



## The Communitarian Third Way

Alexandre Marc and *Ordre Nouveau* 1930-2000

John Hellman

---

*The Communitarian Third Way*  
*Alexandre Marc's Ordre Nouveau, 1930–2000*

Ordre Nouveau's "neither right nor left" movement, based on personalism and revolutionary federalism, helped shape modern Catholic political culture in France, the National Revolution instituted by the Vichy regime, the post-war European movement, and the contemporary European New Right. It influenced European youth exchanges, veterans' organizations, trade unions, religious groups, artists, and architects, even the executives of the French national railway system.

In *The Communitarian Third Way* John Hellman introduces us to the non-conformist Alexandre Marc, a Russian Jew who became a Christian convert and full-time professional revolutionary. Marc helped Le Corbusier launch *Plans*, imported the existential philosophy of Husserl and Heidegger to France, helped Mounier start *Esprit*, and was an important force in revitalizing traditional French Catholic political culture. Hellman uses interviews, unpublished correspondence, and diaries to situate Marc and the Ordre Nouveau group in the context of the French, German, and Belgian political culture of that time and explains the degree to which the ON group succeeded in institutionalizing their new order under Pétain. Hellman also examines their post-war legacy, represented by Alain de Benoist and the contemporary European New Right, shedding new light on the linkages between early national socialism and the political culture of Charles de Gaulle, François Mitterand, and pioneers of the post-World War II European movement.

JOHN HELLMAN, professor of history at McGill University, is the author of *The Knight-Monks of Vichy France: Uriage, 1940–1945*

*This page intentionally left blank*

---

# The Communitarian Third Way

---

*Alexandre Marc's Ordre Nouveau,  
1930–2000*

---

JOHN HELLMAN

© McGill-Queen's University Press 2002  
ISBN 0-7735-2376-6

Legal deposit fourth quarter 2002  
Bibliothèque nationale du Québec

Printed in Canada on acid-free paper that is 100%  
ancient forest free (100% post-consumer recycled),  
processed chlorine free.

This book has been published with the help of a grant  
from the Humanities and Social Sciences Federation of  
Canada, using funds provided by the Social Sciences  
and Humanities Research Council of Canada.

McGill-Queen's University Press acknowledges the  
support of the Canada Council for the Arts for our  
publishing program. We also acknowledge the financial  
support of the Government of Canada through the  
Book Publishing Industry Development Program  
(BPIDP) for our publishing activities.

---

**National Library of Canada Cataloguing in Publication**

Hellman, John, 1940–

The communitarian third way : Alexandre Marc's ordre  
nouveau, 1930–2000 / John Hellman  
Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 0-7735-2376-6

1. Marc, Alexandre.
  2. Ordre nouveau.
  3. Personalism.
  4. France—Politics and government—1914–1940.
  5. Conservatism—France—History—20th century.
  6. Youth movement—France—History—20th century.
- I. Title.

DC389.H44 2002 320.944'09'043 C2002-901551-0

---

Typeset in 10/12 Baskerville by True to Type

---

*To Thomas*

*Franco-Texan poet and singer-songwriter*

*This page intentionally left blank*

---

# Contents

Acknowledgments ix

Illustrations xiii

Introduction: The Non-Conformist Third Way 3

1 The Invention of a French Conservative Revolution:  
Alexandre Marc, Non-Conformism, Young Germany, and  
Ordre Nouveau 13

2 The Sohlberg Spirit (January 1931–May 1932) 29

3 Left-Wing Nazis, Revolutionary Conservatives, and Otto  
Neumann 51

4 Hitler: German Adversaries, French Converts, and a  
Letter to the Chancellor 71

5 The Sohlbergkreis Heritage, the Paris Riots, and the  
French Popular Front (6 February 1934–June 1936) 97

6 Otto Neumann in Belgium, Networking for the New  
Order (January 1933–September 1938) 125

7 The Munich Agreements, the *Fédérés*, Defeat and  
Occupation (29 September 1938 to the Liberation) 159

8 Alexandre Marc's Memories and the European  
New Right 185

Notes 201

Index 281

*This page intentionally left blank*

---

## Acknowledgments

For thoughtful reading of part or all of the manuscript, particular gratitude is due to Oz Arnal, Michel Dobry, Bill Irvine, Christian Roy, Josef Schmidt, Bob Soucy, Zeev Sternhell, and Bob Zaretsky. Judy Williams, editor, and Joan McGilvray, coordinating editor, of McGill-Queen's University Press, were outstandingly helpful and supportive. For an opportunity to present some of the material here for informed criticism special gratitude is owed to the Arriba courses (Lisbon), the colloquium in honour of Jacob Talmon (Israeli Academy of Arts and Sciences), the Columbia University colloquium in honour of Robert Paxton, and the Society for French Historical Studies. Among the individuals with whom the subject of this book was discussed particular gratitude is due, above all, to Alexandre and Suzanne Marc, but also to Mireille Marc-Lipiansky, Jean-Louis Onimus, and Christian Roy, and to the members of the community Les Murs Blancs at Chatenay-Malabry for their hospitality over the years. And, in alphabetical order:

Bruno Ackerman  
Maurice Agulhon  
Donald Baker  
François-George Barbier  
Gregory and Shirley Baum  
François and Renée Bedarida  
Albrecht Betz  
Hubert Beuve-Méry  
Pierre Birnbaum

Anne-Marie Bourdhouxe  
Jon Braun  
William Bush  
M.-D. Chenu, OP  
Martin J. Corbin  
Rita Corbin  
Aline Coutrot  
Jackie Clarke  
Joe Cunneen

Cardinal Jean Daniélou	Mireille Marc-Lipiansky
Charles Davis	Henri-Irenée Marrou
Antoine Delestre	Bill Miller
Esther Delisle	Fr. Joe Moody
Ray Dennehy	André Moosmann
Michel Dobry	Francis J. Murphy
Jean-Marie Domenach	Max and Monique Nemni
René-Jean Dupuy	Emile Noel
Henry W. Ehrmann	Jean Onimus
Marc Ferro	John W. Padberg, sj
Catherine Fieschi	Denis Pechanski
Paul and Simone Fraisse	Gerard Pelletier
Jocelyn George	Simone Pétrement
Bertram Gordon	Antonio Costa Pinto
Frank Guttmann	Miranda Pollard
Bernard and Elizabeth Guyon	Emile Poulat
Robert Hellman	Antoine Prost
Patrice Higonnet	Jean-Pierre Rioux
Peter C. Hoffmann	Henri Rousso
Stanley Hoffmann	Bernard Plongeron
Georges Hourdin	R. William Rauch, Jr
Dick Howard	Denis de Rougemont
Guy Hoyon	David Schalk
Deal Hudson	Maurice Schumann
H. Stuart Hughes	Pierre de Senarclens
Patrick Hutton	Anthony O. Simon
Tony Judt	Alain-Gérard Slama
M. and Mme Jean Lacroix	Zeev Sternhell
Alain Lemeé	Charles and Alba Taylor
Jean-Louis Loubet del Bayle	René Thoreval
Cardinal Henri de Lubac	M and Mme Michel Trebitsch
Alexandre and Suzanne Marc	Rt. Hon. Pierre Elliott Trudeau
Edmond Marc-Lipiansky	Bob Zaretsky

Among those kind enough to provide information by correspondence, particular gratitude is due to:

Michel Bergès	Yves Congar, OP
Albrecht Betz	Jacques Ellul
Etienne Borne	Gaston Fessard, sj
Philippe Burrein	Etienne Gilson
Bernard Charbonneau	Laurent Greilsamer
Bernard Comte	
Dominican Fathers (La Tour Maubourg)	

For help with the illustrations:

Christian Roy (Faculty of Theology, Université Laval), Etienne Hellman (Christie's, Paris), Frédéric Lepine (CIFE, Nice), the staff of the Bibliothèque Forney, Paris, and of the library of the Fogg Art Museum, Harvard University, Marilyn Berger (Blackader-Lauterman Library, McGill), and, above all, the late Alexandre and Suzanne Marc.

*This page intentionally left blank*



Arnaud Dandieu (1897–1933). Librarian, writer, inventor of “personalism,” and founder of the review *L'Ordre Nouveau*



Arnaud Dandieu's study, 11 rue Spontini in Paris, where the review *L'Ordre Nouveau* (1933–38) was born.



Robert Aron (1898–1975) Coauthor, with Dandieu, of *Décadence de la nation française* (1931), *Le Cancer américain* (1931), and *La Révolution nécessaire* (1933) and director of the review *L'Ordre Nouveau*. First historian of the Vichy regime, he was elected to the Académie française.



"*L'Atelier*": the 1931 portrait painted by artist Jean Dries (b. 1905) of his Parisian studio, where the meetings of the *Ordre Nouveau* movement were held from 1930 (the year in which he toured Spain, painting landscapes, with Alexandre Marc).



This 1932 portrait by Jean Dries is of Henri Daniel-Rops (Henri Petiot) (b. 1901), generational spokesman, popularizer of *Ordre Nouveau* ideas, and historian of Christianity, who became a member of the *Académie française*. A copy graced Alexandre Marc's living room.



Alexandre Marc (Marc-Lipiansky) (b. Odessa 1904, d. Vence 2000) in 1934. Founder of the Ordre Nouveau movement, of "personalism," and of the European federalist movement.



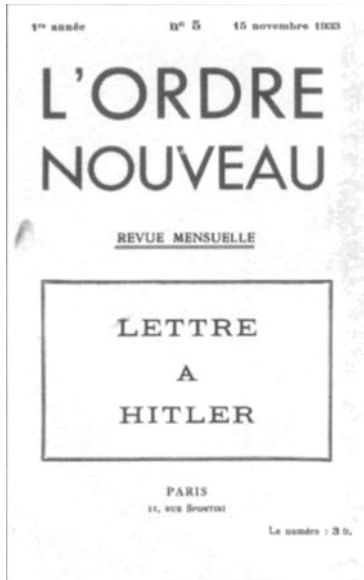
Alexandre Marc as leader of the European Federalist Movement (c. 1947)



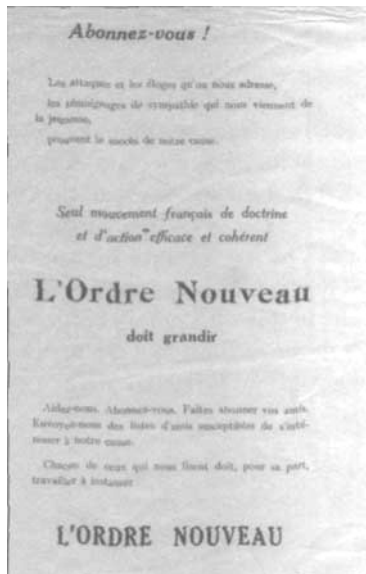
Alexandre Marc in his nineties: the commemorative portrait published by his organization.



Harro Schulze-Boysen (1909–1942). This is a copy of the photo which held a place of honour in Alexandre Marc's living room in Venice. Descendant of Admiral Tirpitz, founder of the Imperial Navy, Berlin representative of the *Amis de Plans* and *Ordre Nouveau*, leader of *Gegner*, officer in the *Luftwaffe*, he was named a member of his friend Reichsmarschall Herman Goering's Institute of Research before becoming a leader of the Stalinist Red Orchestra Resistance group and being hanged as a traitor in 1942.



A controversial issue of *L'Ordre Nouveau*



A subscription flyer advertising *L'Ordre Nouveau*



Emmanuel Mounier visiting Denis de Rougemont in Frankfurt in June 1936. Otto Abetz had arranged a semester's teaching position for de Rougemont at the university.



Swiss existential theologian Karl Barth (right), Barth's young disciple Denis de Rougemont (left), and Alexandre Marc in 1934 in the Dominican convent of Juvisy. Marc and Suzanne Jean of the New Britain movement had been married there the previous November.



The Château Bayard at St Martin d'Uriage, above Grenoble, seat of the Pétain regime's Ecole Nationale Supérieure des Cadres.



“Dominican Life. The taking of the habit. Chanting the Te Deum, the choir greet their new brother.” On this postcard (10 October 1933, just days after Marc’s baptism), theologian Yves Congar, OP, wrote from the Dominican convent of Le Saulchoir, Kain, Belgium, to Marc of his entry into “the City of which the Lamb is the Light”: “More than ever I think of you with affection and the great desire to see you joyful in the truth. That will not settle all questions, I know, as there are still some anguishing ones to resolve. Stay brave!”



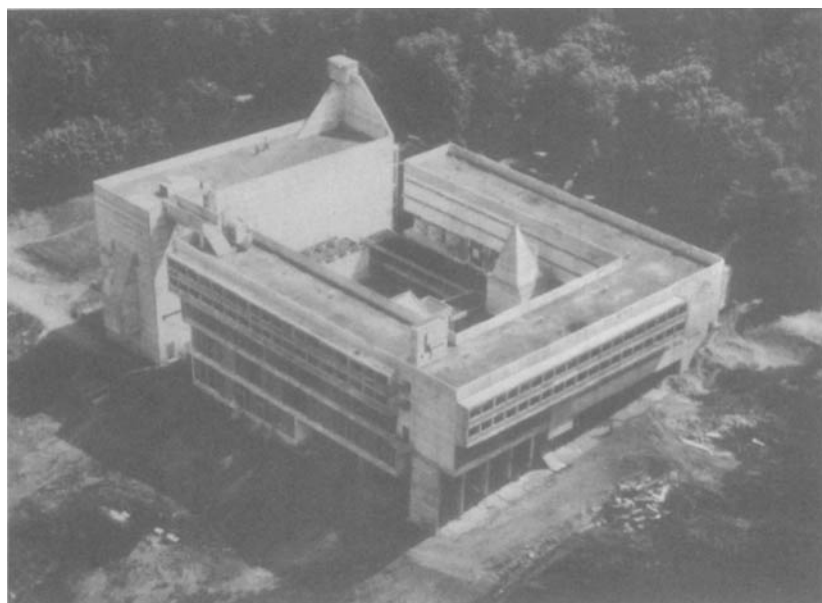
The "Voisin Plan" by Le Corbusier (Charles-Edouard Jeanneret) (1887–1965) graced his memorable Pavillon de l'Esprit Nouveau at the Arts Décoratifs Exhibition in Paris (1925). On 20 May 1927 he gave a slide presentation of his plans for the renewal of Paris for the rank-and-file fascists of George Valois's *Le Faisceau* attending the inauguration of their new headquarters. An illustration from, and article on, the "Voisin Plan" had been published on the title page of Valois's *Nouveau siècle* (1 May 1927) and during the following months Valois published a series of essays in which he aligned his conception of the fascist "New Order" with Le Corbusier's "New City." Le Corbusier would develop his ideas on architectural renewal in *LE-sprit nouveau* and *Plans* (1931–32). During his eighteen months at Vichy (1941–42) he was enthusiastic about the Pétain regime's Order of Architects, comparing them to the master builders of medieval Europe and envisaging them carrying out a massive reconstruction program under the direction of an official to be called *l'ordonnateur* (presumably himself).



**Le Corbusier, three years after completing the pilgrimage church at Ronchamps with the Dominican Father Couturier, constructing the monastery of La Tourette, at l'Abresle, near Lyon.**



This main church of La Tourette is considered, with Ronchamps, to be one of the most important churches, architecturally, of the twentieth century.



This aerial view of La Tourette shows the church on the left. The small pyramid within the cloister is the roof of the oratory for private prayer.



Alexandre Marc and the author at the Institut Universitaire Européen, the European community's graduate school for advanced study, housed in a former Franciscan monastery at San Domenico di Fiesole (Florence), 14 December 1992. This was the sixth annual meeting of the Réseau d'historiens et de chercheurs sur le personnalisme et le fédéralisme founded by Marc.

---

*The Communitarian Third Way*

*This page intentionally left blank*

---

# Introduction

## The Non-Conformist Third Way

During the 1930s and World War II, the French invented a new “non-conformist” politics: so cleverly packaged, it has seldom been seen for what it really was. Claiming to be non-conformists, a group of young journalists, students, and professors invented an anti-democratic and anti-liberal “personalist” approach to life which, although militantly anti-communist, would claim to be “neither of the Right nor of the Left”; it spawned French and Belgian variants of that German “conservative revolution” which helped carry the national socialists to power. Originally intended to help engender a “New Middle Ages” in which the French and other Europeans could husband aspects of their spiritual heritage in a German-dominated New Order, personalist communitarianism had important, enduring, influence.

The New Middle Ages’ authoritarian, elitist educational system was to repudiate the Enlightenment and the French Revolution, and Marxism, and be shaped by natural aristocrats – old-stock Frenchmen, sensitive to those invisible realities of their French Catholic heritage neglected by “secular” Jews, Masons, Marxists, non-Europeans, and Americans. The personalist communitarian movement would be against the dictatorship of the proletariat but for the new “national” socialism which favoured a people’s heritage and the native born. Expectations of an eventual national socialist victory would generate clandestine networking and planning among the initiated,<sup>1</sup> who – when faced with the mortal danger of Stalinist insurgents subverting

weak republican institutions – would favour a nationalist socialist or fascist Europe as the lesser of two evils.

The new personalist discourse would encourage the young to dismiss communism, the free market economy, and liberal and republican values as out of date ... even after the Germans were defeated. Some pre-war non-conformists, such as the political leaders François Mitterrand and Charles de Gaulle, or intellectuals Jacques Maritain and Emmanuel Mounier, would become respectable and well known in France. Other non-conformists, who would be less known after the war, included the interesting and illustrative figure Alexandre Marc.

Anti-Bolshevik Russian exile, Germanophile Jewish convert to Catholicism, Marc would come to embarrass his old comrades by steadfastly maintaining that the non-conformism which he would be instrumental in creating had ... German origins. This Nietzschean anti-Hitler nationalist would claim that Europe owed far more to the conservative revolution than had been admitted. Evoking “pure,” “original,” national socialism – a generational experience for a “magnificent youth” in Germany, and a fortunate few in France, tragically betrayed by Hitler – Marc would stick out for revealing a family secret well-known to the initiated: the new, fresh, constructive national-socialism had deeply and permanently influenced a European elite.

The anti-individualist, spiritualist, or personalist attack on liberal democracy, which Marc discovered among young Action Française Christian philosophers in the late 1920s, would be melded by him with German ideas to create the discourse for a spiritualized, communitarian, French national socialism. When Marc’s defining experience, which he would treasure to his dying day, became politically incorrect, many of his old comrades, and their friends or sympathizers in the French historical establishment, would try to marginalize, if not forget, what he kept saying and what he represented.

Marc’s Nietzschean anti-Judaism, conversion to Catholicism and German philosophy, and bonding with tightly knit bands of fervent young men in a conservative insurrection against modern materialism would prove less unique than his stubborn, unshakeable fidelity to the value of his experiences. As it becomes more acceptable to respect the goals of original national socialism, an exposition of Marc’s fraternal elitism, embrace of the European heritage, committed anti-communism, and passion for charismatic leaders reveals the stark realities behind his abstract, often murky or enigmatic, rhetoric.

For Marc, the challenge would be to create a hierarchical, anti-individualistic, ethnically based, communitarian, heritage-sensitive

socialism, a spiritualistic “New Order” which husbanded the values of both medieval Europe and the anti-Marxist German conservative revolution. What Marc and his *compagnons* said would contrast with what they did – when their noble rhetoric justified the violence and exclusion employed to create their New Order.

A small elite of highly cerebral anti-intellectuals, whose intense lucubrations have been largely forgotten, Marc and his friends nevertheless would represent a France that might have been, a seductive experience and ideal. Marc came to dream of a federated “Europe of a hundred flags” (in Alain de Benoist’s phrase) in which eroding ethnic, regional, and religious values and heritage would be reinvigorated by new economic and political structures of a new peoples-based European socialism, planned and run by a network of enlightened elites.

Interviews, diaries, pocket agenda, and unpublished correspondence would reveal not only what the non-conformists proposed but also how they acted.<sup>2</sup> Public quarrels among the initiated would allow non-conformists to camouflage strategic positioning for an anticipated European civil war: blazoned criticism of Hitler and Mussolini, of French fascists or Nazis, would permit the New Right non-conformists to work with the Old Right Action Française nationalists, to quietly infiltrate veterans’ organizations, think tanks of architects and engineers, Franco-German contacts, various publications, the executive of the vital French national railways system, and the French Socialist and Communist parties. When the final struggle against the communists came, networks of trusted and trustworthy allies with a shared agenda in publishing, religious institutions, youth movements and education, and the officer corps of the army would hold pivotal positions.

Defeated post-republican France in summer 1940 saw public quarrels set aside in the effort to confront the real, the Stalinist, threat. The Nazis might be brutes but one could work with them toward the common goal of a sanitized France in a new sort of Europe. Non-conformists provided sophisticated critical analyses of the Nazis or the fascists for important Catholic publications and organizations, large veterans’ associations like the Croix de Feu and the Parti social français (PSF), the quasi-Nazi Parti populaire français (PPF) of Doriot, and the clandestine Cagoule organizations, all the while focusing on the *real* enemy: communism. These middle or upper-class Nietzscheans, White Russian exiles, royalists, religious converts, or corporatists, understandably considered the communists their mortal enemies. So the enemies of their enemies became their friends.<sup>3</sup>

When non-conformists and personalists earnestly explained themselves, their critics accused them of “muddying their waters in order to

make them seem deep.” After philosopher Jacques Maritain’s conversion, a matter of great public interest and emulation,<sup>4</sup> Alexandre Marc would describe his own evolution (from Russian literature via Kant and Berdyaev, toward phenomenology) as if he had spent his youth in a great library reading room, instead of in propagandist journalism, travel, conspiratorial meetings, networking, and plotting. While Marc would have a conversion experience in which he was, like Maritain, “turned inside out, like a glove,” it would come less from discovering St Augustine’s *Confessions* in the Bibliothèque Nationale than from dramatic encounters with the charismatic leaders of the new German youth movements. These would precipitate his interest in Nietzsche and the new German existentialist philosophy, his conversion to communitarian Catholicism, his fraternizing with new style revolutionaries, and his passion to transmit the spirit of those princely “new men,” the German youth elite, to others. Soon Alexandre Marc would be taken, as an aspiring leader of European Youth, to visit the “Brown Hall” Nazi headquarters in Munich by flamboyant young Harro Schulze-Boysen, candidate for leadership of the Hitler Youth. From what he would observe there, Marc imagined new men being catapulted to leadership positions in France through a national program of “affirmative action.” This top-down corporatist program would allow a fresh meritocracy of old-stock Frenchmen distinguished for their leadership qualities to liquidate the old liberal-democratic and capitalist society’s materialism and pseudo-democracy, creating a New Order that was truly French.

The attacks on liberal democracy by Marc and his friends had elaborate philosophical baggage. But the real reason why Marc and company disliked liberal democracy was the way its political and economic system over-represented “others,” while under-representing the best and the brightest native Europeans. Thus Marc, Jewish immigrant convert, became more French than the French, more Catholic than the Catholics, in contesting the right of “others” to hold power in France as they did in his native Russia, by forming the cream of young “true Europeans” to lead the counter-attack against the rootless subversives ruining the old continent and to fight to establish a healthy, heritage-based European order.

Given the growing resentment against the “others” living and working among Europe’s “ancient peoples,” Marc’s unique populist, regionalistic, federalist communitarianism was – and is – of special interest to those seeking a Third Way for Europe. He would encourage the frank and forthright abandonment of liberal and democratic values in order to construct revitalized ethnic communities which would be appreciative of their traditions, their historical particularities

and roots. Not surprisingly, many of Marc's non-conformist friends were to come from privileged Catholic and/or royalist backgrounds – proudly French and Catholic but too highly educated and civilized to indulge in vulgar racism. The *Ordre Nouveau* (ON) movement which Marc founded included Jews, Protestants, and agnostics, and Marc was to serve as an important link between the European ON movement and potential allies.

When harsh Nazi and fascist realities shocked Marc and his comrades, they would carefully contextualize their vivid memories of the glorious virility and dynamism, the seductiveness, of the early Nazi leadership and of the European New Order. After World War II, the non-conformists would even be happy to be remembered as a marginal, relatively inconsequential segment of that “rebellion of minorities” which furnished some leaders for both the Vichy regime and the Resistance. But non-conformists should also be remembered as the architects of a clandestine, serious, Third Way political and cultural option – a French national socialism with a sophisticated agenda for the economy, international relations, the arts, education, and popular and high culture. All of this might have shaped Europe for generations if Germany had won World War II. In any case elements of the non-conformist Third Way did endure after the war in the European movement, the legacy of Charles de Gaulle and François Mitterrand, and French Catholic religiousness, as well as in the thinking of the contemporary European New Right.

Hitler's failed invasion of the Soviet Union would scuttle dreams of a national socialist France in a European New Order of self-affirming peoples. Instead there was to be the increasingly brutal exploitation of France by a desperate German war machine. The creative and imaginative intellectual architects of the Vichy regime would give way to servile collaborationists willing to compromise French interests for the Wehrmacht's agenda. Non-conformists working for the Pétain regime came to aid friendly elements of the Resistance against the Germans, emerging at the liberation with the Resistance credentials required for distinguished post-war careers.

The personalist communitarian French New Order model – whether “pure” national socialist, or “white” fascist – would afford a conversion experience projecting a young French elite simultaneously into a warm past and a bright future. This anti-modern modernism, an honourable, defining, unforgettable bonding experience, came to engender a discreetly cherished memory.<sup>5</sup> Wartime mystical communitarianism would draw people into the Scouts or young Christian workers, the Pétainist youth movements *Chantiers de la jeunesse* and *Compagnons de France*, and the fanatically anti-communist