‘En Faisant l’Europe’

Internationalism and the Fascist Drift

‘La Nouvelle Génération Européenne’: Generational Politics in 1920s France

Through their family background, Jouvenel and Fabre-Luce encountered foreign ideas, languages and culture from a very young age. Both grew up as members of the French intellectual upper bourgeoisie in a privileged environment of absent parents, foreign holidays and an important educational role played by British and German governesses. As the son of a diplomat, Fabre-Luce initially cherished a short-lived dream of a career in diplomacy, and in 1919 his father’s connections provided him with a six-month internship at the French embassy in London.1 Jouvenel’s father Henry de Jouvenel was a political writer and prominent member of the liberal Parti Radical, while his mother Claire Boas hosted a well-known political salon in Paris. It was through this salon that the young Bertrand met a great number of foreign politicians, especially around the time of the negotiations of the Paris peace treaties. He was impressed by the Czech politician Edvard Beneš, who together with his Slovakian colleague Milan Stefanik almost designed the new state of Czechoslovakia during an evening at the Jouvenels. In 1924, Bertrand spent a few months in Prague as the personal secretary of president Beneš, and he also considered a career in international politics.2

Both these first diplomatic steps ended in failure – Jouvenel did not understand Czech and Fabre-Luce accidentally insulted King George by turning his back on him during a reception. They soon abandoned this career prospect to concentrate on journalism and political writing, which, along with the occasional novel or play, would be their main métier for the rest of their lives.3 In 1924, Fabre-Luce published La Victoire, a thoroughly researched study of international diplomacy before and after the First World War. In the first part of this sarcastically titled book, Fabre-Luce refuted the war guilt thesis according to which Germany had been solely responsibility for the outbreak of the conflict. Although this thesis held official status

1 Garbe, Alfred Fabre-Luce, 70, 74.
2 Dard, Bertrand de Jouvenel, 17, 45; Bertrand de Jouvenel, ‘Tchéco… Slovaquie…’, Gringoire (25 March 1938).
3 Fabre-Luce, J’ai Vécu Plusieurs Siècles, 20; Jouvenel, Un Voyageur, 74.
as a clause in the Versailles treaty that Germany had been forced to sign, he claimed that no serious historian defended it anymore. The Russians also had their share of responsibility, and so did even the wartime French president Raymond Poincaré, whom Fabre-Luce found to have encouraged the Tsar to take an aggressive stance during the July Crisis. The second part centred on post-war politics and described a fragile international order still under the spell of wartime antagonisms. Especially France, again under the leadership of Poincaré who had become prime minister in 1922, had been unable to ‘master its victory’ and work on a just international order. By sending French troops to occupy the Ruhr area after Germany defaulted on its payment of reparations, Poincaré had alienated France from the United Kingdom and resorted to the same kind of politics that had led to the war less than a decade before. In early 1920s France, Fabre-Luce’s conclusions were explosive. Although largely ignored in the nationalist press, the book sold well, was quickly translated into several foreign languages and became a reference work for historians of the First World War. It also earned him the lasting admiration of Thomas Mann, who wrote to thank him for his ‘oeuvre pleine de liberté, de sagesse et d’humanité’ and who was impressed when introduced to Fabre-Luce during a visit to Paris in 1926.

In his memoirs, Jouvenel pays respect to La Victoire as the book that defined his generation’s thought about international relations and war. For Fabre-Luce, Jouvenel and a larger group of young progressive-liberal French intellectuals, the Poincaré-led right-wing governments that had come to power after the 1919 elections represented a France that was stubbornly clinging to outdated nationalist politics. Instead of the logic of force and inequality behind the Versailles Treaty and the Ruhr occupation, they came to promote an international order built on justice and cooperation. Inspired by Woodrow Wilson’s Fourteen Points and the foundation of the League of Nations but unsatisfied with its realisations, they adhered to what Klaus-Peter Sick has called a theory of interdependence in international relations. The horrors of the war inspired them to refute traditional diplomacy’s doctrines of national sovereignty and balance of power. Although he first considered the League of Nations a vehicle for the victorious Entente powers

4 Fabre-Luce, La Victoire, 417, 424.
5 Thomas Mann to Fabre-Luce (22 August 1924), Thomas Mann to Fabre-Luce (15 March 1931), Fonds Alfred Fabre-Luce, Archives Nationales de France, 472 AP 2. See also extract from Thomas Mann, Pariser Rechenschaft included in Fonds AFL, 472 AP 1.
6 Jouvenel, Un Voyageur, 77.
to consolidate their positions, Jouvenel quickly came to appreciate the Geneva-based organisation as a necessary step towards European union. This enthusiasm received a considerable boost during the middle of the 1920s. The left won the 1924 elections and the Poincaré governments were replaced by an unstable series of minority governments led by the Parti Radical. Under the leadership of Foreign Minister Aristide Briand, France ended its occupation of the Ruhr and started to pursue a politics centred on improving international relations through the League of Nations. The Locarno treaties and the resulting German membership of the League further enhanced the reputation of this organisation in the eyes of Fabre-Luce and Jouvenel.8

Around the same time, Fabre-Luce and Jouvenel associated themselves with Jean Luchaire (1901-1946), a precocious journalist and essayist like them but politically more engaged since his earliest years. It is hard to overestimate Luchaire’s importance for the political development of Fabre-Luce and Jouvenel.9 Luchaire was born in Siena, Italy to an intellectual and cosmopolitan French family and spent most of his youth between Paris and Florence, where his father Julien Luchaire founded the French Institute that is still extant today. During the First World War, the young Jean volunteered to work in military hospitals close to Grenoble and in Florence, after Italy entered the war in 1915, receiving a first impression of the horrendous consequences of modern industrial warfare. He met Jouvenel in 1920 and the two soon became inseparable friends, participating together in several internationalist youth organisations.10 In 1927, Luchaire founded the review *Notre Temps*, together with Émile Roche. Subtitled ‘Revue de la Nouvelle Génération Européenne’, *Notre Temps* and its associated publications assumed a leading role in mobilising a group of young internationalist French intellectuals – amongst whom were Jouvenel, Fabre-Luce, but also Pierre Mendès-France, Henri Janson, Hubert Beuve-Méry, Pierre Brossolette and Jacques Kayser – while providing them with a political agenda and a strong generational identity.11

9 Jouvenel, *Un Voyageur*, 81. It is striking that even in his memoirs, just after mentioning Luchaire’s wartime career as the head of the collaborationist press office in Paris and his execution as a traitor in 1946, Jouvenel still paid homage to him as ‘le plus brillant sujet de notre génération’.
Like several other European countries, 1920s France witnessed a spread of generational discourses centred on the experience of the First World War. During the same decade, through the work of social scientists such as Karl Mannheim, the generational concept also acquired validity as an academic tool of analysis. Although generational discourses differed markedly from country to country – and competing versions could exist within a single country – a few interesting transnational commonalities can be identified. The war experience was often considered an essential divide between the old and the young, the latter having been fundamentally transformed by the experience of the conflict. The discourses often displayed a certain wariness with the rituals of parliamentary politics and with established ideologies such as (reformist) socialism, liberalism and conservatism. Instead of these ‘outdated’ political reflexes, they championed a ‘pragmatic’ and ‘unemotional’ approach to politics as a matter better left to technical ‘experts’ rather than petty, squabbling party politicians. There was also a widespread feeling of urgency – the need to achieve radical reforms within a short time – possibly reinforced by the notion of a ‘missed opportunity’ (‘verpasste Chance’) by having been too young to fight in the war. In several European countries, the 1920s saw a new political generation claim a central place in the reshaping of politics.

In Luchaire and Jouvenel’s minds, their generation consisted of those who had been born around 1900. Through their specific experience of having been ‘raised by the war’ and coming of age during the conflict without having fought in it, Luchaire found his generation essentially different from both the older generation and the war veterans, their ‘older brothers’ who had proven themselves unwilling to build a new France once victory had been achieved. Instead, the veterans had retreated into private life, quietly accepting conservative government and failing to seize the political role that seemed reserved for them. This left only Luchaire’s generation to achieve radical reforms in both national and international politics. Luchaire defined his generation as ‘realistic’, unimpressed by ideological dogmas and instead favouring a concrete approach to political problems. His generational concept also bore technocratic and potentially elitist connotations: rather than trusting politicians and the machinations of

12 Heinz Bude, “Generation” im Kontext: Von den Kriegs- zu den Wohlfahrtsstaatsgenera-
14 Sirinelli, Génération intellectuelle, 642, 643; Luchaire, Une Génération Réaliste, 20.
parliament to deal with these problems, he felt these matters were better left to technically and economically trained ‘experts’.\textsuperscript{15}

Its ‘European spirit’ was, according to Luchaire, what fundamentally separated the young generation from those rooted in the world before 1914.\textsuperscript{16} But this is not to say that this ‘generation’ lacked older tutors or that these tutors were homogeneous. Campaigning in favour of the League of Nations brought Luchaire into close contact with Briand, who had been able to remain foreign minister after Poincaré’s return to power in 1926. His ministry came to provide considerable annual subsidies to \textit{Notre Temps}, allowing it to become a weekly, and its contributors often accompanied Briand to Geneva to attend his speeches in front of the Assembly of the League.\textsuperscript{17} Through Bertrand’s uncle Robert de Jouvenel and through Roche, who were both important figures in the Parti Radical and who acted like tutors of the young intellectuals, Jouvenel and Fabre-Luce were drawn closer to this party. They joined the group of ‘Young Turks’ around Daladier, who was triumphantly elected party leader in 1927.\textsuperscript{18}

Fabre-Luce was a long-time admirer of Joseph Caillaux, the liberal reformist politician who had been arrested and imprisoned as a traitor in 1918 for his wartime initiatives to end the war through a ‘paix blanche’, a peace without annexations. From the beginning of the twentieth century, Caillaux defended a progressive income tax, pacifism and Franco-German rapprochement based on free trade and industrial relations, which exposed him to violent attacks by the nationalist right. Apart from these political reasons, the right also hated Caillaux because in early 1914 his wife had shot Gaston Calmette, the chief editor of \textit{Le Figaro}, who had led a press campaign against her husband. The 1924 victory of the left permitted parliament to adopt an amnesty law, after which Caillaux resumed his political career and figured as finance minister in several governments. During this period, Fabre-Luce regularly met Caillaux. They became friends and in 1925 Caillaux even viewed the young writer as his political successor. Failing to achieve


\textsuperscript{16} Jean Luchaire & Émile Roche, ‘Frontières Spirituelles’, \textit{Notre Temps} (October 1927), 2.

\textsuperscript{17} Jouvenel, \textit{La Décomposition de l’Europe Libérale}, 273.

this, Fabre-Luce instead became his biographer, and the two remained in touch until shortly before Caillaux’s death in 1944.19

During the 1920s, Luchaire was a stated enemy of Italian Fascism and a close friend of anti-fascist intellectuals like the brothers Carlo and Nello Rosselli and Gaetano Salvemini, who had become his stepfather after Luchaire’s mother remarried in 1916. But these credentials did not keep Luchaire’s writings from drawing the attention of Georges Valois.20 Before the First World War, Valois (a pseudonym of Alfred-Georges Gressent) had been a member of what Pierre Milza called ‘the Maurrussian left’. He started his political career on the extreme left as an anarchist and revolutionary syndicalist inspired by the ideas of Georges Sorel, the theoretician of mass psychology, myths and violence. After turning to the Action Française in 1906, Valois took the lead of the Cercle Proudhon, an intellectual initiative to create a synthesis of nationalism and revolutionary syndicalism that was to pave the way for an anti-republican alliance of the extreme left and right. Some historians, most notably Zeev Sternhell, consider the Cercle Proudhon as the intellectual birthplace of fascism due to its role in creating this synthesis.21

After the war and inspired by Mussolini’s March on Rome, Valois left Maurras’ monarchist phalanx to found Le Faisceau, France’s first attempt at a genuine fascist movement. Valois called upon all war veterans and ‘producers’ to support the creation of a national state that would sweep away republican bourgeois mediocrity, restore ‘natural hierarchy’ under the rule of an authoritarian leader and create a ‘new elite’ by appointing war veterans at the head of private enterprises and various institutions of society. At the same time, Valois was careful not to entirely alienate the intellectual bourgeoisie from his project, as he frequently stressed that especially young non-conformists and technical experts were more than welcome to contribute to the renewal of France as members of its new elite. Despite initial signs of success and lavish subsidies from the perfume tycoon François Coty, which permitted Valois to start the mass daily Le Nouveau Siècle, Le Faisceau never achieved large support and quickly went down under the pressure of fierce competition from the Action Française and other right-wing ligues.22

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19 ‘Réflexions 1924-1928’, Fonds AFL, 472 AP 10 dr. 1; Caillaux to Fabre-Luce (7 March 1933), Fonds AFL, 472 AP 2; Fabre-Luce, Caillaux. Caillaux wrote Fabre-Luce to thank him for his ‘beautiful’ biography.
20 Alden, ‘The Road to Collaboration’, 14, 21, 60.
21 Sternhell, La Droite Révolutionnaire, 405; Mazgaj, The Action Française and Revolutionary Syndicalism, 214-15.
22 Douglas, From Fascism to Libertarian Communism, 92, 104; Amzalak, Fascists and Honorable Men, 72.
His failure to rally the war veterans behind his project left Valois disappointed with the conservatism and political inertia of these former soldiers – a dismay he shared with Luchaire, Jouvenel and their ‘generation’. Instead, Valois now turned to them and other representatives of the ‘Young Turks’ inside the Radical Party as well as future neosocialists and dissident members of the French Socialist Party, hoping they would be the vanguard of a revolutionary remaking of France along technocratic corporatist lines. Abandoning his aspirations to be a fascist leader and retreating to publishing and editing, Valois became the publisher of both Luchaire and Jouvenel’s first books through his book series of the Bibliothèque Syndicaliste. In a further attempt to realise a synthesis of technical experts and progressive non-conformist intellectuals, Valois also founded the periodical Les Cahiers Bleus, which published contributions from Jouvenel, Luchaire, Pierre Dominique, Marcel Déat, André Philippe and Paul Marion. Despite some striking commonalities between the ideas of Le Faisceau and members of the ‘young generation’, these connections could hardly be seen at the time as a sign of outright fascist affiliation on the part of Jouvenel and Luchaire. After the failure of Le Faisceau, Valois started moving to the left again, and he would end his life in 1945 as an imprisoned Resistance fighter at the Bergen-Belsen concentration camp. Valois later expressed his disappointment at seeing so many of the young intellectuals he had tutored end up associating themselves with fascism and collaboration.

The turn of the 1930s saw a radicalisation of the Europeanism espoused by Jouvenel and Fabre-Luce. While they had first only supported the European project as the best guarantee against future war, it soon became the very core of their political agenda. Back in 1927, in Locarno sans Rêves, Fabre-Luce positively compared the League of Nations to the balance-of-power system of the late nineteenth century and called on support for the League of Nations out of pragmatic reasons including enlightened national self-interest. A few years later, this stance was not enough for him. As the beginning of the economic recession and the decline of the Locarno collective security system began to make themselves felt, the sense of crisis did not milden their Europeanist convictions – instead, it encouraged

23 Milza, Fascisme Français, 93-109; Jouvenel, L’Économie Dirigée. In his memoirs, Jouvenel praised Valois and defended his editorship of his first book: ‘En ce temps-là on ne demandait pas compte aux gens de leurs attitudes passées’. See Jouvenel, Un Voyageur, 82.
24 Amzalak, Fascists and Honorable Men, 76.
25 Fabre-Luce, Locarno sans Rêves, 222.
them to continue at increased speed. In 1930, Jouvenel published *Vers les États-Unis d’Europe* in which he rejected the ‘powerless’ League of Nations system and called for the quick realisation of a European state. He took the American founding father Alexander Hamilton as an example and wanted, much like Pierre Drieu la Rochelle at the time, a European nationalism to replace the old narrow-minded nationalisms. From a global perspective, the differences between European nations and cultures were minimal, and they had to be overcome if Europe wanted to keep its dominant position vis-à-vis the rising superpowers in the East and the West. Europe already had an own identity, which was mainly constructed in opposition to the ‘despotism’ of Asia and the ‘plutocracy’ of the United States. In his last chapter, Jouvenel showed the degree to which Europe had in his eyes become a panacea to all the problems of his time: ‘On ne peut réaliser le Désarmement qu’en faisant l’Europe. On ne peut organiser la répression de la guerre qu’en faisant l’Europe. On ne peut restaurer l’État qu’en faisant l’Europe.’

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Reconciliation with Germany at All Costs?

In international politics, European peace and cooperation meant above all Franco-German reconciliation. Jouvenel and Fabre-Luce called for revisions to the Versailles Treaty and participated in several initiatives to establish contacts with German representatives of their generation. As Jouvenel described six years later, the first post-war meeting with a German delegation during a Prague youth congress in 1923 left him feeling more French than ever, but later contacts were less tense. Relations were established between the *Notre Temps* group and non-conformist elements of the German progressive youth movement. Wolfgang Stresemann, the son of the German foreign minister, published an article in *Notre Temps* on ‘the young German generation’, and Luchaire was given the chance to develop his generational points of view in the German press.

The most lasting contacts were established through Otto Abetz (1903-1958). During a visit to Paris, Abetz, at the time the head of the Circle of Karlsruhe Youth Organisations, invited the *Notre Temps* group, along with representatives of other receptive French youth associations, to a meeting with various representatives of German youth movements on the Sohlberg, a low mountain in the Black Forest not far from the French border. Through the pines, the Sohlberg offered a view of the cathedral of Strasbourg. Held in the summer of 1930 in a deliberately unacademic, all-male atmosphere of camping, hiking, singing and campfire chats, the Sohlberg meeting was a great success, and it marked the beginning of a permanent Sohlberg Circle that organised youth meetings in France and Germany. Common points in the generational discourse of the participating French and German youth organisations played an important role in bringing them together in an atmosphere in which their very real political differences were cloaked by a meta-political form of spiritual affinity.

Jouvenel and Fabre-Luce did not attend the 1930 meeting, but they were present in subsequent years. When Luchaire could not attend a reunion in Berlin in January 1934, Jouvenel – who had become president of the associated Comité d’Entente de la Jeunesse Française pour le Rapprochement

27 Bertrand de Jouvenel, ‘La Politique à Vingt Ans’, *Notre Temps* (February 1929), 84.
Franco-Allemand – instead headed the French delegation. In a report written by Jouvenel in preparation of the Berlin trip, he mentioned the difficult situation of the Comité d’Entente, which had come under attack from both the ‘anti-German’ right and the ‘anti-Hitlerian’ left. Nonetheless, the Committee and its member organisations were convinced that the quest for reaching ‘a common vocabulary’ between French and German youth was too important to be abandoned merely ‘for political reasons’. This position was supported by a plethora of associated youth organisations, from Marc Sangnier’s pacifist Catholic Le Sillon via the ‘Jeunesses Démocrates Populaires’ to the ‘University Group in Support of the League of Nations’ [‘Groupement Universitaire pour la SDN’]. A representative of Gustave Hervé’s fascist Milice Socialiste Nationale was more outspoken: his organisation had always been in favour of reconciliation, ‘whether with Stresemann’s, Brüning’s or Hitler’s Germany’, and it considered reconciliation with Hitler ‘not more difficult, but more effective’, since Hitler’s government better reflected ‘the German temperament’. Even Rudolf Sobernheim, representing the exiled Germans in opposition to National Socialism – those who, he stressed, ‘used to be the ones fighting for Franco-German rapprochement’ – indicated that the meeting should continue, since they did not want to ‘play the role of the Coblenz émigrés’.

Jouvenel’s private papers reveal an elaborate correspondence with Abetz, who organised the practicalities of the trip. Abetz was happy to announce that beds had been found at youth hostels in the city centre and that, in line with the committee’s wishes, it would be strictly a youth meeting ‘without official ceremonies’. Those who wished so were welcome to attend ‘une grande soirée hitlérienne’ as well as a lunch at the Hotel Adlon organised by the Reichsjugendführung. ‘For you personally’, Abetz continued, ‘we have planned several meetings with German captains of industry and I think you will be interested’. Although in his memoirs Jouvenel tries to minimise the importance of the Berlin meeting, he was still impressed by his experience of the German capital under National-Socialist rule, especially when contrasted with the ‘chaos’ he had found when he visited the city two years earlier. Drieu accompanied Jouvenel to Berlin, and his experience of the fanaticism and discipline of the Hitler Youth marked
an important step in his conversion to fascism.\textsuperscript{34} During 1934, Jouvenel brought Abetz into contact with several key personalities within the French veterans' organisations. Henri Pichot, leader of the left-wing Union Fédérale des Anciens Combattants, showed considerable enthusiasm for a reconciliation ceremony with German veterans, and even Jean Goy of the right-wing Union Nationale des Combattants was won over. After meeting Hitler in Berlin in November 1934 (through an invitation organised by Abetz), Goy told Jouvenel he used to have little faith in reconciliation with a republican government that was 'not really in charge' in Germany. But with Hitler, Germany finally had 'a stable government' that allowed for 'long-term agreements'.\textsuperscript{35}

By this time, the 'youthful' element of the meetings had lost most of its importance. The Sohlberg Circle had evolved from a youth platform into the Comité France-Allemagne (CFA), a club of cultural and political writers centred on the bilingual review \textit{Cahiers Franco-Allemands / Deutsch-Französische Monatshefte}. Although Abetz may have adhered to social democracy in the 1920s and kept presenting himself in France as a man of the left, by 1933 he proved more than willing to accommodate himself to Hitler's rule, moving tactically between rivalling Nazi institutions to play as big a role as possible. The German foreign office funded the bilingual review and several of Abetz's initiatives, rightly supposing that they were an excellent tool to seduce a considerable part of the French intelligentsia into accepting the Third Reich.\textsuperscript{36} Fabre-Luce and Jouvenel proved to be an easy catch. Their conceptions of Europe and peace were so intimately linked to Franco-German rapprochement that there seemed to be no alternative to this politics. Already in 1926 in private writings, Fabre-Luce considered Germany the only way of salvation for France. He lamented the predominance of 'Anglo-Saxon' culture and the 'Americanisation' of Paris, which he held responsible for the spread of 'European decadence'. Like the Paneuropean Movement of the count Coudenhove-Kalergy, with whom he had several meetings at the time, Fabre-Luce imagined Europe as

\textsuperscript{34} Jouvenel, \textit{Un Voyageur}, 202; Drieu la Rochelle, \textit{Socialisme Fasciste}, 202. Jouvenel seems to have played a certain role in bringing Drieu into contact with Abetz, who was eager to present him with the marvels of National Socialism. Abetz obtained an invitation for Drieu to attend the 1935 Nuremberg Party Rally and to visit a Nazi elite school at the Pomeranian castle of Krössinsee in 1936. See Lambauer, \textit{Otto Abetz et les Français}, 107.

\textsuperscript{35} Lambauer, \textit{Otto Abetz et les Français}, 72, 79; Jouvenel, \textit{Un Voyageur}, 203. These reconciliation attempts led to little more than two joint Franco-German veterans meetings, in Besançon in 1935 and at Douaumont in 1936. Duroselle, ed., \textit{La Décadence}, 207.

\textsuperscript{36} Bruneteau, \textit{'L'Europe Nouvelle de Hitler'}, 234; Unteutsch, \textit{Vom Sohlbergkreis}, 95.
a continental civilisation, both a political and a cultural centre of gravity between Asia and the United States. Coudenhove even asked Fabre-Luce to head his movement’s French section, which the latter politely declined while assuring Coudenhove of his complete agreement on the necessity of propaganda for the European idea.

In Fabre-Luce’s view, with such an important objective in mind, how could the rise of Hitler bring any change to this agenda of reconciliation? Indeed, during the first years after Hitler’s coming to power, Jouvenel and Fabre-Luce took pains to stress that nothing had changed and that the League of Nations system would continue to function. In private, Fabre-Luce thought that Nazi rule was a passing phenomenon in a Germany on its way to ‘communism or the republic’. In public, he stated that the biggest danger to European peace was not the fascist regimes but the panicked reaction against them in the French press. An understandable antipathy toward the fascist regimes should not inspire French foreign policy: ‘Un vrai libéral ne doit pas vouloir imposer le libéralisme.’ Hitler might be an ‘anti-European, prisoner of a bellicose demagogy’, but he would continue on the path to Franco-German reconciliation, as this was manifestly in the interest of his country. If Hitler did not seize the chances for peace and international cooperation, he would be confronted with a strong liberal opposition. If France fought off its ‘absurd collective psychosis’ and if it were willing to revise the Versailles Treaty, it was still possible to realise a large project of European union in which ‘borders would become irrelevant’.

Jouvenel showed the same degree of underestimation and misinterpretation of National Socialism, which was later joined by an increasing admiration. In 1930, when visiting Munich to report on the German parliamentary elections, Jouvenel attended two Hitler speeches which failed to make much of an impression on him. On the first occasion, he found himself in a largely empty circus tent in which a handful of ‘fat-bellied Austrians and boy scouts’ had apparently been the only ones willing to pay the 10-pfennig entrance fee for listening to an incoherent political monologue. A few days later, Jouvenel did find the tent packed with people, but he quickly noticed that a large part of the audience consisted of Hitler’s own men, uniformed SA storm troopers who had been herded into the tent to give their leader

37 Fonds AFL, 472 AP 10 dr. 1.
39 Fonds AFL, 472 AP 10 dr. 1.
40 Alfred Fabre-Luce, ‘Contre la Manifestation Gide’, Pamphlet (31 March 1933), 9; idem, ‘La Paix en Quelques Mots’, Pamphlet (14 April 1933), 2; idem, ‘Comment Vaincre Hitler?’, Pamphlet (14 April 1933), 4.
the appearance of mass support. Otherwise, Jouvenel was struck by the overrepresentation of women and youth. Ironically titling the article ‘What is Menacing World Peace’, Jouvenel criticised French nationalists who were taking Hitler’s rise as a pretext for pushing French politics towards rearment and away from international reconciliation. In a speech at the October 1930 congress of the Parti Radical, Jouvenel evoked his Munich experiences and tried to explain the Hitler phenomenon through a typical series of comparisons with the French past: ‘We have seen this: first Thiers (or Stresemann). Then the election of MacMahon (or Hindenburg). Then finally the Hitlerian (or Boulangerist) movement.’ But he also linked ‘Hitler’s whiteshirts’ [sic] to related phenomena in Italy, Austria and Hungary and to the French Jeunesses Patriotes and Action Française.

During the following years, Jouvenel did become aware of the significance of Hitler and his party. By 1934, he had to concede that Hitler’s popularity had not been as short-lived as General Boulanger’s mass appeal. In a long article, he advised the French not to expect a quick end to Nazism in Germany but to instead hope for an ‘authoritarian regime’ for France, as this would make it easier to solve international conflicts by taking ‘drastic steps’. Jouvenel explained National Socialism as essentially an attempt to organise and rationalise the economy at the national level after the failure of international socialism to coordinate the economy by international agreements. According to Jouvenel, this project need not be a menace to international relations and the chances of peace: ‘It is the task of the new generations to see to it that these different national socialisms do not turn into nationalist socialisms.’ He blamed the failure of the 1934 disarmament negotiations on France, whose weapons industry had exploited the unpopularity of the Hitler regime to sabotage a unique chance of ‘pacifying Europe’.

Through these statements, the two intellectuals were engaging themselves along the lines of an anti-leftist neo-pacifism, which was gaining ground in 1930s France. Blaming the danger of war on the ‘bellicosity’ of the French left, they held French communism, socialism and anti-fascist intellectuals such as André Gide and André Malraux responsible for missed chances for coming to a fundamental agreement that Germany was supposedly offering. Jouvenel’s most well-known manifestation of this attitude

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41 Bertrand de Jouvenel, ‘Ce Qui Menace la Paix du Monde’, L’Oeuvre (13 September 1930); idem, [untitled], L’Oeuvre (16 September 1930).
42 A transcript of Jouvenel’s speech is included in Fonds BdJ, Don 90 39 (11).
43 Jouvenel, ‘Réflexions sur les Rapports Franco-Allemands’.
45 Vaisse, ‘Der Pazifismus und die Sicherheit Frankreichs’, 605.
is his notorious Hitler interview of February 1936, a few days before the German remilitarisation of the Rhineland, during which he showed himself impressed by the ‘giant task’ the Führer had assigned himself of ‘putting an end to the old French-German hatred’.46

In Fabre-Luce’s writings, this pacifism sometimes took on anti-Semitic dimensions. In an article discussing European problems ‘from a racial point of view’, Fabre-Luce called Arthur de Gobineau ‘possibly the most important writer for today’s Europe’. He refuted Nazi ideas of racial purity as an illusion, but he also tried to explain anti-Semitism as the understandable hatred of the poor Austrian peasantry against rich and hedonistic Vienna, which was ‘dominated by the Jews’. The French media had been justified in criticising the ‘excesses’ of German anti-Semitism, but too much indignation was misplaced, as France’s allies Poland and Romania had known persecutions that were ‘much worse’ than what was happening in Germany. Most importantly, France should put strict limits on Jewish immigration, since it was already receiving the ‘worst elements’ of German Jewry. Jewish immigration even meant a danger to international peace, since ‘Hitler’s anti-Semitic persecutions have been followed by a Jewish counter-offensive’ inciting France to go to war with its eastern neighbour. ‘Against this provocation’, Fabre-Luce concluded, ‘French anti-Semitism or anti-Marxism can turn out to be legitimate defence movements, or a kind of tolerance’.47

This attitude was reinforced by admiration for the fascist dictators, whom Jouvenel and Fabre-Luce had the honour of meeting in person. In his Hitler interview, organised by Abetz and held at the Führer’s mountain retreat in Berchtesgaden,48 Jouvenel described Hitler as ‘completely different from the way I expected him to be’. Instead of the frightful dictator doing everything to impress his visitor, as he had found Mussolini during an earlier trip to Rome, Jouvenel was confronted with a ‘modest’ man dressed in a khaki suit who sat down next to him at a small table and repeatedly patted him on the shoulder. Hitler was ‘un homme de sport’ with ‘beautiful hands’ and a sincere will of peace. When Jouvenel confronted him with radically anti-French citations from Mein Kampf, Hitler responded by stressing that it was a book he wrote in prison as a young man at a time when the Ruhr was occupied by French troops. The text did not need to be rectified in

47  Alfred Fabre-Luce, ‘Les Querelles de Races’, Pamphlet (15 December 1933); idem, ‘Faux Départ’, Pamphlet (23 February 1934).
48  See also Abetz, Das Offene Problem, 78.
later editions, according to Hitler: ‘My rectification? I’m giving it every
day with my foreign policy that is fully oriented towards friendship with
France!’\textsuperscript{49} In 1938, having obtained an official invitation through Abetz,
Jouvenel attended the Nazi party rally in Nuremberg – a privilege very
seldom accorded to foreign guests.\textsuperscript{50} In the same way, Fabre-Luce showed
himself deeply impressed after a private meeting with Mussolini in early
1934. Describing the Duce as an authentic, great man, ‘animated by the soil,
the people and history’, Fabre-Luce concluded that France had a lot to learn
from his fascist regime.\textsuperscript{51}

In November 1934, the famous feminist journalist Louise Weiss, no longer
believing in the League of Nations she had championed for many years,
abandoned her position at the head of \textit{L’Europe Nouvelle}, the prestigious
Europeanist weekly she had founded in 1920 and headed ever since. The
board of editors was split over the question of whether the European project
could continue after the coming to power of Hitler. A considerable group
agreed with Weiss that nothing could be done and left the periodical in her
wake, while those who believed in rapprochement stayed. Within a week’s
time, Fabre-Luce took Weiss’ place as the editor in chief. Closely involving
Jouvenel, Drieu and Pierre Dominique with the weekly, he steered it towards
the neo-pacifist line of continued rapprochement with Germany.

This is not to say that Fabre-Luce and Jouvenel welcomed all of Hitler’s
political moves. While they initially continued believing in the vitality
of the League of Nations system, developments in international politics
gradually led both intellectuals to change their minds. They supported
the April 1934 Stresa agreements between France, Great Britain and Italy
as an efficient way to contain German expansion (and to convince Hitler
to return to the negotiating table), and they severely criticised Britain and
France when this alliance fell apart as a result of Italy’s invasion of Abys-
sinia.\textsuperscript{52} Although writing in a more pessimistic tone about the menace of

\textsuperscript{49} Jouvenel, “Soyons amis”.
\textsuperscript{50} Jouvenel, \textit{Un Voyageur}, 322. Private notes suggest that Jouvenel had another private meeting
with Mussolini on 3 June 1936, but he was not allowed to comment on it in the French press. See
\textsuperscript{52} Bertrand de Jouvenel, ‘Les Trois Victoires de l’Angleterre dans le Conflit Italo-Abyssin’,
\textit{L’Europe Nouvelle} (26 October 1935); Alfred Fabre-Luce, ‘Un “Wait and See” Français?’, \textit{L’Europe
Nouvelle} (22 December 1934); idem, ‘France-Italie’, \textit{L’Europe Nouvelle} (5 January 1935); idem,
‘Scandale International’, \textit{L’Europe Nouvelle} (21 December 1935). The signatories to the Stresa
agreement reaffirmed the Locarno Treaties, guaranteed the independence of Austria and
pledged to resist any further German attempt to change the Treaty of Versailles.
war, Fabre-Luce and Jouvenel continued to consider Hitler’s foreign policy as led by essentially rational considerations. They were convinced that through clever diplomatic moves, France could make Germany see ‘no other solution than peace’.53

In his 1974 memoirs, Fabre-Luce prided himself on his last editorial in *L’Europe Nouvelle*. From the same post-World-War-II perspective, Raymond Aron and Daniel Garbe, his very sympathetic biographer, joined him in this praise.54 In the article, which appeared in late January 1936 – less than two months before the German remilitarisation of the Rhineland – Fabre-Luce envisaged the event and correctly estimated its political consequences. With the Rhineland effectively closed to French troops, France would have no means to enforce its Eastern European treaties, Fabre-Luce stated. Considering the evident fact that Germany was engaged in a politics of aggressive expansion into new ‘virgin territories’ in Eastern Europe, France was left with two political options: either to pre-emptively occupy the Rhineland together with the British or to try to satisfy Germany through territorial, political and economic concessions at the expense of France’s eastern allies. The risk of the first option was an escalation into a European war, while the second option carried the risk of being interpreted as an encouragement by a Germany whose ‘hunger grows while eating’. Doing nothing was worse still, since it would inevitably lead to a later war, ‘under less favourable conditions’.55

While the article gave a correct estimation of the implications of remilitarisation, it did not mark a fundamental shift in Fabre-Luce’s attitude. On the contrary, after the victory of the Popular Front in May 1936 and their association with the PPF, both Jouvenel and Fabre-Luce’s sympathy for Germany grew again. They even partially returned to the idea of Europeanism, albeit in a different form than before. Instead of the League of Nations model, they now came to advocate the concept of a European federation based on treaties between a smaller number of large, authoritarian states with their spheres of influence and colonial dependencies. This new conception went along with some technical large-scale projects from their *Notre Temps* days, such as the joint exploitation of colonial empires, which Jouvenel enthusiastically proposed in a German-language article

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55 Alfred Fabre-Luce, ‘Le Tragique de la Politique Extérieure Française’, *L’Europe Nouvelle* (25 January 1936). Fabre-Luce left *L’Europe Nouvelle* in order to fully dedicate his time to his second (failed) attempt to be elected to parliament in the May 1936 elections.
in the *Cahiers Franco-Allemands*.\(^{56}\) Even the countries of Eastern Europe could become parts of a Franco-German colonial empire, Jouvenel suggested in early 1938. A trip through Romania and the Balkan countries left him with little hope about the capacities of these ‘invertebrate nations’ to exist independently. He proposed that France and Germany jointly found a ‘Europe Company’, modelled after the colonial chartered companies of the eighteenth century, to assure the rational exploitation of the Balkan territories.\(^{57}\) Jouvenel continued to blame the international tension almost exclusively on France. He accused Prime Minister Léon Blum of refusing offers of friendship by Mussolini and Hitler because he was only serving the interests of the Socialist International rather than France. Instead of reconciling itself with Germany and Italy, France had signed a treaty with the Soviet Union, abandoning its foreign policy to ‘Potemkin’ and raising ‘all of Europe against us’.\(^{58}\)

**Metaphysical Europeanism**

In 1937, Fabre-Luce imagined a peaceful international order dominated by ‘five of six’ great powers (he failed to name them, but probably meant France, Germany, Britain, Italy, the Soviet Union and a future Francoïst Spain), bringing all smaller countries under their respective spheres of influence. These smaller powers would lose their independence, but they would profit from being part of a ‘larger organisation’. German racism was one of the best guarantees against further expansion, since ‘out of hygiene, it shuns annexing other peoples’.\(^{59}\) One year later, he even directly contradicted his own Rhineland article by stating that only ‘bellicose’ demagogues of the extreme left wanted France to pre-emptively go to war, pretending that it was in any case inevitable in the long run, ‘under less favourable conditions’.\(^{60}\) France could save the peace only by allowing Germany ‘free hands’ in Eastern Europe, by ending ‘decadence’ and giving itself a strong regime, a French version of what had already been achieved in Italy and Germany.

\(^{56}\) Jouvenel, ‘Das Französische Weltreich’, 104.
\(^{59}\) Fabre-Luce, *Journal Intime*, 70.
\(^{60}\) Fabre-Luce, *Le Sécret de la République*, 195.
France continued to fail at this job, it would inevitably become ‘Germany’s vassal, progressively through peace or brutally through war’.\(^6\) Looking back at his engagements during the past fifteen years, Fabre-Luce resumed his political convictions in the battle cry ‘Contre la guerre d’Occident! Contre le bolchevisme!’ Of course, he admitted, complex political problems could not be solved so easily, but it was at least a beginning and there was no time for doubt. ‘We will doubt no more, as long as we have not saved Europe.’\(^6\)

Around the same time, possibly in reaction to the bleak political perspectives for peace and European integration during the late 1930s, the Europeanism of both intellectuals gained spiritual and metaphysical dimensions. Fabre-Luce – seemingly foreshadowing Mircea Eliade – reflected on the metaphysical identity of his European generation engaged in a search for an ‘Eternal Return’, deepening ‘the experience of the Moment’ and ‘reshaping the Sacred’. Jouvenel longed for a situation where the spiritual and the temporal would overlap, as in the Arabian Peninsula under Muhammad during the first years of Islam. Regrettably, Western society was hopelessly divided, not only between spiritual and secular powers but also within the spiritual sphere between rival beliefs and ideologies, with communism playing an especially disruptive role. Because of these divisions, modern man was lost in the world, a prey to cynicism and scepticism. While the new regimes attempted to solve this crisis by acting as a necessary ‘organising authority’ restoring a coherent social sphere, they were confronted with opposition from the side of the Church and ‘so-called humanists’ claiming to defend general principles but in fact only prolonging Europe’s state of crisis.\(^6\)

For inspiration, Fabre-Luce and Jouvenel mainly looked abroad. Aware of the disaster that a public association with Hitler would mean for his party, Doriot repeatedly stressed that the PPF was thoroughly French and that neither its doctrine nor its ideas were imported from abroad. This did not keep the two intellectuals from travelling to France’s neighbouring countries in search of political examples that reflected their aspirations. Apart from the two fascist regimes, they were also interested in related movements in Belgium, Britain and Spain. When the Spanish Civil War broke out in July 1936, Jouvenel crossed the frontier at Irun and became one of the first French journalists to report from the insurgents’ side.\(^6\) He met the generals Emilio Mola and Francisco Franco as well as José Antonio

\(^6\) Ibid., 224, 237.
\(^6\) Fabre-Luce, *Journal Intime*, 238.
Primo de Rivera, the leader of the fascist Falange movement, and was impressed by their dedication. When Primo de Rivera was killed by Alicante republicans in November 1936, Jouvenel praised him as a martyr who had inspired young Spaniards to sacrifice themselves for their fatherland. His death was a great loss to Spain, Jouvenel argued, because Primo de Rivera had dedicated his life to ‘the social ideal of class fusion within a fraternal community’. Jouvenel and Fabre-Luce’s articles on Spain betray a definite sympathy for the insurgents’ side, blaming the outbreak of the war on the republican Frente Popular government and using the Spanish example as a warning for the kind of damage the French Popular Front could inflict. Largely along the lines of other fascist French writers like Drieu and Robert Brasillach, they depicted Spain as ‘a different world’, a country of strong believers rooted in the traditions of Medieval chivalry and the ‘example of the conquistadors’ and willing to give their lives in defence of their faith.

In Belgium, Fabre-Luce and Jouvenel were fascinated by the quick rise of the young Walloon fascist Léon Degrelle and his Rexist movement, which won more than 11% of the votes at the 1936 parliamentary elections. Degrelle concluded from this victory that he was close to seizing power through legal means, much like Hitler in 1933, but he was weakened by repeated disavowals of his party by the Belgian Catholic Church and in subsequent years lost support. Fabre-Luce met Degrelle and admired his dynamism and youthful charm. Jouvenel also met the Flemish fascist Joris van Severen, who had founded the Verdinaso movement which campaigned for a corporatist Greater-Dutch state including all three Benelux countries plus the French part of Flanders. Despite being a radical anti-Semite, Van Severen despised Germany almost as much, telling Jouvenel he hated the ‘Hitlerians’.

Despite these encounters, Fabre-Luce and Jouvenel’s sympathies were divided between Degrelle and the very government he was fighting, a big coalition of socialists, Catholics and liberals that had adopted large parts of

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65 Bertrand de Jouvenel, ‘On a Tué un Chef; José Antonio’, L’Assaut (24 November 1936); Jouvenel, Un Voyageur, 275.
68 Alfred Fabre-Luce, ‘La Défaite de Degrelle’, L’Assaut (13 April 1937).
the ‘planist’ programmes of Hendrik de Man and Paul-Henri Spaak. When the government took energetic measures against Degrelle and Spaak spoke of founding an ‘authoritarian democracy’, Jouvenel praised the initiative: ‘The speech should be read with care. It’s about infusing enough fascism into democracy as to immunise it against fascism.’ Fabre-Luce, who had already met the English fascist Oswald Mosley in 1933, thought likewise about the chances of fascism in Belgium and Britain. He was unsure whether fascism could be effective and relevant in countries with streamlined and ‘authoritarian’ democratic systems, the very elements he had little hope of seeing established in France. He explained that, contrary to the Third Republic, the British system worked because it artificially created stable majorities and kept public opinion at a certain distance from government. Most importantly, the British political parties created a natural elite that was up to its tasks. The parties functioned as ‘schools of Führers’ who were ‘chosen from adolescence, trained in athletes’ schools, imposed upon the people and assured, even while in power, of long periods of rest that keep them worthy and serene’.

The Sudeten Crisis in August-September 1938 may have contributed to both intellectuals leaving Doriot’s PPF, but it could not fundamentally detach them from their pacifist and Europeanist convictions. Jouvenel, making good use of his long-standing relations with Beneš, visited Czechoslovakia twice in 1938, writing long articles for the French mass press. During a conversation with Beneš in March, at the time of the Anschluss, Jouvenel noted that the Czechoslovakian president manifested his confidence in French guarantees of his country’s independence. In late September, during the Munich negotiations, Jouvenel visited the Sudeten area and several Czechoslovak cities, witnessing the populations’ anger and despair when it became clear that France was abandoning its ally by refusing to assist the country militarily in the case of a German attack.

70 Fabre-Luce, ‘La Défaite de Degrelle’; Bertrand de Jouvenel, ‘Une Expérience Belge Commence’, Vu (27 March 1935). For a longer treatment of De Man and planism, see the next chapter.
71 Bertrand de Jouvenel, [no title], Vu (21 October 1936).
72 Alfred Fabre-Luce, ‘Conversation avec Sir Oswald Mosley’, Pamphlet (19 May 1933); idem, ‘Rex et l’Assaut’, L’Assaut (13 April 1937).
73 Fabre-Luce, Journal Intime, 98.
74 For a larger treatment of Jouvenel and Fabre-Luce’s activities as members of the PPF, see the next chapter.
75 Bertrand de Jouvenel, ‘Tchéco… Slovaquie…’, Gringoire (25 March 1938); idem, Un Voyageur, 333; Dard, Bertrand de Jouvenel, 138.
In French society, the resulting Munich Agreement initially met with wide acclaim. Prime Minister Daladier, himself aware that France had suffered a severe diplomatic defeat, was given a hero’s welcome upon his return by cheering crowds. The mass daily *Le Petit Journal* opened a ‘livre d’or’ in which more than a million people expressed their gratitude to Daladier and Chamberlain for having saved the peace. The French parliament gave the prime minister a standing ovation and approved the agreement by 515 votes against 75. As soon as the initial wave of relief had passed, however, this attitude changed and French politics became strongly divided between ‘munichois’ (supporters of the agreement) and ‘antimunichois’ (its opponents). Except for the unanimously disapproving communists, lines cut right through all parties, but the ‘antimunichois’ camp gradually grew during the following year, receiving considerable boosts from subsequent German acts of aggression such as the annexation of the entire Czech territory in March 1939. By the time of the German invasion of Poland in September 1939, only a small number of fascists, radical pacifists and communists opposed the French declaration of war.76

Division also raged in the PPF, with many high-ranking members disapproving the ‘munichois’ stance that Doriot had adopted. In a speech at the national party congress of 15-16 October, Jouvenel reported his experiences in Prague and openly criticised Doriot’s position. The same day, he wrote a letter to the editor, published in *The Times*, in which he stated that ‘the British and French governments have, in fact, not granted the right of self-disposal to the Sudeten Germans, but simply turned Czechoslovakia over to Germany, lock, stock and barrel’. If a European war were to break out in the future, Jouvenel asserted, ‘the Führer will not be the only one to blame for that disaster’, since Paris and London had ‘led him to think that England and France were dogs that bark but bite not.’ He called upon France and the UK to ‘cure themselves of their present laxity and slovenliness. What has been achieved by Germany has been achieved only because the ceaseless effort of every German, man, woman, and child, has built up that platform of strength from which Herr Hitler speaks.’77 Jouvenel left the PPF a few days later, appalled with its compliance with the dismembering of Beneš’

76 Duroselle, *La Décadence*, 356. The negative votes consisted of all 73 communist deputees plus two individuals, the socialist Jean Bouhey and the rightist Henri de Kerrilis. One year later, the PCF officially kept to the Molotov-Von Ribbentrop Pact and opposed going to war, but many French communists refused to follow this line.

77 Jouvenel, ‘To the Editor of *The Times*’ (signed Paris, 16 October).
state. Fabre-Luce also left, calling the Munich Agreement a ‘catastrophic humiliation’ for France.\footnote{Fabre-Luce, \textit{Histoire Sécrète de la Conciliation de Munich}, 110; idem, ‘Mensonges’, \textit{L’Émancipation Nationale} (30 September 1938); Bertrand de Jouvenel, \textit{Un Voyageur}, 338.}

It is uncertain whether Doriot’s support of the Munich agreement really was their main reason for turning their backs on the PPF. Just one month earlier, Jouvenel had energetically defended the party’s position, calling upon France to pressure the Czechoslovakian government into making territorial concessions to Germany. Fabre-Luce had accused ‘liars’ of wanting to plunge France into an avoidable war. During the summer of 1938, in an exchange of letters with the pacifist baron and Action Française financer Régis de Vibraye, Fabre-Luce agreed that France should do everything to stay out of a future European war, especially since ‘conditions no longer exist for a French intervention in Czechoslovakia or Poland’.\footnote{Correspondence with Régis de Vibraye, July-August 1938, Fonds AFL, 472 AP 2.} Kestel and Dard believe that the departure of Jouvenel and Fabre-Luce was instead due to the PPF’s weakened financial and political position, which diminished their prospects of launching a political career via the party. Jouvenel and Fabre-Luce were unhappy with their status of ‘party intellectuals’ having to follow the line of the PPF without being able to really influence it. Doubts were also rising about the leadership qualities of Doriot, who failed to meet Jouvenel, Drieu and Fabre-Luce’s criteria of a dynamic fascist ‘chef’.\footnote{Kestel, ‘L’Engagement de Bertrand de Jouvenel au PPF’, 123; Dard, \textit{Bertrand de Jouvenel}, 140.}

As dramatic as Jouvenel and Fabre-Luce’s separation from Doriot – the ‘chef’ they thought they had finally found just two years earlier – may seem, it did not lead to a fundamental rethinking of their international principles. Their separation was also not complete from the beginning. Fabre-Luce continued to publish in \textit{L’Émancipation Nationale} until as late as 28 October 1938, while Jouvenel was still in touch with the party leadership in December of the same year.\footnote{Alfred Fabre-Luce, ‘Histoire Sécrète de la Conciliation de Munich’, \textit{L’Émancipation Nationale} (28 October 1938); Fonds BdJ, Don 96 01 (59).} During the same month, Fabre-Luce called upon French politics to abandon Central and Eastern Europe and focus instead on France’s overseas Empire, where its essential interests lay. France was ‘neither willing nor able’ to prevent German eastward expansion, and it would have little to fear from it. Rather than German aggression, Fabre-Luce

Drieu, who left the PPF in early 1939, was deeply disappointed in Doriot, especially because the latter often doubted his decisions, had gained a lot of weight and had acquired the habit of frequenting brothels. For Drieu, himself not averse to the Paris \textit{maisons closes}, this meant that Doriot had succumbed to decadence, becoming ‘effeminate’ and weak, and could no longer embody the ascetic ideal of a ‘pure’, strong, popular leader. See Soucy, \textit{The Second Wave}, 243.

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argued that low birth rates and a lack of political ‘authority’ were France’s real enemies.82 ‘This is strikingly similar to a statement made by Jouvenel one year earlier, before their separation from the PPF. He announced that he was still hoping for a ‘definitive reconciliation’ with Germany, which should be possible because France’s interests lay in the Mediterranean area, not in Eastern Europe towards which German expansion was directed.83

From early 1939, the growing threat of war left little room for grand international projects. During the first half of the year, possibly because they foresaw its imminent impossibility, both Fabre-Luce and Jouvenel took long-distance trips. Via Genoa and Naples, where he stopped for a few days after an inflammatory Mussolini speech made him fear that war might break out at any moment, Fabre-Luce travelled to India, Burma, China and Hawaii. His journey resulted in Un Fils du Ciel (1941), a novel inspired by a combination of Nietzschean longing for a heroic Übermensch and oriental spirituality, garnished with observations from war-torn China.84 In late spring, Jouvenel went to Turkey, Lebanon, Syria and Palestine, writing long articles for the right-wing weeklies Candide and Gringoire that revealed his talent as an écrivain-reporter, a travelling reporter with writer’s credentials that was a prominent feature of French interwar journalism.85

In Turkey, Jouvenel contrasted his observations of hedonistic and decadent Constantinople – ‘une sorte de foire malade où s’assemblent toutes les graisses de la nation’ – with Ankara, the new capital where a harsh climate kept people working hard. The militaristic Ankara atmosphere reminded him of Prussia under the ‘soldier-king’ Frederick William I (1688-1740). Jouvenel was surprised that Turkey had aligned itself diplomatically with the ‘satisfied nations’ of France and Britain, while he found its political structure to be more similar to fascism: ‘One man commands, a single party educates the nation and spreads the instructions of the leader everywhere. The role of Parliament is to register the dictator’s wishes, while the press must explain them. Isn’t this fascism?’ But the Turks assured him that it was not, since Kemalist ideology was ‘progressive, not reactionary’. Jouvenel concluded by citing Hippolyte Taine and associating the Kemalist, Mussolinian and Hitlerian variants of authoritarian government all with Taine’s description of ‘Jacobinism’.86

82 Fabre-Luce, ‘Veux-Tu Vivre ou Mourir?’. 
84 Fabre-Luce, Un Fils du Ciel; idem, Vingt-Cinq Années de Liberté I, 278.
86 Article included in folder ‘Allemagne’, Fonds BdJ, Don 90 39 (23).