

Michel Winock. *Nationalism, Anti-Semitism, and Fascism in France*. Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1998. Translated by Jane Marie Todd. 351 pp. Tables, appendices, endnotes, and index. \$55.00 US (cl). ISBN 0-8047-3286-8.

Review by Robert J. Soucy, Oberlin College, for H-France, December 1999.

Michel Winock's book, published in France in 1982 and now translated into English, is a collection of brilliant, judicious, elegantly written essays. Winock is a consummate historian who ranges over two hundred years of nationalism and anti-Semitism in France with masterful ease while also examining important aspects of French fascism and pre-fascism. His breadth of historical vision (he is particularly astute in marking some of the crucial turning points in the aforementioned phenomena) is combined with a keen eye for the telling detail and for the role of personalities. Not only does he provide analyses of "open" and "closed" nationalism, populism, anti-Semitism (of both the left and right), Boulangism, Bonapartism, the Dreyfus Affair, and fascism, but he also includes separate essays on Jules Guérin, Joris-Karl Huysmans, Georges Sorel, Charles Péguy, Gustave Hervé, Pierre Drieu La Rochelle, Louis-Ferdinand Céline, Georges Bernanos, and Charles de Gaulle--essays that reveal much about them in remarkably few pages.

There is also a delightful essay on French anti-Americanism from the eighteenth century to the present which should be a "must" read for any American traveling to France or any French person traveling to the United States. Winock dissects French stereotypes of Americans with the same skill that he dissects anti-Semitic stereotypes of Jews. Especially valuable is his demonstration of the way these stereotypes varied (despite some crossovers) from one political camp to another and from one era to another, French monarchists in the 1830s, for example, damning Americans for being too egalitarian and French Communists in the 1950s damning them for not being egalitarian enough.

Where historical understanding is concerned, Winock is a foe of the simplistic--which he associates with populist "mobs" and Marxist determinists--and a stickler for the complex--which he associates with humanitarian intellectuals, whether on the left or right. "Totalitarianism," he writes, "is rooted in simple ideas. The twentieth century is teeming with them. Men, women, and children by the millions have created them and have paid the price. That is because it is not easy to admit the complexity of history, the multiple causes behind every social or political phenomenon, universal relativity" (p. 83). Winock believes that from the 1880s onward French nationalists exploited the public demand for simplification more effectively than others, through methods which have since become commonplace, for they realized that "an action cannot be grounded in too subtle or too nuanced an analysis of the living context; in contrast, it becomes a rallying cry if it is based on a univocal causality and a mythological system of

representation that allows people to bypass the rational approach" (pp. 83-84). This, he says, is one of the major reasons nationalists at the beginning of the "mass" era had more success than socialists in providing a "fictional why" for the misfortunes of the world. For Winock, a rational recognition of the "heterogeneity of reality" discourages dangerous political passions.

He is at pains to qualify his own generalizations to avoid the simplistic. For example, after tracing several continuities between the Dreyfus Affair, the crisis of the 1930s, the Vichy regime, and the Algerian war, he calls attention to significant differences among them. Winock is no absolute relativist, however, since he regards certain continuities to be of vital importance, continuities within both the Dreyfusard and anti-Dreyfusard traditions.

Winock is critical of historical explanations that are ideologically doctrinaire--that ignore the ways antagonistic movements sometimes join forces. He notes, for example, that two kinds of nationalism existed in France at the end of the nineteenth century: an "open" nationalism that stemmed from the French revolution of 1789 and merged with the democratic impulse, a "nationalism of the left, republican, based on popular sovereignty and calling upon enslaved nations to deliver themselves from their chains"; and a "closed" nationalism, hostile to the revolution, pessimistic about historical progress, obsessed with decadence and with "protecting, strengthening, and immunizing collective identity against all agents of corruption, true or supposed, that threatened it." Closed nationalism, which first appeared during the Boulanger and Dreyfus Affairs, differed profoundly from republican nationalism, defining the nation by eliminating intruders--Jews, immigrants, revolutionaries. It was both a "paranoid nationalism" that feared modernity, freedom, and "confronting the Other in all its forms" and a "mortuary nationalism" whose ideal "was a humanity contracting, hardening, shrinking to a niggardly and jealous ego." Its defenders sought to purge France of its democratic institutions and of "everything that makes for its diversity, its richness" (p. 25). And yet, Winock says, it would be wrong to imagine that a "watertight partition" separated the two nationalisms, since between the two there were "passageways, convergences, even compromises" (p. 6). Boulanger profited from both conservative and far left votes, from a "syndic of malcontents" of Guesdists, Blanquists, Radicals, and conservatives who opposed the parliamentary regime for contradictory reasons. But these were only "staff level" contradictions, since in the final analysis it was "the people" who backed Boulanger and the people "had no platform". They simply, very simply, had faith in his person.

Winock warns that one of the dangers of political democracy is its vulnerability to the "mob", to the mob's irrationalisms and proclivity for idolatry. During the Boulanger Affair, "nascent nationalism touched the hearts of the mob" (p. 226). Whereas democracy presupposes a culture of rationality where all citizens are capable of

treating political issues with "full knowledge of the facts", this ideal is "beyond reach". For the culture of rationality faces a culture of belief, which is much more widely shared. The latter provides "incompetent" people with simplistic explanations for social problems. This culture of belief extends beyond the Catholic community and occupies a place "even within the socialist far left". During the Boulanger Affair, some socialists "had the same state of mind as the first Christians awaiting imminent parousia" (p. 227).

Boulangism made its appearance at the conjunction of two contradictory movements, the first demanding true popular sovereignty and the second a false sovereignty embodied in a savior. The newborn democracy "would have to answer the challenge of demagoguery, which is constantly being reborn" (p. 228). Despite Winock's condemnation of Ceasarian democracy, in his essay on Charles de Gaulle (a man whom he acknowledges was "full of contempt for 'the reign of parties'"), he seems to defend the General for having always insisted upon "the people's" backing for his major decisions under the Fourth and Fifth Republics: "De Gaulle may have been king, but his monarchy was neither hereditary nor for life: it hinged on the credit granted him by universal suffrage" (p. 307).

In "The Return of National Populism", Winock discusses the emergence of a "new right" during the Boulanger and Dreyfus Affairs (1886-1889 and 1894-1899) that made inroads into both the traditional right and far left and whose echoes are found in Jean-Marie Le Pen's National Front today. This populism contrasted "the people" (virtuous) to parliamentary politicians (corrupt). "Like Le Pen, who today recommends 'broadening the right of referendum,' Drumont, Rochefort, and the Boulangists challenged their equivalent of the 'Gang of Four' with the vox populi" (p. 27). The new right appealed primarily, if not exclusively, to middle class artisans and tradespeople threatened by factories and department stores, and it claimed to defend the "little guy" against the "fat cats". Instead of being humanitarian, however, this populism was tribal and xenophobic, a form of "mass psychosis." Its moral ideal was the exact opposite of Montesquieu's, an opponent of Le Pen before the fact, who wrote: "If I had known something useful for my family that was not so for my nation, I would have sought to forget it; if I had known something useful for my country that would have been prejudicial for Europe, or which would have been useful to Europe but prejudicial for the human race, I would have rejected it as a crime" (p. 28).

The populism of the new right was based on three principal assertions: 1) that France was in a state of decadence and society was falling apart; 2) that a minority of maleficent agents was responsible for this decadence and that Jews played a central role in this "diabolical causality" ("everything comes back to the Jews"); and 3) that France would be saved from decadence by a providential man--whether at different times the proposed savior was Georges Boulanger, Philippe Pétain, or Jean-Marie Le

Pen (Winock's apparent admiration for de Gaulle may explain the General's exclusion from this list).

According to Winock, Le Pen's art lies in instilling fear of being threatened, invaded, or contaminated, while reassuring the people in the same breath: "I am your 'rampart'" (p. 32). In recent years, the French left as well as the French right has been intimidated by the demagoguery of the National Front, by its "ideology of difference". "In the name of difference, a certain leftist tendency has conceived the idea of a 'multicultural' group, the dream of a polyphony in which each person would sing in his or her own way for the happiness of all. While some settle the problem through exclusion, others do so by denying the national community. [Both positions] attest to the same lack of confidence in the values (Judeo-Christian, republican, secular) that formed this country and in our capacity to transmit them. By apparently contradictory means, both arrive at the same disaster: segregation--de jure or de facto" (p. 33).

During the Boulanger and Dreyfus Affairs, as well as with French fascist movements of the 1930s, the populist new right found anti-Semitism quite useful. A common enemy was needed to unite anti-democratic bourgeois and anti-democratic proletarians. Pre-fascists and fascists found the Jew to be the perfect demon, one who would serve to "federate" diverse and even contradictory forces. The primary beneficiaries, however, were the forces of counterrevolution. By the end of the Dreyfus Affair, anti-Semitism had been rejected by the socialist left but remained "fixed" on the right, an "instrument of reactionary policies" (102). It would also crop up again in the 1950s on the communist left under the guise of anti-Zionism and talk of a Jewish "doctors' plot" against Stalin. But during the interwar period, was anti-Semitism, in fact, as central to French fascism as Winock implies? Indeed, he himself remarks in passing that Georges Valois, after indulging in anti-Semitism in his earlier career, backed away from it as the leader of the *Faisceau*: by 1925 "anti-Semitism was no longer part of his speeches" (p. 179). Winock does not express surprise at this or explain why it occurred. He also has little to say about periods in modern French history when anti-Semitism was at low ebb, as in the 1920s and early 1930s (prior to the Depression and mass unemployment) when public respect for Jews who had fought and died for France in the First World War was high and when Jewish and other immigrants were often valued for boosting France's economy and declining population. According to historians Paula Hyman and Vicki Caron, anti-Semitism, populist or otherwise, was relatively weak in France between 1918 and 1933.

More seriously (since it contradicts one of his major theses), Winock ignores that some of France's largest fascist movements during the interwar period--the *Faisceau*, the *Parti populaire français* (PPF), the *Jeunesses patriotes*, and the *Croix de feu* (although he denies that the last two were fascist) not only publically rejected anti-Semitism prior to 1936--and in some cases as late as 1938--but also welcomed Jews

into their ranks (this was also true of Mussolini's *Fascio* which had over 7,000 Jewish members by 1934). In 1927 Valois declared that Jews had "an incontestable creative fever" that contributed to the economic renewal of France. He added: "There are Jews in France who are French. It is necessary to live with them and to see to it that our lives in common are not a trick on anyone, which is perfectly possible." In 1936 Jacques Doriot stated: "Our party [the PPF] is not anti-Semitic. It is a great national party that has better things to do than fight Jews." Ernest Mercier, one of the major financial backers of the *Croix de feu* in 1935 was married to the niece of Alfred Dreyfus, and Colonel François de La Rocque, the leader of the *Croix de feu* (CF), attended a patriotic ceremony at Rabbi Jacob Kaplan's synagogue in Paris in June 1936 accompanied by a member of the Rothschild family. Like the others, Pierre Taittinger of the *Jeunesses patriotes* believed that religious conciliation should accompany class conciliation. Only later did Doriot and La Rocque opt for anti-Semitism.

Winock pays scant attention to two major sets of villains in French fascist demonology--villains whom *most* French fascists in the 1920s and 30s (members of the *Action française* and the *Solidarité française* being the major exceptions) attacked much more regularly and intensely than the Jews. These demons were the Marxists--both democratic socialists and authoritarian communists--and the Freemasons, who were often portrayed as fellow travelers in league with the Marxists. Here, too, heated invective and gross stereotypes abounded, and here, too, diabolical causality was alleged. According to spokesmen for the *Faisceau*, the *Jeunesses patriotes*, the *Parti populaire français*, and the *Croix de feu*, Marxists were primarily responsible for France's economic problems (by encouraging workers to be "lazy") and for dividing the nation (by insisting on class conflict). The anti-clerical Freemasons were not only purveyors of "decadence" with their attacks on Catholic and traditional values, but, as political democrats, they opened the floodgates to communism.

Not only were the Freemasons and the Communists "co-conspirators", but so, too, were the Socialists. Jean Renaud, the leader of the *Solidarité française* intoned that behind the Communists lurked the "sinister profile" of Socialist Léon Blum. The situation in 1935, Renaud wrote, could be compared to a "tidal wave of mud," behind which one hears the "howls of a whole pack of diabolical faces." In 1941 Colonel de La Rocque of the *Croix de feu* denounced the left-center Popular Front that had governed France four years earlier as "degenerate" and demanded the "extirpation of contaminated elements" in France. In 1935, the *Croix de feu's* newspaper, *Le Flambeau*, even denounced French "moderates" (democratic conservatives) as indirect fellow travelers, since their "compromise and hesitation" permitted Marxism to exist in France. Thus, it urged the French people to "stand up against revolution and its sordid ally, moderation." But the major demons of some of French fascism's largest

movements between the wars were the Marxists and the Freemasons, whose numbers were far greater than those of the Jews. Fascist spokesmen portrayed them as threatening society not only with moral but with social decadence, with the menace of industrial strikes, civil war, and--almost as chilling--higher income taxes. It is true that by 1938 Doriot's PPF and by 1941 La Rocque's *Croix de feu/Parti social français* (PSF) had turned the "masonic-bolshevik" conspiracy into "Judeo-masonic-bolshevik" conspiracy. Winock neglects the last two adjectives.

In light of the mass appeal he attributes to the new right at the turn of the century--and to the pre-fascist elements therein--it comes as a surprise that he finds little public support for fascism in France in the 1930s, particularly during the Depression years. In "French-Style Fascism, or Fascism Nowhere to Be Found?" Winock describes France as largely "allergic" to fascism during these years and fascism itself as an ideology that was foreign to France: "That import product may have had a few fans--but far fewer than the yo-yo or the Charleston" (p. 195). Although the word "fascist", he says, has often been misused as a handy insult against a conservative opponent, "we have never known more than an embryonic fascism, imitations at the small-group level, at worst a literary fascism without direct consequences for our political destiny" (p. 195). According to Winock, Zeev Sternhell exaggerates the importance of such fascist fringe groups as the *Cercle Proudhon*, Valois' *Faisceau*, or Thierry Maulnier's *Combat* (a journal that reached only a few hundred readers), all ventures that had "only a mediocre influence or a brief life" (p. 199). The clearest objection to Sternhell's work is that it is "a pure history of ideas... without direct relation to events"(p. 201). Sternhell passes over "vulgar" fascism, "small packs of booted men, Doriot's PPF, the writers of *Je suis partout*, not to mention the *Croix-de-Feu* bugaboo" (p. 198). In his search for the Platonic idea of fascism, Sternhell ignores the conditions required for its success. "And for good reason, since the event never took place" (p. 205).

For all his insistence on multiple causation, Winock operates on the same principle as any good historian: that not all causes in a complex of causes are of equal importance and that some carry more historical weight than others. Indeed, at one point he laments the tendency of some historians (Sternhell being one) to exaggerate the importance of their own subject areas at the expense of "the whole". Yet Winock's own insistence on populist irrationalism ("paranoia") as the primary dynamic driving closed nationalism and the new right at the turn of the century, as the cause that exerted the greatest force, is disputable. Indeed, one wonders how fascism could have been so weak in France during the crisis of the Great Depression if closed nationalism--a "mob" irrationalism that anticipated fascism in important ways--had been so intoxicating at the turn of the century? Why did it not have the same punch as earlier? While irrationalism was certainly present in both French fascism and French

pre-fascism, quite rational social and economic interests (however selfish they may have been) may well have played a much larger role. Certainly, not all the grievances of "the people" at the time of the Boulanger Affair were irrational, nor was the dismay of right-wing populists in 1924, 1932, and 1936 when left-center electoral victories seemed to threaten their material interests. It is no coincidence that upsurges of fascism in France in the 1920s and 1930s occurred during intense right-wing backlashes to these victories.

Although Winock privileges cultural explanation over economic (he is especially critical of Marxist "determinism"), he does not exclude material factors altogether. He acknowledges that the economic crisis of the 1880s contributed to the resurgence of anti-Semitism at the time and that the even greater crisis of the 1930s created fears of Bolshevism that led many on the right to envy foreign countries who "knew how to take the necessary authoritarian measures against the 'specter of communism' which was haunting Europe" (p. 182). Still, the bulk of Winock's analysis is focused on irrational cultural attitudes rather than on rational economic interests. Indeed, he writes somewhat dismissively of the latter: "These fairly common class reflex reactions certainly encouraged the spread of a fascist state of mind in France. That social fear, however, though commonplace, is not enough to explain the kind of 'fascist penetration...that occurred in France during [the 1930s]" (p. 183). No doubt true, but neither does his own explanation explain what occurred in France during 1930s.

That explanation is weakened by his fluctuating attitude toward the role of national "socialism" in French fascism, a socialism which he sometimes regards as an essential ingredient in fascism, but at other times not. First, he suggests that it is the synthesis of "nationalism + socialism" that distinguishes fascism from non-fascist movements on the French authoritarian right, then abandons this requirement when it fails to apply to the *Solidarité française* and the *Parti populaire français*, only to revive it later as a way of distinguishing the *Croix de feu* from fascism. In "Outlines of French Fascism," he contends that Valois' *Faisceau* was "not just another movement of the far right, like Pierre Taittinger's Jeunesses Patriotes..., designed to protect the interests of the bourgeoisie against the Red Peril," but that Valois "proved to be the resolute advocate of an 'absolutely free' trade unionism for workers" (p. 178). Valois himself defined fascism as a fusion of two currents that had previously been contradictory, nationalism and socialism, and Winock seems to take this rhetoric at face value. He argues that, although Valois had been a monarchist since 1906, he "felt" he was in solidarity with the working class (p. 180). Winock maintains that, like the new right at the turn of the century, French fascism during the interwar period "combined to bring together apparently heterogeneous forces, from the left and right, against the regime in place" (p. 179). In line with this reasoning, he denies that the *Action française* was

"specifically fascist", presumably (Winock does not say explicitly) because its nationalism lacked socialism. On the other hand, he has no hesitation placing Robert Brasillach, with his "anti-bourgeois" comments, squarely within the fascist camp, along with other intellectuals who "challenged" communism with a socialism of their own.

However, as subsequent research has revealed (with extensive documentation), both Brasillach and Valois were, in fact, strongly opposed to any seriously leftist, or even left-centrist government policies, be they nationalization of the basic means of production or simply higher taxes for social welfare programs. As the historian Robert Tucker has noted, Brasillach had no interest in "bread and butter socialism", but was impressed by Nazi Germany's success "in neutralizing the workers' unrest by offering them spectacles and entertainments". Winock cites Valois' success in attracting to his cause the former communist mayor of Périgueux, Marcel Delagrangé. But Valois did so not with ideology but with "subsidies". For his services, Valois agreed to pay Delagrangé (whose previous financial improprieties as mayor had led to his disgrace) 2,000 francs a month, to help him buy a house, and to cover his moving expenses. Nor did the fact that Valois had helped break a strike in the publishing industry in 1919 add credibility to his "socialism". Winock himself tells us that "few workers joined the *Faisceau* where the bourgeois component predominated" and that the movement "remained bogged down on the right" (p. 181). If the *Faisceau* was socialist in even the mildest way, why was this the case?

Winock writes that Valois, along with being a "resolute advocate of free trade unionism", wanted "an organized working class and an adjudicating, responsible state standing above class" (p. 180). The devil, however, is in the details. In 1906 Valois, an alleged "syndicalist", contended that primitive men had emerged from a savage state of nature because a "man with a whip" had forced them to overcome their laziness. As "slaves" they had wanted this man to strike them so that they could become civilized. Socialists, on the other hand, were "organizers of the Greatest Repose". They wanted to abolish the whip and "return to the Beast". In modern times, poverty was an incentive for an "elite" among the poor to strive for upward social mobility. Survival of the fittest ("careers open to talent"), not class conflict, was God's will. The strongest industrialist was the best boss. Capitalist Taylorism, not socialist sloth, would increase productivity, which in turn would create higher real wages. Trade unions were not to interfere with production but, by cooperating with management, help to increase it. The trouble with traditional trade unionism was that its strikes forced employers to grant higher wages, irrespective of productivity, which led to inflation, while general strikes led only to frightful misery and "the violent acts of all the brutes". In 1926 and 1927, Valois declared that under fascism the main task of the bourgeoisie would be to "amass wealth, while government by a veterans' elite

would "watch over its conservation". Bolsheviki denied "one of the principle motors of human activity: property." They wanted to pillage the wealth of Europe; fascists wanted to protect it.

In *Fascism* (1927) Valois did call for workers to be "strongly organized" into unions that would "confront" management. However, on the crucial issue of whether workers would have the right to strike and thus exert real leverage, he was silent. His remark that fascism was the only movement which served the workers without leading them into "sterile strikes" implied little sympathy for labor's major weapon. Moreover, when talking of working-class representation vis-à-vis management, he assigned this role only to an "elite" of the working class. Since he was opposed to democratic elections on principle (an election was a "coalition of mediocrities against true leaders"), how well such an elite would have represented the rank-and-file was questionable. At the head of Valois' proposed state was to be a dictator whom the people would understand was "independent of them". In short, neither fascist trade unions nor the fascist state were to be democratically controlled. All this made it highly unlikely that any union "confrontations" that managed to take place under this system (and to indulge in them was committing the sin of "class conflict") would have had any success with either management or an "adjudicating state", particularly a state so strongly committed to protecting bourgeois wealth from predators. This was Valois' idea of "absolutely free" trade unionism.

After reading Winock's "Outlines of French Fascism," one might think that he is one of those who considers fascists and socialists to be ideological brethren, but to view him this way would be a mistake. Not that he whitewashes periods in France's past when elements of the left failed to live up to their own moral principles. He spares neither those leftists who supported Boulangism in 1889, nor those who indulged in "tactical" anti-Semitism during the Dreyfus Affair, nor those who under Guy Mollet's leadership in the 1950s "systematically covered up the scandal of torture" in Algeria. However, when it comes to the "fascist state of mind" in France during the interwar period, not only does he absolve the overwhelming majority of the left from any complicity, but he also emphasizes the fundamentally anti-fascist nature of socialist culture. Although he acknowledges that in the 1930s a "certain number of unionist and leftist personalities" adopted positions "fairly close to fascist formulations", he is careful to point out their lack of mass support. Conversely, he notes that during this same period fascist ideas were spreading "in relatively strong doses" within the French right (p. 184).

Indeed, in "Socialism and Fascism" Winock takes to task the historian François-Georges Dreyfus for claiming that "socialism is intellectually at the origin of fascism." For Winock only conceptual slackness and a poor reading of history can allow such a conclusion: "For Dreyfus, 'socialism' is not a polysemic term with

referents as varied as Olaf Palme's Sweden and Stalin's Russia. In his view, it all amounts to the same thing; in particular, socialism amounts to national socialism" (p. 206). According to Winock, Dreyfus' approach is more opportunistic than rigorous: if statism is made the link between socialism and fascism, then one has to ignore the anti-statist Pierre-Joseph Proudhon and take the pro-statist Marcel Déat instead. "Conversely, the aforementioned Proudhon will be used in the chapter on anti-Semitism" (p. 207). But, says Winock, "if we wish to return to socialism, to its *history*--and not merely to a few of its initial sources of inspiration--we must admit that, in France and elsewhere, it was an effective instrument for the democratization of political life" (pp. 207-08). At a time when nationalism threatened parliamentary democracy, "socialism made itself its guarantor, even when it had to ally itself with representatives of the republican bourgeoisie against populist, anti-Semitic, and antiparliamentary demagoguery." Under Jean Jaurès, French socialism favored the integration of the working class into the system of liberal democracy, while in other European countries socialist movements "contributed decisively toward creating elementary democratic institutions" (p. 208). In most European countries, socialist parties "worked for the installation of liberal democratic regimes, universal suffrage, and public and individual liberties" and against the rise of dictatorships. "To suggest a filiation between [French] socialism and fascism because Déat or [Henri] de Man became fascists is the equivalent of making the Catholic Church one of the direct sources of Radical Socialism on the pretext that [the anti-clerical] Émile Combes had gone to a seminary" (p. 208).

Winock concedes that the revolutionary right and "revolutionary unionism" both condemned French parliamentarianism, but he observes that they did not do so on the same foundation: "one denounced democracy in itself; the other, a pseudodemocratic system established to the advantage of the ruling class at the expense of producers" (pp. 208-09). Any alliance between the two remained on the "symbolic level" only: "The vast majority of the troops and the vast majority of the leaders of the CGT [*Confédération générale du travail*] proved to be fundamentally faithful to the Third Republic, despite its 'strike-breaking' governments" (p. 209). While the novelty of fascism was "to assault liberal democracy with ideas taken from the left and right,... a few 'deviants' cannot implicate the whole of the CGT in the birth of fascism." "The totalitarian nature of socialism--and communism is not simply a variant of it--remains to be demonstrated" (p. 209). For François-Georges Dreyfus to state that socialism is intellectually at the origin of fascism "is to indulge in the pleasure of ideological scrambling, since it suggests a common nature shared by two rigorously antagonistic systems"(pp. 209-210). Fascism borrowed a "few formulas" from socialist culture, but it was fundamentally *against* that culture. Fascist culture was authoritarian, anti-egalitarian, nationalist, and bellicose. "Above all, fascism wanted to resolve the

contradictions of class through the construction of the 'ethical state'" (p. 210). It opposed trade-unionism as a class weapon.

Nevertheless, in "Outlines of French Fascism, Winock returns to the notion that a socialism of some kind was one of the distinguishing characteristics of French fascism in the 1930s. In discussing five fascist or "fascist-style" organizations of the period--the *Solidarité française* (SF), *Francisme*, the *Parti populaire français*, the Cagoule, and *Chemises Vertes*--he says they all "turned to their own account the Valois synthesis (fascism=nationalism + socialism)" (p. 187). It is not clear what "turned to their own account" means here, since Winock himself proceeds to point out that although every fascist organization proclaimed it was anticapitalist, none of their "socialisms" ever went so far as to condemn private property, that the SF sought to solve the social problem by helping workers to acquire property, and that the PPF defended "all middle class, peasant, artisanal, commercial, and industrial activities which constituted the very essence of the nation" (p. 188). As for workers' organizations, they were to be kept within corporatist institutions that forbade strikes. As a result, Winock says, the conceptions of Georges Sorel and Valois no longer applied: "The fascist equation--nationalism + socialism--was now just algebraic advertising" (p. 189).

Having arrived somewhat torturously at this conclusion, Winock reverses himself once again when he turns to the question of the *Croix de feu*. Were the *Croix de feu* and its successor, the *Parti social français*, fascist? The question can hardly be avoided since the major characteristics Winock attributes to the five fascist movements he discusses (except for their "socialism") were shared by the CF/PSF. The same can be said of the *Jeunesses patriotes* as well, which in 1929 had over 100,000 members, but not as many as the the CF/PSF in 1937 which had over 750,000 members, more than those of the French Communist and Socialist parties combined. If the CF/PSF was fascist, then it can no longer be said that France in the 1930s was as allergic to fascism as Winock claims, that it was represented by only few insignificant fringe groups (especially if one adds the nearly 60,000 activists of the PPF in 1937). For Winock, one of the reasons the CF/PSF was not fascist was because it was too socially conservative, because, in other words, it did not meet the requirement of "nationalism + socialism." But this is the same requirement that he had previously discarded when it no longer applied to the PPF and SF. Why does he retain it in the case of the CF/PSF? For that matter, why--if the PPF and SF only used "nationalism + socialism" for nothing more than algebraic advertising--does he continue to call *them* "fascist"?

In Winock's view, the CF/PSF avoided fascism not only because it was "more conservative than revolutionary" but also because it was a "traditionalist" and "Christian" movement marked by a "fervent Catholicism". Besides, Winock notes, La

Rocque rejected anti-Semitism [although not in 1941] and denied that he was "fascist". Indeed, according to Winock, La Rocque was a force *against* fascism since, by refusing to ally with Doriot, he protected his troops from contamination. Winock does mention that La Rocque wanted to apply military solutions to political life, but implies that because this was "naive" on La Rocque's part, it is not to be taken seriously, as the historian René Rémond did not when he dismissed the CF as a movement of "political boy scouts". Finally, Winock claims that mass fascism never took root in France because the bulk of the French right remained committed to republican legality. This included the CF/PSF, the largest party on the French right in 1937, which was "careful to remain within strictly legal bounds".

There are problems with each of these arguments. The socio-economic programs of the five movements Winock associates with fascism were also far more conservative than revolutionary, virtually identical to those of the CF/PSF. These movements, too, lauded cultural traditionalism and (except for the PPF) were predominantly Catholic. Even Doriot, a former communist, declared in 1938 that "a nationalism only understands itself if it finds its sources in the old traditions of the French provinces," and he praised the "cathedrals of France". To imply that no fascists defended Christianity, even right-wing Christianity, ignores the fascisms of José Antonio Primo de Rivera in Spain, Sionio Pais in Portugal, Corneliu Codreanu in Rumania, Engelbert Dollfus in Austria, the "German Christians" in the Third Reich, and Georges Valois, Antoine Redier, Jean Renaud, Marcel Bucard, Robert Brasillach, and Pierre Drieu La Rochelle in France. Winock himself portrays Drieu's admiration for the "virile" Catholicism of the Middle Ages as one expression of the writer's fascism. It is not clear why Winock applies a different standard to the paramilitary Catholicism of the *Croix de feu*--although it would certainly weaken his argument that fascism never had much quantitative success in France if he applied a single standard. Also problematic is Winock's suggestion that La Rocque's desire to apply military solutions to political life was un-fascist because it was "naive". Did not Hitler pursue a similarly naive goal in 1924, and Mussolini also before he came to power? As for La Rocque's original rejection of anti-Semitism, the same was true of Mussolini for the first fourteen years of his rule. It is true that La Rocque rejected the label "fascism", but so too did almost all French fascist leaders in the 1930s, including Renaud of the SF and Doriot of the PPF, mainly because they did not want the public to dismiss their movements as "foreign" (especially as German), that is, as less than nationalist. But rejecting the label does not, by itself, prove that one is not fascist, any more than claiming that one is "socialist" necessarily makes it true.

La Rocque's commitment to "legality" (if what is meant by this was some kind of loyalty to democratic principles) is also suspect. In a forthcoming article, the British historian Kevin Passmore refers to a document in the La Rocque papers (now housed

in the Archives nationales in Paris) which was not available to Winock in 1984 and which throws additional light on La Rocque's views of "legality". As Passmore points out, in the winter of 1935/36, faced with the prospect of the government banning the CF as a paramilitary organization and only six months before the CF's replacement, the allegedly "democratic" PSF, was founded, La Rocque told his troops in a party communiqué: "To scorn universal suffrage does not withstand examination. Neither Mussolini nor Hitler... committed that mistake. Hitlerism in particular raised itself to total power through elections... Hitlerism became a preponderant political force only on the day when... it achieved 107 seats of its own in the Reichstag" (AN 451 AP 81, document 161, winter 1935-36). In short, La Rocque, like Mussolini and Hitler before him, saw the advantage of exploiting electoral democracy in the short run to achieve authoritarian ends in the long run. Long before the discovery of this document, however, the CF/PSF publically displayed a number of other fascist characteristics as well, characteristics which it shared with fascisms both at home and abroad, characteristics which I have discussed elsewhere. Suffice it to say that, except for not using the formula "nationalism + socialism" as algebraic advertising, La Rocque's movement had all the features that marked the five fascist or "fascist-style" movements which Winock discusses in his "Outlines of French Fascism." Moreover, while avoiding the term "socialism", the *Croix de feu* did insist in 1935 that it was "both "national" and "social", proclaiming to workers: "Your aspirations are ours. Those who have portrayed us as your adversaries have lied. We are your brothers." Like Valois, Doriot, and other French fascist leaders, La Rocque did not eschew double-talk.

Finally, one might take issue with Winock's contention that La Rocque prevented his followers from being contaminated by fascism and was therefore a force against fascism in France. This strikes me, at the very least, as much too categorical, as well as much too sanitizing. Had Winock viewed the relationship between the CF/PSF and fascism in the 1930s in the same way as he viewed that between open and closed nationalism in the 1890s, he might have found that here too, it is wrong to imagine "a watertight partition that isolated one from the other" and to ignore that between the two movements there were "passageways, convergences, even compromises". La Rocque's *Service public* (1935) and *Disciplines d'action* (1941), as well as his speeches and various *Croix de feu* newspaper columns, are full of such contaminations. White-washing fascism on the right is no better than white-washing anti-Semitism on the left; the same standard should apply to both.

To dispute a few of Winock's conclusions, however, especially those made prior to the subsequent research discoveries of others, is not to deny the many stellar qualities of his twenty-four essays. These essays, with their plethora of insights and exceptionally fine writing, are in the fullest sense of the word exemplary.

Robert J. Soucy
Oberlin College
Robert.Soucy@oberlin.edu

Copyright © 1997-2000 by H-Net, all rights reserved. Maintained by H-France.