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The Pan-Fascist Paradox

How Does a Nationalist-Minded Fascist Think Transnationally?

Aron Brouwer | ORCID: 0000-0003-3292-8471

University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, PA, USA

Brouwer@sas.upenn.edu

Abstract

To better understand cross-border fascist solidarity, this article suggests a new conceptual framework revolving around the term ‘pan-fascism’ and its ‘paradox’. It argues that the existence or non-existence of a pan-fascist ‘paradox’ in the minds of historical fascists is a matter of optics, as it all depends on who is mobilizing the notion of fascist transnationalism. Because of such optical issues, which all must be unpacked historically, the conceptual framework of ‘pan-fascism’ does not offer a simple solution. It, rather, puts emphasis on a key question: how did certain fascists, at various moments in their lives, think about the possibility of fascist transnationalism? To demonstrate the effectiveness of this approach, this paper takes the work, thought, and practices of the French editors of *Je suis partout* as a case study, and demonstrates how they attempted to reconcile their commitment to French nationalism with fascist transnationalism.

Keywords

France – Germany – fascism – National Socialism – transnational – intellectual – *Je suis partout* (1930–1944)

Dissatisfied with Édouard Daladier’s coalition of the socialist-republican French left, tens of thousands right-wing activists gathered at the Place de la Concorde on 6 February 1934. As the night fell, the crowd turned violent. The protesters burned buses, looted kiosks, and tried to breach the barricades erected around the Palais Bourbon, where the parliament was in active session. Many right-wing leaders such as Charles Maurras, the leading ideologue of the right-wing political movement Action française (AF), were hesitant to back the

activists, as most of them opposed the use of violence to overthrow the Third Republic. Without the active involvement of AF's leaders in particular—being the most established and largest organization on France's heavily splintered ultra-right—the demonstration was highly disorganized and became increasingly violent. As the activists were about to break the barricades, the Parisian police officers fired into the crowd. At the end of the night, 1,400 activists were injured, and fifteen died.

Many—especially young—members of AF denounced their movement for its inaction in moments of crisis. Lucien Rebatet, an editor of the weekly right-wing and French-nationalist journal *Je suis partout* (JSP), depicted his movement's leaders as 'old writers, impotent without their pens, jealously guarding their words against any who might try to put them into action'.¹ Disappointed, many members of AF turned their back to this movement and its ideology, which was predominantly monarchist, antisemitic, anti-parliamentarian, French-nationalist, and anti-German. At Rebatet's journal JSP, various editors openly denounced Maurras's doctrine and, instead, became particularly fascinated by foreign fascist leaders, such as Léon Degrelle, Benito Mussolini, and Adolf Hitler, whom they praised and with whose parties they sought rapprochement.

Although these editors at JSP publicly engaged in collaboration with foreign fascist movements from mid-1936 onward, they never renounced their commitment to French nationalism. This, then, raises a thought-provoking question that transcends the particularities of these French fascists and their unique contexts: how do nationalist-minded fascists think transnationally?

This article sets out to answer this question. The first section examines the historiography on transnational fascism and argues that the current theoretical framework for understanding cross-border collaboration and interaction between fascists is limited. It, thereafter, demonstrates that cross-border connections between fascists can best be examined from the conceptual framework of 'pan-fascism'. Pan-fascism, as defined in this paper, contains the capacity of a very distinct way of understanding fascism, seeing that it seems to bear a paradox within its own name: how does transnational fascism comport with nationalist and imperialist aspects inherent to many fascist ideologies?² It is this friction which makes 'pan-fascism' inherently unstable.

1 Debbie Lackerstein, *National Regeneration in Vichy France: Ideas and Policies, 1930–1944* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2012), 111.

2 In the historiography, the term 'pan-fascism' is notably underutilized. In 2006, Michel Winock coined the term 'pan-fascist school' to criticize a group of English-speaking historians who—in Winock's opinion—see fascists everywhere. Winock contrasted 'pan-fascism' to 'unifas-

The word ‘paradox’, here, helps to underscore that there is a tension between the desire to create a community of fascist nations, or perhaps even a supranational fascist community, and the seeming impossibility of achieving this.³ This goes beyond the question of how one could create an international movement out of national movements, as there are a multitude of examples from the eighteenth century onward where nationalism was not primarily organized around defeating other nationalisms, but where nationalist movements aimed to dismantle—for instance—absolute monarchies, and dynastic state formations. Buried in there was also a latent possibility for conflict, but ‘ideologically’ these forms of nationalism were mostly structured around a common enemy. A great deal of ‘fascist’ ideologues in the first half of the twentieth century, however, primarily structured their thinking about ‘nationalism’ around defeating other nationalisms, rather than implying that national movements in different countries could happily exist besides one another.

Apart from a conceptual friction in the term ‘pan-fascism’, the existence or non-existence of a pan-fascist ‘paradox’ in the minds of historical fascists is clearly a matter of optics, as it all depends on who is mobilizing the notion of fascist transnationalism; as well as on their reasons for doing so. Because of such optical issues, which must all be unpacked historically, the conceptual framework of ‘pan-fascism’ does not offer simple solutions. Rather it puts emphasis upon several key questions: how did certain fascists, at various moments in their lives, think about the possibility of cross-border fascist solidarity? Why did they—or: why did they not—believe that fascist transnationalism was intrinsically paradoxical, and how did this affect them, their thinking, and their actions? This framework, in other words, offers a distinct perspective to analyze how fascists mediated the relationship between nationalism and transnationalism.

The second section of this paper employs this conceptual framework in a very practical sense. It takes the work, thought, and practices of the French

cism’, which he defined as the choice to only regard the Italian regime and its followers as ‘real’ fascists. His usage of the term is, thus, quite different from how it is introduced in this paper. Michel Winock, ‘Revisiting French Fascism: La Rocque and the Croix-de-Feu,’ *Vingtième siècle: Revue d’histoire* 90, no. 2 (2006): 3–27. For an example of how pan-fascism was used in the 1930s, see: Asvero Gravelli, *Panfascismo* (Rome: Nuova Europa, 1935).

3 In many ways, ‘supranationalism’ and ‘transnationalism’ are overlapping terms, as they both emphasize cross-border connections, networks, without using the nation-state as the primary category of analysis. It mostly boils down to scale: when examining all sorts of specific fascist connections across borders, the term ‘transnationalism’ seems more appropriate, whereas the term ‘supranationalism’ is more narrowly defined; as it specifically refers to processes and collaborations that transcend nation-states in a broader, or global, ways.

editors of JSP as a case study, and demonstrates how they attempted to reconcile their commitment to French nationalism with fascist transnationalism. A study of this journal is particularly relevant as the double meaning of its title already points towards the pan-fascist paradox: 'Je suis partout' can be translated into English as both 'I am everywhere' and 'I follow everywhere'. This section discusses how the thought and work of the JSP editors developed between February 1934 and June 1940 and argues that their hopes and dreams depended so heavily on the success of cross-border collaboration between fascists, that they did not allow themselves to recognize any 'tension' between their thinking about French nationalism and fascist transnationalism.

The third section of this article argues that one should consider 'pan-fascist romanticism' to understand how individual fascists thought transnationally. By zeroing in on the relationship between these French editors and foreign fascists, it illustrates that most instances of 'fascist transnationalism' were driven by distinct 'romantic' narratives. Pan-fascist romanticism, as defined in this study, is somewhat similar to 'regular' or 'national' fascist romanticism, in the sense that it often includes an idealization of a deeply mythicized narrative of social, cultural, or political greatness, a profound idea of social, cultural, or political rebirth, as well as a mentioning of old scores to settle against alleged shared enemies.⁴ Both instances of fascist romanticism function in a similar manner to Georges Sorel's 'myths' since they are powerful though generally indeterminate images that helped unify and motivate support.⁵

The difference between 'fascist' and 'pan-fascist' romanticism, though, is the transnational dimension of pan-fascist narratives, which are not primarily driven by 'national' ideas, symbols, or enemies, but are firmly rooted in 'transnationalism'. Practically, this means that the 'myths' are altered to cater to a different 'in-group'. These narratives could be grounded upon antisemitism, pan-Europeanism, various forms of transnational racialism (such as Aryanism or white supremacism), anti-Bolshevism, anti-capitalism, or a complicated combination and overlapping of these and other ideas. Often, such narratives were more about who the alleged enemies of 'fascists' were, rather than asserting a clearly defined body of 'fascist' ideas. These pan-fascist romantic narratives were also constantly in flux. Depending on the particular social, cultural,

4 This paper maintains Roger Griffin's definition of ultra-nationalism, namely that it is essentially xenophobic and is known to legitimize itself 'through deeply mythicized narratives of past cultural or political periods of historical greatness or of old scores to settle against alleged enemies'. Cyprian P. Blamires, ed., *World Fascism: A Historical Encyclopedia* (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2006), 452.

5 Georges Sorel, *Réflexions sur la violence* (Paris: Pages libres, 1908), 116–117.

and political realities of their times, some aspects were sometimes of absolute importance, but they, at other times, faded into the background to be misrecognized, substituted, or forgotten. Due to their transnational reach and dimension, these narratives of 'pan-fascist romanticism' were often at odds with—or fully contradicted—existing narratives of fascist romanticism. How is it, then, possible that certain individual 'nationalist-minded' fascists—at several moments in their lives and careers—were committed to specific conflicting narratives of both 'fascist' and 'pan-fascist' romanticism at the same time?

This third section also examines cases of interaction between the editors of *JSP* and various representatives of the German National Socialist regime in the 1930s. It illustrates that distinct narratives of 'pan-fascist romanticism' were constantly asserted or reinforced by all parties involved. In his book *A Specter Haunting Europe* (2018), Paul Hanebrink demonstrated the importance of anti-Judeo-Bolshevism for the possibility of fascist transnationalism. The Nazis, Hanebrink argues, spread anti-Jewish and anti-Bolshevist ideas to unify potential supporters across the continent into their 'anti-Bolshevik crusade', and he notes that the pages of *JSP*, as well, 'were filled with visions of a France brought low by Judeo-Bolshevik power, racial and sexual contamination, and French emasculation'.⁶ This narrative, Hanebrink argued, was not an aberration in broader European history, but the renewal of an established discourse among Catholic and Protestant thinkers that associated 'Jews' and 'communists' with 'the dangers of secularization and the inversion of moral and social order'.⁷ Although the actual pages of *JSP* remain relatively unexplored in his book, Hanebrink rightly emphasized that the 'anti-Judeo-Bolshevist' narrative was important for *JSP*'s editors, as these French fascists—both in their journal and in their communication with Nazi officials—kept referring to one mythical image in particular: the Germans and French were depicted as two 'Aryan brother races' who were in 'a heroic battle' to 'defend the white human race' against both 'Mr. Stalin's Parisian minions' and 'the Jewish cancer'.⁸ This narrative was strongly grounded in both anti-Judeo-Bolshevism and a sense of transnational racialism under the umbrella of 'Aryan' whiteness.

The fourth section of this paper demonstrates that the narratives of 'pan-fascist romanticism' could be employed to achieve contradicting goals. Whereas they could stimulate and facilitate interaction and collaboration be-

6 Paul Hanebrink, *A Specter Haunting Europe: The Myth of Judeo-Bolshevism* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press, 2018), 91, 98, 109.

7 Hanebrink, *A Specter Haunting Europe*, 91, 98.

8 Pierre-Antoine Cousteau, 'Les communistes ont bien travaillé pour Hitler,' [The communists did good work for Hitler] *Je suis partout*, August 29, 1936, 1.

tween fascists, they could also be used to manipulate foreign fascist peoples, movements, and regimes. Certain representatives of the Nazi regime, for instance, fed into a specific narrative of cross-border fascist collaboration, as a vehicle to further their own ultra-nationalist, imperialist, goals. Some of these representatives saw ‘pan-fascist romanticism’ as a form of camouflage, which could be employed to—temporarily—conceal Nazi Germany’s drive for geographical expansion and physical struggle.⁹ Through the continuing assertion and dissemination of ‘pan-fascist romanticism’ in their communication with French fascists, these individuals hoped to implant ‘pan-fascist illusions’ in the minds of France’s ultra-right, and aimed to further ‘obscure’ something which these Nazis regarded as the irreconcilable paradox of fascist transnationalism.

The goal of this article, ultimately, lies beyond discussing the particularities of its case study.¹⁰ It demonstrates that approaching case studies from the perspective of ‘pan-fascism’ and its ‘paradox’ can make sense of the ideological flexibility found in the work, thinking, and practices of historical agents involved in fascist connections and collaboration across borders. It might stimulate scholars to turn, or stay, away from one-dimensional approaches to fascist transnationalism. And instead of trying to replace these inflexible perspectives with a new, global, or more complicated theory of fascist transnationalism, this paper—again—points towards ‘the pan-fascist paradox’. It does so for one reason in particular: fascism as a clearly defined body of ideas does simply not exist. Because ‘the ideology’—or political-ideological ‘genre’, or ‘ethos’—called fascism has been in an ongoing state of flux and motion throughout history, all rigid methodologies and static approaches will—eventually—fall short and break under the pressure that fascism’s transformative nature asserts.¹¹ When

9 Although expansionist ideas did (more often than not) take a central position in the policies of many fascist regimes, this might have more to do with the ‘nationalist’ underpinnings of the goals of various specific fascist movements, than it being a definite and integral characteristic of ‘fascism’ itself.

10 A forthcoming article will place the editors of JSP in the wider context of late-1930s France. One, for instance, has to remember that the French have a long history of ‘nationalizing’ universal movements; such as the French versions of Catholicism, socialism, and communism. Although the editors of JSP seem to be invested in the project of ‘trans-nationalizing’ an ideology which is often regarded as inherently nationalist, this still begs the question if it is simply a ‘fascist’ story, or also a story of ‘French’ thought in a broader sense, mediating the relationship between the universal and the national in a right-wing key; Aron Brouwer, *False Fronts: Counterintuitive Connections between Ultra-Right, Left-Wing, and Indigenous Opponents of France’s Empire, 1919–1939* (Forthcoming).

11 In 2020, Anson Rabinbach wrote that fascism should be understood as an ‘ethos or *Gesinnung*, a willingness to adhere to the general precepts of a worldview, which was vague and indistinct enough to embrace a variety of related perspectives’. Somewhat similarly,

attempting to reconstruct how individual nationalist-minded fascists thought transnationally, employing a flexible and maneuverable perspective can provide more insights than any fully closed-off theory.

The Heterogeneity of Fascist Transnationalism

Fascist politicians and intellectuals have often been depicted as ideologues who espoused extreme nationalism, condemned cross-border collaboration, and preached cultural parochialism.¹² As a result, many scholars have approached fascism from a 'national' lens, and investigated their historical subjects in the context of national histories. Scholars of 'international fascism', in contrast, predominantly aimed to discern characteristics to differentiate between fascist ideologies and movements in time and space. Rather than examining fascist parties and practices in their unique historical contexts, they focused on constructing abstract typologies.¹³ A recent strand of research on 'transnational fascism', however, foregrounds cross-border cooperation and intellectual exchange between fascists. Certain scholars affiliated with this emerging school of thought have started emphasizing the pan-European elements of fascism, to challenge the conception that right-wing movements were purely driven by nationalism.¹⁴

Sven Reichardt argued that one should think about fascism as seven distinctive 'processes', because 'fascism as a movement, acting within a democratic system, should be understood as fundamentally different from a state carrying out a genocide in the exceptional situation of the Second World War'. Sven Reichardt, 'Fascism's Stages: Imperial Violence, Entanglement, and Processualization,' *History of Ideas* 82, no. 1 (2021): 85–107; Anson Rabinbach, *Staging the Third Reich: Essays in Cultural and Intellectual History*, eds. Stefanos Geroulanos and Dagmar Herzog (London, etc.: Routledge, 2020), 121, 160, 174.

12 Philip Morgan, *Fascism in Europe, 1919–1945* (London, etc.: Routledge, 2003); Wolfgang Schieder, *Der italienische Faschismus 1919–1945* (Munich: Beck, 2010).

13 Stanley Payne, *Fascism: Comparison and Definition* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1980); Stanley Payne, *A History of Fascism, 1914–1915* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1996); Roger Griffin, *International Fascism: Theories, Causes and the New Consensus* (London: Arnold, 1998); Keven Passmore and Chris Millington, eds., *Political Violence and Democracy in Western Europe* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015); Robert Paxton, *The Anatomy of Fascism* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2004).

14 Arnd Bauerkämper, 'Ambiguities of Transnationalism: Fascism in Europe between Pan-Europeanism and Ultra-Nationalism, 1919–1939,' *German Historical Institute London Bulletin* 2 (2007): 44–45; David D. Roberts, *Fascist Interactions: Proposals for a New Approach to Fascism and Its Era, 1919–1945* (New York: Berghahn, 2016); Arnd Bauerkämper and Grzegorz Rossollinski-Liebe, *Fascism without Borders: Transnational Connections and Cooperation between Movements and Regimes in Europe from 1918 to 1945* (New York: Berghahn,

One example of this is Arnd Bauerkämper's article 'Ambiguities of Transnationalism' (2007) in which he effectively employed the idea of pan-European-ism to emphasize the vital role of cross-border exchange and collaboration between European fascists.¹⁵ Recently, Bauerkämper published a collection of thirteen essays on the same topic with Grzegorz Rossollinski-Liebe, entitled *Fascism without Borders* (2017). The editors argued against the idea that fascism is inseparable from nationalism. Instead, they focused on 'transnational connections and cooperation between movements and regimes in Europe' and urged scholars to recognize the pan-European aspects of fascism.¹⁶ But while setting out to show that fascism transcended borders, the underlying thought that connected all the contributions in this collection was that a small group of right-wing politicians and intellectuals, to a certain extent, had substituted national borders with European borders. Rather than truly dismantling the logic of 'thinking in borders', and the nationalist sentiments underlying fascism, they simply displaced them.

Studies that approach fascism from this pan-European fascist paradigm are particularly effective in elucidating the limitations of 'national' approaches to fascism. When trying to analyze the transnational dimensions of fascism, however, this perspective is limited in its own right, as it heavily relies on one particular possibility of transnationalism: pan-Europeanism.

Firstly, this notion of pan-Europeanism deals awkwardly with fascism outside Europe or collaborations between 'European' and 'non-European' fascists. One thing that comes to mind is South African right-wing nationalism in the 1930s. Whereas many members of the Ossewabrandwag felt closely related to the Netherlands and Belgium as their *Stamlande* ['root-countries'], some of them supported the Nazis in their occupation of these countries, as they felt that it was a necessary step to defeat the British and dismantle their empire. Other examples are how the leaders of the Chinese government in Nanjing had become particularly enchanted by Italian and German fascism, or how a group

2017), 196–197; Jochen Böehler and Robert Gerwarth, *The Waffen-SS: A European History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017); Sandrine Kott and Kiran K. Patel, *Nazism Across Borders: The Social Policies of the Third Reich and their Global Appeal* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018); Jorge Dagnino, Matthew Feldman and Paul Stocker, *The 'New Man' in Radical Right Ideology and Practice, 1919–1945* (London: Bloomsbury, 2019); Johannes Dafinger and Dieter Pohl, *A New Nationalist Europe under Hitler: Concepts of Europe and Transnational Networks in the National Socialist Sphere of Influence, 1933–1945* (London: Routledge, 2019); Ricky W. Law, *Transnational Nazism: Ideology and Culture in German–Japanese Relations, 1919–1936* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019).

15 Bauerkämper, 'Ambiguities of Transnationalism,' 44–45.

16 Bauerkämper and Rossollinski-Liebe, *Fascism without Borders*, 196–197.

of predominantly white and Dutch settlers in the Dutch East-Indies wanted to establish an Indonesian ‘fatherland’ independently from the Netherlands; for which they employed anti-Dutch and anti-European fascist language and attempted to mobilize native nationalism among the population of Indonesia. To examine such complicated cases of fascist transnationalism, the prism of pan-Europeanism falls short.

Of course, no author seems to defend the position that fascist transnational solidarity was exclusively about European categories; and this is also not the primary limitation of this perspective. The problem lies in the continuing usage of ‘pan-European fascism’ as an overarching approach—and starting point—when it comes to studying crossborder fascist solidarity. This is insufficient, as it perpetuates Eurocentrism and does not reflect the myriad ways in which individual fascists have tried to make sense of their feelings, thoughts, and experiences in different contexts throughout the world. Instead, the ‘pan-European’ idea should be presented as just one of many possible ideas that spurred transnational collaboration among fascists.¹⁷

Secondly, the pan-European paradigm sheds a very narrow light on the thought and work of fascists—both outside and within the presupposed borders of Europe—because it primarily fixates on the extent to which these fascists dreamt about (the rebirth of) a ‘Europe’ for the ‘Europeans’. It does not give much room to recognize that the thought and work of most fascists was only abstractly related to this pan-European perspective, that pan-European language was often employed to convey disparate meanings, and that most fascists evoked more complicated possibilities of transnationalism.¹⁸

For example, in her contribution to Bauerkämper and Rossollinski-Liebe’s collection *Fascism without Borders*, Marleen Rensen departed her study of ‘transnational fascism and the case of Robert Brasillach’ from the prism of pan-Europeanism: she predominantly depicted Brasillach—who was the editor-in-chief of JSP between 1937 and 1943—as an advocate of a fascist Europe and

17 Some individual fascists at various moments in time, however, were primarily committed to the ‘pan-European’ idea. As Roger Griffin wrote: ‘certain strands of interwar fascism were actively concerned with resolving the decadence brought about by the status quo as a whole, not just in a particular nation, and thus thought of rebirth in pan-European or even Western terms’. Roger Griffin, ‘Europe for the Europeans: Fascist Myths of the European New Order 1922–1992,’ in *A Fascist Century: Essays by Roger Griffin*, ed. Matthew Feldman (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 132–181.

18 Whereas ‘Europe’ was connected to presupposed ‘formal’ European borders for some fascists, it was regarded as a synonym for ‘the white race’ by others. Certain fascists, such as Brasillach, were also invested in projecting ‘Europeanness’ on the colonies and presenting ‘Empire’ as a purer mirror of an impure Europe. See: Brouwer, ‘False Fronts’ (forthcoming).

noted how he contributed ‘to the conception of fascism as a pan-European ideology and movement’. She argued that ‘Brasillach tried to disseminate the universal fascist spirit across national borders’ and made ‘myths of the pan-European fascist fight against communist and Jewish decadence, intended to bring forth spiritual and cultural renewal’.¹⁹ Although her analysis of Brasillach’s work is exemplary, the explanatory power of the ‘pan-European’ frame feels somewhat limited as it seems insufficient to present Brasillach primarily as a proponent of pan-European fascism. Although the idea of the decline of a broader European culture was certainly important for Brasillach—he, for instance, described a crisis of civilization that went beyond the situation of one particular country—these thoughts were only dominant in his work at specific moments in his life. Brasillach’s ideas about ‘Europe’, ‘Europeans’, ‘civilization’, ‘culture’ and many other relevant concepts, principles, and processes also changed drastically over the course of his career. Rather than forcing the ‘pan-European’ frame on Brasillach’s writings, thoughts, and practices, his work can better be understood as a constant tug-of-war between different, and overlapping, ideas about Mediterranean-Latin fascism, French nationalism, pan-Europeanism, and several not-exclusively-European-centered forms of fascist transnationalism.

So, instead of presupposing the relevance of a certain set of ideas, principles, or processes, it makes more sense to think about fascist transnationalism from the perspective of ‘pan-fascism’ and its ‘paradox’. By urging historians to examine how historical fascists positioned themselves in relation to this apparent paradox, and how they mediated the relationship between nationalism and transnationalism, this perspective opens the door to a more complicated understanding of cross-border fascist solidarity.

Two Dissociated Conceptions of France

In November 1930, the publisher Arthème Fayard founded the weekly journal JSP and appointed Pierre Gaxotte as its first director. Because most editors at JSP were members and sympathizers of AF, including Gaxotte, who had previously worked as Maurras’s private secretary, the journal could be considered as an extension of Maurras’s movement. This, however, changed in February

19 Marleen Rensen, ‘Fascist Poetry for Europe: Transnational Fascism and the Case of Robert Brasillach,’ in *Fascism without Borders: Transnational Connections and Cooperation between Movements and Regimes in Europe from 1918 to 1945*, eds. Arnd Bauerkämper and Grzegorz Rossollinski-Liebe (New York: Berghahn, 2017), 192, 208–209.

1934, when a majority of the JSP editors turned to fascism after the failed march on the French parliament. Although many ‘conservatives’ left the journal after this ‘changing of the guard’ transpired, there was certainly no clean break: some editors who stayed loyal to Maurras and AF, such as Gaxotte, continued to work with the more radical and fascist ‘new generation’. Their influence on the editorial line was limited. Even Gaxotte, who remained JSP’s effective director on paper until 1939, felt so ideologically isolated that he chose to publish most of his own writings elsewhere. In practice, it was Brasillach who managed the journal after his appointment as JSP’s editor-in-chief in June 1937.

To understand why the ‘new generation’ of JSP editors became particularly attracted by the ideologies of, and wanted to collaborate with, foreign fascist regimes and the German National Socialists in particular, the thoughts and writings of Pierre-Antoine Cousteau, the older brother of the explorer, naval officer, and oceanographer Jacques-Yves Cousteau, are of particular importance. His contributions in JSP set the tone for the editorial line of the journal regarding Franco-German relations. In one key contribution, published on 29 August 1936, Cousteau tried to get to the roots of French Germanophobia. Apart from traditional anti-German sentiments that had determined French politics since the unification of Germany in 1871, he believed that the source for a recent surge in Germanophobia was the unauthorized French translation of *Mein Kampf*, entitled *Mon Combat* (1934). He was not completely wrong about this. The people behind this translation—Charles Maurras, Pierre Gaxotte, Fernand Sorlot, and Marshall Hubert Lyautey—had openly proclaimed in April 1934 that they suspected that the Nazis were working together with French fascist journalists to censor Hitler’s anti-French statements, and that they saw it as their ‘duty to France’ to publish an integral French translation of *Mein Kampf* to oppose this censorship. Their translation, they believed, showed Hitler’s ‘true’ and ‘anti-French’ intentions.²⁰

Cousteau, in contrast, asserted that it was a mistake to believe that the text of *Mein Kampf* was somehow key to understanding Hitler’s true intentions, as the ideas in this book were clearly outdated: ‘when Hitler wrote *Mein Kampf*’ in prison, ‘it seemed essential to him to “neutralize” France, by crushing it’, but it is important to realize ‘that Hitler had just fought—and lost—a war against France’. Cousteau urged his readers to see the anti-French statements in their original context, and he promised his readers that Hitler, since then,

20 Robert Brasillach, *Notre avant-guerre* (Paris: Plon, 1941), 50–52; Aron Brouwer, “Every Frenchman Must Read This Book:” The Impact of Politics and Ideology on the Production, Translation and Dissemination of Hitler’s “Mein Kampf” in France, 1933–1939, *Quaerendo* 49, no. 3 (2019): 197, 203, 208, 225.

'has changed his mind'.²¹ Right now, Hitler was no longer focused on taking revenge against France, but on the 'conquest towards the East', in his attempts 'to acquire the necessary living space for the German people'. The French, therefore, 'should not worry about the Rhine', Cousteau wrote, as long as they give Hitler enough room to 'settle his quarrel between Hitlerism and Bolshevism'.²²

Because he believed that Hitler and Nazi Germany were in an existential struggle with Judeo-Bolshevism, Cousteau argued that the existence of France's Judeo-Bolshevist Popular Front government could 'provide excuses for pan-Germanism' aimed towards France. The 'greatest crime' of the French government, he wrote, was their 'pact with Mr. Stalin' in February 1936, because it was this agreement that had prompted Hitler's decision to reoccupy the Rhineland in March 1936. This was proof, according to Cousteau, that it would be a fatal mistake to put 'France' deliberately between Hitlerism and Bolshevism.²³

Cousteau, then, unfolded his thoughts about a conspiracy of the highest order. He believed that the people in France's government—who he called 'Mr. Stalin's Parisian minions' and 'Jewish plutocrats'—were in fact foreign invaders who had colonized France and taken over the institutions of the Third Republic. These Judeo-Bolshevists were trying to undermine the French nation and race. They, for instance, were willingly aligning France with the Soviet Union to avert Hitler's attention from his 'conquest towards the east'. For him, these actions could only be explained as attempts to defend Stalin and the Soviet Union, by re-establishing the image of France as Nazi Germany's primary enemy. 'Just as the partition of Poland once saved the Jacobin revolution by diverting attention from Europe', Cousteau prophesied, 'The partition of France would save—for a few years at least—the Russian revolution'.²⁴

The only way to prevent a German invasion and save France, Cousteau asserted, was to eliminate the Judeo-Bolshevist influences on their country. An important symbol of the Judeo-Bolshevist conspiracy, for him, was Georges Mandel, a French politician who was an outspoken opponent of Nazism and fascism. Mandel also had advocated for an official alliance between France and the Soviet Union. In JSP, Mandel was often accused of steering France into a war with Germany, as well as placing his Jewish ancestry above the interests of France. Cousteau wrote the following about Mandel: 'we will never tire of repeating that the presence of this stateless person in the Colonial Ministry is a shame for our country'. He asserted 'that all his racial brothers should be

21 Cousteau, 'Les communistes ont bien travaillé pour Hitler,' 1.

22 Ibid.

23 Ibid.

24 Ibid.

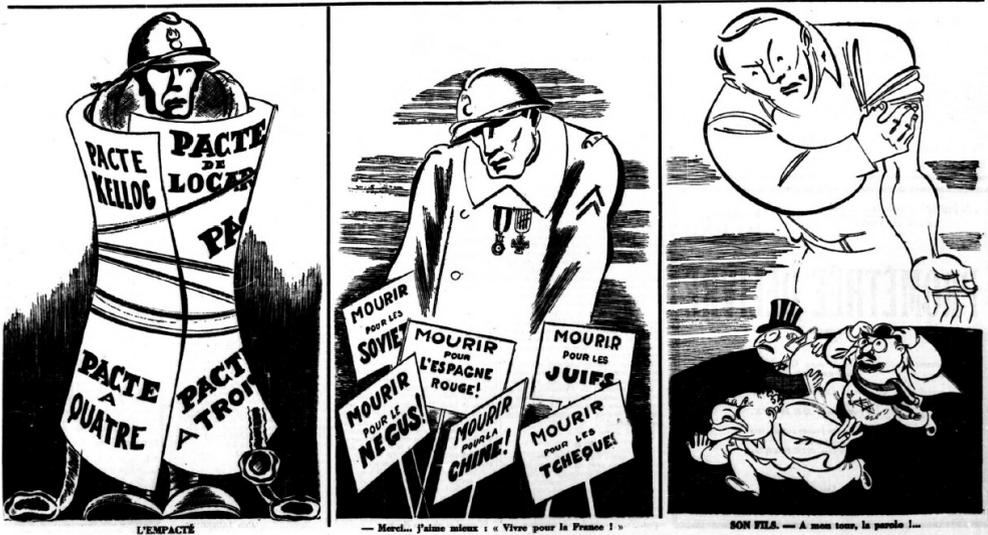


FIGURE 1 Militarist, French nationalist, antisemitic, and anti-Bolshevist cartoons as published in the weekly fascist journal *Je suis partout*, November 11, 1938
 SOURCE: BIBLIOTHÈQUE NATIONALE DE FRANCE, *RETRONEWS*, [HTTPS://WWW.RETRONEWS.FR/TITRE-DE-PRESSE/JE-SUIS-PARTOUT](https://www.retronews.fr/titre-de-presse/je-suis-partout)

mercilessly kept away from the government', to end 'their influence on our destinies'. Right now, 'the idea that Paris is a Jewish metropolis' has gained credence. France can only 'maintain her prestige' if she learns how to defeat 'the Jewish cancer'.²⁵ Cousteau argued that 'it is up to us, the French people' to prevent further crimes of the French government. We, the French people, Cousteau asserted, have to 'wipe out the enemy in the interior'.²⁶

There was a seemingly paradoxical relationship between France and Nazi Germany in Cousteau's analysis of the contemporary political situation, as Hitler was regarded both as a threat to France, as well as its savior. In order to prevent the pretext for a war between Germany and France, Cousteau argued that it was up to the racially pure elements among the French people to wipe out all internal Judeo-Bolshevist enemies. But if they failed to achieve their task, then the German Führer would undoubtedly set out to invade France,

25 Pierre-Antoine Cousteau, 'Le cancer juif,' [The Jewish cancer] *Je suis partout*, October 21, 1938, 2.

26 Cousteau, 'Les communistes ont bien travaillé pour Hitler,' 1. For Brasillach's ideas about Mandel, see: Jean Servièrre [pseudonym Robert Brasillach], 'Le juif Mandel contre nos colonies,' [The Jew Mandel against our colonies] *Je suis partout*, October 14, 1938, 4.

because Hitler was set on destroying Judeo-Bolshevism. As Cousteau believed that France's enemies would soon be destroyed by either way, he asserted that 'the hour for a bloody settlement' was finally upon them.

Cousteau thus regarded Nazi Germany as a threat to France's internal enemies, as well as a threat to the French government, but not to his nationalist image of 'France'. If the Germans would win a war against 'Judeo-Bolshevist' France, then Cousteau would view that as the liberation of France from foreign invaders—that is, from stateless Jews and Stalin's Bolshevik minions—rather than its conquest. This interpretation of the international-political situation after mid-1936 was the most crucial, and most often repeated, message that consistently reared its head in the writings of the JSP editors.

What needs to be made clear, here, is that the JSP editors were not primarily driven by Germanophilia. They did not choose Germany's nationalism over France's. Instead, they regarded German officials as natural allies in their struggle against the Third Republic and the French government, while remaining loyal to a mythical image of France. This dissociated image of France was made particularly explicit in the writings of the JSP editor Georges Blond. On 24 December 1937, he wrote that many young French people, 'while loving their country' and 'while being attached to this set of eternal values that is for them French culture', still 'welcomed the idea of the ruination of the state', because 'the state, to manifest itself to the national community, never found other aspects than those of gendarme carrying mobilization leaflets, electoral cash cows, money borrowers and persecuting policemen'.²⁷ The French government had failed to create 'national unity' in the last decades, Blond argued, because they had not promoted either mythicized narratives of periods of historical greatness, or of old scores to settle against alleged enemies.

Another editor, Henri Lebre, who used the name François Dauture as a pseudonym for most of his publications, similarly asserted in 1936 that he was ashamed of 'France' as a political reality. While 'the whole world moves away from the idols of Genève, from parliamentarism, from democracy, from abject Marxist and Soviet barbarism', Lebre noted, 'the politicians who pretend to speak in the name of France want to make our country the last defender of this junk and this barbarism'. The real French people must fight to 'give France its face back, and to get rid of the mask that hides its features'. As the French anti-Catholic and anti-communist politician Eugène Lautier wrote: 'France is no longer French'. Blond wrote that the Judeo-Bolshevist rhetorics were dan-

27 Georges Blond, 'Oui, les Français pourraient s'unir, mais ...,' [Yes, the French will be able to unite, but ...] *Je suis partout*, December 24, 1937, 2.

gerous, and that ‘we must be wary of it like the plague’. He yearned for the time when ‘Long live France’ would finally mean something different than ‘Long live the banks’ or ‘Long live Moscow’,²⁸ Lebre, in the same sense, could not wait for the ‘cultural and national re-birth’ of their country, and ‘when she returns, we will be amazed by the possibilities that will open before her again.’²⁹

In contrast to Cousteau, Brasillach—who functioned as JSP’s editor-in-chief from June 1937 onward—was skeptical about collaboration between France’s ultra-right and the German National Socialists.³⁰ Brasillach openly affiliated himself with fascism, but with ‘Latin fascism’ in particular. While being particularly fond of Spanish fascism, he had also praised Benito Mussolini for being a Latin poet, and he recognized ‘the Latin fascist traditions’ in the Belgian politics of the French-speaking Léon Degrelle.³¹ Brasillach asserted that France, historically, had always been the primary guardian of the ‘Latin culture’. German fascism, however, was inherently different. Brasillach wrote in the early 1930s that he was worried about Hitler’s ‘primary racism’, that he regarded Hitler’s speeches as the work of ‘a sort of enraged teacher’, and that he believed that Nazi Germany was the greatest political threat to France.³²

Before joining JSP, Brasillach was a member of Maurras’s AF and his thinking about German National Socialism was clearly influenced by the publication of *Mon Combat*. Multiple leaders of AF had also been involved in the production of this ideologically resistant and publicly anti-Nazi translation. After reading *Mein Kampf*’s first French translation in the spring of 1934, Brasillach asserted that anyone, in Hitler, ‘easily discovers a politician who knows what he wants, and who remains, even when he says the opposite, the most formidable of France’s adversaries.’³³

Under the influence of other JSP editors, such as Cousteau, Blond, Lebre, and Rebatet, Brasillach became somewhat more receptive to Nazism from mid-1934 onward, though he kept approaching Germany as ‘the other’. In a lecture series in November 1936, entitled ‘Will Europe be fascist?’ he acknowledged that he

28 Georges Blond, ‘Une réconciliation de plus: Sans haine et sans douleur,’ [One more reconciliation: Without hatred and without pain] *Je suis partout*, February 25, 1938, 2.

29 Henri Lebre, ‘Lettre de Bucarest,’ [The Bucharest letter] *Je suis partout*, September 5, 1936, 9.

30 In September 1943 the Nazis appointed the more ‘radical’ Cousteau to replace Brasillach as JSP’s editor-in-chief.

31 Rensen, ‘Fascist Poetry for Europe,’ fn. 42.

32 Brasillach, *Notre avant-guerre*, 50–52. In 1941, while publicly collaborating with the Nazis in 1941, Brasillach wrote in his *Notre avant-guerre* which used to be very skeptic about France’s relationship with Hitler and Germany.

33 Ibid.

was recently made aware of the successful 'national' and 'social' revolutions in Nazi Germany, and he proposed that German fascism should function as the primary model for French fascism.³⁴ This did not mean directly copying (or borrowing) symbols and ideas from Germany, as he believed these to be too 'irrational' to be effective in France.³⁵ 'I don't know what the Germany of old was like', Brasillach wrote, but 'today it is a great, strange country, further from us than India and China'.³⁶

Brasillach still asserted that the German National Socialism could function as a model for French fascism. He admired the fascist aesthetics of Nazi Germany, as well as the 'social' impact of National Socialism. In the Third Reich, according to Brasillach, people were energetic and joyful. There, people had a sense of sacrifice and honour. He wanted to reproduce this in France. But, to succeed, 'the French must find their poetry, their myths, their French images, as well as confidence in themselves and in a national ideal'. He concluded that 'we can make it ours, not by a useless copy or imitation but by a more developed knowledge of who we are'.³⁷

Traveling and visiting foreign fascist movements abroad, for Brasillach, was crucial to conceptualize uniquely French myths and images: 'it was the time when, in the face of other nationalisms, French nationalism became more clearly conscious of itself', but 'it was also the time when it [French nationalism] listened better than ever' to what was happening 'beyond its borders'.³⁸ In 1936, Brasillach was fascinated by the rise of the Rexist movement of the young Walloon fascist Leon Degrelle, who he personally visited. The Rexist movement had just won more than 11 per cent of the votes of the parliamentary elections that year; which made Brasillach believe that Degrelle was close to gaining power through legal means; as had Hitler's NSDAP in Germany. When thinking about the future of 'French fascism', he also primarily looked to Germany for inspiration. Just as the Nazis had employed a mythical narrative of Hitler's failed Beer Hall Putsch, Brasillach proposed to advance the unsuccessful march on the French parliament of February 1934 as the most important 'content' and 'myth' for the French, and he glorified this event as the birth of French fascism.³⁹ To deliver a profound experience of national community, and

34 Rensen, 'Fascist Poetry for Europe,' 192–215.

35 Alice Kaplan, *The Collaborator: The Trial and Execution of Robert Brasillach* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 12–13.

36 Kaplan, *The Collaborator*, 14.

37 Rensen, 'Fascist Poetry for Europe,' 203; fn. 56.

38 *Ibid.*, fn. 29.

39 In contrast to the idea that February 1934 was a significant 'break' with the past, this paper argues that the events of the first half of 1936 were particularly impactful on the radical-

to spark 'national' and 'social' revolutions, Brasillach also looked across the German border: after one of their yearly visits to the Nuremberg rallies, Brasillach proclaimed that they had to reproduce the same 'style and feeling' at their JSP conferences in France.⁴⁰

This is another example of how Brasillach tried to borrow the German 'model'. At these conferences, much attention was given to the ways in which fascism, antisemitism, and even National Socialism were uniquely French. As Brasillach reminisced in his book *Before the War* (1940), he was particularly struck by one of Rebatet's speeches, in which the orator 'raised the enthusiastic approvals of the audience by painting the precise, funny, passionate, and reasonable picture of the Jewish question'. But at the same time, he had accurately 'recalled that French antisemitism owed nothing to Hitler', and to prove this assertion he had 'listed some of the pungent measures taken by the Ancien Régime against the Jews'.⁴¹ Rebatet, as Brasillach remembered, 'was applauded three times during his first sentence, aroused considerable enthusiasm, and the crowd who listened to him felt ready for anything, the revolution as well as the pogrom'.⁴² Brasillach's postwar account seems to correspond with what one can find in the pages of JSP. On 18 November 1938, for instance, Lebre wrote along similar lines that antisemites across the world 'should not forget that French writers and thinkers were the first' to write about the 'Jewish question', and that 'it would be foolish' to give Germans more credit than they deserved.⁴³ For Rebatet, Lebre, and Brasillach, it was important to prove that concepts such as fascism and antisemitism had uniquely French roots.

Brasillach's early engagement with fascism was primarily intellectual, seeing that his journalism and writings mostly discussed aesthetics and racism, without putting forward a political, social, or economic program. His dreams and

ization of the work, thought, and practices of the JSP editors. It is, additionally, striking that Brasillach does not refer to the Italian march on Rome, which was successful, and which—in some ways—seems like a closer parallel to the 1934 march in France.

40 Brasillach, *Notre avant-guerre*, 50–52.

41 During the 1930s, Brasillach wrote some of his strongly-worded antisemitic articles in JSP under the pseudonym Jean Servièrre. 'We need to be told why we are keeping a Jew at the head of our Empire', Brasillach wrote, as the Jews and Bolsheviks were foreign agents who 'want to disturb our Empire at the precise moment when we needed the cohesion'; Servièrre, 'Le juif Mandel contre nos colonies,' 4.

42 Brasillach, *Notre avant-guerre*, 50–52.

43 François Dauture [Henri Lebre], 'La question juive,' [The Jewish Question] *Je suis partout*, November 18, 1938, 9. For Brasillach on the distinctions between French, German, and 'French Colonial' antisemitism, see: Servièrre, 'Le juif Mandel contre nos colonies,' 4.

JE SUIS PARTOUT

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Le grand hebdomadaire de la vie mondiale

Rédacteur en chef : Robert BRASILLACH

LES JUIFS ET LA FRANCE

LES ARTICLES ET LES TEXTES QUI COMPOSENT CE NUMÉRO ONT ÉTÉ ÉCRITS ET RASSEMBLÉS PAR
LUCIEN REBATET

LES FRANÇAIS DEVANT LES JUIFS

Précisément, pas de persécution, l'ex de persécution, pas de pogrom, telle est la première position de nationalistes français devant la question juive.

Nous faisons en tête de numéro du 15 avril 1938 qu'avait composé Lucien Rebatet sur les Juifs à travers le monde : nous sommes de passage à la guerre civile et à l'assaut est la première (et la dernière colonne) de ceux qui commencent l'assaut.

Depuis le 15 avril, le temps a passé. L'importance de la question juive est devenue évidente pour tous. Le rôle des Juifs bellicistes est apparu à des esprits aussi peu prévenus que M. Chatelet, M. Bayeux et d'autres que les Juifs étaient des hommes comme les autres, mais que, lorsque sur eux Français dans une administration, lui étaient juifs, les Juifs n'étaient pas des Français comme les autres. C'est là, en effet, une part importante du problème.

Les humilités protestent contre l'absence de numéros classiques, d'attentats, d'assauts, à la dignité humaine.

Répandons leur cœur : lorsque les nationalistes d'Angleterre, évincés des fonctions publiques par le roi anglais, réclamèrent l'appui moral de Bonnet, le grand évêque leur répondit qu'il n'y avait pas lieu à protestation, car on n'a pas besoin d'être fonctionnaire pour faire son salut, et le voilà libre dans son gouvernement.

On voit donc les Juifs ?
Ce sont des étrangers.
Et si n'y a aucune raison pour se plaindre à nosseurs notre numéro du 15 avril.

Dans une société bien faite, il ne devrait pas être des Français d'être en Juif à l'étranger, ce qu'il est en France, en Italie, en Espagne, en Allemagne, en Belgique, en l'assaut l'insolent qui fait l'assaut.

Honneur aux 1.200 Juifs mariés Honoré aux anciens combattants Les lois Drogs, en Roumanie, donnant le titre de citoyens aux anciens combattants, ou aux fils des lois. Admirable mesure. Mais cette mesure n'est pas française, car on ne sait ce que deviendra la race. Ce n'est pas un très juif. Les Allemands admettent de Aynès d'honneur, à moins il faut aussi imposer cette mesure à l'assaut.

Nous n'avons aucun préjugé, et nous ne sommes pas racistes. Si un Juif est un grand médecin, pourquoi l'utiliserions-nous pas si découvertes pour le bien commun de l'humanité, comme nous utilisons celles d'un Anglais ou d'un Italien ? Nous nous accordons le droit d'appeler un chimiste Charles Chaplin, dentiste-Juif, d'admirer Proust, d'applaudir le belvédère, Juif, et le paradis de l'air est porté par les autres, verticelles, ainsi nommés de Jull Martz.

Nous remercions même tout particulièrement les Juifs qui s'attachent à mettre en valeur notre patrimoine français, qu'il s'agisse de la dentiste Noyes d'après le plus savant grammairien français. C'est que nous ne sommes pas sténographes.

Le règle d'or : Les Juifs sont des étrangers à d'ail comporter ses conséquences, et toutes ses conséquences. Elles n'ont rien de terrible et de venant. C'est la raison qui doit régir en état juif, et les populations ont toujours été le fait de peuples étrangers et mal assurés dans leur population.

Nous nous rappelons par expériences que des étrangers sont d'une espèce particulière : ils s'appellent les socialistes entre eux, le refusant de se dissocier de la loi de leur peuple, et alors qu'un Français ne se sent rien de commun avec Londres, le Juif a plus intelligents et le plus de ses toujours plus si l'on dit devant lui de mal de



Le bon honn. — Voyez dans le redoutable ministre... Je vais en tapissier mes cabinets... en sera très origina... l'infatigable... — Et la terre moderne... (Dessin de Fernand Peck, 9 août 1938.)

LA FLEUR AU FUSIL... DES AUTRES

Des événements fatigués dont l'Europe passera l'ail, le plus grand nombre de l'assaut nous ont lancé cette idée que les Juifs sont bellicistes, qu'ils veulent la guerre, n'importe quelle guerre, qu'ils furent responsables dans le passé, qu'ils se sentent responsables des guerres, le l'exercice, de toutes les guerres.

Pour ainsi le produire, c'est fournir nos masses désemparées de l'impressionnisme juif une occasion par trop belle de transformer à bon compte. Les Juifs ne désirent pas plus et n'importe quelle guerre, que les Français, les Allemands ou les Russes. Les Juifs... nous croyons l'avoir suffisamment démontré... conclut malgré leur genre plus moderne... un point de vue moral et spirituel que tous les autres gouvernements humains... les Juifs, ils ont senti que les grandes lois qui régissent les rapports entre les différents continents du monde.

En la vie d'une nation est faite d'alternatives entre la paix et la guerre. Une nation qui ne se sent et ne souffre que de la paix, individuellement, ses conditions sont toujours se trouver dans une situation telle que la guerre lui apparaisse comme une solution désirable.

Un succès l'assaut. Seul qu'un mouvement de jeunesse... depuis que le monde est monde, il en a toujours été ainsi et l'assaut sera toujours que la nation juive échappé à la règle commune.

Paix à tout prix
Nous avons connu une époque toute remplie de républicains. Le plus ardent d'entre eux était assurément par l'histoire allemande, le plus ardent d'entre eux était assurément par l'histoire américaine, par exemple, à l'été par. En Amérique, par exemple, les Juifs ont été le plus grand de comment pas l'assaut, pour modifier l'opinion publique, le redoutable ennemi de des régimes d'assaut. Ils doivent donc se consacrer universelle et à celui dans la métaphysique, ce qui permet de le de, moins attentif.

La guerre est déclarée
Et puis Hitler est venu. Absurde, inutilement, tout a changé. L'Allemagne était devenue et restera un danger pour la France, nous le savons qu'il est d'ailleurs possible que la France continue à un pas de l'assaut. Dans Hitler nous avons retrouvé, nous Français, le visage familier d'un valet d'assaut bien connu, le symbole de l'assaut, le postmodernisme. L'assaut de Hitler a été pour nous un événement, il nous a aidés à comprendre que la France devait se résoudre à négocier et qu'elle seule condition elle échapperait à un danger mortel de assaut était tout aussi réel Reich.

Mais la paix de Hitler devaient commander de Berlin du monde à pas convention, qu'on des différends franco-allemands, au qu'elle devaient subsister. Pour cela, il fallait, la victoire d'Hitler n'a pas été une victoire. Elle a empêché le début d'une guerre sans merci.

LE PRÉFET FRANÇAIS EST EN PAIX AVEC L'ALLEMAGNE. LE PRÉFET JUIF EST EN GUERRE AVEC L'ALLEMAGNE.

Constataz que "si nation juive" est un différend. (BRASILLACH) à régler avec le Reich et qu'elle d'efforce de le régler véritablement en médiant sans se dissocier le maximum d'élus possible.

Si l'assaut le ministre d'ail, il suffirait de composer les attitudes prises avant et après l'assaut d'Hitler par la partie intéressée par l'assaut. Dans les pays latins qui ne sont pas directement concernés par l'assaut allemand, le plus ardent d'entre eux est à l'été par. En Amérique, par exemple, les Juifs ont été le plus grand de comment pas l'assaut, pour modifier l'opinion publique, le redoutable ennemi de des régimes d'assaut. Ils doivent donc se consacrer universelle et à celui dans la métaphysique, ce qui permet de le de, moins attentif.

Vive la France

FIGURE 2 The front page of a special edition of the weekly fascist journal *Je suis partout*, entitled 'Les Juifs et la France' ('The Jews and France'). *Je suis partout*, February 17, 1939
SOURCE: BIBLIOTHÈQUE NATIONALE DE FRANCE, RETRONEWS, [HTTPS://WWW.RETRONEWS.FR/TITRE-DE-PRESSE/JE-SUIS-PARTOUT](https://www.retronews.fr/titre-de-presse/je-suis-partout)

hopes, however, were of a political nature. He wanted France to arise 'Phoenix-like' from the political and cultural decadence of its time, but rather than pushing for this to happen, he believed that it would be the result of spontaneous combustion. Brasillach believed that the existence of a uniquely French fascism, grounded in French culture, would be enough to spark a fascist revolution. The fact that it did not, made him increasingly more disillusioned. It made Brasillach's later work—from mid-1938—more dismissive about France's culture and people. It, at the same time, prompted his thinking about foreign fascist movements to become progressively heroic and romantic; as many foreign peoples, in contrast to the French, had brought about profound social and national revolutions. To instigate a French fascist revolution, some editors at JSP even considered asking the Nazis, once the exotic other, for military assistance. Rebatet, at one point, publicly invited Hitler to invade France. And after

the war broke out, and after being drafted for the French army, Rebatet publicly proclaimed that he hoped that France would lose against Germany as quickly as possible.

These editors of JSP—such as Brasillach, Rebatet, Cousteau, Blond, and Lebre—did not regard themselves, their writings, or their actions as anti-French, but pro-French, seeing that they had aligned themselves with an everlasting ‘essence’ of France, which continued to exist through them and their actions. For them, there were two dissociated conceptions of France: it was both a political entity, governed by Judeo-Bolshevist forces, as well as a cultural, mythical, and eternally enduring image that existed in their minds.

While diagnosing the decline and decay of France on countless fronts, these JSP editors prophesied that fascism could bring about a spiritual and cultural renewal. Fascism, for them, was the antidote to the decadency of democracy, capitalism, liberalism, and Marxism. According to them, a fascist revolution would—undoubtedly—lead to the cultural, spiritual, and national rebirth of France. They found proof of this in other countries, such as Nazi Germany. Although Brasillach, throughout the 1930s, kept regarding Nazi Germany as the ‘other’, due to the ‘foreign’ content of its national symbols and myths, the JSP editors consistently presented this country as a magical and safe place, untouched by the corruption of democracy, Judaism, capitalism, liberalism, and Marxism. It was depicted as a place where the Jews and Bolsheviks could not impose their decadent ways. Germany, in other words, was sculptured into a purer mirror of an impure France.

While agreeing on the goal, the editors of JSP employed different strategies to spark a fascist revolution: Cousteau warned the French people that they had to eliminate the ‘internal enemies’ and overthrow the French government themselves, in order to prevent Nazi Germany from invading France to eradicate the Judeo-Bolsheviks. Brasillach, in contrast, asserted in his early work that intellectual engagement with a uniquely French fascism, grounded in French culture, would be enough to trigger a French revolution. From mid-1938 onward, Brasillach became profoundly disillusioned with the French people, as they seemed unwilling to start a revolution, and expanding on his ideas about the aesthetics of fascism, he wrote that Germany should invade France, because only the Nazis could help France and the French people to overcome their weaknesses and their deficit in manliness. Although they all used different narratives, arguments, and metaphors, the JSP editors agreed on the role of, and their relation to, Hitler and Nazi Germany: if a uniquely French fascist revolution was eternally deferred, then they could only defend the national interest of France by working together with the Nazis. Such collaboration, therefore, was not a goal in itself, but an instrument to eradicate the Judeo-Bolshevist forces

governing France, which was a prerequisite for the establishment of a fascist regime and, consequently, the national rebirth of France.

Ma Doctrine (1938) as a Carrier of Pan-Fascist Romanticism

Before thinking about the specific relationship between these French fascist editors at JSP and the German National Socialists, one must first recognize that the Nazis themselves were quite hesitant to export their ideology abroad. Hitler himself strongly doubted that exporting National Socialism would be possible, because he regarded it as an exclusively German phenomenon. He, however, also believed it to be counterproductive, as it ‘would only lead to a strengthening of nationalism in other countries’, which ‘leads to a weakening of Germany’s position’ on the world stage. Hitler, therefore, was glad that the Nazi parties in other countries had ‘not produced leaders of his own calibre’, who were often ‘mere copyists’ without ‘original or new ideas’. As ‘they only imitated us and our methods slavishly’, he believed that they ‘would never amount to anything’.⁴⁴ The primary issue here, for Hitler, was ‘belatedness’. Much of Hitler’s contempt for foreign fascist movements seems to come from the fact that they come late, making them inevitably minions and imitators. For this reason, Hitler did not expect much from most foreign fascists: ‘in every country you have to start from different premises and change your methods accordingly’.⁴⁵

This, however, did not stop the Nazis from interacting with foreign fascists, nor from spreading ‘pan-fascist romanticism’. Already on 16 November 1933, Hitler proclaimed in an interview with the French journalist Fernand de Brinon that he wanted to start conversations ‘between the good French and the good Germans, between the good Poles and the good Germans, and between 100% English people and 100% German ones’. He asserted that cross-border collaboration between all ‘superior human races’—such as the ‘Aryan’ French and German races—could lead to a strengthening of the social, cultural, and political position of these peoples in their respective countries.⁴⁶ People of ‘mixed race’ and ‘internationalists’, in contrast, had to be kept outside of these conversations.

44 Albert Speer, *Erinnerungen* (Berlin: Propyläen Verlag, 1969), 121–122.

45 Speer, *Erinnerungen*, 121–122.

46 Fernand de Brinon, ‘Une conversation avec Adolf Hitler: Pour la première fois, le Chancelier du Reich reçoit un journaliste français,’ [A conversation with Adolf Hitler: For the first time, the Chancellor of the Reich receives a French journalist] *Le Matin*, November 22, 1933, 1.

This Nazi narrative of pan-fascist romanticism, drenched in transnational racialism, was fundamentally at odds with the core message of most of Hitler's German-language speeches and writings, which was shamelessly German-nationalist. Hitler, for instance, consistently depicted the French as irredeemable since they had gone too far in their degenerative process of '*Vernegerung*' ['negrification']. In his German speeches and writings, the Führer consistently repeated throughout the 1930s that the inferior status of the French people and race posed a lurking danger to 'white humanity' and 'the white race'.⁴⁷ During an interview for a French newspaper in February 1936, the journalist Bertrand de Jouvenel asked Hitler if he had plans to adjust some of these anti-French passages in *Mein Kampf*. 'I was in prison when I wrote this book', the Führer responded, 'you want me to make corrections in my book', like 'writer preparing a new edition of his work', but 'I am not a writer, I am a politician'. Hitler did not want to rewrite his book, because he would already bring a rectification through 'my foreign policy', which was 'oriented towards friendship with France!' Only 'if I achieve Franco-German rapprochement as I want it', Hitler proclaimed, 'will [it] be a correction worthy of me', because 'I will write my correction in the great book of History'.⁴⁸

Contrary to Hitler's statement, however, the Nazis would produce, translate, and disseminate a rectified and heavily altered French-language edition of *Mein Kampf* only two years later, which was enabled by a partnership between the German Propaganda Ministry, the French publisher Arthème Fayard, and two editors of JSP. In 1937, the German Propaganda Ministry gave the task of overseeing the production of this translation to Friedrich Grimm, a German lawyer and future member of the German Institute in occupied Paris.

In addition to a French translation of *Mein Kampf*, Grimm was also asked to write a book on Hitler's current, and supposedly changed, attitude towards France and the French people, entitled *Hitler et la France* (1938).⁴⁹ Joachim von

47 Adolf Hitler, *Mein Kampf* (München: Verlag Franz Eher Nachfolger, 1925), 704–705.

48 In addition to this interview with De Jouvenel, there was a broader German media offensive at the same time which was stressing the same narrative; and these rhetorics were also echoed in the work of French fascists, such as Cousteau's articles in JSP from later that same year. Bertrand de Jouvenel, 'A Sensational Interview with the Führer,' *Paris-Midi*, February 28, 1936, 1; Cousteau, 'Les communistes ont bien travaillé pour Hitler,' 1; Daniel Knegt, *Fascism, Liberalism and Europeanism in the Political Thought of Bertrand de Jouvenel and Alfred Fabre-Luce* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2007), 57–61, <https://http://library.oapen.org/handle/20.500.12657/27494>.

49 Adolf Hitler, *Ma Doctrine*, eds. François Dauture [Henri Lebre] and Georges Blond (Paris: Fayard, 1938); Dietrich Orlow, *The Lure of Fascism in Western Europe: German Nazis, Dutch and French Fascists, 1933–1939* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 72, 183.

Ribbentrop, who was heavily involved in trying to change the public opinion of Hitler in France—and who could therefore, to a certain extent, be typified as Nazi Germany's Minister of Foreign Propaganda—wrote a preface to Grimm's *Hitler et la France*, dated 15 September 1938. 'Because the Chancellor's wishes and intentions have not always been interpreted fairly [by French journalists and politicians]', Ribbentrop wrote, 'this publication can be of great use, especially because many veterans from the First World War, as well as youths in both countries have showed that there is a will in Germany and in France to overcome mutual distrust and to draw from the events of the great war the necessary conclusions.'⁵⁰ Ribbentrop, here, referred to his work with Otto Abetz, who had created and supported multiple transnational organizations to overcome long-standing Franco-German antagonism; among which the Sohlberg Circle in 1930. During their work at these organizations, Abetz and Ribbentrop also met people who would become indispensable for furthering Franco-German relations during the late-1930s. It was Abetz, for instance, who had been responsible for organizing Hitler's interview with Bertrand de Jouvenel in 1936.⁵¹

For the translation-process of *Mein Kampf* to French, Grimm and Fayard decided on asking the two JSP-editors Georges Blond and Henri Lebre; who were both known for their knowledge of German, as well as their literary abilities in French.⁵² Lebre and Blond agreed on producing this translation, but their final product, entitled *Ma Doctrine* (1938), should not primarily be considered as a translation of *Mein Kampf*, but as a source in and of itself: the text not only censored the anti-French statements, but omitted various sections and whole chapters from the German edition, and it—at the same time—included almost forty newly written pages.⁵³ These added pages predominantly focused on Hitler's ideas about Nazi Germany's current foreign policy towards France. In it, a distinction was made between 'the ordinary French people' of 'pure blood' and 'the Jews' who supposedly 'had taken control of the French government'. Hitler—that is, the 'image' of the Führer as a person from whose perspective these sections were written—now openly sympathized with the 'Aryan French', who were locked out of the power positions. This same narrative of pan-fascist romanticism was also asserted and reinforced in Grimm and Ribbentrop's publication, *Hitler et la France*, which was produced and disseminated in France around, roughly, the same time as Blond and Lebre's *Ma Doctrine*.

50 Friedrich Grimm, *Hitler et la France* (Paris: Plon, 1938), III–IV.

51 Knegt, *Fascism, Liberalism and Europeanism*, 69–84.

52 Brouwer, "Every Frenchman Must Read This Book", 210–213.

53 *Ibid.*, 222–223.

This narrative, obviously, contrasted greatly from what Hitler wrote and said to his German audience. There, Hitler continued to argue that France as a country should be perceived as ‘a sin against the existence of white humanity’.⁵⁴ In *Ma Doctrine*, however, ‘he’ asserted that France was not inherently the enemy of Germany, but only in its current Judeo-Bolshevist form. The key message of this rewritten text was the proclamation that the French and Germans were all part of the ‘Aryan people’, who were ‘bound by a blood community and a civilization identical’ in outline. ‘The French people of pure blood’, the authors of *Ma Doctrine* asserted, should join Hitler and the Germans in the ‘struggle against their shared enemy in France: the Judeo-Bolshevists’ and, more specifically, ‘the Judeo-Bolshevist French government’.⁵⁵

Mein Kampf’s original narrative of German-nationalist, fascist, romanticism was thus substituted by a narrative of non-national, racialized transnationalism. Hitler’s book was profoundly altered to lead a second life as a carrier of pan-fascist romanticism.

The dissemination of pan-fascist romanticism—such as the publications of *Hitler et la France* and *Ma Doctrine*—also made sense from the perspective of Germany’s propaganda strategy towards France, which changed drastically in mid-1936. After Hitler’s rise to power in 1933, Nazi propaganda originally aimed to cultivate and establish amicable relations with French ministers and diplomats. Until early 1936, the Nazis kept close ties with various French officials.⁵⁶ To help these negotiations, and to further their cause, the Nazis deemed it advisable to deemphasize the ideological and political significance of Hitler’s

54 Dauture and Blond, *Ma Doctrine*, 254.

55 *Ibid.*, 281–282.

56 In the latter half of 1935 and the first months of 1936, the Nazis worked tirelessly to prevent an official alliance between the French and the Soviet Union. On multiple occasions, therefore, Ribbentrop and Hitler reached out to French officials with regard to talks about a French-German alliance; and Hitler also proposed such an alliance in his interview with De Jouvenel. One crucial German ally in the French government was Pierre Laval, who became the French foreign minister after his predecessor—who had drafted the Franco-Soviet pact—had been killed during an assassination attempt on King Aleksandar I of Yugoslavia in Marseilles. Laval, however, did not aspire an alliance with the Soviet Union and worked together with Joachim von Ribbentrop and the pro-German journalist Fernand de Brinon to prevent the treaty from becoming law. Unfortunately, for them, too many agreements were already in place, and Laval was forced to, reluctantly, put his signature under the pact with the Soviet Union. Laval, shortly thereafter, was branded as a traitor by French media who supported the treaty. About this, Cousteau wrote in *JSP*: ‘Mr. Laval was chased in horror. Chat with Berlin, betrayal! Never give up on gentle Mr. Stalin!’ Cousteau argued that Laval was right, because he ‘understood that direct conversation with Germany was France’s only chance of salvation’. Cousteau, ‘Les communistes ont bien travaillé pour Hitler’, 1.

blatantly anti-French statements in *Mein Kampf*. Hitler's French interviews with Brinon and De Jouvenel were part of this strategy. This approach, however, changed from mid-1936 onwards for at least three reasons: the establishment of an alliance between the French government and the Soviet Union in February 1936, the German remilitarization of the Rhineland in March 1936, and the formation of the Popular Front government in May 1936, which was depicted by its right-wing opponents as 'Judeo-Bolshevist'. Due to these developments, the Nazis understood that an attempt to appease the French government was a lost cause.⁵⁷

At the same time, Hitler and his entourage noticed that there was an intense political discussion in France, as many right-wing journalists, intellectuals, and politicians had repeatedly called into question traditional assumptions concerning their country's foreign policy. In the summer of 1936, a broad segment of France's population was extremely dissatisfied with their socialist, and Jewish, prime minister Léon Blum. With the coming to power of Blum's Popular Front, the wave of political antisemitism, and the rise of French fascist movements and journals, the Nazis saw new chances to exploit. Capitalizing on these developments, in an attempt to prevent France from pursuing an undivided and clear anti-German policy, Hitler and his propagandists tried to intensify the hostility towards the French government and spread the assumption that lasting peace was within reach if the French people would collaborate with their German counterparts.⁵⁸ The Nazis, on their part, promised to do anything in their power to assist the French people in the struggle against their 'Judeo-Bolshevist' government.

Rather than solely claiming that 'the French' and 'the Germans' were Aryan brother races (such as in Hitler's interviews with Brinon in 1933 and with De Jouvenel in early 1936) the anti-governmental tone of Nazi narrative of pan-fascist romanticism from mid-1936 onward, including Grimm's *Hitler et la France* and Lebre and Blond's *Ma Doctrine*, primarily served the purpose of fomenting political division and, thereby, weakening France's diplomatic, intellectual, and militaristic resolution against Nazi Germany. In the newly added pages of *Ma Doctrine*, Hitler urged the French to help him to eliminate all Judeo-Bolshevist influences, 'first in France', and then on a 'global scale': a 'union of Aryan peoples against the common enemy: the Jews'.⁵⁹ To achieve this Aryan union, the racially superior people in France first had to rebel against, and oust, the Jewish-Bolshevist 'French' government.

57 Brouwer, "Every Frenchman Must Read This Book", 223–224.

58 Ibid., 224.

59 Dauture and Blond, *Ma Doctrine*, 281.

Seduction, Deception, and Self-Delusion

The relationship and interaction between certain members of the Nazi regime and the editors of *JSP*, however, cannot be fully explained by noting that these French fascists were solely passive recipients of 'Nazi' narratives of pan-fascist romanticism. The story, of course, was a whole lot more complicated. In the thought of a handful of Nazi officials including Hitler, Himmler, and Goebbels, there was a certainly a strong belief that the nationalist and transnationalist dimensions of fascism were irreconcilable, or, in other words, that transnational fascism was intrinsically paradoxical. So, in their minds there was not really so much a 'paradox' as, rather, the recognition of a pattern of delusion on the side of the other fascist peoples and movements that they wished to exploit. Because they were convinced that they saw through the paradox of transnational fascism, and believed they understood where German interests really lay, they attempted to manipulate foreign fascist peoples and movements by feeding into the narrative of 'pan-fascist collaboration', and feeding into the 'delusion' through a continuing assertion and dissemination of pan-fascist romanticism. This, for them, served the purpose of implanting 'pan-fascist illusions' in the minds of foreign fascists to further obscure, what they regarded as, the paradoxical nature of transnational fascism.

It is, however, important to realize that not all Nazi politicians and intellectuals were invested in the project of utilizing pan-fascist romanticism to manipulate other ultra-right people and movements, because it is easy to imagine many of them buying into the romanticism of pan-fascist solidarity as well. Many officials who were involved in these transnational fascist interactions—such as Friedrich Grimm, Otto Abetz, and even Ribbentrop—were, at times, committed to various instances of fascist transnationalism.⁶⁰ This becomes particularly clear when examining Abetz's actions after the fall of Paris in 1940, seeing that he tried to continue his mission to overcome long-standing Franco-German antagonism. Once he was appointed as the ambassador to the German military commander in Paris, Abetz suggested to Hitler that the French could be won over to the idea of collaboration if the Germans continued to blame France's situation on the influence of Jews, Bolsheviks, and other 'international' forces who had been in control over the French government. If the Germans, additionally, made some abstract promises regarding France's territorial integrity and if they would continue to emphasize 'the European idea',

60 Knegt, *Fascism, Liberalism and Europeanism*, 69–84.

then the French intelligentsia could be seduced, Abetz asserted:⁶¹ ‘In exactly the same way as the idea of peace was usurped by National Socialist Germany and served to weaken French morale, without undermining the German fighting spirit, the European idea could be usurped by the Reich without harming the aspiration to continental primacy embedded by National Socialism in the German people.’⁶²

There was, however, a lot of conflict among Nazi officials regarding the desired treatment of France. Himmler and Goebbels were especially hostile to the idea of collaborating with France’s ultra-right, and Hitler was initially hesitant as well. But with Ribbentrop’s support, Abetz managed to gain the trust of the Führer, and he remained in his position in Paris until July 1944. Abetz was attempting to ‘seduce’ the French with the ‘illusion’ of European fascist solidarity. This, obviously, does not disallow the possibility that he was also personally seduced, at least partially, by specific transnational—albeit perhaps not ‘European’, but ‘Franco-German’ specific—fascist ideas.

When looking at the position of the French fascists working at JSP, one should not forget that they had actively sought out rapprochement with the Nazis themselves. They did so for a couple of reasons. The JSP editors had been extremely hostile to the French government from mid-1936 onward, which caused them to create two dissociated conceptions of France. In their minds, it was their mission to defeat France as a ‘political entity’ to save their ‘ideal’ and ‘mythical’ conception of France. From mid-1938 onward, however, they became profoundly frustrated after they believed that a uniquely French fascist revolution was postponed indefinitely due to the ‘weakness’ and ‘unmanliness’ of the French population. In addition to their racial disillusionment, they were jealous about supposedly successful ‘social’ and ‘national’ revolutions in other countries and hoped to learn—and to receive inspiration—from foreign fascists. At the same time, they understood their position as a relatively powerless minority group in France, which meant that their collaboration with the German regime and officials was grounded upon an asymmetrical power relationship. They, however, felt that they could not achieve their goals without German help, and perceived the Nazis as crucial allies in their struggle against the French Judeo-Bolshevist regime. Collaborating with the German National Socialists, they believed from mid-1938 onward, was the only possible way to bring about a fascist revolution in France. Seeing that they were so invested in this collaboration, they actively convinced themselves—and each other—that

61 Ibid., 126–137.

62 As cited in: Philippe Burrin, *La France à l'heure allemande: 1940–1944* (Paris: Seuil, 1995), 93, 101; Knegt, *Fascism, Liberalism and Europeanism*, 126–137.

the Nazi narrative of pan-fascist romanticism was not a ploy. In doing so, they bought into certain pan-fascist 'illusions' that underlay the Nazi propaganda towards France.

For the longest time, the JSP editors also kept explaining away anything that contradicted their 'illusory' convictions. Whenever Cousteau, for instance, was confronted with the anti-French sentiments from Hitler's *Mein Kampf*, he asserted that these statements were simply outdated. During the second half of the 1930s, the editors of JSP were also publicly shamed for their interaction and collaboration with the Nazis. In a review of Blond and Lebre's translation of *Mein Kampf*, the political journalist Emile Buré wrote that this publication was 'the work of bad French and, to be honest, terrible Hitlerites'.⁶³ But such public attacks did not change their minds. On 26 August 1938, an anonymous piece in JSP defended 'my friends, Blond and Dauture', by stating that the authors of *Ma Doctrine* had simply borrowed from the most essential speeches and interviews 'delivered by Hitler since his accession to power' in order to 'not leave the readers unaware of the variations, modifications, or main developments brought about by the author himself'. This article in JSP, again, reasserted that the original text of *Mein Kampf* was clearly outdated and should not be considered important for understanding Hitler's 'true' intentions. It concluded with the statement that *Ma Doctrine* was an accurate reflection of Hitler's ideas about France and the French, as well as of the foreign policy of Nazi Germany.⁶⁴

This logic, of course, was of a circular kind. To explain why they had omitted the anti-French passages in *Ma Doctrine*, the JSP editors referred to the Nazi's pan-fascist narrative of the last years to illustrate and prove that Hitler had changed his attitude towards France and the French people, even though their Nazi-authorized publication, at the same time, propounded exactly the same pan-fascist narrative, and was produced and disseminated to re-assert it. Rather than regarding such examples of crooked logic as failed attempts to defend themselves against allegations from negative reviews, it seems to be emblematic of what the JSP editors themselves believed in from mid-1938 onward. From then on, there was no longer a pan-fascist paradox at play in the work, thought, and practices of the JSP editors, because any possible conflict between the French-national and transnational aspects of fascism was obscured by their complicated relation to French nationalism, their dissociated conceptions of France, and their commitment to the 'Nazi' narrative of pan-fascist romanticism, as well as by their feelings of resentment, disappoint-

63 C.J., 'Ma Doctrine,' *Je suis partout*, August 26, 1938, 4.

64 C.J., 'Ma Doctrine,' 4.

ment, and disillusionment. After all, their hopes and dreams were so much dependent on cross-border collaboration with the German National Socialists, and so much based on self-delusion, that they no longer allowed themselves to acknowledge, at least not publicly, how much they had bought into various pan-fascist illusions. Reality be damned.

Conclusion

When examining how nationalist-minded fascists thought transnationally, it is rewarding to first define fascism as inherently dynamic. Fascists themselves, generally, were little concerned with presenting a clearly defined body of 'fascist' ideas, but instead with inciting hatred and violence, manipulating the discourse of their alleged enemies, and convincing their target groups that 'fascism'—whatever that, exactly, may be—was the antidote to the decadency of democracy, Judaism, capitalism, liberalism, and Marxism. Only a fascist revolution, in their minds, could bring about the social, political, and cultural 'rebirth' that they longed for. To accomplish this, many fascists often incorporated countless combinations of contradictory elements into their thinking and constantly kept modifying their ideas, definitions, and principles throughout their careers. Seeing that tackling their self-defined problems was usually seen as a matter of life and death, many fascists, and this is, of course, particularly the case for 'fascists' who had not managed to secure the support of their 'target groups', and who had become disillusioned by the social, cultural, and political realities of their time, were also overly flexible in their choice of allies. All this fluidity and variation, therefore, makes 'fascism' a moving target. So, assuming the relevance of a certain set of ideas, principles, behavior, and processes when studying cross-border fascist connections and interaction, quickly leads to the construction of 'static' and 'ideal types' of fascism and 'transnational fascism', whereas it feels more fruitful to regard the nature of both categories as fundamentally transformative.⁶⁵

65 This also includes Sven Reichardt's recent suggestion to divide the history of fascism up in seven distinctive 'processes'. Although his approach helps to further problematize static definitions of fascism, and it helps to see different—previously unaddressed—aspects of 'fascism', it also has its limitations. Due to the inherently transformative nature of fascism, it seems almost impossible to incorporate all possible variations of fascism in seven distinct processes without them, eventually, becoming too generic and losing most of their explanatory force. Reichardt, 'Fascism's Stages,' 89–90.

As argued in this paper, the conceptual framework of ‘pan-fascism’ can make sense of the ideological flexibility found in the work, thought, and practices of fascists involved in cross-border connections and collaboration, as it enables the study of more intricate networks and possibilities of fascist transnationalism. Instead of offering a simple definition, model, or solution, it urges scholars to question how historical agents—in distinctive locations, periods, and situations—interpreted, reconciled, or utilized the seemingly conflicting elements of transnational fascism in unique ways. How did certain individual fascists, at specific moments in their lives, think about the possibility of cross-border fascist solidarity? How did they mediate the relationship between nationalism and transnationalism; and how did these fascists—in other words—‘think transnationally’?

For example, if one does regard nationalism as a core element of fascism, then that logically seems to mean that transnational fascism is—at least partially—paradoxical. For this reason, ‘the pan-fascist paradox’ as an analytic concept is extremely effective for studies on transnational fascism in the 1920s, 1930s, and early 1940s, because when examining how fascism operated transnationally during this period, innumerable explicit and implicit struggles with the paradoxical nature of transnational fascism are about to arise, as nationalism—for most fascists at that time—was the pivot around which their thinking and beliefs revolved. Most thoughts, writings, or discussions about fascist solidarity across borders somehow had to take into account that fascists, generally, were set on furthering nationalist and imperialist goals.

The thought, work, and practices of fascists, however, almost never followed simple logical assumptions. Fascist thinking, instead, is all too often molded by resentment, fear, and shame, as well as by a disillusionment with specific social, economic, and political realities. This means that there was a great deal of variation when one takes a closer look at how individual nationalist-minded fascists attempted to ‘think transnationally’. As this article has demonstrated, through a brief analysis of the work and thought of the fascist editors of the French journal *JSP*, one of the ways to study how various individuals thought differently about fascist transnationalism, is by examining how they read, translated, reinforced, or reasserted several dominant narratives of pan-fascist romanticism.

When doing so, one will easily find that many individual fascists do not regard nationalism as a core element of fascism; and, because of this, most of them will not regard transnational fascism as inherently paradoxical. This, by extension, undeniably means that there is no everlasting, unchanging, or transcendental pan-fascist paradox that dictates the impossibility of fascist collaboration across borders, or that any attempt to establish such relations was inherently driven by an attempt of one-sided manipulation. Looking at

how fascism has evolved throughout time, and especially after 1945, it is apparent that distinguishable groups of fascists have substituted nationalism with racism. For many of them, 'the white race' has become the common denominator, which is inherently transnational. The claim to defend 'white superiority' against alleged shared enemies is a clear example of a narrative containing 'pan-fascist romanticism', grounded in transnational racialism. It is, however, crucial to acknowledge how fluid and flexible such narratives are; and how difficult it is to 'capture' the disparate meanings that such language aims to convey.

The main takeaway from this paper on the usefulness of 'pan-fascism' for future historical studies on transnational fascism is that it all boils down to optics. The existence or non-existence of a 'pan-fascist paradox' in the work, thoughts, and practices of fascists highly depends—among many other things—on their interactions with other fascists, their understandings of nationalism and fascism, as well as their feelings about the social, cultural, and political realities of their time. Due to the importance of personal experiences in the formation of unique manifestations of fascist thought, it is not sufficient to just let go of rigid models or ideal types of fascism, because new attempts to replace static methodologies with more inclusive, complicated, or global theories of fascist transnationalism are also doomed to fall short. To account for the way in which certain fascist ideologies across the world have absorbed nationalist and transnational notions and indeed countless other hybridizations of seemingly contradicting elements, thinking from the prism of a presupposed paradox, as a unity of unresolved opposites, can provide more insight than any fully closed-off theory.