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**Elizabeth Campbell Karlsgodt. *Defending National Treasures: French Art and Heritage Under Vichy*.** Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2011. xv + 382pp. Maps, illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. \$60.00 (cloth). ISBN 978-0-8047-7018-7.

**Nimrod Amzalak. *Fascists and Honourable men: Contingency and Choice in French Politics, 1918-45*.** New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011. ix + 217pp. Appendices, notes, bibliography, index. \$90.00 (cloth). ISBN 978-0-230-29777-7.

**Antonin Cohen. *De Vichy à la Communauté Européenne*.** Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 2012. 447pp. Illustrations, notes, index. €25 (paper). ISBN 978-2-13-059472-7.

URL: <http://www.h-net.org/~diplo/essays/PDF/Sweets-France.pdf>

Reviewed for H-Diplo by **John F. Sweets**, University of Kansas

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The three books selected for this review essay have in common a theme emphasized long ago by Robert Paxton in his classic study, *Vichy France: Old Guard and New Order, 1940-1944*;<sup>1</sup> the reality of several threads of continuity linking the interwar years of the 1920s and 1930s through the Vichy Years and into the postwar era. As each of these authors note, despite the singularity of the Vichy period in some regards, notably the presence of the German Occupation, the destruction of the democratic republic, and its replacement by an authoritarian government; in terms of its historical significance the Vichy Regime did not represent simply “Four Years to Erase from our History,”<sup>2</sup> as suggested by the Prosecutor at Marshal Philippe Pétain’s postwar trial, but should be considered as an integral part of the nation’s history, not as some bizarre aberration. Although the books by Nimrod Amzalak and Antonin Cohen share a similar interest in the ‘non-conformists,’ engineers, cadres, and technocrats of the interwar period and the Vichy years, I will consider each of the three books in turn.

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<sup>1</sup> Robert O. Paxton, *Vichy France: Old Guard and New Order, 1940-1944*, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1972).

<sup>2</sup> André Mornet, *Quatre ans à rayer de notre histoire*, (Paris: S.E.L.F., 1949).

Elizabeth Campbell Karlsgodt's well researched and attractively illustrated assessment of attempts by French art officials to protect the country's cultural patrimony during the German Occupation makes a very strong case for the persistence of personnel from the interwar years, through the Vichy period and beyond. Only a very small number of individuals who were outspoken champions of Vichy's National Revolution and collaboration with the Germans were sanctioned in the postwar administrative purge. In fact, overall the curators of French art museums, archeological sites, and historic monuments were perceived by the French public, at the time and still today, as being part of the Resistance against the Germans, and were consequently praised and rewarded with postwar advancement for having protected the cultural patrimony from destruction and theft by the German conquerors. The author acknowledges that this was not a totally unwarranted perception, although she raises serious questions about the intentions of some of the curators, whose actions, particularly with regard to the sequestration of important Jewish art collections, she regards as an opportunistic collection for French museums rather than an intentional protection of the owners' property, an activity that she calls "patrimania" (4). This argument is, broadly speaking, a convincing one, and when the author examines specific examples of this practice in the chapter on Jewish Art Collections, focusing particularly on the Schloss family collection that included exceptionally valuable paintings by Dutch and Flemish Old Masters that were coveted by the Germans, she provides strong archival evidence to buttress her case. On the other hand, in what is generally a well-written text, Campbell Karlsgodt repeats the point that the curators were only interested in acquiring the Schloss paintings for the Louvre's collections so many times that the repetition becomes redundant and preachy, almost obscuring the fact, acknowledged by the author, that all of the paintings were eventually returned to the Schloss family by the Louvre. Similarly, she is critical of what she views as the inadequacies of the Mattéoli Commission report, produced by a special, independent task force created in 1997 by French Premier Alain Juppé to study assets seized from Jews in wartime France, writing that it "...missed an important opportunity to provide a critical analysis of the administration's actions during and after the war" (290). Most other historians' assessments of which I am aware credit the Mattéoli Commission, and its 120 researchers, who (in 3,000 pages) collectively produced twelve different reports on the Jewish experience during Vichy in an honest attempt to describe the assets seized from Jews in wartime France. The report clearly stated that the Vichy Government, as well as the Germans, was responsible for the seizure of assets that affected almost every Jew in France, from rich to poor. The report also noted, as does Campbell Karlsgodt, that the postwar French government had failed to pursue the search for owners of the artworks in its possession. When the author tars civil servants like René Huyghe and Jacques Jaujard with the same brush as Marshal Pétain and Xavier Vallat, as though they were equivalent villains in "the Vichy State" (292), in my opinion the book's tone becomes overly judgmental, and out of character with the more reasoned and detached perspective found elsewhere in this account. Overall, Campbell Karlsgodt's treatment of art and other property stolen from the Jews by Vichy and the Germans is quite good, although she seems not to have consulted a recent work by Jean-Marc Dreyfus and Sarah Gensburger, which describes in detail the role of French moving and storage companies and Jewish internees in packing the stolen goods for shipment to Germany, and makes a very direct

connection between “Operation Furniture” and the deportation from Drancy of special categories of Jews in the last two years of the Occupation.<sup>3</sup>

*Defending National Treasures* explores several aspects of French arts administration under the Vichy Regime, noting, as do the other two books under review, that the existence of an authoritarian dictatorship under Pétain, paved the way for quick action through decree laws even when the content of this legislation had originated under the Third Republic. As Campbell Karlsgodt writes of archeological laws promoted by Jérôme Carcopino, Minister of Education under Vichy, and Louis Hautecoeur, head of the fine arts administration under Vichy: “The archeological reform laws of 1941 and 1942 reflect a common trend during the Occupation, in which a continuity of ideas from the Third Republic underlay the Vichy regime’s new policies” (139). Thus, laws to reorganize and centralize the arts administration and to modernize and professionalize its services were quickly implemented without the parliamentary opposition that had blocked them earlier, even if the relatively low budgetary priority for the arts and, more so, the reality of German Occupation costs, meant that many of these laws had limited impact during the Vichy period. The commitment to the restoration of historic buildings and sites damaged by the war, increasing access to the country’s prestigious art collections through traveling exhibitions, and a law governing archeological excavations in France, were among the administrative reforms in the cultural realm that the author sees as carrying over to the postwar years. Campbell Karlsgodt discusses some characters who are fairly well known, such as Rose Valland, the French art historian and member of the Resistance whose careful notations of the looted art works stored at the Jeu de Paume gallery, where Hermann Goring and other Nazi dignitaries came frequently to take their pick of these treasures, were crucial to the recovery of these objects after the war. Valland’s effort to prevent a final trainload of art treasures from being shipped to Germany was dramatized in John Frankenheimer’s 1964 film, *The Train*. But in addition to Marshal Pétain and Pierre Laval at the head of the Vichy regime, the author also introduces her readers to lesser known figures such as Jacques Jaujard, Louis Hautecoeur, René Huyghe, Jérôme Carcopino, and Abel Bonnard, who represent the full spectrum of political perspectives from resistance to collaboration, and who were among those who played important parts in Vichy cultural policy, and in some cases into the postwar era. She also describes the highly successful evacuation (begun under the Third Republic) of public museum collections and their protection from air raids, war damage, and Nazi looting, arguing that “no other country in Europe protected its museum collections so effectively” (38). Most of the museum collections were stored in various chateaux in the Loire valley.

Recognizing the economic importance of tourism and acknowledging the attraction to foreigners of the French artistic heritage, one area in which defeated France could still see itself as a European leader, the Vichy Regime built upon earlier French efforts in that direction to create a centralized patrimonial policy of protection of historical landmarks and natural sites. Of course, for obvious reasons, France under the German Occupation was not particularly attractive to tourists, and as the author states: “the actual impact of these laws

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<sup>3</sup> Jean-Marc Dreyfus and Sarah Gensburger, *Nazi Labour Camps in Paris* (New York, Berghahn Books, 2011). French-language edition, *Des camps dans Paris* (Paris, Librairie Arthème Fayard, 2003).

during the war was negligible” (117). The general thrust of museum and archeological policy under Vichy had the effect of raising the academic or professional qualifications for employment in these fields, centralizing control at the national level, and favoring the acquisition of traditional classical art works, while discouraging non-professional and perhaps locally significant, if idiosyncratic, art collections and independent local excavations. These changes were ironic in view of the National Revolution’s emphasis on heightened artisanal creation and its encouragement of regionalism. One curious omission from the book is the discovery near Montignac in the Périgord in September 1940 by four teenaged boys and their dog “Robot” of the Lascaux Cave, which is perhaps France’s most famous archeological site.

The author provides two interesting and informative chapters about the removal and destruction of bronze statues. She begins with the very interesting point that statues, instead of church bells, were destroyed in France. Following German practice for most of Nazi-occupied Europe, Goring had originally wished to destroy the bells. But, unlike the Belgians, the Dutch, the Poles, and others, the French held on to their church bells throughout the war. Campbell Karlsgodt, not entirely convincingly, argues that French popular memory of this campaign misleadingly maintains that the statues were destroyed by the Germans and that the destruction targeted primarily leftist political figures. It is certainly true, as she demonstrates, that the Vichy Regime was responsible for issuing the decrees that governed how the statues were to be removed and melted down, with the Ministry of Industrial Production being responsible for the physical destruction of the statues after the Arts Ministry had selected which statues were appropriate for removal. And, with the exception of a few statues destroyed directly by the German troops at the beginning of the Occupation, all of the statues in question were dismantled by French workers from private French companies and taken to French facilities for melting down. However, as had already been indicated by the failure of the French population to respond positively to an earlier voluntary campaign to collect nonferrous materials for French industry (because they suspected, correctly as it turned out, that these materials would be given to the Germans), the melted statues were destined overwhelmingly for transport to Germany. Since the author indicates (159) that approximately 1,600 statues yielded 100 tons of metal that were shipped to Germany in 1942 in the first phase of the campaign alone, and she indicates that the Germans exerted more pressure in the recycling of the statues after the return of Laval as head of the Vichy government in April 1942, it seems a semantic quibble to insist that the statues were not destroyed by the Germans. One can certainly understand why the French, in remembering the Occupation years, might remember this destruction as, in effect, being the work of the Germans.

In her analysis of the destroyed statues the author writes that approximately 1,700 statues and busts were dismantled and destroyed along with several dozen commemorative plaques, medallions and bas-reliefs. Citing evidence that only six percent of removed works were republican allegories such as Marianne, Liberty, and the Republic, she stresses that a substantial number were destroyed simply because they were considered ugly or bad art by the art administration, and that only about seventeen percent of the commemorative statues could be classified as depicting widely-known leftist or republican symbols. Campbell Karlsgodt therefore concludes that popular memory mistakenly saw Vichy’s desire to discredit leftist politicians as the primary motive for the destruction. Nonetheless, she

acknowledges that political symbolism meant a great deal to local officials and to the general public. The author offers three case studies of bronze statue destruction in Paris, Chambéry and Nantes. She finds that in Paris the committee that made decisions about removal of statues was comprised mostly of civil servants, art curators, and museum curators who had built their careers in the Third Republic and who tried to make the selections with the quality of art serving as the foremost consideration rather than partisan political considerations, leaving controversial cases to the Vichy government. Statues of leftist figures made up less than a third of dismantled commemorative monuments in Paris, and only sixteen percent outside of the capital. In Chambéry, the capital of the Savoie in the French Alps, political interests on both left and right played an active part in the debate over which of five statues, including those that celebrated the French Revolution (*La Savoyarde* or “*La Sasson*” and Jean Jacques Rousseau) and others that celebrated the counter-revolutionary philosopher, Joseph de Maistre and his brother Xavier, should be removed. In view of local disagreement about what to do with the statues, the issue was referred to Paris for adjudication; but local officials conspired to block the order to destroy all of the statues.

Finally, the case of Nantes, capital of the Loire-Inférieure department, is one of the most curious because in that city a German officer, convinced of the propaganda value of one statue, actually intervened to insist on its preservation after the local French committee had marked it for destruction. The statue was dedicated to Colonel Villebois-Mareuil, a known admirer of Charles Maurras who had died while fighting the British alongside the Boers in 1900. Although the author does not offer an explanation of why she selected these three particular case studies, and does not claim that they are ‘typical’ examples, it is interesting that all three reflect a significant political content in the decisions to remove only certain statues. Is it possible that French people thought of the destruction of the statues as being primarily attacks on leftists and republicans because those destructions were the ones that most caught their attention (as was the case for *La Savoyarde* at Chambéry)? If I am reading the author’s evidence correctly (163-164), 27% of the total of the destroyed commemorative statues portrayed politicians, the largest single category by profession. But approximately 62% of this group (i.e., seventeen percent of the total percentage of commemorative statues destroyed) were leftist or republican politicians. When I think back on my research on the Auvergne during the Vichy years, and place the issue of the statues in a broader context, I recall the very specific targeting of Socialists and left-republicans when street names were changed, and that books were removed from libraries and book stores because of their leftist symbolism.<sup>4</sup> I can therefore believe that when the Resistance in the Haute Loire took down the statue of Lafayette at Le Puy and hid it for safekeeping they feared it had been targeted by Vichy authorities for destruction because of its revolutionary symbolism.

In her conclusion the author attempts to place the Vichy experience in a broader, long-term, cultural context related to World Heritage and museum collection issues. In final summary she writes that “there appears to be widening acceptance of a self-evident truth that governments, museums, and other institutions have a solemn duty of just restitution in response to just claims. This may be the most valuable lesson to be learned from the legacy of Vichy

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<sup>4</sup> John F. Sweets, *Choices in Vichy France* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986).

patrimonial policy” (302). Although I found myself agreeing with most of what Campbell Karlsgodt writes about the International Council of Museums and UNESCO’s efforts to secure international agreement on ethical guidelines for museum acquisition and her outrage at the damage inflicted on Iraqi art and heritage following the U.S. military’s invasion of that country in 2003, more pertinent to this book, in my opinion, is her earlier statement: “It would be a mistake, however, to exaggerate the coherence of these wartime measures and the extent to which they were implemented during the Occupation. Most were piecemeal measures....They did not constitute a planned, more coherent patrimonial policy, the sort that only developed in the 1960s and 1970s” (296-297). It is noteworthy for purposes of this review essay that Campbell Karlsgodt, in contrast to our other two authors, points out explicitly that despite the opportunity its authoritarian structure opened to certain groups, the Vichy Regime was largely a dismal failure in its attempts to fundamentally change French society.

The second book under review is Nimrod Amzalak’s *Fascists and Honourable Men*. This book is at once the shortest, the least impressively documented, and least convincingly argued of those under consideration in this review essay. In part this relatively negative impression results from a comparison to Antonin Cohen’s book, the final work under consideration here, which shares an interest in the so-called ‘nonconformists’ of the interwar period and their activities under the Vichy Regime, although the two authors focus on different major themes. In his introductory chapter Amzalak provides a brief and rather selective historiographical essay about French fascism, featuring the writings of the historians René Rémond and Zeev Sternhell. He offers several astute observations, as when he critiques theories of fascism that “pretend to offer definitions that supposedly transcend all contexts. By doing so they get away from concrete historical circumstances and therefore also from social, economic, political, cultural and other coordinates which could have ‘pegged-down’ their theories on the hard rock of historical reality” (9). He also provides a convincing dismissal of “essentialist” approaches with which I believe most historians would agree (8). On the other hand he seems to be unaware of the works of Robert Paxton, *The Anatomy of Fascism* and *French Peasant Fascism*,<sup>5</sup> neither of which appears in his text or bibliography. I mention this omission because both of Paxton’s books are good examples of works that address concrete historical circumstances and are based on the hard rock of historical reality. More specifically, *The Anatomy of Fascism* includes a discussion of French fascism that notes: “Most French and some foreign scholars thought that Sternhell’s ‘fascist’ category was far too loose and his conclusions excessive.”<sup>6</sup> Paxton also observes that “Any assessment of fascism in France turns on La Rocque. If his movement were fascist, fascism was powerful in 1930s France; if they were not, fascism was limited to the margins.”<sup>7</sup> Paxton is alluding to Colonel François de la Rocque, the interwar leader of the *Croix de Feu*, a far-right league, and later of the Parti Social

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<sup>5</sup> Robert O. Paxton, *The Anatomy of Fascism* (New York: Vintage Books, 2005) and *French Peasant Fascism: Henry Dorgères’ Greenshirts and the Crises of French Agriculture, 1929-1939* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997).

<sup>6</sup> Paxton, *Anatomy*, p.69.

<sup>7</sup> Paxton, *Anatomy*, p. 69-70.

Français (PSF). Although Amzalak refers to one historian, the Canadian William Irvine, who is convinced that the Croix de Feu was fascist, he mentions Colonel de la Rocque only three times with no serious consideration of his importance in the debate about French fascism. Along the same lines, Jacques Doriot's Parti Populaire Français (PPF), one of the few organizations that is universally recognized by historians as an expression of an authentic French fascism, is not seriously discussed in *Fascists and Honourable Men*, despite several references to individuals who were PPF members. Also missing from Amzalak's bibliography is Paul Jankowski's excellent work, *Communism and Collaboration: Simon Sabiani and Politics in Marseille, 1919-1944*,<sup>8</sup> which makes a convincing argument that fascism in Marseille (in the guise of the PPF), which originated with a formerly Communist political leader, represented a system of clientelism more than an ideologically-driven movement. Kevin Passmore's *From Liberalism to Fascism: The Right in a French Province, 1928-1939*,<sup>9</sup> is yet another fine study that treats fascism in a specific historical context, in this case the Rhone region, that takes the study of fascism out of the realm of theory and into a consideration of interwar political realities. I mention these historians and their works to suggest that a brief discussion of the now rather dated Rémond – Sternhell debate of the 1980s, with an emphasis on “discursive tropes” (18) and “language games” (25) may not be the best reflection of the current status of studies on French fascism.

Arguing that the nature of the impact of the ‘nonconformists’ on French society is at the core of the controversy over French fascism, Amzalak proposes the use of a “control group” (27) to test the level of impregnation of interwar and Vichy society by fascism. He writes: “I have chosen to examine their intellectual and political relations with a particular group of the mainstream of that society – that of ‘professional experts’, mostly engineers and economists involved in and affected by the rationalisation of French industry during the interwar period through a process of technocratisation” (27). This group, he contends, “was finally successful when in the twilight of the Third Republic and during the Vichy period they practically took over the governmental apparatus” (28). The author then qualifies his proposition by noting that not all professional experts were ‘nonconformists,’ nor did all ‘nonconformists see the professionals as the embodiment of their ideas; but he claims that their interactions were beneficial to both. He characterizes their relationship philosophically, following Max Weber, as one of “elective affinities” (29). Amzalak describes the emergence of his control group of engineers from their promotion at the time of the French Revolution through elite educational institutions such as the Ecole Polytechnique and (from 1829) the Ecole Centrale des Arts et Manufactures which over the course of the nineteenth century and later in the twentieth century produced an important group in the social elite, drawn largely from the sons of the upper bourgeoisie. This new elite of experts or technicians, who had proved their competence in industrial settings, would be touted, in contrast to an allegedly incompetent political leadership, as the answer to perceived weakness in France's political system. Among their reputed qualities were efficiency and professionalism, untainted by politics. Sharing the

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<sup>8</sup> Paul Jankowski, *Communism and Collaboration: Simon Sabiani and Politics in Marseille, 1919-1944* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989).

<sup>9</sup> Kevin Passmore, *From Liberalism to Fascism: The Right in a French Province, 1928-1939* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

biases of their class origins, the engineers looked upon the working class as infantile and dangerously subject to subversion by romantic socialist doctrines that threatened to turn them into a barbaric mob at any time. Nonetheless they were also seen as ideal intermediaries between the working masses and the bosses or owners of factories, because as engineers who held sway over the workers, they were also paid a salary by the owners and could understand the concerns of wage-earning workers, whose contributions to production were valuable. As the author writes: “The engineers were considered to be those who could lead the way out of the class struggle and into a kind of cosy class collaboration through their supposed indifference to the various political agendas that surrounded them. They were the peacemakers; the voices of reason” (50).

According to Amzalak, ‘non-conformists’ were an “increasingly coherent group in French politics of the interwar period” and “‘Nonconformists’ and engineers shared many platforms throughout the 1920s” (94). He points to common beliefs that the French political system was bankrupt and would be improved by the replacement of traditional professional politicians by technical experts, the strengthening of the executive, fostering of inter-class cooperation, economic rationalization, and a marked anti-communist emphasis. The author provides a brief look at selected representatives of the ‘non-conformists’ of the 1920s and 1930s, of the variety of political movements and parties, as well as think-tanks, intellectual circles, and social organizations in which they participated; arguing that by the end of the 1930s and with the beginning of the Vichy Regime, they had begun to exert a substantial influence in French politics and society. He argues that by the time Pétain signed the armistice in June 1940, the French government was “highly saturated with the people whom the ‘nonconformists’ had repeatedly urged to take the reins of power” (129). Ultimately, the author argues for “the conquest of government” (148) by the technocrats of Vichy, citing several examples, including Bertrand de Jouvenel, author who praised fascism in the 1930s and Nazi Germany early in the Occupation, Emmanuel Mounier, leading philosopher of the personalist movement, Marcel Déat, prominent Parisian collaborationist and founder of the Rassemblement National Populaire (RNP), François Lehideux, high official in Ministry of Industrial Production under Vichy, Pierre Pucheu, Minister of the Interior at Vichy under Darlin, Jean Luchaire, collaborationist journalist, Georges Mauco, a scientist who advocated limits on Jewish immigration to France, Georges Montandon, anti-Semitic ethonologist, Alexis Carrel, champion of eugenics and head of Vichy’s *Fondation Française pour l’Etude des Problèmes Humains* (FFEPH) and others, whom he acknowledges cannot be tied together all that easily. Nonetheless, he claims that they shared enough beliefs to produce the illusion of a unified voice that was politically significant because of the agency provided to them by the cadres or technicians who served the Vichy government. Curiously, although he provides no real evidence for this assertion except for the claims of their champions, Amzalak insists that these cadres were not driven by “an ideological commitment...nor a hope for personal gain” (174) in serving Vichy.

When he turns to the technocrats’ experience at Vichy, Amzalak refers to the *Charte du Travail* of 4 October 1941 as “Vichy’s most important piece of economic legislation” adding that its *comités sociaux* in each profession “gave equal representation to employers, cadres and workers” (139). The author neglects to point out what a flop the *Charte du Travail* was and that the *comités sociaux* were in fact totally dominated by the employers, essentially giving the

owners of big business more power than they had ever had, with no need to fear either striking workers or their unions, which were banned by the Vichy Regime. In other words in Vichy's new "corporate" order, the purported intermediary role of the engineers between owners and workers is nowhere to be found. Elsewhere Amzalak claims that "Scientific determinism, rationalist categorization and professional impersonalism were the ultimate mottos of the social reformers of the National Revolution, just as liberty, equality and fraternity had been for those of the French Revolution" (177). As the author knows, "Famille, Travail, Patrie" (Family, Work, and Country) was the well-known triptych of Vichy's National Revolution, reflecting the values of the conservatives in Marshal Pétain's entourage, who, along with the Catholic clergy and traditional local notables in each region of the country, continued to have a significant influence at Vichy.

Too often, in focusing on his "control group," Amzalak appears to miss the larger context of the nature and evolution of the Vichy Regime, in which many different factions and personalities interacted in a complex manner. In reading *Fascists and Honourable Men*, a reader might have the impression that the author's cadres or technocrats effectively ran the show and controlled the major reins of power. As he states in his conclusion, the technocrats "soon took over the entire governmental apparatus" (180). By comparison, Marshal Pétain, the one figure who was there from beginning to end as an authoritarian dictator with full powers enhanced by new police forces, and regional prefects appointed by him, a massive propaganda service at his command, and so on, is virtually absent from this book. Despite a widespread disgust with the former Third Republic and its politicians that was evident after the military defeat, the politicians did not simply disappear from the Vichy government as one might assume from the author's account. Most obviously, despite his temporary dismissal in December 1940, Pierre Laval, the classic example of a traditional French politician, had very real power as the head of the government for much of Vichy's history. Pétain, Admiral Darlan, and Laval were the ones who appointed the cadres, not the other way around. Their authoritarian powers were the original feature of this new French experiment in government, not the professionalized bureaucracies that served them (which, as the author demonstrates, were there before 1940, and remained after the war into the Fourth Republic). Moreover, in spite of the increase in the number of the "technocrats" (149) at Vichy, and the apolitical rhetoric of the regime, the cadres' power and influence was always balanced by the permanence of many of those politicians at the regional and local levels, where in addition to the corps of regional and departmental prefects appointed by the executive power, appointed local mayors and departmental commissions often were staffed mainly by the politicians of old, who were especially numerous from the ranks of the Radical Party. Where the technocrats were most evident at Vichy, as in the ministries related to the economy, labor, and industrial production, under Yves Bouthillier, François Lehideux, and René Belin, the push toward rationalization and state control of the economy was undeniable, and to a degree successful. However, when we ask what they actually achieved, the impact of their policies was most apparent in two ways: 1) to the dismay of medium and small-scale industry, through its creation of *Comités d'Organisation* (Organizing Committees) for each profession, the Vichy state shifted most resources to and gave effective control over economic production to big capitalist firms, and 2) ultimately, because of the huge burden of Occupation costs and Armistice obligations, they simply put France more effectively to work for the German war machine. As early as October 3, 1941, Bouthillier acknowledged that "Without seeking to base

our economic policy on doctrinal considerations we recognize simply that it was born of unfortunate circumstances.”<sup>10</sup>

After having noticed that the word “fascism” virtually disappeared from the book after the first chapter, I was somewhat surprised that it reappeared as the key issue in the book’s conclusion, where the author poses this question: “But should we call this affinity between technocrats and ‘nonconformists’ fascism” (181)? The answer is a rather confusing one that starts by saying that it “depends on what one is trying to achieve by using this term” (181), and moves to the idea that it (i.e., fascism) remains a “slippery category” and “has become a mythical entity, a bogeyman” (182). Yet, the author does not wish to say that “fascism is any less real for that” (182), nor to “deny that it has a specific historical and geographical fixation” (183). When he turns back to the French case, he suggests, problematically, that as used by scholars the term fascism “has obscured more than it revealed” (183). Finally, after exhorting the historian wishing to study fascism “to start by questioning his own motivation for conducting the study” (187), he seems to conclude that the question of whether this was ‘really’ fascism is “quite redundant” (188). Having reached this point, I found myself baffled by the author’s choice of titles, *Fascists and Honourable Men: Contingency and Choice in French Politics, 1918-45*. It seems to me that most historians would agree that in France of the interwar years and of the Vichy period there were men who could be reasonably described as fascists and many others who could be described as honorable men. In the context of those times, and especially of the Vichy years, how difficult would it have been to point out to the readers who, among the author’s test case, fit or did not into each of these categories? And if that is impossible, why use the term “Fascists” in the book’s title?

The final book under review is Antonin Cohen’s *De Vichy à la Communauté Européenne*. As mentioned above, Cohen is interested in some of the same non-conformists as was Amzalak, and particularly in their championing of a “troisième voie” (third way)(64) between capitalism and communism, but in his case the focus is on how this group contributed to the origins of the European Community. His study is based on rich documentary evidence and provides a sophisticated and well-argued case that, at least in part because of their earlier association with the Vichy Regime, a certain group from the French business and intellectual elite has not received the credit they might deserve for their roles in the foundation of the European Community. His account begins with a discussion of the way in which, since the 1980s, the European Union remembers its origins with a yearly “Day of Europe” on May 9<sup>th</sup> that commemorates a document that was created in the spring of 1950 by Jean Monnet and a small circle of close associates in the French *Commissariat du Plan* (Planning Commission) and presented to the world in a speech by Robert Schuman on 9 May 1950. The project, subsequently known as the Schuman Plan, is feted as the starting point of negotiations that created the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) in 1952 which led in 1958 to the European Economic Community (ECC), the foundation for today’s European Union.

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<sup>10</sup> Yves Durand, *Vichy 1940-1944* (Paris: Bordas, 1972), p. 71. My translation of the quotation: “*Sans chercher à fonder notre politique économique sur des considérations doctrinales nous reconnaissons simplement qu’elle naît des circonstances malheureuses.*”

Cohen has many interesting and thoughtful things to say about this process, including the surprising note that the Schuman Plan “never really existed” (415).<sup>11</sup> What the author means by this is that immediately following Schuman’s speech, the politicians and diplomats of the six countries that were to form the ECSC, and even some (especially Great Britain) who did not join, almost immediately rejected some of its key provisions as outlined by Monnet and his associates and transformed it into a significantly different institution. In particular Cohen argues that the weaknesses that the sponsors of a “third way” who served the Vichy Regime (as well as as well most of the leaders of the French Resistance) perceived during the late French Third Republic were also seen by the group around Monnet as a threat to France’s future. In their opinion, a thorough reform and modernization of French society was required, notably of its industrial and agricultural economy and its political system. Desired reforms included a strengthened political executive power and extra-parliamentary institutions in which younger, technically- competent men would promote class harmony by including bosses and workers in decision-making. These new institutions would have autonomous powers outside of the traditional monopoly of power held by the older generation in a parliament based upon election by universal suffrage. Also, the possibility of a brighter future for France required a transnational perspective that recognized the limits of traditional nationalism, and viewed a federation of Europe as the only hope for the traditional European powers of western Europe to maintain any measure of influence in the larger world, as a “third way” between the super powers of Soviet Communism and American Capitalism. To be successful the European nations would have to sacrifice some of their traditional national sovereignty to an independent High Authority of supra-national character.

In tracing the evolution of the ideas that eventually led to a united Europe, Cohen highlights the role of François Perroux, a relatively unknown ( or at least relatively neglected) theorist of political economy whose life and prolific activity span the years of the 1930s, the Vichy Regime, and that of the postwar Fourth Republic. The author sees Perroux at the intersection of ideas, intellectual circles, institutions, publications, and personalities of the “third way,” including a large number of ‘non-conformists’ from the interwar period. Particularly notable during the years of Vichy’s attempted “National Revolution,” the author attributes the prevalence of that movement’s chief leitmotiv, “Community,” to Perroux’s activities and writings, such as his prewar *Capitalisme et communauté de travail* (1938) and his *Théorie de la Communauté* (1942). (205). Although acknowledging that Emmanuel Mounier, founder and director of the journal *Esprit* and leader of the Personalist movement, a major influence on the ‘non-conformists’ of the 1930s, had earlier published *Révolution personaliste et communautaire* (1935) and that Marshal Pétain had proclaimed his own *Principes de la communauté* (Principles of the Community) early in 1941, Cohen maintains that Perroux’s involvement in organizations such as Vichy’s training schools for leaders of the National Revolution, such as the Ecole des cadres at Uriage and the Ecole des cadres du Mayet-de-Montagne, as writer, editor, and publisher of numerous books, journals (such as *Economie et Humanisme*, *Demain* and *Idées*), and articles that articulated the philosophy of the National Revolution meant that he was “everywhere” (207) at Vichy. In short, with his many students

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<sup>11</sup> Antonin Cohen, *De Vichy à la Communauté Européenne*; “A vrai dire, le ‘Plan Schuman’ n’a jamais eu de réalité. Ou, au mieux, quelques heures,” (415).

and disciples, Perroux may be viewed as the patron of the communitarian philosophy under Vichy, and several of his followers were to be found working with Monnet in the office of the Commissariat du Plan when it was helping to promote the idea of a European Community in the early Cold War years.

Cohen concludes his fourth chapter, "*Révolution nationale communautaire*," with a description of the two *Journées d'études du Mont-Dore* which were meant to mobilize the partisans of Vichy's National Revolution in order to translate its communitarian and corporatist ideals into practice. Amusingly, the organizers, in order to demonstrate their ability to meet "freely" (266) in France made a point of inviting high-ranking German officers from the German Embassy in Paris, one involved with Economic and Social matters and the other a member of the SS, to attend these "study days" (266). Although not emphasized by the author, by the time of these meetings were held in the spring and fall of 1943, there was virtually no popular support left in France for the ideas of the National Revolution, as one may glean from a few indications in the text. For example, the meetings were held in a remote mountainous site in the Auvergne with no newspaper press and "no publicity" (266). When sending the text of a "Mont-Dore Manifesto" to Marshal Pétain, the council of organizers from the first study meeting complained bitterly of the fact that the government administration was acting in such a way as to block "the reforms promised by the Marshal three years ago" (274). Noting that a proposed third such meeting for June 1944 had to be cancelled because the Regional Prefect for the Auvergne informed the organizers that he could not protect them from a possible attack by the Resistance, Cohen concludes that "The Revolution National was dead" (285). In reality Vichy's National Revolution had been dead long before that, and this fact may be obscured by this book's focus on the intellectuals and their ideas that the author wishes to see as critical to the later movement towards a federal Europe which he argues gave "a second life to the ideology of a third way" (286).

For the most part, I thought that Cohen's work showed the author to be well aware of the complexities and ambiguities of the historical setting he was examining. He is wise to acknowledge that words can have different meanings in different contexts, and that the ideology of the *Revolutions nationale* was significantly discredited at the Liberation and its aftermath. Yet, I wonder if he may not attribute too much significance to the word "community" as a tie that bound his three periods of study together, and helped to obscure the meaning in other contexts. In his last two chapters Cohen suggests that former Resistance activists such as Henri Frenay and others found themselves in the company of former supporters of Vichy's National Revolution, blurring the lines of wartime affiliations, as leaders of various pressure groups working for a federal Europe that could serve as a third way between Soviet Communism and American Capitalism; and there is no doubt that there were numerous individual examples of such cooperation among former adversaries. Finally, when he returns to a focus on Jean Monnet and the Schuman Plan, he suggests more specifically that the key individuals who worked with Jean Monnet to draft the Schuman Plan were examples of these men who brought the ideology of the National Revolution directly into the language of that Plan.

This led me to a similar reaction that I had earlier to Amzalak's book. I am not very happy with the title. As the author states in his acknowledgements (p. 423), his book originated in a

doctoral thesis with the title, *Histoire d'un groupe dans l'institution d'une 'communauté européenne (1940-1950)*. In my opinion that title, perhaps with a change of dates from 1930-1950, might have been a more appropriate title for the book. I suggest this because the "From Vichy" in his title, which may well serve to catch the attention of potential readers, implies a very large kettle of fish, and the "to the European Community" implies a much more direct causal link than I believe he has established. When Cohen writes that the Mont-Dore Manifesto "constituted the consecration of all of the initiatives which, from 1940 to 1943, had hoped to give the National Revolution its *Volksgemeinschaft*" (275), he opens a window to the point I wish to make. During the German Occupation of France, François Perroux, the author's key reference for Vichy's communitarianism and corporatism, effusively praised Germany's *Volksgemeinschaft* which was a folk, national and racial community, and evidence of flagrant racism is found in the proceedings of the "study days" at Mont-Dore, as befitted a regime whose anti-Semitic history is notorious. General Charles de Gaulle's Provisional Government and the French Fourth Republic, born largely of the heritage of the French Resistance, decreed Vichy's legacy of state anti-Semitism null and void, and no trace of this Vichy legacy was apparent in the newborn European Community. More specifically, if we look at the careers of Etienne Hirsch, Pierre Uri, and Paul Reuter, the three men who, along with Jean Monnet, Cohen links directly to the original draft of the Schuman Plan, their connection to Vichy is problematic at best. Hirsch had no connection at all, having left France to join De Gaulle in 1940, when he met Monnet and worked with him from that point forward. Reuter indeed argued for a European Community at Vichy's *Ecole des cadres* at Uriage, but certainly knew that a European Community in the early 1940s meant only one thing, a Europe dominated by Nazi Germany, and this was not the type of Community he helped to design after the war. Long before the Liberation he had broken with Vichy (as did most of the people involved with Uriage) and joined the major resistance movement *Combat*. Finally, Pierre Uri was Jewish and was fired from his position in Vichy's economics ministry, and had to use a pseudonym to publish articles he had authored with his mentor Perroux. Although sheltered by individuals who worked in the Vichy administration who helped him to receive a grant to study the economic theories of John Maynard Keynes in 1943, given the range of his experiences during the Occupation, it would not seem appropriate to refer to a man such as Uri as a 'Vichyite,' with all the negative connotations associated with that term. To my mind these considerations undermine to some extent Cohen's attempt to revise what he terms the classic portrayal of the origins of the European Community as coming from the French Resistance. I am convinced by his account that some members of the intellectual and academic group associated with François Perroux during the 1930s and the Vichy years played some part in formulating some key ideas found in the Schuman Plan, but I would argue that these same or very similar ideas may be found in the work of the National Resistance Council's *Comité Général d'Etudes*, in the Charter of the CNR, even, rather surprisingly, given their primary focus on fighting the Germans, in several of the underground newspapers; and, of course, Jean Monnet received his charge to create the Commissariat du Plan, in whose offices the Schuman Plan was drafted, directly from Charles de Gaulle. Moreover, if one turns to the actual creation of the European Community in 1952, the role of politicians and diplomats who owed their positions to their roles in the Resistance was substantial, and as the author has demonstrated, the ideas of the Schuman Plan were significantly altered in the process. It is true, as Cohen writes, that these politicians and diplomats had a very different idea about democracy and power based upon elective office than did those individuals who were the main focus of his book. Finally, the

author appropriately notes that critical contributions to the foundation of the ECSC and the eventual European Union were made by citizens of other European countries; but in any search for origins, I think a tip of the hat to Aristide Briand, French Foreign Minister in 1930, might have been in order for his proposal in favor of a common market and a federal European Union, ten years before the existence of the Vichy Regime.

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