THE LURE OF FASCISM IN WESTERN EUROPE
This page intentionally left blank
THE LURE OF FASCISM IN WESTERN EUROPE:
GERMAN NAZIS, DUTCH AND FRENCH FASCISTS, 1933–1939

Dietrich Orlow
For Maria
This page intentionally left blank
## Contents

Acknowledgments ix  
List of Abbreviations xiii  
1. Introduction 1  
2. Leaders, Agencies, Groups, Agendas 17  
3. Between Angst and Euphoria: January 1933–August 1934 41  
4. Europe Will Be a Fascist Europe: July 1934–May 1936 61  
5. Fascism, the Only Bulwark Against the Advance of Bolshevism: May 1936–March 1938 89  
6. “We Don’t Understand Our Friends Anymore”: March 1938–September 1939 121  
7. Conclusion 151  
Notes 161  
Bibliography 227  
Index 249
This page intentionally left blank
Acknowledgments

This project has had a longer gestation period than most academic works. Having done previous research in the history of the Nazi Party, I first became interested in the relations between the Nazis and Dutch and French fascists in the late 1980s. However, for a number of reasons I put aside this project on international fascism until the 1990s, when the seeming success of the neofascists in Western Europe suggested that taking a new look at their predecessors in the 1930s might be very much worthwhile. In 1986/1987 I served as visiting professor at the University of Amsterdam, the Netherlands, and in the course of teaching a seminar on West European fascism, I was struck by the presence of a quite noisy and vibrant Dutch fascist movement in the 1930s, although the Netherlands was then and still is the very model of a successful pluralist society. It was also interesting to note that the Dutch fascists initially had ambivalent feelings about the Nazi regime across the border; they viewed the Third Reich with a mixture of mostly admiration, but also some apprehension.

As for France, Ze’ev Sternhell’s work, also in the late 1980s, led to an intensified debate about the existence and nature of French fascism. Sternhell vigorously challenged the dominant historiographic school that, since the end of the Second World War, had claimed that fascism had no indigenous roots in France. Sternhell insisted that French fascism in the 1930s (and even much earlier) was not only a genuinely indigenous phenomenon but also one that exercised considerable influence on the French political and intellectual scene. In addition, as was true for the Dutch fascists, the French extreme right was fascinated by the Nazi regime and its evolving domestic and foreign policies. And on the other side of the Rhine, the Nazis too exhibited a great deal of interest in the “related movements” in Western Europe.

Like any academic project, this project benefited from the help and criticism of a large number of archivists and scholars. Only in this case the magnitude of the help was larger than for most projects; as a book on
comparative history, the project involved research in the archives of three countries. It would be tedious to list all of the archives—they are listed in the bibliography—but I would like to thank all of the archival staff persons with whom I came into contact in the course of the research for this project. They were unfailingly friendly, courteous, and helpful, and I would like to thank all of them.

I would like to make one exception to this general thank-you note, and single out for special acknowledgment Dr. Maria Keiper, the director of the Political Archive of the German Foreign Office, and her staff. The Political Archive, in contrast to the usual “historical” archives, is a “working” archive. That is to say, its primary purpose is to provide historical documentation needed for the conduct of Germany’s current foreign affairs rather than serve the needs of historians. Despite this Dr. Keiper and her staff are unfailingly kind and accommodating to the historians who find the Political Archive holdings a treasure trove of important documentation.

It is a truism that scholarly work is heavily dependent upon the kindness of foundations. In my case I would like to thank the Alexander von Humboldt-Stiftung, and especially the Netherlands Institute for Advanced Studies (NIAS) in Wassenaar, the Netherlands, for granting me a yearlong fellowship in 2001–2002, which enabled me to complete the bulk of the writing of the manuscript.

It is equally true that while scholarly research involves many hours of essentially solitary work in the archives, the final product of that research benefits immensely from interaction with colleagues working in some of the same areas. In my case I would like to single out for particular thanks Prof. Hans Blom, the former director of the Netherlands Institute for War Documentation (NIOD), Prof. Marten Brands, the former director of the Duitsland Instituut of the University of Amsterdam, Prof. Gerald Braunthal of the University of Massachusetts, Prof. Ursula Büttner of the Hamburg Institut für Zeitgeschichte, and Prof. Henry Turner, Jr. of Yale University.

This list of helpful colleagues would not be complete, however, without mention of the “mini group” at NIAS during the academic year 2001–2002. At this time two of my fellow Fellows, Prof. Wichert ten Have of the University of Amsterdam and Prof. Bruno de Wever of the University of Ghent in Belgium, were working on right-wing politics in the Netherlands and Belgium during the 1930s and 1940s. Our ability to interact on a daily basis about our common interests and ideas certainly helped me to hone my ideas about West European fascism.

Finally, as has been true of all my scholarly projects, above all thanks go to my wife Maria. Her role as research partner in the archives, thoughtful
and honest critic, and her invaluable computer skills facilitated the completion of this project all along the line. Without her help the completion of this project would not have been possible, and I would certainly like to express my profound thanks for her role in writing this book.

Dietrich Olow
Bellevue, Washington
This page intentionally left blank
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AA</td>
<td>Auswärtiges Amt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AM</td>
<td>Mussert Archief</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AN</td>
<td>Archive Nationale (Paris)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APA</td>
<td>Aussenpolitisches Amt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APL</td>
<td>Algemeen Propaganda Leider</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APP</td>
<td>Archive de la Préfecture de Police (Paris)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BAB</td>
<td>Bundesarchiv Berlin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CDJC</td>
<td>Centre Documentaire Juive Contemporaine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CF</td>
<td>Croix de Feu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CFA</td>
<td>Comité France-Allemagne</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CRAS</td>
<td>Comité de Rassemblement Anti-Soviétique</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DAF</td>
<td>Deutsche Arbeitsfront</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DFG</td>
<td>Deutsch-Französische Gesellschaft</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DNG</td>
<td>Deutsch-Niederländische Gesellschaft</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FO</td>
<td>Foreign Office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ges. Haag</td>
<td>Gesellschaft Den Haag</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HJ</td>
<td>Hitler Jugend</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JSP</td>
<td>Je Suis Partout</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KdF</td>
<td>Kraft durch Freude</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LICA</td>
<td>Ligue Internationale contre L’Antisémitisme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MSR</td>
<td>Mouvement Social Républicaine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NCPB</td>
<td>Nederlands Christelijk Pers Bureau</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ND</td>
<td>Nationale Dagblad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NIOD</td>
<td>Nederlandse Instituut voor Oorlogsdocumentie</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NKCB</td>
<td>Nederlandsch Katholieke Correspondentie Bureau</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NNS</td>
<td>Nederlandsche Nationaal-Socialist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NSB</td>
<td>Nationaal Socialistische Beweging</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NSNAP</td>
<td>Nationaal Socialistische Nederlandsche Arbeiderspartij</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NSV</td>
<td>Nationalsozialistische Volkswohlfahrtsorganisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PA/AA</td>
<td>Politisches Archiv des Auswärtigen Amtes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PNP</td>
<td>Parti National Populaire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abbreviation</td>
<td>Full Form</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pol. Abt.</td>
<td>Politische Abteilung</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P.P.</td>
<td>Préfecture de Police</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PPF</td>
<td>Parti Populaire Français</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PRNS</td>
<td>Parti Républicain National et Social</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PSF</td>
<td>Parti Social Français</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PSF-JJ</td>
<td>Parti Socialiste de France-Union Jean Jaurès</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RAD</td>
<td>Reichsarbeitsdienst</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RKSP</td>
<td>Rooms-Katholieke Staatspartij</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RMVP</td>
<td>Reichsministerium für Volksaufklärung und Propaganda</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SA</td>
<td>Sturmabteilung</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SG</td>
<td>Sureté Générale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SS</td>
<td>Schutzstaffel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>StdF</td>
<td>Stellvertreter des Führers für Parteiangelegenheiten</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNAC</td>
<td>Union Nationale des Anciens Combattants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vova</td>
<td>Volk en Vaderland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WHW</td>
<td>Winterhilfswerk</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
“Whatever happened to Fascism?” asked Tim Mason almost two decades ago. It was more than a rhetorical question. Mason was concerned that studies of fascism as a generic set of political ideas, organizations, and leaders were increasingly replaced by an avalanche of specialized studies that threatened to bury the study of fascism from a generic and comparative perspective. In addition, most West Europeans had adopted an attitude of been there, done that about fascism. Right-wing extremism in Western Europe seemed to have been effectively marginalized. Western Europe was a “rich, brilliant, and cultivated . . . relatively open and liberal society”; as a political system, democracy had become part of the fabric of West European patriotism.

But, as Ze’ev Sternhell, the author of this assessment of contemporary West European societies, also noted, “not long ago [Europe] was ‘the most horrible place on the face of the earth. A lesson that should not be forgotten.’” Indeed, politics in the 1930s was a far cry from politics at the beginning of the twenty-first century. Far from being universally celebrated, political democracy, especially parliamentary democracy, was widely criticized as a central problem of European political life. The “crisis of democracy” was a much-heard buzzword.

Fascists were the foremost among those creating and propagandizing the “crisis of democracy.” In the eyes of the fascists, democracy was responsible for all that was wrong with Western Europe after the First World War: exacerbated class tensions, cowardice, selfishness, materialism, and, above all, “decadence.” Decadence took a variety of forms, from American jazz to miscegenation, but at heart, the critics insisted, it meant that an unprincipled self-indulgence had replaced virility and idealism. Under the leadership of the bourgeoisie, those “hommes des apéritifs,” Europe had become “mad with scandals. Mad with egotism. Mad with rebellion against heaven.”
Far from being marginalized, fascism in the 1930s was a viable part of the political spectrum in Western Europe. In fact, fascist theorists or organizations existed in all European countries (except perhaps the Soviet Union). Moreover, the ideological and organizational lines between the fascists, who wanted to destroy democracy as the root of Europe’s political problems, and those who variously called themselves critics, reformers, or rejuvenators of democracy were often porous. By no means all of the reformers of democracy rejected working together with the fascists, and many regarded at least part of the fascist agenda as worthy of serious consideration.

This book is not intended to provide another general history of European fascism. As if to answer Tim Mason’s lament, this field of historical studies has become something of a growth industry in the last decade or so. Rather, this analysis focuses on a specific aspect of interwar fascism, the ideological and organizational interaction between the German Nazis and right-wing extremists in two of Germany’s neighbors, France and the Netherlands, in the years from the Nazis’ coming to power in 1933 to the outbreak of the Second World War in 1939 in Europe. Although this is not a history of generic fascism, it may be useful at the outset to describe fascism’s place in the landscape of West European politics during the interwar years and, in addition, provide a brief survey of the historiography of fascist studies.

Was fascism “the idea of the twentieth century,” as the fascists claimed? The fascists saw themselves as political visionaries who would create a new society in Europe. This, they insisted, could only be done by radically altering the course that European history had taken since the French Revolution. According to the fascists, by the twentieth century the promises of 1789 had resulted in nothing but stagnation and self-indulgence or, even worse, the rule of Marxism and Bolshevism. The only answer to Europe’s problems, as Hitler noted on several occasions, was to complete the bourgeois revolution by destroying the bourgeoisie.

Remarkably, some contemporary political opponents of fascism accepted their rivals as genuine political revolutionaries. In a speech in Berlin in 1933, the young French sociologist Raymond Aron, who was later to become a noted champion of liberalism and democracy, attested that the “totalitarian regimes are authentically revolutionary, [while] the democracies are essentially conservative.” Two years later the distinguished Marxist Richard Löwenthal, writing under his pseudonym Paul Sering, agreed that the fascist revolution was a true revolution because it changed the essential character of bourgeois society.

Characterizing fascism as revolutionary has never met with universal acclaim. A few scholars, such as Rainer Zitelmann, A. James Gregor, and Ze’ev Sternhell, continue to insist with some vehemence that the fascists
were social and political revolutionaries, whose primary goal was to destroy bourgeois society and establish true national socialism, but the majority of students of fascism reject this contention. Such renowned scholars as Martin Broszat and Henry Turner put fascism squarely in the counter-revolutionary, reactionary, antimodernist camp. Still others, like Renzo de Felice, want to have it both ways: fascism was not only a reactionary and conservative phenomenon, but also a revolutionary one.

A major reason for the ongoing debate about virtually all aspects of fascism has always been the difficulty of agreeing on an all-encompassing definition of the phenomenon. Almost twenty years ago, Istvan Déak wrote rather wistfully that “[the] day still seems far off [when] someone will . . . formulate a universally acceptable definition of fascism.” He was right; it has not happened yet. The continuing debate ranges over what aspects of fascism should be included under an umbrella definition and how seriously one needs to treat the self-labeling of various extreme-Right organizations and thinkers. To take but one example, the French Parti Populaire Français (PPF) seemed to pass the duck test with ease: the party looked, acted, and shouted like a fascist group, and its leaders did not dispute the fascist label. Still, some scholars insist that neither the organization nor its ideology was completely or really fascist.

Why the controversy and confusion? Partly it involves the question of the significance of a fascist ideology. The “ideological camp” argues that fascism had a viable and coherent set of political values that set it apart from the other dominant political ideologies of twentieth-century Europe: liberalism, conservatism, and Marxism. Those adhering to this set of ideas were fascists; those who did not were not. A major proponent of this approach is Ze’ev Sternhell. But his equally passionate critics contend that his approach is all wrong. By reducing fascism to a set of ideas, he is ignoring the importance of the organizational and stylistic aspects of the phenomenon. In addition, they insist, he is going far beyond the evidence. According to the critics, Sternhell has cast his net so wide that any intellectual critic of parliamentary democracy and liberalism finds himself labeled a fascist.

Some scholars contend that any definition of fascism must exclude organizations that existed in countries that were “immune” to fascism. According to Réné Rémond and his students, there was no native French fascism. Whatever might have looked like fascism in France during the interwar years was really a new manifestation of traditional French Bonapartism. French fascist organizations that deserve the name existed only during the Nazi occupation of the country from 1940 to 1944, when they were created by the occupying Nazis. For the Dutch (and Belgians), Herman van der Wusten has advanced a similar immunity theory. According to van der Wusten, fascism remained marginalized in both
Holland and Belgium because the Low Countries “were thoroughly modern states situated in the capitalist core of Europe, where the chances for authoritarian nationalist victories . . . were relatively small.”

Van der Wusten’s thesis raises the long-standing and emotion-laden question of fascism’s relationship to modernity and modernization. The fascists themselves claimed that they were true “modernizers,” who linked political dictatorship with new forms of economic and social advancement. Their fascination with modern technology and interest in societal restructuring would seem to give verisimilitude to this claim, and some scholars agree that any definition of fascism must include the phenomenon’s modern character. At the same time, there is no doubt that the fascists were nostalgic for the premodern past. They often described this past as an ideal community (Gemeinschaft) that had been destroyed by liberalism and turned into the soulless modern society (Gesellschaft). This description has led most students of fascism to insist that since the fascists rejected the Enlightenment, fascism was antimodern. Actually, the fascists wanted to have it both ways. They insisted that their form of modernization would create a technologically advanced society that would replicate the supposed premodern harmonies. Taking account of this contradiction, a third group of scholars argues that the fascists were indeed ideologically schizophrenic. Jeffrey Herf long ago classified Nazism as a form of “reactionary modernism,” and Renzo de Felice insists that Nazism was reactionary, but Italian Fascism was a modern phenomenon.

The relationship between conservatism and fascism represents another aspect of fascism’s definitional quagmire. As noted earlier, the ideological and organizational boundaries between fascism and conservatism were often fluid, although it is equally correct that—as true conservatives like Alfred Hugenberg and Franz von Papen eventually found out—the fascists had no interest in a long-term, cooperative relationship with the conservatives. Despite their common adversaries and at times similar rhetoric, a description like “fascistoid” conservatism really distorts the essential differences between the two political phenomena.

And what about anti-Semitism and racism? Were Nazism, which placed anti-Semitism and racism at the core of its belief system, and Dutch fascism, which embraced anti-Semitism and racism rather late in its organizational life and even then with a singular lack of enthusiasm, part of the same phenomenon? The social roots of fascism are the subject of another perennial debate. The classic analyses, following Theodor Geiger’s pioneering studies in the early 1930s, emphasized that fascism was primarily a lower-middle-class phenomenon. Recent studies, however, have demonstrated that this was a simplistic conclusion. Fascism, to use Otto Kirchheim’s phrase, was a catchall phenomenon that attracted supporters from all
societal groups, ranging from the upper ranks of the bourgeoisie to the Lumpenproletariat.26

Then there is the thorny issue of the fascist aesthetic or, to use a less artistic term, the fascist style. For most people, fascism evokes thousands of disciplined and uniformed Nazis incessantly marching at the annual party congresses in Nuremberg, or Italian children in Balilla uniforms parading past the Duce in his fanciful militia outfit. But was this style of politics uniquely fascist and therefore an essential part of the phenomenon’s definitional criteria? In general, the 1920s and 1930s in Europe were a far more uniform and march-happy era than our own. The German Social Democratic Reichsbanner Schwarz-Rot-Gold wore rudimentary uniforms and organized numerous marches in its vain attempt to save the democratic Weimar Republic. The Dutch Social Democrats, for their part, in the 1930s campaigned for their Plan van de Arbeid (Plan of Labor) with uniforms, flags, and specially composed marching songs. Was the fascist aesthetic, as the fascists themselves insisted, an essential, not tactical, element in their attempt to create the uomo fascista (fascist man) of the new age? In this connection, Peter Reichel’s complaint that we know far too little about the aesthetics of fascism is not without relevance.27

Faced with this plethora of formidable theoretical controversies and unanswered questions, many students of fascism embraced “nominalism” as a way of escaping the problems of finding an acceptable umbrella definition of fascism. Proponents of this approach argue that the various extreme-Right ideologies and organizations in Europe during the interwar years do not have enough in common to put them in the same political basket. Consequently, the supporters of “nominalism” claim there never was a single fascism, but only a multiplicity of fascisms, each of which needed to be studied as a unique phenomenon in the context of its specific national situation. From this perspective, the Nazis were German National Socialists, and the Italian Fascists just that, Italian Fascists. The two groups had nothing in common.28

In contrast, other analysts attempted to make fascism part of various forms of political “universalism.” Opponents of fascism, especially those on the left side of the political spectrum, applied the fascist label to virtually all of their political opponents, sometimes modifying the category with qualifiers like “neo,” “crypto,” or “quasi.” (On orders of the Comintern the German Communists labeled the Social Democrats as “Social Fascists.”) This may have been effective propaganda, but it was certainly poor analysis. Equally inappropriate was the excessively universal label when used by overenthusiastic supporters of fascism. Writing in the 1920s, the Dutch Catholic essayist Em. Verviers described Leo XIII and
Pius X as the “two greatest fascist Popes,” a classification that both the Holy Fathers and serious analysts of fascism would reject out of hand.

Fascism was also subsumed under the label of totalitarianism, an analytical concept that enjoyed its greatest vogue during the Cold War. True, the term had a certain historic verisimilitude as far as fascism was concerned, since the fascists themselves often spoke of their ambition to create a “total state” and a “total society.” Still, the proponents of totalitarianism pursued a political rather than an analytical goal: finding a label that fit both Soviet Communism and fascism or, more specifically, Russian Stalinism and German Nazism. Both were “enemies of the West,” and consequently the struggle against the Soviet Union after 1945 was a seamless continuation of the battle against Hitler and Nazism in the Second World War. But putting communism and fascism into the same political box was never an uncontroversial fit, and for good reasons. Despite some superficial similarities, Soviet communism and fascism were essentially different political phenomena, both theoretically and in practice.

It will come as no surprise to the reader that I should like to enter a plea for looking upon fascism as a generic phenomenon in this study of the interaction of three national fascisms. I think there are a number of compelling reasons for such a conceptual approach. One is historic: the fascists looked upon themselves as adherents of a set of ideas and organizational principles that would forge the future of all of Europe. To be sure, virtually all fascists would eventually recognize that hypernationalism and fascist internationalism were incompatible, but for most this insight did not come until the Second World War. In the 1930s, fascists across the Continent thought of fascism as a European movement. Even the Nazis, who are often cited as the least generically minded group of fascists, insisted that their movement was part of a Europe-wide phenomenon. Joseph Goebbels expressed his “firm conviction . . . that [fascism] will at one time dominate all of Europe.” In a similar vein, Hitler, in a 1930 article, demanded the “fascitization of the European states.”

The Dutch and French fascists were even more internationally minded. In fact, the French fascists were perhaps the most enthusiastic “Europeans” among the fascists. Shortly before his suicide in August 1944, Pierre Drieu la Rochelle, in many ways the poster child of French fascism, wrote of his disappointment in Nazism because in the end his German heroes had never developed a “European [sic] policy.” Four years earlier Robert Brasillach, Drieu’s fellow fascist intellectual, had written lyrically about the uomo fascista, “a new type of human being who was born in Italy,” but who now manifested himself all across Europe, from Portugal to “the flat lands and canals of Holland.” Nazi Germany would
lead the way: “Germany, attuned [attentive] to the new times, awaited her hour and without hesitating prepared the future.”

In recent years, heeding Raymond Grew’s generation-old plea for more comparative studies, analysts of fascism have shifted away from nominalism and universalism and turned (or returned) to the study of fascism as a generic phenomenon. Typical of this approach is Ian Kershaw’s conclusion that “[Nazism’s ] similarities with other brands of fascism are profound, not peripheral. Nazism’s features place the phenomenon squarely within the European-wide context of radical anti-Socialist, national-integrationist movements.”

Much of the credit for breaking a pathway for renewed interest in the study of generic fascism goes to the French-Israeli scholar Ze’ev Sternhell. In a series of publications, notably his monograph *Neither Left nor Right*, Sternhell attempted to represent fascism as a Europe-wide set of political and social ideas. He summarized his central thesis as follows: “fascism, like liberalism, socialism, and communism, was a universal category with regional and cultural variants.” As noted earlier, few critics accepted Sternhell’s additional arguments about the centrality of French intellectuals in the development of European fascism or the degree of support for fascism in Europe, but in the wake of Sternhell’s tour de force, an increasing number of scholars began to treat fascism—again—as a generic phenomenon that needed to be studied on a cross-national basis. As Francesco Germinaranio put it, Sternhell created a “choc salutaire.”

But was not all this a case of déjà vu? After all, an earlier generation of scholars had tried their hand at “defining” generic fascism. The results, as we now know, were not entirely satisfactory. In their effort to find an irreducible list of minimum characteristics that applied to all fascisms, they ended up with the so-called antis, a series of resentments against the dominant societal forces of the twentieth century that were supposedly common to all fascisms. The list included opposition to Marxism, liberalism, Freemasonry, democracy, and a variety of ethnic minorities. Fascism for these genericists was not an ideology or a political program, but simply a list of irrational resentments, an “appeal to the inner beast in man,” as the German Social Democratic leader Kurt Schumacher put it.

What sets the new genericists apart from the earlier group is the recognition that there were indeed “positive” sides to fascism—positive not in the sense of laudable, but “as a distinctive set of ambitions” for transforming and molding societal life. But what did fascism stand for “positively”? Fascists themselves pointed first to their celebration of the nation. All fascists were hypernationalists, looking upon the nation as the key unit of historical dynamics. The nation as a “living organism” was far more than the individuals who made up this collective entity. In fact, fascists did not
think much of the actual inhabitants of their exalted nations. What Jeannine Verdès-Leroux wrote about the French right-wing extremists was no less true for all other fascists: “They constantly exalted France and equally constantly mistrusted the French.” This was especially so if the nation was languishing under a democratic political system and permeated by the “decadence” fascists so abhorred. Fascists celebrated not the present, but the mythical future nation. In Roger Griffin’s memorable phrase, fascists were “palingenetic nationalists,” insisting that only under their leadership could the nation be reborn as a new and perfect society.

Racism—but not necessarily anti-Semitism—was another “positive” characteristic of fascism. On the face of it this statement may seem surprising. Nominalism in fascist studies found much of its support in the seemingly vast gap between the Italian Fascists and the German Nazis. The Italians, the argument went, were never really racists or anti-Semites; the Nazis were nothing but racists and anti-Semites. On closer examination, however, this nominalist argument turns out to be spurious. It is true that various fascisms placed different values or priorities on racism, but all fascists constructed some form of ethnic, racial, or cultural out-group that had to be suppressed before the palingenetic nation could prosper. The out-groups differed and overlapped: Bolsheviks (often turned into “Asiatic Bolsheviks”) and democrats for all fascists, Jews and Freemasons for the Nazis, liberals for the Dutch fascists, and Protestants and Freemasons for the French.

Similarly, all fascists were European imperialists, a concept that included the belief that the European colonizers were culturally and “racially” superior to the indigenous peoples they conquered and colonized. In this sense, it did not particularly matter if the empire was to be maintained (as was the case for the Dutch East Indies and the French possessions in Asia and Africa) or attained (as would be true for the Nazis’ Lebensraum in Eastern Europe or the Italian Fascists’ dream of the Mediterranean as an Italian lake). As imperialists, the Italian Fascists, no less than other right-wing extremist groups, believed in a hierarchy of races and cultures, classifying them as “superior” and “inferior” and assigning them greater or lesser rights to national fulfillment. The war against Ethiopia was at least in part a campaign to demonstrate the superiority of the white race, and Italian rule in Ethiopia clearly discriminated against the black inhabitants of the country.

Perhaps the most influential and for potential supporters the most attractive “positive” feature of fascism was the concept of the Volksgemeinschaft. This German and specifically Nazi word is difficult to translate (Paul Brooker’s rendering of it as “fraternal society” misses some of the emotional overtones), and for this reason the German term will be
used in this book. While difficult to translate, it is relatively easy to
describe what the fascists meant by the Volksgemeinschaft and why it had
such a widespread appeal. In much of Europe, the 1920s and 1930s
were years of chronic social tension and economic hardship. The extreme
Left proposed to solve society’s problems by means of the proletarian rev-
olution and the dictatorship of the proletariat, but the extreme Right
insisted it could create a future society in which the segments of the
national in-group would not be leveled or abolished, but would live in
perpetual harmony. It is important to keep in mind that the concept of
the Volksgemeinschaft applied only to members of the in-group as
defined by the fascists. The out-groups—whomever they were—would
remain outside the Volksgemeinschaft and would not be able to partici-
pate in its benefits.

For the members of the in-group, however, the fascists promised to
square the circle. Under the leadership of the fascists, the members of the
national in-group would subordinate their individual desires and ambi-
tions to the well-being of the greater whole. (“You are nothing, your peo-
ple are everything,” was Joseph Goebbels’s pithy phrase.) At the same
time the fascist society would not be a social dictatorship of one class over
the others. Rather, the classes would maintain their individual identity,
yet work harmoniously together to advance the national good. According
to the fascists, their concept of the Volksgemeinschaft would simultane-
ously overcome the selfishness of liberal individualism and avoid the class
dictatorship postulated by the Marxists. The fascists also claimed that the
Volksgemeinschaft would bring about political harmony. They would do
this by turning the notion of a political dictatorship on its head. Instead
of the “dictatorship” of many parties, fascism with its one, true “people’s
party” would create a genuine “people’s state (volks-staat),” as an early
Dutch fascist put it.

Many Europeans embraced the concept of the Volksgemeinschaft (not
all of them fascists), but it had an especially strong appeal for the youth-
ful, male members of what Robert Wohl has called the generation of
1914. In the belligerent countries of the First World War, like Germany
and France, veterans were disproportionately overrepresented among fas-
cist activists. In countries that had been neutral in the First World War,
like the Netherlands, fascism attracted the same generational cohort,
although here the activists often substituted their colonial military expe-
rience for the missing engagement on the battlefields of Europe. One rea-
son for the attractiveness of the Volksgemeinschaft among this group was
the conviction that during their military experience the veterans had
already experienced the Volksgemeinschaft in action. This myth pro-
posed that on the battlefront or in the colonies, thousands of soldiers
shed their individual and class identities and willingly sacrificed their health and lives so that the nation might live and be victorious. At the same time, the wartime Volksgemeinschaft was a violent experience, highlighting the contention that physical force was needed to overcome the internal and external out-groups.

The attempt to continue or recreate the wartime Volksgemeinschaft to a great extent shaped the fascists’ specific style of politics. What to later generations seemed like a rather silly militarization of politics with its omnipresent uniforms and incessant marches was to the fascists both means and end toward creating the Volksgemeinschaft. To the fascist activists, the men (and they were mostly men) who put on colored shirts had cast off their individual beings and became (or became again) part of a greater and nobler whole. The fascist style certainly reinforced the activists’ commitment to their cause. Yvonne Karow’s description of the Nazis’ Nuremberg party congresses as a “closed [geschlossene] Volksgemeinschaft” is a particularly felicitous characterization of this annual highlight of the fascist style. Indeed, there is now considerable evidence that for many fascists, their style assumed a religious character. Militarized politics became a substitute religion with all of the characteristics of a religion except for individual salvation after death. (There was, however, the promise of national salvation.) In addition to reinforcing the activists’ commitment to the cause, the fascist style also had a proselytizing function. The sight of disciplined and uniformed political soldiers, who often engaged in violence as well, was designed to impress potential supporters with fascism’s power and determination.

While the new (or renewed) historiographic emphasis on fascism as a generic phenomenon is welcome, there is one aspect of the history of fascism that remains neglected. This is the interaction of a fascist regime in power and extreme-Right movements that were trying to achieve power. By examining the ideological and organizational relations between the Third Reich and French and Dutch fascists in the years from 1933 to 1939, this book addresses a gap in the historiography of interwar fascism.

It is legitimate to ask, of course, why the selection of these two West European fascisms and their relations with the Third Reich? As far as France is concerned, the prewar relations of French fascists with the Nazi regime is still an under-researched topic. Until the publication of Sternhell’s Neither Left Nor Right broke the logjam, Rémond’s “immune theory” as it applied to France was largely uncontested. In recent years, however, historians of contemporary French history have examined the troubled 1930s with renewed interest. Many scholars concluded that large numbers of Frenchmen sympathized with fascism even if they did not join extreme right-wing organizations or called themselves fascist.
Rémond and his followers have not yielded gracefully, and the increas-
ingly polemical historiographic controversy is by no means settled, but it is perhaps possible to draw some interim conclusions. One is that the fear (or hope) expressed by many contemporary observers, that the political situation in France in the 1930s was comparable to that of the Weimar Republic, were clearly exaggerated. At the same time it was equally true that politically France was facing a serious systemic crisis, and that the country was increasingly polarized. A contemporary journalist and essayist, André Siegfried, commented that “the country has a fever.” A later analyst, Pierre Laborie, spoke of France’s “spiritual confusion.”

In this atmosphere, typically fascist values like anti-Semitism, rejection of parliamentary democracy, celebration of militarism and imperialism, and the creation of a true French Volksgemeinschaft in a future palingenetic French nation found widespread support. Moreover, as had been true in Germany in the 1920s and 1930s, the line between the moderate and extreme Right was not always clearly drawn. Fearful of “Marxism” and “Bolshevism” in any guise, many of the moderate right-wing groups did not hesitate to cooperate with organizations and individuals that endorsed fascist ideas and political styles.

The inclusion of the Netherlands in a study of fascist interaction may seem somewhat surprising. At first glance, Holland was an unlikely nurturing ground for a successful, indigenous fascist movement. Neutral during the First World War, the Netherlands were spared the hardships of that conflict as well as many of the political, economic, and social dislocations that followed the war. During the 1920s, the country appeared to be the very model of a well-functioning, modern pluralist society. Although the label verzuiling (pillarization) was not in general use until 1935, this specifically Dutch system of pluralist politics was already well established by the time of the First World War. In practice, verzuiling meant that a small number of clearly defined interest groups in the country shared political power in an interactive system of mutual tolerance and an equitable assignment of the “percs” of power.

Before the First World War the recognized pillars were Protestants, Catholics, and “others”; the last category included mostly liberals of various stripes. After the war, organized labor was also accorded the status as of a zuil, although the bourgeois pillars did not yet welcome labor as a governmental coalition partner; that had to wait until 1939. Each of the zuilen was represented by a specific political party, and since no political group could hope to win a majority of the popular vote, the 1920s and 1930s were characterized by a series of interparty, and consequently interzuilen, coalitions.
The picture of sociopolitical harmony was deceptive, however. In fact, precisely because the Netherlands seemed such an unlikely habitat for fascism, the strength of Dutch fascism demonstrates the ubiquity of the phenomenon. Holland was not left untouched by the wave of antidemocratic sentiments that swept through Europe in the 1930s. A variety of critics insisted that the Dutch sociopolitical system, like democracy in Germany and France, was essentially an arena for deals among the self-serving leaders of the established zuilen at the expense of the “little people.” In addition, the national, or rather the imperial, question became acute in the 1930s. Virtually all Dutch parties supported maintaining Holland’s overseas empire, and a mutiny by Indonesian sailors on a Dutch warship at the beginning of 1933 shocked the nation, leading to widespread accusations that the government was not acting forcefully enough to fulfill its imperial responsibilities.

By the mid-1930s, fascism in Holland was a well-organized political force that threatened the fabric of Dutch political pluralism. Dutch fascism easily fit the generic mold. The Dutch fascists were militarists and imperialists, they were racists, and they promised to bring a true Volksgemeinschaft to a country now dominated by materialism, decadence, and democracy. For the Dutch fascists, the primary problem in Dutch society was the lack of national unity. They claimed that democracy and verzuiling had divided the Dutch into political, economic, and religious segments that coexisted in the same territory, but did not form a national whole.

A study of the relations between the Third Reich and Dutch and French fascists, I believe, contributes significantly to our understanding of the fascist phenomenon. To begin with, it is a historically valid focus. As noted earlier, contrary to the views of the nominalists, fascists thought of themselves as an international phenomenon. Moreover, groups and individuals who labored in the movement phase of their development looked with fascination (and often envy) upon a “sister organization” that had reached its power phase. As a result, French and Dutch fascists exhibited an intense interest in all aspects of the evolving Third Reich.

Not surprisingly, many of the Nazis’ domestic policies spoke to French fascist concerns. The new German rulers eliminated from power the out-groups that the French fascists also identified as responsible for France’s decadence and decline: Communists, democrats, Freemasons, and for many French fascists, Jews. At the same time, the French fascist attitudes toward the Third Reich were neither unabashedly positive nor static. On the domestic front the French extreme Right liked much, but by no means all, of what the Third Reich was doing. French fascists enthusiastically welcomed the destruction of parliamentary democracy in Germany and
the Nazis’ suppression of communism, but they distrusted Nazi neopaganism and claimed that a system of state-sponsored terror would not be needed in any future French fascist states.

If the fascists were ambivalent about the Nazis’ domestic policies, the Third Reich’s foreign policy ambitions initially aroused widespread distrust and suspicion among the French fascists. True, a few accepted Hitler’s early line that destroying the Versailles settlement was the price that needed to be paid for Germany’s willingness to guard the borders of Western civilization against the threat of Bolshevik expansionism. The appeal of the palingenetic myth came into play here as well: These extreme Rightists claimed that once fascism had come to power in France, Nazi Germany and fascist France would cooperate to build the Europe of young nations. But these were not the views of most of the French extreme Right. Rather, the majority of French fascists retained their skepticism at least until the advent of the Franco-Soviet Pact, the Popular Front, and the Spanish Civil War. Now Hitler’s anti-Communist credentials loomed large, and the often-repeated sentiment “rather Hitler than [the French Socialist prime minister] Blum” was no longer limited to a lunatic fringe.

The Dutch fascists, too, insisted they did not approve of everything the Nazis stood for. Initially they were especially critical of the Nazis’ church policies and the rapidly expanding system of state-sponsored terror. In addition, unlike the Nazis and most of the French extreme Right, the Dutch fascists did not initially categorize either Jews or Freemasons as enemies of the new fascist Holland. The Nazis’ early foreign policy aims did not arouse much skepticism among the Dutch extreme Right. True, Nazi descriptions of the Dutch as estranged “Low Germans” angered the Dutch fascists, who were no less hypernationalists than other fascist groups, but the Nazis’ larger aims seemed to fit in well with the Dutch fascists’ own visions. These elements distrusted French Continental hegemony because they saw France as the primary champion of the hated system of democracy. For this reason, the Nazis’ avowed aim of breaking French hegemony was cheered on by the Dutch fascists. So was Hitler’s expressed desire to improve relations with Great Britain. In fact, some of the Dutch fascist leaders hoped that a fascist Holland could act as honest broker in bringing the former enemies together.

But the Dutch fascists also harbored other illusions about the Nazis’ foreign policy. Despite the Dutch fascists’ incessant celebrations of the Dutch accomplishments in the seventeenth century, the “golden century” of Dutch history, even the most benighted among them did not expect the Netherlands to play a role as a major European power in the twentieth century. Rather, the Dutch fascists’ hypernationalism was focused
upon the empire, especially the Dutch East Indies. Dutch control of this area was increasingly challenged by Japan, and since Germany had traditionally tilted toward China and against Japan in her Asian policies, an attitude Hitler initially continued, the Dutch fascists saw the Third Reich as a natural diplomatic ally that would help to preserve the integrity of the Dutch empire.

Interfascist relations were not a one-way street. The Nazis were intensely interested in the fate of fascism in France and Holland, but the new German rulers were also deeply divided on how to deal with the “related movements” in Western Europe. Some Nazi leaders welcomed the supposed decadence of a democratic France and Holland because this would weaken Germany’s neighbors and make it easier to subject them to German control. For these “conquerors,” strong fascist movements in France and the Netherlands were not welcome developments. After all, would a fascist France not pursue its own hegemonial ambitions as a rival of the Third Reich? As for the Netherlands, the Dutch were clearly no threat to German foreign policy ambitions in Europe, but a fascist Holland might also be anxious to preserve its political and cultural independence, rather than become a minor component of the “Greater Germanic Reich.”

However, there were also “collaborationists” among the Nazis. They saw the “related movements” in Germany’s neighbors as pioneers of the new Europe that would form a vast alliance of fascist regimes led by Nazi Germany. From the vantage point of the “collaborationists,” a fascist France and a fascist Holland would be natural allies of Germany. With the benefit of hindsight it is clear, of course, that Hitler was always determined to subjugate the Continent rather than cooperate with Germany’s neighbors, but during much of the 1930s his true intentions were still hidden. The “collaborationists” insisted they were carrying out Hitler’s true goals, and since the Führer took care not yet to reveal his actual aims, the “collaborationists” could pursue their own agenda in the belief that they had Hitler’s support for their activities.

When Hitler began the Second World War, the conflict between “collaborationists” and “conquerors” in the Nazi camp was decided; the “collaborationists” had lost. Relations between the Nazis and the “related movements” in France and the Netherlands were put on a new footing. For this reason, it is useful to end this study of fascist interaction in 1939 rather than in 1945. After the Nazis conquered France and Holland, cooperation with them meant working with a military occupier. Many of the prewar French and Dutch fascists became collaborators with the Nazis, but others did not. The Nazis, too, found themselves in a different role. Before 1939, the “collaborationists” had not envisioned a German
military conquest of Western Europe. Instead, they solicited political allies among the indigenous fascists. After 1940 all Nazis, “conquerors” and “collaborationists” alike, carried out the policies of an occupying power that had the force of military superiority behind it, a qualitatively significant change of roles.

Another reason for concentrating on the 1930s is that with the outbreak of the war the historiographic focus of the study of fascism shifted profoundly. The question of guilt and blame moved to the foreground. To take only one example, before 1939 Robert Brasillach was a popular French writer who openly sympathized with fascism. This made him a controversial author in France, but certainly not a negative or positive cult figure. After the war, however, Brasillach became both. For the Resistance he was the personification of literary treason; Brasillach was the only intellectual executed for this crime. That fate in turn sanctified him in the eyes of the extreme Right. After his execution in 1945 the author quickly rose to the status of poster martyr for the French extreme Right, a position he continues to hold.70

A study of the relations among “classic” fascists also offers some legitimate object lessons for our time. One of these is the success or failure of efforts by nonfascist forces to marginalize fascism as a political phenomenon. In the 1930s in both the Netherlands and France, the antifascists attempted to weaken indigenous fascism by portraying its supporters as vassals of the Third Reich, who were working to establish a Nazi regime across the Rhine. Both the Dutch and French fascists vigorously denied the accusation, but the political results of this denial were decidedly different in Holland and in France. In the Netherlands the determined effort by the antifascist forces succeeded in containing and eventually marginalizing the Dutch fascists. The political fortunes of fascism in Holland rose dramatically until 1935, but after that date, largely because of the successful efforts by the pluralist forces in the Netherlands to link Dutch fascism with Nazi Germany, the Dutch fascists rapidly lost members and voters. By 1937, the membership and votes of the largest Dutch fascist party had been cut in half. This certainly did not happen in France. The French Left also vehemently attacked French fascism because of its supposed sympathies with the Third Reich, but these efforts were far less effective than they were in Holland. As a political force fascism continued to play a major role in undermining the viability of the Third Republic almost until the outbreak of the Second World War. Unlike Holland, France was a politically deeply divided country on the eve of the Second World War. Why one attempt at marginalization failed and the other succeeded is a question that remains very relevant for contemporary European politics.
When the Nazis came to power in Germany on January 30, 1933, Europe’s fascists were elated. They saw Hitler’s appointment as Reich chancellor not only as a triumph of the German Nazis but as another milestone in the fascists’ quest to free Europe from the stranglehold of liberalism, democracy, and Marxism. It is also important to remember that the extreme Right for the most part saw German Nazism and Italian Fascism not as opposites or even rivals, but as two versions of the same phenomenon. This was equally true for Hitler and Mussolini. The German dictator’s admiration for Italian Fascism and the Duce is well known, but Mussolini, too, recognized the significance of Hitler’s movement well before the NSDAP became an acute danger to the Weimar Republic.¹

The establishment of the Third Reich had especially significant consequences for the relations of the Nazis and fascists in Western Europe. The “collaborationists” among the Nazis looked upon the fascist groups in Western Europe as potential partners in some vague alliance of “new nations” dominated by the Third Reich.² The Nazi “conquerors,” of course, drew entirely different conclusions. In their view French and Dutch fascism represented unwelcome barriers to the Nazis’ hegemonic ambitions. Fascist regimes would strengthen the countries of Western Europe and, consequently, enable them to resist Nazi Germany’s imperial plans more effectively.

The fascist groups in France and the Netherlands were particularly interested in elements of the Nazis’ domestic policies as potential models for measures that future fascist regimes would impose in France and Holland. The Third Reich’s foreign policy ambitions aroused more ambivalent feelings. French and Dutch fascists certainly recognized Nazi Germany’s hegemonic ambitions, but they also welcomed the new regime’s leadership in the
battle against fascism’s common international enemies: bolshevism, liberalism, democracy, “international Jewry,” and Freemasonry.

The primary purpose of this chapter is to sketch the organizations and men who became important in the interaction between German Nazism and Dutch and French fascism after the Nazis’ coming to power. For France and the Netherlands, this chapter will introduce the major fascist groups and leaders in the two countries. For Germany, it will be necessary to describe the overlapping and competing state and party jurisdictions that quickly characterized the “dual state” in the nascent Third Reich. A large number of old and new offices and officials insisted they were particularly suited to carry out the Führer’s wishes on relations between the Nazi regime and the “related movements” in Western Europe. The result was a plethora of conflicting initiatives and policy orientations.

Since this survey of officials, intellectuals, and parties focuses on the interaction between the Nazis and Right-wing extremists in Western Europe, the analysis will include descriptions of what in retrospect were clearly unimportant groups and personages. For example, the French fascist Henry Coston was actually a marginal figure in France, but his strident anti-Semitism attracted the Nazis’ attention. They convinced themselves that he was a major political force in the country.

**Germany**

Hitler and most of his close associates had little knowledge, but a great deal of xenophobic prejudice against Germany’s neighbors. The Nazi leader never visited Holland, and his personal acquaintance with France was limited to service on the Western front in the First World War and a short visit to Paris in June 1940. This did not, however, prevent him from having a number of idées fixes about both countries. Hitler’s views of France combined Nazi racial axioms with traditional German Conservative ideas on Franco-German relations. According to Hitler, the present generation of French leaders was merely continuing the policies of all French regimes from the Bourbons to the Third Republic: to destroy Germany not only as a great power but as a nation. Hitler’s view of contemporary French politics reflected his racial determinism: “Systematically led by the Jews, France’s thirst for revenge was a crime against the white race.” Some scholars argue that this was not the whole story, and it is true that at times Hitler professed admiration for French “revolutionary nationalism.” On occasion the Führer also envisioned a modus vivendi with France, provided Germany’s western neighbor gave him free reign to conquer German Lebensraum in the East. Such apparent sentiments gave an aura of verisimilitude to the notion that Hitler’s true aim was to inaugurate an era of peace and good will with a “rejuvenated” France.
While Hitler despised and feared France, he had little interest in contemporary Holland. Small nations that presented no serious challenge to Germany’s hegemonial ambitions did not concern him. Hitler seems to have admired the Dutch for their artistic and geopolitical accomplishments during the seventeenth century, but since then the Dutch had experienced centuries of uninterrupted decline. Holland’s twentieth-century reputation as a land of democratic, peaceful merchants and businessmen ran counter to all that for Hitler constituted greatness in a nation. At the same time, although the Führer categorized the Dutch as a “Germanic people,” he did not initially anticipate that the Netherlands would simply be absorbed in a Greater German Reich. It was only during the Second World War that Hitler insisted that the Dutch (like the Scandinavians) “belonged to our blood,” and would have to be “absorbed” whether they liked it or not. Hitler’s lack of direct interest in the Netherlands meant that other Nazi functionaries could fill the vacuum with a multitude of plans of their own. As we shall see, these ranged from turning Holland over to a Dutch clone of the German Nazi party to leaving the Dutch a considerable degree of financial and economic autonomy, while curtailing the Netherlands’ political independence.

The political system of the Third Reich essentially rested upon grants of power to individual officials. Hitler stood at the apex of this power pyramid, allocating specific spheres of decision-making authority to his subordinates in the state and party administrations. The power grants were seldom rational, and they usually involved overlapping spheres of jurisdiction that allowed Hitler to play his associates off against each other. As a result, the officials favored with a coveted Führerbefehl (order of the Führer) needed to translate their grant of power into an institutionalized, bureaucratized sphere of decision-making authority, a process that involved jostling for office space, budgetary allocations, and personnel appointments. Although the Nazis repeated ad nauseam that Nazism was not for export and agencies of the NSDAP and the German government were repeatedly admonished not to maintain contacts with foreign fascists, in practice a veritable army of state and party officials focused their attention on interfascist relations.

At first glance Alfred Rosenberg seemed destined to play a major role in the Third Reich’s international fascism policies. As the Nazi party’s self-styled chief theorist and one of Hitler’s earliest followers, Rosenberg had served as the NSDAP’s foreign policy spokesman since 1930. In April 1933, Hitler appointed Rosenberg head of the NSDAP’s Aussenpolitisches Amt (Foreign Policy Bureau, APA), nominally giving him the status as the Nazi party’s official foreign affairs expert. His views on France and Holland were a somewhat smudged carbon copy of his master’s.
Considerably more educated than Hitler (the APA’s chief had earned a university degree in his native Russia before the First World War), Rosenberg nevertheless shared all of the dictator’s racial and political prejudices. He, too, argued that Jews and democracy would bring about France’s downfall, although he grudgingly acknowledged that France remained “intellectually scintillating.” Rosenberg had a genuine interest in fostering cooperation among Europe’s fascists to form a united front against democracy and Marxism.\(^\text{11}\) Rosenberg expected to be the future foreign minister of the Third Reich,\(^\text{12}\) but his ambitions vastly exceeded his abilities. A notoriously poor infighter, Rosenberg lost virtually all of his battles with other Nazi officials. As a result, he was increasingly eclipsed as the Nazis’ foreign policy expert; by 1937 the APA had been virtually shut down.\(^\text{13}\)

One of those who bested Rosenberg was Joseph Goebbels, the NSDAP’s chief of propaganda, who in April 1933 also became the Reich Minister of Public Enlightenment and Propaganda (Reichsministerium für Volksaufklärung und Propaganda, RMVP). In contrast to Rosenberg, Goebbels was a superb organizer and infighter. He also had an uncanny ability to identify completely with Hitler’s personality and policy priorities. Ironically, Goebbels and Rosenberg were not far apart in their views of Germany’s neighboring countries. Goebbels despised the Dutch, but like Rosenberg, he had an ambivalent relationship to France. Although the minister frequently expressed disgust for the Francophiles among his fellow Nazis, he also grudgingly admired France’s aesthetic and intellectual qualities.\(^\text{14}\)

Goebbels argued that the newly created Propaganda Ministry was the only genuinely Nazi government agency, and for this reason it was best qualified to tell the story of the “new Germany” at home and abroad. Relations with other fascist movements, according to the minister, were an important part of this public relations process. To sell the Third Reich abroad, the Nazi propaganda leader deliberately selected a group of young, fanatically Nazi officials to manage the Propaganda Ministry’s foreign affairs section.\(^\text{15}\)

Among government agencies, the Foreign Office was the Propaganda Ministry’s foremost rival. The Foreign Office claimed jurisdiction over relations with fascist movements outside Germany as part of its professional responsibility for conducting all of the Reich’s foreign relations.\(^\text{16}\) The Propaganda Ministry and the Foreign Office fought a running jurisdictional battle throughout the years of the Third Reich. The conflict continued even after a genuine Nazi, Joachim von Ribbentrop, became Reich foreign minister in 1938. It was, however, a battle in which the RMVP was gaining the upper hand. Hitler shared Goebbels’ distrust and
dislike of the professionals at the Wilhelmsstrasse. This was especially true for German propaganda abroad, something the Führer felt he and Goebbels could do far more effectively than aristocrats trained in the polite ways of nineteenth-century diplomacy.17

Like all fascist organizations, the Nazi party saw itself, inter alia, as a movement of youth rebelling against the staid ways of European bourgeois society. From this perspective it was only logical that the NSDAP’s youth organization, the Hitlerjugend (Hitler Youth [HJ]) claimed jurisdiction in the area of interfascist relations. Even before the Nazis came to power, Baldur von Schirach, the HJ’s national leader, had insisted, “from now on the party’s foreign relations will be conducted by us.”18 After Hitler became Reich chancellor, the HJ’s central office recruited a number of amateur foreign “experts” to establish contacts with far-right youth movements abroad. One of these was Otto Abetz, a former art teacher and right-wing Francophile. He was no stranger to nongovernmental Franco-German contacts. During the 1920s, he had been active in the Sohlberg-Kreis, a nonpolitical organization that sponsored bilateral Franco-German youth camps and conferences. After 1933 Abetz saw no difficulty serving the new regime. In the summer of 1934, he began working in the HJ’s central office as the youth movement’s “expert on France.” Abetz later insisted he made this career move because the HJ’s leaders, like himself, were genuinely committed to youthful Franco-German rapprochement.19 Provided one added “under Nazi auspices,” this assessment was not altogether wrong.

Among the Nazi party agencies, the most successful entry was the Office of the Deputy Führer for Party Affairs (Stellvertreter des Führers für Parteiangelegenheiten, StdF). Created in 1933 to maintain some control over the wildcat activities of various party agencies, the office of the StdF was headed by Hitler’s long-time associate Rudolf Hess and his even more ambitious chief of staff, Martin Bormann. Hess and Bormann’s main objective was to extend the NSDAP’s control over all policy decisions in the Third Reich. To this end the StdF built up an impressive array of agencies, paralleling virtually all government ministries and offices. In the area of foreign relations the StdF created the Ribbentrop Bureau (Büro Ribbentrop). Joachim von Ribbentrop, a former wine merchant and a relative latecomer to the Nazi cause (he did not join the NSDAP until 1932) rose to prominence quickly after 1933 because Hitler became convinced that in Ribbentrop he had found a master diplomat and a second Bismarck. Overcoming the opposition of the Foreign Office, the Propaganda Ministry, and the APA, Ribbentrop used Hitler’s favor and the authority of the StdF to create a formidable agency staffed with young Nazi would-be diplomats, including Otto Abetz, whom
Ribbentrop lured away from the HJ at the end of 1934. For the most part, Ribbentrop’s “boys” were sincere “collaborationists,” determined to create a Europe of “new nations” led by Nazi Germany.

At the Büro Ribbentrop Otto Abetz headed the French desk, and Rudolf Likus, one of his closest friends, was in charge of relations with the Dutch. Abetz gathered around him a group of journalists, would-be writers, and self-styled intellectuals who, as “Nazis de charme,” set out to convince those who would listen in France that the Third Reich was genuinely interested in Franco-German reconciliation. They included Karl Epting, in the 1930s the head of the Paris office of the German Academic Exchange Service (Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst, DAAD); Friedrich Sieburg, for many years the Frankfurter Zeitung’s representative in Paris and author of the best-selling book Leben wie Gott in Frankreich (Living Like God in France); as well as Friedrich Grimm, a right-wing lawyer who was accredited to practice law in both Germany and France. On a smaller scale, Likus was equally active in cultivating good relations with the Dutch fascists.

If the Büro Ribbentrop exemplified the Nazis’ soft touch, the NSDAP’s Foreign Organization (Auslandsorganisation, AO), another part of Hess’ far-flung empire, was the fist without the glove. Headed by Ernst-Wilhelm Bohle, Hess’ brother-in-law and protégé, the AO’s primary purpose was to persuade German citizens living abroad to join the Nazi party and its affiliates. The AO was particularly active in countries with large German minorities, including the Netherlands. Its efforts were singularly unsuccessful (no more than six per cent of the Germans living abroad ever joined the NSDAP), but this did not stop the AO’s harassing tactics. The AO’s regional office in Holland also routinely ignored admonitions by the central office not to maintain contacts with Dutch fascist organizations. The result was a stream of complaints by the Dutch authorities about the AO’s interference in Dutch internal affairs. The Dutch government eventually demanded that the Germans dissolve the AO in Holland. Formally, the Nazis complied, replacing the AO by an ostensibly apolitical, purely social organization, the Reich German Association (Reichsdeutsche Gemeinschaft, RDG). In fact, of course, the RDG was the AO under another name.

A favorite method of jurisdictional aggrandizement by state and party agencies in the early months of the Third Reich was to take control of what during the Weimar years had been more or less independent and private organizations. In the area of interfascist contacts, the Fichtebund appeared to be an important prize. Created in the 1920s as part of the German public relations effort to discredit the Versailles Treaty, the Fichtebund’s particular niche in this campaign was to publish contributions
by foreign critics of the treaty system in the form of pamphlets and broadsheets in a variety of languages. The publications were printed in Germany but distributed as domestic mail in various foreign countries by sympathizers of the German revisionist cause, a method of propaganda distribution that the Nazis would use as well. By August, 1932, the Fichtebund had made common cause with the Nazis, and after January, 1933, the Fichtebund’s publications routinely added praise of the Third Reich to the continuing attacks on the Treaty of Versailles. Despite its ready endorsement of the new regime, during the Third Reich, the Fichtebund led a precarious existence. Joseph Goebbels argued that “the Fichtebund is useless for foreign propaganda [purposes].” For this reason he was not unduly concerned when, after much infighting, his rivals at the Foreign Office gained control of the organization.

The Propaganda Ministry lost the battle over the Fichtebund, but it achieved a much more important victory when it succeeded in absorbing the Aufklärungsausschuss Hamburg-Bremen (Information Committee Hamburg-Bremen). The Aufklärungsausschuss had been created as a joint effort by the chambers of commerce of Hamburg and Bremen. The organization provided German businessmen traveling abroad with material about the “onerous” reparations the Versailles Treaty had imposed on Germany. Ignoring the strenuous objections of the APA and the Foreign Office, the Propaganda Ministry soon took control of the Aufklärungsausschuss. Under Goebbels’ aegis it became an instrument for the distribution of general Nazi propaganda abroad. Through a network of confidential agents (some 380 in December, 1933), the Aufklärungsausschuss attempted to place articles favorable to the Third Reich in a variety of foreign newspapers.

The Propaganda Ministry also had another vehicle for foreign propaganda in its sights, the periodical Weltdienst (World Service). Despite its neutral and high-sounding name, the Weltdienst was a vicious, low budget, biweekly diatribe against Jews and Jewry. Published and edited by Ulrich Fleischauer, a retired colonel and former organizer for the conservative Deutschnationale Volkspartei (DNVP), the Weltdienst was printed in Erfurt in eight and later nineteen languages. The Weltdienst and its publisher also sponsored periodic international anti-Semitic congresses. The magazine’s list of contributors read like a “who’s who” of the international anti-Semitic movement in the 1920s and 1930s. Not surprisingly, the Nazis developed an interest in Fleischauer’s operations, and by the time Hitler came to power, the periodical was heavily subsidized by Rosenberg’s party office.

Fleischauer quickly realized that the APA offered little protection from other predators, and he sought to affiliate his organization with Heinrich
Himmler and the Schutzstaffel (SS). For a time Fleischauer was able to persuade the SS’s leaders that he had important contacts among the international anti-Semitic network. Eventually, however, Fleischauer’s increasing interest in numerology and mysticism destroyed his credibility even among Himmler’s officials. In the end, the Weltdienst became part of Goebbels’ growing empire.

At first glance the picture that emerges from this jumble of overlapping jurisdictions and rival ambitions among the Nazi agencies and officials suggests that more than anything, chaos reigned in the Third Reich. Actually, however, although the rivalries and power struggles were real, the various Nazi state and party agencies did pursue a common policy line. All worked hard to further the hegemonial ambitions of the Third Reich and to advance the Nazis’ anti-Bolshevik, anti-Masonic, and anti-Semitic aims. Only their tactics differed. While the “collaborationists” wanted to cooperate with “related movements” outside Germany, the “conquerors” distrusted such groups as potential rivals.

**France**

Before 1914 the French extreme Right had been dominated by the royalist Action Française (French Action, AF), but in the 1920s and 1930s fears of the rise of the Left on the one hand and admiration for Mussolini’s Italy on the other led to the creation of a plethora of new organizations and leaders. The French fascist scene in the 1930s consisted of a multitude of quarreling paramilitary leagues, publications, parties, “information centers,” and “literary fascists.” These forces were especially active in the French capital; after the First World War, Paris became an extreme-Rightist stronghold.

The groups exhibited typically fascist styles and programs. Their members wore rudimentary uniforms and displayed at least a modicum of martial bearing. All of the organizations had a self-styled leader, who was also usually the founder. They were also not averse to political violence, although the level and number of political altercations was lower in France than was true for the last years of the Weimar Republic. The degree of support for the French fascist leagues and organizations is still a source of controversy. The groups themselves shamelessly exaggerated their membership figures, while subsequent researchers have probably tended to underestimate the number of supporters. In September 1935, before the coming to power of the Popular Front swelled their ranks even further, the French police estimated the combined membership of the major right-wing anti-Republican, extra-parliamentary organizations to be around 396,000. The readership of the extreme-Rightist press was far
larger. Ze‘ev Sternhell has pointed out that throughout the 1930s the publications of the far-right had far more readers than either those sympathetic to the moderate or the extreme Left.32

A unique feature of French fascism was what Jean Plumyène and Raymond Lasierra have called “literary fascism (fascisme des écrivains).” In fact, it has been argued that nowhere was fascism more of an affair of the intellectuals than in France.33 As a group, French fascist intellectuals shared two characteristics: all were convinced that by writing, speaking, and publishing they would become an influential force in French politics, and virtually all of them were active (or wanted to be so) in Paris. Not all French fascist writers were anxious to join a political organization; one of the most prominent among them, Robert Brasillach, explained he never joined a party because at heart he was an “anarcho-fascist.”34 Fascist intellectuals ranged from noted novelists to obvious cranks on the lunatic fringe. Scholars remain sharply divided on the quality of the intellectuals’ thinking and writing. William Irvine has called Lucien Rebatet, one of the most successful of French fascist publicists, “a sophisticated and cultured film, theater, and music critic,” but Tony Judt has reviled him as a “racist pamphleteer.”35

Many of the French fascist organizations and writers were anti-Semitic, a feature that especially attracted the Nazis’ interest. The political Left in France attempted to stigmatize all French anti-Semitism as Nazi-inspired, but French fascists hardly needed lessons in hatred of the Jews.36 Unlike the Nazis, however, many French fascists did not place anti-Semitism at the center of their ideology. Most French anti-Semites also insisted that their anti-Jewish sentiments, unlike the German variety, were culturally, not racially motivated. Jews were evil not because of their “race,” but because they were a major cause of France’s “decadence.”37 For most French fascists Jews were simply one onerous component of a larger out-group, métèques, people living in France who were not “truly French.” This category included Jews, Protestants, Freemasons, and any other group whom the fascists described as “outsiders.” French fascists directed their venom particularly against immigrants of all kinds; these included Russian and East European Jewish refugees in the 1920s and German Jews fleeing Nazi persecution in the 1930s.

The ideas and values of French fascism corresponded to the characteristics of the generic fascist paradigm discussed earlier, although there were some specifically French priorities and emphases. Like all fascists, the French extremists dwelt lovingly on what they hated and distrusted: liberalism and its twin brothers, Marxism and parliamentary democracy. (“I have never had a single drop of democratic blood in my veins,” wrote Lucien Rebatet.38) In place of the evils of international modernism
spawned by the French Revolution, the French fascists, like their counterparts in Germany and Holland, insisted that they would create a new society that would abolish class antagonisms, drive the métèques from power, eliminate the inefficiencies and injustices of liberal individualism, and restore France to the status of a truly great nation.

More specifically French were plans for a reformed parliamentary system in the future fascist society. All French fascists rejected parliamentary democracy, but few wanted to give total political power to a single chef. Instead, the French fascists envisioned a state with a strong executive and estate or profession-based representative assemblies. This combination, they insisted, would combine the characteristics of the organic society that had existed before 1789 with the corporatist ideals of national socialism. French fascists also professed to be internationalists. They insisted they were “pilgrims of the new Europe,” who would “forge the unity of Europe.”

Turning to specific groups, journals, and intellectuals in France requires entering the minefield of conflicting opinions about who were the real fascists in France. Both contemporaries and later scholars have wrestled with this question, and neither group has been able to reach a consensus. Perhaps none can be expected. As the following survey of the major figures among the French extreme Right will show, the line between “fascistoid” ideas and styles and nonfascist opposition to parliamentary democracy was fluid, as indeed it had been in Germany before 1933.

The Jeunesses Patriotes (Patriotic Youth, JP) was the oldest and, for a time, largest of the French extreme-Right organizations. It also illustrated the fluid lines between fascist and conservative politics in France. The group was founded in 1924 by Pierre Taittinger, a scion of the champagne-manufacturing family. In addition to leading the JP, Taittinger was also a member of the Chamber of Deputies for the right-of-center Republican Federation. The JP’s program was embodied in Taittinger’s 1929 publication *Le Nationalisme Social*. Taittinger demanded that the popularly elected parliament be replaced by a profession-based representative assembly and that the nation’s leaders be selected according to merit rather than popularity. The group also had its own journal, *Le National*. The JP’s leader was a fervent admirer of Mussolini, and in the 1930s the JP’s critique of parliamentary democracy became increasingly strident. Moreover, as well-known anti-Semitic demagogues like Xavier Vallat and Philippe Henriot became associated with the JP (incidentally, both were also vice-presidents of the Republican Federation), the JP embraced a virulent anti-Semitism. The organization was quite active at the beginning of the decade, but by 1934 younger members complained about
creeping lethargy at the top. \(^{43}\) Still, in the early 1930s the police estimated the JP’s total membership as about 90,000. (Taittinger himself claimed a totally fanciful figure of 240,000.)

The histories of Gaston Bergery’s Front commun (Common Front) and Georges Valois’ Faisceau (Fasces) illustrate particularly well the classification difficulties raised by French political organizations. In 1933 Bergery, a prominent member of the centrist Radical Party and a “strange fellow . . . rapidly bored by the ideas that he threw out,” \(^{44}\) organized a small group called Front commun contre le fascisme (Common Front Against Fascism). It became quickly apparent, however, that for Bergery, antifascism meant a combination of anticapitalism and anticommunism. Frontisme, as Bergery’s set of ideas became known, drifted further to the right as its journal, La Flèche (The Arrow), opened its pages to a number of far right intellectuals. By 1935, Frontisme had acquired a distinctly fascist tinge. \(^{45}\) Bergery ended up serving the Vichy regime as ambassador to Moscow.

Georges Valois traveled in the opposite direction. There was no doubt that the Fasces (Faisceau), which Valois founded in 1926, was a fascist organization. Originally a close associate of Charles Maurras, the founder of the Action Française, Valois became convinced that only fascism, by forging a union of socialism and nationalism, could solve France’s and Europe’s twentieth-century problems. Like all fascists Valois opposed parliamentary democracy, but he also rejected anti-Semitism. While opposed to “Jewish plutocrats,” the Faisceau welcomed the cooperation of French Jews in bringing about the coming fascist revolution. As an organization the Faisceau had a meteoric rise and fall. Its greatest popularity came during the currency crises of the mid-1920s, but following the successful stabilization of the franc in 1928 and something of a smear campaign by the AF, the Faisceau quickly faded from prominence. The membership, which had peaked at 20,000 in April, 1926, declined to 10,000 at the end of 1928. Valois himself eventually renounced fascism and became a supporter of the Third Republic. During the Second World War he was active in the Resistance; he died a few days after the end of the conflict in a Nazi concentration camp. \(^{46}\)

The Solidarité Française (French Solidarity [SF]) was originally the vehicle into politics of Réné Coty, “le parfumeur mégalomane (the megalomaniacal perfume manufacturer).” Much like Taittinger’s JP, the SF fulfilled the personal ambitions of its founder for political activism. The group quickly adopted a typically fascist style of politics, including a decided penchant for street brawls. The SF’s program did not extend beyond the usual antidemocratic and antiparliamentary platitudes. On the other hand, it possessed something that was the envy of many of its rivals,
a highly successful journal, *L’Ami du Peuple* (The Friend of the People). As long as he lived, Coty lavishly subsidized this right-wing periodical.\(^{47}\) As the effects of the Depression widened, the group was able to attract support from lower-middle-class elements. At the end of 1933, its membership was estimated at 315,000 (although this figure is probably too high), but it dropped to 180,000 in 1934.

The post-Coty era of the SF’s history was marked by decline and eventual marginization. Coty died in 1934, and his heirs were not willing to remain the SF’s financial angels. Efforts to lure followers away from the Communists failed. Instead, the SF became primarily an organization of lower-class North African immigrants, a development that led the SF’s rivals to describe it as the “Sidilarité française” (the name referred to the Sidi, the region of North Africa, which had been home to many of the organization’s supporters). The SF’s original cohort of activists increasingly left the organization, with many joining the Croix de Feu (Cross of Fire [CF]).\(^{48}\) The Solidarité Française’s new leader, Jean Renaud, emphasized the group’s opposition to democracy, Jews, and Freemasons. (This did not prevent Renaud from claiming that the SF was neither fascist nor anti-Semitic.)

The Croix de Feu, the largest of the French extraparliamentary organizations, is often classified as an example of a “false” French fascist group. Some analysts insist the CF was in the tradition of French Bonapartism and that it should be compared to Charles de Gaulle’s post–World War II Rassemblement Populaire Français (French Popular Assembly [RPF]), rather than to any fascist organizations. Other scholars, however, have no hesitation in classifying the CF as a fascist organization.\(^{49}\) The group was founded in 1928 as an association of elite veterans who had earned a medal for bravery (the *croix de feu*) in the First World War, but by the early 1930s, it had transformed itself into a mass political organization open to all. The CF really took off when Colonel François de la Rocque, a much-decorated war hero and charismatic figure, became its leader. De la Rocque was quickly enveloped by a genuine Führer cult. The CF also controlled a major newspaper, *Le Petit Journal* (The Little Journal), and published its own periodical, *Le Flambeau* (The Flame). In 1936, the CF had some 650,000 members. By the end of the decade, the CF, now reorganized as a political party, the Parti Social Français (The French Social Party [PSF]), had a membership of close to one million.

The group’s rallies, which attracted thousands at the height of the CF’s popularity, had all of the stylistic trappings familiar from similar events in Germany and Italy. However, while de la Rocque’s style of politics was heavily influenced by Italian and German models, the classification of the group’s program is more difficult. The CF emphasized what it opposed
(speculation, liberalism, and Marxism), not what it proposed. De la Rocque thought racial anti-Semitism “benighted,” but, at least after 1936, he endorsed political anti-Semitism. His hatred of Freemasonry was almost as great as his opposition to communism. The CF had a schizophrenic attitude toward parliamentarism. Its spokesmen lambasted the Chamber of Deputies, but some activists served as members of parliament, albeit as deputies of one of the moderate right-of-center parties. (Of course hatred of parliamentary democracy had not prevented the Nazis from sitting in the democratic Reichstag before 1933.)

Compared to the CF, the Francistes, whose fascist character was never in doubt, were a minor player on the French far-right scene. The group was founded in 1933 by Marcel Bucard, a former member of the by then virtually defunct Faisceau. The essential points of the Francistes’ program included the usual opposition to Bolshevism and opposition to parliamentary democracy. On the foreign policy front, Bucard envisioned a triple alliance of a future fascist France with Germany and Italy. The only mildly original feature of the Francistes’ program was the emphasis upon “Latinism.” By this, the group meant the cultural and ethnic unity of all Romance peoples, particularly the Italians and the French. Stylistically, the Francistes exhibited all of the expected trappings of a fascist organization. Although Bucard, like de la Rocque, was a much-decorated war hero, the Francistes were far less successful than the CF. In April 1934, the police estimated that the group’s membership did not exceed 800 in all of France. For a time the Francistes were subsidized by the Italian government, but these payments ceased at the end of 1934.

A splinter group under Henry Coston attempted to usurp the Francistes’ name and put anti-Semitism at the center of its program. Its membership never exceeded 500. Not surprisingly, early on, Coston identified his cause with that of Nazi Germany. In March 1934, he created a minor scandal when he hoisted a swastika flag from his apartment window to express his pro-Nazi sentiments. Two years later, Coston ran—unsuccessfully—as an “anti-Semitic candidate” for parliament. In addition to heading his Francistes offshoot, Coston created an Office de Propagande Nationale (Office of National Propaganda), which published a steady stream of articles and pamphlets insisting that all French government leaders were either Freemasons, Jews, or philo-Semites who wanted to “put France and Frenchmen under the yoke (ferule) of international Jewry.”

In the course of the 1930s, two prominent figures moved from the left side of the political spectrum to the extreme Right. At the beginning of the decade Marcel Déat, a normalien, lycée professor, and well-known Socialist member of parliament, whom many saw as the successor to
Léon Blum as head of the French Socialist Party (SFIO), was becoming disillusioned by his party’s failure to address France’s economic problems with new ideas. In his 1931 book, *Perspectives socialistes*, Déat argued that the Socialists needed to escape their single-class image and join forces with other groups in society—notably the middle classes—to save the national economy. At the SFIO’s national congress in July 1933, supporters of Déat attempted to persuade the party to endorse his program of “order, authority, nation,” but, led by Léon Blum, a large majority of the delegates rejected as “fascist” Déat’s plans for putting the SFIO on a path of cooperation with groups of the center- and moderate-Right.

A few months later, in November 1933, Déat and his followers left the SFIO and founded the Parti Socialiste de France Union Jean Jaurès (Socialist Party of France—Jean Jaurès Union), better known as the Neo-Socialists, or Neos. The Neo-Socialists proclaimed the need for *socialisme national*, although Déat insisted his ideas had nothing to do with Nazism. In many respects this was true; at this time, Déat rejected all forms of racism and anti-Semitism, for example. He even claimed his goal was to save democracy, albeit not parliamentary democracy in the traditional sense. Unfortunately for Déat, support for Neo-Socialism remained disappointingly small. Frustrated by his inability to turn the SFIO to his way of thinking or to gain significant popular support, Déat increasingly convinced himself that his dream of the union of socialism and nationalism had been realized in Nazi Germany. A German observer noted with approval that the Neo-Socialist leader was “coming closer to the ideas of National Socialism.”

For a year or so, mass appeal was not a problem for the other French fascist organization with left-wing antecedents, the PPF, and its leader, Jacques Doriot. In the 1920s, Doriot had headed the youth organization of the PCF. He was also for many years the elected mayor of St. Denis, a working-class suburb east of Paris. Doriot eventually broke with the PCF because he felt the French Communists had become puppets of Stalin and the Soviet Union. In 1936 he founded his own party, the PPF. The party impressed many observers as the only fascist organization that might have a chance of coming to power in France.

Not surprisingly, when Doriot created the PPF, he adopted the organizational apparatus of the PCF as his model. The PPF was run on the lines of democratic centralism, complete with a central committee, politburo, and front organizations familiar to the Communist parties. For a time the PPF rode the crest of popularity and success. The party attracted thousands of dissatisfied Communists, as well as members from other extreme-Rightist groups. By November 1936, the party had a membership of over 100,000. The PPF was able to attract several prominent
fascist intellectuals—including Drieu de la Rochelle and Bertrand de Jouvenel—to its ranks. Stylistically and programmatically, the PPF was a genuine fascist party. A heavy-handed Führer cult developed around the figure of Jacques Doriot, and the party exhibited the traditional colored shirts and a virtual imitation of the fascist salute. The PPF also quickly developed a penchant for street violence.67

At least for a time the party also did not lack for money. The French business community, fearing the revolutionary aims of the Popular Front, lavishly subsidized Doriot’s group as a potential counter force to the Communists.58 The financial largesse enabled the PPF to control its own media outlets, including a daily newspaper, L’Emancipation nationale (National Emancipation) and a journal, La Liberté (Liberty). However, when the Popular Front government fell, financial support for the PPF from the business sector declined rapidly, and there was a corresponding loss of activists and supporters. From a high of 100,000 members in 1938, the party declined to 50,000 members in 1940.59

Like Déat, Doriot insisted that only true “national socialism” could save France. In time the PPF’s leader convinced himself that his program had to a large extent been realized in Italy and Germany. The party and its leader were not originally anti-Semitic. However, as Doriot’s erstwhile comrades in the French Communist party and prominent Jewish leaders intensified their efforts to discredit fascism in France in general and the renegade and his new party in particular, the PPF increasingly merged Jews and Communists into a single negative image. Echoing Goebbels’ vocabulary, the enemy became “Judeo-Bolshevik.”60

As noted earlier, by no means all French fascists were affiliated with political organizations; many were more interested in writing and publishing as a way of advancing the cause rather than in organizing and campaigning on behalf of a party. France and especially Paris in the 1930s were Meccas for “literary fascism.”61 For much of the 1930s, the most successful periodical on the far Right was L’Ami du Peuple. Published from 1928 to 1937, at the height of its popularity, in 1930, the anti-Semitic (it bore the subtitle “the great French anti-Jewish publication”) and xenophobic magazine had 100,000 subscribers, and an estimated three million readers.62 L’Ami du Peuple’s chief rival was Gringoire, a periodical with a circulation of almost one million in 1936. The guiding spirit behind Gringoire was Philippe Henriot, a spellbinding orator whose political career began on the moderate-right, but he eventually became a virulent anti-Semite and full-fledged collaborator during the Vichy years. Henriot initially distrusted Hitler, but his hatred of Bolshevism, parliamentary democracy, Jews, and Freemasons paved the way for an increasingly sympathetic view of the Third Reich.63
The circulation figures of the journal *Je suis partout* (JSP) never came close to those of *L’Ami du Peuple* and *Gringoire*. JSP’s circulation at no time exceeded 100,000, but what it lacked in mass readership it made up in intellectual bravura. JSP was founded in 1930 by Pierre Gaxotte, who had formerly been Charles Maurras’ secretary. The editorial group running the journal included some of France’s brightest young intellectuals, such as Thierry Maulnier, Lucien Rebatet, Robert Brasillach, and Paul Ferdonnet, lending credibility to the claim that it served as the intellectual general staff of the French extreme Right.64

Although JSP was always run by an editorial collective, in the course of the 1930s Robert Brasillach increasingly became primus inter pares of the journal’s group of editors. Like many of France’s fascists, Brasillach had ties to the AF. He eventually rejected Maurras’ political strategy but continued to write a literary column for *Action Française* throughout the 1930s.65 Brasillach would become a fervent friend of the Third Reich, but his admiration for the Nazis came about through a rather circuitous route that began with a political and aesthetic passion for the Rexist movement of Léon Degrelle in Belgium and the Spanish Falangists.66 Brasillach was fascinated by what even after the Second World War he called “the extraordinary poetry” of fascism;67 for him Hitler and Mussolini were simultaneously poets and politicians. In his political testament, written in prison while he awaited trial for treason, he prophesied, “a nocturnal youth camp, the merging of the individual body with that of the entire nation, the recognition of the heroes and saints of the past, a totalitarian feast, these are the elements of fascist poetry, that which will have constituted the madness and the wisdom of our age. I am sure in twenty years, youth, disregarding the faults and errors, will look upon [this] with serious (sombre) envy and incurable nostalgia.”68 In the course of the decade, JSP took an increasingly pro-Nazi line. The tirades against the Jews increased in length and vehemence, culminating in what one author has called a thoroughly demented form of anti-Semitism.69

*L’Ami du Peuple’s* and *Gringoire’s* circulation figures and *Je suis partout*’s intellectual influence were success stories that the dozens of other anti-Semitic, anti-Masonic, and anti-republican journals could only dream of.70 The wannabees included *Combat*, the mouthpiece of Thierry Maulnier, an early admirer of Mussolini, whose hatred of the French Third Republic and admiration for Hitler and the Nazis grew in tandem. By the end of the 1930s *Combat* had become one of the French journals the Nazi press loved to quote. Jean Boissel published *Le Reveil du Peuple* (The Awakening of the People) and headed a political group called *Front franc*. He was a single-minded anti-Semite who, as early as 1931, appeared as a guest speaker at various international anti-Semitic congresses organized
by Julius Streicher and his periodical, Der Stürmer. Au Pilori (To the Pillory) was published by Henri-Robert Petit, who had at one time been Coston’s secretary. Au Pilori, too, modeled itself on Der Stürmer, but its particular target was the supposedly pervasive and pernicious influence of Freemasonry in France. Lucien Pemjean, publisher of Le Grand Occident, specialized in ferreting out Jewish influences in the French media. Pemjean was convinced that since the French Revolution, Jews had expanded their control of the French press, until by 1940 they had become masters of the organs that molded French public opinion.

The daily newspaper Notre Temps occupied a rather special place among the French media. In the 1920s, its editor, Jean Luchaire, had been a centrist. After 1933, however, Luchaire moved increasingly to the right. He also became a close friend of Otto Abetz; Luchaire’s secretary would eventually become Abetz’ wife. Unfortunately for Luchaire, his readers did not follow his politics. The paper’s circulation declined rapidly, and by 1936, Notre Temps had the reputation of being a “German newspaper.” It became an official organ of the German-sponsored Comité France-Allemagne (CFA) and survived primarily because of subsidies from the German embassy.

The French, or rather Parisian, far-right scene contained one unique component, the “literary fascists.” In 1940, an official in Rosenberg’s office put Brasillach, Alfred Fabre-Luce, Abel Bonnard, Lucien Rebatet, Jacques Benoist-Mechin, and Alphonse de Chateaubriant in this category. Bertrand de Jouvenel, Pierre Drieu de la Rochelle, and Ferdinand Céline should be added to this list. Alfred Fabre-Luce loathed what he saw as the decadence and materialism of the Third Republic. He experienced considerable Schadenfreude when the Third Republic collapsed in the spring of 1940. In his book Journal de France, he lovingly chronicled the decline and defeat of France during the dramatic months from August 1939 to June 1940. Not surprisingly, the book was quickly translated into German and published in the Third Reich. Abel Bonnard, bon vivant and “brilliant conversationalist at Parisian dinners,” was another distinguished man of letters who traveled from the moderate- to the extreme Right. A member of the Académie Française, Bonnard became increasingly critical of what he regarded as France’s weakness and self-emasculation, a development he contrasted with the supposed virility and cult of youth that characterized Mussolini’s and Hitler’s regimes.

Lucien Rebatet was a far less distinguished writer than Bonnard, but a more fervent fascist. A member of JSP’s editorial board, he is primarily known for his wartime (1942) book Les Décombres (The Ruins). (The work had the highest sale of any book published in France during the occupation.) Rebatet’s fascist convictions derived in equal measure from his hatred
of democracy and his insistence that only “national socialism” could cure France’s ills. He saw his writings as a “contribution” toward exposing that “France is gravely ill, with serious and putrid wounds.”

Both Jacques Benoist-Mechin and Alphonse de Châteaubriant came to fascism from the perspective of a profoundly conservative Catholicism. Châteaubriant was convinced that French republicanism had alienated France and Europe from their spiritual roots and substituted a rampant materialism for God and the church. The “Catholic fascists” saw the fascist countries as models of societies that had turned against materialism and had restored spiritual values to their rightful place as the foundation of all political and social life. Hitler, according to Châteaubriant, was a “spiritual rejuvenator.” Benoist-Mechin, whom Abetz described as one of the “most honorable [ritterlichsten] pioneers of Franco-German rapprochement,” was best known as the author of an admiring history of the German army.

Bertrand de Jouvenel and Pierre Drieu la Rochelle were perhaps the “purest” intellectual fascists in France. Both contrasted the “morass [marasme]” that France had become with the cult of youth and virility that characterized fascism. For a time both found their hero in Jacques Doriot. After the PPF was organized, Jouvenel served as the editor of the PPF’s paper, Emancipation Nationale, while Drieu, in addition to contributing numerous pieces to this publication, also wrote a panegyric campaign biography of the PPF’s leader.

If there was a poster child for the “literary fascists,” it was Pierre Drieu la Rochelle. He loathed capitalism and parliamentary democracy: “The patriotic counts of business, the deputy-lawyers, the Radical Party with its Free Masonic committees and its Senate composed of sadistic old timers, the Socialist Party and its secret admiration for everything its wise orators denounce. All these people use capitalism and capitalism uses them.” His anti-Semitism became increasingly visceral. In his wartime diary he confided, “I hate the Jews. I have always known that I hated them.” As for Freemasons, “I spit upon the Radicalism and the Free Masonry which have destroyed [perdu] France.” Equally fervent were his celebrations of the warrior and the cult of youth. Rather unusual in Drieu’s intellectual baggage was his Nordic racism. He insisted France’s decline came about because the racially inferior, Mediterranean métèques had pushed aside the country’s natural, Nordic, Normanic elite. In the course of the decade he came to see in Nazi Germany the fulfillment of his fascist dreams: virile, genuinely revolutionary and socialist, “the only system for Europe.”

Finally, among this phalanx of extreme-Right authors, there was the strange case of the physician and novelist Ferdinand Céline. This writer
had no political affiliations or ambitions, but he was a literary talent of the first order. While Céline’s attacks on French colonialism did not endear him to the extreme Right (most of whom saw the empire as a foundation of France’s greatness) and his modernist style appealed to intellectuals who had no sympathies with fascism, his venomous anti-Semitism delighted members of the French fascist scene and the Nazi establishment. Rebatet recalled that passages of Céline’s pamphlet L’École des cadavres (The School of Corpses) were read aloud at meetings of Je suis partout’s editorial board.86

The Netherlands

In contrast to French fascism with its bewildering array of parties, centers, and writers, Dutch fascism presented a picture of unified simplicity. There were no literary figures to speak of, and there was only one significant Dutch fascist party. By the end of 1933, Anton Adriaan Mussert and his Nationaal Socialistiche Beweging (National Socialist Movement, NSB) dominated the fascist scene. The NSB had eclipsed all other extreme-Right organizations in Holland, many of which had their roots in conservative Catholic opposition to modernism and stood ready to mount a serious challenge to Dutch parliamentary democracy. Like all fascists, the Dutch extreme Right was disdainful of what it identified as the Dutch self-satisfied, pacifist, materialist, unheroic middle classes.87 One unique feature of Dutch fascism was the espousal of “dietse” ideas, that is to say, demands for rejoining the Dutch and the Flemish of Belgium in a single country.

Some die-hard German Nazis clung to the illusion that the Nationaal-socialistische Nederlandse Arbeiderspartij (Dutch National Socialist Workers’ Party, NSNAP) constituted a viable rival to the NSB. Actually, the NSNAP was a simple clone of the German NSDAP. The party had virtually no support inside Holland; its few supporters came almost entirely from members of the Dutch minority living in Germany. The NSNAP’s leader in Germany, J. W. van der Heuvel, even did his best to look like a twin of Adolf Hitler—down to the mustache and haircut.88

In contrast to the NSNAP, the NSB stressed its indigenous character. Although its founder left no doubt that he admired much about German Nazism and Italian Fascism,89 he did not want his party to be seen as a German or Italian clone. The NSB insisted it was strictly a “Dutch form of national socialism, completely free of ties to the swastika. [Our party] has nothing to do with the movement which exists in Germany.”90 Mussert, an engineer employed by the Dutch Bureau of Bridges and Waterways,
founded the party in 1931 to attack what he saw as the encrusted political system in Holland and the government’s neglect of the country’s imperial glory. The party’s long-time executive secretary and virtual co-founder, Cornelis (Kees) van Geelkerken, traced his “political awakening” to 1918, when he joined a citizens’ militia to defend the Netherlands against “Bolshevism.”

The NSB’s actual founding was inspired by the Nazis’ dramatic success in the September 1930 Reichstag elections, and the new party’s organization was unabashedly modeled on that of the NSDAP. There was even a Weerafdeling (Defense Unit, WA), the Dutch version of the Nazi Stormtroopers (SA). Whatever his ambitions as a leider (leader)—Mussert’s official title as head of the party—the NSB’s founder was no Hitler or Mussolini. Although a “genius as an organizer,” Mussert was neither a good orator (Geelkerken was a much better speaker) nor did he have the charismatic force of personality to impose his will on his associates.

Since for Mussert and Geelkerken fascism and national socialism were interchangeable, they had no ambition to develop a detailed program of their own. In fact, the NSB’s first program was little more than a Dutch translation of the NSDAP’s twenty-five points, with, as we shall see, some crucial elements left out. The party’s program seemed particularly concerned about economic issues (sixteen of the twenty points in the platform dealt with this topic), but the NSB was studiously silent on concrete policies. Details would only benefit the NSB’s opponents, wrote the movement’s propaganda leader. Mussert and Geelkerken had little interest in ideology, but others in the party had more far-reaching programmatic ambitions. As a result, while Mussert’s leadership of the NSB was never successfully challenged, in time three distinct wings emerged under the overall organizational umbrella of the NSB. The first was the faction personified by Mussert himself. It stressed the need for a distinctly Dutch form of fascism. This meant, for example, that the NSB wanted the nominal head of the Dutch state, the king or queen, to seize the reigns of power. The head of a fascist government, according to the NSB’s program, would be responsible not to parliament, but to the monarch. Mussert and his group were also fervent imperialists. They even dreamed of reincorporating South Africa under the leadership of the Afrikaners into the family of Dutch territories.

A second segment, led by the NSB’s provincial chief in Limburg, Count M.V.E.H.J.M. de Marchant et d’Ansembourg, had close ideological ties to German conservative and Dutch right-wing Catholic thinkers. The leaders of this second group saw the NSB primarily as a bulwark against Marxism and modernism. Finally, there was a Dutch völkisch
segment, initially the weakest of the three, which had its most prominent spokesmen in E.J. Roskam and later Rost van Tonningen. The NSB’s völkische wing did not advocate the union of Nazi Germany and Holland, but it did fully endorse (and sometimes embellish) the racist and anti-Semitic sentiments of the German Nazis.96

When Mussert adapted much of the Nazis’ program for his own purposes, he deliberately left out the anti-Semitic passages. Initially the NSB had no anti-Semitic platform in its program; the party even welcomed Jewish members. (In 1935 the NSB had some 150 Jewish members.) Mussert claimed that when he drafted the NSB’s program he knew nothing about the “Jewish question,” and he had not read Hitler’s Mein Kampf.97 Count d’Ansembourg, who had read Mein Kampf, wrote to an acquaintance, “I am a great admirer of Hitler, but I have very serious reservations about his racial theory, both as a Catholic and as an educated person.”98

In contrast to Mussert’s political emphases, the NSB’s völkische wing stressed Blut und Boden (blood and soil), and what even some of the German Nazis derisively called Germanenbümmelei (Germano-freaking). Insisting that national rejuvenation could only come from a healthy peasantry, Roskam wanted the NSB to prioritize campaigning among Dutch farmers while simultaneously exorcizing all that was “alien” in Dutch society. Their goal was to resurrect a “Germanic culture” in place of Holland’s presently dominant “French-Catholic culture.”99 Not surprisingly, the völkische wing also wanted to make anti-Semitism a central focus of the party’s program.

The NSB might claim programmatic autonomy, but there was never any doubt that the party’s “style,” its physical appearance and propaganda tactics, was a deliberate and enthusiastic copy of the German original. The group’s uniforms and banners could have been borrowed from the “relatives” across the Rhine. Similarly, posters and propaganda brochures looked like Dutch-language copies of material issued by the NSDAP. True, the Dutch generally failed to match the discipline and martial spirit of the original, but this was not for want of trying.100 The stylistic parallels were not accidental. Not only was Geelkerken—unusual among the Dutch—fond of uniforms and marching music, but he and Mussert made a detailed and systematic study of Nazi propaganda tactics. As early as April 1932, Mussert had traveled to Düsseldorf to attend a Hitler rally.101 The men in charge of the NSB’s propaganda efforts also routinely asked for copies of Nazi material, ranging from the NSDAP’s 1927 organizational handbook to posters and brochures issued by the Nazis after they came to power.
The NSB’s membership grew rapidly until the end of 1935, and, paralleling the meteoric rise in membership, the party’s newspaper, Volk en Vaderland (Vova), became a major media outlet with a circulation of 90,000 in September 1935. Special editions reached figures of 600,000. However, for reasons that will become clear in a later chapter, beginning in 1936 the number of activists declined precipitously as the following chart shows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Membership</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1932</td>
<td>1,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1933</td>
<td>20,225</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1934</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1935</td>
<td>46,848</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1936</td>
<td>42,299</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1937</td>
<td>33,076</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1938</td>
<td>30,958</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1939</td>
<td>26,579</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The NSB’s membership has been subjected to numerous analyses, and it is now generally accepted that the group attracted primarily activists from the upper and lower middle classes, that it did better in urban environments than in rural areas, and that until the Catholic bishops stepped in, it was particularly influential in the Catholic province of Limburg. In terms of age cohorts, the party did especially well among the eighteen- to twenty-four-year-olds and among those older than forty-four years. The Dutch government’s apparent weakness on the colonial issue also made the NSB attractive to those who felt that retaining control of the Dutch East Indies was the key to Holland’s national greatness and economic prosperity. In fact, “Indians”—Dutch citizens who lived or had lived in the Dutch East Indies—eventually provided the largest source of financial support for the NSB. In short, as a group, the NSB’s activists felt abandoned by the traditional Dutch zuilen. The NSB, which eventually created a plethora of affiliated organizations—ranging from the WA to women’s and youth auxiliaries—became a substitute zuil for its members.

At the beginning of 1933, the fascist leaders, groups, and agencies in the three countries presented a bewildering array of parallel and
conflicting ideas, interests, and organizations. Each insisted that its tactics and program were destined to advance both the national interest and the cause of European fascism. In the next few years, as the Nazis transformed German society, the evolution of relations between the Third Reich and the “related movements” in France and Holland would fundamentally change fascism both as national, indigenous phenomena and as an international political force.
This page intentionally left blank
The establishment of the Nazi dictatorship occurred much more swiftly than most contemporaries in Germany and abroad had either hoped or feared. Within six months after coming to power, Hitler’s government and party had destroyed political and cultural pluralism in Germany, eliminated all rival political organizations, and created a one-party fascist state. Under the innocent-sounding term *Gleichschaltung* (coordination), the Nazis left virtually no aspect of German societal life untouched. The country’s long-standing tradition of federalism was abolished by administrative fiat, free labor unions were dissolved, and book-burnings signaled the end of cultural and literary diversity. There is no doubt that the Nazis themselves thought they were creating a revolutionary new society in Germany. Ernst Röhm, the leader of the Stormtroopers, insisted the Nazi regime would end the era that began with the French Revolution; the democratic ideas of 1789 would be replaced by “the powers of soul and blood.”

From the beginning to its end, the Nazi regime was, to use Ernst Fraenkel’s memorable phrase, a “dual state.” By this Fraenkel meant that Hitler and his henchmen alternatively used the “normative” powers of the government administration and the “prerogative” powers of the Nazi party and its Führer to accomplish their ends. Stormtroopers, who had been deputized as police officers, committed random acts of violence and established “wild” concentration camps in which they terrorized the regime’s opponents. The April 1933, a nationwide boycott of Jewish stores and businesses was organized on behalf of the NSDAP by Julius Streicher, the *Gauleiter* of Franconia and editor of the pornographic anti-Semitic
journal Der Stürmer, but the action had the full support of Hitler and the new German government. At the same time, Hitler and the state authorities utilized their “deniability” function when, after a day, it became clear that the boycott was unsuccessful and counterproductive.

Although repression and terror were ubiquitous from the beginning of the Nazi regime, many contemporaries associated the early months of Hitler’s rule with more positive accomplishments. There was the Nazi version of the German “economic miracle.” Abandoning the deflationary policies of its predecessors, Hitler’s government instituted a massive public works program and pumped public investment capital into the economy. The result was a dramatic increase in the level of economic activity that benefited primarily the rearmament program, but for many observers the most visible results were a rapid reduction in the number of unemployed and a sense of psychological uplift that permeated the country.³

The Nazis insisted that their goal was the establishment of the Volksgemeinschaft, a stable, prosperous, autark society that would provide a good life for members of the racially defined in-group.⁴ A plethora of new organizations and programs were trumpeted as stepping-stones on the way to the Volksgemeinschaft. The mass tourist organization Kraft durch Freude (Strength Through Joy, KDF) was undoubtedly the most popular of these Nazi creations.⁵ Scholars are still debating whether the Volksgemeinschaft was more than incessant massed parades,⁶ but the weight of the evidence does seem to suggest that at least as an ideal the concept of a society that was free from class-driven tensions and committed to working together to benefit the racially-defined commonweal was not without appeal in all sections of German society.⁷

While Nazi propaganda stressed the harmonious nature of the Volksgemeinschaft, there were also self-proclaimed “revolutionary” and “socialist”—or perhaps better restive and restless—elements among the Nazis. The head of the Stormtroopers, Ernst Röhm, and his close associates frequently reminded Hitler that the goals of the SA were not “a national, but a national socialist revolution. And we put particular stress on the word ‘socialist.’”⁸ Although the Nazi propaganda apparatus in no way discouraged Röhm from airing his ideas,⁹ by mid-1934 Hitler and other Nazi leaders, such as Rudolf Hess and Heinrich Himmler, feared that any radical restructuring of German society would endanger the political stability of the regime. Prodded by Hess, Himmler, and high-ranking officers in the Reichswehr, at the end of June 1934, Hitler ordered a massive purge of the SA’s and NSDAP’s old guard. Röhm and his closest associates were murdered by SS execution squads. In the weeks that followed, about a third of the party’s functionaries as well as a large proportion of the SA’s leadership corps lost their positions.¹⁰
Paradoxically, the Röhm affair dramatically increased Hitler’s popularity in Germany. Both the dictator’s conservative allies and the majority of the German public accepted Hitler’s contention that by eliminating Röhm and other Stormtroop leaders he had dealt forcefully with a group of dangerous radicals and nihilists.¹¹

Church-state relations constituted another stain on the Third Reich’s image as a harmonious society. The Nazis had scored a major public relations coup in the spring of 1933, when they successfully negotiated a concordat with the Vatican to regulate relations between the government and Germany’s Catholics, but on the Protestant side acrimony marked church-state relations. Stiff opposition from the clergy and laity forced the Nazis to abandon efforts by a splinter group that called itself Deutsche Christen (German Christians, DC) to impose an “Aryan” theology on German Protestantism.¹² An attempt to create a single national Protestant church under the leadership of a fellow-traveling “Reich bishop” Ludwig Müller was similarly unsuccessful.¹³

Early Nazi foreign policy moves were ostensibly designed to further three major goals: regaining national sovereignty, building alliances against bolshevism, and furthering the union of ethnic Germans in the name of national self-determination.¹⁴ The new German leaders bundled their initiatives under the misleading label of “peaceful revisionism” of the Versailles system. Despite the regime’s frantic celebrations of its early foreign policy initiatives, the concrete results were meager at best. Leaving the League of Nations increased Germany’s diplomatic isolation, and a Friendship Pact with Poland, intended to suggest that the two countries were cooperating against the threat of bolshevism, was in fact little more than an exchange of platitudes.

France, during the last years of the Third Republic, seemed to lurch from crisis to crisis.¹⁵ From the perspective of the French political Right, corruption was rampant, communism was gaining ground, and the country was being “overrun” by thousands of German-Jewish refugees.¹⁶ The Republican consensus, which had been the fundament of the Third Republic since the Dreyfus affair, was breaking down.¹⁷ For many on the moderate right and all on extreme Right, “the wretched democracy” had clearly failed.¹⁸

It was particularly unfortunate for the prestige of parliamentary democracy in France that the country experienced one of its most notorious corruption affairs at the same time that the young Third Reich presented itself as a model of political stability and economic recovery. At the end of 1933 the speculative financial empire of Alexander Stavisky, a Polish-Jewish immigrant, collapsed. As the press revealed details of Stavisky’s dishonest operations, it became clear that in building his fraudulent
schemes, he had received favors from a number of high-ranking French officials, including some cabinet ministers. Sentiment against Stavisky and the political system that appeared to have made his rise possible ran high, and on February 6, 1934, it exploded into open violence. During a night of rioting in Paris, a number of right-wing groups, among them the JP, the Francistes, and the SF, blockaded the parliament building and battled the police for hours. Members of the CF were also involved in the altercation, but De la Rocque called off his followers when it became clear that the police was gaining the upper hand. When order was restored, several dozen rioters and policemen had been killed, the French cabinet had resigned, and the reputation of democracy as a political system in France had sunk to a new low.

There is no doubt that the Stavisky Affair and its aftermath accelerated the polarization of French politics and increased the appeal of fascism for a number of prominent figures on the French extreme Right. Pierre Drieu de la Rochelle, Robert Brasillach, Bertrand de Jouvenel, Alfred Fabre-Luce, and Lucien Rébatet would all later point to the events of February 6 as a turning point in their political evolution. Disappointed by the lack of “action” by the leagues and their mentor Charles Maurras, they determined that only fascist activism could save France from the “Radicals and the [Free] Masons,” as Drieu put it. Each year after 1934 Brasillach and his friends placed flowers on the Place Concorde in memory of those killed during the riots, and on the eve of his execution Brasillach wrote a farewell in his cell: “This evening I am thinking of you, oh dead of February.”

In the aftermath of the February riots, a number of fascist intellectuals wrote books and articles detailing their ideas for France’s future path. Abel Bonnard published a ringing “National Plan for Youth” in Jouvenel’s Lutte de Jeunes. In a five-part series with the title “France—Where to?” Céline—anonimously—vented his anger at “the morbid and artificial atmosphere” in Paris and insisted that all of the evils that had characterized the Weimar Republic were now present in France. The team of Thierry Maulnier, Jean-Pierre Maxence, and Robert Francis wrote Demain la France, attributing France’s problems to its democratic political system. In its place they demanded a new “national state” and praised Nazi Germany’s youthful energy. De la Rocque’s Service Public, which appeared under the same imprint as Demain la France, was a catalog of catchy slogans (“be clean, be simple”), attacks on “parliamentary degeneration,” and rule by the “paralyzed bourgeoisie.” Perhaps the most honest and sophisticated reaction was Pierre Drieu la Rochelle’s Socialisme Fasciste. His contribution to the growing fascist literature was a passionate indictment of France’s present political and economic system and a call for its replacement
by an authoritarian, single-party, dynamic, and heroic state, which would become an integral part of the new fascist Europe.\textsuperscript{28}

The events of February took place against the backdrop of steadily worsening economic conditions. What to do about the Depression became a major and divisive topic. France’s center-Right political leaders framed the question about the country’s future policies in fiscal rather than economic terms: Should the country abandon the gold standard? To this question the country’s economic and political elite had a ready answer. It was “no!” Fervent monetarists, they were convinced that continuing the deflationary policies of the past would steer France safely through the Depression.\textsuperscript{29} In contrast, as the unemployment figures and business failures multiplied, the Communists extolled the virtues of Soviet bolshevism, while fascist and proto-fascist organizations, using equally demagogic anti-capitalist rhetoric, insisted that only a right-wing political dictatorship could solve France’s problems. Common to both groups was a faith in what Julian Jackson has called “planomania.” The Right favored some form of corporatism, while the Left preferred a centralized, government-run planning apparatus, but the dividing line between the two visions was by no means sharply drawn.\textsuperscript{30}

There was no fundamental systemic crisis in the Netherlands at the beginning of the 1930s, but the Dutch economy was in serious trouble.\textsuperscript{31} Until 1936 the right-of-center Colijn government kept the country on the gold standard. Dutch farmers were particularly hard hit. Dutch agriculture had traditionally relied on the large German market, especially the heavily populated areas along the Rhine and Ruhr, to sell their products. That became increasingly difficult after the Nazis came to power. Not only did the Nazis institute measures to protect Germany’s farmers from foreign competition, but they also imposed severe currency controls. As a result, the Reich increasingly conducted its international trade on the basis of barter and clearing agreements, while Holland with its gold standard continued to insist upon payment in hard currency.\textsuperscript{32}

The Netherlands faced political problems as well. A mutiny on the Dutch warship Zeven Provinciën in East Indian waters in February 1933 “shook the foundations of the Netherlands.” The government and all of the bourgeois parties blamed the Communists and the Socialists for inspiring the mutineers. And, as was true in France, Jewish refugees fleeing Nazi persecution received an ambivalent welcome. Often looked as sympathizers of the political Left, Dutch Conservatives expressed fears of an uncontrolled influx of “Marxists.”\textsuperscript{33}

The NSB echoed the anti-Marxist rhetoric (according to Geelkerken the mutiny demonstrated that “the red beast had shown its true face”), but insisted that the fundamental reason for Holland’s economic and
political difficulties was the system of *verzuiling* and parliamentary democracy. In response the established *zuilen* and their political representatives began to close ranks to protect the Dutch political system and attempt to marginalize the extreme-Right challengers. In February 1933, the Catholic bishops added the fascists to the list of political organizations prohibited for Catholics; until then the list had been limited to the left-wing parties. The government for its part at the end of 1933 prohibited civil servants from joining or supporting a fascist organization. (Earlier that injunction had also applied only to the Communists.) This measure, which had the full support of Queen Wilhelmina who loathed the NSB, had immediate consequences for organized Dutch fascism. Both Mussert and Geelkerken resigned their civil service positions rather than abandon their political careers. At the time Mussert was chief engineer in the Utrecht office of the Dutch Waterways Administration, and Geelkerken worked for the treasurer’s office in the Province of Gelderland. Many other NSB members and sympathizers, however, resigned their party membership rather than lose their civil service jobs. It is estimated that the NSB lost about 5 per cent of its membership as a result of the civil service directive.35

**Early Nazi Initiatives in France and Holland**

Dutch and French fascists often compared what they saw as the efficiency and rational decision-making in the Third Reich with the inefficiency, compromise, and backstage dealing that characterized their countries’ democratic systems. Actually, of course, confusion and contradiction rather than efficiency and rationality characterized the dual state that was the Third Reich. In the area of interfascist relations a bevy of Nazi party-affiliated foreign policy “experts” insisted that their foreign contacts would be effective in furthering Nazi Germany’s foreign policy goals.36

The amateurs were especially numerous and active in France. Notably the Propaganda Ministry and the Dienststelle Ribbentrop with its peripatetic expert on France, Otto Abetz, tirelessly sought to open channels to groups and individuals that they felt would be sympathetic to the Third Reich.37 Within a year after arriving in Paris, Abetz had become a close friend of Luchaire, made contact with Marcel Déat, facilitated journeys to Berlin for Jouvenel and Drieu, and paved the way for a German translation of Fernand de Brinon’s book *France-Allemagne*.38 For the “collaborationists” among the Nazis the Third Reich was becoming the model for the rest of Europe, including France. One of the most enthusiastic among them, Helmuth Otto, commented: “There is something particularly appealing for us impartial and uninvolved observers to see how in our neighboring countries national movements are developing
which are founded upon the leadership principle and which are gathering increasing support in their countries.” To be sure, there were some skeptics. France, wrote Karl Epting, the head of the DAAD’s Paris office, “had long ago passed the zenith of its cultural creativity and its ability for biological renewal [biologische Erneuerungskraft].”

Not surprisingly, German observers saw new evidence of France’s progressive “fascistization” after the February 1934 riots; some of the Nazi alternative experts insisted that the Stavisky Affair had opened the way for the triumph of fascism in France. The Propaganda Ministry urged wide coverage of the riots in the German press, although it also recommended that the reports should avoid “gleeful [hämische] Schadenfreude” about France’s domestic problems. The professional diplomats at the German embassy were far more skeptical about the coming age of fascism in France, and even some of the amateurs noted that most of the French extreme Right did not subscribe to the key element underlying all Nazi policies—völkisch racism.

Whatever their differing assessments of France’s domestic stability, Nazi agencies took care to highlight those policies of the young Third Reich that they expected would be readily endorsed by the opponents of parliamentary democracy in France. In a veritable offensive de charme Nazi party offices and officials, Abetz foremost among them, organized interviews with prominent Nazis and subsidized travel to Germany by selecting carefully chosen individuals to observe equally carefully selected aspects of the Nazi regime. Hitler himself led the way by granting a steady stream of interviews to French journalists and intellectuals. In the course of 1933 and 1934 Jean Luchaire, Fernand de Brinon, Bertrand de Jouvenel, Jean Foy, and Jacques Chastenet were all granted the favor of an “exclusive” interview by the new German leader. In these conversations Hitler consistently stressed his anticommunism and his peaceful intentions toward France. Although Hitler’s friendship for France strained credulity, the German chancellor attempted to dismiss the anti-French passages in Mein Kampf as campaign rhetoric that were superseded by his policies as head of the German government. Following Hitler’s example, other Nazi leaders welcomed sympathetic Frenchmen to a variety of Nazi institutions. Sometimes French fascists even acted as the Nazis’ agents. Bertrand de Jouvenel—along with Abetz—made possible Drieu de la Rochelle’s first visit to Berlin as a guest of the Hitler Youth in January, 1934.

Among the visitors’ points of interest the camps of the Reichsarbeitsdienst (Reich Labor Service, RAD) became an early favorite. Hitler Youth camps were also useful in demonstrating the regime’s dynamism and young Germans’ enthusiastic support of the Third Reich. A favorite few
visitors from abroad were even shown selected concentration camps, where the Nazis put their “humane” treatment of Communists on display. Beginning in 1934, the annual Nazi party congresses in Nuremberg (the 1934 spectacle was the one which Leni Riefenstahl immortalized in the film *Triumph of the Will*) became the most important vehicle for impressing foreign visitors. (Drieu attended his first party congress in 1934.)

Goebbels insisted that after he had provided foreign visitors with the necessary “enlightenment” (*Aufklärung*) about the new Germany, most of them went away “converted” (*bekehrt*), but he also admitted that selling the Third Reich was an uphill struggle. The minister blamed “atrocities propaganda” abroad for detracting from the positive news about Nazi Germany, but he might have looked closer to home for the regime’s own propaganda failings. While Hitler mouthed platitudes about a new era of Franco-German friendship, the Nazi-controlled press was not only prohibited from publishing these interviews in Germany but ordered to continue stressing the “hereditary animosity” between the two countries.

Alongside showing off selected aspects of the Third Reich, the regime launched a public relations campaign in the form of “foreign propaganda” (*Auslandspropaganda*) abroad. Various party and state offices sought to place laudatory pieces about the Third Reich, written either in Germany or with German help, in the French press. Efforts to place these pieces in French large circulation, mainstream papers, and journals met with little success, and the Germans had to turn to second-rung media outlets, especially the publications of the “related movements.” Although rumors of large-scale Nazi cash payments to French clients abounded, the Germans, always short on foreign currency, used primarily indirect means of support to meet their ends. The acceptance of Nazi propaganda pieces was often coupled with an agreement to purchase a certain number of subscriptions to the publications that printed the articles. The Nazis also used their French sympathizers as straw men for the Third Reich’s foreign propaganda. In 1934 Paul Ferdonnet and Lucien Penjean founded the Prima Presse agency; Goebbels provided the funds for what turned out to be a completely unsuccessful venture.

The Nazis’ criteria for selecting groups and individuals to approach and support included a number of specific priorities. Not surprisingly, anti-Semitic groups and writers headed the list. The Germans also eyed regional groups in Alsace that promised to be receptive to the Nazis’ propaganda about the ethnic union of all German-speaking peoples. Organizations that sought to appeal specifically to youthful supporters always attracted the Nazis’ attention, since the rulers of the Third Reich
were convinced that the future of fascism in France lay with the under-
forty generation.54

These criteria led the Nazis to classify French far-Right organizations
and writers in a rather idiosyncratic manner. The new German rulers
paid a great deal of attention to the anti-Semitism of the SF and of Henry
Coston, the leader of one wing of the Francistes. On a visit to Germany
in April 1934, Coston was given “far-reaching considerations (weitgehende
Erleichterungen).”55 The Nazis’ monomaniacal fascination with the “Jewish
question” led them to contact and at times support the publications of a
number of very marginal figures who identified themselves as leaders and
propagandists of French anti-Semitism. Despite discouraging evaluations
by the German embassy in Paris, the Propaganda Ministry subsidized
Paul Ferdonnet, a drug addict and alcoholic. He received an RM 3000
subsidy for his panegyric book, Le IIIe Reich.56

In the case of Bertrand de Jouvenel, a Nazi favorite from the earliest
days of the Third Reich, it was less anti-Semitism than his supposed
influence among France’s youth that drew the Nazis’ interest. Jouvenel
was president of an organization called the Comité d’Entente de la
Jeunesse française pour le Rapprochement franco-allemand (The French
Youth’s Committee of Understanding for Franco-German Rapproche-
ment). At the beginning of 1934, Abetz arranged a meeting between rep-
resentatives of Jouvenel’s organization and officials of the Hitler Youth.
Similarly, the Nazis listed Marcel Déat and his Neo-Socialists among
France’s “youth movements.”57

In contrast, the Nazis showed little interest in the largest of the para-
military groups, the CF. Despite the CF’s fascistoid style and the Führer-
cult around the organization’s leader, Colonel François de la Rocque, the
group’s ambivalence about parliamentary democracy and its suspect anti-
Semitic credentials led the Nazis to conclude that the CF was not a fascist
organization, but rather a “self-protection movement of the bourgeoisie.”58

Not surprisingly, the collaborationists among the Nazis welcomed the
many publications critical of French parliamentary democracy that
appeared in the wake of the February riots. Karl Heinz Bremer positively
gushed over Drieu’s Socialisme Fasciste. Here was a French author who for
the first time in centuries had transcended the rigid categories of left and
right and achieved a “permeation [Durchdringung]” of the spiritual and
the mundane. Drieu, according to Bremer, already lived in the new age
of totalitarian dictatorship. Similarly, the authors of Demain la France
had cast off the fossilized thought patterns of the AF. Their program
combined a “truly revolutionary, völkisch-social, and realistic attitude
with the healthy elements of Conservatism.59
By mid-1934 the Germans thought their public relations efforts were showing some results. Two second-rate organs, *Volonté* and *Notre Temps* (the latter edited by Jean Luchaire), routinely printed articles favorable to the Third Reich. Between March and July 1934, *Notre Temps* printed seventeen articles supplied by the Aufklärungsausschuss Hamburg-Bremen, one of the front organizations controlled by the Propaganda Ministry. Nevertheless, on balance, the Nazis’s success in influencing French public opinion in the first eighteen months of the Third Reich was decidedly limited. Attempts to channel information to German-controlled, but ostensibly French-owned press agencies failed. Large-audience publications remained closed to the Nazis. Even the anti-Semitic publications were a doubtful asset. Their impact on the larger French scene was limited, and their anti-Semitism was often coupled with fierce French chauvinism: While lauding the Nazis’ anti-Jewish measures, these publications also advanced their own version of the hereditary animosity between Germany and France.

As was true for France, creating a favorable image for the Third Reich in Holland was an uphill struggle. The AO’s and later the RG’s strong-arm tactics led to numerous complaints by the Dutch government that the Germans were interfering in Dutch domestic affairs. The Dutch familiarity with the German language facilitated interviews and personal contacts in Holland, but it also gave the Dutch direct access to information the Nazis intended solely for home consumption. In view of these circumstances the Foreign Office and especially the German minister in The Hague throughout the 1930s, Count von Zech-Burkeroda, an old-line conservative and son-in-law of Theobald von Bethmann Hollweg, Germany’s chancellor in the First World War, felt the new German government should leave well enough alone. The professional diplomats argued that the government of Hendrik Colijn was the best Germany could hope for. Authoritarian and largely unconcerned about German domestic policies, at least in the early years of the Nazi regime, the Colijn government would go to considerable length not to offend the Third Reich.

Zech also argued that if the Nazis wanted to establish good relations with a fascist Dutch organization, it should be with the NSB. As we saw, by the time the Nazis came to power Mussert’s organization dominated the extreme-Right scene in Holland. For the most part the Nazis followed Zech’s advice. A succession of AO chiefs in Holland worked hard to establish good relations between their organization and the NSB, going so far as to recommend that Germans with dual citizenship join both the NSB and the NSDAP. And despite the NSB’s lack of an anti-Semitic platform, most Nazi offices were generally helpful to Mussert’s organization.
They permitted the NSB to campaign among the Dutch minority in Germany, and the party received favorable coverage in the Nazi-controlled press.64

Zech also recognized that state-church relations in Nazi Germany were a major problem for the Third Reich’s image in Holland. The Nazis’ support for the German Christians and their attempt to create a national Protestant church under government control aroused widespread criticism in the Netherlands, a country with strong traditions of both religious autonomy and institutional church influence. When the leader of the Hitler Youth, Baldur von Schirach, was quoted in the Dutch newspaper Telegraaf (which was generally sympathetic toward the Third Reich), as saying there were two rocks of strength, Adolf Hitler and Christ, but only old women still clung to Christ, Zech asked for a swift and official denial that the statement represented the German government’s point of view. The diplomat noted that Schirach’s utterance had led to a “profound irritation (tiefgehende Verstimmung)” in the Netherlands.65

The Nazis also used Dutch fascists and fellow-travelers to staff ostensibly private press bureaus through which, much as in France, Goebbels attempted to place articles friendly to the Third Reich in the Dutch media. The driving force behind two of these efforts was one J. Göbel, a shadowy entrepreneur who convinced the officials at the Propaganda Ministry that he had excellent connections with the Dutch press. In 1933 the Propaganda Ministry supplied Göbel with funds to establish the Netherlands Press Bureau with headquarters in Berlin. Among the Bureau’s associates was E.F.L. van Lith Haareboome, the propaganda chief of the NSB’s local organization in Berlin. The Netherlands Press Bureau was joined in the fall of 1934 by the Nederlandsch Katholieke Correspondentie Bureau (The Dutch Catholic Correspondence Bureau, NKCB), which was later renamed Pro Deo et Patria (For God and Fatherland). The RKCB was under the successive direction of two fellow-traveling priests, Anselmus Vrients and W. Leonhards. The former, a German, had worked for many years in Holland, while the latter, who was Dutch, had long resided in Berlin. Both were vehement defenders of Nazi church policies until they were silenced by the bishop of Berlin.

H.W. van de Vaart Smit’s Dutch Christian Press Bureau had been founded in 1930, before the Nazis came to power. The organization was to supply information on German church affairs to the Dutch Protestant media. Initially the bureau had no connection with any government, but van de Vaart Smit was a long-time “secret” member of the NSB (the party permitted such a category of membership), and when the Nazis came to power he quickly hopped on the bandwagon. His dispatches consistently reflected the Nazi version of the growing church-state conflict in Germany.
The bureau supplied a number of Dutch Protestant papers with news on Germany—at least until van de Vaart Smit came out of the closet and revealed his NSB membership.\textsuperscript{66}

Despite the undoubted advantages of the NSB connection for the Nazis’ propaganda efforts in the Netherlands, the NSB’s lack of anti-Semitism led some Nazis, including Julius Streicher and his \textit{Stürmer}, to denounce the NSB as little more than a front for Jewish and Freemasonic influences in Holland. Zech’s efforts to persuade the Propaganda Ministry to restrain the \textit{Stürmer} had no effect. Nazi critics of the NSB pinned their hopes—actually illusions—for a German bridgehead in the Netherlands on the NSNAP, the Dutch clone of the NSDAP.\textsuperscript{67} More realistic Nazi officials pointed out that Nazi support for the NSNAP actually alienated those sections of Dutch public opinion that might be favorably inclined toward indigenous Dutch fascism. All to no avail. The schizophrenic attitude of the German authorities reached something of an early climax with the “Goch affair” in March 1933. The NSB had scheduled a rally in the German border town of Goch with Mussert as featured speaker. The rally was broken up when a gang of NSNAP followers, aided by German Stormtroopers, assaulted the NSB’s supporters.\textsuperscript{68}

At the beginning of 1934 the Nazis officially prohibited political activities by the NSNAP in Germany, but local Nazi officials seem to have paid little attention to the national directive.\textsuperscript{69}

Nazi propaganda efforts in Holland, then, were not a resounding success. Especially the regime’s early economic measures evoked a positive response across the border, but the anti-Jewish and antichurch moves quickly tarnished the Third Reich’s image and alienated the vast majority of Dutch public opinion, including many NSB activists. The AO’s continuing efforts to Nazify the German minority in Holland not only further undermined attempts to create a favorable image for the Third Reich but also assured that “Nazism” and Nazi Germany would continue to remain an issue in Dutch domestic politics as well.

\textbf{The French Extreme Right Assesses the Beginnings of the Third Reich}

French politicians and publicists were fascinated by virtually everything about the Third Reich.\textsuperscript{70} Not surprisingly, the French fascists instrumentalized events in Nazi Germany for their own political agenda. For the French far-Right the early policies of Hitler’s regime demonstrated how the Nazis had successfully tackled problems that were equally acute in France; a sense of “unbelievable envy” permeated the comments of French intellectuals and extreme-Right politicians. Marcel Déat later summed
up what he saw as the contrast between the two countries: “In short the Reich was governed, while France was not.”

At the same time, most of the French extreme Right insisted their aim was not to copy the Nazis, but to learn from them and adapt their policies to France. French fascists emphasized that they looked upon the Third Reich with calm equanimity; “neither fear nor hatred,” wrote Jean Prévost. The authors of *Demain la France* praised Nazi Germany’s youthful energy, but added that such exuberance was to be expected from an underdeveloped and immature country. De la Rocque echoed the theme of Germany’s immaturity. He commented that under the Nazis Germany remained a restless, unfinished, barbarian country that “lacked the Latin sense of moderation.” Hitler was “a rather confused personality.” On the foreign policy front in these early months of the Third Reich, French fascists expressed fear of the Nazis’ aggressive intentions, but they also insisted French fascism would succeed in containing the ambitions of Germany’s new rulers. The weakness of French democracy had enabled Hitler to come to power, but a French fascist regime would thwart German expansionist ambitions.

While the French fascists were apprehensive about the Nazis’ future foreign policy moves, they saw the Third Reich’s early domestic policies in a much more positive light. They cheered the destruction of parliamentary democracy. Writing in a German periodical, Alfred Fabre-Luce insisted Hitler’s dictatorship rested upon the will of the people. “This was something the fanatics of parliamentarism had not foreseen.” (The French fascists vigorously opposed any joint action by the Western democracies to restore pluralism in Germany. Nothing was so contemptible as a “crusade of democracies.”) But, above all, the French fascists celebrated the Third Reich’s swift moves against the Bolshevik “menace.” Readily accepting the Nazi thesis that at the beginning of 1933 the German Communists stood poised to launch a revolution, French fascists agreed that Hitler had saved not only Germany but also Europe from bolshevism.

For the Nazis, anticommunism, anti-Semitism, and opposition to Freemasonry were interchangeable, and many French fascists were equally willing to believe in this conspiratorial triad. To give it a Gallic twist, they added that Marxist Socialism was a “Judeo-German export product.” In contrast to Nazi Germany, which had recognized the Jewish menace and done something about it, the French fascists complained that France continued to tolerate the Jews’ excessive power and influence. In fact, things were rapidly deteriorating. Jews, who were now fleeing Nazi persecution, were permitted to settle in France, where they would compete for French jobs, provide support for communism and democracy, and contribute to the country’s growing moral and artistic decline.
On other aspects of the Nazi regime the reaction of the French far-Right was more differentiated. Virtually all of the extreme Right agreed that France needed a strong leader like Mussolini or Hitler who would truly unite the French people, but most French fascists were not initially impressed by the Führer himself. Robert Brasillach, in later years an unabashed admirer of virtually everything Nazi, found the German dictator an unprepossessing figure with a “frightful” voice. During his trip to Berlin in February 1934, Drieu liked the élan of the German youth, but was pessimistic about the future of the Nazi revolution. “To hear the Germans speak of their dynamism contorts me, or rather makes me smile bitterly.” Ever the skeptic, Drieu feared that Germany was again becoming a static society, much like France under Napoleon III.

Unlike their Nazi counterparts, most French fascists kept insisting they were not racists. France, wrote Marcel Déat, was “immunized against all race diseases” by its firm commitment to the ideas of humanism and universalism. At this time most extreme Rightists also distinguished between good and bad Jews. Good, genuine French Jews had become an integral part of the French nation. Bad Jews, like German-Jewish refugees, were part of the alien metèques, immigrants who did not belong in France.

However, as the Third Republic’s political and economic problems increased, so did the number of French fascists who came to “understand” the Nazis’ racism and anti-Semitism. Louis Bertrand argued that Nazi racism was simply the mirror image of Jewish racism. Robert Fabre-Luce assured his German contacts that he fully recognized the “race and blood relationship” (rassenmässige und blutsmässige Verbundenheit) between France and Germany. In 1931 Pierre Drieu de la Rochelle had made fun of Nazi racism, but the growing strength of the French Communists and Socialists, as well as his journey to Germany in January 1934, convinced him, as he told Otto Abetz, of the need for the “Nordic elements” in Germany and France to stand together. Attendance at the September 1934 Nazi party congress in Nuremberg completed Drieu’s conversion from skeptic to believer.

Lamenting the lack of forceful and charismatic leaders in France, the French right-wing extremists, despite their initially unenthusiastic assessment of Hitler, increasingly contrasted the dictator’s stature as Germany’s national leader with the elected chieftains of French parliamentarism. The German Führer had given hope to the German people, while France’s parliamentary leaders had given the country only decadence and corruption. The Nazi dictator was simple, selfless, full of naked energy. Hitler was compared to Franklin Delano Roosevelt and Maximilien Robespierre. He was one of four political geniuses of the twentieth century. (The other three were Lenin, Mustapha Kemal, and Mussolini.)
The Nazis’ economic policies evoked unabashed admiration among most of the French Right. Germany under Hitler seemed to have accomplished the “miracle” of the marriage of nationalism and socialism.\textsuperscript{84} Alfred Fabre-Luce pointed out that by rapidly reducing the army of unemployed in Germany, Hitler’s dictatorship had provided true freedom that many had never known in the democratic Weimar Republic.\textsuperscript{85} The German embassy also reported widespread interest in the Third Reich’s social and welfare policies. For the extreme Right the leaders of the Third Republic persisted in pursuing policies that divided the nation, while the Nazis were able to break down the barriers between previously antagonistic groups. In the eyes of the French fascists institutions like the German Labor Front, the RAD, and a host of other Nazi-created agencies had succeeded in creating a true Volksgemeinschaft, lifting work beyond alienation and “\textit{machinisme}.”\textsuperscript{86}

Most French fascists agreed that the Nazis’ style of politics was an essential and positive aspect of the Third Reich. Incessant rallies and the fanciful uniforms of a plethora of party agencies symbolized a “\textit{spectacle grandiose}” even to superficial observers. The French extreme Right contrasted the decadence and mediocrity of life in their own country with the dynamism, romantic sacrifice, “poetry” in action, and “Nietzschean vibrations” in the Third Reich.\textsuperscript{87} The most impressive evidence of the Nazi style was the annual NSDAP party congress in Nuremberg. Although the 1933 spectacle was a pale prelude of the organized perfection that characterized the later congresses, French observers were profoundly impressed by the “holy [\textit{sacré}] delerium” manifested at the first rally after the Nazis assumed power. Here, they recognized a “popular dictatorship” in action.\textsuperscript{88} Always eager to claim that the French had done it first, Bertrand de Jouvenel would later write that the Nazi party had achieved the “total mobilization of the national resources for which our Jacobins had given the first example.”\textsuperscript{89}

The cult of youth also fascinated the French fascists. Jean Luchaire contrasted “a new Europe [represented by Germany] and an old France,” while Bertrand de Jouvenel claimed that on January 30, 1933, Germany’s youth had come to power. Drieu de la Rochelle claimed that the Nazi cult of youth was a revolt against decadence, and consequently, “Nazism was . . . Europe’s best hope against decadence.”\textsuperscript{90} But the Nazi cult of youth could not be separated from militarism, and here apprehension rather than enthusiastic approbation characterized the French fascist response. Claude Jeantet, who reported on the NSDAP’s 1933 congress for \textit{JSP}, was impressed by the rally, but seeing the various formations march past Hitler in perfect military order, he also noted that here were men who only lacked rifles to become soldiers.\textsuperscript{91}
Despite such misgivings Hitler's early foreign policy moves also evoked admiration in some far-Right circles largely because they challenged the Third Republic's policy of collective security. The League of Nations had few friends among the French extreme Right; it smacked of Anglo-Saxon hegemony. Heinrich XXXIII Prince Reuss, Hess’s man in Paris at this time, reported that after Germany left the League of Nations he suddenly received invitations to social occasions from people who had previously ignored him.92 Some French fascists even expressed sympathies for the Nazis' territorial ambitions. Alfred Fabre-Luce’s *Pamphlet* suggested as early as February, 1933 that Germany’s claims to the Polish Corridor were justified.93 Finally, there were Hitler’s impeccable antibolshevik credentials. While the French government was engaging in negotiations that in March 1935 would lead to the Franco-Soviet pact, the Nazis were building the Anti-Comintern alliance as a bulwark against Soviet expansionism or, in Drieu de la Rochelle’s racist terminology, the “Slavic peril.”94

The Röhm affair brought an abrupt, albeit temporary, end to the Third Reich’s positive image among the French extreme Right.95 For many fascists in France the SA personified Nazi revolutionary idealism, the true fusion of socialism and nationalism. A few leaders and publications, such as Rebetet, Brinon, the Francistes, *L’Ami du Peuple*, and *JSP* accepted the official version that Hitler had saved Germany from chaos and societal upheavals,96 but most of the extreme right condemned the Röhm affair for what it was, state-sponsored terror. French fascists pointed out repeatedly that such unprovoked violence ran counter to French ideas of decency and law and order. In addition, the French fascists worried that the purge had permanently ended the revolutionary impulses of the Third Reich. Drieu feared that the bourgeois elements of Nazism (“the Göring-Ribbentrop type”) would now take over and “pervert [German] fascism.” Louis Ferdinand Céline, too, thought the Röhm affair had decapitated revolutionary socialism in Germany.97 If the “socialists” among the French fascists lamented the murder of Ernst Röhm and the purge of the NSDAP’s left wing, more conservative sympathizers of the Third Reich were disappointed by the Nazis’ continuing attacks on the Christian churches. Especially in Alsace, where the influence of the Catholic Church was strong, right-wing commentators compared the Nazis’ persecution of organized religion to Stalin’s militant atheism and Bismarck’s *Kulturkampf*.98

Eighteen months after the Nazis’ coming to power French fascists viewed developments across the Rhine with ambivalent feelings. Contrasting the Nazis’ domestic policies with those of France, the French fascists saw dynamism in Germany, stagnation in their own country, restored national pride in the Third Reich, and control by alien elements
in France. They admired the Nazis’ forceful plans for economic recovery. At the same time, “socialist” fascists criticized the timidity of the Nazis’ domestic revolution. Most French fascists rejected the Nazis’ use of terror, but they also admired Hitler’s success in eliminating communism, democracy, and liberalism in Germany.

**Dutch Fascism and the Early Third Reich: Real Problems and False Prospects**

In these early months of the Third Reich the Dutch fascists in the NSB liked much, but by no means everything, that was happening across the Rhine. In their speeches and writings the NSB’s leaders endorsed the persecution of Social Democrats and Communists, fully accepting the Nazis’ claim that only Hitler’s appointment as chancellor had prevented the triumph of bolshevism in Germany. Similarly, the Nazis’ destruction of parliamentary democracy was a positive development; its place would be taken by a “higher order of democracy,” which the Nazis were creating in Germany and which the NSB was “very near” to introducing in the Netherlands.99

The NSB heaped even more fulsome praise on the Nazis’ economic and social policies as a way of attacking what the party saw as the disastrous economic consequences of the Dutch government’s supply-side decisions. Reports in the NSB’s press contrasted the Nazis’ public works programs, which resulted in a rapid decrease in the number of unemployed in the Reich and began the construction of a true Volksgemeinschaft, with the Colijn government’s pursuit of the “golden guilder,” which the NSB claimed constantly added more people to the growing army of Dutch unemployed and increased class tensions in the Netherlands.100 The Dutch fascists were especially enthusiastic about the compulsory RAD. Here was an institution that had everything to recommend it: rich and poor young men working enthusiastically side by side to serve the nation by improving its infrastructure. The NSB had already selected projects along the Zuiderzee for the Dutch labor service that would be established once the party came to power in the Netherlands.101 The NSB also found the Nazis’ agrarian policies attractive. The party hoped that news of the Nazis’ agricultural policies with their promise of stable commodity prices would facilitate the party’s attempts to gain a following among Dutch farmers. The “Germano-freaks” in the NSB, of course, welcomed the cult of blood and soil, which was at the center of the Nazis’ agrarian program.102

On a more tactical level the NSB was convinced that access to the NSDAP’s propaganda and campaign materials would propell the party to power. Using its members among the Dutch minority in Germany as
emissaries, the NSB approached Nazi party offices with requests for suitable propaganda materials. “Send a lot, send it fast,” wrote the NSB’s chief of propaganda. As Mussert recalled later, “We learned a lot from Germany.”103 While Mussert and his associates thought aping the Nazi style of campaigning would benefit the NSB, church-state relations in Nazi Germany quickly became and remained an ongoing embarrassment for the Dutch fascists. This came as an unexpected and unpleasant surprise to the NSB leaders. Initially, they saw the Nazis’ problems with the German churches as a welcome opportunity to stress the differences between Dutch fascism and German Nazism. Fascist Holland, the NSB’s leider wrote at this time, would remain a pluralistic society, and the NSB regime would respect Holland’s confessional diversity.104

Because of the severe economic problems in the coal mining industry in the largely Catholic province of Limburg, the NSB’s early recruiting efforts had been quite successful in this area. After the Nazis came to power, however, the Dutch Catholic hierarchy, fearful of losing control of the Catholic zuil, used the NSB’s praise of the Third Reich to link the Dutch fascists with the German Nazis. The leider and other party leaders denied any linkage, but the Dutch Catholic bishops refused to believe these protestations. D’Ansembourg, using his family’s Vatican connections, attempted to induce the Pope to restrain the Dutch clergy, but he failed. The party now went on the offensive, claiming that the tensions between Catholics and the new regime in Germany were the result of the German [Catholic] Center Party’s earlier misguided opposition to Nazism. The party threatened that unless the Dutch Catholic clergy ceased their present course of action and stopped interfering in politics, the church in Holland would face similar problems once the NSB came to power in the Netherlands.105

Mussert and many NSB activists felt that the party’s positions on anti-Semitism, Freemasonry, and racism offered another welcome opportunity to differentiate the NSB from the Nazis and underscore the autonomous nature of Dutch fascism.106 But, here too, matters were not that simple. The NSB’s leaders were under pressure from three sides. Admiring so much else about the Nazis regime and convinced that identification with Hitler’s Germany was politically beneficial to them, they hesitated to take a position that was fundamentally different from that of the Nazis. There was also increasing pressure from within the party. The NSB’s propaganda chief in Germany insisted that the party’s supporters there generally endorsed the Nazi line. If the NSB would adopt an unequivocal anti-Semitic stand, the party could have “thousands of members” in Germany.107 Finally, as domestic opposition to the NSB intensified, the NSB’s moderate leaders became convinced that Dutch
Jews were indeed a guiding force in the effort to prevent the NSB from taking power in Holland.\textsuperscript{108} As a result, while the NSB officially maintained its opposition to racism and anti-Semitism, party spokesmen also issued ominous warnings that the future attitude of the NSB toward Dutch Jews would depend on the Jews’ reaction toward the new fascist Holland.\textsuperscript{109}

As was true in France, the glowing image of the Third Reich among the Dutch fascists was severely tarnished by the Röhm affair. Count d’Ansembourg later described the Röhm affair as a “heavy blow” for the NSB.\textsuperscript{110} Both personally and politically Mussert found it difficult coming to terms with Hitler’s decision to order the murders of some of his closest associates as well as a number of innocent bystanders. True, in his published reactions Mussert praised Hitler’s determination to wipe out corruption in the Nazis’ own ranks, and concluded that Röhm had been a traitor to his Führer, his own comrades, and Nazi ideals. But he also attempted to draw a distinction between Röhm’s murder and the death of innocent victims. The latter’s deaths were “extremely un-fascist, indeed counter-productive.” Mussert insisted gratuitous violence was not the Dutch fascist way; such events would not occur when the NSB came to power in Holland.\textsuperscript{111} Clearly on the defensive, Mussert tried to put the Röhm affair into historical perspective. He claimed that great revolutionary changes were always accompanied by birth pangs; in comparison with the French or Russian revolutions the fascist upheavals in Germany had claimed relatively few victims. Finally, the NSB’s leader advanced an early version of the “if only the Führer knew” syndrom. He consoled himself with the thought that the unnecessary atrocities were the responsibility of the Gestapo, not Hitler.\textsuperscript{112}

The Nazis’ early foreign policy moves evoked no sense of unease among the Dutch fascists. This was because for the moment the Nazis’ efforts to revise the power relationship among the European countries seemed to fit in well with the NSB’s own foreign policy agenda. To begin with, the NSB and particularly its leider profoundly distrusted the victors of the First World War, France foremost among them. Mussert felt France wanted to reduce the Netherlands to the status of a French satellite; he claimed this had already happened to Belgium. In addition, the NSB leader accused Great Britain and France of permitting Japan to achieve a position as a major regional power, enabling the Asian nation to challenge the Netherlands’ control of the Dutch East Indies.\textsuperscript{113} As a result, the NSB enthusiastically welcomed what the Dutch fascists saw as German moves that began the process of creating a new fascist balance of power in Europe.\textsuperscript{114}

Even more than in the case of the French fascists, relations between Dutch fascists and German Nazis at the beginning of the Third Reich
were characterized by wishful thinking on both sides. The NSB was enthusiastic about many aspects of the emerging Third Reich—the destruction of democracy, the Nazis’ economic and social policies, their propagandistic style, and their challenges to French Continental hegemony—but Mussert’s group also tried to retain a measure of autonomy, particularly in the areas of church-state relations and anti-Semitism. Most Nazis, for their part, recognized that the NSB was the only viable fascist organization in Holland, but they remained distrustful of Mussert’s group because of the NSB’s official stand against racism and anti-Semitism.

Equally illusionary was the hope, cherished by a number of German Nazis as well as French and Dutch fascists, that the Nazis’ policies in Germany would benefit the fascist groups in France and Holland and consequently hasten the arrival of the new fascist era in Western Europe. True, the seeming success of the Third Reich’s early domestic policies did attract some support for fascism in France and the Netherlands, but this was a temporary phenomenon. As the aggressive and cruel nature of German Nazism became obvious, identifying their cause with that of the Third Reich became a liability for the indigenous fascists in France and the Netherlands.
Chapter 4

Europe Will be a Fascist Europe: July 1934–May 1936

Political Developments in Germany, France and the Netherlands

In the mid-1930s the Nazis seemed to go from success to success, while the West European democracies appeared to lurch from crisis to crisis. No wonder that Western European fascists thought they could smell victory ahead. In reality, of course, this picture of fascist successes and democratic failures was largely wishful thinking. After the death of Reich president von Hindenburg in August 1934, Hitler added the powers of the president’s office to those of the Reich chancellor. The Reichswehr and the Neo-Conservatives, grateful for what they perceived as Hitler’s help in beating back the Stormtrooper radicals, readily accepted the former corporal as head of the Reich and commander-in-chief of the armed forces. The rulers of the Reich began to move against what they saw as the remaining obstacles to establishing Nazi totalitarianism. Among the prominent targets were the Christian churches and Germany’s Jews. The Nazis were determined to ultimately eliminate the churches as an institutional force in German society. Goebbels wrote in his diary, “Hitting the churches hard. We want to become a church ourselves.”1

In January 1935, attacks upon both the Catholic and Protestant churches became commonplace again. Alfred Rosenberg, stung by criticism of his book, Der Mythos des Zwanzigsten Jahrhunderts (The Myth of the Twentieth Century), bitterly denounced church leaders for their opposition to the Nazis’ political theology. In the same year a number of Gauleiter (regional leader) in predominantly Catholic areas harassed church officials and institutions, often precipitating open conflict between the faithful and
the regime. Baldur von Schirach, the leader of the Hitler Youth, lashed out at church leaders who had expressed concern about the Hitler Youth’s efforts to discourage religious instruction for its members.² The Nazis also advanced their anti-Semitic agenda. The so-called Nuremberg Laws, which the rubber-stamp Reichstag passed at a special session organized in conjunction with the annual Nazi party congress in September 1935, deprived Germany’s Jews of their citizenship and subjected them to a variety of new discriminatory measures.³

On the “positive” side, the forced pace of Germany’s rearmament program led to the rapid decline in the number of unemployed, giving additional credence to the myth that there really was a Nazi “economic miracle.” At the same time the Nazis’ plethora of social institutions appeared to give concrete shape to the Volksgemeinschaft in progress.⁴ The Nazis also continued to work on improving the stylistic side of the regime. Unencumbered now by either financial problems, political opposition, or government regulations, the new rulers blanketed the country with what appeared to be an unending series of rallies, demonstrations, and exhibitions, culminating with the annual Nazi party congress, always held in early September in Nuremburg. Beginning with the 1934 event, the NSDAP’s national congresses became increasingly gigantic, professionally managed spectacles, which impressed party activists and visitors alike.⁵

On the foreign policy side the regime still worked hard to convince friends and potential foes that its aim was merely to “revise” the Versailles system in order to remove its inequities and strengthen the Reich’s position as a bulwark against the threat of Soviet Bolshevism. But even in 1934 and 1935 the Nazis’ actual foreign policy moves seemed to belie their protestations of peaceful intentions. The attempt to seize power in Austria in July 1934 and bring about the union of Austria and Germany turned out to be a major foreign policy setback. Austrian Nazis, aided and abetted by their German counterparts, staged a coup to topple the quasi-fascist regime of Engelbert Dollfuss. The conspirators succeeded in assassinating the Austrian chancellor, but their attempt to take power was thwarted when Mussolini made it clear that Italy would militarily intervene to prevent a Nazi takeover of Austria. The German rulers fastened to disavow the plot they had helped to hatch.⁶

The Nazis used the signing of the Franco-Soviet Pact in 1935 as unconvincing justification for reestablishing universal military service in the Reich. In response, Great Britain, France, and Italy agreed to coordinate their policies in defense of the Versailles system.⁷ Hitler was rescued from complete diplomatic and political isolation by Mussolini’s military intervention in Ethiopia. Great Britain and France responded to Italy’s
aggression with (half-hearted) sanctions. Nazi Germany, seeing an opportunity to improve German-Italian relations, denounced the sanctions and continued to supply Italy with much needed materials. Mussolini was understandably grateful. The ratification of the Franco-Soviet Pact by the French parliament served as the excuse for the Nazis’ first use of military force to challenge the strategic balance of power in Europe. Claiming that the Franco-Soviet agreement had relieved Germany of her obligations under the Versailles and Locarno Treaties, in March 1936, the regime sent German troops into the previously de-militarized left bank of the Rhine.

The history of France in these years was full of paradoxes. On the domestic front the main problem was, of course, the Depression. France’s GDP did not reach its pre-Depression level of 1928 until 1939. The government’s answers to the country’s economic woes were protectionism and deflation. In view of soaring unemployment figures and mounting business failures, increasing numbers of Frenchmen rejected this recipe. French foreign relations were also beset by problems. The Franco-Soviet Pact quickly became embroiled in domestic politics. In fact, a curious reversal of political camps took place. Some on the political Left, who had argued for reconciliation with Germany during the Weimar years, now supported a policy of strength and military preparedness against Nazi Germany. They welcomed the Soviet Union as a partner in this endeavor. In contrast, many on the political Right, traditionally the camp of hard-liners toward Germany, distrusted all collective security measures that involved an alliance with the Soviet Union. They argued Stalin’s aim was not to strengthen France’s defense, but to provoke a war between France and Germany, which would enable the French Communist Party to seize power. To prevent this scenario the Right urged renewed efforts to achieve a Franco-German détente.

The French decision to support sanctions against Italy after the Fascist regime launched military operations in Ethiopia was lauded by the Left, but it evoked fiercely negative reactions on the far-right. Rebatet could see no reason why Great Britain and France should support “a petty black king (voitalet) who traffics in slaves,” and Déat asked if France and Europe wanted to risk war “for the pretty eyes of the Negus [the formal title of the emperor of Ethiopia], a feudal baron and slave trader.” The critics argued that while France was entering into an alliance with Stalin’s Russia, a power that was committed to destroying Western civilization, the country was unnecessarily alienating a traditional ally.

On both the domestic and foreign policy fronts, polarization and mutual distrust characterized French politics. The victory of the Popular Front parties—the Socialists, Radicals, and Communists—in the May 1936 elections only increased fears that the Communist revolution was
imminent. The supposed threat from the Left increased the vehemence of the Right’s criticism of France’s parliamentary democracy. Abel Bonnard’s *Les Modéres*, a three hundred page-long, unremitting attack on France’s political system, became an instant bestseller. The leitmotif of the work was Bonnard’s contention that “for two centuries French democracy . . . has been the final vulgarization of all the faults which made good men and good spirits drunk.” Already fueled by the arrival of thousands of Jewish immigrants fleeing Nazi persecution, the possible election of Léon Blum, the Jewish leader of the Socialist Party as prime minister of a Popular Front government, brought French anti-Semitism to a fever pitch. The anti-Blum campaign reached a new nadir in February 1936 when the Socialist leader was physically attacked by members of the AF’s youth organization, the Camelots de Roi.

The French extreme Right, then, saw France on the eve of Armageddon, and itself as the nation’s last hope of salvation. Its self-assigned task was to jerk the nation back from the abyss and return it to greatness. How? Certainly “three enemies . . . international capitalism, international Marxism, international Masonry” had to be destroyed, although how this was to be done was in dispute. Alfred Fabre-Luce thought only French fascism could effectively deal with France’s problems. Others were less specific, although all agreed that the ineffective parliamentary system had to be replaced by “the institution of a dictatorial regime.” Jean-Pierre Maxence even offered suggestions for the hoped-for dictatorial regime’s first executive decisions: “Within six hours prohibition of the Socialist press, within seven hours suppression of Free Masonry, and after eight hours Blum is executed [on fusille].”

Ironically, the French extreme Right was itself facing a mounting organizational and political crisis. Many of the organizations that had been successful in the 1920s were now laboring under a variety of financial, membership, and programmatic difficulties. Observers noted that the SF’s membership was declining and that many of the remaining activists were discouraged and listless. The SF’s program remained a jumble of contradictions. The organization’s increasingly strident attacks upon Jews and Freemasons echoed Nazi positions, but the SF also continued to insist that it was opposed to everything German.

Other groups confronted similar difficulties. Taittinger’s JP lacked members, and, according to its critics, a sense of purpose. The Francistes were also unable to attract any sizable following, although their activists were certainly active. According to the police the Francistes initiated a disproportionately large number of street brawls and other forms of political violence. Their leader, Marcel Bucard, vigorously denied that he was anti-Semitic, but he returned from a trip to Berlin in 1934 proclaiming
his admiration for the Third Reich. He also announced that reports of Nazi anti-Semitism were exaggerated. In the heady atmosphere of the pre-Popular Front era new groups were constantly emerging, but even sympathetic German observers saw little future influence for organizations with fancy names like L’Union anti-maçonnique de France (The Anti-Masonic Union of France) or the Parti français national communiste (French National Communist Party).

Rebuffed by the SFIO, Marcel Déat’s Neo-Socialists led a precarious existence. In November 1935 Déat replaced his Socialist Party of France—Jean Jaurès Union—with a new organization, the Socialist and Republican Union—Union Socialiste et Républicaine—but the new label did not generate significantly more support for Déat’s brand of “national socialism.” In fact, between 1934 and 1936 only one extraparliamentary organization presented a serious potential threat to the French political system. This was the CF. The CF was by far the largest of the extraparliamentary organizations, and especially in the last months of 1935 the CF’s leader, Colonel de la Rocque, issued ominous directives seemingly preparing his organization for “action.” “The hour approaches; your comrades are awaiting (guettent) your signal . . . The assignments have been issued; the leaders have been alerted,” he wrote in October 1935. But the colonel also insisted that while the CF was ready to deal with a Communist uprising, it would not act on its own.

Still, the CF had problems as well. Aside from being anti-Communist, anti-German, and anti-democratic, the group’s program remained diffuse and contradictory, lacking even “an embryo of a doctrine.” The CF claimed to reject all forms of anti-Semitism, but its leader also railed against the corrosive influence of recent Jewish immigrants and accused the Freemasons of sabotaging the better relations between Germany and France. De la Rocque professed admiration for the way in which Hitler had used democratic elections to destroy the German parliamentary system, but he also insisted that his activists were “neither conspirators nor fascists, but simply new men.” The colonel’s attitude of just “being ready” was not enough for increasing numbers of activists in the CF. De la Rocque, in the words of his former deputy Pierre Pucheu, was becoming “sterile through his mediocrity.”

In view of the extreme Right’s organizational difficulties, it seemed almost ironic that in June 1936, the French government ordered the immediate dissolution of the CF, the JP, the Francistes, the SF, and their successor and front organizations. Although the move did not come as a surprise, the affected groups, of course, sent up a collective cry of indignation, insisting that the dissolution order was “part of a plot to leave patriotic Frenchmen defenseless before the attacks of Moscow’s well-armed,
well-organized henchmen.”26 For Brasillach the dissolution order meant the birth of the fascist spirit: “One saw it being born. We saw it being born.”27

Within a short while the right-wing paramilitary groups were replaced by a plethora of more or less new organizations and publications, most of them of little significance.28 In fact, only two organizations dominated organized political activity on the extreme Right in the post-League era. One was the successor to the CF, the Parti Social Français (French Social Party, PSF), and the other was the PPF. In the heady atmosphere after the Stavisky riots and the arrival of the Popular Front, a steady stream of new, extreme-Right publications made their appearance. Lucien Pemjean’s periodical, *Le Grand Occident* (The Great West), railed against Jews and Freemasons, while Jean Boissel poured his anti-Semitic tirades into *Le réveil du peuple* (The Awakening of the People), a publication that was “truly without readers.”29 Taittinger’s new journal, *Defense Nationale*, which began publishing in February 1937 had a circulation of no more than 5,000. The trio of Maulnier, Francis, and Maxence, who had earlier collaborated in writing *Demain la France*, now tried their hand at a periodical, *L’Insurge* (The Insurgency). It lasted all of six months.

France’s extreme Right intellectuals for the most part continued to see themselves as a political force in their own Right.30 They also remained an eclectic and divided group. For example, while most of the French far right supported the Catholic Church as a positive force in society, some fascist intellectuals wanted to add anticlericalism to the anti-Semitic, anti-Freemasonic, and anti-Communist themes of the far right. Céline and Rebatet were violent anticlericals, who saw Nazi Germany with its showcase trials of clerics as a model of what could be done by a regime that had liberated itself from the subversive influence of the reactionary power of the Christian churches.

Compared to the French, at first glance the Dutch political scene seemed an oasis of calm. There was little of the visceral disdain for the Dutch constitutional system and infrequent political violence. Holland was also spared the incessant series of cabinet crises that marked the last years of the Third Republic. In the Netherlands the prime minister Hendrik Colijn was very much the strongman of the decade. In fact, he claimed that only his presence prevented a fascist take-over in Holland. He also noted with some degree of self-satisfaction that an “influential person (*bevoegd persoon*)” had told him that if he, Colijn, wanted to, he could slip into the role of the Netherlands’ Mussolini.31

Nevertheless, all was not well in Holland either. The Depression lasted longer in the Netherlands than elsewhere, and the massive economic problems, which were exacerbated by the continuing deflationary policies
of the Colijn government, weakened support for the system of pluralism and verzuilings, especially among farmers, small businessmen, civil servants, and miners. The opposition also criticized the government’s handling of colonial and foreign policy issues. There were concerns that the government was neglecting Holland’s position as an imperial power. Similarly, critics charged that the government’s stand on the Ethiopian question was misguided. The Colijn cabinet supported the French and British decision to impose sanctions against Italy when Mussolini’s regime invaded Ethiopia, but a sizable minority of the Dutch populace felt that in view of the challenges Holland was encountering in her own colonies, the Netherlands should not be supporting indigenous peoples against a white imperial power.

The NSB, of course, exploited the dissatisfaction on the domestic and foreign policy fronts for its own ends. The party’s propaganda efforts targeted especially urban middle-class voters in the Randstad (the triangular area in the northern Netherlands that includes Amsterdam, The Hague, and Rotterdam) and the Catholics of the South. In the North the NSB focused on economic and imperial issues, and in the South the party attacked the Rooms-Katholieke Staatspartij (Roman Catholic State Party, RKSP), the political arm of the Catholic zuil, for its supposed ambition to create a clerical dictatorship in the Netherlands. According to the Dutch fascists, the Austrian Fatherland Front regime was exactly the sort of political system the RKSP was attempting to establish in Holland.

The NSB’s efforts were not in vain. At the beginning of 1934 the Dutch foreign minister expressed his concerns about the “steady growth of the NSB.” The year 1935 would turn out to be the high point of the NSB’s political success. The party’s membership was growing rapidly, and the Dutch fascists expected an electoral triumph in the provincial elections of April 1935. Although the provincial contests were essentially a popularity contest that had no influence on the composition of the national government, the NSB waged an intense, broadly based campaign. The results sent shock waves throughout the political establishment. The NSB drew votes from all segments of the electorate (with the notable exception of industrial workers), and it did especially well in upscale precincts in urban areas. Obtaining 295,000 votes nationwide, almost 8 per cent of the total votes cast, the Dutch fascists had become the fifth largest party in a field of more than a dozen political groups. Moreover, although the pluralist parties had done their best to identify the NSB with the Nazi regime, the election seemed to demonstrate that at this time the NSB actually benefited from its identification with Nazi Germany. Analysts noted that the Dutch fascists did especially well in some of the areas of Holland that bordered on Germany.
Mussert was convinced that the April 1935 elections were the equivalent for the NSB of the German Nazis’ September 1930 triumph; it was now only a matter of time before the Dutch fascists would take power in the Netherlands. To solidify the party’s gains and to demonstrate his concern for the empire, the leider made a much-publicized “trip of his life” to the Dutch East Indies. Mussert stayed for almost two months (16 July to 2 September, 1935) in the Dutch colony. He received a generally warm welcome from the Dutch community there (the party had some 5,000 members in the East Indies; 10 percent of its total membership in 1935), and met twice with the governor.

But the NSB’s triumph also shocked the party’s political rivals into action. In coordinated efforts, the government, the pluralist parties, and the leadership of the zuilen moved against the NSB. The leitmotif running through all of these efforts was the accusation that the NSB was no more than a Dutch version of the German NSDAP. All of the pluralist parties also cooperated in creating a new grass roots organization, Eenheid door Democratie (Unity Through Democracy, EDD), which launched a massive and successful public relations campaign against the NSB. (EDD gained 30,000 members almost overnight.) A second organization, the Comité voor Waakzaamheid (Vigilance Committee), targeted a more educated constituency.

Both the Protestant and Catholic Churches issued statements that national socialism was incompatible with the tenets of Christianity. Moves by the Dutch Catholic bishops were especially far reaching. In 1936 the bishops issued a Mandement (decree) determining that lay Catholics who gave “substantial support” to the NSB would be denied the sacraments. The clergy’s stand confronted NSB activists with a severe conflict of conscience, and many devout rank-and-file Catholics dropped their NSB membership. Even Count M.V.E.H.J.M. de Marchant et d’Ansembourg, the NSB’s leader in Limburg, confessed to a friend, “even more important to me than the welfare of my people is the state of my soul.” (Despite this lament, the Count remained a leader of the NSB, traveling to nearby Germany to receive the sacraments.) Mussert and his associates did their best to counter the opposition of the churches and the pluralist parties, but their efforts had little effect. The leider traveled to Rome in June 1936 and attempted to persuade the Vatican to put pressure on the Dutch bishops to lift their sanctions against the NSB. He met with the state secretary (and future Pope) Eugenio Pacelli, but Pacelli made it clear that the Vatican would not countermand the Dutch bishops.

Adding to the party’s problems was pressure of an altogether different kind from some rank-and-file members. There was growing criticism,
particularly from members in the large cities, of the party’s refusal to take an official anti-Semitic stand. Regional leaders claimed that of the 54,000 NSB members, 50,000 were anti-Semitic. Those clamoring for the party’s endorsement of anti-Semitism argued that straddling the fence put the NSB in an impossible situation. “We can’t have the cabbage and the goat,” wrote the party’s district inspector in Rotterdam, quoting a Dutch proverb.43 Anti-Semitic sentiments from the rank-and-file were, of course, enthusiastically endorsed by the leaders of the NSB’s völkische wing.44

The result of the party’s myriad internal and external problems was a rapid decline in the NSB’s membership on the one hand45 and the radicalization of those activists who remained. Trying to put a positive spin on these developments, the NSB would later claim that the declining membership actually benefited the party’s political focus. It enabled Mussert to transform his party from an opportunistic organization with a mass membership into a smaller movement devoted to “true national socialism.”46 As for the rise of anti-Semitism within the NSB, Mussert himself had little sympathy for the aims of the völkische wing, and he never did become a racial anti-Semite. However, the leder increasingly saw his opponents as a concerted Jewish-Liberal-clerical conspiracy whose sole aim was to prevent the NSB and him from taking their rightful place as the political leaders of the Netherlands. In the leder’s eyes the EDD was a “Jewish front.”47 The party also lashed out at Holland’s Catholic bishops. The NSB’s Council of Catholics published a Wit-Geel Papier (White-Yellow Paper) accusing the hierarchy of using material and ecclesiastical terror against NSB activists in order to benefit the RKSP and the Catholic Church’s worldly power.48

**The Nazis and the Fascist Scene in France: Activism, Illusions, and Successes**

During the months covered in this chapter, Franco-German relations were marked by increasing distrust and acrimony. The aftermath of the Röhm affair, the continuing friction between the regime and the Christian Churches, the Nuremberg Laws, and unilateral foreign policy initiatives all produced a negative image for the Third Reich among the French public. German government and party agencies from the Foreign Office and the Propaganda Ministry to the Büro Ribbentrop and the Stürmer hoped that fascist groups and writers in France would help the Nazis’ in their foreign propaganda campaign. To that end, the Nazis not only kept a close watch on the French political scene but also systematically increased their contacts with the French far-right groups and leaders.49
From the perspective of the Nazis, France in the middle of the decade was a politically unstable country confronted by increasingly severe problems. Nazi reports dwelt long and lovingly on France’s political, economic, and fiscal difficulties, but they gave widely differing assessments of France’s future. Some German observers stressed the growing strength of the extreme Right, pointing to developments in Paris as well as provincial cities like Bordeaux and Marseille, but more seasoned analysts cautioned against exaggerating the strength of fascism outside Paris. “The French province remains democratic,” concluded Friedrich Grimm. However, a number of Nazi observers, Hitler included, seemed to feel that democracy was already doomed. The rise of the Popular Front meant the victory of Bolshevism in France.

As we saw, for the Nazis the strength of the extreme Right was always linked to signs of increasing anti-Semitism in France. The Foreign Office ordered all German diplomatic personnel abroad to report on “the known fact” of Freemasonic and Jewish influence on French politics, and to analyze the connections between “Jewish, Marxist, and Free Masonic circles.” All Nazi agencies eagerly noted signs of antagonism toward the Jews in France, but here, too, they drew different conclusions. The Stürmer was convinced that racial anti-Semites like Coston and Boissel were rapidly gaining influence, but the professional diplomats and journalists pointed out that the French anti-Semitic scene was riddled with poseurs and charlatans. Moreover, most French anti-Semites were still not racial anti-Semites. They attacked the supposedly excessive power of Jews in France, not the “evils” of the “Jewish race.”

The Nazis were equally ambivalent about the significance of France’s extraparliamentary and paramilitary groups. They not only recognized that the CF staged impressive rallies and marches but also noted that there was an absence of any clear antisystemic program. The Neo-Socialists faced the opposite problem; they had a program, but little mass following and severe financial difficulties. According to some Nazi observers, the Francistes had considerable support among France’s youth, but the organization was virtually paralyzed by internal conflicts between its warring wings. The declining political influence of the right-wing veterans’ organizations, in which the Nazis had for a time placed high hopes, severely disappointed especially the Nazi “collaborationists.”

Nazi observers were more encouraged by developments on the intellectual and media scene. Especially the foreign policy amateurs among the Nazis tended to exaggerate the influence of extreme-Right publications and writers. They regarded them as important molders of public opinion, who would be useful in shaping the image of the Third Reich in France. The Nazis noted with approval the increasingly anti-Semitic
and pro-Nazi editorial line of *Le Matin, La Victoire, Gingoire, Je suis partout,* and *La Libre Parole.* Anti-Semitism even began to redeem the novelist Louis-Ferdinand Céline, an author whose writings the puritanical Nazis had previously denounced as pornography and cited as evidence of French decadence.

The point man for the Nazis’ foreign propaganda in France was Otto Abetz, Joachim von Ribbentrop’s agent in Paris. Abetz established himself as a ubiquitous presence on the Parisian intellectual and media scene, and by 1935 the Sûreté kept a close watch over his movements. His *offensive de charme* reached its zenith during these months. A steady stream of Abetz-sponsored lectures, interview, and travels placed the amateur diplomat at the center of the Third Reich’s foreign propaganda efforts in France. In addition, while the Nazis did not routinely control papers (*Notre Temps* remained an exception) or bribe journalists, they were not averse to using more indirect forms of financial influence to obtain good press coverage for the Third Reich. In addition to buying a certain number of subscriptions of favored publications, the Nazis also provided indirect subsidies by placing advertisements, especially from German tourist agencies, in selected publications. The works of a few contemporary French authors were translated into German, while others received exaggerated honoraria for articles published in the German press. Still the success of all these efforts was limited. The Nazis complained that they still had virtually no success with the Parisian press, and only limited access to provincial papers.

The Nazis’ ability to influence the French media remained constrained, but there was one aspect of their foreign propaganda activities that they could control: visits to Germany by sympathetic French writers and journalists. And there was no lack of interest in such travel. Competition for an interview with Hitler remained fierce. Virtually every right-wing French journalist and self-proclaimed intellectual wanted a conversation with the dictator, and by carefully restricting access to Hitler, the Nazis assured that the interviews would get wide media attention in France—benefiting both the Third Reich and the interviewer. Between January 1933 and September 1938 Hitler granted interviews to eight French journalists and writers; particularly Bertrand de Jouvenel’s interview with Hitler in February 1936 (which was published in the large-circulation *Paris-Midi*) “made a big splash [*fit grand bruit*].” Incidentally, Goebbels continued to insist that the German press limit their reporting of Hitler’s interviews with foreign journalists to the summaries compiled by the Deutsches Nachrichtenbüro, the Reich’s official press agency.

Hitler’s reasons for granting interviews to French journalists and writers were partly damage control, partly flattery of supposedly influential
media personalities, and partly an attempt to influence contemporary political events in France. The Führer’s anti-French diatribes in *Mein Kampf* certainly required permanent damage control. The French left-wing press delighted in quoting Hitler’s autobiography to show the dictator’s true feelings, while Hitler and the Propaganda Ministry repeatedly insisted *Mein Kampf* was a “period piece” written by Hitler the politician, which did not represent the views of Hitler the statesman. The dictator’s interview with Bertrand de Jouvenel in February 1936 was typical of these exercises. The initiative came from Jouvenel, who appealed to Abetz to act as go-between. Abetz was happy to do so, and Hitler suddenly revealed himself as a true friend of France. He told Bertrand de Jouvenel, “you see before you a Germany of which 90 per cent [of the population] places their trust in their leader. And that leader says to you: LET US BE FRIENDS! [sic]” While Hitler’s interview with Jouvenel was fairly straightforward, on occasions the dictator did not hesitate to shamelessly flatter his guests when it suited his purpose. He told his admirer Alphonse de Châteaubriant, who came close to seeing in Hitler a second Christ, “you have understood National Socialism better than 99 per cent of the Germans who voted for me.”

While the German party and government agencies limited access to Hitler (and other top Nazis), they placed few restrictions on foreign travel in Germany. The Nazis controlled who could visit the country, but once they had been granted a visa, the visitors were not severely hampered in their choice of destinations—for good reason. These were the years of the regime’s greatest popularity among the German people, and the Nazis hoped that the visitors would be impressed by the contrast between the developing Volksgemeinschaft in the Third Reich and the chaotic conditions in France. In “welfare measures (*soziale Massnahmen*) we lead the whole world,” commented Goebbels. The Nazis saw first-hand experience with the accomplishments of Germany’s social policies as “one of the major weapons against the economic and social thinking in the plutocratic states.”

Travel and travelers ranged widely. Abetz sponsored a lecture tour in Germany by the noted writer (and nonfascist) Jules Romains. The German university student association invited Thierry Maulnier to deliver a lecture at Berlin’s Humboldt University in May 1935. Still, attendance at the Nazi party’s annual national congress in Nuremberg remained the most coveted prize. Attendance by foreigners was by invitation only, and the various Nazi government and party agencies were allocated a set number of tickets with which they could honor their favorite contacts abroad. Abetz, for example, arranged for Drieu to visit
the 1935 Nazi party congress as well as the Ordsensburg Crössinsee, one of the newly established training institutes for future Nazi party leaders. Not all Nazi offices were pleased by the invitations to foreigners that their colleagues issued. The Foreign Office complained about the “dubious foreign types” whom Streicher had invited to Nuremberg; needless to say, the group included some of France’s most notorious anti-Semites.67

The Nazis were also enthusiastic sponsors of institutionalized bilateral contacts, provided they controlled both the personnel and the press coverage. The initiative for meetings between veteran groups from France and Germany began with an address by Rudolf Hess, himself a veteran of the First World War. Speaking at the beginning of July 1934 in Königsberg, the main thrust of the deputy Führer’s remarks was an attempt at damage control after the Röhm affair, but Hess also suggested that bilateral meetings of French and German veterans might prepare the way for better relations between the two countries. As a genuine “collaborationist,” Hess probably did believe that the mutual Fronterlebnis (experience at the front) of German and French veterans would enable them to communicate “across the trenches.”68

The veterans’ organization in Germany enthusiastically welcomed Hess’ initiative, of course, but the French response was mixed. Left-wing veterans’ organizations rejected the Nazi overtures, but under the organizational aegis of Abetz and Ribbentrop, a number of right-wing French veteran groups accepted invitations to bilateral meetings with their German counterparts in both Germany and France. The propagandistic impact certainly pleased the Germans. Some of the French right-wing veteran leaders sympathized with an authoritarian agenda, and a number were convinced that Hitler was genuinely interested in Franco-German cooperation. A few actually subscribed to the entire Führer cult. “He [Hitler] has kind eyes,” reported Georges Pineau.69 Hitler used an interview in November 1934 to assure Jean Goy, the leader of the Union Nationale des Combattants (National Union of Veterans), that the Third Reich regarded the Franco-German border as inviolate, while Goy professed his admiration for the new Germany. The interview was published in France by Paris Midi. As usual, Goebbels prohibited publication of the interview in Germany, this time with the threadbare excuse that the meeting between Goy and Hitler was not an interview, but a conversation between two veterans of the First World War.70 While the Nazis felt that in general they received good propagandistic value from the bilateral veterans’ meetings, there were also some problems. Jean Goy waxed enthusiastically about the Third Reich, but the French ambassador in Berlin warned the German Foreign Office that in France Goy had a very
bad reputation as a speculator and embezzler. Several of the French veteran leaders belatedly recognized that they were being used in a coordinated German propaganda effort, and refused future invitations.71

For a time, the Nazis were also very active in trying to bring French and German youth groups together. The guiding force on the German side was again Otto Abetz, who, as we saw, had worked in the central office of the Hitler Youth before joining Ribbentrop’s staff. At the end of June 1934, Abetz “as the representative of German youth” attended a congress in Paris of the États Généraux de la Jeunesse (Estates General of Youth), organized by Jean Luchaire and Bertrand de Jouvenel. Drieu participated in a similar conference in Germany. At a less elevated level bilateral youth camps and organized travel in the two countries mushroomed.72

In time, the Nazis discovered that even the enthusiasm of youth was not without its problems. Aside from the—from the Nazis’ perspective—organizational disarray of the French youth movement, the Germans were concerned about their inability to control the information that the members of the Hitler Youth received as they traveled abroad or met their French counterparts in Germany. As a result, Nazi agencies began to restrict the program of inviting foreigners to spend time in German youth camps, and Hitler himself ordered that foreign travel by Hitler Youth delegations should be curtailed as much as possible.73

Then there was Ribbentrop’s favorite project, the Deutsch-Französische Gesellschaft (German-French Association, DFG) and its French counterpart, the Comité France-Allemagne (Franco-German Committee, CFA). The DFG was not a Nazi invention. It had been founded during the Weimar years, primarily to facilitate contacts between businessmen of the two countries. The Nazis dissolved this group soon after they came to power. A successor organization was established in October 1935 under Ribbentrop’s personal patronage, with members carefully selected both for their media recognition and their political trustworthiness. The new DFG’s chairman was Achim von Arnim, the rector of the Technical University of Berlin. Members of the board of directors included Hanns Oberlindober, the head of the German veterans’ organization, Friedrich Grimm, and, it goes almost without saying, Otto Abetz.74

The history of the CFA, which was founded in November 1935, was more complicated. This organization had not existed during the Weimar years, and initially the German Foreign Office was opposed to the initiative. French diplomats, including the French ambassador in Berlin, André François-Poncet, were more enthusiastic. Eventually the Nazi amateurs prevailed over their professional colleagues, and Abetz took matters in hand with his customary enthusiasm. Abetz and Ribbentrop envisioned a prestigious group that would include well-known figures from a wide
spectrum that covered sympathizers of the Third Reich from the moderate left to the extreme Right. This proved an illusionary goal. Abetz soon discovered that supporters of the French left were unwilling to sit alongside representatives from the extreme Right. In the end, although Abetz took care not to recruit the most controversial extreme Rightists, the CFA became very much a group of known right-wing sympathizers of the Third Reich. The founding president was Commandant L’Hospital, a former member of Marshal Foch’s staff; he was succeeded in 1936 by Georges Scapini, the president of the French association of blind veterans. Other prominent members included Bertrand de Jouvenel, Fernand de Brinon, and Jacques Benoist-Mechin. Until it collapsed later in the decade, the DFG and even more so the CFA organized wide-ranging programs of lectures, travels, and publications, much of it coordinated by the group’s very active vice-president, the journalist and essayist, Fernand de Brinon.76

Abetz was especially determined to make the organization’s journal, the Deutsch-Französische Monatshefte/Cahiers France-Allemagne (Franco-German Monthly/Notebooks France-Germany), into the mouthpiece of the “collaborationists” on both sides of the Rhine, and up to a point he succeeded. The journal avoided heavy-handed propaganda and portrayed itself as the voice of the front generation and youth of both countries. Nevertheless, this was not an objective periodical of information. The leitmotif of the contributions was the contrast between a modern, dynamic, positive Third Reich and a France that “appeared decrepit [caduc] and impotent under its parliamentary system.”77

Did all these efforts pay off for the Third Reich? In a certain sense, yes. As we shall see, the French extreme Right was impressed by the domestic policies of the Third Reich and the “spirit” of the new Germany. On the other hand, most of the French far right remained unpersuaded that racism had to be at the core of national rejuvenation. A senior official at the Foreign Office, Braun von Stumm, concluded, “the attempt to justify the German racial policies in France—and in Italy as well—would be futile.”78

**German Nazis and Dutch Fascists**

There continued to be a marked dichotomy between the attitude of the German Foreign Office toward Dutch affairs and the policies of the Nazi party. The diplomats were convinced that the Dutch longed for a strong, but not fascist, regime.79 In contrast, Nazi party officials saw Dutch fascism as the wave of the future, and even if it were not, Holland was a minor player on the international scene that could be bullied at will.
No one was more anxious to follow the Foreign Office line than the German envoy in the Netherlands, Count von Zech-Burkaroda. Resident in The Hague since 1928, Zech had developed excellent political and even personal relations with the Dutch political establishment, and especially with the Foreign Minister, Baron A.C.D. de Graeff. Zech, who was certainly no Nazi, successfully conveyed the impression that he was a reasonable man whom the Dutch could work with, and that when he delivered Nazi-inspired messages, he did so with personal distaste. There was some exaggeration in this picture—the envoy was not free of anti-Semitic sentiments, for example—but Zech was in full agreement with his superiors at the Foreign Office that German agents and agencies should avoid overt contacts with the extreme-Right scene in the Netherlands. This was not a policy the Nazi party offices wanted to pursue.

As was true for France, Nazi propaganda activities in the Netherlands were multifaceted, using both open and clandestine channels. No Dutch writers or journalists were considered important enough to be granted an interview with Hitler, but the Propaganda Ministry issued invitations—usually channeled through German newspapers—to several Dutch journalists to tour a variety of Nazi institutions. Some, like the later NSB propagandist Max Blokzijl, were even privileged with “insider information.” In fact, from the Nazis’ perspective Blokzijl was a major catch among the foreign journalists residing in the German capital. He had been reporting from Berlin for a number of Dutch publications, including the daily *Algemeen Handelsblad*, since 1917. After the Nazis came to power, Blokzijl’s sympathies for the new regime and for the NSB grew rapidly, and in 1935 Blokzijl became a “secret” member of Mussert’s party. His dispatches from Berlin, too, were increasingly permeated by his new ideological sympathies. While his articles for the *Algemeen Handelsblad* remained reasonably objective, the pieces he wrote for a number of provincial papers were essentially open panegyrics of the Third Reich.

The Nazis also worked hard to influence the content of the Dutch press by more direct methods. The Aufklärungsausschuss Hamburg-Bremen (AAHB) and the Nazi-controlled Dutch press bureaus continued their attempts to place articles friendly to the Third Reich in Dutch papers. But the Propaganda Ministry also used its influence to curtail negative reporting about the Third Reich. Whenever the ministry was displeased with a story, the legation in The Hague was ordered to launch a formal protest with the Dutch Foreign Ministry. In addition, the Nazis attempted to use economic pressure—usually the threat to stop or curtail advertisement of German products and tourist attractions—to change the editorial content of various papers.
How effective was this propaganda avalanche? The results were mixed. The AAHB was able to place a number of articles by its correspondent Werner Freiherr von Rheinbaben in the large-circulation Telegraaf; but the products of the Nazi-controlled press bureaus turned out to be too strident and one-sided to be very influential. It was not difficult for knowledgeable readers to discern who was behind these effusions. Above all, however, the contradictory political and propagandistic priorities of the party agencies and the Foreign Office tended to work against each other. In 1935 the German legation in The Hague compiled a list of Nazi programs that it felt would receive favorable publicity among the Dutch. The list included the Nazi welfare agency (NSV), the Strength Through Joy organization, the Volksgemeinschaft concept, and anti-communism. Instead of stressing these policies, the German minister complained, Nazi agencies stressed anti-Semitism, attacks on the Versailles treaty, and criticism of the Catholic Church—all topics that aroused either indifference or outright rejection among the Dutch.84

One organization that the Nazis did keep free of politics was the Deutsch-Niederländische Gesellschaft (German-Dutch Association, DNG), the equivalent of the DFG for Holland. (There was no counterpart of the CFA in the Netherlands.) The DNG focused its activities on commercial and business relations. The organization was headed by Emil Helfferich, the then head of the Hapag shipping firm, who, like Zech, was also a good friend of the Dutch foreign minister de Graeff.85

The Nazis’ relationship to the NSB remained controversial. Pointing to the NSB’s growing membership, its increasing visibility, and above all the organization’s success in the April 1935 elections, some German agents agreed with Mussert’s optimistic assessment that within two years the NSB would come to power.86 Informal and even institutional contacts between the Nazis and the NSB were frequent and often close. Hitler met with both Rost van Tonningen and Mussert in 1936, although the meetings were not publicized. The NSB maintained regular contact with Dr. Johannsen at the Propaganda Ministry’s Aufklärungsausschuss, and behind the scenes an NSB member worked for the Dutch language section of the German shortwave radio service. Leaders of the NSB, including Rost and d’Ansembourg (but not Mussert), attended the annual Nazi party congresses in 1935 and 1936 as Hitler’s personal guests. Above all, the Nazis used the NSB as a distribution channel for massive amounts of propaganda material.87

But there were countervailing arguments as well. Some perceptive German observers doubted Mussert’s ability to become the Dutch Führer, recognizing—quite correctly as it turned out—that the NSB’s April 1935 triumph was a brush fire that could not be sustained.88 In a 1936
dissertation (dedicated to his *Gauleiter*) the author, Helmut Otto, concluded that very few Dutch possessed an “unrestrained drive which will sacrifice all for an idea (unbändiger Kampfeswille, der auch das Letzte für eine Idee einsetzt).” In the final analysis the Dutch “national character (Volkscharakter)” was “democratic liberal.”89 Zech, for his part, argued that Nazi support for the NSB enabled the group’s political opponents (including the government) to link the NSB and the German Nazis in their campaign against the Dutch fascists.90 In November 1935 an anonymously published pamphlet, *Nederland annexeert zich zelf* (the Netherlands Annex Themselves), claimed to reprint German documents showing that Mussert’s group was a German fifth column. (Incidentally, most of the documents in the pamphlet were forgeries.)91

Finally, there remained what the Nazis saw as the NSB’s crucial ideological failing: Mussert’s organization was officially still neither racist nor anti-Semitic. In a 1935 interview with a German reporter, Geelkerken, the NSB’s secretary general, admitted that the party had some one hundred and fifty Jewish members, although he thought they did not feel particularly welcome in the NSB, since hatred of the Jews was growing within the ranks of the party. As for racism, Geelkerken argued that as a major colonial power the Netherlands could not afford to endorse racism. Like all Dutch parties, the NSB had to follow the maxim that “politics is the art of the possible.” Remarkably, the Propaganda Ministry was sympathetic to the NSB’s sensitivity in this area, and urged that the Dutch fascists not be criticized for their stand on the “Jewish question.”92

These tactical considerations did not convince the fanatic anti-Semites among the Nazis that Mussert’s organization should be treated as a “related movement.” Especially the *Stürmer* and its followers continued to urge German support for the virtually defunct NSNAP.93 The NSB’s leaders complained bitterly that some German authorities kept the NSB at arm’s length, while maintaining cordial relations with the NSNAP and permitting this splinter group to relentlessly attack Mussert’s organization.94 Repeated rumors that the Germans had finally decided to prohibit the NSNAP from organizing in Germany always proved to be wrong.95

**French Fascists and the Third Reich**

French fascists continued to see the Third Reich through the prism of their hatred of the Third Republic, “a regime which,” according to Louis Bertrand’s 1936 book *Hitler,* has given us muddle-headedness (*gabegie*), lack of foresight (*imprévoyance*), organizational failure, weak leaders (*faiblesses de nos effectifs*), and, above all, the demoralization of the country.96 In contrast, the Third Reich provided a glimpse of what an authoritarian,
undemocratic regime could do to restore national and international greatness to a country. “To raise herself France had to model herself upon her neighbors, Italy and Germany,” proclaimed Marcel Bucard at a rally in Paris in July 1935. Denis de Rougemont noted quite perceptively that those praising Hitler were in reality attacking Léon Blum, “without knowing anything about Hitler.” Remarkably, this was even true of those who should have known better, that is to say Frenchmen living in Germany. All too often, complained Henri Jourdan, the head of the French students’ office in Berlin, French students delighted the Nazis by their vehement attacks on France’s political leaders and institutions.

Although the French fascists admired the Third Reich as a counterpoint to the Third Republic, they continued to insist that a fascist France would not be a carbon copy of the Nazi regime. “A French Hitlerite (un français hitlérien) seems to me a nice (belle) absurdity,” wrote Bertrand in his panegyric biography of the German dictator. Fascism/national socialism à la français would be unique . . . and better. Few French fascists joined Céline and Rebatet in their fulsome praise of the Nuremberg Laws, but even Denis de Rougemont, certainly no fascist, observed on a visit to Germany, “many of [the Jews] whom one still sees in a café at the Opernplatz [in Frankfurt a.M.] appear, one must admit, to justify the most blatant slogans of Nazi propaganda . . . they represent the type of vulgar and arrogant capitalist.”

Foremost among the myths about the Third Reich which the French fascists accepted without question was the legend that Hitler had saved Germany from communism. Moreover, as the Popular Front loomed larger on the horizon and Jewish leaders played a role in the organized opposition to fascism, many French fascists also accepted the Jews’ negative role and the supposed identification of Jews and Communists. An article in L’Ami du Peuple in December 1934 carried the headline “With Hitler Against Bolshevism.” “Jews and Communists are synonymous for me,” wrote Céline, and Louis Bertrand added, “in battling Judaism Hitler is fighting Communism, a factor that is a life and death question for Germany as well as Europe and the world.”

France’s increasing economic and social problems in 1934 and 1935 led to intense interest in the Nazis’ economic and social policies. In general, French commentators saw a social revolution in Nazi Germany, although, as we now know, there was none. The French right was traditionally obsessed with the country’s low birthrate, and the Nazis’ pronatalist programs seemed like the perfect remedy for France. Welfare programs like the Winter Help (WHW) and especially the RAD and the NSV seemed to embody the Nazis’ genuine concern for the workers’ well-being. And then there was the Hitler Youth as the embodiment of
the new Germany’s future: “A strong youth, ready to meet all ordeals (épreuves), marching . . . toward a Germany that is sure of itself.” Drieu was positively lyrical in his description of 50,000 Hitler Youths at the 1935 Nazi party congress. He admired their “beautiful chants and cho- 
ruses.” The parade of SS troops, too, “was superb.” Drieu compared the 
choreography of the SS to that of the Ballet Russe, a comparison that the 
SS might not have appreciated.107

Criticism of the Nazis’ domestic policies? There was a sense of unease 
about the militarization of social life in Germany in many of the reports. 
Marcel Laloire, while impressed with the sense of comradeship in the 
RAD camp he visited (Bernau), also noted the anti-intellectualism in 
the institution (“a library was not among the services of the camp”) and 
the feeling of being in an army barrack. Everything was, “extremely sim-
ple, like a barracks . . . That’s the spirit of the front.”108 Passionate 
corporatists and planistes, who claimed that their goal was to destroy the 
excessive influence of big business and finance capitalism in France, the 
French fascists were disappointed that the Nazis had allowed the German 
capitalists to retain their power. Sympathy with the so-called left wing of 
the Nazi movement, which the French fascists still identified with the 
Stormtroopers, remained widespread among the French extreme Right. 
Bertrand de Jouvenel remembered, “the brown uniforms [of the 
Stormtroopers] in the streets of Berlin were the external signs of a prole-
tarian dictatorship.”109

Something between unabashed lyricism and subtle skepticism marked 
the reports of the French fascists who attended the Nazi party’s annual 
rally in Nuremberg. By 1935 that spectacle had been perfected as an 
increasingly militaristic show, which fascinated and bewildered the 
French visitors. Both Drieu and Bertrand de Jouvenel attended the 1935 
congress. Jouvenel, who attended the congress as Hitler’s personal guest, 
wrote that he had come to Nuremberg “to see and to report,” as was the 
duty of every French patriot.110 It is true he disliked some aspects of the 
spectacle. Jouvenel commented on the regimentation and pseudo-mili-
tary discipline, which he regarded as unnecessary, typically German, and 
alien to the French spirit. Yet he found “particularly striking (le plus 
frappé)” the peaceful character of the 1935 Nazi party congress. He heard 
not one war-like utterance, not even against the Jews, and Hitler, in total 
contrast to William II, was peace-loving and conciliatory. In the end 
Jouvenel was overwhelmed by the mysticism and the power of the rallies. 
Lest his readers miss the point, he asked rhetorically, “why doesn’t one see 
something like this in our country? The masses, this discipline, especially 
this unanimity which gives the idea invincible power.”111 Drieu, who 
was at Nuremberg as Abetz’ and Ribbentrop’s guest, struck a similar note.
The leitmotif of his public and private reminiscences was that Nuremberg was both “marvelous and frightening,” but he chose to emphasize the heroic, mystical aspects of the spectacle.\footnote{112 Marcel Déat, who did not attend the congress, added “is it not profound to see 40 million people throw themselves into the same movement,” a movement “simultaneously characterized by a socialist and primitive [brutal] élan.”} Marcel Déat, who did not attend the congress, added “is it not profound to see 40 million people throw themselves into the same movement,” a movement “simultaneously characterized by a socialist and primitive [brutal] élan.”\footnote{113}

French right-wingers were more critical about the conflict between the Nazis and the Catholic Church. True, a few fascist mystics, notably Alphonse de Châteaubriant, dwelt lovingly on the supposed self-sacrifice and spiritual harmony of life under the Nazis, but the majority of French fascists looked upon Nazi church policies as a manifestation of Nazi neopaganism that had no place in French fascism.\footnote{114} Nevertheless, while a few among the extreme Right, such as Jean-Pierre Maxence, mocked their comrades for their sycophantic attitude toward the Third Reich, as long as Léon Blum loomed as an ever larger political threat, for most French fascists Hitler retained his image as the man who had saved his country from the very disasters that were threatening France.\footnote{115}

Whatever the French fascists’ view of Nazi Germany’s domestic policies, one would have expected that the extreme Rightists, most of whom had been schooled in the AF school of extreme Germanophobia, would have reacted with visceral outrage to the Third Reich’s foreign policy moves in these months. After all, in short order the Nazis reintroduced universal military service, increased the pace of Germany’s rearmament, and reoccupied the Rhineland—all in clear violation of the Versailles Treaty, the corner stone of the French security system. At first glance the French fascists did seem to react as expected. Vigilance toward the Third Reich “despite Hitler’s sermons” was a widespread sentiment.\footnote{116} But Hitler had also snubbed his nose at the League, and from the perspective of the French extreme Right, that was a positive development. French fascists saw the League of Nations not as an institution that strengthened France’s international position, but as a Jewish-Freemasonic club dominated by the Anglo-Saxons and designed to defend and extend the hated system of democracy throughout the world.\footnote{117} From this perspective Hitler’s early foreign policy moves had given the Nazi dictator a sizable advance credit in the eyes of many French fascists. Instead of the League, extreme Rightists dreamed of a tripartite alliance between Germany, Italy, and the soon-to-be fascist France, which would form an unassailable bulwark against the international conspiracy of Communists, Jews, and democrats.\footnote{118}

True, as Hitler’s aggressive intentions became increasingly obvious, the Nazi dictator lost much of his credit of good will among the French fascists. Lucien Rebatet, later one of the most pro-Nazi of the French
fascists, remembered that in July 1934, when the Nazi thugs murdered the Austrian chancellor in the failed coup attempt, “I would have been the most ardent supporter [belliciste] of an anti-German crusade.” The French extreme Right objected vigorously to the Nazis’ unilateral reintroduction of conscription in open defiance of the Versailles treaty. Few French extreme Rightists were willing to put credence in the Nazis’ claim that this measure was needed to confront the Soviet threat.

The Ethiopian crisis put Nazi Germany in a more positive light again. The French government could not be accused of weakness and indecision in the case of the Ethiopian crisis, but from the perspective of the French far right, in this case the government’s decisions were completely counterproductive. Instead of sanctions, the French extreme Right urged diplomatic and economic support of the Italian position in Ethiopia. Sanctions not only raised the status of the hated League, but alienated Mussolini’s Italy, a power that the French fascists regarded as France’s natural ally. The French extreme Right also routinely coupled its criticism of the Anglo-French position with praise for Nazi Germany, which, for its own reasons, supported Mussolini’s aggression in Ethiopia and refused to abide by the League’s sanctions.

Above all, however, it was the Franco-Soviet Pact that gave Hitler a new line of credit among the French right. The French right, both moderates and extremes, were vehemently opposed to the pact. For the French fascists the treaty was a Trojan horse: Doriot and Déat, recent converts to fascism, claimed the Franco-Soviet Pact was designed to lead to a war between Germany and France, which the Communists would utilize to seize power in France. As France threw herself into Stalin’s arms, the Nazis’ claim that they were Europe’s first defense against the “the assassins of Moscow” gained new credibility in the ranks of France’s extreme Rightists. Louis Bertrand found it “incredible” that France would choose the Soviet Union over Germany. He told the *Petit Marseillais*, “I say it quite openly, I am a supporter of Hitler.”

If the signing of the Franco-Soviet Pact added substantially to Hitler’s stock of good will account among French fascists, the dictator’s decision to invade the demilitarized Rhineland put a severe drain upon it. This was not only another open violation of the Treaty of Versailles, but one that had an immediate and profound impact upon France’s strategic position. The initial reaction to Hitler’s bold and blatant move among all segments of the French political spectrum was strong and vociferous condemnation. Even Drieu de la Rochelle became very pessimistic about the possibility of a Franco-German rapprochement, and admonished his fellow fascists not to become the political creatures of either the German or the Italian dictator. The veterans’ organization Union Nationale des
Combattants (UNC) dropped its membership in the CFA. However, the fascists coupled their strident denunciations of Hitler’s aggression with equally strong attacks on the Third Republic’s policies and leaders. For the French fascists the Rhineland crisis dramatically demonstrated that the system of collective security left France at the mercy of decisions by Great Britain and the Soviet Union. Pierre Gaxotte was outraged by the Nazi move, but he railed even more against the inactivity of the “Radicals [and] Socialo-Communists [sic].” He, Gaxotte, would have occupied the German cities of Trier, Kehl and Landau in retaliation for the remilitarization of the Rhineland, but “the men of the Left have done nothing.”

Remarkably, after their initial outbursts the French fascists quickly moderated their tone and criticism. Bergéry, Déat, and Doriot all insisted that the answer to Hitler’s moves had to be strong French countermeasures and an independent French foreign policy, but they also thought Franco-German negotiations were now more important than ever. The later PPF leader in Marseille, Simon Sabiani, accepted the Nazi claim that the reoccupation of the Rhineland was a legitimate reaction to the ratification of the Franco-Soviet Pact and argued France and Germany had to work together against the “capitalo-Communist [sic] menace.”

The extreme Right was willing to see a cause and effect relationship between the German move and the Franco-Soviet Pact. The French and the Soviets had destabilized the international order, not the Third Reich. Benoist-Mechin went back to the 1920s, and saw a connection between the Rhineland crisis and France’s failed attempt to include Eastern Europe in the Locarno Pact. By trying to protect Poland and the successor states of the Habsburg Empire, France had lost the good will of the Germans in the West. In other words, the looming victory of the Popular Front parties in the May 1936 election led many French fascists to see Hitler and the Nazis once again as the formidable obstacle to bolshevism that they claimed to be. The distorted image of Léon Blum helped restore the illusionary picture of Hitler.

**Dutch Fascists between Alignment and Autonomy**

In the heady atmosphere that followed the NSB’s success in the April 1935 elections, the party leaders expected that the Dutch parliamentary elections scheduled for 1937 would propel them to power. They were also convinced that emulating the German Nazis’ propaganda tactics would be good politics. The question remained, however, how closely the Dutch fascists should identify with their big brother across the Rhine. Some of the party’s leaders and even many of the lower-ranking activists argued that promising to implement Dutch versions of many of the
Nazis’ policies would attract voters and supporters. Others, more perceptive, recognized that the NSB had a chance of coming to power in Holland only if it managed to defuse the widespread fear that the party would impose a Dutch version of the Third Reich in the Netherlands.

In the face of internal dissension and put on the defensive by the concerted effort of the antifascist forces in Holland, the NSB attempted to square the circle. On the one hand the party worked hard to present a favorable picture of Nazi Germany in Holland. At the same time, the NSB’s leaders continued to indignantly reject the charge that Mussert’s movement was a subsidiary of the German Nazis. Speaking to a closed meeting of NSB members in Germany in October 1934, Mussert emphasized the crucial difference between the NSB and the NSDAP: The NSB rejected Nazi racism. Mussert, like Geelkerken, insisted that qualitative racial distinctions had no place in a country that was responsible for a multiracial empire. The NSB also rejected “racial hygiene,” and criticized the Nazis’ forced sterilization measures for the mentally ill. (That the Nazi “treatment” of the mentally ill also involved murdering many patients was not public knowledge at the time.) In the same vein Volk en Vaderland criticized the Stürmer for its crude, pornographic anti-Semitism. According to the Dutch fascists, this form of anti-Semitism was simply “tasteless” (onsmakelijk). Finally, the NSB vehemently rejected any political union of Germany and the Netherlands. The Germanic Schicksalsgemeinschaft (community of fate) that was to become such a major propaganda theme during the Second World War was not a significant issue for the NSB before the conflict. After Count d’Ansembourg met with Göring during the 1935 Nazi party congress, he reported that the most important but also the most obvious (vanzelfsprekendste) result of the discussion was his [Göring’s] word of honor that Germany would never covet one square meter of the Netherlands.

If the NSB’s leaders thought their carefully constructed position on anti-Semitism and racism would convince the Dutch of the NSB’s ideological and political autonomy, they sabotaged this effort by their increasingly virulent political (as distinct from racial) anti-Semitism. Leaders of the Dutch Jewish community and German-Jewish refugees in the Netherlands were spearheading the drive against the NSB in Holland, the NSB severely criticized the Dutch government for permitting German-Jewish refugees to enter Holland. The party also defended the Nuremberg Laws; they were needed in order to reduce the excessive Jewish influence in German society.

While Mussert and Geelkerken attempted to straddle the fence, pressure was mounting from within the NSB for abandoning the distinction between racial and political anti-Semitism. Mussert’s völkische critics
argued with increased urgency that the party should embrace racial anti-Semitism because Holland’s Jews, just like their German counterparts, had imposed on the country an alien “Jewish” way of life and suppressed the Germanic roots of Dutch society. With the Germans’ cheering on the sidelines, the völkische faction made headway. The NSB peppered its publications and rallies with increasingly undifferentiated anti-Semitic attacks. The party’s leaders also endorsed exporting Europe’s “Jewish problem.” By the middle of 1936 the party’s leadership favored a “Zionist” solution: Europe’s Jews should have their own state somewhere outside Europe; at this point the NSB enthusiastically supported Jewish immigration to Palestine. Since the Nazis were also encouraging Jewish emigration at this time (provided the Jews left most of their assets behind), the NSB’s position paralleled that of the Germans.137

There was abundant evidence that the Nazis’ persecution of the Christian churches evoked massive criticism in the Netherlands,138 and officially the NSB took care to emphasize that in a future Dutch fascist state, organized Christianity would not only be tolerated but would be encouraged to take an active part in the public life of the country. In July 1935 Mussert even created a Raad van kerkelijke Aangelegenheden (Council on Church Matters) to advise him on drafting policies for governing relations between church and state in a future fascist Holland.139

At the same time the NSB’s reports on church-state relations in Germany contained a defensive and apologetic undercurrent. The party claimed that there was a division within the NSDAP between Hitler, who wanted to protect organized Christianity, and what the NSB identified as the Nazis’ “pagan” wing—men like Schirach, Rosenberg, and Streicher.140 (A fellow-traveling minister, W. Laatsman, claimed that Rosenberg had told him the Germans had to return to the worship of Wotan, but “unfortunately” Hitler did not agree.141) It was not a very convincing argument; few Catholics and Protestants in the Netherlands accepted this portrait of Hitler as a champion of organized Christianity.

Faced with a massive drop in Catholic members, behind the scenes the NSB leaders appealed to the German Nazis to tone down their attacks on organized religion.142 The NSB also claimed that the present difficulties in the Third Reich were a legacy of the Church hierarchy’s positions during the Weimar Republic. At that time Germany’s Catholic bishops had allied themselves with democrats, Bolsheviks, and Jews in order to prevent Germany’s Catholics from giving their support to National Socialism. Now that the Nazis had come to power it was only natural that the leaders of the Third Reich wanted to eliminate all vestiges of political activism by the Church.143 At the same time, and paradoxically, the NSB continued to insist that in reality the German churches were not persecuted
at all. Making liberal use of material supplied by Nazi propaganda sources, *Volk en Vaderland* and other NSB publications claimed that Germany’s Christians had never had it so good. The churches thrived under the protection of the Third Reich. After all, the Nazis had suppressed the pernicious atheistic propaganda that the Marxists had been able to disseminate freely during the Weimar years.\textsuperscript{144}

Unlike its difficulties with anti-Semitism and church-state relations in Nazi Germany, the NSB thought it had found a propagandistic goldmine in the Nazis’ economic and social policies. Here the Dutch fascists proclaimed that the Third Reich was the true model of the future. The Nazis’ social policies had eliminated class conflicts in Germany and assured a comprehensive welfare system for all Germans. The Nazis’ economic policies, the NSB never tired of pointing out, had by now virtually eliminated unemployment in Germany, assured farmers of land ownership and good prices for their products, and yet did not stifle businessmen with excessive regulations.\textsuperscript{145}

Most of the NSB leaders also looked upon the stylized rituals of the Third Reich with unstinting admiration. For the leider and his associates, the seemingly perfect synchronization of leader and followers at the Nuremberg rallies was the image of a fascism in power that they hoped to bring to Holland.\textsuperscript{146} In an obvious attempt to emulate the Nuremberg spectacles, the NSB bought land near the town Lunteren, and in 1935 began staging its own annual rallies, the so-called *Hagespraken*. Attending an NSB rally for the first time, a German consul general was “forcefully reminded” of similar events staged by the NSDAP in the years of the *Kampfzeit*.\textsuperscript{147} But there was criticism as well. The NSB’s propaganda leader in Rotterdam, for example, pointed out that it was precisely the aping of the Nazi style, which alienated many potential supporters.\textsuperscript{148} Even Marchant was ambivalent about his experience at the 1935 Nuremberg congress. He found the organization perfect, but Hitler’s speech not much more than “really exaggerated screaming (*erg overdreven geschreeuwe*)”.\textsuperscript{149}

But in the long run, the advice to keep the NSB at a distance from the German Nazis went largely unheeded by the NSB’s leaders. Convinced that the forces that the Nazis had identified as their primary enemies—Jews, Marxists, and the Catholic Church—were also the major forces arrayed against the NSB in Holland, the NSB would overcome its opposition with the same methods the Nazis had used to defeat their enemies. And it would do so by copying the Nazis’ style of campaigning, and by telling the Dutch people the “truth” about the Third Reich.

Unlike the French extreme Rightists, Dutch fascists were still not particularly concerned about Hitler’s foreign policy moves. Focused on their desire to reduce France’s hegemonial position on the Continent, the
Dutch fascists welcomed the Nazis’ “revisionist” efforts. True, there was an undercurrent of unease about the Nazis’ future plans for the “Greater Germanic Reich.” Some Nazi domestic propaganda seemed to include Holland as part of the new Germanic superstate, and linguistic maps published during the Third Reich routinely listed the Dutch-language area as part of the “Lower German” region. Publicly at least, the NSB’s leaders accepted the assurances by German officials that such lapses were initiatives by lower-level party officials who had exceeded their authority. More worrisome was Hitler’s lack of consultation with small countries before carrying out his foreign policy moves. Nevertheless, on the whole, the Dutch fascists saw Hitler’s initiatives as positive steps that would weaken the Versailles system.

Like the French extreme Right, the Dutch fascists saw Nazi foreign policy moves through the prism of their domestic politics. Thus the NSB interpreted the Nazis’ putsch in Austria not as a coup d’état sponsored by a foreign power, but as a popular uprising by the oppressed Austrian people against the dictatorial aims of Austrian political Catholicism. The party’s papers and speakers portrayed the Dollfuss government as a form of clerical dictatorship, quite analogous to the regime that the NSB insisted the Catholic hierarchy was trying to impose upon the Netherlands. In this instance the NSB departed from its usual admiring stance toward Mussolini. The Dutch fascists regretted that Mussolini’s threat of military intervention allowed Austria’s clerical authoritarian regime to remain in power.

One of the NSB’s constant campaign themes was to criticize the Colijn government for its supposed neglect of the Dutch military preparedness. For the NSB, Germany’s reintroduction of the military draft was an inspiring example of a great nation determined to regain its national sovereignty. The plebiscite in the Saar in April 1935 presented the Dutch fascists with another opportunity to criticize the Dutch government and its support of the League of Nations. The party enthusiastically welcomed the return of the Saar to German control as an example of national self-determination and evidence of fascist popularity.

In the eyes of the Dutch fascists Mussolini more than redeemed himself for his wrong-headed policy in Austria with his forceful action in Ethiopia. For the NSB Italy’s military action in Ethiopia was the inspiring example of a European colonial power acting to secure its rightful sphere of influence. For the Dutch fascists the Ethiopian emperor was an upstart colonial, while Mussolini represented Western and European civilization. By imposing sanctions on Italy, the League of Nations, controlled by France and its new ally, the Soviet Union, was clearing the way for the advance of bolshevism in Africa. In contrast, the Nazi decision to
defy the League’s sanctions and to support Italy economically and diplomatically represented the epitome of fascist internationalism: The two leading fascist powers were acting in concert to defend European colonial possessions against native ambitions and Bolshevik threats. Unfortunately for the NSB’s political fortunes, a majority of the Dutch people condemned Mussolini’s unilateral military action, and welcomed the sanctions imposed by the League of Nations against Italy. In fact, the NSB’s continuing support of Mussolini’s aggression in Ethiopia contributed significantly to the NSB’s political decline.

Since the German reoccupation of the Rhineland weakened France’s strategic position, it came as no surprise that the Dutch fascists cheered the German use of military force. They fully accepted the Nazi argument that the reoccupation of the Rhineland strengthened Europe’s defenses against bolshevism. In material issued to the NSB’s propagandists after the ratification of the Franco-Soviet Pact, the party leaders gleefully noted how right they (and the Nazis) had been: The alliance between France and the Soviet Union demonstrated that democratic regimes were incapable of stopping communism. The Nazis’ reoccupation of the Left Bank was an act of fully justified self-defense.

By mid-1936, then, the NSB stood shoulder-to-shoulder with Hitler and Mussolini. The NSB criticized neither Hitler’s “revisionist” goals, nor the Nazis’ methods in achieving their aims. Mussert and his associates hoped that their endorsement of Italian and German foreign policy moves would embarrass the Colijn government and gain additional support for the NSB, but the vast majority of the Dutch people supported the government’s determination to maintain Holland’s neutrality and fulfill her international obligations. Increasingly isolated, the NSB aligned itself ever more closely with the German Nazis and Italian Fascists. The party’s insistence that in Ethiopia Mussolini was defending the interests of the white race, and a reference during the Rhineland crisis that France had offended the Rhenish population by stationing black colonial troops on the Left Bank, brought racial arguments into the debate that might please the Germans, but they also contributed to alienating the party from many of its potential Dutch supporters.
Political Dynamics in Germany, France, and the Netherlands

During the months May 1936–March 1938 the Third Reich enjoyed its greatest overall prestige and popularity, both in Germany and abroad. On the domestic front the Nazis presented Germany as a country marching in lockstep behind its Führer and his party. Nazi control of the flow of information was complete. Goebbels noted proudly that editors and reporters could have no illusions about “what was forbidden and would not be tolerated.”\(^1\) But the regime enjoyed international admiration as well. The Berlin Olympic Games in September 1936 represented a high-point for the regime’s international prestige. Marquis de Polignac, a French member of the International Olympic Committee, commented that never before had the Games been prepared with such “intelligence, trust, eagerness, and care.” Goebbels was delighted to give this judgment wide coverage.\(^2\)

In their propaganda the Nazis continued to highlight their social “revolution” and the emerging Volksgemeinschaft. Many Germans and foreigners alike became convinced that German fascism had solved the problems of class conflict in a modern society.\(^3\) At the same time the regime increased the persecution of its declared enemies. Anti-Semitic propaganda was put on hold during the 1936 Olympic Games, but as soon as the Games

---

\(^1\) Goebbels noted proudly that editors and reporters could have no illusions about “what was forbidden and would not be tolerated.”

\(^2\) Marquis de Polignac, a French member of the International Olympic Committee, commented that never before had the Games been prepared with such “intelligence, trust, eagerness, and care.”

\(^3\) Many Germans and foreigners alike became convinced that German fascism had solved the problems of class conflict in a modern society.
ended, attacks upon the Jews intensified. Traveling exhibitions hammered home the regime’s anti-Semitic message. One, put together by Ulrich Fleischauer, the publisher of the Weltdienst, was titled “The Eternal Jew”; it underscored the international nature of the Jewish threat. A second traveling show, “Degenerate Art,” was organized by the Propaganda Ministry. It was designed to “prove” the decadence of modern art, which the organizers insisted was largely the work of Jews.

The appointment of Hans Kerrl as Reich and Prussian Minister for Church Affairs in July 1935 signaled an intensification of the Nazis’ attacks on organized religion. Kerrl, an old-line Nazi, regarded the Catholic Church as an international, un-German organization. In July 1936 a meeting between Hitler and the Archbishop of Munich, Cardinal Faulhaber, seemed to imply better relations between church and state, but the respite was brief. In December, Hitler Youth membership was made mandatory for all German boys and girls between the ages of ten and eighteen. The measure was designed to reduce the influence of the churches among Germany’s youth. Goebbels soon joined the ranks of the radicals. As always, when it came to dealing with organized religion, Hitler equivocated. In public he was the uninvolved chief of state, but privately he permitted the hot heads in the party to press ahead. Goebbels was pleased. He wrote in his diary, “the Führer is becoming increasingly radical on the church question. That’s good.”

But the Catholic Church was not idle either. In March 1937 Pope Pius XI issued a biting encyclical, Mit brennender Sorge (With Burning Concern). The well-documented missive detailed the many Nazi violations of the Concordat. In retaliation Hitler authorized the Gestapo and the Reich’s judicial apparatus to intensify their persecution of Catholic clergymen, while Goebbels launched a massive media attack against the Catholic Church. Insisting that “the Vatican has really gotten impertinent (der Vatikan ist ganz frech geworden),” the Propaganda minister ordered the German press to run pieces accusing the Pope of anti-Nazi activities and the German Catholic clergy of moral debauchery. Throughout the spring and early summer the regime staged a series of show trials against Catholic monks and clergymen. The trumped-up charges concentrated on accusations of sexual misbehavior. The Propaganda Ministry’s directive (Sprachregelung) ordered editors to stress that “monasteries and churches presented a revolting picture . . . The holiest places had become houses of prostitution.” The aim of the campaign was clearly to drive a wedge between the Catholic laity and clerical leaders of their church, but here the Nazis failed completely. Moreover, the public soon lost interest in the sensational reporting. In July Goebbels wrote smugly, “the priest trials
(Pfaffenprozesse) are continuing on their merry way,” but blaming the German judiciary for its incompetence and failure to serve the regime’s political ends, Hitler and the Propaganda minister soon called a halt to the antichurch campaign.7

While the persecution of the churches was a propaganda defeat, in its international relations the regime could score a number of triumphs. Against the backdrop of the Popular Front government in France and the Spanish Civil War, the leitmotif of the 1936 and 1937 Nazi party congresses was the Third Reich’s leading role in defending Europe against Soviet Communism. At the 1936 spectacle, Goebbels delivered a major address (later published as a pamphlet) which he called a “general reckoning [Generalabrechnung] with Bolshevism.” In a clear allusion to the Franco-Soviet Pact, the propaganda chief insisted that any alliance between a bourgeois democracy and bolshevism spelled doom for the bourgeoisie.8 The Spanish Civil War was an important factor in transforming the growing cooperation between the Nazis and the Italian Fascists into the firm alliance of the Berlin-Rome Axis. This was a development that virtually all European extreme Rightists welcomed. The Nazis worked hard to polish the image of the fascist powers as defenders of Western culture against bolshevism. For the benefit of their French audience the Nazis pointed out that the Spanish Civil War was only a foretaste of what the Communists were planning for France.

The Nazis’ certainty of triumph and prestige was shattered in February 1938 by what Goebbels rather melodramatically called “the regime’s worst crisis since the Röhm affair.” A scandal involving the Reich Minister of Defense, General Werner von Blomberg, and the commander-in-chief of the land forces, General Werner von Fritsch, led to the resignation of both generals. For a time Goebbels was genuinely concerned that foreign countries, especially France, might get the impression that the Nazi regime was showing signs of disintegration.9 Actually Hitler used the affair to strengthen his own position. He abolished the Defense Ministry, and took direct charge of the armed forces. At the same time Konstatin von Neurath, who had been Foreign Minister since 1933, was forced to make way for Joachim von Ribbentrop.

If Nazi Germany gave the impression of a country united behind its leaders, France presented a picture of a nation divided against itself. “In 1936–37,” wrote Stanley Hoffmann, “the French political ‘community’ looked rather like two armed camps preparing for a fight.” Drieu de la Rochelle agreed. He feared that “civil war is going to break out in France.”10 Increasingly, it appeared, Frenchmen were divided into those who insisted that only the Popular Front could save France from fascism
and those who were convinced that only some form of right-wing authoritarianism or fascism could save France from the Popular Front and the Communist revolution.

The country’s polarization reached new levels of intensity during the national election campaign in the spring of 1936 and the subsequent establishment of the Popular Front government. The campaign itself reminded many observers of the bitter contests in the last years of the Weimar Republic. The election results seemed to confirm the rightists’ worst fears. The Communists gained 62 seats and the Socialists 49 in the national parliament, while the moderate Republican parties lost 42 seats. The new government coalition was composed of Socialists and Radicals and was headed by the Socialist leader Léon Blum. Drieu would later remember that “at the latest in 1937 I no longer believed in France.”

The most ominous feature of the politics of polarization in the Popular Front era was the noticeable increase in the number and virulence of anti-Semitic, anti-Masonic, and antidemocratic manifestations. Anti-Semitic demonstrations with as many as 10,000 participants, physical attacks upon individual Jews, and a steady stream of venomous publications became commonplace. It was no accident that Céline’s *Bagatelle pour un massacre*, which exhibited a “murderous anti-Semitism rarely equaled in France,” was published in 1937, nor that Brasillach called it “an enormous book, a magnificent book.” For the extreme Right the appointment of Léon Blum, a Socialist and Jew, as prime minister was undeniable evidence that the international Jewish conspiracy had finally taken control of France. Rebatet’s description of the opening ceremonies for the 1937 Paris World’s Fair evoked the image of Jewish *métemps* posing as real Frenchmen: “All of the great men of the regime came forward. When M. Blum, M. Zay, M. Abraham, M. Cahen-Salvador, M. Moch appeared, the band of the [Republican] Guard began playing, *Proud Gauls with Round Heads.*” The far-right also identified German-Jewish refugees in France with the Popular Front. Exhibiting his best polemical form, Rebatet remembered that during the 1936 Bastille Day celebrations, “some monstrous [*monstrueuses*] families of Berlin yids [*youtres*] demonstrated on the Champs-Elysées with shouts of ‘Long live the Popular Front.’” (The French original “*Fife lé Vront Bobulaire*” is meant to suggest someone speaking French with a strong German accent.) To be sure, as a group most French anti-Semites continued to insist that they were not racists. However, as Ralph Schor has demonstrated, racist anti-Semitism was also on the rise. Increasingly, the physical and cultural descriptions of Jews in French anti-Semitic publications resembled the caricatures found in the *Stürmer*, including references to false Talmudic quotations and to Jesus as a blond Aryan.
De la Rocque’s CF transformed itself into the PSF. As had been true for its paramilitary predecessor, the PSF remained an enigma for both contemporaries and subsequent scholars. The party did not lack either a mass membership, or money, or an effective organization. De la Rocque claimed two million members; less biased sources gave the figure as between seven hundred thousand and one million. Still, even the second number exceeded the combined membership total for the Socialist and Communist parties. Organized into 1,300 locals and a number of front organizations, the PSF seemed well on its way toward becoming a French catchall party. In the Chamber of Deputies the PSF’s parliamentary group was allied with the conservative Republican Federation. Finally, the party had ready access to a number of mass circulation press organs.

The ultimate aim of this massed political potential was less clear. Not surprisingly, much of the PSF’s program was taken over verbatim from its earlier incarnation. The new political party certainly endorsed vaguely fascist sentiments, such as a sort of French version of the Nazis’ Volksgemeinschaft. The French were urged to “develop among those of good will the greatest and most fervent spirit of mutual help.” Words like “authority,” “hierarchy,” “combat,” and “camaraderie” also had a familiar ring. The PSF endorsed “le plan technique,” and “a courageous reform of capitalism.” Was the PSF a fascist party? Robert Soucy concludes unequivocally that the CF/PSF was “the largest fascist movement in France”; Andreas Wirsching and William Irvine agree. Others stressed that the PSF wanted to have it both ways: It was antiparliamentary in tone, fascistic in style, but not antirepublican in practice.

But the PSF was not an unequivocal success story. Straddling the fence brought problems of its own. The news that earlier in the decade de la Rocque had accepted money from the French government was gleefully publicized by the PSF’s only serious rival as a mass organization on the far right, the PPF. Under the leadership of Jacques Doriot, the PPF’s membership grew rapidly; to the chagrin of de la Rocque, the PPF attracted a number of activists from the PSF who had become disappointed with de la Rocque’s equivocating politics. An impressive number of prominent intellectuals, including Jouvenel and Drieu la Rochelle, saw the PPF as the answer to what the French extreme Right had always lacked: an organization that could attract mass working class support, headed by a “chef” who would become the French Führer.

Especially in its formative stages, the PPF had no money problems. One of the defectors from de la Rocque’s PSF, Pierre Pucheu, a sales director for the French steel industry, had excellent connections to the world of high finance. Doriot also had no qualms about accepting significant sums from the Italian Fascist regime. The go-between here was...
Count Pozzo di Borgo, another defector from the PSF. Contrary to persistent rumors, the PPF did not receive any money from the Nazis. 26

As was true for the PSF, the PPF’s program made up in passion what it lacked in precision. At the center of Doriot’s message was fanatical, unwavering opposition to communism and bolshevism. 27 The positive side of the PPF’s program was more difficult to discern. Without saying so explicitly, Doriot clearly admired the accomplishments of fascism in Germany and Italy. The PPF’s economic platform was a French version of Mussolini’s corporatism. There was a great deal of talk in party circles about a French form of Volksgemeinschaft. The PPF denied that it would import the dictatorial methods familiar from the regime across the Rhine, but the party did insist that parliamentary democracy had to be eliminated. The PPF was also hypernationalist, insisting upon maintaining the integrity of the French empire against Communist efforts to foment revolts and independence movements in the colonial areas. (Doriot had some previous experience in this area; in the 1920s he had been the PCF’s expert on colonial issues.) 28

Initially, anti-Semitism was not a prominent feature of the PPF. The party received money from Jewish banks, and two of the editors of L’Emancipation Nationale and La Liberté, Alexander Abremski and Bertrand de Jouvenel, were of “mixed blood” according to Nazi definitions. As was true for the NSB and the PSF, there was considerable pressure from the rank and file in the PPF, especially in Algeria, for a stronger stand against Jews and métèques. Eventually Doriot, too, convinced himself that France’s Jewish establishment stood behind the Communists’ efforts to destroy the PPF and prevent France’s national rejuvenation. 29 Stylistically Doriot’s group was an authentically fascist party. From 1937 on, the PPF was subject to what Philippe Burrin has called “an accelerated fascicization,” and that included an unabashed Führer cult around Doriot.

Despite its full coffers, mass membership, and charismatic leader, the story of the PPF was one of dramatic rise followed by an equally swift decline. As the threat of the Bolshevik revolution receded, business subsidies dried up. At the same time, Doriot faced mounting personal and political problems. A Communist-sponsored recall election succeeded in forcing him to resign as mayor of St. Denis, depriving the PPF’s leader of his political home base. Never an athletic type, the ready availability of money seems to have gone both to Doriot’s head and waistline. Complaints multiplied that he was enjoying a lavish lifestyle more than the rigors of political campaigning. 30

While Doriot’s star declined, these were probably the most influential years for the editorial collective that ran Je suis partout, the self-appointed “intellectual general staff of the extreme right.” Brasillach and his associates
supported many of Doriot’s positions, and they were generally sympathetic toward the PPF, but the journal still refused to become affiliated with any party or organization. At the same time, there was no doubt that *JSP*, much like the extreme Right as a whole, was becoming more radical. The magazine’s style was increasingly frenetic; vicious attacks against the “enemies” of the nation—Jews, Freemasons, international financiers, Communists—and demands to “shoot Blum” alternated with praise of the fascist regimes.31

Faced with the—albeit temporary—unity of the Left and the coming to power of the Popular Front, demands for cooperation on the Right increased as well. These efforts culminated in March 1937 with Doriot’s call for a Front de la Liberté (Front of Liberty) against communism. Doriot suggested that the institutional members of the Front de la Liberté should coordinate their anti-Communist activities by staging joint rallies and forming electoral alliances against left-wing foes. At the beginning of May the PPF’s leader used the occasion of a huge rally in the Paris *Vélodrome d’Hiver* to announce that the Front de la Liberté had been joined by a wide spectrum of organizations and leaders, including the Republican Federation. Both *Gringoire* and *Je suis partout* provided editorial endorsement.32

One major organization remained aloof, however. The PSF, the largest and most important of the far right groups, was unwilling to join the new umbrella organization. Colonel de la Rocque did not reject membership outright; rather, he repeatedly insisted that he needed additional information before he would commit the PSF to join the Front. In the end, the colonel, distrusting Doriot and undoubtedly fearful that the whole maneuver was designed to fold the PSF into the PPF, announced that by joining the Front the PSF would be seen as fascist, “which we don’t want at any price.” Without the PSF the dream of unity among the French far right remained an illusion.33

One of the “regularities” of modern French history has been the correlation between domestic political consensus and challenges to the nation from abroad. As the nation was threatened by forces outside France, the French tended to rally in support of the country’s domestic constitutional system, whatever it might be. The middle years of the decade represented an exception to this rule, largely because Left and Right could not agree on the nature of the foreign threat. The Left pointed to Nazi Germany and its aggressive moves, the Right argued the major threat was Soviet Russia as the mastermind of a worldwide Bolshevik revolution. This then was the central question that bitterly divided the French: Should France cooperate with Russia to block Hitler, or appease Hitler as Europe’s protector against Soviet expansionism? The outbreak of the Spanish Civil
War added fuel to the debate. No single event polarized French public opinion more than the drawn-out conflict between Nationalists and Republicans in Spain.\textsuperscript{34} As many Rightists would later claim, it was the Spanish Civil War that finally convinced them that fascism was the only viable answer to the Bolshevik threat.\textsuperscript{35}

While there was certainly no sense that the Netherlands were on the brink of civil war, all was not well in the Low Countries either. In mid-1937 a month-long cabinet crisis paralyzed the government. A more lasting problem was the widespread sentiment that politics as usual had reached a dead end. The country had dropped the gold standard for the guilder in September 1936, but the government’s continuing supply-side economic policies met with increasing criticism; proponents of some sort of corporatism were active in all political camps. Self-styled “rejuvenators” (vernieuwers) often combined their criticism of the government’s economic policies with demands for political reforms that would strengthen the national cohesion and weaken the role of the parties and zuilen.\textsuperscript{36} Nevertheless, in the Netherlands the lines between moderates and the extreme Right and Left were not fluid. The Social Democratic, Protestant, and Catholic parties and the zuilen that supported them cooperated to combat both the extreme Right, which they consistently stigmatized as a “German import,” and the much less important Communists.

The drawing together of the pluralist forces had a profound impact on the political fortunes of the NSB, although for the moment the Dutch fascists were still under the illusion that they were embarking on an unimpeded march to power. The Dutch fascists anticipated that in the upcoming national elections in May 1937 they would gain between 10 and 12 percent of the vote, which in the Dutch multiparty spectrum would have made the NSB the third or even the second largest party in the country.\textsuperscript{37}

In the 1937 parliamentary election campaign the party focused on the communist threat facing Europe and the Netherlands. The NSB portrayed the Spanish Civil War as a harbinger of the coming, Europe-wide Bolshevik revolution, and Mussert’s organization as the only political force that could save the Netherlands from communism. “Mussert or Moscow” was the alliterative slogan that greeted Dutch voters from thousands of placards and billboards.\textsuperscript{38} With expectations so high, the 1937 results were a devastating disappointment for the NSB. Instead of the expected 10 to 12 percent of the national vote, the party received 4.2 percent, about half of what it had obtained in the provincial contests two years earlier.\textsuperscript{39}

Not surprisingly, the immediate consequence of the disastrous election results was a profound internal crisis in the party. At party headquarters
in Utrecht “moderates” and “radicals” battled for control of the NSB. Geelkerken later described the months from May to November 1937 as a “tumultuous half year (stormachtige halfjaar).” Even Mussert had given up hope that the party would win the hearts and minds of the Dutch voters in the near future. The leider announced that the country was not yet ready for the NSB and that the party’s activists should be prepared to suffer isolation in their own country. But, he concluded, “in our isolation lies our strength.” Although Mussert and Geelkerken continued to insist that a Stürmer-style anti-Semitism had no place in the NSB, anti-Semitic outbursts had surfaced repeatedly during the 1937 campaign, and the leider refused to reign in the radicals. A number of moderates felt that Mussert’s unwillingness to curtail the activities of NSB’s völkisch, anti-Semitic wing spelled disaster for Dutch fascism. They mounted a silent coup to replace Mussert as leader of the party, and when that failed, several prominent moderates left the NSB. They included G. van Duyl, one of the party’s most popular speakers, and General H.A. Seyffardt, a former chief of staff of the Dutch army.

The exodus of the moderates left Mussert even more dependent on the radicals, and with the benefit of hindsight, the leider’s decision to let the moderates go seems both personally and politically counterproductive. At the time, however, Mussert was convinced it was a politically smart move. The 1937 elections had demonstrated that the road to power would be a long one, requiring a cadre of committed and fanatic activists. The NSB’s membership was dwindling, and the cohort that remained largely identified with the völkische, the anti-Semitic wing of the party. Mussert also seems to have become convinced that there really was a Jewish-democratic conspiracy to prevent the NSB’s message from reaching the Dutch people. There were financial considerations as well. After 1935 the NSB’s membership grew fastest among the Dutch residents of East India. In fact, Mussert later claimed that it was the financial sacrifices of the East Indian members that sustained the party during the dark days from 1937 to 1940.

Into the vacuum left by the departing moderates moved the radicals, led by M.M. Rost van Tonningen. Rost, who worked for the League of Nations as an expert in international finance, did not formally join the NSB until August, 1936, but once he became a member he was on a collision course with the old guard. Marchant d’Ansembourg rejected his political tactics, and Geelkerken and Rost “couldn’t stand each other.” Mussert, too, neither liked nor trusted Rost, but the leider valued the newcomer for his good contacts with the Germans. After the election disaster, Rost, who had sympathized with Nazism for some time, argued vehemently that only the Nazis could provide the NSB with a successful
model for coming to power. He and his allies used the party’s new daily newspaper, the Nationale Dagblad (ND) to put Nazi propaganda tactics into practice in Holland. The ND had been founded in 1936 (with funds provided by Mussert) to complement the NSB’s older, weekly publication Volk en Vaderland. As editor of the new paper, Rost immediately modeled the ND upon Goebbels’ Berlin paper, Der Angriff.44

Mussert used a special party congress in October 1937 to celebrate his pyrrhic victory over the failed conspirators and to set the party on a new course. In a melodramatic address full of Biblical allusions, the NSB’s leider attempted to instill in his shrinking band of followers the conviction that they were now the chosen few, the committed who would overcome all obstacles to liberate the Netherlands from her chains. Denouncing materialism, intellectuals, and modernism, Mussert’s attack climaxed with the rhetorical question if it was not true that behind all these modern evils stood “the gold of the Jews” and the political system that the Jews had made particularly their own, democracy.45

Through the Prism of Domestic Politics: German Nazis and French Fascists

Nazi involvement in the French political scene continued to be both passive and active. The Germans simultaneously reported on the significance of political developments in the neighboring country, while seeking to create a favorable image for the Third Reich in France and attempting to influence the political balance of power in the hexagon. German reports on what was going on in France in these years were a striking mixture of accurate observations, wishful thinking, and misjudgments. The professionals and the amateurs were still at odds. In his diary46 Goebbels fumed against Germany’s professional diplomats. The Reich’s representative in Paris “should at least be a genuine German,” he wrote at the beginning of 1938. But all was not harmony and friendship in the amateurs’ camp either. In 1937 officials in the Nazi University Student Organization accused Otto Abetz, the quintessential Nazi amateur diplomat, of “treasonable Francophilia”. He was eventually cleared of the charges, but decided to protect himself against further intrigues by joining both the Nazi party and the SS.47

German reporting on the Popular Front had an element of schizophrenia about it. Not surprisingly, as the Blum government took office, German assessments stressed the accelerating polarization of France and the threat of a Communist coup, while emphasizing Germany’s ongoing efforts to combat the Bolshevik danger. The German embassy reported “a mood of panic” among the French middle classes, but the ambassador,
Count Welckeck, soon recognized that a Communist coup was unlikely, and he offered a quite positive portrait of Léon Blum. At the beginning of 1938 the ambassador even agreed with Blum that France’s continuing sense of malaise was not justified by the country’s economic and social indicators.48

The Nazi amateurs in France held onto their scenario of a probable Bolshevik putsch considerably longer. Some Nazi observers continued to report rumors of left-wing “action” throughout 1937. Their assessments also invariably contained a good dose of self-serving comparisons between France in 1936 and 1937 and the Weimar Republic in its last years.49 Goebbels took a middle line. Throughout 1937 he ordered the German press to print stories about the “chaotic” conditions in France, but his ministry also insisted that France was not on the verge of a Bolshevik revolution. Goebbels even wanted German newspapers to acknowledge that Blum was attempting to save France from bolshevism, and the Propaganda Ministry prohibited personal attacks on the French statesman.50

Nazi observers speculated about France’s political future at great length. Most Nazi reporters claimed to see clear evidence of growing sympathy for “authoritarianism” in France, but they were pessimistic about the future of fascism in France. The extreme Right was divided, and there were no real leaders (“nowhere is there a Führer,” wrote Friedrich Grimm). Moreover, there was considerable underlying support for the Republican system. The Third Republic, even the amateurs acknowledged, was not the Weimar Republic.51

The Nazi amateurs insisted, however, that there was an additional factor in the dynamics of French politics which only they were able to assess accurately and which might well form a basis for a new relationship between Germany and France: The rise of anti-Semitism as the French people recognized what role the “hidden forces” of Jews and Freemasons were playing in France. Citing as evidence large-scale anti-Semitic rallies, the appearance of new anti-Jewish periodicals, and the increased circulation figures for established ones, the Nazis concluded that anti-Semitism was becoming a major political force in France. They convinced themselves that “anti-Semitism had become . . . an element of Franco-German understanding.” But the Nazis vastly exaggerated the influence of what Friedrich Grimm called “voices of reason.” These included, for example, André Chaumet, whom the Weltdienst described as a “well-known French author.”52 The German embassy, however, quoted a French informant that “Chaumet still has no established reputation in either politics or literature.” His book Comment causer avec l’Allemagne (How to Talk With Germany) “had not sold well” and had received only two reviews.53
The Germans also recognized that only the PSF and the PPF represented significant organized forces among the French extreme Right, but they had reservations about both. Goebbels permitted the German press to print articles about the PSF as long as they were not “too prominently placed (nicht gross herausgebracht).” German reports described de la Rocque’s party as an organization whose primary purpose was organizing itself. Some Nazis were impressed by the PSF’s large membership, and they praised its opposition to communism. The more enthusiastic among them even called the PSF a “battle cry against the [parliamentary] system.” But de la Rocque and his party clearly failed two other litmus tests. The PSF and its leader refused to categorize themselves as either fascist or anti-Semitic. The German ambassador in Paris described the PSF as the French equivalent of the German Stahlhelm veterans’ organization during the Weimar Republic: large, disciplined, and inclined to verbal radicalism, but not a threat to the established political order.

That left the PPF, the new entry on the French fascist scene. Doriot’s creation aroused the Nazis’ intense interest—too intense for Goebbels’ taste. The Propaganda minister reminded the German press not to speculate about the PPF’s future role in France, but some enthusiastic German reporters in France paid little attention to this admonition. Kurt Ihlefeld, the Paris correspondent of the NSDAP’s central organ, Völkischer Beobachter, wrote a panegyric piece titled “Ein Vorkämpfer gegen den Kommunismus—bei Jacques Doriot in Saint Denis (A Pioneer in the Struggle Against Communism—A Visit With Jacques Doriot in St. Denis)” which suggested that Doriot was the future leader of France. Heinz Bremer was less certain about Doriot’s political future, but he had high praise for the PPF’s “healthy and vital will to power,” and the “instinctive explosion (Ausbruch) of genuinely popular feelings and expectations” which animated the party. Nazi observers noted that stylistically the PPF’s rallies came closest to being copies of the Nazi and Fascist originals. The PPF even seemed to have its foreign policy priorities right. In June 1937 Doriot’s paper, Liberté, published a piece accepting the Nazi argument that the remilitarization of the left bank of the Rhine was a justified response to the Franco-Soviet Pact.

But the PPF, too, was not without its problems. Doriot’s failure to defeat the recall petition and his subsequent resignation as mayor of St. Denis in June 1937 demonstrated the limits of his charismatic appeal. In addition, while the Nazis praised Doriot’s anti-Communism, they also observed that the PPF’s narrow focus on antibolshevism made Doriot something of a “Jacques-one-note.” Above all, however, the failure of the Front de la Liberté tarnished Doriot’s image in Nazi eyes. Obsessed with their own party history, the Nazis saw the Front as the equivalent of
Hitler’s efforts to absorb his völkische rivals into the NSDAP. Unlike Hitler, Doriot had not succeeded in rallying the French Right around him.60

On the “active” side Nazi foreign propaganda pursued foreign and domestic goals simultaneously. To achieve their dual aims the Nazis used a combination of lavish displays, attacks on their French critics, and selected citations from friendly sources. On the one hand the Nazis continued to work at creating a positive image of the Third Reich in France. The Nazis spent considerable money and effort in constructing and publicizing the German pavilion at the 1937 Paris World’s Fair. At the same time German readers and listeners were given a picture of France in which criticism of the Nazi regime came only from a fanatical, left-wing (and mostly Jewish) fringe; all “reasonable” voices praised the accomplishments of the Third Reich. The German press was ordered to publicize with considerable fanfare the prizes that the German exhibits won at the Fair.61 In France, Fernand Brinon, on behalf of the Comité France-Allemagne, took on the task of “denying and correcting” negative news stories about the regime across the Rhine, while in Germany Goebbels demanded that the press attack the exhibition “Five Years of the Hitler Regime,” which left-wing circles had organized in Paris in early 1938.62

The year 1937 was probably the most successful one for Abetz’ offensive de charme. Especially the CFA and its journal Cahiers France-Allemagne/Deutsch-Französische Monatshefte did much to publicize a favorable view of the new Germany. For his French readers Abetz worked tirelessly to underscore the Third Reich’s image as Europe’s only bulwark against bolshevism. During the Paris World’s Fair a veritable army of Nazi officials descended on the city. Walther Funk, the Reich economics minister, and Baldur von Schirach, the head of the Hitler Youth, gave what they described as well-received lectures. Under Abetz’ guidance the CFA organized Journées d’études franco-allemandes (Franco-German Study Days), and one of Abetz’ front organizations, Rive gauche (Left Bank), sponsored an ongoing lecture series that brought such luminaries as Leni Riefenstahl to Paris.

A great deal of Nazi foreign propaganda actually took place in Germany, and an interview with Hitler was still the top prize. In line with Germany’s public relations priorities in these years, Hitler took care to emphasize his anti-Communist credentials and to stress the “social” accomplishments of National Socialism. In a conversation with Abel Bonnard, the Nazi leader emphasized that under the Nazi regime working conditions for German sailors had dramatically improved.63 Alphonse de Châteaubriant was accorded the singular honor of an invitation to Hitler’s mountain retreat in Berchtesgaden as the climax to several weeks of travel in Germany.64
The coming to power of the Popular Front called forth renewed efforts by the Nazis’ most vociferous anti-Semites. The *Stürmer* set the tone for the campaign with its headline: “A Nation Which Takes a Jew as Leader is Headed for Ruin.” Streicher’s friend Jean Boissel was invited to speak in Nuremberg on several occasions. Not to be outdone, in October 1936 the untiring *Weltdienst* organized an anti-Semitic congress in Erfurt. The ubiquitous Boissel spoke on “The Situation in France from an Anti-Semitic and Aryan Perspective,” and Jean Drault enlightened the delegates with “A Contribution to the Research on the ‘Protocols of Zion.’” Parallel to the Erfurt anti-Semitic congress, Goebbels organized an international authors’ meeting, which he described as a great success. The minister thought the French participants were particularly impressed. The Olympic Games provided welcome opportunities for travel in Germany, both official and private. Two members of the *JSP* editorial board attended the Games, and subsequently traveled widely throughout Germany.

The projected authorized French edition of *Mein Kampf* was one of the more bizarre and ultimately stillborn attempts to demonstrate Hitler’s changed attitude toward France. Portions of Hitler’s autobiography, with its multitude of hateful passages about French leaders past and present, were available in French translation, but the Nazis claimed that these unauthorized editions distorted the Führer’s views. For this reason Friedrich Grimm, the fellow-traveling lawyer, suggested he would oversee an authorized French edition of *Mein Kampf* complete with an introduction by Rudolf Hess and a “contemporary” explanation of the most embarrassing passages. The French edition would also include some ringing endorsements by French friends of the Third Reich. Both the Propaganda Ministry and the Büro Ribbentrop showed some initial enthusiasm when Grimm proposed the project at the end of 1937, but eventually they concluded that calling attention to *Mein Kampf* in France would be counterproductive. In addition, the German embassy pointed out “that no one would take seriously” endorsements by such figures as Paul Ferdonnet or Alphonse de Chateaubriant. For a time the project was quietly dropped.

Convinced that France’s youth was traveling along lines parallel to its German counterpart, some of the most enthusiastic Nazi practitioners of Franco-German collaboration were leaders and members of the Hitler Youth. When Schirach visited the Paris World’s Fair, he was accompanied by a large retinue of Hitler Youth officials. The HJ’s leadership organ, *Wille und Macht* (Will and Power), frequently published articles advocating better Franco-German relations, and Karl-Heinz Bremer concluded that “French youth are anxious to break the old chains and [search for] new life views.” For a time Goebbels and Hitler seemed to encourage
the HJ’s efforts, but in the course of 1937 the Führer increasingly curbed Schirach’s enthusiasm. The regime imposed restrictions on foreign travel by HJ members, and Goebbels noted, “there is too much talk of Franco-German understanding. Especially by Schirach and the HJ. I put a damper on it.”

In spite of the competition from the Olympic Games and the World’s Fair, the annual Nazi party congress remained the cornerstone of the Nazis’ efforts to impress sympathetic foreigners. Government and party offices worked hard to bring their favorite foreign “celebrities” to Nuremberg. Abetz wanted to invite journalists and intellectuals who represented “voices of reason” in France. The editors of the Stürmer and the Weltdienst hoped to see many French anti-Semites in Nuremberg. Interoffice tensions were rampant. Abetz accused his rivals of inviting nonentities, and the fanatical anti-Semites countered by accusing Ribbentrop’s agent of bringing people to the congress whose anti-Jewish and pro-Nazi credentials were suspect. Ironically, these altercations do not appear to have affected the lists very much. Virtually everyone seems to have been able to invite his or her favorites. Hitler had his own guest list, but he made no effort to control the number of invitations issued by other offices.

French guests visiting Germany were expected to produce glowing reports about their experiences, and in general they did. The Nazis’ problem with the French reports was not their content, but their placement. Je suis partout, Civilization et Bolchévisme, L’Assaut, Candide, and other small circulation publications were clearly no substitute for the mass-circulation Parisian newspapers. German printing subsidies or promises of guaranteed sales made possible the publication of a number of books favorable to the Third Reich. The Propaganda Ministry, for example, agreed to distribute 2000 copies of Alphonse de Chateaubriant’s lavish praise of the Third Reich, La gerbe des forces. The Nazis also published in record time a German translation of La gerbe des forces under the title Geballte Kraft: Ein französischer Dichter erlebt das neue Deutschland (Concentrated Power: A French Poet experiences the new Germany). But such efforts, too, had limited success. Many pro-Nazi books were either written by nonentities or so excessive in their praise of the Third Reich that they lacked credibility. On balance, contrary to the conclusions reached by some later historians, the Nazis judged their propaganda effort in France largely a failure.

While the Nazis concentrated on obtaining a good press for the Third Reich, the French public was far more fascinated by sensational news of direct cooperation between Nazi officials and French extreme Right individuals and groups. The left-wing press, led by the Communist daily Humanité, charged that Doriot had frequent meetings with German
agents and that the PPF routinely served as a conduit for German propaganda material. The Germans insisted that all these charges were unfounded, but the denial was not entirely convincing. All German offices in France maintained a list of persons known to be sympathetic to the Third Reich who might be used as a distribution network for German propaganda material. For example, the German consulate in Lyon used “appropriate middle men and members of right-wing parties” to distribute copies of Goebbels’s 1937 pamphlet *Bolschewismus in Theorie und Praxis*, which the Propaganda Minister thought contained a particularly convincing analysis of the cooperation between Jews and Bolsheviks in the Spanish Civil War. Such “circles of friends” were also useful in assessing the numerous self-appointed leaders who continued to seek financial support from German state and party organizations.

There was certainly no shortage of requests for German funds from a variety of aspiring French political “leaders.” An architect, G.F. Michels, wanted to organize a Parti raciste with German help. A certain P. Mariani requested a credit of FF 2 million to found a newspaper that would combat the *forces mauvaises* in the world, which he identified as “Freemasons, Jews, international finance, Communism, British money, and the yellow peril.” And such requests were not limited to obscure outsiders: The Francistes demanded money; so did Claude Reyss, Jean Renaud’s secretary, on behalf of the RPF, the successor organization of the SF. All of these requests were turned down, but it is certainly true that Luchaire, Ferdonnet, Albert Dubarry (the editor of *La Volonté*), Jeantet, Henry Coston, and Fernand de Brinon did receive regular financial subsidies from the Germans.

True, the Germans were rather more careful about public contacts with French far right leaders. When the *Francistes* leader Bucard wanted a meeting with German officials, the Nazis did not refuse. They merely insisted that the talks be held on German soil. Generally the Germans ignored invitations to send official representatives to meetings and rallies organized by far right organizations. Darquier de Pellepoix’s Rassemblement Anti-Juif sent the German embassy two reserved tickets for the group’s “grande réunion de propagande” at the Salle Wagram at the beginning of November 1937, but no German officials attended the event.

The Nazis also looked for opportunities to buy shares in firms that controlled French newspapers, but such schemes were generally unsuccessful. The large-circulation papers that were of most use for German propaganda purposes were either off limits or too expensive, while provincial papers, which were often in financial trouble, had little impact upon the larger political scene. In addition, once it became known that the Germans were part-owner of a particular paper—although the Nazis
worked with French straw men, it proved virtually impossible to keep this information confidential for long—much of the propagandistic impact was lost.\(^7_8\) On balance, the Nazis got a rather poor return on their foreign propaganda investment in France. Their insistence on positive media coverage of the Third Reich and their obsession with anti-Semitism led them to limit their contacts to groups and writers who were willing to provide uncritical and sycophantic adulation of the Nazi regime and show “understanding” of the Nazis’ view of the “Jewish question,” but whose influence on French public opinion was decidedly limited.

**Blurring the Contours: German Nazis and Dutch Fascists**

Nazi propaganda continued to face an uphill battle in the Netherlands as well. German government and party officials recognized that most of the Dutch rejected Nazism and especially Nazi anti-Semitism and racism. An NSDAP functionary lamented after a visit to the country, “the spirit that animates Adolf Hitler’s movement is totally absent [in Holland],” and Count Zech, the German minister in The Hague, reported that even “circles friendly to us” denounced the Third Reich’s anti-Semitic measures.\(^7_9\)

As a result, the Germans were generally quite unhappy with the coverage of the Third Reich in the Dutch press. Goebbels complained that stories in the mainstream press about German anti-Semitic measures, the problem of refugees, church-state relations, suppression of press freedom, and economic and fiscal problems in Germany were all distorted. And there was a ready explanation of course. In 1937 the Gestapo issued a guidebook (Leitheft), “The Dutch Press,” which, no surprise, attributed the critical attitude of Dutch newspapers to the preponderance of Jewish editors and owners.\(^8_0\)

The answer to this public relations problem was to work with Germany’s friends. But who were the Nazis’ best friends? In the heady atmosphere of early 1937 it seemed to be the NSB. One of the diplomats at the German mission in The Hague described the NSB as a well-organized group, with a growing number of activists and leaders who were increasingly friendly toward the Third Reich.\(^8_1\) Count Zech was more skeptical. He realized that, “the . . . NSB is looked upon as a copy of the NSDAP, which to a certain extent it is.”\(^8_2\) Consequently, he argued forcefully that fascism as an indigenous political force was unlikely to succeed in Holland, and cultivating good relations with the Colijn government was in the Reich’s best interest. Other German observers, however, remained convinced that the NSB really had a future as a major force in Holland. In August 1936 the German consul in Batavia (Djakarta) reported that
the visiting NSB leader van Duyl (who would soon leave the party after losing the power struggle with Mussert), had “drawn large crowds and strong applause” for his message that the Netherlands needed rejuvenation through national socialism.

The euphoria about the NSB’s prospects was dealt a severe blow by the 1937 election results. To the leader’s chagrin the Völkischer Beobachter reported that the Mussert era in the NSB was coming to an end, and that the party’s founder might be forced to resign.83 That conclusion was clearly wrong, but the Nazis remained divided both on Mussert’s and the NSB’s future. Even before the elections, some Nazi agencies wanted to keep their distance from Mussert because they hoped that the völkische wing of the NSB would eventually win out over the “moderates.” The “excellent elements (Rost!) [sic] in the party did not yet exercise the influence they deserved,” concluded a Gestapo report in February 1937. Goebbels agreed. He described his first meeting with Rost: “A magnificent head (ein fabelhafter Kopf), brave, intelligent, idealistic . . . A most enjoyable conversation. I am really enthusiastic.” In contrast, the Propaganda minister was and continued to be unimpressed by Mussert.84 Count Zech, for his part, was less pessimistic about the NSB’s future under Mussert’s leadership. The diplomat reported that while the party had lost supporters in absolute numbers, it had improved its position by enlarging its support beyond its original lower-middle-class constituency; it was in the process of becoming a workers’ party.85

While Zech urged taking account of Dutch domestic sensibilities, most Nazis were firm believers in the axiom that power alone mattered in international relations. Nazi propaganda activities in Holland were characterized by a singular brazenness and lack of subtlety. Goebbels, for example, used a variety of economic pressures in an attempt to force Dutch papers to tone down their criticism of the Third Reich. The RDG continued to act like a bull in a china shop. Operating from an office in the German legation, by 1938 Otto Butting, the head of the RDG in the Netherlands, clumsily pursued his two-strand strategy: to force the German minority in Holland under the organizational umbrella of the RDG, and to use the NSB for the distribution of Nazi propaganda material in the Netherlands.86 Complaints by the Dutch government about the RDG’s activities increased. These were delivered with particular vehemence by the Dutch minister in Berlin, Count Limburg-Stirum, a fierce opponent of the NSB and Nazism. (In retaliation, Goebbels ordered the German press not to print the usual good wishes when the Count left his post at the end of 1936.87)

While much of the Dutch-German altercation took place behind the scenes, in the fall of 1936 the marriage of Prince Bernhard of
Lippe-Detmold, a member of a minor German noble family, to Princess Juliana, the heiress to the Dutch throne, led to a full-scale German-Dutch media war. The Germans had originally hoped that Prince Bernhard, who had briefly been a member of the NSDAP and the mounted SS, would act as a pro-Nazi influence at the Dutch court. However, the prince made it clear that he had left his youthful indiscretions behind and was now opposed to Nazism. In turn Goebbels used his minions to unleash a torrent of criticism in the German press. The Dutch press counterattacked vigorously, defending the prince and exposing the Nazi press’ mudslinging tactics. When the dust had settled, the Dutch emerged as the clear victor. Goebbels’ press attaché in The Hague Karl Otto Faber (who had been instrumental in starting the press war) was transferred, and the head of the RMVP’s foreign press desk had to apologize to the Dutch minister in Berlin.

There were a number of other issues that caused friction between the Dutch and the Germans. The Nazis struck a raw nerve among the Dutch (including NSB members) by their continuing insistence on classifying the Dutch as ethnic Germans, and by the Hitler Youth’s practice of publishing maps that labeled the Dutch as “Germans on the borders” (*Grenzdeutsche*). The frictions reached a climax of sorts in the summer and fall of 1936 with an episode in which the Germans again managed to annoy both the Dutch government and the NSB. The Dutch had decided to expel several overactive RDG organizers from the Netherlands. In retaliation the Nazis ordered a number of Dutch nationals living in Germany to leave the country. To the embarrassment of the Nazi authorities, among the expellees were four members of the NSB, including the propaganda chief of the party’s Berlin local. The NSB’s leadership was understandably annoyed, but Hess, in his role as Deputy Führer for Party Affairs, came to its rescue. He insisted that the four NSB members be exempted from the expulsion order. German agencies were also ordered to make sure that NSB members were not included in any future list of expellees. Still, the affair left a bitter aftertaste among the NSB’s leaders. The NSB’s secretary general, Cornelis Geelkerken, refused an invitation to attend the 1936 Nuremberg congress.

As was true for France, the primary aim of German propaganda activities in the Netherlands was to impress the Dutch with the strength and success of the Third Reich. Here the NSB offered itself as a welcome conduit to spread the Nazi message in Holland. Contacts between German officials and a number of Dutch fascists became close and frequent. The most dramatic development was Mussert’s first meeting with Hitler in November 1936. The NSB *leider* had long wished for a meeting with the Führer, but it was not until the end of 1936 that the Büro Ribbentrop
was able to arrange the visit. While in Berlin, Mussert also met with a number of other top Nazis, including Göring and Goebbels. The Nazis were quite pleased with the visit. They thought they had convinced the Dutch leider of the invincibility of the Nazi system, which, as we shall see, was essentially true. Mussert never attended any of the Nuremberg party congresses, but most of the other prominent NSB leaders did. Marchant d’Ansembourg came regularly beginning in 1935, and Geelkerken, mollified after the 1936 expulsion affair, attended the 1937 event. Rost van Tonningen was first invited at the suggestion of Franz von Papen (the two men became acquainted when Papen was German ambassador in Vienna, and Rost, head of the League of Nations’ financial office in the city), but later Rost came regularly to Nuremberg as the guest of Heinrich Himmler, the Reichsführer (national leader) of the SS.

The heavy-handedness of the Nazis’ propaganda effort in the Netherlands rendered it unconvincing most of the time and on occasion counterproductive. German newspapers circulated freely in Holland, especially in the areas close to the German border, but their style of blatant political propaganda, intended for a domestic audience, evoked ridicule and disbelief among most Dutch readers. Efforts to deliver racial anti-Semitic messages were counterproductive. When the head of the Nazi party in Switzerland, Wilhelm Gustloff, was assassinated at the beginning of 1936, Wolfgang Diewerge, an official in the RMVP, wrote a vicious anti-Semitic pamphlet titled *Ein Jude hat geschossen* (A Jew Has Fired a Shot). The Propaganda Ministry wanted to distribute a Dutch translation in Holland, but Zech felt this was a waste of time and money. He wrote, “in view of the fundamental objection to such information material [Aufklärungsmaterial] even by those who sympathize with us,” distributing Diewerge’s pamphlet in Holland “would not be useful.”

Direct German influence on the Dutch press was largely limited to the NSB’s publications, especially the new daily, the *Nationale Dagblad*. The Nazis did not provide cash to the *ND*, but they did supply cheap newsprint, and they supported the paper with advertising by German firms and government agencies. The Aufklärungsausschuss Hamburg-Bremen maintained a stable of anonymous freelance writers—some Dutch, some German—who wrote articles on various aspects of life in the Third Reich. These pieces were then offered free of charge to any Dutch newspaper that wished to print them. Unfortunately for the Aufklärungsausschuss, for the most part the fellow-traveling intent of the articles was readily apparent.

Recognizing that church-state relations in the Third Reich continued to be a propaganda liability for the regime (and the NSB), Goebbels’ ministry provided free of charge a steady stream of articles about religious
life in Nazi Germany. The articles and “letters” supplied by the Propaganda Ministry’s Pro Deo et Patria bureau certainly painted a euphoric picture of religious life in Germany. The Pro Deo et Patria contributions insisted that under the Nazis the German Catholic Church flourished as never before. Protected by the state, the churches were full of worshipers. In October 1937, the head of Pro Deo et Patria, Father Leonards, supplemented his journalistic activities with a speaking tour of Holland. He lectured on religious life in Germany in Haarlem, Utrecht, Den Haag, and Amsterdam. Although his audiences were often large (in Amsterdam his lecture filled the Concertgebouw), he was preaching mostly to the already convinced; his audiences consisted primarily of NSB supporters.94

There was a wide and growing divergence between the Nazis’ own assessment of the effectiveness of their propaganda efforts and the response from the Dutch public. The sponsoring agencies in Berlin, of course, were full of self-praise. The Propaganda Ministry’s man behind the scenes at Pro Deo et Patria claimed that his organization’s efforts had convinced the Dutch that there really was no friction between the Catholic Church and the Nazi regime. In a similar vein in May 1938, the Aufklärungsausschuss Hamburg-Bremen proudly reported to its superiors at the Propaganda Ministry that at various times some ninety-five Dutch papers had printed material supplied by the AAHB. In reality these success stories were largely self-delusionary. Nazi propaganda in Holland reached mostly those already committed to the cause. And things were not getting better. Pro Deo et Patria had to acknowledge that the number of Dutch subscribers to its news service was decreasing, and by the end of 1937 the only publication that routinely printed material from the AAHB was the Nationale Dagblad. Even Volk en Vaderland was not on the agency’s list of permanent subscribers.95

**Between Envy and Fear: The French Extreme Right and the Third Reich**

The French extreme Right’s picture of Nazi Germany in the years 1936 to 1938 was the result, in roughly equal parts, of an exaggerated sense of the Nazi successes at home and abroad, and an equally excessive sense of France’s weakness and decadence. A veritable “cult of fascism and national socialism” permeated the French dissident Right in these months. Anticipating the Popular Front government, both Bertrand de Jouvenel and Alfred Fabre-Luce contrasted Germany, the “resurrected nation” with an increasingly weak France. “We lack heroism,” wrote Chateaubriant in his panegyric of the Nazi regime.96 In contrast, a visit to the German pavilion at the Paris World’s Fair gave the impression of “a strong regime,
a powerful economy [and] a united people.” The French fascists had no
doubt about who was responsible for their country’s sad state of affairs:
the Popular Front and its Communist, Jewish, and Freemasonic allies and
masters. To liberate herself, France “needed to be governed by a national
government, and not a “noisy radical socialist mob or a bunch of Free
Masonic-Bolshevist jailbirds [une pétaudière radicale-socialiste ou une
chiourme maçonnico-bolcheviste].”

The election of Léon Blum as France’s first Jewish prime minister led
to a plethora of invidious comparisons between Hitler, the German
leader of the Germans, and Blum, “who is not of our country [but] is
master of my country.” In the same vein, Jouvenel characterized Blum as
part of an abstraction, “the Jew, the démolisseur (the wrecker) of foreign
nations, who has absolutely no political sense, nevertheless . . . aspires to
direct the politics of the world.” French anti-Semitism in these years
underwent a significant qualitative change. As Ralph Schor has pointed
out, virtually the entire pallet of Nazi anti-Jewish stereotypes now popu-
lated the pages of French anti-Semitic publications. From the repulsive
physical description of Jews to accusations of ritual murders, it was all
there. So were demands for the prohibition of mixed marriages and laws
to reduce the number of Jews in the professions, especially medicine and
the law. Equally familiar were the “proofs” of Jewish malfeasance drawn
from false quotations of Talmudic writings and the forged Protocols of
Zion.

With the publication in 1937 and 1938 of two long pamphlets by
Ferdinand Céline, Bagatelles pour un massacre (Trifles for a Massacre) and
L’École des cadavres (School for Corpses) anti-Semitic diatribes reached a
new nadir. (A third, Les beaux draps [The Beautiful Flags], followed in
1941.) Bagatelles, the more vicious and shocking of the two, was published
in December 1937. Céline used a wide variety of eclectic and erratic
sources to “prove” his thesis of Jewish malevolent omnipotence, but promi-
nent among these, as Alice Kaplan has shown, was material published
in the French edition of the Weltdienst. Not surprisingly, then, in L’École
des cadavres Céline heaped praise upon Hitler’s racism and the Nazis’
socioeconomic accomplishments.

While French anti-Semitism was drawing closer to the Nazi variety,
French fascists continued to be critical of church-state relations in Germany.
French extreme Rightists described Nazi neo-paganism as essentially
unfascist. The criticism increased significantly after the publication of the
Papal encyclical Mit brennender Sorge; the French Fédération Catholique
even dispatched lawyers to Germany to help defend priests in the Nazi
show trials. At the same time, the German embassy reported widespread
sympathy in France for Martin Niemöller, the head of the Protestant
Confessing Church, who was put on trial by the Nazis in 1937 and 1938, and subsequently sent to a concentration camp.\textsuperscript{101}

One of those who vehemently defended the Nazis’ church policies was Châteaubriant. He recognized that some Nazis, like Alfred Rosenberg, had neo-pagan sympathies, but he hastened to point out that this was not the Third Reich’s official policy. Pursuing his theme of Christian rebirth in Germany, Châteaubriant insisted, “nowhere [in Germany] did I encounter that odious spirit of sectarianism that is so widespread among our anti-clericals.” Instead he found full churches, crucifixes everywhere, and many Nazi party members attending mass in uniform.\textsuperscript{102} This was a bit too much for Châteaubriant’s fellow fascists. Although \textit{JSP} published Châteaubriant’s effusive report on his 1937 travels in Germany, Robert Brasillach found the description of Germany in \textit{La Gerbe} “puerile.”\textsuperscript{103}

The supposedly harmonious Volksgemeinschaft in Germany elicited generally favorable comments from members of the French extreme Right. A steady stream of French visitors claimed to find a country that was open, accessible, and efficient. The Third Reich no longer wasted its national energy in unproductive class antagonisms; all Germans accepted that they needed to work together as building blocks of a national unit of destiny.\textsuperscript{104} Abel Bonnard, for example, saw the RAD and the DAF as models for similar organizations in the new France that would arise after the Popular Front had been defeated. Comparing the new Germany in July 1936 with the hopelessness of the Weimar years, Benoist-Mechin “did not think I would see the country in such a state of euphoria . . . The Autobahnen stretch [across the countryside] . . . and what cities: tens of thousands of individual workers’ houses nestled in green spaces.” Bringing the contrast closer to home, \textit{Je suis partout} vividly contrasted the joyfully cooperative spirit of the German workers at the 1937 Paris Exposition with the strike-bound sullenness of their French counterparts.\textsuperscript{105}

As we saw, in 1936 and 1937 the Nazis had the opportunity to organize three megaevents with which to impress their foreign visitors: the Olympic Games in Berlin in August 1936 (the Winter Games in Garmisch-Partenkirchen attracted fewer visitors) and the annual Nazi party congresses in Nuremberg in September 1936 and 1937. The Berlin Olympic Games, a celebration of Germany’s “free, strong, and happy youth,” were held at the same time as the first of the public purge trials in Moscow. (Fascists noticed such parallels.) The Games made an “extraordinary impression” and had a “strong political impact” among the French observers. The organizational perfection, friendly reception, as well as the success of the German athletes in the games themselves, convinced sympathetic French visitors that the Nazis had sparked a societal rebirth in Germany.\textsuperscript{106}
The impression left by the Olympic Games was dwarfed by the spectacles at Nuremberg. In July 1937 Abetz noted proudly that of the eight major books favorable to the Third Reich that had been published in France since 1933, four were by authors for whom he had obtained invitations to attend the Nazi party congresses.\footnote{107} The French observers had individual versions of what they saw as the reality behind the sea of uniforms and flags. Brasillach, who visited the 1937 party congress with a sizable contingent from \textit{Je suis partout}, was so pleased with the account of his impressions of Nuremberg that he used his report in three separate publications. It appeared originally under the title \textit{Cent heures chez Hitler—Le congrès de Nuremberg} (A Hundred Hours With Hitler—The Congress at Nuremberg) in the journal \textit{Revue universelle}. Later he reworked it as part of his novel \textit{Les Sept Couleurs} (The Seven Colors), and finally the piece appeared again in his 1940 memoirs \textit{Notre Avant-Guerre} (Our Prewar). Not surprisingly, Brasillach contrasted the dynamism and vigor of Hitler’s youth with the decadence of democratic France. Employing his favorite stylistic device of the rhetorical question, he asked, “Why is there nothing comparable in France? . . . These masses, this discipline, especially this unity which gives the idea invincible power!” Comparing the party congress to a new form of the Catholic mass, Brasillach felt he was witnessing the “emergence of religious feelings or even of a religious cult” at Nuremberg.\footnote{108}

While Brasillach put the participants in Nuremberg at the center of his impressions, Louis Bertrand and Alphonse de Chateaubriant stressed Hitler’s superhuman status at the rally. Bertrand, who confessed that he personally “liked Hitler,” noted with approval that for his followers the Nazi Führer was a prophet who “participated in divinity.”\footnote{109} Châteaubriant expressed his quasi-mystical relationship to Hitler in a letter to the Führer’s adjutant thanking him for the invitation to visit Hitler in Berchtesgaden: “what deep emotions animate me as I contemplate I will soon speak to the Führer. I will make the pilgrimage to Berchtesgaden with a limitless feeling of elation.”\footnote{110} Abel Bonnard did not go that far, but even he later dated his “conversion” from Maurrassian Germanophobia to admiration of the Nazi system from his travels in Germany in May 1937.\footnote{111}

Although the French visitors were clearly impressed by the spectacles at Nuremberg, most kept some critical acumen as well. The leitmotiv of the French fascists’ reports on Nazi Germany continued to be that while a future fascist France would certainly borrow aspects from the model across the Rhine, the Nazi system should not be copied wholesale. Even Brasillach’s lyrical celebration of the Germans on display at Nuremberg contained the warning that France must be on guard against the forces unleashed there. In addition, the author’s aesthetic sense was offended by
the Nazis’ heavy-handed political propaganda; he found the anti-Bolshevik and anti-Masonic exhibitions that were staged in connection with the 1937 party congress slightly ludicrous. Brasillach also rejected the Nazis’ attempt to control artistic expression; he insisted that the state had no right to interfere in the process of artistic production.112

One might have expected that the trickle of criticism about the Nazis’ domestic policies from the ranks of the French fascists would become a torrent of attacks on the Nazis’ foreign policy ambitions. To be sure, some of the extreme Right did stick to the French right’s traditional chauvinism and xenophobia. JSP complained that the French had forgotten that “they . . . were the masters, and not the Germans,” and Brasillach criticized Chateaubriant’s La Gerbe for its subservient attitude toward the Germans. Marcel Déat also warned about the Third Reich’s expansionist ambitions.113 But French fascist chauvinism was focused even more on the supposed determination of French democracy, allied to the Soviet Union, to involve France in a war with Germany. In August 1936 Marcel Bucard argued that French soldiers were not obligated to obey orders if the “Jewish-Marxist” government of France decided to attack Germany or Italy.114 Seeing Stalin’s Russia as the greatest threat to Western civilization, French fascists accepted the growing power of Germany because it strengthened Western Europe’s defenses against what both the French fascists and the German Nazis liked to portray as the “Asiatic onslaught.”115

Moreover, the Nazis’ policies seemed to match their anti-Bolshevik rhetoric. A key event here was the Spanish Civil War. For the far right, Franco and the Nationalists represented the forces of Western civilization battling with Bolshevik barbarism. A number of French fascists made a pilgrimage to Franco’s forces, if not to fight with them, at least to give them propagandistic support. Among them was Brasillach. One by-product of his travels in war-torn Spain was the novel Le Siège d’Alcazar (The Siege of Alcazar), a book-length naive and sentimental hymn of praise of the Nationalist side. In this battle between good and evil Mussolini and Hitler were clearly on the right side. In contrast, France’s Popular Front government pursued an ineffective policy that, according to the extreme Right, the final analysis benefited only the Communists. “The anti-fascist crusade was playing Stalin’s game magnificently,” concluded Marcel Déat.116

Most French fascists argued that the alternative to France’s present misguided foreign policy was an alliance between Germany, Italy, and a soon to be rejuvenated France. Bertrand wrote, given a choice between an alliance of France and Germany and the “Franco-Russian-Balkan coalition, . . . I am not able to understand that a civilized person would hesitate one instant before deciding.” Moreover such an alliance could
bypass “the Holy Office in Geneva [i.e. the League], which, as one knows, is only an instrument of occult powers.” But would Hitler be willing to enter into such an alliance of equals? “Yes,” concluded many French fascists. They convinced themselves that the Nazis were sincerely interested in a Europe-wide alliance against bolshevism, and that the primary obstacle to such a new power block in international relations was not Hitler, but France and her present rulers. Blinded by their hatred of the Popular Front, it did not occur to the French far right that a relationship of equals was precisely what Hitler did not want.

**Dutch Fascism and German Nazism: Radicalization and Alignment**

In the middle years of the decade relations between the NSB and the Nazis became increasingly close. In May 1936 Mussert had already “expressed his greatest admiration for the accomplishments of the Third Reich,” and the NSB’s defeat in the 1937 elections only accelerated the process of aligning the Dutch fascists and the Nazis. The NSB lashed out at a list of enemies who largely paralleled the “antis” identified earlier by the Nazis. In the pages of *Volk en Vaderland*, positive treatments were pretty much limited to the House of Orange (the NSB still insisted that the future Dutch fascist state would be headed by an authoritarian king or queen), Dutch patriotism, and Hitler’s and Mussolini’s successes. In the NSB’s world of blacks and whites, international Communism was the most dangerous negative force. For the Dutch fascists Hitler and the Nazis had saved Europe from bolshevism in 1933, but as the rise of the Popular Front showed, the beast was not yet dead. Anti-Communism now became linked to a virulent and aggressive anti-Semitism. The stereotypical picture of the Jew presented in the NSB’s press and propaganda was increasingly indistinguishable from the Nazis’ anti-Semitic portrayals. Jews were held responsible for both Communism and democracy in the Netherlands, and the NSB insisted that German-Jewish immigrants increasingly controlled Dutch economic, cultural, and artistic life, much as they had in Germany during the Weimar Republic.

True, despite mounting pressure from the party’s provincial leaders and its *völkische* wing, the NSB’s leadership continued to resist adopting racial anti-Semitism as the party’s official doctrine. At the beginning of 1937 Geelkerken still maintained the NSB was not a mere clone of the Nazis on the “Jewish question,” and for much of the time under discussion here even the *Nationale Dagblad* attacked the Jews only on political grounds. (Incidentally, the NSB limited its discussion of the “Jewish problem” to developments in Holland, and seldom commented directly
on Nazi measures against Germany’s Jews.) In an ominous portend of the future, however, in 1937 the NSB’s völkische wing began publishing a Stürmer-like anti-Semitic journal, De Misthoorn (The Fog Horn). It was put out by a fictional entity called the Committee for Guidance on the Jewish Question, but no one doubted that the initiative came from Rost and his associates.

As the Nazi persecution of the Catholic Church reached its zenith in 1936 and 1937, news of deteriorating church-state relations in Germany increasingly put the NSB on the defensive. During his visit to Berlin, Mussert asked Hitler, Göring, and Krell for advice on how to deal with the churches in Holland, but the Germans were not very helpful. They merely insisted it was the churches’ responsibility to stay out of politics. The party’s own efforts to defuse the situation in Holland were no more successful. The leider sent a letter to the Pope underscoring the differences between the NSB’s and the NSDAP’s position on church-state relations and racial anti-Semitism. The Pope did not respond, and he continued to refuse to put pressure on the Dutch bishops to tone down their anti-NSB campaign.

When appeasement failed, the NSB turned to denial and self-righteous justification. Relying heavily upon information supplied by Pro Deo et Patria, the party press throughout 1936 and 1937 presented “evidence” that the Catholic Church in Germany had never had it so good. Since 1933 an unprecedented number of new churches had been constructed, and the houses of worship throughout Germany were filled with worshipers. (Volk en Vaderland liked to publish contrasting pictures of crowded churches in Germany and photos of houses of worship, which the paper claimed had been destroyed by Loyalist forces in the Spanish Civil War.) Nazi and church welfare organizations worked together in close harmony. As for the show trials of Catholic clerics accused of currency and moral crimes, the NSB fully accepted the Nazi version that the Gestapo and the courts had stepped in only after it was obvious that church authorities were unwilling to deal with the cesspools of depravity.¹²³

The NSB’s leaders thought they had found a promising campaign issue in descriptions of cultural and artistic life in the Third Reich. Rost and his followers were particularly enthusiastic about the “revolutionary” flowering of true völkische art in the Third Reich, but Mussert and the “moderates” were not far behind. Although book burnings and the traveling exhibition of “Degenerate Art” might shock “bloodless individualists,” such measures were necessary to remove the “spirit of Bolshevism and Jewishness” from German cultural and artistic life. Drawing parallels with the Netherlands, the NSB contrasted the cultural revival under the Nazis with artistic stagnation in Holland. Volk en Vaderland in August
and September 1937 printed a series of articles demonstrating how under
democracy decadence and degeneracy dominated Dutch cultural life. Only
Mussert’s coming to power would restore true art in the Netherlands.124

The NSB was also convinced that the Third Reich’s economic and
social policies provided it with effective propaganda material. Much as its
enemies used the Nazis’ persecution of the churches and the regime’s
anti-Semitic measures to stigmatize the NSB, Mussert’s movement
attempted to use the ostensible successes of the Third Reich’s economic
and social policies to attack the Dutch government’s failings in these areas.
NSB propaganda characterized the German economic recovery as a true
squaring of the circle: The Nazi regime had provided full employment, sta-
ble prices, and massive subsidies for agriculture without either “monetary
experiments,” inflation, or social tensions. In the Nazi Volksgemeinschaft
economic envy and strife had been eliminated, and crime sharply
reduced.125

For the NSB, reducing unemployment in Germany stood at the top
of the Nazis’ accomplishments. The party press gleefully noted that in
1937 large numbers of unemployed remained a chronic feature of Dutch
economic life, while Germany was experiencing labor shortages and
advertised for Dutch workers to come to the Reich. Often cast in the
form of firsthand reports from Dutch travelers in Germany, Volk en
Vaderland and Nationale Dagblad contrasted the picture of Germany pre-
sented in the mainstream Dutch press (“concentration camps, repression,
and surveillance”) with accounts of “average” Germans enjoying the ben-
efits of the Third Reich. “Is there anyone in Holland, who laughs like
this?” read the caption under a photo of happy German blue-collar work-
ers and farm hands. From public housing to free vacations—for the Nazis
nothing was too good for the German worker. Indeed, one of the NSB
members of parliament claimed that the Dutch government was institut-
ing a surcharge on foreign travel so that the “little guy” could not see for
himself “how good things are in Germany.”126 Mussert’s organization
even attempted to anticipate the institutionalization of Germany’s wel-
fare policies in Holland. In the fall of 1937, the NSB established its own
version of the Nazis’ Winterhilfswerk (Winter Aid, WHW), called, with
a singular lack of originality, Wintershulp.127

A steady stream of Dutch visitors (including Mussert during his jour-
ney to Germany in November 1936) came back impressed by the ideal-
ism exemplified in the RAD, this “social and democratic institution.”
Concern for the health of the youthful participants went hand in hand
with teaching them useful skills and leveling class and social differences.
In contrast the NSB’s propaganda portrayed Dutch youth as unemployed,
drifting about without purpose, or, even worse, active in the youth
groups of the Marxist parties. *Volk en Vaderland* summed up one of its reports on the RAD with the conclusion, “Youth in Germany—Youth in The Netherlands! What a contrast!”

German farmers, too, had never had it so good. Not only had the Law on the Reich Food Estate prevented farm foreclosures and guaranteed stable prices for agricultural products, but the Nazis had raised the prestige and status of the rural population. Instead of being looked down upon as—literally—boorish hicks, the Nazi regime celebrated the farmers as the true foundation of the Volksgemeinschaft. The NSB contrasted what the Nazis had done for the German farmer with what the NSB claimed the Colijn government had failed to do for the Dutch farmer. *Volk en Vaderland* and *Nationale Dagblad* were positively euphoric in reporting on the colorful folk costumes, paramilitary units clad in “farmers’ uniforms,” and the presence of “many [superb] racial types (vele rassige typen)” at the 1936 German National Farmers’ Day in Goslar.

Stylistically, the NSB aligned its external image and internal organization even more closely with the German model. At the party’s rallies and its annual congress at Lunteren uniforms and insignia, all looked increasingly like Dutch copies of the German original. Of course, the ideal still remained out of reach. An unnamed participant at the 1936 Nuremberg party congress (probably Rost or Marchant d’Ansembourg) admitted, “One felt so small and yet the feeling of comradeship made one feel great again”. He was buoyed when his Nazi friends told him that they, too, had faced difficulties before coming to power. If the NSB persisted on its path it would certainly overcome its difficulties.

Yet another stylistic feature of Nazism was imposed on the NSB in these years: the elevation of the leider to super-human status. When the NSB was founded Mussert was something of a primus inter pares, but in the years 1936 and 1937 the party introduced the German *Führerprinzip* (translated as *leidersbeginsel*) in the NSB. The *leidersbeginsel* gave Mussert the stature of a strong leader which he felt he needed to deal with the electoral setbacks and the party’s subsequent internal crisis. But Mussert was also emotionally attached to Hitler. His meeting with the German dictator in November, 1936 was a pivotal event in the leider’s political life. He described his first impression of Hitler in his diary: “Powerful, muscular, large, light blue, always bright eyes with a peculiar, almost transcendental (*bovenaardische*) shine.” For the first time in his life, he had met someone “whose superiority [he] immediately recognized . . . Happy people who have such a leader.”

The NSB’s leader returned from Germany convinced of the power and invincibility of the Nazi regime. As a result, he launched the NSB on a self-propelling and self-defeating cycle. Angered by their inability to
win Holland over to fascism and frustrated by their failure to break through the united front of political forces arrayed against them, Mussert and his associates sought refuge in identification with and approval from the German Nazis. Consequently, even more “moderates” left the NSB, increasing the party’s political isolation in Holland, but also drawing it still closer to the Third Reich. As always, anti-Semitism was the bellwether issue. In November 1937 the Germans noted that “for the first time Mussert has stated clearly and openly that he is an implacable (scharfer) enemy of the Jews,” although they were still disappointed that the leider remained silent on the dangers of Freemasonry.

Were there any voices within the NSB who objected to the headlong rush toward Nazification? The answer is, yes, but not many. The party’s number two man, Cornelis Geelkerken, never did like the Germans and their ways, but Geelkerken was also too loyal to Mussert not to follow the leider’s line. An unnamed official in the party’s agricultural bureau peppered an internal document praising the Nazis’ agrarian policies with marginalia like, “Holland is not Germany . . . copy [afleksel] of Darré-Göring theory. For the NSB worthless and dangerous.” More widespread was the concern about the Nazis’ religious policies. Even the Nationale Dagblad criticized the neo-pagan cults in Nazi Germany, although, typically, it singled out for specific attacks the Ludendorff movement, a sect which the Nazi authorities themselves were in the process of prohibiting. There was only one issue on which the leider did not hesitate to voice unbridled criticism of the Germans. This was the matter of Mussert’s own position in the NSB. When the Nazi party’s official organ, the Völkischer Beobachter, reported that Mussert was about to resign as leader of the NSB, Volk en Vaderland, under the banner headline, “Lack of Truth in a German Paper,” issued both a fervent denial of the story and a severe criticism of the Völkischer Beobachter’s lack of journalistic standards.

Whatever few qualms the NSB’s leadership might have had about aligning the party with the Nazis on domestic issues, Mussert and his associates had no criticism of the Nazis’ foreign policy moves. They were convinced that the German Nazis and the Dutch fascists shared two essential foreign policy aims: Both wanted to weaken France’s hegemony in Europe, and they wanted to maintain Western Europe’s position as an imperial power. This leitmotiv dominated the NSB’s analysis of the international crises in 1936 and 1937. The party used the Ethiopian war, which dragged on into 1936, to repeatedly criticize the democracies’ mistaken ways of handling challenges to their empires. Insisting that Italy was as justified in controlling Ethiopia as England, Holland, and France had a right to their colonies, Marchant d’Ansembourg and others offered
lavish praise for what the Dutch fascists called Italy’s defense of European civilization and predominance. Equally laudable was Germany’s diplomatic and economic support for Mussolini. While France and Great Britain acted to undermine Europe’s position in the world, the Germans rallied to help Italy defend Western imperialism. For good measure the NSB also endorsed the return of Germany’s overseas territories to the control of the Reich.\textsuperscript{138}

The NSB was just as enthusiastic about Germany’s and Italy’s role in the Spanish Civil War. Claiming that without Italy’s intervention in Spain, the Communists would already have overrun Holland,\textsuperscript{139} Mussert and his associates portrayed the Loyalist forces as extensions of Moscow’s influence in Western Europe and England and France as blind to these dangers. Germany’s and Italy’s support for Franco’s Nationalist forces was yet another example of fascism’s willingness to defend Western civilization, including its Christian heritage. The party’s press contrasted the anticlerical fanaticism of the Loyalist forces with Franco’s support of the Catholic Church. In fact, in Spain the fascist powers acted even more selflessly than in Ethiopia. Although Franco’s movement was essentially conservative and reactionary, not fascist, the fascist powers did not hesitate in coming to its aid. True, outrages like the German bombing of Guernica disturbed this positive picture, but here the NSB did its best to deny reality. \textit{Nationale Dagblad} doubted that the town had been destroyed by bombing; the paper speculated Guernica was probably the victim of arson.\textsuperscript{140}

Despite the NSB’s enthusiastic public welcome of Germany’s new leadership role in international relations, the leadership retained some nagging doubts about Holland’s place in the new European order. There remained the fact that the Big Brother next door dwarfed the small Dutch neighbor. The NSB did not want Holland to be treated as a mere appendage to Germany (“we don’t want to be Frenchmen, but we have no desire to be Germans either”\textsuperscript{141}), and the party repeatedly asked for assurances from the Nazis that the Reich had no hegemonial ambitions in its relations with Holland. The Nazis, never too concerned about honesty in international relations, readily provided such promises, especially if Holland acted as a “loyal” partner of the Third Reich. The NSB equally readily accepted the Nazis’ assurances, and concluded that a future fascist Holland would take its rightful place as a partner in a block of “Germanic states” which would include Great Britain, Germany, and the Scandinavian countries.\textsuperscript{142}

In order to play a role as Germany’s creditable partner, Holland needed to maintain a position of strength, and that in the NSB’s eyes meant above all retaining control of the Dutch East Indian colonies. It was for
this reason that the Dutch fascists were far more uneasy about the Third Reich’s changing Asian policy than about Hitler’s moves in Europe. Fearing (correctly) that Japan constituted a major threat to the Dutch empire, the NSB was clearly unhappy about the mounting evidence that Hitler wanted to establish closer ties with Japan. Nazi attempts to portray Japan as the “savior of Asia from Bolshevism” did not convince the Dutch fascists.143 Nationale Dagblad argued that Holland’s reaction to the Anti-Comintern Pact between Germany, Italy, and Japan must be to strengthen the defense of the East Indies “regardless of the cost involved” because this was “a question of life and death for our country.”144 Despite such celebrations of Dutch independence, at the beginning of 1938 the NSB’s alignment with the Nazi regime was virtually complete. Unable to affect a political breakthrough in Holland on its own, the party made the misguided decision to align its fortunes with those of the Third Reich. It was a disastrous and counterproductive decision that accelerated the marginalization of the Dutch fascists as an indigenous political force.

At the beginning of 1938 relations between the Nazis and Dutch and French fascists stood at crossroads. The Nazis were at the zenith of their domestic and international popularity. The Nazis’ anti-Communist credentials were untarnished at home and abroad. In the eyes of French and Dutch fascists Hitler had stopped the threat of bolshevism in Germany, and he and Mussolini were selflessly aiding the anti-Communist cause in Spain. Paradoxically, in the next few months the Nazis would destroy virtually all of the good will they had built up in the ranks of the “related movements” in Western Europe.
During the months covered in this chapter, hubris was on the horizon for the Third Reich. The Nazi leaders, Hitler foremost among them, were convinced that nothing could prevent them from achieving their ultimate aim of European, if not global, hegemony. This certainty of future triumphs had significant implications for the running feud between “collaborationists” and “conquerors” in the Nazi establishment. Hitler still refused to give unequivocal backing to either camp, and some “collaborationists” remained convinced that the dictator supported them, but there is little doubt that in these last months before the outbreak of the Second World War the “conquerors” were gaining the upper hand.1 In the spring of 1938 Germany annexed Austria, and eighteen months later the Third Reich attacked Poland and unleashed the Second World War. The brief time span between these two milestones represented the zenith of the Nazis’ self-confidence and the beginning of Hitler’s self-destructive megalomania. The dictator did not hesitate to start a global altercation to achieve his ends; in fact, he eagerly anticipated armed conflict. On November 10, 1938—one day after the Reichskristallnacht pogrom—the Führer delivered an infamous address to a selected group of German newspaper editors admonishing them to prepare their readers for war rather than peace.2
Five years after the Nazis came to power the confusing picture of interagency rivalries that characterized the Nazi “dual state” had been considerably simplified. By the end of the decade there were only two serious contenders with aspirations for controlling and conducting the Third Reich’s dealings with “related” groups in foreign countries: the Propaganda Ministry under Joseph Goebbels and the now Nazified Foreign Office under Joachim von Ribbentrop. Goebbels was generally pleased with the state of affairs in his own organization. He even professed to enjoy his reputation abroad as a diabolical master of propaganda. True, Julius Streicher and the *Stürmer*, with their pretensions to autonomous leadership of the international anti-Semitic movement, remained difficult. Although the Franconian *Gauleiter* was, in Goebbels’ eyes, “pathological” and his organization a “pig sty for which every criticism is too mild,” the *Stürmer* continued to be published. But this was a minor difficulty compared to the one serious obstacle standing in Goebbels’ way: Joachim von Ribbentrop and the Foreign Office. Their long-standing rivalry grew into increasingly open animosity. Goebbels’ diaries are filled with references to Ribbentrop’s “megalomania.” The minister eagerly registered every comment by other Nazi leaders that Ribbentrop was vainglorious and impossible to work with. By mid-1939 Goebbels seemed to have triumphed. Hitler had already indicated earlier that at times Ribbentrop was “borderline mad” and that he, Hitler, would eventually have to let him go. (“May God grant it,” was Goebbels’ heartfelt comment.) In June of that year the Führer determined that the RMVP should have total control of all foreign and domestic press and radio activities. “A tremendous defeat for Ribbentrop,” wrote Goebbels triumphantly. But, as was so often the case in the Nazi regime, the done deal unraveled a few months later. Ribbentrop had his revenge. As Goebbels put it, the foreign minister “squeezed out (herausgequescht)” of Hitler a new decree that assigned control of foreign propaganda to the Foreign Office.

As the Nazi regime’s international triumphs mounted in these months, its domestic policies became increasingly reckless and radical. This was especially true for the handling of the “Jewish question.” In August 1938 Goebbels wrote that “the Jews will be driven back according to plan,” and in early November the murder of a young German diplomat at the Paris embassy by a Jewish Polish refugee was a welcome opportunity to increase the intensity and level of the persecutions. Goebbels was at his demagogic worst; as he proudly admitted, he was the driving force behind the violence of the *Reichskristallnacht* pogrom.

Hubris also set in on the international field. Until March 1939 the Nazis had always justified their territorial conquests by the doctrine of
self-determination: All ethnic Germans (except those, like the South Tyrolians, who Hitler had decided would remain outside the fold) should become part of the German Reich. The annexation of Austria was the last conquest that could still be justified under this doctrine. The dissolution of Czechoslovakia, the creation of the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia, and the establishment of an “independent” Slovakian state were clearly cases of naked aggression, and Germany’s “friends” were shocked by the qualitative sea change in international relations. The quotation that forms the title of this chapter derives from an article by Félix Bérard in the *Deutsch-Französische Monatshefte*.8

After the occupation of Prague, the Nazi-Soviet Pact of August 1939 was something of an anticlimax. The arrangement between Hitler and Stalin merely confirmed both regimes’ blatant and cynical power politics. Focused on fierce anticommunism for so many years, even some Nazi leaders were uneasy about the alliance with the former archenemy. While Ribbentrop, the architect of the pact, came back from Moscow virtually describing bolshevism as a form of National Socialism, Goebbels had serious misgivings. The Propaganda minister wanted to make sure that “practical political considerations (politische Zweckmässigkeit)” would not be confused with “ideological agreement (Übereinstimmung der Ideen).”9

At first glance, France and Germany presented mirror images of each other. For much of 1938 France was still beset by political polarization and executive paralysis, but change was on the way. As William Irvine has noted, the domestic confrontations and the sense of political paralysis was particularly characteristic of the period 1934–1938; by 1939 there was a closing of ranks on the foreign policy front.10 The executive was also acting more forcefully in domestic politics. To deprive the extreme right and especially the anti-Semites of a major issue for their anti-Republican propaganda, the government issued a series of decrees curtailing the flow of foreigners into France. The executive even took a leaf out of Goebbels’ book and set up a Commissariat générale à l’information (General Information Agency).

As the threat of a Bolshevik revolution receded, the French extreme right lost much of its appeal. The PSF’s locals complained of lethargy and lack of dues payments; the party “no longer seemed to be doing very much.”11 The PSF’s major rival, the PPF, was doing even worse. In 1937 there had been legitimate expectations (or fears) that the PPF would be able to forge a unified and powerful antiparliamentary force in France, but throughout 1938 and 1939 the PPF rapidly declined in both popular appeal and organizational strength. Contributions from industrial sources, which had been the mainstay of the party’s finances during its heyday, dried up. Jacques Doriot’s increasing arrogance (his critics accused him of
“Stalinist manners” in dealing with his advisors) and ostentatious lifestyle alienated many militants. The *chef* became a supporter of appeasement, insisting even in the face of Nazi aggression that the Third Reich was less dangerous than Stalin’s empire. Most of the PPF’s leaders and sympathizers, including Drieu and Jouvenel, the PPF’s poster intellectuals, broke with Doriot over this stand. By the time of the outbreak of the Second World War, the once powerful PPF had become little more than a “sect of misguided fanatics.”

To counter the decline of the far right there was another attempt to create a unified Right. In June 1938 a number of groups, including the PPF and the Republican Federation launched a National Front. Claiming an initial membership of 40,000, the organizers promulgated the familiar program of the Right: a strong executive, rearmament, recognition of Franco’s government in Spain, and better relations with the Axis powers, especially Italy. With the PSF again standing aloof, the National Front was as unsuccessful as the earlier Front of Liberty.

Ironically, while organized right-wing extremism was declining, these months provided particularly fertile ground for anti-Semitic and anti-Masonic conspiracy theories. Fueled by a new wave of refugees fleeing from the areas conquered by Nazi Germany in 1938 and 1939—Austria, the Sudetenland, Czechoslovakia—French anti-Semites intensified their attacks on Freemasons and Jews as unwanted *métèques* and elements who fomented war between Germany and France to revenge themselves on the Nazi regime.

Typical of the intensified anti-Semitic propaganda were the two special issues that *JSP* devoted to the “Jewish question” (no. 386, 15 April 1938, and no. 430, 17 Feb. 1939). Promising a “vigorously objective” presentation, the first covered Jewish influence in the world and the second Jews in France. The driving force behind the project was Lucien Rebatet, and the results were predictable: Jews represented an international conspiracy that undermined national cultures in order to increase their power and influence. *JSP*’s remedies for the “Jewish problem” in France were also not very original: a halt to Jewish immigration and limitations on the number of Jews allowed in various occupations, especially law and medicine. Darquier de Pellepoix, later Vichy’s Commissioner for Jewish Affairs, made two contributions of his own to the canon of anti-Semitism at this time. In both cases the titles were sufficient to indicate the contents: *Le complot juif: Les protocols des Sages de Sion* (The Jewish Plot: The Protocols of the Elders of Zion) and *Le Maître de la France* (The Master of France). Perhaps the most vicious contribution to the anti-Semitic outpourings was Paul Ferdonnet’s *La Guerre juive* (The Jewish War). Ostensibly a plea for peace, Ferdonnet’s work accused the Jews of
controlling everything in France from the diplomatic service to the press. *La Guerre juive* insisted that after causing the First World War and the Bolshevik Revolution, the Jews were now at work unleashing the Second World War. Peace in Europe, according to Ferdonnet, could only come when the Jews had been excluded from the French Volksgemeinschaft and France has been restored to the French. Until then the slogan “down with the Jews” was synonymous with “national preservation.”

There were also some notable contributions to that peculiarly French species of fascist activism, literary fascism. Céline’s anti-Semitic pamphlet, *L’École des cadavres* (The School of Corpses) evoked the unabashed admiration of JSP’s editorial board. Lucien Rebatet remembered “we had received the *Bagatelles*. . . with unlimited joy and admiration. We knew whole pages and a hundred aphorisms by heart.” Drieu la Rochelle’s *Gilles*, a thinly disguised fictional account of the author’s road to fascism, was published in October 1939, but obviously written earlier. It was “an astonishing catalog of fascist ideas.” Not to be outdone, Brasillach published his novel *Les sept couleurs* (The Seven Colors), another fictionalized portrait of fascism’s virtues. Less autobiographical than *Gilles*, but no less passionate in its celebration of fascism and especially its cult of youth, *Les sept couleurs* included a second version of Brasillach’s report on his experiences at the 1937 Nazi party congress. Interestingly, for the novel Brasillach removed virtually all of the critical comments that he had included in his original piece, “*Cent heurs chez Hitler*.” The reportage was now almost pure pro-Nazi propaganda. (In April 1939 the French government finally decided that anti-Semitic propaganda had gotten out of hand. Parliament passed a law making anti-Semitic writing and inciting racial hatred a criminal offence.)

There were even contributions to the quasi-fascist genre by those who were assigned to defend the Republic and its values. Jean Giraudoux, a well-known dramatist and publicist whom the Daladier government had appointed as Commissioner of Information, published *Plein pouvoirs* (Plenipotentiary Powers), an analysis of what ailed France, along with suggestions for remedies. Giraudoux, it turned out, was obsessed with the physical health of the French, both as individuals and as a nation. According to the author the French were sick, and the causes were diseases and the low birth rate—familiar themes among French right-wing intellectuals—but also the excessive number of immigrants and refugees who were diluting France’s racial stock. Giraudoux wrote, “we are in full agreement with Hitler in proclaiming that a policy only achieves its highest plane once it is racial.” Although Giraudoux insisted that his goal was a better moral and cultural France, his call for the creation of a Ministry of Race, his dismissive comments on the immigrants’ lack of physical
beauty, and his frequent anti-Semitic utterances left no doubt that the line between his and the Nazis’ racism was fluid to say the least.¹⁹

For many right-wing extremists, anti-Semitism and opposition to Freemasonry were synonymous with anticommunism. Ferdonnet, for example, insisted that the “quintessential Jewish party [was] the Third International [Comintern] controlled by the Jews of Moscow.” For much of the 1930s the French far right had argued that the Soviet Union and what it identified as Stalin’s domestic fellow travellers—Jews, Freemasons, and democrats—rather than Nazi Germany, were the primary threat confronting France. The continuing Spanish Civil War reinforced the impression that bolshevism remained the major danger for Western Europe, and a wave of strikes at the end of November 1938 suggested that despite the defeat of the Popular Front, communism was still a domestic as well as an international threat.²⁰

Foreign policy became the wheel upon which French fascism was broken. When Hitler demanded (and obtained) the destruction of Czechoslovakia at the Munich Conference in October 1938, the French extreme right split into opposing camps of appeasers and antiappeasers. The French labels were munichois and anti-munichois. The appeasers, who constituted a majority of the French right at the time of the Munich crisis, rapidly lost ground in the following months. With the Nazi occupation of the remainder of Czechoslovakia in mid-March, 1939, the munichois camp, whose ranks were dwindling in any case, lost whatever credibility it might have had. As Hitler turned up the pressure on Poland in the spring and summer of 1939, 76 per cent of the French people were in favor of armed resistance if Germany attacked Danzig or Poland. A few months later the Hitler-Stalin Pact appeared more as the confirmation of an already established pattern of Nazi betrayal, not as a shocking new move.²¹

Dutch fascism continued its decline. By 1938 it was clear that the worst of the Depression in Holland was over. The NSB’s call for national renewal and reforms of the verzuiling system was taken up by groups and individuals who were critical of the political status quo, but who also rejected fascism as the solution to the country’s constitutional shortcomings. The NSB could not even claim a monopoly for its fierce anticommunism. Eenheid door Democratie fought communism as vigorously as it opposed fascism. In addition, the Dutch government continued to make things difficult for the NSB. A 1939 law prohibited Dutch citizens living abroad from being dues-paying members of Dutch parties. As a result the NSB was forced to formally sever its ties with the party’s large-scale organization in Germany, creating significant financial and organizational problems for Mussert’s movement.²²
The result of these developments was a steady decline of the NSB’s membership and the stabilizing of its voter appeal at a low level. In the provincial elections of April 19, 1939—four days after the German occupation of what remained of Czechoslovakia—the NSB’s share of the vote was essentially the same as it had been in 1937, roughly 4 percent. Ironically, the only bright spot for the party came just before the outbreak of the Second World War. Concentrating all of its propaganda efforts on the local elections in Amsterdam in June 1939, the NSB gained 27,898 (6.91 per cent) of the popular votes, 3,000 more than in the provincial elections in April of the same year. But it was a very isolated triumph; the party did not put up candidates in any other locality.

These setbacks intensified the conflicts within the NSB over the party’s ideological image and propaganda tactics. Rost van Tonningen and his supporters wanted the NSB to present itself as a movement with a clear völkisch, Germanic ideology. Mussert and his associates, on the other hand, wanted the party to represent a movement that was “un-Germanized and un-Frenchified (onverduitst en onverfranst).” On the tactical side, Rost, a fervent admirer of everything Nazi, insisted that the party would benefit by using the smear tactics made infamous by Goebbels’ paper, Der Angriff, while Mussert and the NSB old guard were equally sure such antics would be counterproductive in Holland. They were right; Rost’s Nationale Dagblad was rapidly losing readers and subscribers.

Rost practiced what he preached during the so-called Oss affair. In Oss, a small, largely Catholic community in the province of Brabant, the regional office of the Dutch national police, the Marechaussee, had been investigating charges of sexual harassment against a local factory owner and the parish priest. Claiming the Marechaussee had mishandled the investigation, the minister of justice, C.M.J.F. Goseling, a member of the Catholic RKSP, removed the police from the case and transferred the investigation to the justice ministry. Rost thought he had found the issue that would put the NSB on the political map again. Despite three convictions for libel and several calls to order in parliament, Rost and his Nationale Daagblad in true Angriff style relentlessly accused the justice minister of transferring the investigation to his own jurisdiction only because he wanted to prevent exposure of a cesspool of moral depravity among Dutch Catholic lay and clerical leaders.

While Rost and Mussert differed on political tactics, there was one issue on which they were coming together in practice, if not in theory. Rost’s anti-Semitism, like that of the Nazis, viewed Jews as a separate race that represented an eternally evil antiforce in world history. Mussert continued to deny that his anti-Semitism was based upon racial considerations. Jews, he insisted, were not racially inferior, just politically despicable.
In Holland, no less than in the rest of Europe, the world of liberalism, capitalism, Marxism, and democracy was “to put it bluntly, the Jewish world.” Despite the theoretical disagreements on the “Jewish question” throughout 1938, Mussert’s anti-Semitism became increasingly vociferous and virtually indistinguishable from the Rost version. It was also clear that anti-Semitism was widespread among the remaining rank-and-file membership. Mussert himself later claimed he was surprised by the vehemence of anti-Semitic sentiments among his followers.

**Hubris Before the Fall: Nazi Assessments of France and French Fascism**

As we saw, Nazi foreign propaganda always had a passive and an active side. On the passive, reporting side Nazi observers continued to see France as a decadent democracy and a nation divided against itself. The reports increasingly focused on those forces—Jews, Communists, and Freemasons—that, according to the Nazis, controlled France and fomented anti-Nazi sentiments in the country. Quoting liberally from French anti-Semitic publications, Heinz Bellensiefer in his book *Juden in Frankreich* (Jews in France) pictured a country in which every aspect of public life was directly or indirectly controlled by Jews. According to the Nazi hardliners, it was the strength of these elements that made France what it was: weak, decadent, and democratic. True, “calls for a strong authoritarian government were becoming louder,” and some Nazi reporters insisted that the French Rightists were increasingly convinced of the need to cooperate with the Nazis, but most German analysts were not blind to the growing organizational disarray and political weakness among the French extreme right groups. Grimm wrote, quite accurately, that neither Doriot nor de la Rocque had much influence left. Moreover, with some significant exceptions, publications and journals that “understood” the Third Reich were declining in influence in France. Somewhat grudgingly the Nazis recognized that France might have found the strong leader she needed in Edouard Daladier. Although the Radical chieftain headed a parliamentary government, his forceful policies—which included wide-ranging plenipotentiary powers—evoked Goebbels’ half-hearted admiration. He noted that while “at heart [Daladier] remained a parliamentarian” who only “played at being Führer,” the prime minister had effectively “clarified the situation” in France. Moreover, the Senate elections of October 1938 clearly reduced the threat of the revival of the Popular Front.

New groups constantly appeared on the French extreme-right scene, and the Germans painstakingly noted their programs, memberships, and
backers. Often the Nazis' initial assessment of a new movement was excessively positive. This was true, for example, of La Spirale (The Spiral), a group that emerged at the end of 1938 and was supposed to have the backing of the PSF and the PPF with money provided by leading industrialists, including Renault, Mercier, and de Wendel. The driving force of the Spirale was a Commandant Loustaunau-Lacau, who also edited a journal, *Notre prestige* (Our Prestige). The Nazis initially thought the Spirale had “chances for the future,” but a few months later they had to admit that “there was no evidence of significant influence” for the Spirale.31

Nevertheless, some Nazis found “evidence” that the “voices of reason” were making headway in France in the murky world of French anti-Semitic political journalism. Grimm noted that anti-Semitism was “progressing extraordinarily well” in France.32 The Nazis eagerly registered the growing number of anti-Semitic publications and the supposed popularity of anti-Semitic literature. The Propaganda Ministry bombarded the German diplomatic agencies with requests for lists of anti-Semitic organizations and evaluations of their effectiveness. The diplomats’ response was not encouraging. Officials at the German embassy in Paris, including the Propaganda Ministry’s resident attaché, noted that many of the periodicals ceased publication after one or two issues and others vastly inflated their circulation figures.33

The amateurs’ evaluations were more positive. The *Weltdienst*, for example, insisted that Céline’s *Bagatelles pour un massacre* had reached its sixty-eighth printing within a short time and had “hit like a bomb” because it told the truth about France’s Jews.34 The *Stürmer* added its positive assessment under the headline, “An Alert: The French Physician Céline Predicts the Bloody End of France.” Céline’s *Bagatelles* was quickly translated into German under the rather provocative title “The Jewish Conspiracy in France.”35 The chief of Rosenberg’s West European department reported a “very powerful advance of pro-Nazi groups,” and the German consul in Lyon was impressed by the activities of Darquier de Pellepoix’s Rassemblement Anti-Juif.36 Relying on information contained in a brochure by Henri-Robert Petit’s anti-Semitic Centre de documentation et de propagande, *Das Schwarze Korps*, the house organ of the SS, wrote that the average Frenchman was beginning to realize that the Jews were attempting to lead France into a war with Germany.37

It goes almost without saying that the Nazis were most enthusiastic about Châteaubriant’s *La Gerbe des forces*. The Propaganda Ministry urged the German press to take note of this “extraordinarily profound (tiefgehend) and aesthetically (dichterisch) very valuable recognition (Würdigung) of National Socialism and Hitler.”38 The Nazis were also delighted by the
apparent success of JSP; they reported (and exaggerated) a circulation figure of 120,000 for this journal that continued to voice appreciation for the Nazi point of view.39

Active foreign propaganda initiatives took a variety of forms, some familiar from earlier years, while others reflected new priorities. The Nazi hardliners now insisted that “to foster the wave of anti-Semitism must be the task of German foreign policy.” At the beginning of 1939 the Foreign Office and the RMVP, for once in agreement, announced that it was the goal of Germany to find an international solution to the “Jewish problem,” “which was not dictated by the false compassion for the expelled Jewish religious minority, but by the mature (gereiften) recognition of the danger which the Jews represented for the ethnic (völkische) composition of all peoples.”40 Goebbels also considered acquiring a financial stake in additional French publications. As a result of the Anschluss the Nazis had obtained Austria’s considerable foreign currency reserves, and a part of these assets found their way into the coffers of the Propaganda Ministry. In the end he decided against any purchase of publications, concluding cynically that in times of international crises, “it is better to buy people, not papers.” But major French opinion makers were not for sale.41

At the beginning of 1938 some other foreign propaganda initiatives were still doing well. The board of directors of the CFA, for example, had a roster of quite distinguished names. The Hitler Youth declared 1938—rather ironically in retrospect—the “Year of Understanding,” and planned to concentrate its foreign activities on France and Great Britain. But the high-flying plans faced what turned out to be insurmountable barriers: discouragement on the German side by the “conquerors,” and an increasing number of refusals to participate in bilateral activities on the French side. In April 1938 the HJ planned to invite 1000 sons of French veterans to Berlin, but after the Anschluss the French canceled the visit.42 Some of the old favorites, like Brinon, Benoist-Méchin, and Châteaubriant, still accepted invitations to travel in Germany, and their reports continued to reflect an “understanding of the Third Reich.” Brinon and Benoist-Méchin went on lecture tours sponsored by the DFG, and Châteaubriant made yet another pilgrimage to Berchtesgaden.43 Grimm’s somewhat bizarre Mein Kampf project bore fruit of sorts. A complete version of Hitler’s autobiography was never officially translated into French, but Grimm made a suitably censored selection of Hitler quotes, which were then published, complete with a preface by Joachim von Ribbentrop, under the title Hitler et la France. According to the propaganda attaché at the embassy, the book was a great success; the first edition sold out shortly after its publication.44
Understandably, the *Reichskristallnacht* pogrom confronted the Nazis with a major public relations challenge. As the propaganda minister admitted, the foreign reaction to the violence in Germany was “very bad.” The Nazis’ answer was a combination of blatant, if unconvincing, denials and intensified anti-Semitic attacks. The German press was ordered to portray the pogrom as a spontaneous popular reaction to the murder of the German diplomat Ernst vom Rath. In the course of that reaction there may have been some broken windows, and a few synagogues burned as a result of “spontaneous combustion or other causes.”

The murderer of vom Rath, Herszel Grynszpan, would be tried in France, and the Propaganda Ministry, the *Weltdienst*, and a host of other Nazi agencies unleashed a flurry of activities to encourage anti-Semitism in the country. Wolfgang Diewerge, who had experience with this sort of thing, wrote *Anschlag gegen den Frieden: Ein Gelbbuch über Grünspan und seine Helfershelfer* (An Attack on Peace: A Yellow Book About Grünspan and his Helpers). This work and another pamphlet, *L’Allemagne et la question juive* (Germany and the Jewish Question) were written in Germany and distributed in France by a network of middlemen. The Propaganda Ministry was even willing to spend considerable amounts of money, some of which went directly to French anti-Semitic organizations, such as Darquier’s Rassemblement anti-Juif. Among French publications Ferdinand’s *La guerre juive* (a work based in large part on material supplied by the *Stürmer*) reached large publication figures with the help of German subsidies. The German embassy used its own network of contacts to give a boost to otherwise obscure journals. The December 1938 issue of *Contre-révolution* contained an article “L’ Assassinat de von Rath” (The Assassination of von Rath) which the embassy distributed to “suitable” (*geeignete*) personalities. The Propaganda Ministry designed anti-Semitic handbills that it wanted to distribute in France. Unfortunately, the ministry’s old enemy, the Foreign Office, kept turning them down as unsuitable. Goebbels was ready “to throw up (*zum Kotzen*)”.

Despite all these efforts, “understanding” of Nazi policies among the French extreme right fell off dramatically as the accelerating series of diplomatic crises in 1938 made the Nazis’ aggressive intentions glaringly obvious. Nazi observers noted that the Anschluss created a wave of distrust and animosity toward Germany “among all of our friends.” Older Nazis with experience in French affairs were reminded of the atmosphere that prevailed in the country on the eve of the First World War. The “collaborationists” among the Nazis were anxious to repair the damage caused by the series of Nazi provocations, but the “conquerors” consistently undermined their efforts. The “peace in our time” atmosphere of the Munich Agreement was quickly erased by a particularly Francophobe
speech that Hitler delivered in Saarbrücken on October 9. The rapidly deteriorating Franco-German relations put considerable burden on Joachim von Ribbentrop when he visited Paris in early December 1938. The Reich foreign minister did his best to organize a media blitz. He met with a number of high-ranking French officials, granted an interview to *Gringoire* (Goebbels prohibited its publication in the German press), and in his uniform as an honorary general in the SS, laid a wreath at the tomb of the Unknown Soldier. The visit culminated in a bilateral Declaration of Paris, with both sides expressing their desire for peace and reiterating their respect for each other’s territorial integrity. The Germans were quite pleased with the French reaction to Ribbentrop’s trip. Goebbels for once actually praised his rival at the Foreign Office, and Grimm reported a “sense of pronounced optimism” among his French contacts.

The uplift quickly evaporated when the Nazis destroyed the remainder of Czechoslovakia, creating the Protectorate of Bohemia-Moravia and the “independent” state of Slovakia in its place. The depths of anti-Nazi feeling in 1939 exceeded those registered during any of the preceding years, and as Nazi observers ruefully acknowledged, very few among Germany’s friends “understood” Hitler and the Nazis any more. After the occupation of Czechoslovakia the stream of French visitors to Germany came to an abrupt end. Friedrich Grimm noted laconically, “all current initiatives for Franco-German understanding have been canceled [by the French].” Among the victims of the Nazi occupation of Prague was the CFA. Although a few members, like Brinon, wanted to continue the “policy of understanding,” the majority of the membership refused to lend their name to the CFA after Prague. As tensions between Germany and France increased, more and more publications were closed to any form of Nazi propaganda. Only the professional anti-Semitic press continued to welcome Nazi-inspired articles, and, despite the Nazis’ wishful thinking, and best efforts, its impact remained circumscribed.

Another victim of sorts of the radically changed atmosphere was Otto Abetz. Henri de Kerillis, a right-wing but fiercely anti-Nazi publicist, led a campaign against Abetz, insisting that Ribbentrop’s man in Paris was a spy who had also spent millions of francs to buy pro-Nazi and anti-Semitic press coverage. Despite Ribbentrop’s personal intervention, in June 1939 the French government refused Abetz, who was in Germany at the time, permission to come back to France. He had to cool his heels in Germany until the following June, when he returned with the invading Nazi troops.

Actually the “Abetz affair” was of more symbolic than political significance. For all practical purposes there was not much more for Abetz to do in Paris. The list of those willing to accept an invitation to attend the 1938 Nazi party congress had dwindled to a few fanatic fellow-travelers like Bucard.
Although the German agencies went through the motions of compiling invitation lists for the 1939 “Congress of Peace,” those on the scene in France reported that virtually all prominent French personalities had let it be known before invitations were even issued that they would prefer not to be on the list. Others “had eliminated themselves” because they had in the meantime joined the ranks of those criticizing the Third Reich and its actions. Under these circumstances Germany’s links to most of the French far right had been severed beyond repair. They would be resumed only under radically changed circumstances.

**The Bully on the Block: Nazi Activities in Holland**

As the Nazis’ self-confidence grew limitless, relations between the Third Reich and the Dutch became increasingly acrimonious. Goebbels’ diary is peppered with negative references to the Dutch, “becoming a little sassy,” the “[Catholic newspaper] Maasbode is mean (gemein) toward the Führer,” or “public opinion in Holland: really hard-nosed against us.” The minister, of course, had a ready explanation: “For a long time now Holland seems to be a bridgehead for those elements of international Jewry who think Germans abroad can be harassed at will.”

Ironically, German observers on the scene were fully aware that anti-Nazi feelings and anti-Mussert sentiments went hand-in-hand in the Netherlands. Despite the increasing ill will between Germany and the Netherlands, Goebbels was pleased with the propaganda attaché at The Hague: “He is one of us.” This was because the attaché reported what his master in Berlin wanted to hear: There was evidence of growing anti-Semitism in Holland. The Netherlands, like the rest of Europe, was liberating itself from the Jewish yoke through the shining example of Nazi Germany. In the first half of 1938 Nazi agents also painted a rosy picture of the NSB’s future prospects despite the electoral disasters of the previous year. The party was attracting more farmers and workers, the organization was improving, and, always important for the Nazis, the völkische elements were pushing aside the “intellectual-confessional wing.” After the April 1939 provincial elections some Nazis accurately recognized that the NSB was a political failure in Holland, but they continued to misunderstand the reasons for the movement’s lack of success. They blamed Mussert and the “moderate” leaders in the NSB because the party had still not unequivocally endorsed the Nazis’ brand of racist anti-Semitism. Relying on the—false—premise that anti-Semitism was on the
rise in the Netherlands, the Nazis were convinced that the NSB could ride this nonexistent wave to power in Holland.\(^{63}\)

For the moment the NSB’s primary usefulness for the Nazis was as a conduit for Nazi propaganda. The material that poured from the pens of the scribes hired by the Aufklärungsausschuss Hamburg-Bremen and the Propaganda Ministry’s Pro Deo et Patria bureau found its way into the NSB’s publications or was distributed as the party’s campaign literature. Unfortunately for the Nazis, the overall propaganda impact of this effort was limited. It was a matter of preaching to the converted, since the dwindling readership of the NSB’s publications was already convinced that the Third Reich was the model for the Netherlands’ future.\(^{64}\)

Preaching to the converted also applied to the Dutch guests at the 1938 Nazi party congress in Nuremberg. The list of invitations was compiled by the German legation in The Hague, in consultation with Mussert. Perhaps to ingratiate the NSB further with the Germans, the leader tended to suggest leaders of the party’s \textit{völkische} wing, rather than “moderates.” (As noted earlier, Mussert himself never attended one of the Nuremberg congresses.)\(^{65}\)

“Active” Nazi foreign propaganda was not limited to public relations efforts. The Nazis’ growing arrogance led to blatant bullying tactics and increasingly open interference in Dutch internal affairs. Beginning in 1938 the Propaganda Ministry routinely pressured the Dutch authorities to curtail criticism of the Third Reich in the Dutch press.\(^{66}\) A high point of sorts of the Nazis’ disregard for Dutch sensitivities came in the summer of 1939, when Otto Butting, the head of the RDG, was expelled from the Netherlands for engaging in espionage. (He had stolen some military documents.) In practice the Germans also ignored the Dutch government’s attempts to curtail the NSB’s activities in Germany. In May 1939 the Dutch government insisted on the dissolution of the party’s organization in Germany. Pro forma the German government complied, but with the approval of the Nazi authorities, the NSB’s former chief of propaganda in the Reich, Julius Herdtmann, organized some of the NSB’s members into a paramilitary organization with the misleading name of Sport en Spel (Sport and Games). Members of this group later took part in the Nazi invasion of Holland.\(^{67}\)

\textbf{The French Extreme Right and the Third Reich: Disappointment, Denial, and Resistance}

In contrast to Holland, where the fascists declined to little more than a political sect that increasingly aligned itself with the Third Reich, in France fascism in the last months of the decade remained a formidable
political phenomenon, albeit one that became increasingly skeptical and critical of the Third Reich. For most French fascists Germany had lost its appeal. Clear evidence of the Nazis’ expansionist aims ended the illusion that Franco-German cooperation could build a new Europe. Even Brasillach, who remained a great admirer of the Third Reich, wrote in April 1939 that Italy and Germany “had besmirched fascism.” French fascists, he assured his readers, “would know how to establish our fascism better then they.”

True, a small group of extreme rightists, obsessed with the “Judeo-democratic-Free Masonic threat” at home and the Bolshevik menace abroad, continued to insist that establishing something like the Nazi totalitarian system in France was the only hope of domestic renewal, while cooperation with the Third Reich would save France from the ever growing Bolshevik threat. On the domestic policy front this group of French fascists continued to be fascinated by the theory and supposed practice of the Volksgemeinschaft. Félicien Challaye, a leading member of the Frontist party, returned from a trip to Germany in February 1939 full of praise for the Nazis’ achievements in town planning, political indoctrination, and the education of a new political elite in the Ordensburgen. For many French fascists the German Labor Front (DAF), the Nazis’ compulsory union for workers and managers, replaced the Stormtroopers as the symbol of the new, “socialist” Germany. The RAD, too, continued to have its admirers in France; both Brasillach and Cousteau among the JSP équipe demanded that France institute a similar program.

Some of the remaining French sympathizers of the Nazis were still under the spell of the Nazis’ increasingly perfected political choreography. They insisted that the Nazi style had lifted politics beyond the level of democratic interest brokering to the realm of revolutionary idealism and supraindividual aestheticism. And nothing seemed to prove this more than the 1938 Nazi party congress. Rebatet, Henri Bordeaux, and Drieu were all ecstatic about the Nazis’ ability to capture the enthusiasm of German youth. Bertrand de Jouvenel was more reserved, although his report in the 9 September issue of Gringoire was far more enthusiastic than the later reminiscences in his postwar memoirs.

As before, for these elements Germany was the positive mirror image of what had gone wrong in France. Roman Fernandez, the president of the PPF’s front organization Cercles Populaires and a member of the party’s politburo, praised Hitler’s selfless dedication to his country. Like Napoleon and Mussolini, the German Führer was an idealistic revolutionary, whose sole concern was the higher interest of the country. Others were disappointed that Doriot had not become the French Hitler. In his letter of resignation from the PPF, Paul Marion, the party’s number two
man, accused the PPF’s leader of abandoning, “the mysticism, the poetry, the heroic action, the religious character of [the] movement.” Instead, Marion complained that the PPF leader sounded increasingly like a minister of the hated Third Republic.72

Still, discordant notes increased even among the die-hard admirers of the Third Reich. Brasillach rejected the Nazis’ cultural policies as totally at variance with French traditions of artistic freedom. Nazi methods of dealing with their political opponents also produced equivocal reactions. Jean Fontenoy, who was to die as a member of the French contingent of the Waffen SS defending Berlin in the spring of 1945, spoke quite critically in an article for *Journal* in April 1939 of SS masters terrorizing their slave-inmates at the Oranienburg concentration camp.73 The French fascists also remained critical of the Nazis’ continuing attacks on the Catholic Church. Drieu, for all his admiration of the new *uomo fascista* emerging in Germany, insisted that the Catholic Church should be an integral component of the future French fascist society. He rejected the neo-paganist tendencies in Nazism. To be sure, it was a peculiarly fascist Catholic Church that Drieu wanted to install in France and Europe. He criticized the contemporary Church for its lack of heroic models and demanded the restoration of “the Christ of the Cathedrals, the great God white and virile; a king, son of a king.” His alter ego, Gilles, insisted that the Catholic religion owed far more to ancient, Greek and Aryan, religions than to its Jewish antecedents.74

Even the Nazis’ handling the “Jewish problem,” which many French fascists had long admired as exemplary, came in for some criticism. Brasillach claimed that French anti-Semitism remained “reasonable,” and no French anti-Semite wanted to kill anyone or organize a pogrom. Even Paul Ferdonnet, whose 1938 book *La Guerre juive* contained fulsome expressions of gratitude to Hitler for breaking the power of the Jews and saving Europe, nevertheless insisted that he was “neither racist, nor anti-Semitic.” The author was “anti-Jewish, only insofar as the Jews had abused their right of asylum and threatened the peace.”75 But some French anti-Semites continued to draw their inspiration (and their “evidence”) directly from the Nazis. The Centre de Documentation et de Propagande issued a compendium of anti-Semitic statements by Hitler, Rosenberg, and Streicher titled *Guerre aux Juifs* (War on the Jews). Rebatet, writing in *JSP*, endorsed prohibitions against Jewish-Christian marriages contained in the Nuremberg Laws, but he gave his approval a Gallo-Christian twist. Such prohibitions were not a Nazi invention, but a long-standing canon of the Catholic Church.76 Others praised the Nazis’ decision to put “asocial elements” into concentration camps or “appreciated” the treatment of Jews in Austria after the *Anschluss*. Members of the Cercles Populaires proposed expelling the Jews from France as part of a national revolution.77
Two of French fascism’s intellectual poster boys, Drieu La Rochelle and Louis-Ferdinand Céline, became increasingly obsessed with the “racial question” in France. For Drieu the Jews were not only a race but also a negative biological factor; echoing Julius Streicher, he claimed the Jews caused “natural degeneracy.” Céline rejected “race mixing” as an invention of the Freemasons and dreamed of a Franco-German alliance based upon the countries’ “racial” commonality. According to Céline, 75 percent of the French were of Nordic-Aryan stock, and only 25 percent traced their ancestry to the—inferior—Latin races.78

The violence of the Night of Crystal split the dwindling group of sympathizers of the Third Reich yet again. Some among the extreme right, such as the PSP’s Le Petit Journal, unequivocally condemned the pogrom, while others kept their silence.79 Still others deplored the violence of the Reichskristallnacht, but accepted the Nazi interpretation of vom Rath’s murder: Grynszpan was not a lone assassin, but an instrument of international Jewry, intent on advancing the cause of Judeo-Bolshevism. Saint-Paulien, the PPF’s general secretary, compared Grynszpan’s deed with Gavrilo Princip’s assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand in 1914. In both cases the forces behind the assassination wanted to unleash a world war.80 These elements were also satisfied with the official Nazi version that the Reichskristallnacht pogrom was a spontaneous, nationwide reaction to the murder of a German diplomat at the Paris embassy. Darquier de Pellepoix justified the subsequent fine imposed on the German-Jewish community by pointing to similar measures by the French kings of the Ancien Regime. Finally, some among the extreme right were primarily concerned about the possible consequences of the pogrom for France. Léon Daudet, a close associate of Charles Maurras, wrote, “Let us hope that no one will take this as a pretext for flooding us with Jews.”81

Significantly, the Reichskristallnacht did not dampen the anti-Semitic fervor on the French domestic front. As we saw, the second special issue of JSP devoted to the “Jewish question” was published in April 1939; it became a runaway bestseller. In March 1939 a collective of anti-Semitic journals, including La Pilori, Réveil du Peuple, and La France Enchainée put out a poster titled “The Jewish Question,” which contrasted the Jews’ machinations to plunge France and Germany into war against each other with Hitler’s determination to preserve peace even in the face of provocations like the murder of vom Rath. The poster’s anonymous authors still insisted “we are not racists,” but they added “when we see that the Jews rob us, divide us, corrupt us, we turn against them like the victim turns against the thief. That is our form of racism.”82 Some anti-Semites revived the tradition of linking anti-Semitism and Germanophobia. Expanding upon a long-standing contention of the Action française that
Jews and Germans had always acted in consort, one Christian Polemon wrote a tract whose title was also its thesis and content: “Hitler, Creature and Instrument of Israel or the Explanation of Israel’s Gigantic Global Plan to Accomplish its Great and Last Coup.” Five thousand copies of this account of Nazi-Jewish cooperation were seized by the police before they could be distributed.\(^{83}\)

The Third Reich’s series of foreign aggressions after the Munich Crisis caused a far more profound division in the French fascist movement. The munichois and anti-munichois camps accused each other of selling out fascist principles. The munichois faced the task of Sisyphus. With every new diplomatic crisis Hitler undermined the munichois position further, leading more French fascists to join the ranks of the anti-munichois. In the end very few die-hards clung to the illusion that a genuine Franco-German alliance remained possible, and even they insisted they remained munichois only because the alternative would benefit the cause of bolshevism, the Jews, and the hated Third Republic.\(^{84}\)

The munichois insisted nothing could justify a war between France and Germany. In contrast, the anti-munichois argued that unless Hitler’s ambitions were stopped, the Nazis would destroy France as a great power. Before the occupation of Prague among the munichois Drieu, Doriot, Châteaubriant, Déat, Céline, Fabre-Luce, Brasillach, and, interestingly, De la Rocque still dreamed of a “New Europe” anchored on a Berlin-Rome-Paris axis, but their argumentation and motivation differed. Céline wanted to repudiate the Treaty of Verdun and reunite the Aryans of France and Germany in a single nation. Others, like Doriot and Alfred Fabre-Luce, advanced anti-Semitic and anti-Communist arguments.\(^{85}\) Marcel Déat, perhaps the most eloquent of the munichois, insisted he was neither a Nazi fellow-traveler nor a pacifist, but he was willing to give Hitler a free hand in Eastern Europe because the fate of Poland and the Soviet Union was less important than maintaining peace between Germany and France.\(^{86}\) Châteaubriant clung to his illusion that Hitler would lead a spiritual revival in Europe.

The Nazis’ conquests of foreign lands began with the annexation of Austria. The \textit{Anschluss}, as it came to be called, sent shock waves through the French extreme right; the vast majority of the Third Reich’s sympathizers felt betrayed and dismayed. Ferdinand de Brinon for a time left the CFA because he claimed Hitler had earlier personally assured him that the Nazi leader had no intention of annexing Austria. The veteran leaders Pichot, Goy, and Scapini, all canceled their planned trip to Berlin to attend the “Sons of Veterans Celebration” organized by the HJ.\(^{87}\) True, there were some apologists of the action as well. Bergéry felt that as “a great leader” Hitler had simply kicked aside what had always been a
stupid provision of the Versailles Treaty. Rebetet, who visited Vienna a few months after the Anschluss, found the city “relieved and cleansed.”

Significantly, criticism of the Anschluss did not lead the French extreme right to close ranks with their Republican opponents. Rather, there was an undeniable sense of Schadenfreude about the Republic’s diplomatic setback. Most French fascists searched for a way to contain Germany that did not involve support for the present French constitutional system or acceptance of the Franco-Soviet alliance. Jacques Doriot favored a Franco-German-Italian-British alliance. Shortly after the Anschluss JSP presented a six-point program recommending, in addition to restoring the Austro-Hungarian Empire, that France should recognize Franco’s government in Spain, resign from the League, and end the military alliances with the Soviet Union and Czechoslovakia. Instead France should conclude a military pact with Poland and strengthen her ties with Great Britain and Italy.

The Italian connection surfaced in other contexts as well. In a meeting of the PPF’s Central Committee on March 12 (literally as the German troops were marching into Austria), Bertrand de Jouvenel recalled that in June 1936 Mussolini had personally assured him that he, Mussolini, was ready to stand shoulder to shoulder with France. The Italian dictator demanded French recognition of the Italian control of Ethiopia, but after that, according to Jouvenel, Mussolini said, “I love your country . . . With you I will defend Czechoslovakia, with me you will defend Austria. Tell Blum this! I’ll sign a treaty tomorrow if he wants this.” Jouvenel insisted that Blum ignored Mussolini’s generous offer, and as a result Austria was now under Nazi control. The major stumbling block preventing the “natural” alliance between the two Mediterranean countries of France and Italy was France’s present “Franco-Russian government,” which refused to sever its ties to the Soviet Union.

There was little time to digest the Anschluss before the Nazis turned their covetous eyes on Czechoslovakia. Demanding German control of the Sudetenland, the Third Reich threatened the territorial integrity of the only genuine democracy in Central Europe and one of France’s staunchest allies. The response of the French far right to this new Nazi aggression had nothing to do with preserving democracy in Europe. The far right continued insist that no one should go to war to save “Jewish-plutocratic” democracy in Czechoslovakia or France. JSP and Benoist-Méchin characterized the Czechoslovak government as “a friend of the Soviets”; Taittinger insisted that Prague had always acted at the instigation of Moscow. The “experts” on international conspiracies added their own twisted interpretations. H. Lèbre, a contributor to JSP, claimed that Beneš, the president of Czechoslovakia, was a Freemason, and for Rebetet
Czechoslovakia was simply a Marxist-Jewish state. Céline, as always, was the most vicious and vituperative. He answered his own rhetorical question, “who are the Czechs?” in *L’ École des cadavres*: “The military [force], the *gardes mobiles* of the Jews in Central Europe . . . Masaryk [Czechoslovakia’s first president], grand prince of Free Masonry, together with the Jew Beneš have prepared the establishment of Judeo-Bolshevism in Europe.”94

*Le Pays réel* claimed that with the transfer of the Sudetenland to Germany, Czechoslovakia, “the Mecca of Free Masonic democracy has been razed, destroyed,” and democracy in France discredited. Munich demonstrated that only a “nationalist and anti-democratic France” could negotiate with Hitler on equal terms.95

Neither the munichoïs nor the anti-munichoïs were interested in the fate of Czechoslovakia. Rather, the two camps disagreed on whether Germany’s designs on Czechoslovakia represented an acute threat to France’s position as a great power, and if so, should France use military force to stop Germany’s territorial ambitions. All of the munichoïs insisted that they were not motivated by love of Hitler or the Third Reich. Rather, they did not like the answer to the cui bono question. In other words, for them the real question was who benefited from a military confrontation between France and Germany over the unloved Czechoslovakia. The answer, according to the munichoïs, was the unholy trio of Communists, Jews, and French democracy. Driot’s paper *La Liberté* claimed “in order to defeat Hitler it is first necessary to eliminate Stalin.” An editorial in *JSP* concluded that “after Munich there is only one loser, Moscow.” Ferdonnet celebrated the defeat of the Jews and the Communists at Munich; Hitler’s moderation had made the success of the Munich Conference possible.96

Convinced that Hitler’s moves in Southeastern Europe represented a renewed “Pan-Germanic push,”97 the anti-munichoïs called for vigorous opposition to further Nazi aggression, massive French rearmament, and even a renewal of the traditional alliance between France and Great Britain. Their ranks now included such prominent figures on the far right as Paul Marion, Drieu la Rochelle, Henry Coston, Gaston Bergéry, and Bertrand de Jouvenel. The fervent cry for national unity and anti-German policies resounded in the pages of the far-right media, although they also continued to be uneasy about the beneficiaries of any Franco-German confrontation. Bergéry was a convinced anti-munichoïs, but he also thought the Jews wanted war between France and Germany not to serve France’s interests but to avenge themselves on Hitler. Despite the strident and xenophobic tone of the fascist anti-munichoïs, there was also an undertone of disappointment and disillusion. Drieu wrote that Hitler had “profoundly deceived him”; far from inaugurating a new international order, the German leader had brought back “the old methods of diplomacy
and conquest.” For Bertrand de Jouvenel Munich represented the end of a double illusion: that one could reach an understanding with Hitler’s Germany, and that the PPF would be able to breathe new life into French politics.98

After Hitler had poured additional salt into the wounds of the French fascists with his particularly Francophobic speech in Saarbrücken on November 3,99 what remained of the munichois camp eagerly looked forward to Ribbentrop’s visit as evidence that Germany remained interested in good relations with France. Brinon and what remained of the CFA organized a banquet on the occasion of Ribbentrop’s visit to celebrate “the Franco-German alliance, the miracle of Munich, and the good will of the Führer.” According to Saint-Paulien, the PPF’s press secretary, the Declaration of Friendship signed by Ribbentrop and the French Foreign Minister Bonnet meant that Germany did not contest France’s Western boundaries or her imperial possessions, while the Third Reich had a free hand to pursue economic and political initiatives in the East. /SP, too, thought collaboration was back on track—but only if France “regenerated” herself and abolished the democratic Republic.100 The Frontistes, with Déat, Bergéry and Scapini in attendance, staged a rally in the Salle Wagram in Paris which attracted some five thousand persons. The speakers advocated friendship with Germany and the elimination of “geographic irrationalities,” such as the Polish Corridor.101

The atmosphere of goodwill vanished quickly. When Germany destroyed what remained of Czechoslovakia on March 15, 1939, the munichois camp collapsed almost completely. The peripatetic Friedrich Grimm reported that Germany’s “friends” complained that they had been duped and that they had no arguments with which to justify the Third Reich’s actions. Hitler had abused their trust.102 The Comité France-Allemagne went “to sleep,” as the intellectuals, media personalities, and veteran leaders whom the German collaborationists had so laboriously cultivated turned their backs on the CFA. Fernand Brinon, the organization’s vice-president, “retired,” as he put it; he claimed that after Prague he avoided all further contact with the Germans until 1940.103 Doriot, at the time of the Munich Crisis still staunchly munichois, now insisted that the policy of appeasement had failed. /SP returned to a thesis it had denied for the last six years: There was no new Germany, “once again the conflict is between Pan-Germanism and Europe.” Drieu La Rochelle, too, thought the Third Reich was not interested in a fascist Europe and pursued only German nationalist interests.104 To be sure, the extreme-Right’s disappointment in Germany still did not decrease its hatred of the French Republic. Once again Brasillach insisted France had to become fascist to resist the threat of foreign fascism. Saint-Paulien later lamented that the
French Republic did not create the internal conditions that would have assured victory of France’s foreign enemies. After Prague the munichois camp was reduced to a pitiful remnant composed of advocates of peace-at-any-price and a few professional anti-Semites. Jean Drault, editor of *Au Pilori* and according to the *Weltdienst* a “true Frenchman,” argued that only Jews in France were upset over the destruction of Czechoslovakia. Lucien Rebatet felt Hitler’s dissolution of Czechoslovakia was justified because the Czechoslovaks, the Poles, the Serbs were “inferior people (sous-peuples),” whose indefensible states existed only because Great Britain and France had created them. There were master nations and vassal nations, and Eastern Europe consisted of vassal states that rightfully belonged in Germany’s sphere of influence. For Céline, too, nothing had changed. In his *L’École des cadavres* he continued to advocate a “total alliance” with Germany: politically, militarily, economically.

The following months brought new setbacks to the all but vanished band of munichois. When the Nazis confronted Poland, France’s traditional ally in Eastern Europe, with demands for the return of Danzig to German control and an extraterritorial road through the Polish Corridor, the Poles refused, and most French fascists cheered their steadfastness. Writing in *JSP* Paul-Antoine Cousteau praised the Poles for their semi-fascist regime, the strength of their armed forces, and their self-confidence. “The leitmotiv of the Polish press is, ‘We are not Czechs.’ We [Cousteau] don’t doubt it.” As for Germany, “the only means of discouraging her . . . is a superior force. This force, which we lacked in September [1938], we now have. The danger—immense to be sure—would be that Berlin doesn’t understand this.”

Among the miniscule group who still favored friendship with the Third Reich, Marcel Déat undoubtedly achieved the greatest notoriety. At the beginning of May, Déat, who found the initial German proposals for a “solution” to the Polish question “very reasonable,” published his infamous article, “Pourquoi mourir pour Danzig? (Why die for Danzig?).” Déat argued that the fate of the city of Danzig (and by implication that of Poland) was not worth a second global conflict. The reaction to Déat’s article among the French extreme right was immediate, widespread, and overwhelmingly negative. Most French fascists rejected abandoning Poland as incompatible with France’s position as a great power. One of the few prominent fascists to agree with Déat was Gaston Bergéry, and he added an anti-Semitic note to the argument. A war to defeat Nazi Germany would mean the “death of millions of Frenchmen and Europeans to avenge a few dead Jews and a few hundred thousand unfortunate Jews.”
The Hitler-Stalin Pact of August 1939 increased the sense of betrayal among the remaining munichois. Victor Barthélemy, the PPF’s secretary general, wrote, “It was Germany’s inexplicable fault to have betrayed the West . . . brought the barbarians back to the Rhine.” The Third Reich’s image as Europe’s champion against communism was beyond redemption, as were the utopian hopes for a European Fascist Internationale led by Nazi Germany. Only Marcel Déat remained a lonely voice crying for new negotiations with Hitler. Since the Nazi-Soviet Pact had made the Anglo-French guarantee of Poland unenforceable in any case, now was the time for a true rapprochement with Germany. There was only one aspect of the Nazi-Soviet Pact that brought joy to the French fascists. Since the Soviet Union was now Hitler’s ally, and the French Communists—many contre coeur, to be sure—supported Stalin’s about-face, this was the time to destroy French communism. Doriot offered to present the government a list with the names of two thousand dangerous Communist militants, who should be arrested immediately. Bergéry thought the pact meant the end of the PCF as a viable domestic political force, and Barthélemy remembered, “at no time in the last three years had I been as content that I had left the Communist party in 1936.”

As a new European conflict appeared all but inevitable in the last days of August 1939, what remained of the munichois camp among the French fascists split into two groups yet again. Most insisted in this hour of national crisis that France could and must stand up to the Nazis. Even the editorial board at JSP joined the call to stop Pan-German expansionism. The journal insisted “France needs the strongest and largest army in the world [but] there is not the slightest doubt about the outcome of a war: long, deplorable—but victorious for France.” On the other side were the faint cries by those who even now could see something positive in Nazi Germany. Obsessed with his anti-Semitic agenda, Céline wrote he preferred German rulers to Jewish oppressors. Châteaubriant remained convinced that Hitler was Europe’s spiritual savior. Barthélemy ended on a note of lyrical sadness: “The peasants of our mountains and valleys did not detest the German regime. They admired the order that it had established, its respect for work, the joy it had given back to youth.”

The Henleins of Holland: The NSB and Nazi Triumphs

Thoroughly on the defensive in Holland by now, the NSB voluntarily gave up what little political autonomy it still preserved as an indigenous fascist organization. In the face of overwhelming evidence to the contrary, the leaders insisted that their own situation in the Netherlands paralleled that of the NSDAP in the last years of the Weimar Republic.
Mussert noted that in 1928 the Nazis had obtained 2.6 per cent of the national vote in Germany, and yet only five years later, they had come to power. The NSB obtained 4 per cent of the Dutch vote in 1937, so surely the Dutch fascists would come to power in a few years.\textsuperscript{115} The NSB’s propaganda was increasingly targeting industrial workers, claiming that once the Dutch workers learned the truth about life in Germany they would desert their traditional political allegiances and flock to the NSB.\textsuperscript{116} In the field of foreign relations the Dutch fascists still felt that they and the Nazis had a mutually beneficial relationship. The NSB had no objection to German hegemony on the Continent, and the Nazis did not dispute Holland’s status as a major colonial power.

Since the NSB’s leaders were convinced that support from the Nazis would help the fascist cause in Holland, Mussert and Rost van Tonningen remained anxious to maintain and improve their personal relations with leading Nazis. Rost was a frequent guest of the Heinrich Himmler, the head of the SS, in these months, and he even volunteered for service in the Waffen-SS. The Germans politely declined the offer.\textsuperscript{117} Through the good offices of Rost, Mussert finally met Himmler in the summer of 1938, but the meeting was not a success; the SS leader and the NSB chief were not impressed with each other. A far happier experience for Mussert was his weeklong visit to Germany in April 1939. He came back impressed with the Third Reich’s military strength (he attended the military parade that was part of the elaborate celebrations honoring Hitler on his fiftieth birthday), but he was also convinced that the Volksgemeinschaft had by now been completely realized in the Third Reich. Mussert came home more than ever convinced that the Nazis represented both an unstoppable force and an example for the future fascist Holland. In a series of articles and speeches the leider assured his listeners and readers that Germany had succeeded in overcoming the class and generational divisions that still bedeviled Holland.\textsuperscript{118}

None of this impressed either the Dutch voters or the leaders of the zuilen. The NSB was especially angry that its attempts to improve relations with the Dutch churches had failed. Particularly the Catholic leaders rejected the party’s siren calls with increasing vehemence. Frustrated by the failure to grasp what the NSB saw as its outstretched hand, the party lashed out at organized Dutch religion by celebrating the supposed harmony of church-state relations in the Third Reich. Mussert’s movement denied that the German churches were persecuted, and portrayed the opposition to the Nazis by individual church leaders as politically rather than religiously motivated. According to \textit{Volk en Vaderland} the Catholic church leaders in Holland would do well to follow the example of Cardinal Innitzer in Vienna, who a few days after the Anschluss had greeted the German dictator with a heartfelt “Heil Hitler.”\textsuperscript{119}
The NSB intensified its efforts to make its rallies and propaganda as indistinguishable as possible from those of the Nazis, although the Dutch still lacked the Germans’ choreographic and pyrotechnical skills. Mussert’s appearances in the cavernous Amsterdam RAI hall were reminiscent of the Goebbels’ Sportpalast rallies in Berlin. The NSB also adopted a new party banner, a Dutch equivalent of the swastika flag. The new flag—blue, white, and orange instead of red, white, and blue—was supposed to underscore the party’s support for the Dutch royal house of Orange, but the emblem, which largely replaced the Dutch national colors at the party’s rallies, marginalized the NSB even further.120

In earlier years Mussert and the NSB moderates had resisted Rost’s pleas that the party needed to adopt wholesale Goebbels’ style of written and spoken demagoguery. Similarly, the moderates had insisted that they were not racial anti-Semites. Now, however, the radicals and völkische triumphed on both counts. The NSB’s campaign tactics became copies of Goebbels’ vicious efforts, and, reeling under the persistent attacks of his democratic opponents in Holland, Mussert lashed out at the Jews in increasingly vindictive terms. Jews had started the Spanish Civil War, Jews had almost succeeded in unleashing a military conflict over Czechoslovakia, Jews stood behind Marxism in every European country, and Jewish refugees in the Netherlands constituted a growing group of parasites who prevented the emergence of a true national Volksgemeinschaft.121

The climax of the NSB’s full-scale embrace of Nazi-style anti-Semitism came at a carefully choreographed rally at the Amsterdam RAI hall on October 22, 1938. Addressing several hundred invited party functionaries, Mussert in a lengthy speech laid out what he clearly intended to be the NSB’s definitive position on the “Jewish problem.” Beginning, like Hitler, with a long-winded party history, the NSB leader touched upon a wide range of issues from the evils of the French Revolution to the arrogance of political Catholicism, but he concentrated his remarks on the “Jewish problem.” To save Holland the Jews had to be deprived of their positions of influence and power. At the same time Mussert heaped praise on the Third Reich where the “Jewish problem” had been solved. He also closed the NSB to Jewish membership and demanded that the Dutch government prohibit additional Jewish refugees from entering the country.122

The new line was immediately evident in the NSB’s reaction to the Night of Crystal. Condemning the “cowardly” murder of vom Rath, Nationale Dagblad endorsed the official Nazi line that the pogrom in Germany was a spontaneous outburst of “popular fury” against Jewish “offenses.” The commentaries in Volk en Vaderland, which Mussert edited, were only marginally less violent. Vova found the pogrom “unfortunate” and mildly criticized the “excessive” violence, but the paper also claimed
that the “popular awakening” that had been unleashed in Germany was a legitimate reaction to the Jews’ campaign of terror. Besides, Mussert added for good measure, what had happened in Germany paled in comparison with the atrocities committed by the Bolsheviks in the Soviet Union, the Loyalists in Spain, and the British in South Africa. Moreover, the German authorities had done their best to prevent injury to persons and property. A month after the pogrom Volk en Vaderland published an article titled “The Purim Celebration of the Future,” which echoed the Stürmer with a fanciful account of Jewish atrocities supposedly documented in the Bible. All this was to prove that since time immemorial Jews had always hated everything “Aryan.”

Still, Mussert also wanted to make a “positive” contribution toward solving the “Jewish problem.” His efforts resulted in one of the more bizarre episodes in the long saga of anti-Semitism. With considerable fanfare (Vova printed a special edition of 250,000 copies), the NSB leader, shortly after the Reichskristallnacht, proposed the creation of a “Jewish homeland” in the Dutch colony of Guyana (present-day Surinam). Holland would give the colony to the Jews of the world. As compensation, the Netherlands would receive Portuguese territory in Africa adjacent to the Republic of South Africa. (Mussert, of course, always dreamed of the return of South Africa to Dutch control.)

Not surprisingly, Dutch Jewish spokesmen and the Portuguese government, neither of whom had not been consulted beforehand, rejected the Guyana plan. But Mussert was most interested in obtaining the Nazis’ approval. To this end he sent Rost, who for once fully supported his leider’s ideas, to Berlin. The results were disappointing. The Nazis had no interest in the resettlement scheme; they had “entirely different plans,” commented Mussert some months later. (Ironically, although Mussert did not know this, Hitler had privately articulated quite similar ideas some months earlier. Only the Führer wanted to send the Jews to Madagascar, not Surinam.) Although both the Nazis and Dutch Jewish leaders rejected the Guyana plan, Mussert chose to blame only on the Jews for his political setback. He insisted that the Jews themselves had sabotaged the homeland because they wanted to continue exercising their power in the Netherlands.

The NSB’s self-alignment with the Nazis was even closer in foreign affairs, if that were possible, than in domestic policies. Unlike the French fascists, the Dutch extreme right celebrated with unabashed glee Hitler’s victories as triumphs over fascism’s common enemies. All factions in the NSB greeted the Anschluss with unbridled enthusiasm. Mussert had argued since 1934 that Austria had suffered under the dictatorship of political Catholicism, precisely the sort of political system that the Dutch
RKSP was attempting to install in Holland. Rost, who embraced Nazism while living in Austria as an employee of the League of Nations, shared the hatred that his Austrian friends felt for the Dollfuss and Schuschnigg regimes. Months before the actual Anschluss, Nationale Dagblad had published a steady stream of articles drawing an analogy between the “terror” of the Schuschnigg regime against the Austrian Nazis and the persecution of the NSB by the Dutch government.  

According to the NSB, the Anschluss accomplished several desirable goals. Germany’s coup had prevented civil war in Austria, which, as in Spain, would have been “the logical outcome of the dictatorship of political Catholicism.” It was also an example of fascist cooperation in action. Mussolini, whose abandonment of the Schuschnigg regime had made the Anschluss possible, was joining Hitler in creating what Mussert called “the new Europe . . . based upon a fascist, national socialist, that is to say, völkisch foundation.” After Austria had been annexed, the NSB reported the astonishingly rapid establishment of the Nazi Volksgemeinschaft in the former realm of clerical rule. Unemployment disappeared virtually overnight, and the NSB’s correspondents discovered a new spirit of confidence in the future. The NSB did report instances of terror and criticized such activities, but they were invariably portrayed as isolated instances perpetrated by over-zealous subordinate officials. Above all, the NSB drove home the point that church-state relations were rapidly improving in Austria. Surely now the Catholic establishment in the Netherlands would also see the light, and stop insisting that National Socialism and Catholicism were incompatible.  

Five days after the annexation of Austria Volk en Vaderland commented that now only the 3.5 million Sudeten Germans remained unfree. The NSB welcomed Germany’s concern for the Sudetenland in part because it demonstrated Hitler’s “divine mission” in uniting his people in one nation but also because transferring the Sudetenland to Germany would weaken the position of Czechoslovakia, a country that the NSB insisted was a center of Bolshevik agitation in Central Europe. For many years Dutch fascists had seen Czechoslovakia primarily through the eyes of Prince Karl-Anton von Rohan, an Austrian aristocrat and editor of the periodical Europäische Revue (European Revue). His articles on Central and Eastern Europe appeared frequently in both Volk en Vaderland and Nationale Dagblad. Rohan was a fierce opponent of Czechoslovakian democracy and portrayed the country’s leaders as Stalin’s dupes and sycophants.  

The NSB’s reaction to the outcome of the Munich crisis was predictably euphoric. Mussert, who promptly sent a congratulatory telegram to Hitler, later described the Munich accords as the highpoint of his
vision for a new Europe. In the NSB’s accounts of the Munich Crisis, Mussolini and Hitler had prevented Jewish and Bolshevik efforts to unleash a European war. Instead, the fascist powers had inaugurated a new era of “peace through justice” on the Continent. An NSB activist remembered after the war that Hitler’s gathering of the Germans into the Greater German Reich gave hope to the Dutch for establishing the Greater Netherlands, and that meant, “the Flemish [parts of Belgium], The Netherlands, and South Africa.”

The era of “peace through justice” lasted only a few months, and the manner of Czechoslovakia’s demise resulted in a perceptible split among the NSB’s leaders. While all party wings had unanimously endorsed the Anschluss and the annexation of the Sudentenland, Mussert and Rost took rather different positions on the complete destruction of Czechoslovakia. Rost’s Nationale Dagblad fully accepted the Nazi version that German military intervention was necessary to liberate the Slovaks from Czech oppression. In addition, the Czech government had violated the Munich accords by continuing to agitate against the Third Reich under orders from Moscow. Mussert and the moderates were considerably more uneasy about the new German aggression. The leider excused the German coup as a justified response to Allied warmongering, but Volk en Vaderland also noted that the occupation of Bohemia and Moravia violated the doctrine of national self-determination. “The Czechs are not Germans” was Mussert’s private comment. Both Mussert and d’Ansembourg finally showed signs of concern about an all too powerful Germany. The NSB, Mussert and his associates cried out almost desperately, was neither “Frenchified [like the Dutch government] nor Germanized,” but truly Dutch.

Perhaps to shift attention away from European concerns, all factions in the NSB tried to convince the Germans that an independent, fascist Holland and its colonies were a major asset in the coming altercation between Europe and Asia. Mussert’s movement was fiercely determined to hold on to the Dutch colonial empire, and suggested various ways of strengthening the ties between the Netherlands and her possessions. At the NSB’s 1938 congress Mussert had demanded that the Queen Wilhelmina, much like Queen Victoria earlier, be proclaimed empress of the Dutch East and West Indies. The primary threat to Holland’s largest and economically most important colony, the Dutch East Indies, was, of course, Japan, and it was therefore understandable that the increasingly close relations between Japan and Nazi Germany worried the NSB leaders.

Already severely shaken by the Nazi coup in Prague, and uneasy about the Third Reich’s Asian policies, Mussert’s world of illusions collapsed
completely with the announcement of the Nazi-Soviet Pact. The NSB’s leader waited for several weeks before he attempted a weak defense of the alliance between the two former archenemies. Arguing that the “Jewish people and their non-Jewish fellow travelers” had succeeded in setting England and France on the path of war against Germany, Mussert eventually claimed that Hitler had no choice but to seek a tactical ally in the East to escape the Allied encirclement. But he did not really believe it. For the NSB leader, the Nazi-Soviet Pact was the antithesis of all he had fought for, and his bad conscience in defending the Pact to his supporters was apparent to all but the most naive.136 Even Rost dampened his usual enthusiasm for everything the Nazis undertook. Nationale Dagblad pointedly insisted that the Nazi-Soviet Pact was not an ideological alliance, but a tactical deal forced upon both the Soviet Union and the Third Reich by the Jews who controlled France and Great Britain.137

The leider’s personal doubts in late summer 1939 reflected the mood of the remaining party activists. There was increasing evidence that many of them felt uneasy about their party’s lock-step alignment with the Nazis. In a series of publications and speeches the NSB moderates belatedly attempted to differentiate their party’s “national socialism” from Nazism. But it was too late. By this time the NSB’s activists were an isolated political sect in Holland dominated by the party’s völkische wing. Their protestations of political autonomy had no credibility. They were sustained only by the hope that somehow the Nazis would create the conditions for the victory of fascism in all of Europe, including the Netherlands. Having no political standing at home, the NSB had no choice but to believe in its own propaganda that the world was in the midst of a Manichean struggle between Jewish-Communist forces and the fascist-völkisch world of the future. As for Mussert, he made the worst of a bad situation. While clearly uneasy over the future path of his own creation, he saw no choice but to continue alongside the Nazis if he were to remain leader of the NSB. He had indeed become the “Henlein of Holland,” as his opponents claimed.138
This page intentionally left blank
Chapter 7

Conclusion

The international fascists greeted the outbreak of the Second World War with a mixture of disillusionment, defiance, disappointment, despair, and rage. *Je suis partout* tried to have it both ways: “Down with war! Long live France!” read its cover headline on August 30, 1939. *Gringoire* returned to the extreme Right’s never very deeply buried chauvinist roots and proclaimed the need for not only the defeat of Germany but its destruction and dismemberment.1 The beginning of military operations meant that everywhere the international fascists were marginalized, albeit for different reasons and in different ways. In Germany the advocates of military conquest triumphed, pushing aside the “collaborationists.” As would be his habit for the rest of his life, the German dictator busied himself with vast postwar projects. At the beginning of November 1939, Hitler was making plans for the breakup of France and the resettlement of the ethnic Germans from the southern Tyrol in Burgundy. Goebbels admitted that such planning was a bit premature, but he explained that these activities were typical of a genius at work.2 In France the government rounded up a number of the extreme Rightists and sent them to internment camps. Other French fascists, like Brasillach, were quickly drafted into the army. Much the same happened in the Netherlands. The Dutch cabinet ordered the arrest of several NSB “radicals,” Rost von Tonningen among them, and put others, like Mussert, under close observation, severely restricting their movements and activities.

As they surveyed the collapse of their dreams, the international fascists contemplated the reasons for their momentary success and ultimate failure. Remarkably, contemporaries and later analysts agreed that above all, international fascism in the 1920s and 1930s benefited from a perceived “crisis of modernization.” One prime symptom of that “crisis” was the widespread disaffection with political democracy and particularly parliamentary democracy. For a time fascism’s promise that it could create a
national and European Volksgemeinschaft that could bring the benefits of modernization without societal conflict met with considerable positive response. The foundation of that Volksgemeinschaft would be a “new” European, the “uomo fascista (new fascist man).”

While agreeing on the goal of creating the new Volksgemeinschaft, the fascists in the three countries discussed in this book differed in their analyses of the obstacles that stood in the way of the future fascist society. The German Nazis with their monolithic emphasis upon anti-Semitism insisted that the removal of the Jews from Germany and Europe was essential for the realization of the fascist future. For the French fascists victory meant putting “the last nail in the coffin of 1789.” This was because the French Revolution had saddled France with everything that prevented a return to the country’s greatness: political democracy with weak leaders, Marxism, decadence, and, for the anti-Semites among the French fascists, Jewish emancipation. After 1933 many among the French extreme Right looked enviously to the regime across the Rhine that seemingly had achieved what they felt France so desperately needed: a strong leader and disciplined followers, who would destroy democracy and Marxism, the obstacles in the path of national greatness.

According to the NSB, by the 1930s the system of verzuiling and political democracy had led Holland to the edge of the abyss. Unwilling to make the necessary sacrifices to preserve the Dutch empire, especially the Dutch East Indies, the leaders of the zuilen had allowed Holland to lose its one claim to global greatness. At home the NSB claimed that the leaders of the zuilen refused to deal with the disastrous effects of the Depression. Fixated on a stable currency and balanced budgets, the Dutch governing parties abandoned the “little man” to unemployment and business failures. (Remarkably, unlike many French fascists and all German Nazis, the NSB did not initially blame the Jews for Holland’s problems.) For all of these concerns the NSB found a positive model in the new Nazi regime. It had seized control of Germany’s destiny by abolishing democracy, destroying communism, and establishing national unity.

For a time, the Dutch fascists had illusions that the voters would give them a mandate to govern the Netherlands. After their unexpected triumph in the April 1935 provincial elections, the leaders of the NSB expected that their own coming to power was just around the corner. But the goal of attaining political power through the ballot box remained elusive, and, increasingly focused on the Third Reich, the NSB’s leaders convinced themselves that an alliance of the Dutch Jews and German-Jewish refugees in Holland working together with the leaders of the zuilen had conspired to prevent the establishment of fascism in the Netherlands.
International fascism was a failure, and explanations of this fact vary widely. As they surveyed the ruins of their hopes after the end of the Second World War, the international fascists insisted that their dreams had failed because the proponents had not been revolutionary enough. Making compromises with the old elites and holding onto many of the values of the nineteenth century, the much debated *uomo fascista* and his Volksgemeinschaft were never realized. This explanation, to put it gently, is not very persuasive. However much the fascists insisted that the *uomo fascista* and his brave new world was a work in progress, they never developed any coherent picture of what the future fascist society of perpetual harmony would look like. Rather, the explanation for the failure of international fascism lies in the politics of the individual countries and, perhaps equally important, in the ideological and organizational relations between the Third Reich and Dutch and French fascism.

In Nazi Germany Hitler and the “conquerors” had no real interest in international fascism as a cooperative venture. For the “conquerors” the future role of France and the Netherlands was that of German satellites, not partners in a fascist Europe. A war of conquest had always been the ultimate goal of Hitler, Goebbels, and Himmler. The “collaborationists” like Abetz and perhaps even Ribbentrop did have visions of a cooperative fascist Europe, but it was to be a union of very unequal partners. Moreover, when push came to shove, the “collaborationists” readily agreed to serve the “conquerors’” imperialist objectives.

French fascism had a number of domestic assets and liabilities. As was true for Germany in the last years of the Weimar Republic, the nonfascist French elites were at times willing to cooperate with the extreme Right, but the French Conservatives’ dislike of the status quo was not so strong that it included a willingness to hand governmental power to the French fascists. In sharp contrast to the situation in Germany, French fascism also faced massive organizational problems. The fascist scene was divided into a large number of competing groups, with no unifying *chef* who could be compared to the Führer in Germany. Indeed, the two most prominent and charismatic personalities on the French extreme Right, de la Rocque and Doriot, spent as much time and energy battling each other as they expended on advancing their political agenda. Finally, there was the special problem of French literary fascism. France undoubtedly produced some of the most eloquent fascist writing, but none of the authors had either the interest or the ability to act as leader of a fascist organization.

Fascism in the Netherlands failed because of political rather than organizational problems. In Holland, as in Germany, one organization, the NSB,
was able to “swallow” its rivals, but this turned out to be a Pyrrhic victory. After the NSB’s good showing in the April 1935 provincial elections, the Dutch pluralist *zuilen*, led by the Catholic Church, quickly closed ranks against the upstart; in the Netherlands none of the old elites cooperated with the fascists. As a result, the Dutch fascists lost much of their political momentum, particularly among the Catholics of Limburg. Confronted with the choice between excommunication and membership in the NSB, most Catholic members left the NSB.10

As the party was pushed to the margins of Dutch politics, behind the scenes “moderates” and “radicals” battled for control of the NSB. It was an uneven contest. With a dwindling membership that increasingly supported the radicals, the moderates, including Adriaan Anton Mussert, the NSB’s founder, felt they had no choice but to embrace the radicals’ line, thereby alienating the NSB even further from the mainstream of Dutch politics.11 The NSB’s close relationship with the Nazis added to the party’s problems. The Nazi model, which had seemed attractive for many Dutch voters in the years 1933 to 1935, became increasingly repulsive as the full measure of Nazi totalitarianism became apparent. By 1939 most of the “moderate” activists had left the party, leaving an increasingly fanaticized and Nazified, but also isolated and marginalized “radical” remnant behind.12

The Second World War confronted the international fascists in all three countries with profound dilemmas. The Germans seem to have had the easiest time with the new situation. Whatever private misgivings they may have had, all of the German “collaborationists” continued to serve the regime. Now endowed with the title of ambassador, Otto Abetz, along with a cohort of both “collaborationists” and “conquerors,” again took up residence in Paris in June 1940. In his memoirs Abetz emphasized that despite the changed circumstances he continued his efforts to increase mutual understanding between France and Germany.13 This account conveniently overlooked his role in the repressive measures of the German occupation, especially the Holocaust and the hated forced labor program. A number of younger German officials were eventually drafted into the army and some died at the front, including Karl-Heinz Bremer, the deputy director of the German Institute in Paris. Brasillach dedicated an effusive and adulatory obituary to him.

During the war the French extreme Right was divided into three groups, differentiated by their activities and attitudes toward the Nazi occupiers. Some enthusiastically served the Vichy regime, believing that with Marshall Pétain and his government France had finally found the chef and the authoritarian regime it needed. A second segment, collectively called the *Groupe Collaboration*, included a plethora of variegated
individuals and organizations. Common to all of them was the belief that by cooperating with the German conquerors they could somehow advance the cause of French and international fascism. This cohort included many of the French literary fascists, as well as a number of politicians prominent in the interwar years, such as Marcel Déat and Jacques Doriot. The high point of wartime literary fascism, if it can be called that, was an international writers’ congress, which Goebbels organized in Weimar in the fall of 1941. The large French contingent included both Drieu and Brasillach. As for the politicians among the collaborators, Déat and Doriot spent the war years battling each other in an effort to persuade the Germans to name one or the other as the single, recognized leader of a collaborating France. The Germans never awarded either man this questionable prize, but this did not deter the contenders from continuing their increasingly frantic efforts to ingratiate themselves with the Nazis. The third segment was the numerically largest. Most of the extreme Rightists active in the 1930s refused to cooperate with the German occupiers. They either withdrew into private life or joined the Resistance. Among the resistors was De la Rocque; he was imprisoned in a German concentration camp. At the end of the war he returned to France, where, ironically, he was put back in jail by the new French government.

Even most of the French fascists who initially cooperated with the Germans became disillusioned as the war went on. They accused the Nazi occupiers of a number of failings including a lack of political sense and revolutionary spirit, an inadequate commitment to the advancement of “national socialism,” and naked power politics. In short, the Nazis had betrayed what the French fascists insisted were the ideals of international fascism.

Most of the pitiful remnant of the Dutch NSB, isolated and despised in their homeland, collaborated with the German occupiers, albeit with varying degrees of enthusiasm. Rost van Tonningen became president of the Dutch National Bank, and Johan Feldmeijer, before the war the head of Mussert’s body guard, the Mussert Garde, headed the Dutch unit of the Waffen-SS. Unfortunately for Rost, his ardent desire to become a member of the SS could not be fulfilled. Himmler sadly informed Rost that despite his fervent belief in Nazism, his bloodlines were tainted; there was some Indonesian blood in his ancestry, and that meant he was not a full-blooded “Aryan.” Mussert, who never entirely trusted the Germans (the feeling was mutual), nevertheless made one political concession after the other in the vain hope that Hitler would appoint him head of the Dutch government. The Führer refused, and throughout the war Holland was administered by a German viceroy, the Austrian Nazi leader Arthur von Seyss-Inquart. In the final analysis, then, most of the international
fascists recognized that their attempt to square the circle was a resounding failure. The policies of national aggrandizement and military conquest were incompatible with the ideal of creating a new cooperative fascist European order. As Wolfgang Wippermann has put it, “fascism was an international phenomenon, but a Fascist Internationale was a contradiction in itself.”

The fate of the international fascists in the three countries after the Second World War was as varied as their activities during the conflict. Most of the Germans who had not perished went through the Allied de-Nazification procedures relatively unscathed. Subsequently they lived quietly in West Germany; virtually no one played a significant political role in the Federal Republic. Among those active in France, Otto Abetz was tried by a French court for crimes against the French nation and people and sentenced to twenty years hard labor. His sentence was commuted after five years and he returned to Germany, but his postwar life was cut short when he was killed in an auto accident a short time after returning to his homeland.

Among the German political leaders, Déat and Doriot remained rivals to the bitter end. They retreated with the German army and the remnants of the Vichy regime to Sigmaringen in Württemberg, and technically were colleagues in Marshal Pétain’s last cabinet. Doriot, however, took one final step in his collaboration career and became a member of the Waffen-SS. He was killed in the last days of the war in an Allied air attack. Déat was rather more fortunate. He and his wife managed to escape across the Alps to Italy, where they lived in exile near Milan for the rest of their lives. Déat supported himself and his wife by giving French lessons. In a sense his life had come full circle; Déat had been a lycée teacher before he embarked on his political career. Somewhat surprisingly, the French government made no strenuous effort to have Déat extradited.

Among the literary fascists, Drieu committed suicide in March 1945. He left a letter to his brother expressing his bitter disappointment with the German Nazis: Abetz turned out to be a weak democrat, Hitler’s anti-Semitism was suspect, and Ernst Aschenbach, the number two man at the German embassy, a “[Free] Mason, democrat, and without doubt a quarter Jew.” A number of Drieu’s fellow writers managed to survive the heat of the postwar purges in more hospitable climates. Like Déat, Châteaubriant went south, spending his exile in a small Austrian village outside of Innsbruck. Céline, who had left France with the Vichy cohort, remained in Germany until the last days of the war (he wrote an ironic account of the internecine feuds among the French entitled From Castle to Castle), but then moved on to Denmark. He returned to France in
1956. As in Déat’s case, the French governments of the Fourth Republic made no strenuous effort to have Châteaubriant and Céline extradited.

The one exception to the lenient treatment of the literary fascists was the case of Robert Brasillach. He was the only writer who was formally tried for treason, and the only intellectual actually executed for his crimes. For his admirers Brasillach was punished to whitewash the French intellectual establishment of its collaborating taint. Brasillach’s trial was controversial at the time (when the verdict of death by execution was announced, a member of the audience shouted “that is a shame,” to which Brasillach from the dock replied, “no, sir, it is an honor”), and it has remained so ever since. Some of the terms of the indictment do look a little strange with the benefit of hindsight. Among other crimes, Brasillach was accused of undermining national unity by his criticism of the Communists. After the death sentence had been pronounced, more than a hundred intellectuals, by no means all of them right-wing sympathizers, signed a petition for clemency, but the president of the French Provisional Republic, Charles de Gaulle, refused to act. Supposedly, he mistook a picture of Doriot in his Waffen-SS uniform in Brasillach’s file for a photograph of Brasillach. In rejecting clemency de Gaulle argued that he could not pardon any one who had fought in a German uniform. Brasillach, of course, had never worn a German uniform.19

The purge of the Dutch fascists was perhaps the most thorough. True, only a few NSB leaders were sentenced to death, and an even smaller number was actually executed. That group included Mussert and Feldmeijer. (Rost van Tonningen committed suicide in June 1945 while in jail at Scheveningen awaiting his trial.) However, virtually all of the NSB activists were interned for a time and ostracized from Dutch society for much longer. Stories of harassment of the children of NSB activists made the rounds for years after the war. Those affected were still bitter at their treatment a half century later.20

Did the literary fascists have careers after the Second World War? The answer is clearly yes, but not as fascists. In the years immediately after the war, the writings of the literary fascists were understandably not in great demand, but as early as 1947 a renaissance of sorts took place. In that year Jean Paulhan, a nonfascist writer with ties to the Resistance, used a journal he edited, Cahiers de la Pléiade (Notebooks of the Pleiad), to begin publishing the writings of his personal friend and well-known anti-Semite, Marcel Jouhandeau. This, according to Ze’ev Sternhell, opened the floodgates.21 Even Lucien Rebatet’s Décombres, that fierce attack on the Third Republic and effusive praise of the Third Reich, was republished (purged of some of the worst passages) in 1951 by the distinguished publishing house of Gallimard.22 Most of the literary fascists refrained from
overt political writings after the war, but there were exceptions here as well. Henry Coston, one of the leaders of the Francistes in the 1930s, continued to put out a steady stream of thinly disguised anti-Semitic and anti-Masonic diatribes for decades after the war.23

As might be expected, the memory of Robert Brasillach, the only real martyr of the cause, was placed on an especially impressive pedestal. Benoist-Mechin recalled Brasillach’s last words to him (they were incarcerated in the same jail) as a sort of oral legacy of international fascism. He also described Brasillach’s calm as he faced his fate: “In a few days one would judge him a traitor, although he had been nothing but the poet of a betrayed youth.”24 Less than five years after Brasillach’s execution, an organization called Amis de Robert Brasillach (Friends of Robert Brasillach) was founded by his literary and political admirers. It had (and has) its headquarters in Lausanne, Switzerland, and the list of founding members read like a Who's Who of what remained of the French far right and its sympathizers. The organization is still in existence, and its journal, Cahiers des Amis de Robert Brasillach (Notebooks of the Friends of Robert Brasillach), continues to be filled with adulatory pieces about Brasillach and his work.25

And what about the lines of continuity between the international fascism of the 1930s and contemporary European neo-fascism? Some of the sympathizers of the old international fascists now claim that their political forbearers were pioneers in the quest for Franco-German reconciliation and the movement for European unity.26 This is clearly a distortion of the historical record. The democratic ideals of men like Robert Schuman, Konrad Adenauer, or Carlo Schmid had nothing in common with the authoritarian and totalitarian concepts of fascism. Nevertheless, there are some apparent similarities between fascism and neo-fascism. The tradition of charismatic, populist leaders, who create movements “above the parties” and promise to address the neglected concerns of the “little man” remains unbroken. In France Pierre Poujade in the 1950s and Jean-Marie Le Pen in the 1990s fit this mold. So did Pim Fortuijn in the Netherlands at the beginning of this century. However, unlike Hitler and Mussolini, but much like Doriot, their political careers were meteoric, but brief. (To be fair, we cannot know about the future success of Pim Fortuijn in the Netherlands; the leader of the characteristically entitled “Pim Fortuijn List” was assassinated in May 2002, just before the scheduled Dutch parliamentary elections. As it turned out, even after Fortuijn’s death his List did quite well, but without its leader the movement quickly fell apart.)27

The leader syndrome has remained constant, but most of the issues that the fascists of the 1930s rode to success and sometimes to power no longer benefited the neo-fascists. Antidemocracy, anti-Semitism, and even
anticommunism are not big political drawing cards in present-day Europe. Nor, with a rapidly aging population, are demands for military prowess and the cult of youth much in vogue. As for the venerable fascist style of pseudo-military politics, this evokes ridicule rather than admiration in contemporary Europe. On the other hand, the old fascists’ concern with the “problems” of the aliens amidst the “real” Germans, French, and Dutch have remained on the front burner. All neo-fascists warn of the excessive number and influence of the “métèques” in European society. Only the nature of the alien threat has changed. It is no longer fashionable to attack Jewish immigration; Muslims have taken the place of the Jews.

Ironically, there is one area in which the neo-fascists have achieved what had always alluded the earlier international fascists. The neo-fascists really have created something like a “Fascist Internationale.” The postwar ease of intra-European travel and the technologies of the Internet have made it possible for the neo-fascists of Western Europe to exchange data bases, membership lists, and the best ways of eluding police surveillance. It is also true that political brawls, which remain a distinctive feature of the European far-Right, now have a distinctly international character with skinheads and other hooligans from many countries converging on a single city to engage in some “action.” Nevertheless, Peter Merkl, Diethelm Prowe, and others are right: Neo-fascism is not primarily a continuation of fascism, but a distinctly post-World War II and fortunately far less dangerous phenomenon than its prewar predecessor.
This page intentionally left blank
Notes

Chapter 1

1. An earlier version of this chapter appeared in the Aug. 2003 issue of the journal European Review.
3. This quotation and the following are from Ze’ev Sternhell as quoted in Robert Tombs, “Was Fascism Fleeting?” Times Literary Supplement, 14 September 2001, 26.
5. The quotation is from the Belgian fascist leader Léon Dégrelle. See his, Revolution des Âmes (Paris, 1938), pp. 149–50.
9. Frank-Lothar Kroll, Utopie als Ideologie: Geschichtsdenken und politisches Handeln im Dritten Reich (Paderborn, 1998), pp. 291–93; Ledeen,


20. For a good discussion of this aspect of fascism see, Mark Roseman, “National Socialism and Modernization,” in Fascist Italy and Nazi


23. Jeffrey Herf, Reactionary Modernism (New York, 1984); and De Felice, Fascism, p. 56.


40. Griffin, *International Fascism*, pp. 1–20, presents a good overview of the historiography of fascist studies in the last century.


44. Payne, *Fascism*, pp. 3ff and 494. See also, Robert O. Paxton, *The Anatomy of Fascism* (New York, 2004); and Christof Dipper, Rainer


68. See J.C.H. Blom, De muiterij op de “Zeven Provinciën,” 2nd ed. (Utrecht, 1983).


70. Alice Yaeger Kaplan, Reproductions of Banality: Fascism, Literature, and French Intellectual Life (Minneapolis, 1986).
Chapter 2


3. The concept of the Nazi “dual state” was first developed by Ernst Fraenkel, *The Dual State* (London, 1941 [reprint: New York, 1969]). An excellent introduction to various facets of the Third Reich is the essay collection, Karl Dietrich Bracher et al., eds., *Deutschland, 1933–1945* (Düsseldorf, 1992).


11. Rosenberg and some Dutch fascists established contacts with each other as early as 1931. See, de Joode to RMI, 25 April 1936, PA/AA, R 102892.


16. For the Foreign Office’s views on Goebbels’s establishment see, Bülow to Köster, 15 March 1934 (top secret), PA/AA, Büro StS, Pol. B/94/2.

17. Goebbels’s diaries are sprinkled with attacks on the Foreign Office, Ribbentrop and Germany’s professional diplomats. The Propaganda Minister and Hitler were especially critical of the Reich’s ambassadors in Paris, Roland Köster and his successor Count Welczek, and the German minister at The Hague, Count von Zech-Burkersroda. See, for example, *Tagebücher*, II: 421 (17 May 1933), III: 21, 33, 126, and 163 (25 Jan., 4 Feb., 28 April, and 3 June 1937).


21. In his apologetic memoirs, Abetz wrote, “no statesman was more honestly interested in preserving peace between Germany and France than Ribbentrop.” See, Abetz, *Problem*, p. 51.

22. This is the term used by Gérard Loiseaux, *La littérature de la défaite et la collaboration* (Paris, 1984). Abetz tells his version of the “charm offensive” in *Problem*.
23. For Likus’s contacts with Dutch fascists see, A.A. Mussert, “Dagboek van Mussert,” May–Sept. 1940, p.6 (30 May 1940), NIOD, AM, 3/E.


25. For information on the *Fichtebund*’s operations in France, see the report of the Paris Préfecture de Police, 24 June 1938, AN, F7 12966.


29. See the documentation in, BAB, R 58/988.


31. Andreas Wirsching, “Politische Gewalt in der Krise der Demokratie in Deutschland und Frankreich der Zwischenkriegszeit,” in *Demokratie in Deutschland und Frankreich 1918–1933/40: Beiträge zu einem historischen Vergleich*, eds. Horst Möller and Manfred Kittel (Munich, 2002), 131–150.
32. See the documentation in, APP, BA/1960. See also, Ze’ev Sternhell, *Neither Right Nor Left*, p. 296.


37. For a police description of the anti-Semitic organizations active in Paris in July 1939 see, Paul J. Kingston, ed., *Anti-Semitism in France during the 1930s* (Hull, GB, 1983). See also, Kingston’s incisive introduction to this report in, ibid. For an analysis of French anti-Semitism in the 1930s see esp., Schor, *L’Antisémitisme*.


43. For a police report on membership figures and complaints about the inactivity of the leadership see, Préfecture de Police to Sûreté Générale, 8 May 1933, APP, B/A 1951.


48. On the SF’s activities and supporters see the police reports on the Parisian sections of the organization in, AN, F 7, 13238 and 13239; and APP, B/A, 1960. See also, Robert Soucy, *French Fascism: The First Phase, 1924–1933* (New Haven, CT, 1985), esp. chap. 3; Millman, *Question*, p. 185; Klaus-Jürgen Müller, “Faschismus in Frankreichs Dritter Republik?: Zum Problem der Überlebensfähigkeit der französischen Demokratie zwischen den Weltkriegen,” in *Demokratie in Deutschland und Frankreich, 1918–1933/40: Beiträge zu einem historischen Vergleich*, ed. Horst Möller and Manfred Kittel (Munich, 2002), pp. 91–130.


52. The quotation is from Jean Boissel quoted in, *Weltdienst* to RSHA, 20 Nov. 1936, BA, R 58/588. On Coston and his activities see the police


60. For a panegyric account of Doriot, the PPF's program, and its fascist character see the memoirs of the party's former secretary general, Victor Barthélémy, *Du communisme au fascisme: L'histoire d'un engagement politique* (Paris, 1978), p. 93–95.


70. For good descriptions of the many small periodicals see, Verdès-Leroux, Refus, pp. 18–20; and Schor, L’Anti-Sémitisme, pp. 29ff.


74. Quoted in Burrin, Dérive, p. 80.


77. The quotation is from Rebatet, Décombres, p. 11. See also, Carroll, Fascism, p. 13; and Loiseaux, Litterature, p. 189.


82. Mabire, *Drieu*, p. 84; and Balvet, *Itinéraire*, pp. 106ff, 125ff, and 142ff. See also Pierre Drieu La Rochelle, *L’Europe contre les patries* (Paris, 1931), pp. 54 and 147.


87. For the Dutch fascists’ attempt to link their ideas with Holland’s heroic past, see Ronald Havenaar, *De NSB tussen nationalism en “volkse” solidariteit* (Den Haag, 1983), pp. 19ff and 58. See also, Ivo Schöffer, *Het nationaal-socialistische beeld van de geschiedenis der Nederlanden* (Amsterdam, 1956).

88. On the NSNAP and its organizational vagaries, see esp. J.A.H. Hollander, “De NSNAP Kruijt: Een nationaal-socialistische splinterpartij in

89. The NSB used fascism and national socialism as interchangeable concepts. See the party’s official history C. van Geelkerken, ed., Voor Volk en Vaderland: Tien jaren Strijd van NSB der Nederlanden, 1931–14 December 1941, 2nd ed. ([Utrecht], 1943), p. 19; and M.C. van den Toorn, Dietsch en volkisch: ten verkenning van het taalgebruik der nationaal-socialisten in Nederland (Groningen, 1975), p. 49.

90. Volk en Vaderland (hereafter Vova), 15 July 1933, and 24 March 1934; and NSB, Afd.[eling] Prop.[agenda]to F.E.H. Goenman, 12 April 1933, NIOD, NSBA/1c.


92. For Geelkerken’s political evolution, see Bart van der Boom, Kees van Geelkerken: De rechterhand van Mussert (Utrecht, 1990), pp. 13 and 19.


100. For complaints on the NSB’s lack of polish and discipline, see Farwerck to de Jager Meezenbrock, 10 Feb. 1936, NIOD, NSBA/10d.

101. Boom, Geelkerken, pp. 12 and 21; and Farwerck to NSB-Propagandaleider Duitsland, Feb. 1934, and Reichsschulungsamt der NSDAP, 22 Aug. 1934, NIOD, NSBA/P-3a and 5c resp. Interestingly, Farwerck specifically excluded anti-Semitic propaganda material from his request. See also, the documentation in ibid., 49 NIOD, NSBA/P-49. For a report on Mussert’s trip to Düsseldorf see, German Legation Den Haag, “Aufzeichnung,” 21 April 1932, PA/AA, Ges. Den Haag, Pol. 4, Bd. 1.


Chapter 3


3. On the Nazis’ economic and fiscal policies see, Willi A. Boelcke, Die Kosten von Hitlers Krieg: Kriegsfinanzierung und finanzielles Kriegserbe in Deutschland, 1933–1948 (Paderborn, 1985); Richard J. Overy, The Nazi


8. The quotations are from Röhm’s April 1934 address to the diplomatic corps in Berlin, Revolution, pp. 19 and 20. The most detailed recent analysis of Röhm’s ideas is Peter Longerich, Die braunen Bataillone: Geschichte der SA (Munich, 1989).

9. Goebbels ordered that Röhm’s remarks to the foreign diplomats, which included the quotation cited above, be given “prominent coverage” (bevorzugt aufgemacht) by the German press. See, RMVP, Presseanw., II:190 (18 April 1934).

10. The most detailed analyses of the purge and its preparation are in, Heinz Höhne, Mordsache Röhm—Hitlers Durchbruch zur Alleinherrschaft, 1933–1934 (Hamburg, 1984); and Die Zeit der Illusionen: Hitler und die Anfänge des Dritten Reiches (Düsseldorf, 1991); and Longerich, SA, pp. 165ff. Höhne, Mordsache, pp. 319–21 supplies the most accurate list of those executed.


13. The press was ordered not even to mention a meeting between Hitler and Müller in February 1934. See, RMVP, Presseanw., II:61–62 (2 Feb. 1934).


16. By the end of 1933, approximately 25,000 German emigrants had found refuge in France. See, Rita R. Thalmann, “Die Emigration aus Deutschland und die öffentliche Meinung Frankreichs 1933 bis 1939,” in Das Unrechtsregime, ed. Ursula Büttner, et al. (Hamburg, 1986), II:249–50 and 254.

17. The quotation is from Marcel Déat, “Mémoires,” XIV-5 (Déat Papers, Hoover Institution, Stanford University, Box 1, Part 1 [hereafter: Déat Papers]). The most detailed analyses of French anti-Semitism in the 1930s are Pierre Birnbaum, Anti-Semitism in France: A Political History from Léon Blum to the Present, trans. Miriam Kochan (Oxford, 1992); and Ralph Schor, L’Antisémitisme en France pendant les années trente (Brussels, 1992). See also, the report of the Préfecture de Police, Paris, 3 Jan. 1934, B/A 1907 (Archive de la Préfecture de Police, Paris [hereafter: APP]).


36. See, Ihlefeld (the correspondent of the *Angriff* in Paris), 20 Dec. 1933 (Politisches Archiv des Auswärtigen Amtes [hereafter: PA/AA], Bot.Par., V 2, Bd. 4; the correspondence between Köster and Heide, 3 to 19 Jan. 1934, ibid., V 5, Bd. 8; and the report of a French agent in, ibid., I Fr. 2 adh. 2, Bd. 2). See also, Friedrich Grimm’s “Frankreich-Berichte,” in Grimm papers (Bundesarchiv Berlin [hereafter: BAB]). After the war, Grimm published a selection of these reports as *Frankreich-Berichte, 1934–1944* (Bodmann/Bodensee, 1972).


41. See, RMVP, *Presseanw.,* II:72 (7 Feb. 1934). Grimm in his “Frankreich-Berichte” of 13 and 25 Feb. and 23 March 1934, and Heinrich XXXIII Reuss, “Aufzeichnungen,” Dec. 1933, BAB, Sammlung Schumacher/268, judged the “fascist wave” in France to be far stronger than did the professional diplomats in the German embassy. For the latter’s views after
the riots see, Köster to AA, 4 Aug. 1933, PA/AA, Presseabt. P 16, Bd. 3, Fach 34/35, Paket 74/1; and the reports of 22 June, 6 and 19 July 1934, PA/AA, Bot. Par. 550b, Bd. 26; and 14 May 1934, PA/AA, Geheimakten 1920–36, Pol 5 (Fr), Bd. 3.


45. In July, 1934 Hess gave an interview to Jean Renaud, the head of the SF. The two men agreed that true Franco-German rapprochement could come only after the Jews had been expelled from Germany and France. See, Richard Millman, La question juive entre les deux guerres: Légues de droite et l’anti-sémitisme en France (Paris, 1992), pp. 180–81.


47. On Drieu’s visit to the 1934 congress see, Robert Soucy, Fascist Intellectual: Drieu La Rochelle (Berkeley, CA, 1979), pp. 75–76.


49. RMVP, Presseanw., I:32 (24 June 1933).

50. See, Köster to AA, 4 Aug. 1933, PA/AA, Presseabt. P 16, Bd. 3, Fach 35/35, Paket 74/1. This was not for want of trying. See, Abetz’ list of journalistic contacts in, Abetz papers, LXXI–113 (Centre Documentation


53. See, Sûreté Commissaire Spécial Colmar to Préfet Haut-Rhin, 7 April 1934, AN, F7 13238.


55. See, German embassy Paris to AA, 12 May 1934, PA/AA, Bot. Par., V 5, Bd. 9, Paket 691a; and the effusive article in, Der Stürmer 21 (1 July, 1943).

56. See, for example, German embassy Paris to Propaganda Ministry, 11 June 1934, PA/AA, Pol. Abt. II, Pol. 2 C, Bd. 21 on possible subsidies for La Libre Parole. See, the requests for subsidies by (and the German reaction) such self-styled defenders of the “New Germany” as René Ozanne (Encyclopédie), Jeantet and Pierrot (Je suis partout), de Latour (L’Action Sociale), Pierre Pichon (La Protection Parisienne), and de Bisschop (Parti national social populaire) in PA/AA, Pol. Abt. II, Pol. 29 Fr, Bd. 1, Presseabt. Fr 2, Bd. 8, and Bot. Paris, V 5, Bd. 7–9, Paket 690b, and VI 5, Bd. 3.


59. Bremer, Nationalismus, pp. 108 and 118–19. For a list of whom the Nazis regarded as “intellectual rejuvenators” in France see, Paul Disterbarth, Neues Werden in Frankreich (Stuttgart, 1938).


61. On the AO’s “unbelievable” activities see, Zech to AA, July 1933 (not sent) PA/AA, Ges. Den Haag, Pol. 4, Bd. 1; German consulate Heerlen to AA, 24 April 1934, PA/AA, Pol. Abt. II, Pol. 29 Ni, Bd. 2; and Bülow, “Aufzeichnung,” 26 July 1933, PA/AA, Bü. StS., AD, 81/2. See also,


63. On the AO’s pro-NSB attitude see, Donald M. McKale, The Swastika Outside Germany (Kent, OH, 1977), p. 25.


68. The NSB’s version of the Goch affair is in Volk en Vaderland [hereafter: Vova], 20 March 1933. See also, Meyers, Mussert, p. 133.

69. For a report on the continuing violence between supporters of the NSNAP and the NSB in Germany see, Gestapo headquarters to AA, 18 June 1934, PA/AA, Pol. Abt. II, Pol. 29 Ni. For NSB complaints about the Nazis’ continuing support of the NSNAP see, Huybers (the NSB’s chief of propaganda in Germany) to Mussert, 25 Aug. 1933, NIOD/NSBA, 267g.

70. See, for example, Pamphlet, 3 and 17 Feb. 1933. See also, Eckert, Revolution, p. 113, n. 97, and p. 114. The French-language version of Mein Kampf was entitled Ma Doctrine (Paris, 1934).

71. Quoted in, Burrin, Dérive, p. 255.


74. See, *La Solidarité Française*, 29 June 1933; *L’Ami du Peuple*, 7 and 27 July 1933; Marcel Déat, “Nein, kein Nationalsozialismus,” *Das Neue Tagebuch* 1, no. 5 (29 July 1933): 113; and the report on an SF meeting in Amiens in, Commissariat Central de Police to Sûreté Générale, 23 April 1934, AN, F 7 13238. See also, Soucy, *Second Wave*, pp. 40–41.


103. See, Farwerck to v.d. Hoeven (the NSB’s leader in Hamburg), 14 (quotation) and 22 Dec. 1933, NIOD/NSBA, P 2d and 267g; and Mussert, “Koort Overzicht van den strijd der Nationaal-Socialistische Beweging in Nederland,” p. 4, Dec. 1940, NIOD/NSBA, L 15g. See also, Farwerck to Kleinman, 3 Jan. 1934, NIOD/NSBA, P 3a; *Vova*, 4 Nov. 1933; Blockzijl, *Ik*, p. 167; and Havenaar, *NSB*, p. 15. On the NSB’s
early efforts to establish contact with Nazi agencies see, d’Ansembourg to Mussert, 3 Nov. and 21 Dec. 1933, NIOD/NSBA, 249a.

104. For the chronological “phases” of the NSB’s position on organized Christianity see, Harmjan Dam, De NSB en de kerken: de opstelling in de Nationaal socialistische beweging in Nederland ten opzichte van het Christendom en met name de Gereformeerde Kerken (Kampen, 1986), pp. 163ff.


107. Propagandaleider Duitsland to Farwerck, 16 Jan. 1934, NIOD/NSBA, P 2d, P 2c, and P-3e resp. On the growing anti-Semitism in the NSB see, Farwerck to editor of De Daad, 9 Oct. 1933, and v. Houten to Mussert, 6 April 1934, NIOD/NSBA, P-2b and L 4a resp.; and Vova, 2 Dec. 1933. For the NSB’s attempts to defend itself against German criticism see, d’Ansembourg to editor of Der Mittag, 22 May 1934, NIOD/NSBA, 249c.

108. Farwerck to J. Bouwmans, 12 Aug. 1933, NIOD/NSBA, 267g. See also, de Jonge, NS, p. 92; and Galen Last, Storm, pp. 22–26.

109. Propagandainspecteur Noord Holland to Farwerck, 6 Dec. 1933; Farwerck to G. Hollander, 8 Jan. 1934, NIOD/NSBA, 267g.

110. The quotation is from a report of a conversation between d’Ansembourg and the German consul in Heerlen. See, German consulate in Heerlen to German legation in Den Haag, 21 March 1935, PA/AA, Ges. Den Haag, Pol 4, Bd. 3.

111. Vova, 7 July 1934. The article is unsigned, but internal evidence points to Mussert as the author.

112. Vova, 14 July 1934. This article, entitled “De Duitsche les,” lists Mussert as author.


114. Vova, 1 April and 21 Oct. 1933.

115. De Jonge, NS, p. 94.
Chapter 4


25. See the documentation in, AN, F7, 13241/3, esp. the Sureté report of 12 July 1935; and Pierre Pucheu, Ma Vie (Paris, 1948), p. 72.


28. German embassy Paris to AA, 12 April 1937, PA/AA, 102856. See, the police reports on these and a number of other Ersatz-ligues in Anti-Semitism in France during the 1930s, ed. Paul J. Kingston (Hull, GB, 1983); and the documentation in, APP , B/A, 1961.


34. Vellenga, Limburg, pp. 43, 75, 112–13, and 145.


44. On Rost’s intellectual and emotional relationship to the German Nazis see his letter to Seyss-Inquart, 3 Dec. 1940, and his letter to Mussert, 22 Oct. 1941 in, Meinoud Marinus Rost van Tonningen, Correspondentie van Mr. M.M. Rost van Tonningen, ed. E. Fraenkel-Verkade and A.J. van der Leeuw, (Den Haag, 1967), I: 727. See also, Ronald Havenaar, De NSB tussen nationalisme en volkssolidariteit: De vooroorlogse ideologie van het Nationaal-Socialistische Beweging in Nederland (Den Haag, 1984), pp. 113ff; and Jan Meyers, Mussert: Een politiek leven (Amsterdam, 1984), pp. 147, 179, and 194.

45. de Jong, Voorspel, p. 296; and de Jonge, NS, p. 154.

46. For assessments of the NSB’s 1935/36 crisis from within the party see, A. Droos to W.G. Nieuwenkamp, 14 Feb. 1936, and C. Vermaas to v. Duyl, 14 April 1936, RvO/NSBA, 10d and 70c resp.

47. Geelkerken, Volk, pp. 111, 218ff, and 230. For the growth of anti-Semitism in the NSB see esp., de Jonge, NS; pp. 93 and 104ff; and for Mussert’s claim that the Jews were behind the campaign to destroy the NSB see, his address, “12 Jahre aus der Vogelperspektive,” pp. 4–5 (11 Dec. 1943), BAB, NS 26/678.


52. See, *Stürmer* 14, no. 1 (Jan. 1936); and the report by the AAHB to AA and the Propaganda Ministry, 27 Aug. 1934, PA/AA, Presseabt., P 20, Bd. 5; “Note Jean,” 18 July, 1935, AN, F7, 12960 (The German embassy routinely received confidential information from “Jean,” but it is not clear whether Jean was a generic code name for several agents or whether Jean was a single, double agent); Ribbentrop, “Notiz für den Führer,” 22 Jan. 1936, BA, NS 10/93; Abetz to AA, 10 March 1942, PA/AA, UStS, Luther, Bd. 11; *Weltidianer* (Reißler) to AA, 18 April 1942, PA/AA, Inl. II, A/B, 83-26, Bd. 4; and Friedrich Grimm, “Lebenserinnerungen eines deutschen Rechtsanwalts,” (typescript ms., ca. 1949), VI: 243, Grimm papers, 6.


56. For the Sureté’s reports on Abetz and other Nazi agents see the various “Notes Jean,” AN, F7, 12961.


67. For information on invitations to the Nazi party congresses see the documentation in, PA/AA, UStS. Luther, Bd. 31, Pol. Abt. II, Pol. 2C, Bd. 2; and “Note Jean,” 17 Sept. 1935, AN, F”, 12960. The AA’s complaints are in, Luther, “Mitteilung an Pg. Büttner,” 7 July 1937, PA/AA, Inl. I-Partei, 82-09, 76/2 II.
68. For a report on Hess’s speech see, German embassy Paris (Köster) to AA, 11 July 1934, PA/AA, Pol. Abt. II, Pol. 2 Fr., Bd. 1.


76. See the documentation in, PA/AA, Pol. Abt. II, Pol. 2C Fr., Bd. 6; and Alfred Kupferman, “Diplomatie parallèle et guerre psychologique: Le rôle de la Ribbentrop Dienststelle . . . 1934–39,” Relations internationales, no. 3 (July 1975): p. 84. See also, Lambauer, Abetz, pp. 84ff and 104. For a highly favorable view of Abetz’ efforts see, Saint-Paulien, Collaboration, pp. 14–15.

77. Lambauer, Abetz, pp. 84–85.


81. For the AA’s basic position see, AA to Reich Ministry of the Interior, 8 July 1934, PA/AA, Pol. Abt. II, Pol. 29 Ni, Bd. 2; for official Dutch criticism of the AO see the documentation in BA, R 43 II/1411; Graeff to Limburg Stirum, 26 Nov. 1934, 13 April 1935, and 26 Jan. 1936, in Graeff, Voor U, pp. 73, 92–96, and 121; and for the AO’s complaints about Dutch “harassments” (Schikanen) of its activities see, AO to AA, 12 Nov. 1935, PA/AA, Ges. Den Haag, Pol. 3, Nr. 5b, Bd. 1.


83. See, the documentation in, BAB, R 55/20939; and Vree, Pers, pp. 88ff and 114–15.

84. See, the documentation in, PA/AA, Ges. Den Haag, P 3, Ni 8.


87. See, P.G. de Jager Meezenbroek to Farwerck, 12 March 1935, RvO/NSBA, 7b; and Blanche Koelensmid to NSB headquarters, 31 March 1935, ibid., 7c. See also, Fraenkel-Verkade, “Inleiding,” pp. 26–27 and 51–53. For correspondence between the RKPV and the press attaché at the German legation on the use of a straw man to distribute German propaganda see, Heismann to Faber, 4 Nov. 1935, BAB, R 55/20930.


91. On rumors of Nazi financial support for the NSB see, Het Volk, 13 July 1935; Algemeen Handelsblad, 26 Nov. 1935; Boltze to Dutch Foreign Ministry, 27 Nov. 1935, PA/AA, Ges. Den Haag, Pol. 4, Bd. 3; and the prosecutor’s statement at Mussert’s trial, 28 Nov. 1945, NIOD, AM, 3/G.


93. See the Stürmer’s article on the NSNAP’s “national congress,” 7 Oct. 1935; and the NSNAP’s own assessment of its present strength and future prospects in, B. [sic] to Bruckhaus (AA), 22 May 1935, PA/AA, Presseabt., Ni 4, Bd. 4, Fach 155, Paket 326.


100. For Rebatet’s testimony on his path from Maurrassian anti-Semitism to Hitlerian anti-Semitism see, *Décombres*, pp. 23–27. See also, Schor, *L’Antisémitisme*, pp. 153ff and 183–86.


104. See the police report on a Francistes rally, 11 July 1935, AN, F7, 13241/4.


106. For the favorable impression which the RAD camps made on French journalists see, the report by Müller Brandenburg, 29 April 1935, Müller-Brandenburg to AA, 23 Sept. 1936, and German embassy Paris to AA, 8 Feb. 1935, all in PA/AA, Bot. Paris, V-20, Bd. 1.


108. Laloire, *Allemagne*, pp. 260 and 266. Incidentally, most RAD camps did have small libraries, although they were typically stocked only with Nazi propaganda materials.


112. This phrase, from a private letter, has been widely quoted. See, for example, Avril, “Drieu,” p. 388; Pfeil, “Frontgeneration,” p. 116; and Leibovici, *Sang*, pp. 265–66. Incidentally, after Nuremberg, Drieu went on to visit the concentration camp at Dachau, where he was impressed with the camp’s “admirable comfort and frank severity.” See, Pierre Andreu and Frédéric, *Drieu La Rochelle* (Paris, 1979), p. 440.

113. Quoted in, Burrin, *Dérive*, p. 149.


116. The quotation is from the police report on an SF meeting, 2 Feb. 1935, APP, B/A, 1960. See also, Burrin, *Dérive*, p. 67.


120. See, among numerous instances, Luchaire in *Notre Temps*, 23 March 1935; Goy’s report on his meeting with Hitler, 13 Dec. 1934, AN, F7, 12963; the police report on Bucard’s address at a Francistes meeting, 14 Nov. 1935, APP, B/A, 1907; and “Note Jean,” 20 April 1936, AN, F7, 12961.


123. The Bertrand quotation is from German consulate general Marseille to AA, 23 March 1935, PA/AA, Pol. Abt. II, Pol. 2C Fr., Bd. 23. For a German assessment of Bertrand see, German embassy Paris (Köster) to AA, 22 May 1935, PA/AA, Presseabt., Fr. 4, Bd. 4.


125. See, the police report on an election rally address by Taittinger, 12 March 1936, AN, F7, 12964. See also, A. Fabre-Luce, *25 (I)*, p. 169; Burrin,
132. *Vova*, 6 July 1935; and W. Huybers (NSB propaganda chief in Germany) to Goebbels, 3 March 1934, StAHbg, Aufklärungsausschuss Hamburg-Bremen, Nr. 9, Bd. 2. For Mussert’s fulsome praise of conditions in Germany see, Zech to AA, 16 Nov. 1934 and 15 May 1936, PA/AA, Ges. Den Haag, Pol. 4, Bd. 2 and 3.
135. Quoted in, Bruinsma, “Marchant,” p. 44. See also, Otto, *Bewegungen*, p. 93.
137. For the NSB’s official view on the “Jewish question” at this time see, Farwerck to Levy, 17 May 1935, RvO/NSBA, 8a; and for the völkisch wing’s attitude on the same issue, Fraenkel-Verkade, “Inleiding,” pp. 37–39. Examples of anti-Semitism and *Germanentümmelei* are in, *Vova*, 13 July 1935 and 24 April 1936. For the NSB’s “support” of Zionism see, *Vova*, 1 Feb. 1936; and Mussert’s address, ca. Feb. 1936, NIOD, NSBA, L-7d.
138. For the Nazis’ own recognition of this, see the documentation in, PA/AA, Inl. I-Partei, 82-35A, 87/2.
139. Farwerck to H.G. Kengen, 19 March 1935, and J. Levelt, 23 April 1935, NIOD, NSBA, 4b and 7d. See also, Dam, Kerken, pp. 120–21.
140. D’Ansembourg to the abbot of the monastery of Maria Laach and to Dr. Paul Nieborowski, 26 June and 19 Sept. 1934, NIOD, NSBA, 249d; and Vova, 13 April 1935. See the apologetic account of church-state relations in Germany by the fellow-traveling head of the NCPB (and secret NSB member) H.W. van der Vaart Smit, De Duitse Kerkstrijd (Amsterdam, 1935), pp. 44–45 and 108.
142. For the NSB’s efforts to persuade the Germans to ease up on their attacks on the churches see, d’Ansembourg to Farwerck, 2 May 1935, NIOD, NSBA, 8a.
143. NSB, Wit-Geel, pp. 17–18. See also, d’Ansembourg to Freiherr v. Nagel, 20 June 1936, NIOD, NSBA, 251c; and Vova, 10 Nov. 1934, 23 Nov. 1935, and 8 Feb. and 17 April 1936.
144. For examples of NSB reports on the thriving life of German Catholicism see, Vova, 2 June 1934, and 6 July and 23 Nov. 1935. These reports were supplied by the Pro Deo et Patria agency.
148. Chevalier to Mussert, 4 May 1935, NIOD, NSBA, 8a. The district leader of Gooi-Noord argued along similar lines. See, his letter to Farwerck, 16 Sept. 1935, ibid., 5d.
149. Quoted in, Bruinsma, “Marchant,” p. 42.
151. Vova, 1 April 1934; and Lindeman, ed., Nationalisme, p. 130.
Chapter 5

2. Ibid., IV/1:522 (22 May 1936).


15. See, for example, the police report on a speech by Emil Bergéron, 21 Jan. 1938, APP, B/A, 1951; and the handbill issued by the SF and distributed by students at the Sorbonne in June 1936. It is enclosed in, Préfecture de Police to Sureté Générale, 29 June 1936, APP, B/A, 1962. See also, Hans Wendt, Frankreich heute und wir: Ein blau-weiß-rotes ABC (Berlin, 1939), p. 171.


in Deutschland und Frankreich, 1918–1933/40: Beiträge zu einem historischen Vergleich, ed. Horst Möller and Manfred Kittel (Munich, 2002), pp. 142–43 and 127 resp.

22. See, Prefect of Police, “[Information],” 9 July 1936, APP, B/A, 1962; Coston, Partis, pp. 72–73; Soucy, Second Wave, p. 118; and Maurice Pujo, Comment la Rocque a trahi (Paris, 1937), pp. 185–86. For a highly favorable account of De la Rocque's relations with the government see, François Veuillot, La Rocque et son parti comme je les ai vus (Paris, 1938), pp. 14ff.


32. See, the documentation in APP, B/A, 1946 and 1951; Wolf, Doriot, pp. 186–89; the series of interviews in Gringoire, April to June 1937. The most detailed study of the Front de la Liberté is, Philippe Machefer,

33. Prefecture de Police, “[Information],” 10 June and 18 Dec. 1937, APP, B/A, 1946. See also, Brunet, “PPF-Fascisme,” p. 180 (quotation), and Diorio, pp. 269–75.

34. Brasillach, Guerre, p. 247.


38. For a good summary of the NSB’s campaign themes see, Mussert’s notes for his standard stump speech, “Onze strijd,” NIOD, NSBA, 51a. For expectations of an NSB victory see especially, Vova, 16 April 1937.


40. The first quotation is from Geelkerken, Volk, p. 313, and the second from a report by the ND (27 May 1937) on a speech by Mussert in Amsterdam.


42. See, Mussert’s brief for his appeal to the Court van Cassatie, Dec. 1945–Jan. 1946, p. 7, NIOD, AM, 6/K; and the report of the DNB representative in Djarkarta, 27 Nov. 1936, PA/AA, Büro Ribbentrop, VB 1/1, Teil 1. See also, the NSB’s Indië Programma,”


45. See, the draft of Mussert’ speech in, NIOD, NSBA, L/9i. See also, Geelkerken, Volk, pp. 307–12. For the increasing influence of the radicals on Mussert’s speeches see, Roskam’s notes for an address by Mussert, 22 May 1938, NIOD, NSBA, L/12.


50. See, for example, RMVP, Presseanw., IV/1: 467 (4 May 1936), IV/2: 1012 and 1112 (7 Sept. and 25 Sept. 1936), and V/1:doc. 117 (14 Jan. 1937), doc. 671 and 678 (17 and 18 March 1937). The minister’s diary is also full of references to France’s problems. See, Goebbels, Tgb., V: 78–79, and 100 (31 Dec. 1937, 1, 15, and 30 Jan. 1938).


56. See, the long and detailed report by Welczeck to Foreign Office, 8 June 1937, PA/AA, Pol.Abtl.II, Fr. 5, Bd. 2. For a more positive assessment of the PSF’s attitude toward Nazi Germany see, Abetz, “Notiz für Pg. Kramarz,” 20 July 1937, PA/AA, Abt. Inl., I-Partei, 82-09, 76/2/5.


59. APA to the Büro des Adjudanten des Führers, June 1937, BAB, NS 10/63.


PA/AA, Dienstst. Ribb., DEG at al, 16/4, 1937–40, and BAB, R 43 II/1440. See also, Goebbels, Tgb., III:276 (24 Sept. 1937). For the resurrection of Grimm’s project see below, p. 000.


67. See, the documentation in, PA/AA, R 102843 (the quotation is from, AA, “Aufzeichnung,” 18 Jan. 1938); and RMVP, Presseanw., VI/3:499 (23 May 1938).


70. See, the documentation in, PA/AA, Inl. I, Partei, 80-09, 76/1 II-76/2 II. For Rosenberg’s complaints about Ribbentrop’s and Goebbels’ attempts to push the APA aside see, Rosenberg to Hitler, 24 Sept. 1936, BAB, NS 10/62.


80. Stoop, Presse, pp. 94 and 206–7.


82. See, German legation Den Haag (Boltze) to AA, 26 Feb. 1937, PA/AA, Pol. Abt. II, Pol. 29 Ni, Bd. 2; and German consul in Batavia to AA, 11 Aug. 1936, PA/AA, R 102892. For the RMVP’s criticism of excessively favorable stories on the NSB see, RMVP, Presseanw., V/2:docs. 1240 and 1259 (27 March and 19 May 1937).


84. The quotations are from a Gestapo/Auslandsdienst report, “Bericht Nr. 393/1937,” 9 Feb. 1937; Goebbels, Tagebücher, III:692 (3 Oct. 1936) (“Bertvom” is a misidentification; the visitor is undoubtedly Rost van Tonning), and II:730 (18 Nov. 1936), and IV:477–78 (21 Jan. 1941). See also, Meyers, Mussert, p. 163.


86. See, the documentation in PA/AA, Inl. II, A/B, 83-80E, Bd. 1 on the distribution in Holland of Goebbels’ 1936 Nazi Party Congress speech, Der Bolschewismus.


91. See, the documentation in, PA/AA, Inl. I, Partei, 80-09/76/1 I-II and 2 II. Marchant’s reports on the 1936 Nuremberg congress are in, NIOD, NSBA/251d. See also, Fraenkel-Verkade, “Inleiding,” pp. 38–39, and Rost, *Correspondentie*, I:331, 336, and 331, n.4 and 5. For the difficulties of compiling a list of suitable Dutch invitees see, the documentation in, PA/AA, Ges. Den Haag, DPol. 3, Bd. 1.


93. Wolf (AA), “Aktennotiz” (secret), 1 Oct. 1936, PA/AA, Preeabt. Ni 4, Bd. 4, Fach 155, Paket 326. See also, Mussert’s memo on his meeting with the president of the German Advertising Council, 17 Nov. 1936, NIOD, AM/3-G. For an example of a full-page ad by the *Deutsches Verkehrsbüro* see, ND, 4 June 1937.


104. *JSP*, 24 April 1937. The journal also carried a regular travel column, “En zig-zag à travers le Reich.”


110. Châteaubriant to [Wiedemann], 6 July 1937, BAB, NS 10/43. The original German reads as follows: “welches tiefe Gefühl mich bei dem Gedanken erfüllt, sobald mit dem Führer . . . ein Gespräch . . . zu haben. Mit einem unendlichen Hochgefühl werde ich nach Berchtesgaden pilgern.” Goebbels was right that Châteaubriant “was really taken with us [ganz vollgesogen von uns].” See, Goebbels, *Tgb.* II:710 (29 Oct. 1936).


114. *Le Franciste*, 30 Aug. 1936. As a result of this publication, Bucard was sentenced to six months in jail for subversion. See, the undated note in, PA/AA, Bot. Paris, I Fr. 2, adh. 2, Bd. 2.

115. The quotation is from a speech by Gaston Henry-Haye, then the mayor of Versailles and later the Vichy ambassador to the United States, to a meeting of the Rhineland branch of the Deutsch-Französische Gesellschaft, 28 May 1937. See PA/AA, Dienstst. Ribbentrop, DEG et al, 16/4, 1937–1940.

116. Marcel Déat, “Mémoires,” Déat Papers, Hoover Institution, Stanford University, XVII:12–14. See also, the police reports on a PPF meeting welcoming returning volunteers who had fought for the Nationalist side in Spain, 10 Feb. 1937, and on a PRNS meeting, 6 Nov. 1937, AN, F7, 12966, and APP, B/A, 1951, resp.


120. “Twee machten botsen,” *Vova*, 4 June 1937. See also, *ND*, 9 and 11 Nov. 1936; and Mussert’s notes for various speeches, 19 April to 4 May 1937, NIOD, NSBA, L/5 A.

121. The tenor of such propaganda was indicated by *Vova’s* rhetorical question if it was really “coincidental” that the caps worn by the Red Army resembled medieval Jews’ hats. (26 Feb. 1937). See also, Havenaar, *NSB*, p. 132.


123. *Vova*, 11 and 25 Sept. and 11 Dec. 1936, and 6 Aug. and 3 Sept. 1937; and *ND*, 3–29 May, 8 June, and 14 and 23 July 1937. See also, NSB,


125. See, for example, Vova, 2 April 1937; and ND, 3 Dec. 1936, and 5 and 27 July 1937. The reporting on economic affairs was more extensive in ND than in Vova and many of the unsigned articles in ND were obviously written by the paper’s editor, Rost van Tonningen. See also, the NSB’s campaign handout for the 1937 election, NIOD, NSBA/51a.


128. The quotations are from Vova, 31 July and 3 Sept. 1937. See also, ND, 16 Oct. 1937.


131. See, Mussert’s handwritten notes on his Berlin visit 15–22 Nov. 1936, NIOD, AM/3G; and his diary entries, “Berlijnsche reis,” in NIOD, NSBA/L-6 b. The quotations are from the diary entries. The diary was printed as part of the supporting materials for Mussert’s postwar trial for treason. See, NIOD, ed., Het Proces Mussert (The Hague, 1948 [reprint: Amsterdam, 1987]), pp. 311–14. See also, Meyers, Mussert, pp. 311–14.


133. Boom, Geelkerken, p. 41.

134. NSB, Afdeling IV to Afdeling III, 3 May 1937, NIOD, NSBA/13e.

135. See, ND, 18 Dec. 1936, 5 April and 23 July 1937.

136. See, Vova, 14 March and 19 June 1936.


138. Mussert to an unnamed NSB member, 4 Aug. 1936, NIOD, NSBA/L-6 F; and Marchant to Geesteramus, 9 Nov. 1936, ibid./251e. See also, ND, 10 Dec. 1936.


141. During his meeting with Müller-Brandenburg, the RAD’s chief of staff, Mussert noted that the Dutch were afraid of Germany, and that he, too, “could not deny a little fear.” See, Müller-Brandenburg to AA,

142. See, Mussert’s notes on his meeting with Göring, 18 Nov. 1936, NIOD, AM/3 g. See also, Meyers, Mussert, pp. 115–16.


144. ND, 26 Nov. 1936.

Chapter 6


3. Goebbels called René Hambourger, Goebbels: chef de publicité du IIIè Reich ([Paris, 1939]) “an amusing diatribe (Machwerk) against me.”


5. For the AA’s position see, for example, Ribbentrop to Welczeck, 8 March 1939, PA/AA, Büro StS., Fr. 1938–1940, Bd. 1. For the details of the Ribbentrop-Goebbels rivalry see, Goebbels, Tgb., esp. V:287 (5 May 1938), and VI:80, 273, 351, 366, 375–76, and 382ff (5 May, and 9 Sept. 1938, and 2 March, 18 May, 2, 12–13, and 18 June 1939).

6. This was a comment on a decree removing the licenses of Jewish physicians in Germany. See, Goebbels, Tgb., VI:53 (4 Aug. 1938).


25. ND, July, 1938ff. See also, Geelkerken, Volk, p. 343ff. A later analysis of the affair, Ellen Berends, De affaire Oss (MA thesis, U. Leiden, 1982), p. 79, comes to the conclusion that Goseling was justified in taking action; there were serious problems with the Marechaussee’s investigation.


35. Louis Ferdinand Céline, *Die Judenverschwörung in Frankreich*, trans. Willi Könitzer and Arthur Pfannstiel (Dresden [1938]). On the reception of Céline in Germany see, Albert Betz, “Céline im Dritten Reich,”


40. On 25 Jan. 1939 the AA (Schaumberg) issued a circular to all German diplomatic and consular representatives titled “Die Judenfrage als Faktor der Aussenpolitik im Jahre 1938 [sic].” See, PA/AA, Presseabt., P 20, Bd. 7; and *RMVP*, *Presseanw.*, VII/1:2 (2 Jan. 1939).


47. Goebbels, *Tgb.*, VI:198 (23 Nov. 1938), and VII:203 (21 Nov. 1939); and the documentation in, BAB, R 55/20979 and 20983. See also, Schor, *L’Antisémitisme*, pp. 42 and 45.


50. On the need for a gesture on the part of Germany see, Grimm to Abetz, 18 Oct. 1938, BAB, NL Grimm, II/3.


55. On the Kerillis-Abetz affair see, Kerrillis’ article in L’Oeuvre, 31 Dec. 1938; Abetz, Problem, pp. 104–07; state secretary to Welczeck, 13 July 1939, Welczeck to state secretary, 14 July 1939, and state secretary to Welczeck, 2 Aug. 1939, PA/AA, Büro StS., Fr. 1938–40, Bd. 1; and office of the state secretary, “Aufzeichnung,” 19 July 1939 (secret), ibid. See also, RMVP, Presseanw., VII/2:735 (24 July 1939); Bremer, Nationalismus, p. 94; and Lambauer, Abetz, pp. 121ff.


57. See, Welczeck to state secretary, 6 Aug. 1939, PA/AA, Büro StS., Fr. 1938–1940, Bd. 1; and Likus, “Vertraulicher Bericht,” 1 Aug. 1939, PA/AA, Büro Ribbentrop, 4/1. For the compilation procedures see, state secretary to German embassy Paris, 14 July 1939, Bot. Paris, V 20, Bd. 1; and Foreign Office to German embassy Paris, 17 July 1939, ibid.


60. See the documentation in PA/AA, R 27210; and Goebbels, Tgb., IX:74 (31 Dec. 1940). Typical was the view of an unnamed official of the German legation in Den Haag, “If [the increase in Dutch anti-Semitism] continues, it could well happen that the Dutch would not only gain greater understanding of Germany’s measures against the Jews, but would also wish to pursue the same policies as we have.” Cited in, AA, “Die Judenfrage als Faktor der Aussenpolitik im Jahre 1938,” p. 13.


155, Paket 326; and RMVP to AAHB, 31 May 1938, StAH, Best. Aufklärungsausschuss Hamburg-Bremen, Nr. 9, Bd. 2; Rost, Correspondentie, I:363 n. 50; and Paul Stoop, Niederländische Presse unter Druck: Deutsche auswärtige Pressepolitik und die Niederlande, 1933–1940 (Munich, 1987), pp. 267 and 300.

65. See the documentation in PA/AA, Ges. Den Haag, Pol. 3, Bd. 1; German legation to AA, 16 Aug. 1938, Ibid, Abt.Inl., Inl. I-Partei, 82-09, 78/1; Die Ehrengäste . . . 1938; and Rost, Correspondentie, I:808 n. 3.

66. Stoop, Presse, p. 115.


69. See the police report on a speech by René Benjamin at a meeting of the Cercle Populaire, 24 Nov. 1938, APP, B/A, 1946. In its 14 April 1939 issue JSP wrote, “It is necessary to respond to threatening nationalism with nationalism and not with democracy.”


72. The quotations are from the police report on the Cercle Populaire meeting 19 May 1939, and Marion to Doriot, 3 Jan 1939, APP, B/A, 1946 and 1945–1950 resp.


75. Ferdonnet, Guerre, pp. 257–58 (quotation). See also, Rebatet, Décombres, p. 262; Verdès-Leroux, Réfus, p. 97; Carroll, Literary Fascism, pp. 202–03; and Dioudonnat, JSP, pp. 244–45.


77. See, the police reports on the meetings of the Cercle Populaire, 9 and 25 Feb. and 28 March 1939, APP, B/A, 1951 and 1946 resp.; and German embassy Paris to Foreign Office, 4 April 1939, PA/AA, Bot. Paris, V 5, Bd. 15, Paket 692c.

78. Winock, “Parabole,” pp. 46 and 356 (quotation); and Morand, Céline, pp. 50ff, 74, and 129–30.


82. See the documentation in, APP, B/A, 1951. A copy of the poster is in, PA/AA, Bot. Paris, VI 6a, Bd. 1.


84. Marc Augier quoted in, Loiseaux, Littérature, p. 444; and Prefecture of Police to General Security, 14 June 1939 (report on a meeting of the PRN&S), APP, B/A, 1951.


87. “Procès-verbal” of Abetz, 15 Nov. 1945, CDJC, LXXI-112; Abetz, Problem, p. 71; and [Büro Dr. Reuter], “Bericht aus Paris,” 29 March 1938, BA,
NS 10/89. See also, Lacaze, Opinion, pp. 316–17; and Goebbels, Tgb., V:184 (3 March 1938); and Lambauer, Abetz, p. 114.


92. The quotation is from an address by Henriot in Lyon, as reported in German consulate Lyon to Foreign Office, 10 March 1938, PA/AA, Bot. Paris, I Fr. 2, Bd. 32.


94. Dioudonnat, JSP, pp. 284–85; and Rebatet, Décobres, pp. 77–79. Céline is quoted in, Morand, Céline, pp. 64–65.


97. The quotation is from a letter by Paul Marion to Doriot, 3 Jan. 1939, APP, B/A, 1945–1950.


99. Goebbels noted after the speech, “the mood in Paris is pretty glacial.” See, Goebbels, Tgb., VI:171 (3 Nov. 1938).

100. Saint-Paulien, Collaboration, pp. 28–29; and Dioudonnat, JSP, p. 292. The most detailed account of the diplomatic negotiations is in Bellstedt, Apaisement.

101. See the report by an observer from the German embassy at the rally, 2 March 1939, PA/AA, Bot. Paris, I Fr. 2 adh. 2, Bd. 2.


111. Déat, “Mémoires,” XXI:17; and Brendler, *Kollaboration*, p. 82.


115. See, Mussert’s notes for an April, 1939 speech, NIOD, NSBA, L-13b; and Likus, “Aufzeichnung zur Vorlage im RAM,” 24 April 1939, PA/AA, Büro Ribbentrop, VB, 1/2, Teil 1. See also, *Vova*, 21 April 1939.

116. See, d’Ansembourg to Geelkerken, 29 Dec. 1938, NIOD, NSBA/252b; and ND, 21 March 1939.

117. *Volksblad*, 27 April 1938; Rijksrecherche Maastricht to police director Den Bosch, 7 May 1938, AMvJ, 18.6., RDG . . . 1938, Nr. 14;
E. Fraenkel Verkade, “Inleiding,” in: Rost van Tonningen, Correspondentie, I:78. After the war Mussert claimed he had been against Rost’s close ties to the SS. See, Mussert’s interrogation by the Procureur General, 13 Sept. [1945], NIOD, AM, 1/B.

118. Accounts of Germany’s domestic bliss appeared almost daily in Vova and the NSB’s propaganda literature. Typical was Werner Kahl’s pamphlet, Arbeiders op reis: Duitse arbeiders maken vacantie reizen (Amsterdam [1940]). See also, the notes for Mussert’s campaign speeches, 5 Nov. 1938–15 April 1939, and for his address to the June, 1938 Hagespraak, NIOD, NSBA, L-5a and L-12; and Jan Meyers, Mussert: Een politiek leven (Amsterdam, 1984), p. 127.

119. See, the propaganda broadsheet, “Poels en Rongen tegen Innitzer,” NIOD, NSBA, 51c; “Niemöllers Anhang—Om de kerkstrijd in Duitschland,” Vova, 2 Sept. 1938; and Geelkerken, Volk, p. 343.

120. See, the documentation in NIOD, NSBA, L-13e; and the coverage of the 1938 Hagespraak in, Vova, 29 April 1938.

121. See, the documentation in, NIOD, NSBA/L-12 and L-13b; and Vova, 10 June, 30 Sept., and 28 Oct. 1938.

122. Mussert, “Rede—Werkersvergadering te Amsterdam, “22 Oct. 1938, NIOD, NSBA, L-11g. The speech was also published as a pamphlet, Musserts Standpunt ([Utrecht, 1938]). A copy is in NIOD, NSBA, 51c. A copy of the ms. with Mussert’s handwritten corrections is in, ibid., L-11g. See also, Fraenkel-Verkade, “Inleiding,” I:55.

123. ND, 8, 10, 11, and 12 Nov. 1938; and Vova, 18 Nov. and 16 Dec. 1938.

124. See, Mussert’s statement, 15 Nov. 1938, NIOD, NSBA, L-12. See also, de Jonge, NS, p. 137.

125. On Rost’s Berlin trip see, his expense account in Rost to Mussert, 2 Jan 1939, NIOD, NSBA/L-7f; Meyers, Mussert, p. 141; and Haas to Schickedanz, 28 Feb. 1939, BA, NS 8/217. For the NSB’s explanation of the plan’s failure see also, Vova, 6 Jan. 1939. On Hitler’s Madagascar musings see, Goebbels, Tgb., V:256 and 269–70 (11 and 23 April 1938).

126. See, his address to the NSB’s 1939 congress, NIOD, NSBA, L-13e. Incidentally, even after the war Mussert was still enthusiastic about the scheme. See, his statement, 29 Sept. 1945, NIOD, AM, 1/B.


128. The quotations are from, Vova, 18 March 1938; and Mussert’s speech, “Europeesche Politiek,” 4 Aug. 1938, NIOD, NSBA/L-11d. See also, Vova, 23 Sept. 1938.


130. For examples of Rohan’s reports on Czechoslovakia see, “In de greep van het communisme,” and “Ellende der Sudetenduitsers,” Vova, 31 July and 2 Oct. 1936; and his series of articles in, ND, 3 Nov. and 8 Dec. 1936. For Vova’s editorial views of the Czechoslovak crisis see, 18 March and
23 Sept. 1938. The prince also tried to ingratiate himself with the German Nazis, but Ribbentrop distrusted Rohan’s ties to Austria’s old-line aristocratic families. For the Germans’ view of Rohan see, Luther to Dr. Paul Schmidt (Presse), 27 Oct. 1941, PA/AA, UStS. Luther, Bd. 8.


133. ND, 9–16 March 1939.

134. See, Mussert, “Koort overzicht der strijd der Nationaal-Socialistische Beweging in Nederland” [Christmas, 1940], p. 6 (quotation), NIOD, NSBA, L-15g; Vova, 10 and 24 March, 6 April 1932 (quotation), and 26 June 1939.

135. See, the protocol of the meeting between Likus and Mussert, 22 April 1939, DGFP, D, VI:308–309; and the documentation in, NIOD, NSBA/L-12 and L-13. See also, Meyers, Mussert, p. 310 n. 4.


Chapter 7


BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. Archival Depositories
1.1. Amsterdam
   Nederlands Instituut voor Oorlogsdocumentatie (NIOD)
   Mussert Archief
   NSB Archief

1.2. Berlin
   1.2.1. Bundesarchiv Berlin (BAB)
      Akten der Neuen Reichskanzlei (R 43 II)
      Reichsministerium für Volksaufklärung und Propaganda (R 55)
      Reichssicherheitshauptamt (R 58)
      Kanzlei Rosenberg (NS 8)
      Adjudantur des Führers (NS 10)
      Beauftragter des Führers für die Überwachung der gesamten
geistigen und weltanschaulichen Schulung und Erziehung der
Partei (NS 15)
      NSDAP, Reichspropagandaleitung (NS 18)
      NSDAP, Hauptarchiv (NS 26)
      Sammlung Schumacher
      Nachlass Friedrich Grimm
   1.2.2. Politisches Archiv des Auswärtigen Amtes (PA/AA)
      Abteilung Inland II
      Auslandsorganisation
      Botschaft Paris
      Büro Ribbentrop
      Gesellschaft Den Haag
      Handakten Unterstaatssekretär Luther
      Politische Abteilung II
      Presseabteilung

1.3. Den Haag
   Archief van de Ministerie van Justitie
   Reichsdeutsche Gemeinschaft

1.4. Hamburg
   Staatsarchiv
   Aufklärungsausschuss Hamburg-Bremen
1.5. Paris

1.5.1. Archive Nationale (AN)
- “Notes Jean” (F7 12960–61)
- Rapports politiques (F7 12963)
- Croix de Feu (F7 13241/3)
- Francistes (F7 13241/4)
- Reactionnaires divers (F7 13241/5)
- Solidarité Française (F7 13238–39)

1.5.2. Archive de la Préfecture de Police (APP)
- Archive Doriot (B/A 337, 341)
- La Cagoule (B/A 1903)
- Chemises Bleues (B/A 1906)
- Le Francisme (B/A 1907)
- Mouvements Fascistes et Antifascistes (B/A 1915)
- Parti Populaire Français (B/A 1945–46)
- Parti Social Français (B/A 1952)
- Rassemblement National Populaire (B/A 1960)
- Dissolution des Ligues (B/A 1961–62)

1.5.3. Centre Documentation Juive Contemporaine (CDJC)
- Alfred Rosenberg Papers

1.6. Stanford, CA

Hoover Institution Archives
- Gaston Bergéry Papers
- Marcel Déat Papers
- NSDAP, Aussenpolitischen Amt File
- Georges Scapini Papers

2. Bibliographic Aids and Handbooks


3. Printed Primary Sources

3.1 Official and Semiofficial Party Publications


Drieu, Pierre La Rochelle. Doriot ou la vie d’un ouvrier français. Saint-Denis, 1936.


3.2 Documentary Collections


3.3 Memoirs and Diaries


Blokzijl, Max. *Ik was er zelf bij: Herinneringen en ervaringen*. Utrecht, 1944.


4. Secondary Sources


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Edition Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Boom, Bart van der</td>
<td><em>Kees van Geelkerken: De rechterhand van Mussert</em></td>
<td>Utrecht, 1990</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bourdè, Guy</td>
<td><em>La Défaite du Front populaire</em></td>
<td>Paris, 1977</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bouvier, Jean</td>
<td><em>La France en Mouvement, 1934–1938</em></td>
<td>Lyons, 1996</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bracher, Karl Dietrich et al.</td>
<td><em>Deutschland, 1933–1945</em></td>
<td>Düsseldorf, 1992</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brasillach, Robert and Henri Massis</td>
<td><em>Léon Degrelle et l'avenir de Rex</em></td>
<td>Paris, 1936</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brasillach, Robert</td>
<td><em>Les Cadets de l'Alcazar</em></td>
<td>Paris, 1936</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brasillié, Annie</td>
<td><em>Robert Brasillach ou encore un instant de bonheur</em></td>
<td>Paris, 1987</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bremer, Karl Heinz</td>
<td><em>Der französische Nationalismus</em></td>
<td>Berlin, 1939</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brendel, Reinhold</td>
<td><em>Kollaboration in Frankreich im Zweiten Weltkrieg: Marcel Déat und das Rassemblement national populaire.</em></td>
<td>Munich, 1992</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brooker, Paul</td>
<td><em>The Faces of Fraternalism: Nazi Germany, Fascist Italy, and Imperial Japan.</em></td>
<td>New York, 1991</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Broszat, Martin</td>
<td>“Das Dritte Reich als Gegenstand historischen Fragens.”</td>
<td>Broszat, pp. 140–47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>———</td>
<td>“Plädoyer für eine Historisierung des Nationalsozialismus.”</td>
<td>Broszat, <em>Hitler</em>, pp. 159–73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brunet, Jean Paul</td>
<td><em>Jacques Doriot: Du Communisme au fascisme.</em></td>
<td>Paris, 1986</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Bibliography

Hauser, Oswald, ed. Politische Parteien in Deutschland und Frankreich, 1918–1939. Wiesbaden, 1969.
Hoffmann, Stanley. “Paradoxes of the French Political Community.” In Hoffmann et al., eds. Search, pp. 1–117.


———. *Sozialpolitik im Dritten Reich,* 2nd ed. (Opladen, 1978).


———. “Les ligues et la République dans les années trente.” In Möller, ed. *Demokratie,* pp. 79–89.


N.a. *Waar Gaan Wij Heen?* Amsterdam [1934].


———. *Het nationaal-socialistische beeld van de geschiedenis der Nederlanden.* Amsterdam, 1956.
Stourzh, Gerald, and Birgitta Zaar, eds. *Österreich, Deutschland und die Mächte.* Vienna, 1990.


## INDEX

Because of the frequency of use, “Fascism” and “Hitler” have not been used as entries in the index.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Page(s)</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abremski, Alexander</td>
<td>94</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Académie Française</td>
<td>33</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Action Française</td>
<td>24, 27, 49</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Action Française (periodical)</td>
<td>32</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adenauer, Konrad</td>
<td>158</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Algemeen Handelsblad</td>
<td>(periodical), 76</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allemagne et la question juive, L’ (pamphlet)</td>
<td>131</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alsace (French province)</td>
<td>48, 56</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ami du Peuple, L’ (periodical)</td>
<td>28, 31–32, 56, 79</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amis de Robert Brasillach</td>
<td>158</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amsterdam (city)</td>
<td>67, 109, 127, 145</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Angriff: Der (periodical)</td>
<td>98, 127</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anschlag gegen den Frieden: Ein Gelb Buch über Grünspan und seine Helfershelfer (pamphlet)</td>
<td>131</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aschenbach, Ernst</td>
<td>156</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assaut, L’ (periodical)</td>
<td>103</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Au Pilori (periodical)</td>
<td>33, 142</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aron, Raymond</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arnim, Achim von</td>
<td>74</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assaut, L’ (periodical)</td>
<td>103</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Au Pilori (periodical)</td>
<td>33, 142</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arnim, Achim von</td>
<td>74</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aron, Raymond</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aschenbach, Ernst</td>
<td>156</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assaut, L’ (periodical)</td>
<td>103</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Au Pilori (periodical)</td>
<td>33, 142</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aschenbach, Ernst</td>
<td>156</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assaut, L’ (periodical)</td>
<td>103</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Au Pilori (periodical)</td>
<td>33, 142</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
INDEX

Bagatelles pour un massacre (book), 92, 110, 125, 129
Ballet Russe, 80
Ballila (Italian youth organization), 5
Barthélemy, Victor, 143
Beaux draps, Les (book), 110
Belgium, 3–4, 32, 35, 59, 148
Bellensiefer, Heinz, 128
Beneš, Edvard, 139–40
Benoist-Mechin, Jacques, 33–34, 75, 83, 111, 130, 139, 158
Békard, Félix, 123
Berchtesgaden (town), 101, 112, 130
Bergery, Gaston, 27, 83, 138, 140–43
Berlin-Rome Axis, 138. See also Nazi regime, foreign policy
Bertrand, Louis, 31, 33–34, 44, 47, 49, 54, 78–79, 82, 112–13, 135, 139–41
Bismarck, Otto von, 21, 56
Blokzijl, Max, 76
Blum, Léon, 13, 30, 64, 79, 81, 83, 92, 94, 98–99, 110, 139
Blut und Boden, concept of, 37
Bohemia and Moravia, Protectorate of, 123, 124, 148. See also Czechoslovakia
Bohle, Ernst-Wilhelm, 22
Boissel, Jean, 32, 66, 70, 102
Bolschewismus in Theorie und Praxis (pamphlet), 104
Bolshevism, 2, 5, 7–9, 11–12, 18, 29, 31, 36, 53–54, 57, 62, 70, 82, 94–95, 99, 114, 120, 143, 146, 158–59
Bonapartism, 3, 28
Bonnard, Abel, 33, 44, 64, 101, 111–12
Bonnet, Georges, 141
Bordeaux (city), 70
Bordeaux, Henri, 135
Borgo, Count Pozzo di, 94
Bormann, Martin, 21
Bourbons (French royal family), 18
Brabant (Dutch province), 127
Brasillach, Robert, 6, 15, 25, 151, 154
and anti-Semitism, 92
and French politics, 44, 66, 141
and JSP, 32–33, 94
and Nazi regime, 54, 111–13, 125, 135–36, 138, 155
trial and execution, 157–58
Bremer, Karl Heinz, 49, 100, 102, 154
Brinon, Fernand, 46–47, 56, 75, 101, 104, 130, 132, 138, 141
Brooker, Paul, 8
Broszat, Martin, 3
Bucard, Marcel, 29, 64, 79, 104, 113, 132
Büro Ribbentrop, 21–22, 46, 69, 102, 107
Butting, Otto, 106, 134
Cahen-Salvador, Georges, 94
Cahiers de la Pléiade (periodical), 157
Cahiers des Amis de Robert Brasillach (periodical), 158
Cahiers France-Allemagne (periodical), 75, 101. See also Deutsch-Französische Monatshefte
Camelots de Roi, 64
Candide (periodical), 103
Catholic Church, 34, 56, 77, 85
Cent heures chez Hitler (article), 112, 125
Center Party (Germany), 57–58
Centre de Documentation et de Propagande, 129, 136
Challaye, Félicien, 137
Chamber of Deputies (French parliament), 26, 29, 93
Chastenet, Jacques, 47
Chaumet, André, 99
China, 14
church-state relations
in France, 34, 110–11, 136
in Germany, 51–52, 61, 81, 86, 90–91, 108–11
in the Netherlands, 36, 46, 58, 67–68, 85, 115, 144, 146–47, 153–54
Civilization et Bolchévisme (periodical), 103
Cold War, 6
Colijn, Hendrik, 45, 50, 57, 66, 87–88, 105, 117
colonialism, 8–9
Combat (periodical), 32
Comité d’Entente de la Jeunesse Française, 49
Comité France-Allemagne, 33, 49, 74, 101–41. See also Deutsch-Französische Gesellschaft
Comité voor Waakzaamheid, 68
Comment causer avec l’Allemagne (book), 99
communism. See bolshevism
Comintern (Communist International), 5, 56, 120, 126
Complot juif: Les protocols des Sages de Sion, Le (book), 124
Confessing Church, 111
Contre-révolution (periodical), 131
Coston, Henry, 18, 29, 33, 49, 70, 104, 140, 158
Coty, Réné, 27–28
Cousteau, Antoine, 135, 142
crisis of Modernization, concept of, 35, 151
Croix de Feu, 28–30, 33, 44, 49, 65–66, 70, 75, 77, 93. See also Parti Social Français
Crössinsee (Nazi training institute), 73
Czechoslovakia, 123–24, 126–27, 132, 139–42, 145, 147–48
Daladier, Edouard, 125, 128
Danzig (Gdansk) (city), 126, 142
Darquier de Pellepoix, Louis, 104, 124, 129, 131, 137
Daudet, Léon, 137
Déak, Istvan, 3
Déat, Marcel, 29, 46, 49, 52, 54, 65, 81–82, 113, 138, 142–43, 155
decadence, concept of, 1–2, 8, 12, 14, 25, 33, 54–55, 71, 90, 109, 112, 116, 152
Declaration of Paris, 132, 141
Décombres, Les (book), 33–34, 157
Defense Nationale (periodical), 36, 66
Degenerate Art (exhibition), 90, 115
Degrelle, Léon, 32
Demain la France (book), 44, 49, 53, 66
Denmark, 156
Deutsche Arbeitsfront (German Labor Front), 55
Deutsche Christen (organization), 43
Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst, 22, 47
Deutsches Nachrichtenbüro, 71
Deutsch-Französische Gesellschaft, 74–75
Deutsch-Französische Monatshefte (periodical), 75, 101, 123. See also Cahiers France-Allemagne
Deutsch-Niederländische Gesellschaft, 77
Diewerge, Wolfgang, 108, 131
Djakarta (Batavia) (city), 105
Dollfuss, Engelbert, 62, 87, 147
Doriot, Jacques, 34, 82–83, 128, 135, 157–58
death, 156
and Nazi Germany, 100–103, 138–41, 143, 153, 155
and PPF, 30–31, 94–95, 123–24
Drault, Jean, 102, 142
Dreyfus affair, 43
Drieu, Pierre la Rochelle, 6, 91–92, 155–56
and anti-Semitism, 34, 137
and Free Masonry, 44
and Nazi Germany, 46–48, 72, 74, 80, 82, 135, 138, 140–41
political ideas, 6, 31, 44–45, 49, 54–56, 125, 136
and PPF, 34, 93, 124
dual state, concept of, 18, 41, 46, 122. See also Nazi regime
Dubarry, Albert, 104
Düsseldorf (city), 37
Dutch Christian Press Bureau, 51–52
Dutch East Indies (Indonesia), 8, 14, 38, 45, 49, 59, 68, 97, 119–20, 148, 152
Dutch Waterways Administration, 35–36, 46
Duyl, G. van, 97, 106

Ecole des cadavres, L’ (book), 35, 110, 125, 140, 142
Eenheid door Democratie, 68, 126
Ein Jude hat geschossen (pamphlet), 108
Emancipation Nationale, L’ (periodical), 31, 34, 94
Epting, Karl, 22, 47
Erfurt (city), 23, 102
États Généraux de la Jeunesse, 74
Ethiopia, 8, 62–63, 67, 82, 87–88, 118–19, 139
Europäische Revue (periodical), 147
Faber, Karl Otto, 107
Fabre-Luce, Alfred, 54–56, 64, 109, 138
Faisceau, 27, 29
Falangists (Spanish political group), 32
Fatherland Front (Austria), 67
Faulhaber, Michael Cardinal von, 90
February 1934 riots, 44, 47
Fédération Catholique, 110
Feldmeijer, Johan, 155, 157
Felicie, Renzo de, 3–4
Ferdonnet, Paul, 32, 48–49, 102, 104, 124–26, 131, 136, 140
Fernandez, Roman, 135
Fichtebund, 22–23
Flambeau, Le (periodical), 28
Flèche, La (periodical), 27
Fleischauer, Ulrich, 23–24, 90
Fontenoy, Jean, 136
Fortuijn, Pim, 158
Fourth Republic, French, 157
Foy, Jean, 47
Fraenkel, Ernst, 41
and economic problems, 28, 45, 63–64, 79
foreign policy, 63, 82–83, 87–88, 95–96, 141
political problems, 24–25, 43–45, 63–65, 92, 123
France Enchainée, La (periodical), 137
France-Allemagne (book), 46
Francis, Robert, 66
Francistes, 29, 44, 49, 56, 64–65, 70, 104, 158
Franco y Bahamonde, Francisco, 113, 119, 124, 139
François-Poncet, André, 74
Franco-Soviet Pact, 13, 56, 62–63, 82–83, 88, 91, 100, 139
Frankfurter Zeitung (newspaper), 22
Franz Ferdinand, Archduke of Austria, 137
Free Masonry, 7–8, 18, 25, 29, 34, 44, 64, 70, 110, 135, 140, 156
French Revolution, 2, 26, 41
French Socialist Party, 13, 30, 65
Fritsch, Werner von, 91
From Castle to Castle (book), 156
Front Commun Contre le Fascisme, 27
Front de la Liberté, 95, 100
Front franc, 32
Fronterlebnis, concept of, 9–10, 73
Frontisme, 27
Führerbefehl, concept of, 19. See also Nazi regime
Funk, Walthier, 101
Gallimard (publishing house), 157
Garmisch-Partenkirchen (1936 Winter Olympic Games), 111
Gaulle, Charles de, 28, 157
Gaxotte, Pierre, 32, 83
Geelkerken, Cornelis van, 36–37, 45–46, 78, 84, 97, 107–8, 114, 118
Geiger, Theodor, 4
Gelderland (Dutch province), 46
Gerbe des Forces, La (book), 129
German Labor Front, 55, 135
Germanentümmelei, 37, 57
Germinaranio, Francesco, 7
Gesellschaft, fascist concept of, 4
Gestapo, 59, 90, 105–6, 115
Gilles (book), 125, 136
Giraudoux, Jean, 125
Gleichschaltung, concept of, 41
Göbel, J., 51
Goch affair, 52. See also Nationaal Socialistische Beweging
Goebbels, Joseph, 6, 9, 31, 48, 72, 127, 145, 151, 153
and anti-Semitism, 122–23
and church-state relations, 61, 90–91, 115, 118
and France, 20, 71–73, 99ff., 128ff., 155
and the Netherlands, 20, 51, 133–34
position in Nazi regime, 20, 23–24, 98–99, 122–23
and Reichsministerium für Volksaufklärung und Propaganda, 20–21, 89–91
Göring, Hermann, 56, 84, 108, 115, 118
Goseling, C. M. J. F., 127
Goslar (city), 117
Goy, Jean, 73, 138
Graeff, Baron A. C. D. de, 76–77
Grand Occident, Le (periodical), 33
Great Britain, 13, 59
Greater German Reich, 19, 148
Greater Netherlands, concept of, 13, 59, 148
Gregor, A. James, 2
Grew, Raymond, 7
Griffin, Roger, 8
Grimm, Friedrich, 22, 70, 74, 99, 102, 128–30, 132, 141
Gringoire (periodical), 31–32, 95, 132, 135, 151
Groupe Collaboration, 154
Grynszpan, Herszel, 131, 137
Guerre aux Juifs (book), 136
Guerre juive, La (book), 124–25, 136
Gustloff, Wilhelm, 108
Guyana Plan, 146
Haarlem (city), 109
Habsburg Empire, 83
Hague, The (city), 50, 67, 76–77, 105, 107, 109, 133–34
Helfferich, Emil, 77
Henlein, Konrad, 149
Henriot, Philippe, 26, 31
Herdtmann, Julius, 132
Herf, Jeffrey, 4
Hess, Rudolf, 21–22, 42, 56, 73, 102, 107
Heuvel, J. W. van der, 35
Himmler, Heinrich, 24, 42, 108, 144, 153, 155
Hindenburg, Paul von, 61
Hitler et la France (book), 130
Hitlerjugend, 21, 47, 49, 51, 61, 74, 79–80, 90, 101–2, 107, 130
Hitler-Stalin Pact, 126, 143
Hoffmann, Stanley, 91
Hugenberg, Alfred, 4
Humanité (periodical), 103
Humboldt University (Berlin), 72

Ihlefeld, Kurt, 101
Imperialism, 8, 12–14
Innitzer, Theodor Cardinal, 144
Innsbruck (city), 156
Insurge, L’ (periodical), 66
International Olympic Committee, 89
Irvine, William, 25, 93, 123
Italy, 5–6, 8, 24, 28–31, 62–63, 67, 75, 79–82, 87–88, 94, 113, 118–20, 124, 135, 139, 156
Jackson, Julian, 45
Jacobins, 55
Japan, 14, 59, 120, 148
Jeanet, Claude, 55, 104
Jeunesses Patriotes, 26–27
Jourdan, Henri, 79
Journal (periodical), 136
Journal de France (book), 33
Juden in Frankreich (book), 128
Judt, Tony, 25
Juliana, Princess of the Netherlands, 107
Karow, Yvonne, 10
Kehl (city), 83
Kemal, Mustapha, 54
Kerillis, Henri de, 132
Kerrl, Hans, 90, 105
Kershaw, Ian, 7
Kirchheim, Otto, 4
Königsberg (city), 73
Kraft durch Freude (organization), 42, 103
Kulturkampf, 56. See also church-state relations
Laatsman, W., 85
Laborie, Pierre, 11
Laloire, Marcel, 80
Landau (city), 83
Lasierra, Raymond, 25
Lausanne (city), 158
Le Pen, Jean-Marie, 158
League of Nations, 43, 56, 66, 81–82, 87–88, 97, 108, 114, 139, 147
Leben wie Gott in Frankreich (book), 22
Lebensraum, concept of, 8, 18
Lèbre, H., 139
Lenin, Vladimir Ilyich, 54
Leo XIII (Pope), 5
Leonhards, W., 51
L’Hospital, Commandant, 75
Liberalism, 2–4, 7, 17–18, 25, 29, 57, 128
Liberté, La (periodical), 31, 94, 100, 140
Libre Parole, La (periodical), 71
Likus, Rudolf, 22
Limburg (Dutch province), 36, 57
Limburg-Stirum, J. P. Count van, 106
Lippe-Detmold, Prince Bernhard von, 107
Lith Haareboome, E. F. L. van, 51
Locarno, Treaty of, 63, 83
Loustaunau-Lacau, Georges, 129
Löwenthal, Richard, 2
Loyalists (Spanish political group), 146
Luchaire, Jean, 33, 46–47, 50, 55, 74, 104
Ludendorff Movement, 118
Lumpenproletariat, 5
Lunteren (city), 86, 117
Lutte de Jeunes (periodical), 44
Lyon (city), 104, 129

Maasbode (periodical), 133
Maître de la France, Le (book), 124
Mandement, 68
Marechaussee, 127
Mariani, P., 104
Marion, Paul, 135–36, 140
Marseille (city), 70, 82–83
Marxism. See bolshevism
Masaryk, Jan, 140
Mason, Tim, 1–2
Matin, Le (periodical), 71
Maulnier, Thierry, 32, 44, 66, 72
Maurras, Charles, 27, 32, 44, 112, 137
Maxence, Jean-Pierre, 44, 64, 66, 81
Mein Kampf (book), 37, 47, 72, 102, 130
Mercier, Ernest, 129
Merkel, Peter, 158
métèques, concept of, 25–26, 34, 54, 92, 94, 124, 159
Michels, G. F., 104
Milan (city), 156
Misthoorn, De (periodical), 115
Mit brennender Sorge (Papal encyclical), 90, 110
Moch, Jules, 92
Modérés, Les (book), 64
modernism, concept of, 4
Müller, Ludwig, 43
Munich Conference, 126, 138, 140–41, 147
munichois, 126, 138, 140–43
Muslims, 159

Mussert, Anton Adriaan, 46, 50, 52, 60, 76, 106, 108, 119, 133–34, 148
and anti-Semitism, 58, 60, 84, 97, 118, 127–28, 145–46
and church-state relations, 60, 68, 85, 98, 115, 144, 146
and colonialism, 36, 148
and Nazi foreign policy, 59, 77, 88, 118, 146–47
and Nazi regime, 58–59, 78, 84, 97, 114, 116, 118, 134, 149
and NSB factions, 69, 77, 84, 97, 106, 115, 127, 154
as NSB leider, 35–36, 77, 106, 117
political ideas, 37, 116, 127
political style, 36, 48, 68, 78, 96, 98, 106, 128, 144–45
relation to Hitler, 77, 107–8, 117, 144
trial and execution, 157
Mythos des Zwanzigsten Jahrhunderts, Der (book), 61

Napoleon I (French emperor), 135
Napoleon III (French emperor), 154
Nation, fascist concept of, 7–8, 13–14
Natioonale Socialistische Beweging, 35ff.
and anti-Semitism, 12, 37, 50–51, 58–59, 69, 78–79, 84–85, 87, 97, 114, 118, 127–28, 133–34, 145, 152
and Catholic Church, 36, 46, 58, 67–68, 85, 144, 153–54
and colonialism, 14, 36, 38, 68, 119

Muscovites, 126
Nazi foreign policy, 59, 77, 88, 118, 146–47
and NSB factions, 69, 77, 84, 97, 106, 115, 127, 154
as NSB leider, 35–36, 77, 106, 117
political ideas, 37, 116, 127
political style, 36, 48, 68, 78, 96, 98, 106, 128, 144–45
relation to Hitler, 77, 107–8, 117, 144
trial and execution, 157
Mythos des Zwanzigsten Jahrhunderts, Der (book), 61

Napoleon I (French emperor), 135
Napoleon III (French emperor), 154
Nation, fascist concept of, 7–8, 13–14
Natioonale Socialistische Beweging, 35ff.
and anti-Semitism, 12, 37, 50–51, 58–59, 69, 78–79, 84–85, 87, 97, 114, 118, 127–28, 133–34, 145, 152
and Catholic Church, 36, 46, 58, 67–68, 85, 144, 153–54
and colonialism, 14, 36, 38, 68, 119

Muscovites, 126
Nazi foreign policy, 59, 77, 88, 118, 146–47
and NSB factions, 69, 77, 84, 97, 106, 115, 127, 154
as NSB leider, 35–36, 77, 106, 117
political ideas, 37, 116, 127
political style, 36, 48, 68, 78, 96, 98, 106, 128, 144–45
relation to Hitler, 77, 107–8, 117, 144
trial and execution, 157
Mythos des Zwanzigsten Jahrhunderts, Der (book), 61

Napoleon I (French emperor), 135
Napoleon III (French emperor), 154
Nation, fascist concept of, 7–8, 13–14
Natioonale Socialistische Beweging, 35ff.
and anti-Semitism, 12, 37, 50–51, 58–59, 69, 78–79, 84–85, 87, 97, 114, 118, 127–28, 133–34, 145, 152
and Catholic Church, 36, 46, 58, 67–68, 85, 144, 153–54
and colonialism, 14, 36, 38, 68, 119

Muscovites, 126
Nationaal Socialistische (continued) founding, 35–36
in Germany, 57–58, 107
leider concept of, 36, 97–98, 117–18
membership, 38, 67–68, 77, 97, 127
and Nazi economic policies, 57, 60, 116
political style, 37, 57–58, 83, 86, 117, 127
postwar purge of, 157
program, 36, 152
Weerafdeling, 36, 38, 155
in World War II, 151–52, 155–56
Nationaalsocialistische Nederlandse Arbeiderspartij, 35, 52
National, Le (periodical), 26
National Front (France), 124
Nationale Dagblad (periodical), 98, 108–9, 114, 116–20, 127, 145, 147–49
Nationalisme Social, Le (book), 26
Nazi Party
and anti-Semitism, 4–5, 11, 49, 61–62, 122, 131
and “dual state,” 18
and interfascist relations, 6, 19–22
Stormtroopers, 41, 52, 80
Nazi regime, 17ff., 89ff., 121ff.
and anti-Semitic measures, 18, 23–26, 41–42, 48–49, 79, 89–90, 102
and “collaborationists,” 14–15, 17, 24, 73, 130–31, 153–54
and “conquerors,” 14–15, 17, 24, 130–31, 153–54
cultural policies, 115–16
and “dual state,” 18
economic policies, 42–43, 55–57, 60, 62, 72
and foreign propaganda, 48ff.
political structure, 18ff., 41–42, 61, 91
and youth cult, 48–49
Nederlandsch Katholieke Correspondentie Bureau, 51.
See also Pro Deo et Patria Neither Left nor Right (book), 7, 10
neo-fascism, 158–59
Neo-Socialists, 30, 49, 65, 70
Netherlands, the, 3–4, 6, 8, 11, 13ff., 50ff., 105ff., 114ff., 126, 133ff., 151–53, 155, 157
economic problems, 45, 58–60, 66–67, 126
elections, 77–78, 83, 127
political problems, 11, 67, 106–7, 126
Netherlands Press Bureau, 51
Neurath, Konstantin von, 91
Niemöller, Martin, 110
Notre Avant-Guerre (book), 112
Notre prestige (periodical), 129
Notre Temps (periodical), 33, 50, 71
Nuremberg (city), 5, 54, 103
Nuremberg Laws, 62, 69, 79, 84, 136. See also Nazi Regime, anti-Semitic measures
Oberlindober, Hanns, 74
Office de Propagande Nationale, 29
Olympic Games (Berlin 1936), 89, 102–3, 111–12
Orange, house of (Dutch royal house), 114–15
Oranienburg (Nazi concentration camp), 136
Ordensburgen, 73, 135
Oss affair, 127
Otto, Helmut, 46, 78
Pacelli, Eugenio, 68
Palestine, 85
Pamphlet (periodical), 56
Papen, Franz von, 4, 108
Paris Midi (periodical), 71, 73
Paris World’s Fair, 92, 101–2, 109, 111
Parti Communiste Français (French Communist Party), 30, 94, 143
Parti Français National Communiste, 65
Parti Populaire Français, 3, 94–95, 101–2, 139–41, 155–56
and anti-Semitism, 31, 94
decline of, 31, 123–24
finances, 31, 93–94, 123–24
founding, 30–31
membership, 93–94
political style, 94
program, 94
Parti Social Français, 28, 30, 66, 93–95, 100, 123–24, 129
Parti Socialiste de France-Union Jean Jaurès.  See Neo-Socialists
Paulhan, Jean, 157
Pays réel, Le (periodical), 28, 137
Pemjean, Lucien, 33, 48, 66
Perspectives socialistes (book), 30
Pétain, Philippe, 156
Petit, Henri-Robert, 28, 33, 82, 129, 137
Petit Journal, Le (periodical), 28, 137
Petit Marseillais (periodical), 82
Pichot, Henri, 138
Pilori, La (periodical), 33, 137, 142
Pineau, Georges, 73
Pius X (Pope), 6
Pius XI (Pope), 90
Pius XII (Pope), 68
Plan van de Arbeid, 5
Plein pouvoirs (book), 125
Plumyène, Jean, 25
Poland, 43, 83, 121, 126, 138–39, 142–43
Polemon, Christian, 138
Polignac, Marquis de, 89
Polish Corridor, 56, 141–42
Portugal, 6
Poujade, Pierre, 158
Prague (city), 123, 132, 138–39, 141–42, 148
Prévost, Jean, 53
Prima Presse, 48
Princip, Gavrilo, 137
Pro Deo et Patria, 51, 109, 115, 134
Protocols of Zion (pamphlet), 102, 110, 124
Prowe, Diethelm, 159
Pucheu, Pierre, 65, 93
racism, 4, 8, 30, 34, 47, 54, 58–60, 75, 78, 84, 105, 110, 126, 137
Radical Party (France), 24, 27, 34
RAI, 145
Randstad (geographic area), 67
Rassemblement Anti-Juif, 104, 129, 131
Rassemblement Populaire Français, 28
Rath, Ernst vom, 131, 137
refugees, German-Jewish, 25, 43, 45, 53
Reichel, Peter, 5
Reichsarbeitsdienst, 47, 55, 57
Reichsbanner Schwarz-Rot-Gold, 5
Reichsdeutsche Gemeinschaft, 22, 50.
See also Auslandsorganisation
Reichskristallnacht (anti-Jewish pogrom), 121–22, 131, 137, 146
Reichstag (parliament), 29, 36, 62
Reichswehr, 42, 61
Rémond, Réné, 3, 10–11
Renaud, Jean, 28, 104
Renault, Louis, 129
Republican Federation, 26, 93, 95, 124
Resistance (French), 15, 27, 134, 155, 157
Reuss, Prince Heinrich XXXIII, 56
Reveil du Peuple, Le (periodical), 32
Revue universelle (periodical), 112
Reyss, Claude, 104
Rheinbaben, Werner Freiherr von, 77
Rhine (river), 15, 37, 45, 56–57, 63, 75, 81–83, 94, 100–101, 112, 143, 152
Rhineland, 81–83, 88
Riefenstahl, Leni, 48, 101
Rive gauche, 101
Robespierre, Maximilien, 54
Rocque, François de la, 28, 44, 65, 93, 100, 128, 153
and anti-Semitism, 29
and Front of Liberty, 95
ideology, 44, 65
and Nazi regime, 53, 138, 165
and parliamentary democracy, 49
political style, 49
during World War II, 155
Rohan, Karl-Anton von, 147
Röhm, Ernst, 41–43, 56
Röhm affair, 42–43, 56, 59, 69, 73, 91
Romains, Jules, 72
Rome (city), 68, 91
Rooms-Katholieke Staatspartij, 67, 69, 127, 146
Roosevelt, Franklin Delano, 54
Rosenberg, Alfred, 19–20, 23, 33, 61, 85, 111, 129, 136
Roskam, E. J., 37
Rotterdam (city), 67, 69, 86
Rougement, Denis de, 79
Ruhr (river), 45
Saar, 87
Saarbrücken (city), 132, 141
Sabiani, Simon, 83
Saint-Paulien, J. See Sicard, Maurice-Yvan
Salle Wagram, 104, 141
Scandinavia, 19, 119
Scapini, Georges, 75, 138, 141
Scheveningen (city), 157
Schirach, Baldur von, 21, 51, 62, 85, 101–3
Schmid, Carlo, 158
Schor, Ralph, 92, 110
Schumacher, Kurt, 7
Schuman, Robert, 158
Schuschnigg, Kurt von, 147
Schutzstaffel, 24, 42, 80, 98, 107, 129, 132, 136, 144, 155–57. See also Nazi regime
Schwarze Korps, Das (periodical), 129
Sept Couleurs, Les (book), 112
Séring, Paul. See Löwenthal, Richard Service Public (book), 44
Seyffardt, H. A., 97
Seyss-Inquart, Arthur von, 155
Sicard, Maurice-Yvan, 137, 141
Sieburg, Friedrich, 22
Siège d’Alcazar, Les (book), 113
Siegfried, André, 11
Sigmaringen (town), 156
Slovakia, 123, 132
Smit, H. W. van de Vaart, 51–52
social democracy, 5, 7, 57, 96
Socialisme Fasciste (book), 44, 49
Sohlberg-Kreis, 21. See also Abetz, Otto
Solidarité Française, 27–28
Soucy, Robert, 93
South Africa, 36, 146, 148
Soviet Union, 2, 6, 30, 63, 82–83, 87–88, 113, 126, 138–39, 143, 146, 149
Spanish Civil War, 13, 91, 95–96, 104, 113, 115, 119, 126, 145
Spirale, La, 129
Sport en Spel, 134
Sportpalast, 145
St. Denis (city), 30, 94, 100
Stalin, Joseph, 5–6, 30, 56, 63, 82, 113, 123–24, 126, 140, 143, 147
Stavisky, Alexander, 43–44, 47, 66
Stellvertreter des Führers für Parteiangelegenheiten, 20–21. See also Hess, Rudolf, and Büro Ribbentrop
Sternhell, Ze’ev, 1–3, 7, 10, 25, 157
Streicher, Julius, 33, 41, 52, 73, 85, 102, 122, 136–37
Stumm, Braun von, 75
Stürmer, Der (periodical), 33, 41–42, 52, 69–70, 78, 84, 92, 97, 102–3, 115, 122, 129, 131, 146
Sudetenland, 124, 139–40, 147
Surinam, 146
Taittinger, Pierre, 26–27, 64, 66, 139
Telegram (periodical), 51, 77
Third Reich. See Nazi regime totalitarianism, concept of, 5
Trier (city), 83
Triumph of the Will (film), 48
Turner, Henry, 3
Union Anti-Maçonnique de France, 65
Union Nationale des Combattants, 73, 82
Union Socialiste et Républicaine, 65. See also Parti Socialiste de France-Union Jean Jaurès
uomo fascista, concept of, 5–6, 136, 152–53
Utrecht (city), 46, 97, 109
Vallat, Xavier, 26
Valois, Georges, 27
Vélocro d’Hiver, 95
Verdès-Leroux, Jeannine, 8
Verdun, Treaty of, 138
Versailles, Treaty of, 13, 22–24, 43, 62–63, 77, 81–82, 87, 139
Verviers, Em., 5
Verzögerung, concept of, 10–11, 38, 46
veterans, 9, 28, 70, 73–75, 82, 100, 130
Vichy regime, 27, 31, 124, 154, 156
Victoire, La (periodical), 71
Victoria, Queen of Great Britain, 148
Vienna (city), 108, 139, 144
Volk en Vaderland (periodical), 38, 84, 86, 98, 109, 114–17, 138, 144–48
INDEX

Völkischer Beobachter (periodical), 100, 106, 118
Volksgemeinschaft, concept of, 4, 8–12, 42, 55, 57, 62, 72, 77, 89, 93–94, 111, 116–17, 125, 135, 144–47, 152–53
Volonté (periodical), 50, 104
Vriens, Anselmus, 51

Weimar Republic, 5, 11, 17, 22, 24, 44, 55, 63, 74, 85–86, 92, 99–100, 111, 114, 143, 153, 155
Weltorden (periodical), 23–24
Wendel, François de, 129
Wilhelmina (Queen of the Netherlands), 46, 148
Wille und Macht (periodical), 102
William II (German emperor), 80
Winterhilfswerk, 79, 116
Wintershulp, 116

Wippermann, Wolfgang, 156
Wirsching, Andreas, 93
Wit-Geel Papier, 69
Wohl, Robert, 9
World War I, 1, 9, 11, 18, 20, 24, 28, 50, 59, 73, 125, 131
World War II, 2, 5–6, 14–15, 19, 27, 32, 84, 121, 124–25, 127, 151, 153–54, 156–57
Württemberg (German state), 156
Wusten, Herman v. d., 3–4

Youth, fascist cult of, 21, 34, 53, 55

Zay, Jean, 92
Zech-Burkeroda, Julius Count von, 50–52, 76–78, 105–6, 108
Zeven Provinciën (Dutch warship), 45
Zitelmann, Rainer, 2
Zuiderzee (body of water), 57