence.

La Rocque’s solution to the ‘feodalités parasites’ of French masonry was simple: As subversive elements within the nation they were to be systematically eliminated in order to implement ‘La France française’, categorized as undeserving of the benefits accorded to citizens and forcefully expelled.⁵⁷¹ Nor was this exclusion to be a peaceful process. In a 1935 note to readers of the group’s newspaper, La Rocque urged peasants to “éliminer sans pitié les influences extérieures, surtout celles de la politique et de la franc-maçonnerie”.⁵⁷² Ybarnégaray was equally ruthless, telling a crowd that “nous voulons le nettoyage de tout cette boue, la liquidation de tous les scandales et la mort de la maçonnerie”. The language used by both men clearly indicated that the mere dissolution of the lodges was considered insufficient; a violent ejection of the ‘occult’ order was the minimum action foreseen. Le Flambeau set the tone in October 1935, when the front page carried a photograph of lodge brothers with a caption proudly proclaiming the actions of Turkish Pasha Ismet, who had dissolved the lodges in his country and confiscated the

La Rocque, “Prodromes”, Le Flambeau, 12 Oct. 1935; La Rocque, “Les Éceuille et Narcisse”, Petit journal, 3 Nov. 1937. For a slightly outlandish variant, see F/7/14817, Minister of the Interior/Direction Générale de la Sureté Nationale, 1ère Brigade Régionale de Police Mobile #393, “Note”, 30 Jan. 1937. The document is a report of a PSF meeting in Seine-et-Oise where the President of the local committee stated that government persecution directed at the PSF was due to pressure from the masonic lodges, who were supplied with guns and cars by Swiss members to aid the French masonic cause.

⁵⁷⁰La Rocque, “Hebdomanaire”, Le Flambeau, 2 March 1935.

⁵⁷¹See for example F/7/12965, Tract-Travail, paix, liberté, March 1936; La Rocque, “Élections”, Le Flambeau, 11 May 1935; CHEVS LR 9 D, CDLR letter of 12 June 1935, recipient unknown.

⁵⁷²Jean Desquerets, “Esprit rural et esprit Croix de Feu”, Le Flambeau, 12 Oct. 1935. The note appears as a postscript to Desquerets’s article. See also CHEVS/LR 6 II B 1, “Fiche ‘a’ et ‘b’: Conditions minimum d’appui du mouvement Croix de Feu”, April 1932. This information sheet was sent out to potential sympathizers; Le Flambeau, 19 Oct. 1935, text of a letter sent to each senatorial candidate.

personal property of all members. The caption ended with an ominous threat: "Un bel exemple à suivre....A qui le tour?"⁵⁷³

Various plans were put forward as solutions to the 'masonic question'. Marcel Aucouturier bluntly stated that the new CDF/PSF government would forbid all masons, and any socialists, communists, or members of international finance from sitting in the chamber. This would effectively remove all corrupt influences from the state, ensuring that the general interest would become the sole national priority. Writing under the pseudonym of Jean d'Ardenes, Edouard Barrachin responded to a local call for the dissolution of the rightist ligues with a counterproposal for the complete suppression of the masons and their 'lackeys' in the Ligue des droits de l'homme, the trade unions, and the Popular Front. La Rocque further demanded a reconstitution of the press, which he accused of being mason-controlled and funded, and as such completely biased and compromised. Transforming these words into action, the Croix de Feu parliamentary contingent joined a December 1935 attempt to pass a bill weakening the powers of the masonic lodges.⁵⁷⁴

The group was thus in complete agreement, from leadership to rank and file, that the masons represented a serious threat to the nation and the state, and that exclusion was the only antidote. Unlike the group's position vis-à-vis the Jews, there was no fragmentation or dissent regarding the masons, and La Rocque's dictum that they were all unsalvageable foreigners who engendered French weakness went unchallenged. Nor were there ideological divisions as had existed regarding antisemitism, for the group's anti-masonic doctrine lacked any concept of the 'good' mason, and the language used by both the leadership and rank and file was extraordinarily violent.

⁵⁷³AN/F7/12963, "Conférence de M. Ybarnégary sur 'quelques vérités'", 2 June 1934; "Les loges sont dissoutes....", *Le Flambeau*, 30 Oct. 1935.

⁵⁷⁴Marcel Aucouturier, *Au service....*, pp. 174/179; CHEVS/LR 34, Jean d'Ardenes (Barrachin), "Cause et effet", *Chronique Ardennaise*, 7 Nov. 1935; La Rocque, "Pour le peuple, par le peuple", supplement to *Le Flambeau*, 11 April 1936.

In rejecting masonic participation in their proposed nation, the group was also in complete agreement with the Faisceau. Like the CDF/PSF, the Faisceau supported the exclusion of the masons, seen to be actively working against the interests of the nation. Their effective control of France was a stumbling block to be overcome by the advent of the national revolution, in which they were to play no part. However, even Hubert Bourgin did not go as far as La Rocque and the CDF/PSF, instead arguing that those who were honest but deluded could remain in the nation. Only those who had willfully acted against the national interest would be excised: “Mais ceux qui n’ont cherché, et trouvé, dans la franc-maçonnerie, que le moyen de satisfaire des intérêts vulgaires ou des ambitions tyranniques, ceux-là, comme tous les profiteurs, comme tous les mercantis, n’obtiendront pas de grâce devant elle”.⁵⁷⁵

3.

One further category of undesirables existed in the doctrine of both the Faisceau and the CDF/PSF: the foreigner. Both groups, fearing the growing numbers of supposedly ‘un-French’ elements immigrating to France each year, wrote extensively on the issue. Immigrants were seen to be taking advantage of French hospitality, and in many cases using France as a base for their own nefarious (often communist) activities. Many members of both groups adopted a much more virulent position, based on racial stereotyping, advocating violent solutions to eradicate foreigners from the nation. As with freemasonry, the answer was to be the complete and utter exclusion of all but a small fraction of the immigrant population who were perceived to be loyal and law-abiding.

The Faisceau were active during a lull in French anti-semitic and anti-foreigner sentiment. The fin de siècle divisions of Panama and Dreyfus, along with their widely recognized purveyors such as Edouard Drumont and Maurice Barrès, were not replicated in

⁵⁷⁵Hubert Bourgin, “La Franc-Maçonnerie et la dictature”, *NS*, 26 Feb. 1926.

the nineteen twenties. Only the venerable Charles Maurras and his Action française cohorts still lectured the public about the dangers of 'l'anti-France'. Immigration had not ground to a halt, however. With one-and-a-half million war dead, the French government reached out to foreign labour—especially skilled workers—to fill the void. The low French birthrate, combined with the need for massive reconstruction of regions razed during the war and burgeoning heavy industries, gave the country little choice in the matter. The Polish miners and Italian agricultural workers who arrived received a fairly warm welcome, and by 1926 there were 2 498 230 foreigners living on French soil, representing 6.1% of the population, and settling mostly in the Eastern half of France.⁵⁷⁶ Although public opinion was far from unanimous in accepting the newcomers, most proposed concerns were minor ones. French doctors, notoriously right-wing politically and socially, worried about disease and delinquency rates among foreigners.⁵⁷⁷ Likewise economic factors, such as unemployment due to the fall of the franc in the mid-twenties, precipitated xenophobic sentiment. Such outbursts were brief, however, and produced no sustained action or polemic against foreigners.

The Faisceau were not among those extending their hand to the newcomers. Yet what set them apart from more casual xenophobes in nineteen-twenties France was the harshness with which they condemned foreigners. Valois and his colleagues mobilized certain common arguments, but added an extreme and often violent critique of their own, more Action française racialism than socio-economic complaint. Although not adopting pronatalist sentiments per se, various members criticized what they perceived to be governmental irresponsibility concerning immigration policy. More conservative members declared the 'invasion' of foreign workers to be a consequence of a low birthrate and a lack of proper hygiene. Others argued that women should be allowed to work in the places of

⁵⁷⁶Marrus and Paxton, p. 35., Ralph Schor, *L'Opinion française et les étrangers* (Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 1985), p. 34, 40.

⁵⁷⁷Schor, pp. 415-435.

those who had fallen on the battlefield.⁵⁷⁸ All agreed, however, that foreigners were not welcome in France, and that the new fascist state would take immediate and severe action to eliminate their presence. Their xenophobia was not a socio-economic concern about immigrants taking jobs away from Frenchmen. Rather the Faisceau critique was exclusively racial: The foreigners were an invading horde of inferior stock, whose goal was the colonization and destruction of France.

Contrary to their public disavowal of antisemitism, no member of the Faisceau took a similar stance against xenophobia, with the brief exception of Gaëton Bernöville who wrote in July 1927 that Catholicism opposed such attitudes.⁵⁷⁹ The rest of the group emphatically disagreed with such sentiments. Hubert Bourgin warned that France was in disarray due to a lack of recognition from the newcomers of “l’héritage paternel et maternel”. There were foreigners everywhere in France, warned Bourgin, who were nothing but parasites and “carnassiers”. “Sommes-nous encore chez-nous?” he groaned. In a book chapter entitled “The Garbage”, Bourgin placed “les métèques” as first among the rubbish: Those who could or would not assimilate, and those who came to France only to make money. They gave nothing back to the country, were corrupt and thieving, and never worked, seeing French cities as places only for the pursuit of decadent pleasures. Claiming that most were parasites, Bourgin allotted them no place in the French ‘maison’.⁵⁸⁰

The group newspaper frequently attacked what it considered to be an overly lax state policy on immigration. An unsigned July 1926 article criticized the Paris chief of police for not keeping exact data on the whereabouts of foreigners in the capital, including the number of immigrants residing in the city, their place of origin, and their activities. Most of them, the author surmised, were in France for the sole purpose of starting a civil war, and the

⁵⁷⁸See Chapter Four.

⁵⁷⁹Gaëton Bernöville, “Nègres et civilisation”, *NS*, 3 July 1927.

⁵⁸⁰Hubert Bourgin, *Les Pierres de la maison* (Paris: Nouvelle Librairie Nationale, 1926), p. 8, 156-157.

article closed with a sarcastic warning to “sleep, Parisians surrounded by Métèques, you are being well guarded!” Jacques Reboul asserted that a steady stream of undesirables from other nations who came to France to live well, and to encumber already overburdened public services, were a malevolent force who were ‘injuring’ France. Immigrants and foreigners regularly harassed and insulted French citizens, warned Reboul, and the government would have to take steps to control the “macaques”.⁵⁸¹

In assailing the quantity of foreigners living in France, Faisceau members frequently portrayed immigrants as an invading force. France was en route to becoming a colony of foreigners, cried Louis Masset in March 1926, with some Parisian schools reporting that as many as two-thirds of their students were of foreign origin. Despite the presence of only 230 172 foreign children in France, he claimed that some French students could no longer even go to school, as their places in the classroom had been taken by foreigners. Masset declared the plight of the French worker to be even more unjust. In the tourist industry where so many native Frenchmen were unemployed, for example, eight out of ten hotel workers were foreigners. Anciens combattants went without homes, Masset groaned, as foreigners took all the housing and never worked hard, lazing about and drinking or smoking all day.⁵⁸²

Group sympathizer Ambroise Rendu extended this argument to the countryside, where ‘two million’ foreigners had bought up “the land of our fathers”.⁵⁸³ To Rendu, French immigration policy should have as its mission the protection of French traditions and “our race”, lest defense of the tricolore be left to immigrants’ sons. A virtual foreign invasion,

⁵⁸¹“Les Etrangers à Paris”, *NS*, 30 July 1925; Jacques Reboul, “La Question des étrangers”, *NS*, 14 Aug. 1926.

⁵⁸²Louis Masset, “Une Colonie pour les étrangers”, *NS*, 7 March 1926. Statistics on foreign children taken from Schor, p. 362.

⁵⁸³A member of the Action française and close friend of Charles Maurras, Rendu severed his ties with the Faisceau in 1926, after Valois and his confrères began a press campaign against the royalist group. See Eugen Weber, *Action française: Royalism and Reaction in Twentieth-Century France* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1962), pp. 94, 152; Douglas, pp. 93-99.

he claimed, had allowed Italians to take control of French agricultural production in the South-West of France. Because no governmental regulation prevented the acquisition of French land by foreigners, the majority of children in certain villages in Gers or Lot-et-Garonne were Italian. Rendu lamented the loss of French racial purity, warning that "little by little, the foreign blood mixes with our blood, altering the exterior character of our race". Nor would Italians, remaining faithful to their country of origin, accept French customs and traditions. Rendu proposed that "occupied ancestral territory" be given to farmers from Alsace-Lorraine. The new Faisceau state, he declared, would end immigration and immediately undertake the task of assimilating the three million or more foreigners already on French soil.⁵⁸⁴

Immigrant workers whether rural or urban were the target of a virtual hate campaign within the pages of Nouveau Siècle, whose writers claimed that they were a dire threat to the safety and vitality of the French nation. Echoing Masset and Rendu, Antoine Fouroux wrote of a veritable foreign invasion, calling the new arrivals unassimilable revolutionaries on the run from their native countries. He reserved the greatest ire for Polish workers: "[The] poles, who we have been able to band together in large industrial cities, are for the most part Jews, designated by the term Pollacks". Pierre Dumas added that the foreign labourer was stealing jobs from the French worker, and received better protection and perks than his French counterpart. Dumas believed that the clothing industry exemplified the plight of the true French labourer, who pounded the pavement searching for work, while an entire colony of 'Pollacks' from Galicia/Poland/Russia/Romania worked for starvation wages in his place. The consequence was moral and material sickness among French workers.⁵⁸⁵

⁵⁸⁴Ambroise Rendu, "La Terre de France", *NS*, 26 Feb. 1925; Ambroise Rendu, "L'Infiltration étrangère", *NS*, 11 June 1925.

⁵⁸⁵Antoine Fouroux, "Une soirée à l'Union des corporations françaises", *NS*, 2 April 1925; Pierre Dumas, "Le Travailleur français, dupé par la CGT doit trouver un asile au Faisceau", *NS*, 28 Feb. 1926; Pierre Dumas, "Les Ouvriers françaises....", *NS*, 5 Feb. 1927. This theme was present throughout

The Faisceau declared the real culprit to be the revolutionary left, the communist and socialist parties, and their allies in the CGT and CGTU, who supported foreign workers to further their own revolutionary agenda. Léon Blum, for example, was referred to as a 'mètèque', unleashed upon France to start the 'anti-national revolution'.⁵⁸⁶ Others in the group went beyond mere insults. Dumas insisted that the CGTU was being run by 'Pollacks', adding that each time its Parisian adherents cried 'Vive l'Internationale', they were doing so at the insistence of their foreign masters. Describing a 'special propaganda office' of the CGTU which supplied foreign language speakers, Fouroux similarly claimed that the communist party used foreign workers, especially refugees from Mussolini's Italy or Primo's Spain, as shock troops. Soviet agents were omnipresent, posing as factory workers or agricultural labourers, pursuing Bolshevik aims and recruiting fresh troops for the coming civil war.⁵⁸⁷

The threat thus went beyond the immigrant workers themselves, who were seen as a problem for which there was an easy solution: Expulsion. Socialists and communists were a different matter, equally at odds with the true nation yet less conspicuous, aiming to bring the revolution from Russia to France. As one anonymous article in Nouveau Siècle menacingly reported:

La terreur rouge fera trembler tous les bourgeois qui, d'ailleurs, deviendront léninistes à vue d'œil. Quant aux incurables, aux généurs qui ne voudraient pas consentir à l'application du marxisme intégral dans la patrie en ruines, les centuries chinoises déjà formées dans la banlieue Parisienne les auront vite mis à la raison. Et quand les français seront fusillés, leurs biens pillés, les

Dumas's career. See for example "L'Organisation ouvrière", *Cahiers des États-Généraux*, Dec. 1924: "Et nous assistons à la naissance, au développement d'un formidable esclavage moral à l'Americaine. D'ailleurs, renseignez-vous sur la composition d'une usine de métallurgie d'importance moyenne, qu'elle soit située à Paris, à Lyon, à Marseille, à Lille ou à Nantes, et l'on vous dira que, comme en Amérique, les ouvriers de dix à quinze nationalités y sont employés: que l'ouvrier français est le véritable étranger" (p. 498).

⁵⁸⁶L. Marcellin, "Le Rubican à rebours", *NS*, 16 July 1925.

⁵⁸⁷Pierre Dumas, "Les Ouvriers françaises....", *NS*, 5 Feb. 1927; Antoine Fouroux, "Les Ouvriers étrangers sont encadrés dans l'armée communiste en vue de la guerre civile", *NS*, 26 March 1925. Articles on Soviet agents, usually minute, appeared on a regular basis in the Faisceau press. For a larger example, see "Les Ouvriers agricoles Russes en France", *NS*, 24 Sept. 1925.

trésors nationaux saccagés, quand l'Allemand chassera les lourdes bottes pour prendre part à la curée, il est bien évident que nous connaissons tous les douceurs du paradis.⁵⁸⁸

A network of Soviet agents facilitated such activities. D'Obrenan claimed that the Marxists trained immigrant journalists, politicians, diplomats, and bankers, spies whose activities were made possible by French 'humanitarianism' and hospitality. Valois himself claimed that communism corrupted good French workers through the agents of 'Krassin and Rakowsky', who were introduced into France by Anatole de Monzie to construct a Soviet republic. He declared that De Monzie, finance minister in Herriot's 1924 government, and a member of Caillaux's cabinet in 1926, was Horace Finaly's chief agent inside the Cartel des Gauches.⁵⁸⁹

By far the worst crime committed by the communists in the eyes of the Faisceau was the exploitation of the unwitting French worker.⁵⁹⁰ Echoing the Faisceau political notion of the primacy of the ancien combattant, Valois reminded his audience at Verdun in February 1926 that many workers who were now communist had once been prepared to make the ultimate sacrifice for the French nation, by fighting in the trenches. That these brave patriots had been hoodwinked by the 'barbaric emissaries' of Moscow into believing that the factory owner was to blame for their misery was an act of treason.⁵⁹¹ Faisceau founding member Philippe Barrès used more violent language, arguing that the group sought to free enslaved workers of good heart and spirit from Marxism. The Faisceau would therefore welcome communist workers into the ranks, but would utilize force to combat the the leftist movement and its doctrine.⁵⁹²

⁵⁸⁸"Le Coup d'état du 3 Août", *NS*, 30 July 1925.

⁵⁸⁹D'Obrenan, pp. 66, 91; "La Politique socialiste", *NS*, 3 Jan. 1926. A similar argument appears in F/7/13210, Tract-"Tu n'est pas communiste? Non, mon camarade, tu n'est pas communiste".

⁵⁹⁰Antoine Fouroux, "Ouvriers français, qui faire pour éviter la misère?", *NS*, 2 July 1925.

⁵⁹¹"Au marché couvert", *NS*, 28 Feb. 1926.

⁵⁹²Philippe Barrès, "Précisons encore", *NS*, 8 Jan. 1926; F/7/13208, note of 15 May 1926. The son of nationalist author Maurice Barrès also accused the 'men from Moscow' of collaboration with Arab nationalists, specifically Abd el Krim, in an effort to destroy the French empire.

Valois and the Faisceau operated during a time when immigration was not a widespread concern within French society. Although they were not alone in their anti-foreigner stance--the Action française and Jeunesses patriotes were equally rabid--they were the exception and not the rule. By the 1930's, however, the entire French political spectrum had become permeated with varying degrees of xenophobia. The CDF/PSF were an extreme representative of this renewed violent polemic against foreigners.

Though there were approximately three million foreigners in France by 1931, the onslaught of the depression a year later (as production fell by more than 25%) led to the economic victimization of foreigners in varying degrees.⁵⁹³ By 1936 the total number in France actually fell by more than half a million, as many lost their jobs and either returned to their own countries or immigrated once more. But the European crises of the thirties, the nazi ascension to power in Germany and the Spanish Civil War being the most prominent, led to a refugee crisis of daunting and unprecedented proportions in France. By 1939, France surpassed the United States as the country containing the most foreigners per hundred thousand inhabitants (515 against 492), and throughout the decade refugees were a much-debated topic in government, the press, and among the population in general. Every facet of French life affected by immigrants, from the number of foreign students in French medical faculties to the political affiliation of the newcomers, was placed under a socio-political microscope. No such situation had existed in the twenties, when the Faisceau had conducted their press campaign against foreigners.

The result of the new wave of immigration was a backlash against the arrivals. More traditional rightist groups, such as the Fédération républicaine, began publicly to espouse xenophobic sentiments by 1936-37.⁵⁹⁴ The left was equally affected, as evidenced by an April 1937 article in *L'Humanité* attacking foreign spies and agents provocateurs, and the

⁵⁹³All of the figures here are taken from the section on the refugee crisis of the 1930's in Marrus and Paxton, pp. 34-45

⁵⁹⁴Schor, p. 663.

inability of the Popular Front government to keep them out of France, which concluded by stating that "il faut nettoyer Paris et la France". No less an authority than Maurice Thorez concurred while speaking at the Vélodrome d'Hiver that September, shouting: "Quand nous crions la France aux Français, cela signifie: à la porte les espions! à la porte les provocateurs de meurtre!"⁵⁹⁵ Thorez went on to accuse recent immigrants of abusing French hospitality. The centre agreed with both ends of the political spectrum, and in 1938 radical Minister of the Interior Albert Sarraut enacted legislation obliging non-citizens to obtain identity cards and inform the police of any change of address, restricting their right to work, and stripping all foreigners of the right to vote while imposing a five year waiting period on applications for citizenship.⁵⁹⁶

Such sentiments may leave the impression that the views of La Rocque and the CDF/PSF were no different than any other group in France at the time. But however unwelcoming French society may have been to immigrants in the thirties, the CDF/PSF leadership and rank and file stood out in the virulent scope and violence of its critique of immigrants. Like the Faisceau the group stood apart from popular sentiment due to its menacing voice, even when addressing more common socio-economic issues regarding foreigners. The group's policy of exclusion made no exceptions, and the tone of its discourse often rivaled the worst that Gringoire or Je suis partout could muster. Theirs was not a momentary xenophobia, to be resolved through prohibitive legislation, but rather an all-out assault on the racial and cultural influx which was perceived to be ruining France.

La Rocque's theoretical xenophobia was developed in his 1934 work Service public, and he adhered to many of its principles throughout the decade. He began by condemning racism, which he believed "à la fois se révolter contre l'ordre des choses, contre le bon sens, contre la nature". To La Rocque, the French race was a "magnificent synthesis" and as such

⁵⁹⁵Quoted in Schor, pp. 661, 662.

⁵⁹⁶Ibid, p. 667.

xenophobia could not exist within its borders. He nevertheless considered the issue of the foreigner problematic, specifically the massive and uncontrolled perpetual immigration which had resulted from Hitler's ascension to power: "Paris et les grandes villes, Marseille en tête, sont saturés d'expulsés, d'interdits de séjour, de déracinés. L'excessive facilité des naturalisations sans période suffisante d'épreuve introduit dans ces rangs civiques un multitude croissante d'indésirables".⁵⁹⁷ Although La Rocque did not believe that all refugees were suspect, he worried that many were using nazi persecution as cover for a variety of activities which included conspiracy and spying on behalf of Germany. Nor did he specifically direct this sentiment at Jews, for he professed 'Hitlerism' to be ridiculous; the real question was one of immigration en-soi, and hence there could be no differentiation between the Jew and the non-Jew. All were abusing French hospitality, taking French jobs away from citizens, and bringing revolution and chaos to la Patrie. Legislation was needed to rid France of immigrants from Central and Eastern Europe, and any other foreigners who were "parasites", including a severe naturalization statute making conditions for citizenship more rigorous.⁵⁹⁸

As the decade progressed, La Rocque's tone changed. He no longer emphasized the benevolence of France towards other races, instead adopting a confrontational tone. At the third PSF national congress in December 1938, La Rocque made a clear distinction between assimilated Frenchmen and relative newcomers, protesting against an "invasion des éléments étrangers" which was the cause of renewed racism in France.⁵⁹⁹ He further called for a complete revision of the "hateful and abusive" naturalizations of the previous ten years, and

⁵⁹⁷Lt-Colonel François de la Rocque, *Service public* (Paris: Grasset, 1934), pp. 157, 159.

⁵⁹⁸Ibid, pp. 160-162. La Rocque also proposed the elimination of all foreigners who took jobs away from native French in a November 1934 interview in the *Petit journal*. See the reprint in extenso in *Le Flambeau*, Nov. 1934. This theme was later taken up on a political level, as La Rocque wrote to senatorial candidates in October 1935 calling for the governmental elimination of all foreign economic influence in France, and an end to immigration. For the text of the letter see *Le Flambeau*, 19 Oct. 1935.

⁵⁹⁹AP/451/117, 3me Congrès national du PSF, "Déclaration du PSF, présentée par le Président du parti", 4 Dec. 1938.

a special tax for immigrants conducting business and/or living in France. Two weeks later, in a Petit journal editorial, he wrote that immigration weakened France, making her the "champ clos des intrigues étrangères". Recent immigrants and refugees, he claimed, worked against France in the service of international finance and foreign powers, principally the Soviet Union. "[N]ous voulons la France Française", La Rocque concluded, demanding the immediate arrest and expulsion of all communist leaders.⁶⁰⁰

La Rocque's exclusionary doctrine was pragmatic: All foreigners who did not comply with French traditions and morals were to be forcibly removed from the nation. Others in the group argued for exclusion based upon racial origin, emphasizing both the superiority of the French race and the dangers inherent in allowing foreigners to taint that racial purity. Their writings thus once again emphasized sickness and degeneration. The Volonté du Centre referred to each member of the French nation as a cell in a living organism, which was being poisoned by the introduction of foreign "parasites". Similarly Jean Madigner, writing in the Volontaire 36, claimed that "nous ne pouvons laisser se constituer chez nous des noyaux de Français récents, gardent leurs instincts de races primitives, brutales ou ondoyantes". French blood was strong, capable of withstanding a certain level of assimilation, but he warned that France must remain truly French, composed of families of the "old soil" who were nourished on French wheat and tradition.⁶⁰¹

Another CDF/PSF argument against immigration was economic, a more common rationale in nineteen-thirties France. However, the group began assailing foreign labour well before the refugee crisis of 1934, beating the government and the middle-class (the principal backers of the economic argument, and the backbone of CDF/PSF support) to the punch by two years.⁶⁰² As early as November 1932, Le Flambeau addressed the issue of

⁶⁰⁰La Rocque, "La France française", Petit journal, 18 Dec. 1938. This daily was purchased by the CDF/PSF in mid-1937 to replace the weekly Le Flambeau.

⁶⁰¹Le PSF Moyen, "Éloge de l'egoïsme de parti", Volonté du Centre, 22 April 1939; Jean Madigner, "Fecundation artificielle", Volontaire 36, 15 Sept. 1936.

⁶⁰²See Caron, *passim*.

unemployment, crying foul over the fact that there were 300 000 unemployed French workers yet two million foreigners with jobs in France. The proposed solution was the mandatory hiring of French workers to replace each departing foreign labourer, and the reduction of immigrants in France to a "suitable" number overall. Writing in Le Flambeau in January 1936, Louis Recoules followed suit, singling out the "massive and dangerous" immigration of "non-aryans" expelled from Germany who would become a "veritable peril" if allowed to take French jobs. The government had a duty to protect the French worker, and especially the artisan, against the inferior craftsmanship of the immigrant. La Rocque himself entered the fray during a nationally broadcast radio speech on April 24, 1936, in which he claimed that with the implementation of the Profession Organisée, "on ne verra plus de travailleurs français dans la rue et des hordes d'étrangers encombrant les cités pauvres, touchent les indemnités, grevant les budgets, contaminant les populations".⁶⁰³

The group's transformation into the parliamentary PSF only made the rhetoric more hostile. The issue was no longer one of protection for the battered French worker, but rather immediate action against dangerous and unhealthy immigrants. According to the Volonté du Centre in 1937, it was impermissible to have as many foreign workers as French unemployed in the country. The publication also claimed that the recent arrivals were disloyal to France, made inferior products, and abused French hospitality by ruining French society and business. The government would have to protect French workers from the foreigners, wrote the anonymous author, all of whom were Eastern European, Jewish, or a combination of the two, symbolized by the frequently heard surnames 'Rubenstien' and 'Frydman'. Writing in a PSF magazine, Albert Carpide further claimed that whole

⁶⁰³"Appel pour les chomeurs", Le Flambeau, 11 Nov. 1932; Louis Recoules, "Qualité", Le Flambeau, 11 Jan. 1936; CHEVS/LR 38, "Déclaration du Lt-Colonel de la Rocque, radiodiffusée le 24 Avril 1936". La Rocque and various rank and file members made the same points numerous times at CDF/PSF meetings and in articles or tracts: AP/451/103, Tract-"Que'est-ce le PSF?", p. 13; BN/Anon. Pourquoi nous sommes devenues Croix de Feu, 1934; Magny, "Le Chomage", Le Flambeau, 1 Feb. 1932.

departements had been 'victimized' by the newcomers, who had taken over entire industries, such as mining, rubber, textiles, transportation, and tourism.⁶⁰⁴

Proposed solutions to the 'problem' of foreign labour invariably focused upon the role of the CGT, emphasizing the need to eliminate the syndicalist menace, which utilized the unwitting foreign worker to further the implementation of a communist state in France. These new citizens were believed to be operating within the ranks of organized labour, and especially within the CGT and CGTU, which were laying the groundwork for the coming revolution by protecting their "foreign brothers"--the future revolutionary troops--in the workplace. Like the Faisceau's Pierre Dumas, La Rocque believed that the CGT took these orders directly from Moscow, and hence all native workers within the syndical apparatus were in danger of becoming communist. For this reason La Flamme called for the elimination of foreign labour, with exceptions only for those patriotic immigrants who fulfilled their military service obligation.⁶⁰⁵

The most detailed CDF/PSF critique of foreigners was made by parliamentary deputy Charles Vallin. While proclaiming that the CDF/PSF were not xenophobes and that racism ran counter to French culture and the principles of Western civilization, Vallin nevertheless argued that it was unfair to import foreign skilled labour while so many French workers were unemployed. The lack of an apprenticeship system and the low birthrate, he claimed, had created the initial need for such immigrants. But the result, a "veritable invasion" of foreigners, was deemed unacceptable. According to Vallin, France had woken up one morning to find colonies of immigrants camped along various stretches of her territory, creating a dire threat to her national security. They also represented a threat to the mental

⁶⁰⁴Volonté du Centre, 13 Feb. 1937; "Protégons le travail française", Volonté du Centre, 28 May 1938; CHEVS/LR 43, Albert Carpide, "La France française", La France sera sauvée par la P.S.F., Oct. 1937. The latter was a special colour magazine devoted to the PSF platform.

⁶⁰⁵La Rocque, "Syndicats et politique", Petit journal, 22 Jan. 1939; Dols, "La Question de la main d'oeuvre étrangère", La Flamme, 15 Nov. 1936. See also M.G., "Donnez du travail aux français d'abord", La Flamme des Deux-Sèvres, April 1939.

and moral health of the nation, and a severe hygiene problem. Some of the three million foreigners living on French soil respected the rules, Vallin argued, but many others were "parasites". The economic threat posed by the newcomers was the most severe problem, he warned; was it acceptable for a French Tabac-owner to close, sending his clients to an immigrant? His response was blunt: "Nous ne le pensons pas. Nous demandons que les étrangers établis en France soient frappés d'une majoration d'impôt", to fund French business, artisans, and doctors in the name of 'justice'.⁶⁰⁶

Speaking on behalf of the group, Vallin thus demanded strict physical and moral control of prospective immigrants, and the immediate expulsion of all undesirables. A severe exam would be administered before citizenship was proffered, and all naturalizations of the previous ten years would be reviewed by the government (in the new PSF state) to weed out the undesirables. Once a candidate was accepted, Vallin's proposed immigration tax would immediately take effect, with exceptions made for those who had fought on the French side during the war.⁶⁰⁷

Harsher suggestions were made by the Alsatian sections of the CDF/PSF. Speaking to a crowd at a Croix de Feu regional congress in 1936, a M. Heintz called for a strict Statute of Foreigners, necessary because France (and Alsace in particular) had become the preferred destination for a multitude of refugees, many of whom did not speak French. The new arrivals lived from the fruits of Alsatian labour, highjacking local politics and implementing corrupt business practices. Heintz was unequivocal in his language: "L'Alsacien ne doit pas être privé de son travail par les étrangers. Il y a des lois. Qu'on les applique".⁶⁰⁸ The Parti social français, he declared, would protect the local worker and

⁶⁰⁶Charles Vallin, "Il faut régler la question des étrangers", *Petit journal*, 19 Oct. 1938. The same argument was utilized practically verbatim by Lukas Haas in Alsace. See Mislin, p. 35.

⁶⁰⁷Charles Vallin, "La Question des étrangers", *Petit journal*, 3 Nov. 1938. Vallin's call for expulsion was neither new nor exclusive to the CDF/PSF leadership. See the article on immigrants in the *Volontaire* 36, 8 May 1938.

⁶⁰⁸AP/451/103, Tract-"Qu'est ce que le P.S.F?", pp.6-7

enforce a severe repression of usury, which he called a common business practice among foreigners. All undesirables would be repatriated, immigration treaties would be completely revised, and French workers would do French work. As the Flambeau de l'Est reminded its readers, a statute regulating foreigners would not only free up jobs for the unemployed, but would unburden taxpayers who were funding hospital beds and prison cells for the foreigners, taking billions of francs worth of social programs away from the poor every year. Decent and honest foreigners would always have a place in France, the newspaper declared, but the remainder (and majority) were to be thrown out.⁶⁰⁹

Rural CDF/PSF supporters were every bit as xenophobic, concerned that immigrants were taking over the countryside. They were accused of 'colonizing France', while successive governments did nothing to address the situation. In December 1933, the Flambeau claimed that France had fallen victim to an invasion of immigrants from the steppes, desert, and foreign lands. There were three million foreigners in France in 1930, the author cried, three times the number at the end of the last century, and 91 000 of them cultivated 586 000 hectares of French soil. The French race had become "anemic", its fields and culture increasingly lost in the swamp of immigration.⁶¹⁰

It was a simple step from criticism to proposed exclusion, enacted in a virulently xenophobic Flambeau article written by Jacques Le Roy Ladurie, which portrayed the farmer as a victim of the foreigner. Ladurie was not a member of the group, but he wrote the article specifically for their newspaper, whose decision to print it speaks for itself. In any event, Ladurie certainly had ties to the extreme-right. As Robert Paxton has demonstrated, both he and the CDF/PSF supported the Peasant Front of Henry Dorgères, and Ladurie's Union centrale des syndicats agricoles (the largest such network in France during the thirties) supported the creation of an authoritarian, corporatist state which largely

⁶⁰⁹"Das Problem der Auslander", Flambeau de l'Est, 30 April 1938.

⁶¹⁰"Invasion étrangère", Le Flambeau, Dec. 1933. See also party agricultural secretary Jean Duval's "La Vie agricole", Flamme Vendéenne, 15 Jan. 1939.

resembled the one proposed by La Rocque. Ladurie harshly criticized the government in his Le Flambeau article for lowering production target ceilings while 300 000 foreigners, 30 000 of whom owned "stolen" French soil, dominated French agriculture and refused assimilation. Naturalized or not, they could never understand "la mystique de la terre", as they had not been born in France.⁶¹¹

Among the loudest sections of the CDF/PSF on the question of foreigners were the youth organizations. The debate over and hostility towards foreign students was by no means limited to the CDF/PSF, yet few other groups matched their intensity on the subject. Protests regarding foreign students during the thirties derived typically from a purely economic perspective, representing fears of a super-saturated job market, and occurred mainly in the medical faculties, where the competition was most acutely felt.⁶¹² CDF/PSF youth groups, by contrast, acted out of ideological conviction rather than pragmatism: They believed that foreigners were abusing French hospitality and colonizing France, and as such were a threat to the national well-being irrespective of the job market. Notwithstanding certain rhetorical similarities with more mainstream student organizations on the issue of foreigners, the CDF/PSF answer, as always, was expulsion.

Despite a proclamation in the Flambeau youth column of December 1933 that "nos cadets ne peuvent l'envisager sous un aspect 'raciste', comme leurs contemporains Allemands, puisque notre pays est un assimilateur de races", it was from the CDF/PSF students and youth that the loudest cries for expulsion came. In March 1935, Le Flambeau

⁶¹¹Jacques Le Roy Ladurie, "Paroles paysannes", Le Flambeau, Sept. 1933; Robert O. Paxton, French Peasant Fascism: Henry Dorgères's Greenshirts and the Crises of French Agriculture, 1929-1939 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), especially chapters one, three, and four. La Rocque himself warned that the CDF/PSF could never accept foreigners tilling French soil: "le bruit ne court-il pas aussi de la fixation chez nous, sous prétexte de complément de main d'oeuvre...à pied d'oeuvre, de dizaines de milles réfugiés Espagnols infiltrés d'anarchistes, de communistes? Ici, halte-là!". See Parti sociale français, 1er congrès agricole, 16-17 Février, 1939 (Saint Brieuc: Les Presses Bretonnes, 1939), p. 16. This point was also made by a M. Heintz at the 1936 regional congress in Alsace, in Qu'est-ce que le P.S.F., pp. 4-5.

⁶¹²See Caron, pp. 41-48. Medicine was rarely singled out by the CDF/PSF. The exception is Aucouturier in Programmes socialistes...., p. 14.

cautioned that foreigner students were anti-patriotic: "Un certain nombre de ces étudiants étrangers, qui sont fort nombreux, ont tendance à oublier trop souvent ce qu'ils doivent à l'hospitalité française". One group author claimed that foreign students were not problematic, for this was a centuries-old practice resulting from the French position at the centre of Christian civilization. More troublesome was that they did not leave upon the completion of their studies, swamping the profession of medicine for example, with tacit governmental approval. The article concluded with praise for a recent student conference resolution to bar foreigners from practicing any profession in France or her colonies, until ten years from the date of being granted citizenship.⁶¹³

CDF/PSF youth members went far beyond such socio-economic critiques. André Delacour asserted that France was not a "conquered country" and should not be treated as such by ungrateful immigrant students, a sentiment echoed by various CDF/PSF writers. In April 1938, L'Espoir de l'Est similarly complained that "olive-faced" and Asian students had taken over the universities, and that their goal was to remain in France for as long as possible: "Ils installent en pays conquis. Ils profitent de nos faiblesses pour occuper les postes qui devraient normalement être réservés à nos compatriotes. Leur émigration momentanée devient une occupation".⁶¹⁴ The author unhesitatingly pointed out that they did not perform their civic duties or take on the burden of military service: The student graduated, gained an easy naturalization, changed his name, and then robbed Frenchmen of their careers.

Thus at the second annual PSF students conference in March 1939, a motion on the "Étudiants Étrangère" was floated, calling for restrictions on the admission of foreign students. Only if moral and intellectual qualifications were met, and if the applicant could

⁶¹³Trézien, "Le Sentiment de la grandeur", Le Flambeau, Dec. 1933; "À la Sorbonne", Le Flambeau, 23 March 1935; André Delacour, "Science ou profession", Le Flambeau, 20 April 1935.

⁶¹⁴"Les Etudiants étrangers", L'Espoir de l'Est, 2 April 1938. See also D.L., "Le Dernier né se porte bien", Flambeau de Sud-Ouest, 22 May 1937.

prove sufficient financial resources, should they be allowed entry. Although PSF students were opposed to racism in principle, the text read, they would not hesitate to expel those who did not meet their criteria.⁶¹⁵ These proposals were enlarged in *L'Étudiant sociale*, the CDF/PSF student publication. Writing in May 1939, Pierre Suire claimed that it was a French tradition to draw foreign students to French universities if the newcomers were "ambassadeurs discrets et sincères". But France was not being respected by the current crop, who abused French hospitality and used the university setting to engage in partisan politics. Too many foreigners were being naturalized, and therefore the professions were becoming overcrowded. While those immigrants who faced persecution or utter poverty upon returning to their country of origin would be allowed to remain in France, others would be shown the door to ensure employment for French students upon graduation. Most importantly, Suire concluded, France was a Christian country, whose traditions must be respected by all who crossed its borders, including visiting students.⁶¹⁶

4.

Zeev Sternhell has written of the French extreme-rightist attitude that

No legal fiction can convert a Rumanian Jew into a Frenchman. It can convert him into a French *citizen*, but it cannot make him into a *Frenchman*. To be a French citizen and to be a Frenchman are two quite different things....Hence, according to organic nationalism, Léon Blum, though a renowned and successful literary critic, could not possibly understand Racine. He could not plumb the depths of seventeenth-century French literature because his brain and heart were foreign to the inner essence of the text, even though he could understand the language and analyze the linguistic forms.⁶¹⁷

It was this type of thinking which drove both the Faisceau and the CDF/PSF to make the politics of exclusion central to their projected transformation of the nation and the state. To

⁶¹⁵*La Flamme*, 10 March 1939.

⁶¹⁶Pierre Suire, "Les Etudiants étrangers", *L'Étudiant sociale*, May 1939. Suire was the President of the group's Centre universitaire. The author further claimed that the immigrants were causing problems for French Jews, an unfair burden for these patriots, many of whom had fought in the war.

⁶¹⁷Zeev Sternhell, *Antisemitism and the Right in France* (Jerusalem: Shazar Library/Institute of Contemporary Jewry, 1988), p. 13.

both groups, Jews, masons, foreigners, and Marxists could never become truly French, even if naturalized. There were exceptions to be sure; to La Rocque, a war veteran and Jew of many generations such as Rabbini Kaplan could qualify for membership in the CDF/PSF group and nation. Likewise, Valois's immigrant who was a sixth-generation citizen with two sons killed at the Somme fighting for the fatherland could be a member of the Faisceau. These men could do so only if they adhered to the doctrine of the Faisceau or CDF/PSF, and suspicions would be present even if they were enthusiastic participants. But in the Third Republic, where Jews and foreigners shied away from supporting or voting for the extreme-right, exceptions of any kind to the exclusionary triptych were rare indeed. The mason, by contrast, could never be a member of the group or the nation because he followed a creed which proclaimed itself above and opposed to both of them.

It is important to note, however, that it was in the politics of exclusion alone that the Faisceau and CDF/PSF shared common ground. Their versions of the political and economic state, and their plans for society showed a remarkable dissimilarity. Furthermore, neither the Faisceau nor the CDF/PSF were monolithic entities, and the divisions between leadership and rank and file, apparent throughout their ideological matrices of the nation and the state, were particularly acute regarding the politics of exclusion. However, the degree of difference varied according to the group faction to which the member belonged. Leaders Valois and La Rocque saw the 'Jewish question' as easily resolved through the conversion of the 'other' to the group ideology, while the rank and file for the most part disagreed, rejecting the casual antisemitism and xenophobia of their leaders while adopting more violent solutions and rhetoric. These men believed that the Jew/mason/foreigner were conspiring enemies who ruled France from the shadows, the 'other' who bore full responsibility for French weakness, and whose expulsion would reinvigorate the nation. The elimination of the enemy was thus the crucial preliminary step towards the establishment of a new nation and state based upon group principles.

Hence the Faisceau and the CDF/PSF designs for the new nation were predicated upon the identification and expulsion of the Jew, the mason, and the foreigner. The health of the nation was seen as dependent upon the eradication of all elements considered 'dangerous' to society, a notion extended even to those who constituted a potential threat. The language of violence, disease, and malevolence was mobilized in support of these proposed actions. Both the Faisceau and the CDF/PSF, and especially the rank and file, used this lexicon to depict the enemy as an example of everything that 'la Patrie'--the true France represented exclusively by the groups themselves--was not. The republic had converted the Jew, the mason, and the foreigner into citizens, but they could never become the necessary figures for membership in the nation: Frenchmen.

Conclusion

In his work on the 'reactionary modernism' of interwar German intellectuals, historian Jeffrey Herf writes that:

The reactionary modernists were nationalists who turned the romantic anticapitalism of the German right away from backward-looking pastoralism, pointing instead to the outlines of a beautiful new order replacing the formless chaos due to capitalism in a united, technologically advanced nation.⁶¹⁸

Figures such as Ernst Jünger, Carl Schmitt, Werner Sombart, Oswald Spengler, Martin Heidegger, and Josef Goebbels knew that the state could not be strong yet simultaneously technologically backward. They thus combined the traditional conservative goal of *Gemeinschaft* with the hated *Gesellschaft*, mobilizing the trappings of modernity in the service of an authoritarian ideal. Heavily influenced by the experience of the trenches and the socio-technological changes wrought by the Great War, the reactionary modernists sought to mobilize technology in furtherance of blood and race, to realize full German potential. In so doing, writes Herf, they "interpreted technology as the embodiment of will and beauty", an irrational means to the ends of national community and self-realization in contrast to soul-less intellectual discourse.⁶¹⁹

This 'reactionary modernism' bears certain similarities to the programs of the Faisceau and CDF/PSF across the Rhine. Enthralled by the trench experience, both wished to import the mentalité of the combattant into civilian life. They too looked beyond capitalism, which they derided as artificially divisive, to a gilded future in which conservative principles were served by an authoritarian state. Rejecting both liberal capitalism and socialism in equal measure, the leadership and rank and file of the Faisceau and CDF/PSF wished to transform the nation and state, moving beyond the decadent, materialist, and frail Republic.

⁶¹⁸ Jeffrey Herf, *Reactionary Modernism: Technology, Culture, and Politics in Weimar and the Third Reich* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), pp. 2-3.

⁶¹⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 24-25, 30.

Finally, each group contained staunch believers in the primacy of technology in forging the new nation and state.

Beyond these superficial similarities, however, lay a diverse reality of competing plans which went far beyond the scope of their German counterparts. To begin with, the various positions adopted by factions within the Faisceau and CDF/PSF were uniquely French. Their proposed renovation of the nation and state did not exist in a vacuum, but as part of a well-defined French tradition. Within the Third Republic, elements of both the left and the right continually sought to seize power in order to effect the reconstruction of France, from the rise of General Boulanger and the founding of the revolutionary Parti ouvrier français in the late 1880s onwards. By 1924, when the Faisceau was founded, the Republic had already fought off the challenges of Guesdist socialism, revolutionary syndicalism, the 1890s anarchist wave, the rise of the extreme-right in the wake of the Dreyfus affair, the subsequent prewar royalist vogue led by Maurras and the Action française, and the newly formed communist party to name only a few of its contemporary enemies.

The conservative faction within the Faisceau drew heavily upon their extreme-rightist antecedents, invoking Maurras, Maurice Barrès, and social Catholicism in formulating their doctrine. Yearning in like manner for the 'true France' of tradition espoused by the dissatisfied right throughout the Republican years, they were conscious of the continuity present in their discourse. Even Valois, whose hyper-modernism and suspect conservatism aroused the suspicion of his more traditional confrères, was not particularly novel. His influences were either French--Sorel, Quinton, Le Corbusier-- or shared with an emerging French economic avant garde, for figures such as Léon Jouhaux, Ernst Mercier, and Louis Renault shared his admiration of Henry Ford and Frederick Taylor. Thus the first fascist group in France, characterized by distinctly French heritage and ambition, bore little resemblance to its Italian counterpart. Similarly, certain factions within the CDF/PSF adopted positions found on the Republican left and right, such as economic rationalization

and planisme, while others looked to French social Catholic doctrine and the *idéologie des combattants* for inspiration. In an era where the diminishing radical centre was vulnerable to the dynamism of the left and the right, especially following the 1934 formation of the Popular Front, previously marginalized ideas became common political currency.

Furthermore, unlike Herf's reactionary modernists, prewar French leagues like the *Action française* or *Ligue des patriotes*, or most interwar leagues, neither the *Faisceau* nor the *CDF/PSF* was monolithic. Rather than adopting technology and modernism in the service of a reactionary agenda, both groups were divided into traditionalist and modernist factions, which were themselves occasionally subdivided into different positions. Further compounding this heterogeneity of doctrine were disagreements about the form and content of the new nation and state, which often corresponded to ideas or plans existent within the Republic itself.

Valois's technocratic state and economy were not *sui generis*, and elicited opposition from a hierarchical, authoritarian, and social Darwinist system proposed by the conservative faction within the group, itself a product of nineteenth and early-twentieth century French thought. Various French industrialists, combattant groups and right-wing political figures agreed wholeheartedly with the respective sides. Similar disagreements occurred regarding the position of women in the new nation, where progressive and traditionalist stances corresponded to analogous positions within the Republic concerning feminist demands for the right to work, the vote, and equal treatment. *Faisceau* blueprints for the French family after the *Révolution nationale* included organic Maurrassian nationalism, negative eugenics, and old-fashioned pronatalism. Their plans for youth were similarly divided. Valois's emphasis on the young fascist 'engineer', representative of the 'generation of 1914', confronted Hubert Bourgin's emphasis on moral education, emphasizing discipline, obedience, and social Catholic principles. Both, however, drew upon the revolt of interwar youth against a Republic perceived as weak and decadent, and Bourgin's prescription in

particular resembled the platform of the Scouts or Association Catholique de la jeunesse française. Finally, although members unanimously agreed that Jews, Masons, and foreigners were undesirable, their proposed politics of exclusion varied greatly, ranging from re-education to outright elimination. Clearly there was precious little agreement among Faisceau members, many of whom often adopted a platform corresponding to doctrines prevalent within French society.

This situation was even more acute within the ranks of the Croix de Feu/Parti social français. Like the Faisceau, the CDF/PSF was factionalized, and many positions formulated by the various factions were commonplace within the Republic. Unlike the Faisceau, however, the group was not divided cleanly along two ideological lines. As a genuine mass movement, with 450 000 adherents by 1936, and over one million members two years later, the group could not possibly manufacture unanimity. The group attracted an extremely diverse following from a wide variety of socio-economic backgrounds, many of whom simply saw the CDF/PSF as a non-traditional vehicle towards the achievement of limited reform. Certain members limited their planning to one specific area of the new nation or state: Touron or Canat, for example, wrote exclusively about the new economic order, occasionally straying into the political. But neither figure provided great detail regarding the political state, or contributed to group plans for the new nation. Others, including La Rocque, argued for a complete transformation of France, and the creation of a new Etat social français, run according to group doctrine.

The political and economic plans of various CDF/PSF leaders, including La Rocque, were steeped in the social Catholicism of De Mun and La Tour du Pin. They were equally influenced by the trench experience, placing them alongside veteran's associations such as the Union nationale des combattants. Much like Valois, CDF/PSF technocrats who opposed the antimodernism of their leaders, instead proposed state planning and rationalization. Unlike the notions broached by their Faisceau counterparts a decade earlier,

however, such ideas were rife in nineteen-thirties France, foreshadowing the postwar reconfiguration of the French economy under the guidance of Jean Monnet. Group views regarding women and the family were less divided, yet equally common. In adopting a staunchly anti-feminist and pronatalist platform for their new nation, CDF/PSF leadership and rank and file alike aligned themselves with a burgeoning movement which garnered support across the political spectrum. Deputies of all colours, along with an impressive and diverse array of prominent Republicans, supported pronatalist groups like the Alliance nationale pour l'accroissement de la population française. Similarly, governmental initiatives such as Edouard Daladier's Code de la Famille included the salaire familial and restrictions on contraception and abortion among their provisions. By the mid-thirties, Léon Blum's Popular Front government, the radical party, and even the communist party spoke openly of a woman's 'natural role' as mother and housewife, and supported the 'preservation' of the French family.

Neither were conflicting CDF/PSF policies regarding youth and education aberrant. Calls for a more traditional and Catholic curriculum dated from the preceding decade, when conservatives in the Chamber of Deputies mounted campaigns for the restoration of state-funding for Catholic schools and the reimposition of Latin and Greek as mandatory subjects. In such a milieu calls for an end to 'Republicanized' laic education were hardly surprising, and the solution of the social Catholic and conservative CDF/PSF faction--emphasizing discipline, moral and physical education, and order--was certainly not particular to the group. The concept of education as propaganda drove Jules Ferry's reinvention of French pedagogy in the early eighteen-eighties, while Front Populaire minister Leo Lagrange and the Jeunesse Chrétienne movement proposed similar strategies for energizing contemporary youth. Those voices within the CDF/PSF which called for the formation of a young leadership elite based on talent, and still others concerned with skill development, further reflected established public opinion. Even the most extreme on the

issue, those who proposed the creation of a 'new man' through physical and moral regeneration, reflected the spirit of the age. Nor was CDF/PSF exclusionary rhetoric unprecedented: From the mid-thirties onwards, socio-economic antisemitism and xenophobia were increasingly apparent throughout French society.

Yet the Faisceau and the CDF/PSF did not merely parrot contemporary doctrine. In many instances, the extremity of their solutions differentiated them from their Republican counterparts. Valois's views of a hyper-modern productivist state shared affinities with those of Jouhaux, Renault, or André Tardieu, who attempted to implement technocratic and planiste reforms as Premier in 1930-31. But Valois was far more revolutionary in scope. Where Mercier or Jouhaux preached the gospel of rationalization and scientific management for industry, Valois envisioned a state run according to such principles. Furthermore, unlike these figures, Valois portrayed the nation in organic terms, delegating the preservation of morality, tradition, and order to the newly-empowered French family. Similarly, the demand of Hubert Bourgin, Philippe Barrès, and Jacques Arthuys for a return to tradition through the installation of an authoritarian regime was echoed during the nineteen-twenties only by the Action française, the Légion, and similar extreme-rightist organizations. Bourgin's seemingly conservative plans for French education, for example, hinged upon the transformation of society as a whole, from parliamentary democracy to an authoritarian, hierarchical, and 'traditionally French' state. Thus while his pedagogical program might have received the approval of French conservatives, his means and ends would not, for the Republican Federation and the Alliance Démocratique supported the Republic. More severely, the proto-geneticist leanings of Aragonnés and the eliminationist antisemitism of Van den Broek d'Obrenan went far beyond the scope of any opinions expressed by more mainstream political parties or social organizations.

CDF/PSF ideas were equally extreme. Although influenced by social Catholicism and the experience of modern war, La Rocque's authoritarian state, artisanal and agrarian

economy, and emphasis upon moral and physical conformity, were anathematic to the Christian youth movements so popular in nineteen-thirties France. The blatant xenophobia of his traditionalist faction, their strident anti-Republicanism, and the rejection of economic modernity were likewise closer in tone to the extreme-rightist leagues than the parties of the mainstream conservative right. The same was true for the technocratic and modernizing planistes in the group, who like Valois went far beyond limits deemed acceptable by industry and government during the nineteen-thirties. Although planistes entered government posts in 1936-37 during the Blum's ministry, and economic rationalization was in vogue during the thirties, the complete transformation of the nation and state were never discussed. Only marginalized figures such as Marcel Déat argued for such extreme changes to French economy and society. Likewise, the antisemitism and xenophobia displayed by CDF/PSF leadership and rank-and-file alike went far beyond the socio-economic complaints heard throughout French society from the middle of the decade onwards. With the exception of La Rocque, the CDF/PSF critique of Jews, Masons, and foreigners was based on race, and not the unemployment rate. Various members claimed that these 'undesirables' were unassimilable aliens whose mere presence ruined France.

It is tempting to argue that both groups were simply representatives of a society-wide shift to the right, that the Third Republic in its closing stages itself adopted many of the doctrinal features long popular on the extreme-right. After all, the Faisceau and CDF/PSF were undeniably extreme-rightist in orientation, and yet advocated plans which existed within the Republic. Yet such a parallel is superficial at best. The Faisceau were most influential during the era of the left-wing Cartel des Gauches, while the CDF/PSF rose to prominence alongside the socialist-led Popular Front. Although both the Cartel des Gauches and the Popular Front adopted limited versions of right-wing demands, primarily regarding women and youth, the radicals, socialists, and communists--who continued to represent the electoral majority--never abandoned their political beliefs, which were

incompatible with extreme-rightist sentiment. Furthermore, with the exception of the communists and the extreme-rightist leagues, all of the political parties in the interwar period remained faithful to the parliamentary democracy of the Republic, never envisioning a complete transformation of the nation and state. Thus although they occasionally adopted social policies characteristic of the extreme-right, the left and centre never switched sides.

The diversity of the Faisceau and CDF/PSF plans, and their character, instead resemble the Vichy regime which replaced the Republic following the German victory in June 1940. Although the Faisceau and CDF/PSF were by no means responsible for the advent of Vichy, there were broad similarities between the two leagues and the Vichy experience. Diverse factions in both the CDF/PSF and the Faisceau were equally apparent from 1940-44 during the implementation of the *Révolution nationale*. Disagreements arose concerning all aspects of the nation and state--politics, economics, gender, family, youth and education, and the politics of exclusion. That the conflicts were overt during the Vichy era, rather than simmering under the surface, was a product of structural differences: The struggles for control within the various Vichy ministries were matters of state, while the appearance of unity was necessary for the Faisceau and CDF/PSF during the drive to power. Yet the overall experience, of opposing factions with differing plans for the new nation and state, remains analogous.

Like the Faisceau and the CDF/PSF, the first Vichyistes, under the leadership of Maréchal Philippe Pétain, unanimously supported the transformation of the nation and state. Their proposals greatly resembled the plans put forth by conservative and social Catholic factions in both groups. It was no accident that the slogans of the Vichy era--"La *Révolution nationale*" and "Travail, Famille, Patrie"--were coined by the Faisceau and CDF/PSF during the preceding decades. Driven by organic nationalism, in which the individual existed only within the family, corporation, region, and nation, this doctrine portrayed the leader--Pétain--as the saviour and ultimate expression of the state. The regime

proclaimed itself against Republican decadence, personified by the Jew, Mason, foreigner and communist, and instead embraced a 'moral regeneration'. The "anti-France" of the Republican enemy was replaced by a variety of exalted figures: The mother (representing tradition), the peasant (social harmony, Catholicism, the soil), and the combattant (youth, discipline, patriotism).⁶²⁰

As in the Faisceau and CDF/PSF, this unanimity quickly evaporated. Figures from across the political spectrum regarded the new regime as an opportunity for change. Plans were tendered by a multitude of diverse personalities, affecting all areas of political, economic, and social life, ranging from social Catholicism and integral nationalism to pagan tribalism, corporative federalism to bureaucratic centralization, and communal economic organization to technocratic synarchy. Like the Faisceau and CDF/PSF, Vichy officials sought a third way between laissez-faire liberal capitalism and its parliamentary politics on one hand, and communism on the other. Their visions of the new France, however, reflected personal agendas and defeated any attempts at consensus.⁶²¹

In the realm of economics, for example, traditionalists believed the family farm to be the basis for the new French economy. This massive "return to the soil", supported by Pétain and Pierre Caziot, Vichy's first Minister of Agriculture in 1940-41, was bolstered by the artisan-based corporatism of René Gillouin and Jules Verger who, much like La Rocque, supported a 'moral' economy based upon the social Catholic profession organisée. These plans were resolutely opposed by technocratic modernizers, led by Finance Minister Yves Bouthillier, and Ministers of Industrial Production René Belin, Pierre Pucheu, François Lehideux, and Jean Bichelonne, as well as Caziot's replacement in the agriculture ministry, Jacques Le Roy Ladurie. Industrialists and engineers by trade (with the exception of the

⁶²⁰Denis Peschanski, *Vichy 1940-44: Contrôle et exclusion* (Paris: Éditions Complexe, 1997), pp. 20-23.

⁶²¹See Robert Paxton, *Vichy France: Old Guard and New Order, 1940-1944* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1972), chapter two.

ex-CGT activist Belin), they strove to modernize the French economy, implementing state management of industry and agriculture, planning, and the rule of experts. Theirs was the economic modernization proposed by Valois, Dumas, and Lusignac within the Faisceau, and the Maréchaux, Canat, and Touron in the Croix de Feu/Parti social français. Believing the French defeat to have been the product of economic backwardness, they paid lip service to the traditionalist program, but ignored its initiatives in practical terms. With their triumph in the Fall of 1941, the organic community ideal of the farmer and artisan extolled by the traditionalists was relegated to the Vichyiste dustbin.⁶²² Although neither the Faisceau nor the CDF/PSF witnessed such success, the conflicts during the Vichy years seem all too familiar to the scholar of either group.

Similar disagreements occurred regarding youth and education, as they had in the Faisceau and CDF/PSF. Within the education ministry, the rationalization of French pedagogy championed by Jérôme Carcopino was bitterly contested by the staunch clericalism of Jacques Chevalier, whose concept of reform involved the reimposition of a traditional and Catholic 'moral' education upon French youth. In the same vein, former tennis champion and "Commissaire Général à l'Éducation générale et aux Sports" Jean Borotra, former scout leader and director of the Chantiers de la jeunesse General de la Porte du Theuil, and the leaders of the Uriage 'école des cadres' favoured an emphasis upon the creation of a 'new order' through a harsh physical regimen. Viewing their efforts as both dangerous and incompatible with the goals of the national revolution, especially the Uriage espousal of 'communitarian personalism', the Catholic and conservative Conseil national at Vichy continually thwarted their efforts. Hoping to root out teachings incompatible with the prevailing Pétainisme, authorities also closely monitored the Compagnons de France work groups and Chantiers de la jeunesse, called the "avant-garde of the national revolution" for

⁶²²Paxton, pp. 200-221, 268-271; Richard F. Kuisel, *Capitalism and the State in Modern France: Renovation and Economic Management in the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), chapter five.

their role in indoctrinating youth with the values of hard work, order, and discipline. Again, one finds in such infighting a parallel with the Faisceau and CDF/PSF experience. All of the elements present in both groups--the Catholic and traditional, the creation of a 'new order' and 'new man', the meritocratic elite, and the modernization of the education system were represented in the Vichy ministries for education, youth, and sport.⁶²³

Even on the subject of exclusion, there was frequent disagreement among Vichy government ministers and officials at the Commissaire générale pour la question juive. Much like the differing opinions in the Faisceau and CDF/PSF, the matter was simply one of degree: How far was the process of exclusion to progress? Within the two groups, opinions ranged from the acceptance of genuinely 'French' Jews and the dissolution of the Masonic lodges, to the violent exclusion of all Jews, Masons, and foreigners. The debate concerning exclusion took place within the same parameters at Vichy, focusing upon the extent to which the regime would act against undesirables. In debating anti-Semitic measures, for example, Admiral Darlan, the head of state throughout 1941, clearly differentiated between French Jews and foreigners, much like La Rocque had done in the CDF/PSF, or Valois in the Faisceau. Yet the views of CQJC head Xavier Vallat were akin to those held by the rank and file in both groups. A virulent anti-Semite, he was dedicated to suppressing Jews of all stripes, and withholding any and all rights and privileges from them. Vallat interned French Jews in camps while deporting foreigners to Germany. His rhetoric and actions, however, were temperate compared those of his successor, Darquier de Pellepoix, an eliminationist anti-Semite dedicated to bringing nazi racial policies to France.⁶²⁴

⁶²³Paxton, pp. 153-165; W.D. Halls, *The Youth of Vichy France* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981), pp. 132-134, 187; John Hellman, *The Knight-Monks of Vichy France: Uriage, 1940-1945* (Montréal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1993), pp. 15-16, 50, 74, 139-141, 163-181.

⁶²⁴Peschanski, pp. 143-179; Michael R. Marrus and Robert O. Paxton, *Vichy France and the Jews* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995), *passim*. but especially pp. 83-96, 283-286.

The comparison, however, goes well beyond doctrine. Although Georges Valois, a convert to the left after the demise of the Faisceau, perished as a resistor in Bergen-Belsen in January 1945, other former members resurfaced under the Vichy regime, most notably Vallat.⁶²⁵ La Rocque was given a seat on the Conseil national and a minor post within the Vichy administrative apparatus, but quickly abandoned them for the reconstituted PSF (renamed the Progrès social français in August 1940), whose independence he stressed. Irrate at the inattention of Vichy to the group program, La Rocque became a minor resistor and was arrested by the Gestapo in March 1943 for aiding British Intelligence. Some of his former colleagues trod a quite different path, and Ybarnégaray (Minister of Family and Public Health, then Minister of Youth, in 1940), Creyssel (Secretary-General for Propaganda in 1943), Félix Olivier-Martin (Secretary-General for Youth in 1943), and Stanislas Devaud and Charles Vallin (members of the Conseil national) all actively collaborated.⁶²⁶ Many rank and file CDF/PSF members also supported the different factions within the Vichy regime, including Darquier de Pellepoix.⁶²⁷

In the final analysis, factions within both groups agreed on very little. Angered by the perceived decadence and weakness of the parliamentary Republic, fearful of the potential for success on the left, and yearning for a new order, the various leaders and members banded together to forge a French future in their own image. In the process, they provided a microcosm of the Vichyiste national revolution, and prepared the way for its program. Although the results were remarkably different—failure for the Faisceau, limited success for

⁶²⁵On Vallat's experience in the Faisceau, see his memoirs, *Le Nez de Cléopâtre: Souvenirs d'un homme de droite, 1919-1944* (Paris: Éditions les Quatre Fils Ayman, 1957), pp. 131-133. Vallat was subsequently a member of the CDF/PSF. He left the Faisceau in 1926, after the rupture with the Action française, and the CDF/PSF, after its transformation into a parliamentary party. A member of the conservative Fédération Republicaine, Vallat chose to remain with that organization.

⁶²⁶Paxton, pp. 251-252; Sean Kennedy, "Reconciling the Nation Against Democracy: The Croix de Feu, Parti sociale français and French Politics, 1927-1945". Doctoral Dissertation, York University, 1998, pp. 367-393. Vallin eventually fled Vichy, joining De Gaulle in London in September 1942.

⁶²⁷On Darquier de Pellepoix in the CDF/PSF, see Jean Laloum, *La France antisémite de Darquier de Pellepoix* (Paris: Éditions Syros, 1979), p. 16. He abruptly left the group in December 1935, believing La Rocque to be a "perfumed dictator".

the CDF/PSF, and the exercise of power for the Vichyistes, their ultimate experience was a common one. Diverse conservative, extreme-rightist, and technocratic notions of the new nation and state defined the Faisceau and CDF/PSF, much as the plans of the traditionalists, synarchists, social Catholics, and ardent nationalists defined the Vichy regime.

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L'Espoir Lorrain

L'Étudiant sociale

Faisceau Bellifontain

Le Flambeau

Le Flambeau de Bourgogne

Le Flambeau de Cannes

Le Flambeau de Charentes et du Périgord

Le Flambeau de l'Est

Le Flambeau de Flandres-Artois-Picardie

Le Flambeau de Franche-Comte et Territoire de Belfort

Le Flambeau de l'Indochine

Le Flambeau de l'Isère

Le Flambeau de Lorraine

Le Flambeau Marocain

Le Flambeau du Midi

Le Flambeau Morbihannais

Le Flambeau Normand

Le Flambeau du Sud-Est

Le Flambeau du Sud-Ouest

Le Flambeau des Vosges

La Flamme

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