





ABSTRACT

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"Rotten to the Core". Variations of French nationalist anti-system rhetoric.

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Finnish summary

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One of the main components (*topoi*) of the politics of the French nationalists since the late 19th century has been the rhetoric against the existing "system," that is the discourse against the representative form of democracy, the parliamentary form of government and the political establishment. This study focuses on the nationalist anti-system rhetoric at the turn of the 20th and the turn of the 21st centuries, namely on Boulangism (1886-1889) and its representative Maurice Barrès (1862-1923), the nationalist Charles Maurras (1868-1952), and the contemporary radical right movement, the Front National (1972-). This study aims to carry out a detailed and politically oriented exploration of the changes that can be detected in this rejection from the time of Boulanger to that of the Front National.

Methodologically, the study is neither strictly rhetorical nor historical but is instead located somewhere between these two approaches. The main objective is to distinguish the political assumptions and commitments that lie behind the terminology of the political programs not only by analyzing the attack against parliamentarism and the "deteriorated" establishment but also by examining the "political alternative" provided, that is, for example the populist calls for direct democracy. The use of antithetical pairs clearly typifies this kind of nationalist rhetoric, and the dichotomy between "the real nation" and "the legal nation" is a specific emblematic manifestation of how in the nationalist discourse "the true political essence" is distinguished from the "the false political appearance," thereby serving as a basis for the nationalist attempt at achieving "one truth or one essence"

The study illustrates how nationalist politics actually aims at harmonizing political life and simplifying politics, not only by demanding firm authority and relying directly on the people by means of referenda but also by avoiding political struggles, "vain" politicking and useless parliamentary discussions. Although there are variations in the rhetoric of the various political agents and ideologists covered in this study, one may nevertheless conclude that the call for national coherence and political unanimity on the one hand, and the renunciation of pluralism, political alternatives and contingency on the other, seem to prevail.

Keywords: nationalism, populism, extremist movements, France, right-wing parties, rhetoric, parliamentarism.

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T.V.

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1 INTRODUCTION

I have had a keen interest in French politics for years. When it came time to prepare my master's thesis, it was self-evident that the subject would concern French political life. In the 1980's, after the accession to power of the socialist president François Mitterrand, the traditional political *paysage* of France began to undergo a gradual change. The traditional polarization of the political spectrum between the forces on the left and those on the right acquired new nuances, not only with the gradual decline in the number of communists but also with the emergence of the Front National, which has troubled the right-wing pole from 1984 onwards. (Cf. Todd 1988) Against the backdrop of this changing political environment I became interested in the "new" political movement, the Front National, about which I wrote my master's thesis in 1994¹. I later extended my study of the same subject by also including other similar movements in Europe in my licentiate thesis.²

In this study the focus is, in turn, on historical French nationalism and its hostility toward the existing political system. The reason why I decided to write my thesis on French nationalism, although now from a more historical point of view, was based on my interest in both deepening the perspective from which to view this phenomenon and dealing with the anti-system protest that dates back to the nationalist and populist movements whose political and ideological influences can still be seen in contemporary French extreme nationalism.

Studying extreme nationalist movements is not an easy task to undertake, as their dark sides are inherently connected to their ideology. In order to study this phenomenon, certain ideological aspects which one might personally find repulsive must simply be faced, and one must aim to scrutinize the subject as

¹ My unpublished master's thesis is entitled "'La France de Monsieur Mamadou ou la France de Monsieur Dupont?' Inkluisio ja ekskluisio Front nationalin diskursissa." [Inclusion and exclusion in the discourse of Front National]. University of Jyväskylä 1994.

² My unpublished licentiate thesis is entitled "'Oma kansa ensin'. Äärioikeiston muukalaisvastainen diskurssi Ranskassa ja muualla Euroopassa." ["Our Own People First". The xenophobic discourse of the extreme right parties in France and Europe."] University of Jyväskylä 1997.

neutrally as possible. My intention has not, however, been to legitimize this kind of extreme nationalism – on the contrary, the reason why any scholar studies militant nationalist movements is to make the mechanisms behind why these movements and ideologies are politically appealing more intelligible and to indicate that there is no need to mystify – and by that I mean to make it even more appealing – this political phenomenon.

In this study I shall concentrate on the attack against the republic, against parliamentarism and against the prevalent political establishment made by populists and nationalists both at the turn of the 20th and the turn of the 21st centuries. The populist and nationalist rhetoric is limited to three different entities: the movement of Boulangism (1886-1889) and its ideologist and representative in the Chamber of Deputies, Maurice Barrès (1862-1923), the nationalist Charles Maurras (1868-1952), and the contemporary movement, the Front National (1972-).³

I shall concentrate on these three specific topics because their rhetoric represents different variants of populist and nationalist anti-system protest during different periods. Additionally, these three references form three important “moments” of militant French anti-system nationalism in France and, therefore, provide an appropriate temporal and ideological line against which my rhetorical analysis will be drawn. I shall concentrate in the historical parts of my work mainly on the turn of the 20th century and its anti-system rhetoric, thereby excluding, for example, the anti-parliamentary revolts carried out by various nationalist and fascist-oriented *ligues* in between the two world wars. Also, when dealing with Maurrasism I attempt to refer to sources mainly from the turn of the century.

One of the main *topoi* in the politics of the French nationalists since the late 19th century has been the rhetoric against the existing “system”. In 1895, Maurice Barrès, for example, echoed the Boulangist anti-parliamentarist sentiment by declaring that: “Le système est pourri, le régime est par terre”.⁴ In 2004, Jean-Marie Le Pen, the leader of the Front National, proclaimed that “le système pseudo démocratique de la 5ème décadente est perverti, truqué, vicié”⁵. In 1900, Charles Maurras, for his part, echoed the old counter-revolutionary idea that is crystallized in the dictum: “la démocratie c’est le mal, la démocratie c’est la mort”⁶.

As one may notice, the term “system” in this connection has, of course, nothing to do with the later academic “system theories” but refers instead to a figure that is used in order to express the idea that the existing political order and the establishment are in opposition to the natural or traditional ones. The anti-system rhetoric of the nationalists thus claims that both these “systems” and the political establishment are undesirable and distorted as a means to their

³ The histories of these political movements and the biographies of those mentioned in association with them are all included here as appendices 1-4.

⁴ Barrès in La Cocarde, 18.1.1895 in Barrès 1994, 49.

⁵ Le Pen’s speech of 1 May 2004 is available at http://www.frontnational.com/doc_interventions_detail.php?id_inter=63

⁶ Maurras 1900, 121.

own end. The resistance against the "system" is a figure that is directed against vain conscious attempts to change the world. The "system", or "political system" in this context, can also be interpreted as a sort of umbrella concept under which the undesirable political entities, institutions and persons involved in them are gathered in the nationalist discourse.

My attempt in this research is *not* to provide a strictly historical study on the thoughts and activities of French nationalists. Instead, I am interested in the conceptual commitments and rhetorical *topoi*, tropes and figures that characterize the discourse and thinking of French nationalists. This is to say that historical events and processes are matters of great importance in this study in the sense that they provide an essential context, a backdrop against which the rhetorical analysis will be made. In other words, my attempt is to carry out my analysis mainly on the basis of the primary texts of political agents (i.e. Boulanger, Barrès, Maurras, Le Pen), although in a way in which each is viewed through its own specific historical and political context. For this reason, I have added to my work quite long chapters outlining the various historical and political contexts and frameworks. I believe that in so doing I shall clarify my intended perspective in the further discussions.

Since the topic I am dealing with here has been defined with a variety of concepts ranging from the broad term of nationalism to such notions as the extreme or radical right, ethnonationalism or national populism, it is appropriate – prior turning to the principal aim of this study – to briefly clarify the various concepts and terms connected to the phenomenon covered here.

1.1 Primary concepts and aim of the study

The lack of consensus surrounding concepts is as much related to academic discussions as it is to the way in which political agents acting in contemporary nationalist (if using the broadest possible concept) movements define themselves. The various definitions surrounding the contemporary Front National clearly illustrates the multitude of terms used to define the phenomenon. Over the years, scholars have used terms such as neo-fascist (Husbands 1992), extreme right (Ignazi 2003 and numerous other scholars), national-populist or ethnonationalist (e.g. Taguieff 1984) and neo-populist (Birenbaum and Villa 2003), to name just a few, in labeling the Front National.

It is obvious that the selection of a specific concept allows one to emphasize various dimensions of the phenomenon. The term neo-fascist refers to the historical and ideological continuity which is interpreted as being reemerged along with the contemporary movement. Extreme right, in turn, stresses the spatial position of the movement in the political spectrum, which is at the extreme right and, therefore, underlines the existing opposition of the movement both to the "moderate" or liberal right-wing and to the left-wing in general. In the French context, the term extreme right (*l'extrême droite*) has been

widely used, and not only when referring to present-day movements but also at a very general level in studies on the entire historical line of this *famille spirituelle* and its multiple manifestations (e.g. Chebel d'Appollonia 1988). In this connection, the concept of the extreme right includes general historical *courants* of traditionalism, nationalism and fascism, and as such suggests that it is better to speak of the extreme rights, plural (Cf. Rémond 1982). Moreover, the question of which ideological features are associated with the term "extreme right" at any given time may vary (from antidemocratic attitudes to xenophobia) (Cf. Mudde 1995 and 1996a).

Some scholars are willing to completely avoid the "polemical" and somewhat trivial concept of the extreme right, while in some cases the extreme right appears to have simply been substituted by the term "radical right" when a general concept has been required. Pierre-André Taguieff, in turn, characterizes the Front National as a populist-style ethnonationalist party, which indicates that the party's nationalism is ethnically defined⁷. In cases in which populist features are underlined one may use the term national-populism, which combines nationalist and populist dimensions. Neo-populism refers, for its part, to a certain historical continuity of populism and its actual reemergence (see below).

The same kind of lack of consensus over concepts also concerns the historical nationalist movement that emerged in France in the late 19th century. It is commonly recognized that a new type of reactionary and exclusionary nationalism developed in France in the aftermath of the Franco-Prussian War (1870-1871) and along with the two major crises of the Third Republic, Boulangism and the Dreyfus Affair, although once again one sees a broad spectrum of terms used to define this phenomenon.⁸

The new form of nationalism, which according to René Rémond (1982, 150) was born during the first of the crises and baptized during the second, may be labeled as "new" because it differed from the "old" nationalism that was prevalent throughout the first half of the 19th century. Whereas the old nationalism, which can be characterized as beginning during the period of revolutionary patriotism, can be regarded as more left-wing and universalistic, this new ideological formula began to develop around defensive nationalism along with the increasing emphasis that was placed on exclusionary elements.⁹

⁷ From my interview with Pierre-André Taguieff 29.5. 1997 in Paris.

⁸ Raoul Girardet (1983) has used the term *nationalisme des "nationalistes"* in this connection, referring to the fact that from 1886 onwards a new and characteristically *nationalist* doctrine was developed by Edouard Drumont, Barrès and Maurras. Zeev Sternhell (1978) has labeled movements of *fin de siècle* as revolutionary right, which also implies, according to Sternhell, that this is where the origin of fascist political culture lies. René Rémond (1982) (who denies Sternhell's thesis of French profascism) uses the term "*droite contestataire*".

⁹ Cf. Michel Winock's conception of "open" and "closed" nationalism. According to Winock (1990), open nationalism stemming from the Revolution was the "nationalism of the left, republican, based on popular sovereignty and calling upon enslaved nations to deliver themselves from their chains". Closed nationalism, which first appeared during the Boulangier and Dreyfus Affairs, aimed at "protecting, strengthening, and immunizing collective identity against all agents of corruption,

The most important aspects of this new nationalism were, from the point of view of my study, first, that it was emphatically against the prevailing parliamentarism and democracy; second, that, along with Boulangism, it began to take on populist shades; and third, that the doctrine stemming from this era was elaborated further by two main figures, namely Barrès and Maurras. (Cf. Girardet 1983; Taguieff 1991) Due to the fact that I shall limit my discussion mainly to anti-system rhetoric, I shall focus exclusively on Barrès and Maurras, who both made significant contributions to this field, and bypass racialist doctrinaires such as Edouard Drumont, who paved the way for the development of a racially oriented exclusionary discourse. The fourth point with regard to the importance of the new nationalism for this research is that echoes of it are found in the rhetoric of the present-day Front National.

It is commonly asserted that Boulangism, which revolted against the political institutions of the Third Republic, was the first mass movement in France that used populist methods and expressed a *vox populi*. General Boulanger rallied the masses both by methods that are nowadays regarded as "populist" and with a discourse that emphasized the direct appeal to the electorate, which, at the time, played a fresh political role guaranteed by the universal manhood suffrage in quite a new Republic. In this sense, Boulangism was a precursor of French populism but simultaneously gathered momentum for nationalism. Nationalism was to a certain extent combined with Boulangist populism, especially in terms of its emphasis on *revanche* and national unity. The nationalism associated with Boulangism is sometimes regarded as *avant la lettre* (Cf. Winock 1997b), because political nationalism *as a concept* was not introduced into the French context until after the gradual decline of Boulangism.

As a matter of fact, it was Maurice Barrès who transformed the meaning of the word nationalism into its modern political and exclusive meaning in the French context. His article, "La querelle des nationalistes et des cosmopolites" (published in the Figaro 4.7.1892), is considered to have been the turning point that, on the one hand, outlined the nationalist defense of Frenchness on the general level, and defined the exclusion of foreigners¹⁰ on the other. (Cf. Maurras 1900, 134-135; Buthman 1939, 60-62)

true or supposed, that threatened it". Furthermore, not only was it against existing democratic institutions, it was fervently "confronting the Other in all its forms".

At this point I do not, however, intend to claim that there exists good form of nationalism and a bad, exclusionary and extreme variant of it. On the contrary, I, like many others, am convinced that nationalism as such necessarily implies exclusion just as much as it implies inclusion. (Cf. Taguieff 1991)

¹⁰ The exclusion of foreigners was formulated in the *fin-de-siècle* rhetoric of Maurice Barrès as the discouragement of the employment and presence of foreign labor in France. Barrès cited statistics and noted that the number of foreigners was rapidly increasing in France. According to Barrès, "the work of nocturnal Hospitality, which brings ten thousand of foreigners to Paris, while many of our unfortunate compatriots remain on the streets for want of beds". In addition, Barrès argued that "the idea of the *patrie* implies an inequality, but to the detriment of the foreigners and not, as today, to the detriment of the nationals". (Barrès 1893, 7, 13; English

In this light, the contribution of Maurice Barrès may be seen as an intermediary link from protest populism toward exclusive nationalism. Following the terminology suggested by Pierre-André Taguieff (1996a; 2002), Boulangism may be regarded as a form of protest populism which emphasized the protest against the political elite and, at the same time, idealized the forms of direct democracy (Cf. Winock 1997b). The term identitarian populism, on the other hand, aptly describes the contemporary Front National, whose rhetoric combines both elements of populism and nationalism and may therefore, also be defined by the twofold concept of national-populism.

Overall, the categories of populism, protest and identitarian populism are ideal-typical, which means that no movement can be defined as being located completely at one end of the spectrum, but, rather, most movements have aspects that overlap and juxtapose both categories. Consequently, Boulangism is not reducible exclusively to protest populism nor can Lepenist discourse be categorized as purely identitarian. Similarly, nationalist features are often indistinguishable from populism and vice versa. As such, the rhetorics examined in this research are very difficult to condense into one word or concept.

In addition to Barrès' influence on Boulangism, he also played an important role during the Dreyfus Affair. Charles Maurras, in turn, elaborated on the nationalist line that was originally introduced by Barrès, although he carried out an original synthesis of nationalism and subsequently modernized monarchism. Maurras also led the new nationalism toward a slightly different direction as he made a clear distinction between nationalism and populism, therefore forming a new variant within the new nationalism. One may also claim that Boulangism provided the "model" for the further nationalist anti-system rhetoric, whereas the Dreyfus Affair, along with the influence of various radical and anti-Semitic theorists, established the grounds for the future phenomenon of nationalist exclusion. In this research, the latter aspect, which is notably related to the rhetoric of exclusion, is not the primary focus of my examination.

In sum, my own approach and the object of my study will precisely follow the line of this new nationalism, or whatever term one wishes to use, which stemmed from the late 19th century, was developed by Barrès and Maurras, and the echoes of which are still seen in the discourse of the Front National.

However, my approach will not be a direct continuation of the numerous studies about the history of the ideas of French nationalism. My interest lies rather in the rhetoric that concerns the rejection of political institutions, procedures and practices in France. It is a well-known fact that the French nationalists have to a great extent rejected the representative form of democracy and the parliamentary form of government. Nevertheless, carrying out a more detailed analysis of the extent of this radical rejection and attempting to identify

translations taken from Buthman 1939, 62-63) This kind of overtly exclusive nationalist rhetoric is identical to the rhetoric of the contemporary Front National.

the kinds of changes that can be detected in this rejection from the time of Boulanger to that of the Front National would certainly be of great interest.

Even less well-known and more interesting is the link between the rhetoric against parliamentarism and representative democracy and nationalist ideology. One cannot simply conclude that by being a nationalist one is by definition against democracy and parliamentarism. Being politically effective in a polity based on manhood suffrage requires at least a certain level of acceptance of democratic legitimation, and the reaction against representative democracy must be at least partially legitimized in terms of another, higher form of democracy. Similarly, to participate in parliamentary elections and to act as a member of parliament, as Maurice Barrès did for years, requires more than making a few declarations against the parliamentary government.

What is of primary political interest in the politics of the French nationalists is the rhetoric that they employ as a means of dealing with this ambiguous situation. How could they simultaneously legitimize their anti-system attitudes, their repudiation of representative democracy and defense of a "popular" form of democracy, their rejection of the parliamentary style of government and participation in the elections and their daily parliamentary practices? In other words, there is an interesting ambivalence between the rejection of the existing political system and the involvement in essential parts of it, particularly in the discourse of Maurice Barrès and the contemporary Front National.

Because I delimit my discussion to the "new nationalism", the "nationalism of nationalists", I shall primarily use the broad and simple concept of "nationalism" in this connection, although the terms "extreme nationalism" or "militant nationalism" might also be useful. The problem concerning the broad term of nationalism is, of course, that it may also refer to the defense of "France" in more general terms as well as in the emphatic forms of Gaullism or any other more or less nationalistically oriented political tendency.

In relation to this, I believe that my argumentation about the historical line of "new nationalism" will clarify the picture and also provide explanations of why populism plays such an important role in this variant of nationalism (except the contribution of Maurras).

From a methodological point of view, I do not intend to carry out a strictly historical study, although it is also not my intention to present a strictly rhetorical study either. Rather, I am willing to move in-between these two methodological perspectives. The present study is not, then, a purely rhetorical study in the sense that it will neither examine various rhetorical manifestations in detail nor systematically categorize all the different figures or tropes found in the text. This would no doubt prove to be an unending project. Rather, my aim here is to identify and differentiate some *topoi* or common themes which appear to be emblematic for the anti-system rhetoric of the nationalists examined here. In so doing, I shall clarify the particularities of the nationalist discourse's reactions and attacks against the prevalent political establishment.

The rhetorical analysis does not aim at presenting an explanation of nationalist thinking in general but at producing a study of its specific political

role. By differentiating certain typical commonplaces in this kind of discourse I attempt to both highlight certain interpretational differences amongst nationalists (e.g. Barrès' and Maurras' differing views on populism) and to consider the potential continuity and change of the *topoi* studied here between Barresism, Maurrasism and Lepenism. In the concluding chapter I shall review and differentiate the rhetoric covered in the study in greater detail by applying Chaïm Perelman's dichotomy of philosophical pairs.

The emphasis of this study is on the anti-system rhetoric of nationalists, which means that the programs and texts that argue against both the existing form of government and political life as well as the political establishment as an elite are studied in detail. The anti-parliamentary attitudes are specifically pinpointed because of the importance and freshness of this aspect in the Third Republic. Additionally, the entire anti-system nationalist program can be taken as a common factor which, on the one hand, also reveals something essential about the reaction of the nationalists toward political conflicts, controversies and pluralism on the general level.

It is my thesis that nationalist thinking remains incompatible with the acceptance of a polity based on the omnipresence of political struggle and competition. In this respect, the interesting point both in terms of Barrès' career and in the politics of the Front National lies in its flexibility. Over the years they have moved from the outright rejection or mere toleration of the use of the existing democratic and parliamentary institutions and procedures to their utilization as tools to be used against the celebration of political struggle and competition. The explication of how, when and in which forms this has taken place is one of the main objectives of this study.

On the other hand, it is possible to claim that the nationalist anti-system program of the era of Boulangism is still valid as a *model* of argumentation despite the potential variation in the factual content and substance that is a result of the specific context of the Fifth Republic.

In my view, this kind of perspective toward the nationalist anti-system rhetoric has not previously highlighted in the sense in which I attempt to do so. My aim is to analyze this anti-system rhetoric on the basis of original program texts (e.g. Barrès' electoral platform of 1889 and the Front National's 1997 constitutional reform Manifesto), which might initially appear to be meaningless little contributions.

I claim, however, that on the basis of these "little" texts one can highlight politically and rhetorically interesting and relevant points of view - especially when they are analyzed against the backdrop of specific historical and political contexts and with regard to other primary sources. Traditional historiography has not paid enough attention to the formulations and conceptual commitments that can be found in these types of programmatic "little" texts. Engaging in a rhetorical analysis allows us to treat a limited number of key texts as "representative anecdotes" (Burke 1945) of the modes of argumentation that characterize nationalist thinking. These "representative anecdotes" are thus not only selected descriptions of the entire body of rhetoric but they also provide us with an analytical source which allows us to take these documents seriously

and not to classify them according to predetermined schemes within the sphere of nationalist ideology. Instead, one can take nationalists' own formulations and expressions as a point of departure in carrying out an in-depth analysis, thereby rendering the argumentation in these documents more intelligible. In addition to these primary texts, my analysis is bolstered by commentaries, secondary sources and studies on French political history when needed.

It is important to underline the following with regard to the primary sources: There is an immense amount of literary and political writings by both Barrès and Maurras available¹¹, and, therefore, the sources have been strictly delimited. Moreover, the political writings of both Barrès and Maurras are very often collected into volumes that are published much later than original pieces of work¹², and sometimes – although rarely – the works' original dates are not even mentioned. This is a matter that I have attempted to take into account when contextualizing the substance of the various writings I have examined.

My primary source from the contemporary Front National is the Manifesto of the party congress in Strasbourg in 1997, when the party had yet to be divided. Along with this specific document I also use a broad range of party programs and various books written by the members of the party. The acquisition of the Front National material was rather difficult before the "Internet era" (nowadays party programs, pamphlets and important speeches are available on the Internet). Before the Internet era, I was obliged to visit some rare and obscure bookshops in Paris that specialized in extreme rightist material. I have also procured some books and leaflets from the Front National headquarters in St. Cloud and from the party congresses, where I was forced to present myself as a "journalist" in order to gain access both to the events themselves and to the material available there.

In order to clarify my own research profile, I will now provide a very general outline of the major trends in studies concerning French militant nationalism. Since the mid-1980's, after the first electoral successes of the Front National party, an increasing number of researchers have published works both on the contemporary extreme right and its historical predecessors. Both French and Anglo-American researchers have made contributions to this genre.

First, one may mention the electoral studies examining the present-day Front National. Scholars who carried out studies in this genre include, for example, Pascal Perrineau, Colette Ysmal (e.g. Perrineau and Ysmal 2003) and Nonna Mayer (e.g. 2002). Additionally, the Front National has been examined from different angles both in collections of essays (e.g. Mayer and Perrineau

¹¹ Maurras alone has published almost 200 books in addition to his thousands of daily articles (Goyet 2000, 190). Barrès, in turn, also published over 2,000 articles on various subjects in addition to his novels and other books. (Broche and Roussel in Barrès 1994, 7) For a complete bibliography of Barrès see Zarach 1951, of Maurras see Joseph and Forges 1980.

¹² For example, Barrès' "Scènes et doctrines du nationalisme" (1902b) was primarily a collection of articles etc. compiled by Barrès himself. In this study I have also used a collection of articles compiled by François Roche and Éric Roussel (1994). Also Maurras' large "Dictionnaire politique et critique" in five volumes (1932-1934) and his "Mes Idées politiques" (1937) are collections of articles.

1989) and in special monographs (Birenbaum 1992, Declair 1999). Naturally, this is a broad field that includes numerous different studies, which cannot all be listed here. In addition to academic studies, a large number of various books on the phenomenon of the Front National have been published either by journalists (e.g. Dély 1999, Tristan 1987) or by different civil organizations.

Second, there are historical studies examining different extreme nationalist or rightist movements on the European level or in the French context. Very often these collections of essays have covered the period from the late 19th century (i.e. from Boulanger or from Maurras) to Le Pen (see e.g. Chebel d'Appollonia 1988, Arnold 2000), in some cases going as far back as the Revolution (e.g. Atkin and Tallett 2003, Davies 2002, Winock 1994). In this research, the phenomenon is examined in variety of ways depending on the perspective of the individual writer.

Third, there are many valuable monographs on historical figures or movements. For example, Zeev Sternhell's (1972) fine and thorough book on Barrès has proven to be an essential guide over the course of my research. A great number of books have been written on Maurras and Action Française, for example by writers such as Eugen Weber (1962), just to name one. Some "older" studies on Maurras and Barrès are also available, for example by Albert Thibaudet (1920 and 1921 respectively) and Muret (1933). The writers of these studies also cover Barrèsism and Maurrasism in varying degrees with regard to the history of ideas and political thinking. Therefore, my central aim in this research is neither to tackle the history of events nor the history of ideas in the sense that I would trace the intellectual sources of the thinkers and movements examined here.

Fourth, there are rhetorical and political studies which might as well use the historical analytical perspective. A case in point is the work of Pierre-André Taguieff, whose various books have inspired me greatly. Taguieff is a prolific writer whose studies cover not only in-depth rhetorical analyses on both contemporary and historical nationalism, but whose books about the history of ideas (nationalism, racism etc.) have been of vital importance in my understanding of French political nationalism and thought. Taguieff has also published joint studies with Gil Delannoi, which focus more on the theoretical side of nationalism (Delannoi and Taguieff 1991). In addition to Taguieff's studies, a number of other strict rhetorical studies on argumentation have also been published (e.g. special edition of *Mots* n° 58, 1999 entitled "Argumentations d'extrême droite" and Souchard, Wahnich, Cuminal and Wathier 1997).

1.2 Being against

Because my approach in this study stresses the vital role of populism in relation to nationalism both in the late 19th century as well as at present, below, I will

consider the specificity of populism in this connection. When considering both the definitions of populism and populist movements on a broader level, one peculiarity is that the feature "of being against" is commonly related to both. This is to say that the populist rhetoric is very often manifested in the form of a peculiar type of negativism: populists are hostile, for example, to the prevalent form of government, to the political establishment and to predominant ideologies and forms of thinking. Additionally, the populist rhetoric, which tends to be anti-elitist and challenges the established authority, tends very often to worship the people, thus underlining the pathos of the "little man". (Cf. Canovan 1981 and 1982)

This feature of being against, a sort of "anti-ism" has been commonly recognized by scholars who have attempted to define the otherwise very vague concept of populism.¹³ This negativism is peculiar and even paradoxical in the sense that populist movements cannot necessarily be counted amongst those political movements that advocate radical and progressive change. On the contrary, the apparent "change" demanded by populists is more conservative in nature – even traditional – and, therefore, populist rhetoric may be often regarded as reactionary.

The reactionary rhetoric, which has been discussed for instance by Albert O. Hirschman (1991), aptly illustrates the basis behind the populist, and indeed nationalist, rhetoric, which may be seen as a mere "reaction" against certain "actions", which as such is not necessarily representative of any kind of call for change. In fact, the opposite is usually the case.¹⁴ In other words, reactionaries are proclaiming an alternative, but "the change" they are demanding cannot be regarded as a change in the "progressive sense" of the term. Instead, they are willing to restore the often idealized status quo ante and thereby revert back to the assumed original order, to the essence. The reaction is directed toward a change that breaks up the traditional order, and the suggested restoration is interpreted both as a salvation from the prevailing process of decadence and as a means of returning to the essence, to the "roots" as Barrès might have put it.

This essentialist aspect might be associated with the overall rhetoric of populists and nationalists covered in this study, but my examination here is limited specifically to the anti-system rhetoric, and the peculiarity of populism has been taken as a point of departure against which the analysis of the anti-system rhetoric of French nationalists and populists has been carried out. Relevant questions in this regard are thus how the essentialist anti-system

¹³ For the first scholarly attempts to define populism see e.g. Ionescu and Gellner 1969, or "To define Populism," in *Government and Opposition*, Vol. 3, 1968. Both the book and the article are based on a discussion held at the London School of Economics in May 1967. For more actual interpretations see *Telos* N° 103, 1995. See also Taguieff 1996a and 2002.

¹⁴ Very commonly, the term "reactionary" has a negative implication, referring to those "who want to turn the clock back". This negative meaning dates back to the French Revolution, during which those who "reacted" to the Revolution and hence were seen as being against the progressive spirit of the Enlightenment, were labeled as "reactionaries". (Hirschman 1991, 8-10)

rhetoric is interpreted and what lies behind this more or less implicit appeal to essence?

I do not claim that negativism as such is a feature that is exclusively related to populist rhetoric, nor do I maintain that the overall anti-system sentiments expressed at the beginning of the Third Republic, for example, can be reduced solely to the property of popular Boulangism. The early years of the Third Republic were, in contrast, the context of various forces of opposition against the young Republican regime, of which Boulangism, however, was gathered the most support. In a similar way, as a political party, the contemporary Front National is one exponent among a number of anti-system parties, although it may be regarded as the most significant of them all.

What is important in this connection is the matter that the other side of being against in the populist and nationalist discourse is the exaltation of the people and the emphatic (direct) appeal to the people. An appeal to the people (*Appel au peuple*¹⁵ in French) describes the demagoguery associated with the discourses of the various movements and thinkers studied here. In addition, it can also be regarded as a slogan, whether implicit or explicit, that is formulated in a variety of ways and illustrative of the discourses of Boulangism and Lepenism.

On the contrary, the thinking of Charles Maurras, which has had an extensive influence on nationalist discourses, is, in fact, free of "easy populism": Maurrasism neither highlights a direct link with the people by means of the mobilization of mass passions nor speaks in favor of popular sovereignty. Nevertheless, in this study, Maurras's integral nationalism is used as a reference because his thinking is connected to that of Barrès – as it is to the overall nationalist discussion of the period. For example, the example studied here of the dichotomy between the *pays légal* and the *pays réel* cannot be discussed without the inclusion of the Maurrasian doctrine. Moreover, one may also find direct influences of Maurrasism in the discourse of the contemporary Front National.

During the Third Republic, the slogan *appel au peuple* was not only and exclusively associated with Boulangism, although the movement used it virtuously. The overall political discussion dealing with *appel au peuple* in the early years of the Third Republic was naturally connected to the political procedures of the Second Empire. After the Second Empire of Napoleon III, the

¹⁵ *Appel au peuple* must be distinguished from the logical fallacy known as *argumentum ad populum*, which suggests that an arguer appeals to the enthusiasm of the people/crowd in order to "win assent to an argument not adequately supported by proper evidence". (Walton 1980,164) In the article mentioned here, Douglas N. Walton questions the *ad populum* as an error of argumentation and asks "what is wrong, as a deficiency of correct argument, with appealing to popular enthusiasm?/.../what manner of argument is it that is thought to be incorrect?" In other words, why is it erroneous to say that something is true because it is popular or accepted by a large group of people? Although the argument of *ad populum* is different from the thesis of *appel au peuple*, this is not to say that *ad populum* would not occasionally be used as part of the populist rhetoric. In fact, quite the opposite is true. In any case, Pierre-André Taguieff (2002, 21) assumes that populism's bad reputation as such is due in part to its association with the fallacy of *ad populum*.

practice of appealing directly, although only decoratively, to the people by plebiscites¹⁶ was generally condemned. It was, naturally, the Bonapartists who elaborated an *appel au peuple* as the core of their doctrine in the beginning of the 1870's. By applying that motto they questioned the overall representative government on the one hand and portrayed themselves as real advocates of universal suffrage – and of the people – on the other. They even established a parliamentary group entitled “Groupe parlementaire de l’appel au peuple,” which was fervently in favor of the plebiscite as a way of deciding the final form of government. (Rosanvallon 2000, 288)

However, the slogan *appel au peuple* also forced the republicans to react: they tried to retort the famous argument for their own purpose by opposing *appel au peuple césarien* to *appel au peuple républicain*. This attempt was made by Jules Barni in the pamphlet entitled “Appel au peuple” (1874), in which he attempted to alter the content of the phrase toward a more republican direction. (see Rosanvallon *ibid.*, 305) By the end of 1880's, then, a direct appeal to the people in terms of the question of referendum was moved to the core of the political debate. General Boulanger himself actually introduced the new word “referendum” (in place of plebiscite) into the contemporary political discussions in his famous speech in the Chamber of Deputies in 1888. (*ibid.*, 287-288) (see Ch. 3.2.3. below)

Appel au peuple was, accordingly, connected to the demands of direct government, plebiscites/referenda and, in brief, to the general sovereignty of the people. And these demands are, at least in nationalist and protest oriented discourse, usually incompatible with the representative regime. An appeal to the people is, in this view, approached through political institutions: the establishment or existing regimes are condemned as “enemies” of the people. In this connection, a direct appeal to the people is an instrument of political legitimization, and in fact is considered to be the only possible means of legitimizing political action. Without the assignment of this kind of direct “autonomous” political role to the people, the political establishment and government are, in a way, illegitimate. An appeal to the people can therefore be seen as an essential source of political legitimacy.

This is one aspect of the appeal to the people that is highly evident when looking back in history. The classical Latin slogan *vox populi, vox Dei* implies that the opinion of the majority must be taken into account and followed. With regard to nationalist discourse, underlining the *appel au peuple*, this might be considered a self-evident fact. However, the question of the kind of majority to which an appeal is referring is a separate subject in itself, and one that will be studied further at a later point in this work.

At this point, one additional aspect that is essentially associated with the anti-system rhetoric should also be noted, namely the theme of decadence. One very typical rhetorical figure that is directly connected to the anti-system framework of the extreme nationalist discourse examined in this study is the

¹⁶ The last plebiscite was arranged as late as in May 1870, prior to the defeat in Sedan. The plebiscite thus approved a more liberal regime for the Empire by more than 7 million yes -votes.

mythical theme of decadence. After Boulangism and along with the Barresian and Maurrasian discourses, the diagnosis of decadence (associated with the overall *fin de siècle* spirit of decadence, a synonym of cultural pessimism¹⁷) can be seen as one backdrop of the nationalist anti-system rhetoric. Thus, behind the anti-system and anti-parliamentary programs of Boulangism, as well as the contemporary Front National, lies the basic conviction regarding the declining political life and decomposing society.

The nationalist rhetoric, which is, by definition, devoted to the defence of the nation, generally conceives of the nation as a living entity which is on the verge of fateful decline on various levels: politically, morally, culturally and even physically. Social and moral decadence, the decline of political institutions and physical degeneration are examples of the aspects against which the anti-modernist and anti-urban campaigns, as well as anti-capitalist, anti-parliamentary or anti-system protests in general and anti-foreign and anti-Semitic revolts in particular reacted. The rhetoric of decadence is commonly based on the chain of arguments which, first, denounces a problem (causes of decadence), second, indicates the scapegoats who are to blame, third, proposes a (usually simple) solution to the problem, and, in addition, presents the figure of a national saviour, a man of providence who will lead the nation out of decadence. General Boulanger was labeled as precisely this kind of providential figure head during his time, and Jean-Marie Le Pen may be considered as such among the supporters of the present-day Front National.

Instead of keeping my focus on the pure analysis of decadence and its rich rhetorical manifestations and variants¹⁸, in the present study I shall focus on the anti-system critique and solutions related to it, leaving the explicit manifestation of decadence itself aside. This is because, on the one hand, an in-depth examination of decadence would lead to both definitions of anti-France and analyses of the rhetorical strategies of exclusion, which is not my principal aim in this study.¹⁹ On the other hand, the theme of decadence has already occasionally been historically and rhetorically examined in relation to French nationalist movements.

¹⁷ See e.g. Weber E. (1982 and 1986).

¹⁸ There are already a number of more or less in-depth studies dealing with the rhetoric of decadence of the French nationalists. See especially Taguieff 1984 and 1990 in addition to the works mentioned in the preceding footnote.

¹⁹ In both my master's and licentiate theses I have concentrated more on the rhetoric of inclusion and exclusion (i.e. how "our own nation" is rhetorically constructed and who is excluded from it and in what way) in the discourse of contemporary European extreme right movements including the Front National.

1.3 The presentation of the narrative

The present study begins with a general overview of Boulangism and its historical and social background. Because the basic aim of my research is to highlight special nationalist rhetorics in their own specific contexts – in other words to analyze the anti-system rhetoric against the backdrop of a specific historical context – it is imperative that the necessary information be provided. Concerning Boulangism, the fact that the movement was also a pioneer in the fields of populist mass movements and populist demagogy is also worthy of discussion.

In chapter 3, I shall turn more specifically to the Boulangist repudiation of the Third Republic and its various aspects. Because it is quite common to claim that the political program of Boulangism remained vague and somewhat incoherent, I shall focus in particular on General Boulanger's speech in the Chamber of Deputies in 1888, which was interpreted at the time as a "fundamental text" of the movement the principal points of which were reformulated in Maurice Barrès' electoral program in 1889.

Since the main point behind the Boulangist protest – on the level of written documents – lay both in constitutional revisionism and the assault made against the young republic and its political institutions, my analysis in this chapter is made in light of the prevalent parliamentary context of the Third Republic. The current form of French parliamentarism is viewed here mainly from the perspective of its accentuated and specific rhetorical character (Cf. the interpretations of Nicolas Roussellier for example), and the parliament-dominated regime is taken here as a context against which the virulent anti-parliamentarism of Boulangism is reflected upon. In addition to the overall focus on Boulangist critique, chapters 3.3. and 3.4. will also deal in greater detail with Maurice Barrès' attitude toward the rhetorically emphasized situation in the parliament through the deputy's eyes.

In chapter 4, I shall review in greater detail the broad notion of "people," which is represented as a rhetorically constructed alternative to the political establishment and the institutions it leads. The rhetorical opposition between the common people and the politically or otherwise corrupted elite forms yet another angle from which to view the overall anti-system rhetoric. In this chapter the emphasis is thus on the profound dualism which may be formulated – following the nationalist rhetoric – as an implicit or explicit division between the *pays légal* and *pays réel*.

The concepts of *pays légal* and *pays réel* are most commonly associated with Charles Maurras and his polemics, although a similar type of dualism was rhetorically applied even before Maurras' application, as I attempt to illustrate in chapter 4. Therefore, I shall focus more generally on Charles Maurras and his polemics against the Republic in chapter 5. Maurras' contribution in this context is slightly different in the sense that although his polemic was also addressed directly against the existing political regime and as such was bound to the

specific historical context of that time, his critique was – more profoundly than Barrès' for example – based on his (monarchist) theory, against which he reflected actual political circumstances. In my view, the political reaction of both the Boulangists and Barrès was more circumstantial and lacked similar doctrine. Moreover, the personal influence Maurras exerted through his writings extended as far as the Fourth Republic.

In chapters 6 and 7, I shall turn to the Fifth Republic and the denouncement made by the present-day Front National against it. The context of the contemporary political framework is primarily discussed because it differs essentially from the Third Republican situation. Next, the contention of the Front National is studied in greater detail, and the Le Penist demand for a "true Sixth Republic" and a "populist democracy" are examined on the basis of the party programs and texts.

I shall conclude my research with an overall rhetorical examination of the aforementioned topics. This is to say that in the last chapter I shall bring out the rhetorical structure that, in my opinion, is emblematic to the populist and nationalist discourse examined in this study. One of the figures related to this anti-system rhetoric was the opposition between the "real or true nation" and the "legal nation". In addition, it is possible to identify further similar rhetorical pairs, albeit more implicit, in the rhetoric examined here, which I shall outline by means of Chaïm Perelman's dissociation of philosophical pairs.

2 BOULANGISM – A MOVEMENT TOWARD MASS POLITICS

2.1 General historical background

Next, I will provide an overview of the political circumstances behind the emergence of Boulangism and, accordingly, populism in France. From a general historical point of view, populism dates back to the early part of the Third Republic, particularly to the period of Boulangism. Boulangism (1886-1889) is considered to have been one of the first populist movements in France.¹

The era of Boulangism was marked by the politicization of the masses, *l'ère des foules*, as Gustave Le Bon later wrote. Universal male suffrage had given new segments of the population the opportunity to participate politically, which, subsequently, gave rise to new political movements, especially political parties. Although the first political parties were officially formed as late as the beginning of the 20th century, numerous political associations resembling political parties existed way before the introduction of the law (in 1901) which legalized political parties.² Generally speaking, gradual industrialization, urbanization and the development of railways were all factors that modernized and transformed the overall society and gave rise to political change toward mass democracy.

Political life in the early years of the Third Republic was changing due to this social modification and shift in the social basis of political power. The new

¹ For another kind of historical interpretation see Ch. 2.2.

² Electoral committees, for example, organized campaigns for candidates who stood for parliament. Also, various extra-parliamentary organizations, such as *leagues*, were formed, and parapolitical lodges of freemasonry gathered republican and anticlerical supporters at the local level. According to Bernstein (2002b, 418-419), the need for political associations (between the voter and the elected) had been evident since the introduction of universal suffrage in 1848. In comparison to other countries at the time, however, political associations were organized quite late in France, mostly because of the individualistic French political culture and an electoral system based on single-member constituency (*scrutin d'arrondissement*). (ibid., 422; Anderson 1977, 67-73)

“notables,” that is the cultivated middle class, were beginning to take the place of the traditional governing class or old “notables”, that is the country gentry and the upper *bourgeoisie d'affaires*. These *couches nouvelles* formed a new social strata whose entry into politics with the coming of the republic was fervently announced by Léon Gambetta from 1872 onwards. (Cf. Thomson 1946, 41) Gambetta’s republican project rested upon the support of the common people, especially those belonging to the middle class, and the peasantry, who in fact became real political actors with the establishment of universal suffrage. This new middle class, which was not by any means a homogeneous class, was basically formed by professional classes, such as teachers, journalists, lawyers and doctors, and was to dominate the public life of and, at least in part, consolidate the republic.

Although universal male suffrage was introduced already in 1848, it was not actually fulfilled until the 1880’s due to the introduction of social and political improvements. In 1881, new laws were passed which guaranteed the freedom of the press, the right of public association and the right to receive free and public primary education. Similarly, an increasing number of people were literate, local and national newspapers were rapidly increasing their circulation, and the political press was influential. All this signified that political debate was more widespread than ever before, and the “little man”, who up until then had been passive with regard to politics, became conscious of his political role. (Anderson 1977, Ch. 2; Berstein 2002a, 278-283; Grévy 1998, 64; Thomson 1946, Ch.II;)

Therefore, on the one hand, the casting of votes began to signify a political act made by common people, and, on the other hand, representatives in local and national bodies (municipal and departmental councils, Chamber of Deputies) epitomized democratic political power, they were *the* decision-makers elected *by* the people. For the first time, politics could be deduced from universal suffrage, as Gambetta has formulated it. (Roussellier 2002, 355)

The role of the parliament was in practice emphasized in the Third Republic. In a sense, parliamentary sovereignty overshadowed both the senate and the president. The emphasis exerted by the representatives of the people (legislative authority) over the administrators of the state (executive authority) basically resulted from the eagerness to differentiate the republican system from the monarchical one. The crisis of 16 May 1877, after which the extensive presidential powers were restricted, also confirmed this kind of evolution. In a nutshell, most governments in the Third Republic were unstable and short-lived, and parliament remained the real center of power. (Anderson 1977, Ch. 5; Berstein 2002a) (see more on this in ch. 3.1.)

With the appearance of the general democratization of politics came the opportunity to “popularize politics,” in other words to appeal directly to voters. Politicians began to transform actual events, such as the drift from the land, uprooting or other problems related to modernization and industrialization, into new political themes – to “manipulate the masses”. As a result, all this served to accelerate the appearance of a new populist rhetoric in politics. Movements like Boulangism and its organizational embodiment, the Paul

Deroulede's Ligue des Patriotes³, made the most of the situation and were among those who developed demagogic, popularity-seeking discourse. (see e.g. Prochasson 1994; Sternhell 1978, introduction) In fact, historians have seen the Boulangist movement as an important turning point in the history of French nationalism because, firstly, it led nationalism in a new direction, and, secondly, it modernized political culture.

For one thing, the turn of the 20th Century marked the beginning of an era of populism in France. At that time, a new nationalism appeared which was, in many respects, combined with populism. As I mentioned in the introduction, this new nationalism – “a nationalism of dissatisfaction, of tension and of protest” according to Girardet (1983, 276) – erupted on to the political scene during the 1880's in the form of Boulangism. (Tombs 1991, xiii) In short, the organic and exclusive nationalism of the late 19th century can be seen as a synthesis of the politics of Boulangism and of the ethics of the anti-Dreyfusards. (Cf. Sternhell 1991)

In addition, popular Boulangism engaged in mass politics, effectively exploited universal suffrage and mobilized supporters of the nationalism of the late 19th century with “issues of the twentieth century,” such as social discontent and anti-Semitism. It also used modern means of communication, notably newspapers, for somewhat propagandist purposes. In addition to this new kind of populist rhetoric, Boulangism also provided a new style of political campaigning.

The legend of Boulanger was created and disseminated by publicity in forms such as campaign leaflets, popular histories, photographs and even songs proclaiming admiration for the General.⁴ One contemporary journalist

³ Originally, the anti-opportunist Ligue des patriotes of Paul Déroulède, founded in 1882, had been in the hands of orthodox republicans like Victor Hugo and Gambetta. The principles of the *Ligue* were initially the revision of the Treaty of Frankfurt, the return of the lost territories and patriotic and military education by books, songs, shooting and gymnastics. From 1886 onwards, the patriotism of the *Ligue* became more militaristic, xenophobic and authoritarian, accentuating the cult of the chief and opposition to the parliamentary republic. By 1886 Déroulède was convinced that the *Revanche* could not be carried out by the existing regime. He suggested a *coup d'état* to Boulanger, who did not oppose the idea. Parliamentary institutions were questioned in the name of revenge and the fatherland. Boulanger, who was the Minister of War, became a symbol of revenge, the providential man who by authoritarian government would lead France to *revanche*. He became a figurehead of the movement that united all sorts of factions of opposition to the regime, such as radical leftist, revanchist, royalist and nationalist groups. Authoritarian and revanchist Boulangism was born and for the first time patriotic sentiment turned against the republic, as Sternhell notes. (Sternhell 1972, 63-75;)

⁴ One *chanson populaire* described how entire families gathered together to watch the military review of 14 July 1886 at Longchamps and celebrate *notre brave général Boulanger*: This parade was the one which first revealed the mass enthusiasm for - and political significance of - Boulanger, because “soldiers turned their heads right to Boulanger and not left to the President of the Republic”. (Curtis 1959, 28; Hutton 1976, 90) “Je suis l’chef d’un joyeus’ famille/D’puis longtemps j’avait fait l’projet/ D’emm’ner ma femm’, ma soeur, ma fille/ Voir la r’vue du Quatorz’ Juillet/ Après avoir casser la croûte/ En choeur, nous nous somm’s mis en route/ Les femmes avaient pris l’dévant/ Moi, j’donnais l’bras à bell’maman/ Chacun d’vait emporter/D’quoi pouvoir boulotter/D’abord moi j’portais les pruneaux/ Ma femm’ portait deux jambonneaux/ Ma bell’-mère comm’ fricot/ Avait un’ têt’de veau/ Ma

described how Boulanger "used all the publicity that civilization and mercantile commerce puts at the disposal of politicians and peddlers: brochures, newspapers, portraits, posters, cheerleaders, vendors, receptions, parades, banquets...all manner of means to make contact with the voters." (Le Courrier de la Champagne, 20 August 1888, quoted in Irvine 1989, 108)

In addition to this wide-ranging use of publicity, official Boulangist newspapers were established in major cities. In Paris alone, four daily papers were published and enjoyed massive circulation. The Boulangist legend was then carefully propagated from the very start of the campaign. (Hutton 1976, 92-93)⁵

Moreover, Boulangism challenged the traditionally elitist political style of politicians in addition to integrating the "people" into the political process. The Boulangist campaigning of 1889, for example, presented an opportunity for people with no previous party affiliation to participate politically. Not only was the campaigning "modern" in a sense, but so was the organizational structure of the Ligue des Patriotes, which provided a nationwide centralized, quasi-military and electoral organization for Boulanger. (For more in detail see Hutton 1976)

In addition, the Boulangist program of social reform was near to the "grassroots of popular sentiment" and thus seemed to perhaps be more open to the common problems of common men than other parties. Boulangism can be interpreted, hence, as a modern political phenomenon which has contributed to

fill' son chocolat/ Et ma soeur deux oeufs sur le plat./ /Bientôt d'Longchamp on foul' la p'louse/ Nous commençons par nous installer/ Puis, j'débouch' les douz' litt' à douze/ Et l'on s'met à saucinnonner/ Tout à coup, on crie Viv' la France/ Crédié, c'est la r'vue qui commence/J'grimp' sur un marronnier en fleur/ Et ma femm'sur l'dos d'un facteur/Ma soeur qu'aim' les pompiers/Aclam' ces fiers troupiers/Ma tendre épouse bat des mains/ Quand défile les Saint-Cyriens/ Ma bell'-mèr' pouss' des cris/ En r'luquant les Spahis/ Moi, j'faisais qu'admirer/ Notr'brav'général Boulanger." (En revenant de la revue 1886 cited in Marcard 1996, 187-188)

⁵ An interesting aspect of Boulangism is indeed its remarkable popularity. Numerous popular demonstrations in favor of *Général* took place in Paris (cf. the previous footnote) and various household products such as soaps, pipes, food, toys and weapons, were manufactured under the name of Boulanger. "Politics had degenerated into a commercial enterprise," as Curtis puts it. (Curtis 1959,28) Michael Burns (1984, 64) sees the mixture of commercial and political publicity (i.e. commercialism and political propaganda) as "an important feature of political acculturation in the *fin de siècle*". In spite of the support of the populace, Boulanger eventually threw away his opportunity to seize power. He did not attempt a *coup d'état* in the crucial moment after his spectacular victory in the election of January 1889, although the crowd urged him to do so. This refusal to take over the government was a culminating point in Boulangism: on the one hand the movement itself began to disintegrate and on the other, the government took measures in order to be better able to defend itself. (Buthman 1939,37 and e.g. Sternhell 1972,138) Zeev Sternhell, however, reminds us that no serious or completely organized project for a *coup* existed. He argues that famous crys of *A l'Élysée!* only took place in the imagination of Maurice Barrès, who dedicated his book, "L'Appel au soldat," to Boulangism. (Sternhell's claim can, however, be denied, cf. e.g. Chastenet 1954, 209) "Appel au soldat" was not published until 1900 (over the course of the Dreyfus Affair) and, therefore, Barrès' view of Boulangism is reconstructed and idealized. (see e.g. Touchard 1963,163; Sternhell 1978,57-58)

setting France along a path toward *démocratie de masses*. (Levillain 1992,184; Davies 2002, 67; Hutton 1976)

Concerning the era at the turn of the 20th century, it is also clear that the second crisis of the Third Republic, the Dreyfus Affair, has had a major impact on the nationalist ideology of both Barrès and Maurras, which is covered in this study. The gap between the two different value structures that emerged along with the politicization of the Dreyfus case, especially from 1898 onwards (i.e. after Emile Zola's publication of "J'accuse...!"), was a matter that gained a great amount of momentum toward exclusionary nationalism and anti-Semitism. The aspect of nationalist exclusion in the name of the national interest, which should overrule the individual best interest, was, however, highlighted more during the Dreyfus Affair than the assault against the existing system as such. Yet, one must not deny that the value system of the anti-dreyfusards, including militarism, authoritarianism, clericalism, anti-individualism and militant nationalism, is commonly considered to be incompatible with republican principles.

Because of this, the Dreyfus Affair and its ramifications as an historical backdrop are taken into account when associated with the brand of nationalist ideology studied here. With the exception of this particular point, I shall not focus primarily on the Dreyfus case because, in my view, if applied in this context to the distinction discussed by Pierre-Andre Taguieff between the identitarian and protest forms of populism, it is much more closely linked to identitarian nationalist rhetoric than to the protest, "anti-system" rhetoric.

2.2 The excursion to the "politique du peuple"

As the text above suggests, most historians tend to see the "roots" of French populism as lying in Boulangism. Unlike most scholars, Roger Dupuy dates the "birth" of populism to a period prior to Boulangism. In his book, "La politique du peuple" (2002), Dupuy examines current manifestations of populism in the light of politics made by *couches populaires* since the *Ancien régime*. According to him, some features of current populism stem from *politique du peuple*, which was manifested by *sans-culottes* in Paris and the peasants in western parts of France already during the Revolution and later in the form of the insurrections of 1830, 1848 and 1871.

From this perspective, Dupuy argues that populism is based on the eternal protestation of "lower orders," of those "at the bottom" who do not have much, that is the *plebs* against the elite. Dupuy wants to underline the role of the common people and their own political interests as opposed to focusing only on the elites' concern over the uncontrollable plebeians. In connection to this idea, Dupuy criticizes historians who have interpreted the Revolution exclusively from the perspective of the elite, and, by definition, the bourgeoisie, thus

disregarding the *politique du peuple*. (see Dupuy 2002, especially introduction, Chapters 1 and 4)

One of the points made by Dupuy is that Boulangism instrumentalized and confiscated the opinion of the people for its own purposes (that is, to the leader's own advantage), which, according to Dupuy, signified that "couches populaires n'étaient toujours pas capables d'imposer leurs volontés, leur propre politique". (Dupuy 2002, 8) Additionally, Dupuy does not want to highlight, as many others do, Boulangism as a crucial turning point that has modified political practises and the political climate. Instead, he is convinced that the "brief but spectacular success of Boulanger expressed new realities of the sociopolitical evolution that have been largely started on earlier". (see *ibid.*, 192-198) Similarly, Dupuy concludes that giving rise to populism was not as much representative of entry into the era of the masses as it was the successful outcome of national integration, that is the increasing consciousness of belonging to a national as well as a local community. (*ibid.*, 198)

The overall situation in the late 19th century was, in any case, quite different from the era of the Revolution as regards a *politique du peuple*. The level of politicization and political consciousness of the people naturally differed in the days of the violent insurrections of the Revolution or 1830 and from those in the days of universal suffrage and more developed means of communication and media. As Benedict Anderson (1983) has argued in his famous thesis about "imagined communities," nationalism supposes national consciousness, and the rise of populism also presumes some sort of national integration and consciousness. In this light, the development of education and communication extended circles of solidarity from the local to the national level and made people more interested in the national community and national affairs as opposed to concentrating solely on local matters. (Cf. Dupuy 2002, 198)

In addition, the ways of acting and motivation to act politically changed when the "political weapon" changed from the lance to the ballot paper. Therefore, it can be said that universal suffrage was a kind of turning point because it, at least theoretically, disarmed the people. Since then, the popular spirit of rebellion has had the potential to be manifested through protest votes. The ballot, then, took the place of violent uprisings, which, prior to the extension of universal suffrage, had been not the only way but certainly one way for common people to express their political anger. (Dupuy 2002, 214)

Although the extension of universal suffrage gave democratic populism a new means of expression in the beginning of the Third Republic, it must be remembered that this was not an entirely new phenomenon. At their time, both Napoleon the First and Napoleon the Third used quasi-universal suffrage for their own purposes by means of plebiscites. The Bonapartist plebiscites under the two Empires were, of course, purely formal consultations which did not give any democratic power to the people. On the contrary, despite its democratic appearances, the reality was authoritarian, even tyrannical in nature. (see e.g. *Institutions et vie politique* 1997, 8-12)

It has quite accurately been said that universal suffrage does not guarantee real democracy. In fact, quite the opposite is true in the light of certain historical evidence, such as the election by an overwhelming majority of Louis-Napoleon Bonaparte to the presidency of the Second Republic in 1848. In fact, Dupuy's (ibid. 157) view of Bonapartism as a form of populism which, as such, questions the causal connection between universal suffrage and democracy, and, moreover, consolidates that populism, although under another name,⁶ is rooted much farther back than the period of Boulangism. Therefore, it is quite peculiar that Bonapartism is not generally considered to be populist by nature, although some of its Caesarist features are largely regarded as typical characteristics of populist and authoritarian leaders.

In brief, how, then, is Boulangism connected to Bonapartism? There are some similar features, such as the longing for a strong government and leadership by one providential man (authoritarianism), the emphasis on order and national glory, anti-parliamentarism, and, finally, the appeal to the people. Both movements were like "Janus politique" (as René Rémond characterizes Bonapartism), because of their ambiguity – that is, they were neither leftist nor rightist and they united disparate ideologies. (see Rémond 1982, 106-110) Rémond (ibid.,152) is thus prepared to conclude that Boulangism is an avatar of Bonapartist tradition that is deeply entrenched in French political culture. It is a "stable combination" of the traits mentioned above, which have later been reformulated. Rémond also adds that where Bonapartism paved the way for radicalism, Boulangism did the same for socialism. (ibid., 153)

In the same way, Rosanvallon (2000, 183-184) speaks of Bonapartism as an original political model which refers only to one specific historical event and which united two contradictory references: the belief in administrative rationalism and a cult of sovereignty of the people, in other words, order and democracy. As with the so-called Caesarism of Napoleon III, it distinguished Bonapartism with features such as turning to plebiscites, the leader as an incarnation of the people, and the denial of intermediate bodies between the people and those who hold political power. Rosanvallon regards this kind of rule as *démocratie illibérale* because of its restriction of civil liberties, like freedom of the press, which was not at all recognized. In sum: Bonapartist features are entangled with some new traits in Boulangism, which have been typical to populist political culture from that point onwards.

To return now to the main point, is there, after all, some sort of difference between the revolts of "lower orders" far that date far back in history, for example la *politique du peuple*, and the modern type of populism that is manipulated from above, by the ambitions of one, perhaps charismatic, leader? According to Dupuy, there is an implicit political transformation from la *politique du peuple* toward populisme. But what sort of transition is it, and what kind of links can be seen between these two phenomena?

⁶ Dupuy criticizes the retroactive use of the modern concept of populism in describing historical events, preferring instead to use terms like *politique du peuple* or democratic populism when referring to the more remote past than the 20th century. (ibid., 209-210.)

Dupuy seems to emphasize the manipulation and exploitation of popular impulses ("l'instrumentalisation partisane de certaines angoisses héritées de la politique du peuple, comme la peur de la guerre ou la crainte du complot de l'étranger") as features of modern populism, which as such differs from "democratic," spontaneous and "old-fashioned" popular riots. Referring to the typologies of Pierre-André Taguieff and Ernesto Laclau⁷, Dupuy makes a distinction between spontaneous populism in the form of social protestation (*plebs* against the establishment) and exploited populism (*populisme instrumentalisé*), spontaneous or provoked, executed by one part of an elite against another. (see Dupuy 2002, 177-190)

It is also worth mentioning the remark made by Girardet (1983, 28) and commented on later by Dupuy (2002, 198). Referring to social change in the Third Republic, Girardet reminds us that in addition to industrialization and urbanization, the society was also simultaneously secularizing. Girardet proposes a hypothesis which suggests that the emerging nationalism began, to a certain extent, to act as a substitute for religion, or certain sacred values, in people's secularized lives. Barrès, for instance, has written that "J'ai ramené ma piété du ciel sur la terre de mes ancêtres". Maurras, for his own part, has noted that nationalism should incite among its compatriots "une égale religion de la déesse France". Perhaps here both Barrès and Maurras were following the tendency of the time to define patriotism as a religion. It was Michelet who first expressed the idea that the love of one's fatherland goes hand in hand with universal love of God. Thereafter, there were many, for example Paul Déroulède who confessed the same faith.⁸ (see Girardet op.cit., 28-30)

Finally, it can be said that without tackling the question of concepts, *la politique du peuple* undoubtedly refers to the periods prior to, during and after the turn of the 20th century, to the mobilization of the humble people, of the "have-nots" (*mobilisation des sans*), about whom populist politics in itself narrates and whose senses it canalizes (Cf. Mouchard 2002). There might well be a difference between spontaneous civil disobedience and the manipulation of these same senses from above (for the benefit of one specific political movement), but the basis of the politics involved is the same: it lies in protest. Previously, this politics of protest might have been pre-emptive of a revolution, while nowadays it is more or less the act of protesting against the establishment without challenging the basic political framework. This political protest will be studied in greater detail below.

⁷ Pierre-André Taguieff makes an ideal-typical distinction between protest populism and national populism; the former denounces the elite, the establishment and those "at the top". The latter, that is identitarian populism, rejects all that is interpreted to be against authentic (nature of the) people. According to Dupuy, Taguieff's analysis is inspired by Ernesto Laclau's (1977) contribution toward a theory of populism.

⁸ It must not be forgotten that in the official ideology of republican education (*civisme républicain*), patriotism, even military patriotism, was emphasized in early years of the Third Republic. It has even been said that, with *laïcité* and a spirit of revenge, it served as a substitute for God and confessional education. This general *état d'esprit* prevailed up until the time of Boulangism and the Dreyfus Affair, which reversed the situation and caused revanchist patriotism à la Déroulède to become a symbol of overt hostility against the regime.

My intention above is not to propose a causal connection between social transformation and the rise of populism. On the contrary, the facts mentioned above served as catalysts in the general development toward the mass democracy of today. The social and political transformation experienced during the Third Republic has certain parallels to today's Fifth Republic. For example, European integration and economic globalization cause sentiments of anxiety about the future, and the presupposed fact that people feel uncertain or insecure can easily be transformed into effective political tools in order to take advantage of this "increasing insecurity".

3 ATTACK ON THE THIRD REPUBLIC

Turning out attention to the polemics made by Boulangism against the Third Republic provides us with a more detailed picture of the demands concerning *appel au peuple*. The attack against the republic was manifested in the discourse against the representative system, parliamentarism, but in favor of direct government. Before carrying out any further analysis, let us begin with a short presentation of about the "antiestablishment" atmosphere that prevailed during the era of Boulangism.

As one can learn from historical textbooks, discontent with the political establishment and an inherent distrust of politicians were, during the time of Boulangism, increasing among the masses mainly because of corruption and recurrent political scandals. Not only were there a succession of crises concerning various ministers in the parliament, but there was also the Wilson Affair¹, which, for example, made it clear to many that the republic could be just as corrupt as the empire. Because the parliament personified the republic, anti-parliament attitudes were the natural outcome of the general discontent felt toward and common distrust of political authorities. Thus, to many, the opportunist republic represented lowness and mediocrity above all else. Boulangist ideology was, consequently, negative: it aimed at abolishing the parliamentary regime, which was considered ineffective, corrupt and controlled by an oligarchy that was alienated from the people.

This project of constitutional revision was supported by various groups opposing the parliamentary republic: the far left radicals, who found the Republic too moderate; the nationalists, who saw Boulanger as the avenger of the French defeat in the Franco-German War (*Général Révanche*); the Bonapartists, who wanted to restore the Empire; and the monarchists, who used Boulanger in order to destabilize the existing regime by supporting him

¹ The Wilson Affair (1887) was a "scandal of honours" that led to the resignation of President Jules Grévy because his son-in-law, Daniel Wilson, was involved with the traffic in decorations from the Elysée. Another political consequence of the scandal was that from then on the power of president in relation to the parliament was reduced even more.

financially². Boulanger was, then, more like the figurehead of a constitutional revision that was not exclusively linked with the General himself. It just happened that the interest in the man finally overshadowed "the cause for which he was the emblem." (Hutton 1976, 90)

Overall, the incoherent movement, which centered around one charismatic figure, the former Minister of War General Boulanger, formed a loose coalition that was called *Parti national*. It linked, in addition to anti-republicans and anti-democrats, those who opposed the anticlerical bias of the regime or those who saw in the crisis of Boulangism an opportunity to disseminate xenophobic or anti-Semitic opinions. (see e.g. Curtis 1959, 23-33; Sternhell 1972, 77-79; Winock 1994, 51-82 and 1997b)

In addition to the fact that Boulangism united disparate ideologies, the movement can also be divided into two distinct phases. The first wave of Boulangism, which was centered upon Boulanger himself and his electoral campaigns, was, according to Hutton (1976,86), "initial, populist phase" and "spontaneous in its origins". Sternhell (1972, 82) sees the "first Boulangism" as a movement which developed the radical leftist line of thought. On the whole, Boulanger can be seen, at this point, as a convenient, but more or less unexpected tool used by a wide range of anti-Republican intriguers, and the movement around him can be seen as possessing chameleon-like characteristics.

Hutton (ibid.) sees the second phase of Boulangism as the "*political* phase in which the momentum generated by the movement was institutionalized, and in which Boulanger played a role of diminishing importance". Michael Burns (1984, 60) confirms Hutton's notes by arguing that, at this phase, "politically uninterested country folk" turned to Boulangism and "built new coalitions using materials from within their community: politics homespun". Indeed, local political leaders played a larger role at the time by building coalitions for the legislatives in autumn 1889 and by trying to maintain the previous level of electoral support. However, Boulanger himself had already fled abroad, the spell of the legend had been broken and his movement was in the beginning stages of its gradual decline.³

² According to William D. Irvine (1989), Boulanger received not only financial but also concrete electoral support from the royalists. For example, in many provincial by-elections Boulanger "ran in conservative departments, replaced a conservative deputy and never faced a conservative opponent", and, in addition, "obtained great majority of his votes from those usually voted for conservatives". Moreover, royalists actively coordinated Boulanger's electoral campaigns to the extent that Irvine was prepared to conclude that "without their active intervention there would have been no Boulanger Affair". (op.cit.,9) For more about both the royalists' and conservative supporters' financial and electoral backing of the Boulanger movement and the role the royalists played in Boulangism see op.cit.

³ Although the elections of 1889 are generally seen as "an epilogue to the Boulanger affair", William D. Irvine (1989, 124-) argues that "Boulangism without Boulanger" provided French royalists "the opportunity for their last concerted assault on the republic".

To sum up, Boulangism, as a so-called forerunner of mass political movements, appealed to everyone⁴ with its broad and vague program of "Dissolution, Révision, Constituante"⁵. This famous Boulangist slogan, which demanded the dissolution of existing political structures and the implementation of constitutional revision, referred to the overall political situation in France and to the notion that the Constitution of 1875 was in fact a series of constitutional laws as opposed to a single constitutional text or document. The laws were, paradoxically, passed by the National Assembly, which was elected already in 1871 and in which monarchists held the majority.⁶ David Thomson (1946,75) argues the point by saying that "the fundamental paradox of the Third Republican constitution was that it was a system of parliamentary sovereignty in a country where very few of the political parties or the broadly accepted schools of political thought really believed in parliamentary sovereignty".

Indeed, at first, the Third Republic was a republic only in name due to the monarchist majority in the National Assembly and the ongoing struggle for a monarchist regime. The fundamental split in the monarchist camp between the Legitimists and the Orléanists was a major obstacle to the Restoration, and thus it became increasingly probable that the outcome would be a conservative republic.

In 1875, when the republican regime in France was confirmed (by one vote, 353 to 352, in the National Assembly) and the constitutional laws were passed, the Constitution, however, remained strongly conservative in character. The President of the Republic, for example, had extensive executive powers and acted, in fact, as a kind of monarch without the hereditary aspect but with the eligibility for re-election. Finally, after the crisis of 16th May 1877, after the republicans gained a majority in both the Assembly (1876) and the Senate (1879), and after the election of a republican president, Jules Grévy (1879), for the first time, the Republic was entirely in the hands of the republicans and the "Republic of Republicans" really began. (see e.g. Thomson *op.cit.*, chapter III; *Institutions et vie politique* 1997, 13-14)

In a sense, Boulangism can be interpreted as an outcome of this political atmosphere. In the following I shall complete the picture on Boulangism with a rhetorical analysis that will bring out further and more detailed aspects of the anti-system attitudes of the Boulangists.

⁴ "Un talisman promis à tous les malheureux," according to Arthur Meyer in 1889, as quoted in Curtis 1959,25.

⁵ Zeev Sternhell notes (1972, 81) that this slogan was by no means new or revolutionary. It was actually a summary of the old republican program that had been manifested by the extreme left for years. In fact, as Sternhell adds (*ibid.*, 82), the Boulangist program, including Barrès' program, did not include a single theme that had not been developed by radicals, like Alfred Naquet, during their electoral campaign in 1885, or even earlier. (see more below)

⁶ The Third Republican constitution has been, despite severe criticism against it, the most enduring constitution in French history. Thus, for a period of 65 years the French lived somewhat normally and peacefully without a single written constitutional document. See the constitution in detail in *Les Institutions de la IIIe République* 1987, or in *Institutions et vie politique* 1997.

3.1 Boulangism against parliamentarism

One of the few Boulangist deputies elected to the parliament in October 1889 (when the movement was actually in decline)⁷ was the writer Maurice Barrès. At that time, this future theorist of French nationalism proclaimed himself to be a revisionist, identified himself as an *homme de gauche*⁸ and was sitting on the extreme left of the Chamber. His Boulangist program can be summarized in issues such as anti-parliamentarism (i.e. the attack against both parliamentary institutions and the establishment), social question and, finally, anti-Semitism. His anti-parliamentarism differs only slightly from that supported by radical socialists like Alfred Naquet⁹, nor is his program much different from the one Boulanger himself presented. (Sternhell 1972, 83)

As previously noted, the first wave of Boulangism molded the line of thought first outlined by radicals. This is very clear with regard to the anti-parliamentary thematic, which echoed Boulangism's general trend of blurring the distinction between the so-called Left and Right.

The theme of anti-parliamentarism, which was the starting point in Barresian Boulangism, formed the basis of his electoral campaign in Nancy in 1889 and echoed themes previously represented by Naquet and Laisant during the 1880's. The same principles were also introduced by Boulanger in the speech he gave in the Chamber of Deputies about constitutional revision on 4th June 1888. This famous speech, which was interrupted many times over the course of a vivid afternoon *séance*, is studied further below.

Barrès' anti-parliamentarism was above all else a struggle against the established order. One must keep in mind that in the days of Boulangism, during his first political campaign, Barrès was just a young 27 year-old writer who just a year earlier had published his first novel, an "existentialist" (*avant la*

⁷ The year 1889 was the famous year of both electoral success (January) and electoral failure (October) for the Boulangist movement. On 27th January, Boulanger himself was elected to the Chamber of Deputies (candidate in the Seine) by an overwhelming majority, with 245,000 votes cast. (see Wieviorka and Prochasson 1994, 95-96) Boulanger's victory was quite extraordinary in Paris, which had tended to be more the land of radicals and democratic republicans. In autumn 1889, however, only 38 Boulangists were elected to the Chamber of Deputies against 172 conservatives and 366 republicans. This was due especially to the hasty reaction of the government against Boulangism in the form of the abolition of *scrutin de liste* and the prohibition of multiple candidacies. (see e.g. Chasteney 1954, Chapter XII, Thomson 1946, 94, 155).

⁸ See Notes d'un nouvel élu, Le Figaro 21.10.1889 in Barrès 1994, 25-29, in which he proudly declares: "Soyons socialistes!".

⁹ In fact, in 1889, Barrès proclaimed himself to be a disciple of the radical senator. He was referring here to Alfred Naquet (1834-1916), a Boulangist and a Jew who contributed to the legislative work that led to the establishment of the freedom of the press 1881 and to the re-establishment of the right of divorce in 1883. Along with the future anarchist A. Laisant (1841-1920), Naquet was one of the anti-parliamentary theorists in the Boulangist movement, and he formed a bitter opposition to the bourgeois and parliamentary Republic. For more about the themes of Naquet, Laisant and others from the radical left faction of Boulangism see e.g. Sternhell 1972, 81-93.

lettre) book entitled "Sous l'oeil des Barbares," which was to become the first part of the trilogy entitled "Culte du moi". The second part of the trilogy, "Un Homme libre," was published in April 1889 when Barrès was already campaigning on his Boulangist platform. At the time Barrès was, to a certain extent, a public figure who was known especially among the young people as *prince de la jeunesse*.¹⁰

Barrès, like the Boulangists in general, saw the parliament as a symbol of bourgeois order and liberal democracy. The Boulangists thought that the inherent evil in the current system originated from the "uncommon" Constitution of 1875. This inference in relation to the specific political and historical context of the backing of constitutional laws was not in and of itself radical, because the Constitution of 1875 was indeed a compromise and there were a number of opposing voices against the existing regime operating in more or less moderate and radical forms and in various areas of the political sphere.¹¹ Thus, the entire situation, in which the Chamber of Deputies also ended up being "the real government of France" in the parliament-dominated regime, provided the Boulangists with a good opportunity to radicalize opponent voices: to use populist rhetoric, blame the constitution and the parliament, and represent themselves as an authentic "pro-people party".

Both the opponent voices against the existing regime and anti-parliamentarism can be viewed in a specific French context. Namely, according to Roussellier (2000, 247-248), whereas the principle of democracy is precocious in France, attitudes toward how political institutions should be arranged have varied over the years. Democratic principles had been widely accepted as given facts through the liberty of free expression, assembly and the press, the elimination of illiteracy etc., and were already emblematically concretized by manhood suffrage in 1848.

In contrast, there has not been such a broad consensus regarding the organization of constitutional authorities, or, to put it differently, the organization of public powers. There have even been a variety of interpretations within the republican tradition itself as to how public powers should be arranged – from centralized jacobinism to direct democracy. The Third Republic was actually the first lasting regime that attempted to reconcile free manhood suffrage to the balanced organization of public authorities, and, as Roussellier notes, as such it was the first form of established democracy in France to base its legitimacy on manhood suffrage (*ibid.*, 248).

¹⁰ Barrès' first novel, "Sous l'oeil des Barbares," was a "metaphysical examination" of an inner Self. The novel has been interpreted as responding to the spiritual and intellectual introspection carried out by the youth at that time. See more about youth and "Sous l'oeil des Barbares" in e.g. Claude Foucart: *La jeunesse tout 'nûment'* in Barrès, *Une tradition dans la modernité. Travaux et recherches des universités rhénanes*, dirigés par André Guyaux et Robert Kopp, Paris: Librairie Honoré Champion, Editeur, 1991.

¹¹ Nicolas Roussellier (2002,373), for example, notes that no real consensus with regard to institutional matters existed in France in between 1875 and the beginning of Boulangism in spite of moments of republican unification, such as the crisis of 1877. For instance, 80 radicals out of 82 elected to the Chamber of Deputies in 1881 were explicitly in favor of some sort of constitutional revision.

Let us now briefly review the parliament-dominated regime and parliamentarism during the Third Republic, against which the Boulangist critique was focused. The supremacy of the parliament in the Third Republic was due particularly to the decline of presidential powers after 1877 on the one hand, and the concentration of the executive power in the cabinet, which in turn was entirely dependent on the support of the majority of the Chamber, on the other. Due to the multiplicity of party groups and the lack of one dominant party, governments had to be coalition governments in order to gain majority support. Because of the lack of a stable majority, the establishment of coalitions remained open and circumstantial. Therefore, the power fell in the hands of the center groups, "virtually indispensable to all ministries, and the marginal groups, whose adherence or desertion made and unmade governments," as Thomson (1946, 96) puts it.

The Chamber was, accordingly, often a scene of bargaining, maneuvering and lobbying amongst political groups. Whenever conflicts arose, disputing groups withdrew from the alliance and forced their ministers to resign. Consequently, as Thomson writes, unstable and short-lived governments were "at the mercy of group bargains". (Cf. Thomson 1946, 96 and ch. III) The breakup of a parliamentary coalition also meant the disintegration of the government coalition.

This specific situation in the context of the parliamentary government can also be regarded from a point of view that emphasizes the Chamber of Deputies as a public arena of controversial debate and deliberative politics — that is, a government by discussion *par excellence*. Nicolas Roussellier (1997, 9) highlights this aspect of classic parliamentarism by pinpointing that in the Third Republican context "la parole n'était pas le simple ornement de la liberté des orateurs mais la condition même du pouvoir". In other words, it was not a question of "mere" parliamentary eloquence but about discussion and rhetoric in general as "la source discursive du pouvoir".

Put differently, the role of political rhetoric in French parliamentarism in the Third Republic was accentuated in the sense that at that time speeches in the parliament had the potential to alter the existing governmental coalitions, and they fulfilled that potential: the Third Republic was a period of short-lived governments¹², which meant that parliamentary majorities were formed and governments formed and dismissed *in* the parliament while it was in session more often than through elections. The fall of government was thus a "regular and normal sanction of the parliamentary deliberation," if one uses the formulation of Nicolas Roussellier (1997, 281). At the time, political parties did not dominate the electoral system and majorities were not established by ballot boxes. Instead, the majorities were formed in the parliament through parliamentary *discussion*. (Roussellier 2000, 256).

Additionally, the play of discussion and rhetorical disputes in the Chamber of Deputies remained open because the debate was free (e.g.

¹² Over 100 governments were formed and dissolved during the Third Republic. See the chronological list of governments between 1870 and 1938 in Soulier 1939.

individual speeches were not temporally limited and the Chamber could control its political agenda [see Roussellier 2002, 366]): every proposition for amendment, counterplan or interpellation has the potential to be passed. As I have already noted, the parliament was often a place of political conflict and controversy that was naturally connected to the parliamentary procedure of speaking for and against whatever issue happened to be in question. Often the alliances that formed the necessary majority of voices in order to get a bill passed were the most unexpected, "créaient des diagonales parlementaires inattendues," as Roussellier (2000, 260) puts it. The point here is that parliamentary discussion, the art of argumentation and eloquence were of prime importance and in fact served as a foundation of controversial parliamentary politics in this situation of *parlementarisme d'assemblée*. (Cf. Roussellier 2000, 260; 2002, 366-367, 372)

Regarded mainly from the standpoint of its rhetorical characteristics, the term parliamentarism refers directly to the etymological origins of the word parliament, which is *parler* in French and *parlare* in Italian. More generally speaking and in relation to this, Kari Palonen (2004) interprets the "parliamentary style of politics" as a "political form of rhetorical culture based on the argumentation for and against", in other words political action in parliament is conceived in terms of speech and counter-speech. The parliament is thus considered to be a place of deliberation where political alternatives are weighed against one another firstly by speaking, secondly by procedures guaranteeing that opposing points of view will be heard and discussed, and thirdly by voting. All these forms illustrate the way in which parliamentarism is reviewed from the rhetorical angle, which simultaneously highlights the singularity of parliamentary politics as politics-by-speech. (Cf. Palonen forthcoming, Roussellier 1997)

The fact that governments were easily overthrown in the Third Republic is commonly seen as a sign of crisis within a given political regime. Usually weak governments and a government's *immobilisme* (i.e. governments could not take any risks in order to avoid the breakup of a coalition that formed the majority it needed in the Chamber) are emphasized.

The existing situation is described, for example, as follows: "the Chamber of Deputies made and unmade governments at will". (Morris 1994, 76) This formulation implies a negative attitude toward the phenomenon, but if the same situation is viewed from a different angle, one can even interpret these effects more as opportunities than inevitable disadvantages. In other words, the continuous play with majorities may not necessarily be seen solely as a derogatory political game of intrigues etc., as the Boulangists saw it (as will be shown later), but also as a way of highlighting parliamentary deliberation and its "virtue," as Nicolas Roussellier does. In relation to this idea, Roussellier states that:

(à) quoi sert de délibérer si l'on ne peut plus, sauf sur les détails, ni convaincre ni gagner à sa cause des voix a priori hostiles, si l'on ne peut plus "transformer" les adversaires en partenaires d'une transaction? On ne délibère que si le pouvoir, de près ou de loin, est en jeu. (Roussellier 1997, 281)

Nicolas Roussellier (2002, 367) also demonstrates that the so-called governmental instability during the Third Republic was not necessarily as dramatic as it might have appeared. He indicates that in most cases the "*crises ministérielles*" were neither political crises nor real cabinet crises but more like a "method of adjustment," "un moyen d'assurer la continuité du phénomène majoritaire, un régulateur du système." (ibid.,368) It was, therefore, more a question of adjusting to the parliamentary situation in which majorities were never assured nor certain, and in which the "political games" surrounding majorities were ongoing. Roussellier also adds that the change of governments was related more to the *président du Conseil*, whereas ministers often remained in their posts. And in many of these cases reform projects were not stopped, but, on the contrary, were relaunched after the formation of a new majority. (Cf. ibid., 367-368) Similarly, from a more constructive perspective, one can add that even if the decisions made in the Chamber during the Third Republic were compromises, they were at least made – ideally – following an extensive deliberative discussion and close scrutiny. (Cf. Roussellier 1997, 282 and Roussellier 2000, 278-)

The same kind of more constructive or "positive" outlook concerning the parliamentary approval of the government can be found in Walter Bagehot's classic *English Constitution* (1867,18), in which he (referring to the English style "cabinet governments") claims that "a change of government is a great result" because it is inevitably preceded by beneficial and fine debates which "are sure to be listened to, and sure to sink deep into the national mind". The point is, as Bagehot argues: "whether the government will go out or remain is determined by the debate, and by the division of parliament".

Here, Bagehot is referring on the one hand to the political significance of parliamentary speaking, and, on the other hand, to the governmental opposition that exists within the parliament itself and divides the forces into the categories of pro-government and con-government. This is the situation that serves as the basis for overthrowing the government and that is directly connected to the rhetorical basis of parliamentary work. The advantage of this kind of parliamentary government, then, is its flexibility – the parliament can change the government in-between elections. And, moreover, "the climate of opinion" outside the parliament can be taken into account and influence the overall discussion in a parliamentary situation such as this, which is decidedly impossible in presidential regimes. (Bagehot 1867, 18-19)

The Third Republican parliamentarism considered here is seen as a context and background of the further analysis of Boulangist anti-parliamentary protest. In my view, it is important to contextualize the political moment of Boulangism, and emphasizing the dominant role of the parliament at the time allows us to shed more light on the general anti-system and anti-parliamentary sentiments of the Boulangists. In so doing, one will eventually arrive at the perspective in which the contrast between the "highly politicized" prevalent regime and the "highly depoliticized" Boulangist movement is accentuated.

By "highly politicized" I mean to refer both to the "conflictual" parliamentary culture during the days of the parliament-dominated Third

Republic and to the notion that the parliament was at that time an arena of political rhetoric *par excellence*. By referring to Boulangist "depoliticization" I want to point out, for example, that the Boulangists interpreted the parliamentary deliberation and struggle as insignificant and that their demand for direct democracy was intended to simplify political life. (More for political vocabulary see e.g. Palonen 1993) These aspects are studied further below.

3.2 The revisionist program of Boulangism

Let us now turn to the Boulangist reaction. Generally speaking, the Boulangists saw the parliamentary government and *valse des ministères* as factors that ruined political institutions. The prevailing parliamentarism, with its apparent conflicts and subsequent compromises and its political scandals, was the basis from which the anti-parliamentary revolt emerged and was then radicalized in the Boulangist camp. Additionally, one can assume that the prevalent criticism toward parliamentarism lent more weight to their arguments in the eyes of the public. Concerning the overall political situation, the anti-Third Republic protest supported by both the Boulangist movement and Barrès, can be summed up as criticism of the various weaknesses of the existing regime and political culture.

These themes were the ineffectiveness of the institutions, the power of the parliament over the executive, the instability of governments, political immobilism and "opportunism," the lack of strong political leaders and the weakness of the president, continual scandals and corruption, the dishonesty of self-interested politicians etc.¹³ All these demands were connected to the principal point: constitutional reform. Let us next consider in greater detail the Boulangist revisionist reform.

Within the context of policy, the Boulangist program for constitutional revision remained somewhat vague and was, more importantly, interpreted in different ways ranging from the complete abolition of the presidency and the senate (extreme Left) to demands for a strong executive power (the Right). Boulanger himself supported the latter alternative. He once noted in an interview that: "le remède est tout simplement dans le retour à un chef d'État effectif, responsable comme le président des États-Unis. Seulement, je voudrais que la durée du mandat fût prolongée de dix ans." (Interview of Boulanger in *La Tribune de Genève*, 7.2.1889, quoted in Winock 1997b,79)¹⁴

¹³ Barrès' novels "Appel au soldat" (1900) and "Leurs Figures" (1902a) serves as a good source of reference with regard to overall Boulangist and anti-parliamentary rhetoric, although in literary form. Nevertheless, in these novels Barrès systematically echoed the themes he had previously published in articles in "Le Courrier de L'Est" and in "La Cocarde". (Sternhell 1972, 124 footnote,126)

¹⁴ Cf. Dansette 1946, 147-148, in which the author notes that Boulanger was personally impressed by the American style of presidentialism after his journey to the United States.

According to the General himself, the Constitution of 1875 was neither sufficiently republican nor democratic, but, on the contrary, was oligarchic and parliamentary – that is, “en contradiction constante avec l’esprit, les moeurs, les intérêts et les besoins de la France contemporaine”. (Journal Officiel. Débats de la Chambre des députés. Séance du lundi 4 Juin 1888¹⁵) Thus, Boulangism claimed to be “truly democratic” as opposed to the existing democracy, which it interpreted as corrupt and oligarchic. If one briefly analyses the epithets that were the target of Boulanger’s criticism, it would appear as though he used the term oligarchy in order to allude to the aristocratic elite that might be said to have been selected as opposed to elected as representatives. By the term “parliamentary” he implied the prevalent form of parliamentarism, which he regarded as corrupt and inefficient, whereas his attempt at being “truly democratic” implied direct democracy in the form of popular consultations.

In the speech he gave in the Chamber of Deputies, Boulanger, *député du Nord*, argued for the abolition of the parliamentary regime and the absolute separation of executive and legislative powers. The result would be a legislative body whose powers would be limited by presidential veto and popular referendum and a Head of State or “*conseil suprême*”, who would serve as an executive body to whom the cabinet ministers would be directly accountable. The senate would preferably be abolished. This was because Boulanger held the representative assembly in contempt: it was allegedly based on anonymity and, additionally, it was seen as incompatible with democracy and universal suffrage. Instead he emphasized a firm government, and republican reform was to have been based on direct government through “la sanction populaire”.¹⁶ (Cf. in addition to the speech of Boulanger of 4.6.1888, e.g. Curtis 1959,27; Dansette 1946, 147-148; Sternhell 1972, 132-135)

These basic premises supported by Boulanger were incorporated, without any essential changes¹⁷, to Barrès’ electoral platform, the major points of which were as follows:

¹⁵ In the following, when referring to Boulanger’s speech in the Chamber, it will be marked only with the date of 4.6.1888. Zeev Sternhell (1972,123) reminds us that Boulanger’s speech became “a real political credo of the movement, the fundamental text” that was republished in “Le Courrier de l’Est” numerous times under the title “Programme du Parti national boulangiste”.

¹⁶ Related to this, one can ask whether the Boulangists actually sought a dictatorship or whether they were “merely avant-garde republicans” trying to deepen the popular, allegedly democratic bias against the Republic. See e.g. Mermeix (pseudonym of journalist Jean Terrail, the Parisian Boulangist deputy who in 1889 broke away from the *parti national* after accusing Boulanger of colluding with the Bonapartists and Royalists) in Girardet 1983,137-140, which is a real “speech in defense” of Boulangism. Rather, there appears to be both some sort of naive yearning for absolute power and a naive trust in unanimous people in Boulanger’s comments following the successful election of 27st January 1889, when he refused to march to Elysée: “Pourquoi voulez-vous que j’aie conquis illégalement le pouvoir quand je suis sûr d’y être porté dans six mois par l’unanimité de la France?” (Quoted in Chastenet 1954, 209)

¹⁷ There is, however, one difference concerning the election of legislative and executive bodies. In Barrès’ program both were issued from by means of universal suffrage, whereas Boulanger did not specify how the president should be elected. In his speech in the Chamber, Boulanger left this “point of secondary order” open. It was

- 1° Révision de la Constitution par une assemblée nommée à cet effet par le suffrage universel pour aboutir à une république définitive et incontestée.
 - 2° Suppression du régime parlementaire qui, sous la République comme sous la Monarchie, n'a donné que des preuves d'impuissance et de corruption.
 - 3° Séparation absolue des pouvoirs exécutif et législatif, tous deux émanant du suffrage universel.
 - 4° Subordination des ministres et des autres fonctionnaires au pouvoir exécutif.
 - 5° Sanction de la Constitution par le peuple.
 - 6° Soumission à la nation, par la voie de référendum, des questions pouvant susciter un grave conflit d'opinions que seule la nation peut résoudre.
- (Major points of the electoral program of Maurice Barrès, the Boulangist candidate of "la Commission du Comité républicain révisionniste de Meurthe-et-Moselle" of the third constituency of Nancy for the Chamber of Deputies in 1889, taken from Touchard 1963, 162; also in Girardet 1983, 136)

In fact, aforementioned manifesto is the first part of the bipartite program, which deals with the subject of constitutional reform: the "*Partie impérative*" indicates "reforms that should be fulfilled immediately". The second part, "*Voeux*", contains minor legislative reforms that should be discussed only after the new Constitution has been accomplished. These reforms, which went under the heading of "*Voeux*", included the foundation of pension funds, the implementation of tax reforms and the protection of French labor against foreign workers. (See e.g. Girardet 1983, 136-137) These same demands, most of which are more or less "social" in character, were incorporated in a more extended form into Barrès' second electoral program of Nancy in 1898. (cf. Barrès 1902b, Appendix 41) Below I shall further examine these points in the Barresian program along with Boulanger's speech in the Chamber of Deputies on 4th June 1888.

The first point follows the French revolutionary tradition, as it requires an assembly formed exclusively for constitutive as opposed to legislative purposes. It also insinuates that an assembly might also be provisional because of its exceptionality and subversive nature. (Cf. Rosanvallon 2000, 49) But, more importantly, as the last word of the slogan "Dissolution, Révision, Constituante" implies, according to the Boulangists, the Constitution should have a broad democratic basis, contrary to the Constitution of 1875, and should therefore to be submitted to the sovereignty of the people, that is to the assembly elected by universal suffrage.

Additionally, the first demand implies that the Boulangists were willing to make institutional reforms, at least decoratively, within the framework of a republic. As they themselves thus wanted to underline, they were prepared to

Paul Déroulède, in particular, who spoke in favor of the "plebiscitary Republic" with the election of the president on the basis of universal suffrage. (Winock 1997b, 80; see also Déroulède's speech in the Chamber of Deputies on 23 December 1892 in *Journal Officiel, Débats parlementaires, Chambre des Députés*.) Barrès, for his part, did not specify what he actually meant by the term executive: is it a person or a council? One can assume that Barrès would have been of the opinion that the executive power should have been in the hands of one person, the saviour, the *maître*. Mermeix (1892, 80), however, alluded to the notion that putting the executive power in the hands of a presidential or directorial council instead of a president would prevent things from drifting toward Caesarism. These differences in interpreting the matter once again reveal quite a bit about the utmost vagueness and incoherence of Boulangist ideology.

do so not in order to abolish the republic in itself as a regime but rather in order to consolidate its allegedly insufficient democratic basis. In his speech in the Chamber of Deputies (4.6.1888), Boulanger himself claimed that: "Il y a deux causes à ce mal politique et social: d'une part l'impropriété de nos institutions, d'autre part, une conception absolument fausse de la République." By "a false conception" Boulanger was referring to the opportunists: "ce parti a toujours considéré la République comme son bien, comme sa chose; il a réduit la République à n'être que le gouvernement d'un groupe". He referred to the plebiscitary republic and direct government by arguing that: "La République ne doit être la propriété de personne. Tous les Français ont des droits égaux à son gouvernement". These quotations follow the rhetorical logic of Boulanger himself, who in his speech first brings out the evils afflicting contemporary politics, then indicates the causes and people behind it and finally offers a remedy to the situation.

Boulanger's interpretation of who is to be considered a "republican" is as broad as it could possibly be, including both conservatives and radicals alike. In his speech he argued that: "Pour ce qui est d'être républicain il n'est point de titre plus large que celui-là. Être républicain veut dire qu'on est partisan de la justice pour tous et de la liberté pour tous!" This remark is quite curious because it highlights both the equality of individuals before the law and individual rights, which sounds more like the rhetoric of partisan republicans than that of General Boulanger. Alternatively, this remark may be interpreted as an immediate retaliation against the republicans who criticized the speech Boulanger made in the Chamber.¹⁸ Whatever the interpretation, this kind of argumentation was Boulanger's attempt to persuade as broad an audience as possible. In addition, and related to this idea, one must not forget that Boulanger, was not a committed anti-Semite and therefore he was less exclusionist than many of his supporters.

Here, however, the concept of abolition was related more to parliamentarism than to the republican system¹⁹, although the "spirit" and basic principles of republicanism, as crystallized later during the Dreyfus Affair, extended beyond the overall nationalist program. This also becomes clear when we examine the next point in Barrès' imperative program, in which he demanded the complete suppression of the parliamentary regime.

For Barrès, Boulanger personified the opposition to the parliamentary regime and to corrupted and "barbarian" parliamentarians. According to him, with Boulanger "qui seul est aujourd'hui capable de cette audace- disparaîtront ces barbares décidément décriés parmi les honnêtes Français de toute caste". (Barrès in *La Revue indépendante* in 1888, republished in Barrès 1994, 126)

¹⁸ It is also part of the strategy of the contemporary Front National's Jean-Marie Le Pen to make allegations against both the political establishment and the media regarding their failure to provide a sufficient amount of time and opportunity for his party to express its political opinions (i.e. the *tactique* of "political martyrdom").

¹⁹ This is true as regards the points of view of Barrès and Boulanger, but, naturally, this cannot be generalized to apply to the entire Boulangist movement, which was fractured and even included some royalists, whose chief interest was to restore the monarchy.

3.2.1 The Parliament

Concerning point number two,

- 2° Suppression du régime parlementaire qui, sous la République comme sous la Monarchie, n'a donné que des preuves d'impuissance et de corruption,

one may ask what the writer saw as the "proof of the powerlessness (*impuissance*) and corruption" that was linked with parliamentarism here. On the one hand, it is likely that the Wilson honors scandal (December 1887) was the main thing on the writer's mind when he referred to "the corruption". Likewise, Boulanger was referring to the current parliamentary situation when he referred to the notion of "impropriété de nos institutions" in his speech in the Chamber, as he had done earlier that same year while campaigning for by-elections. In one of these manifestos (1st April 1888) he stated that: "A l'impuissance dont l'assemblée législative est atteinte, il n'y a qu'un remède: Dissolution de la Chambre, révision de la Constitution." (Barrès 1900,1425 footnote 172)

In his speech in the Chamber, Boulanger declared that universal discontent leaves no other option than to "établir un pénible contraste avec l'inertie dont la représentation nationale a fait preuve par suite de l'impuissance qui s'attache à elle en raison même de la nature de nos institutions parlementaires". According to the Boulangists, "*impropriété*" and "powerlessness" referred then to the prevailing form of parliamentarism, in which the hands of the deputies, that is their real "*volonté*" and liberty to act, were tied because of the continuous play with majorities and coalitions. As Boulanger stated in his speech in the Chamber: "A peine arrivés au Palais-Bourbon les députés se distribuent en groupes; et, au lieu de suivre une politique purement nationale, ils ne servent que des intérêts de parti et des ambitions de coterie."

The Boulangists actually claimed that the existing forms of parliamentarism were obscured by vain procedures and empty discussions. The most important thing for the deputy was thus to play with coalitions and to act in this political play in a way that would be beneficial with regard to the achievement of re-election (as a deputy always remained a candidate [Barrès 1902a, 1051]). According to the Boulangists, certain substantial issues remained secondary in parliament because of the "political game," and especially because the entire situation thus tended to accentuate the private interests of the deputies as opposed to the substantial matters that had the potential to serve the common good.²⁰ The claims of the Boulangists thus supported the fact that representative parliamentarism was especially vulnerable to corruption, and if

²⁰ See e.g. "Appel au soldat" (Barrès 1900, 823-824), in which the character of the novel "Alfred Naquet" speaks out about the difficulties in lawmaking, about how difficult is to get a law passed in the current system of parliamentarism. The real senator Naquet was himself the man behind the Divorce Bill, which was passed – after persistent work and campaigning – both in the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate and became law in 1884. (Cf. Fortescue 2000,91-93)

only it were substituted by direct democracy (by referenda) and firm government, the entire situation would substantially improve.

Characteristically, the Boulangists regarded the deputies as advocates of their private interests, not as advocates of the "general will" or common good, nor the will of their electors. In his populist manifesto addressed directly to the people, Boulanger accused the deputies of having failed to fulfill the mandates set for them by the people.²¹ Instead, the deputies placed their own selfish interests before those of the people and thus acted as a separate autonomous body. Accordingly, the deputies are more representative of themselves than of the interests of the people, which could imply that Boulanger, at this point, defended a sort of imperative mandate.

In the Boulangist discourse, this possible longing for an imperative mandate of deputies can be interpreted as an influence of the Left, for whom the imperative mandate represented, at that particular time, a simple realization of a democratic ideal. It seems more probable, however, that Boulanger's view on this issue was merely echoing the contemporary discussion surrounding both the nature of electoral mandates and the relationship between the elector and the elected, representation and responsibility etc. (Cf. Rosanvallon 2000, ch. VII) In any case, one must not ignore the fact that the demand for an imperative mandate indeed promotes an attachment to the simplicity of politics, and, subsequently, the restriction of the deliberative role of parliamentary politics, which, as such, was a typical attitude behind the general revisionist ideology of Boulangism.

The Boulangist claim according to which the deputies placed their own interests above "the common good" additionally implies the overall corruption of representative politics. Namely, a corruption that is related notably to the prevailing parliamentary regime that allegedly corrupts and destroys a new deputy. This is depicted, for example, by Barrès in his "Leurs figures": "Toutefois, ces députés, ces petites bêtes de proie/.../adoptent rapidement des mœurs et une âme corporatives. Sous la discipline du Palais-Bourbon et par la force des choses, ils s'approchent d'un certain type parlementaire qui est bien la 'caponerie', c'est-à-dire le caractère d'un joueur rusé, fin, ennemi de tout héroïsme, appliqué seulement à prendre ses avantages." (Barrès 1902a, 1051-1052)²²

The aforementioned examples and quotations suggest that corruption, in the context of this specific discourse, is understood as a more comprehensive, broad and symbolic determinant than the narrow meaning of the word corruption would suggest. Generally speaking, corruption can be seen, in this context, as an opposite counterpart, or an antithesis of political virtue if one

²¹ Cf. Boulanger's political manifesto from April 1888 (see Appendix 5), in which he argues, for example, that: "A ceux qui font passer, avant vos intérêts qu'ils devraient défendre, leurs besoins, leurs appétits, leurs ambition malsaine et qui voient, d'un oeil sec et d'un coeur léger, l'ouvrier pâtir et mourir de faim!"

²² From this statement one can also discern an overall disdain for parliamentary politicians. That point is studied further below. (see Ch. 3.3. about the contempt for politicians)

follows the conception outlined by J.G.A. Pocock in *The Machiavellian Moment* (1975).

In this particular Boulangist connection political representatives were not allegedly capable of attaining the level of political virtue in the prevalent parliamentary regime. Yet, the people were seen as naturally virtuous while their representatives were not. This was a direct result of the constant temptation of corruption that the representatives faced. The representatives were tempted to become corrupt unless they were controlled by "the people". In other words, if the representatives were not controlled by the electors, they tended to follow their own personal interests instead of aiming toward the common good and public benefit. (Cf. Pocock 1975, 519) Consequently, politics that is beyond the control of the people is interpreted as malicious, bad, etc., and, above all, as inherently against the "real" and naturally virtuous interests of the people.

To put it simply: for the Boulangists, the natural and even political virtues lie with the people and cannot be adequately represented by the representatives of the people. In a representative system such as the French Third Republic, corruption inevitably destroys the elected representatives and alienates them from virtuous patriotism. Therefore, the overall politics of the government is seen as corrupt and as going against the national interest.

The general disagreement regarding the principles and directions of policies are formulated in colorful and extreme expressions that blame the government for maintaining a kind of false consciousness and subsequently implementing the wrong policy. It follows that the overall rhetoric concerning the policies of the government and its establishment itself are, in this context, customarily expressed pejoratively by using expressions such as "representatives of evil", "chequards", "conspiracy plots" etc. (Cf. e.g. Barrès 1994,144-146) Parallel to the overall denunciation of the "decadence" of political institutions, the existing establishment and agenda of policies were defamed. Here one sees clearly the distinction between real and false politics – in other words between the political essence and its false appearance as represented by the current system of government.

How then can the decline of political virtue be prevented and the "renewal" of virtue promoted? In the Boulangist context, the solution lies in the control of the people, that is in the notion of "popular sanction" that was formulated in the context of so-called direct government, in which the people themselves are directly involved in politics by means of direct consultations. Behind the legitimization by the people also lies the assumption according to which the people are seen as "one" – as united, and, therefore, as unanimous – whereas the representative deputies are seen as "many" and, therefore, as representing disparate, that is "suspicious", points of view.

This "*sanction populaire*", that is "the ratification by the people" (Cf. Boulanger 4.6.1888), is commonly emphasized and achievable by means of referenda (though the word plebiscite would in some cases more precisely describe the basic political aims of the Boulangists). As Barrès explicitly argued: "la grande doctrine démocratique admet qu'un parlement, un corps

représentatif toujours est suspect et doit être contrôlé par la nation.” (Article entitled *Contre le système représentatif* in *La Cocarde* 2.3.1895, quoted in Sternhell 1972, 124)

The demand for referenda will be discussed below (see point number five, Ch. 3.2.3.), and, at this stage, it is adequate to merely point out that for Boulanger, representative parliamentarism was thus incompatible with “real” national sovereignty. Boulanger argued in his speech that “Le parlementarisme est très séduisant en théorie, mais c’est à tort qu’on le représente comme l’expression du Self government.” Boulanger saw a “democratic deficit” in parliamentarism, but, more importantly, the Boulangists interpreted the parliamentary system as being a regime that was incapable of representing the *vox populi*, of handling the interests of the common people, because of the inherent corruption of the system itself. In other words, representation was considered as unreasonable because it was incapable of representing virtuous patriotism, which can be found in its purest form among “the humble people”.

It is assumed that if the decision-making is directly in the hands of the people (who are naturally neither tempted nor corrupted by false consciousness) and the people thus possess the political power to make decisions directly on substantial matters (and not only about the people who will represent their political will or to whom they will give their mandate), the entire constitutional and institutional problem would be solved in one fell swoop. This longing for simplicity naturally minimizes the complexity of politics and highlights the administrative and pure “decision-making-aspect” of political action. (Cf. Ch. 3.2.3.)

3.2.2 Firm government

- 3° Séparation absolue des pouvoirs exécutif et législatif, tous deux émanant du suffrage universel.

The third point demands the strict application of the doctrine of the separation of powers. The absolute separation of executive and legislative powers suggests in this context that the Boulangists wanted to turn the current constitutional situation upside down: they wanted to move from the supremacy of the parliament toward the omnipotence of the executive (whether it be the president or the supreme council). This demand implies that the power of the executive, that is the real governmental power, would be separated from the control of the parliament, in this case the one chamber *Assemblée constituante*. The government would thus be beyond parliamentary control. (Cf. also footnotes 16 and 17 in this Chapter above)

This is because ministers, in this case, would not be accountable to the assembly but directly to the executive, as is stressed in point number 4,

- 4° Subordination des ministres et des autres fonctionnaires au pouvoir exécutif.

and, additionally, there would not be any possibility for the assembly to censure the cabinet with a vote of no-confidence. It follows that ministers, who, according to the Boulangists, cannot be drawn from the assembly, would thus be mere administrators, similarly to the "fonctionnaires" (as in the point 4). As General Boulanger stressed in his speech in the Chamber: "La Chambre doit légiférer; elle ne doit pas gouverner", and: "L'expérience a démontré que la responsabilité des ministres devant la Chambre équivaut à l'absorption du pouvoir exécutif par le pouvoir législatif et à l'avilissement du premier."

All this indicates that the assembly would, according to the Boulangist revision, play a merely decorative and supernumerary role. It would remain mainly an arena in which various points of view are represented publicly but open-ended political questions are left open because there is no need for any kind of real deliberation or weighing of alternatives – no decisions are made there. The real governmental power would reside in the hands of the executive, the Head of State, and the parliament is rendered powerless.

Additionally, if one now turns once again to Bagehot (1867, 19) one can see that this kind of presidential government implies that the rhetorical dimension of parliamentary work and discussion have been reduced and the "nation", the citizens, have no influence at all over debates except to vote.²³ According to Bagehot (ibid.), this implies that "there are doubtless debates in the legislature, but they are prologues without a play. There is nothing of a catastrophe about them; you cannot turn out the government".

The accentuation of the executive thus indicates a simplistic approach to political action. The role of an executive as implementing laws is more administrative than, strictly speaking, political, which seems to indicate that the "art of politics" as dealing with unexpected and contingent events is disregarded. (Cf. Rosanvallon 2000, 172-173)

Behind this Boulangist demand one can discern a reaction to the current radical parliamentarism and its political practices, according to which the members of the government were drawn from the parliament and the government was thus, by definition, "a government of the parliament". In the prevailing situation, as has already been noted, the main conflict existed not as much between the government and the parliament as between the governmental and oppositional groups within the parliament itself. In other words, the Boulangists were against a parliamentary government that would be dependent on the decisions of the parliamentary and electoral majorities without having to resort to superior instances such as the national interest.

Additionally, because the coalitions changed according to the issue in question, there was no strict and stable political line of division between the opposition and the government in the parliament. This flexibility of the political situation encouraged any parliamentary group to take a stand on a particular

²³ In a section in which Bagehot describes the opposing features of the American-style presidential government and the British-style "cabinet government," he writes as follows: "But under presidential government a nation has, except at the electing moment, no influence; it has not the ballot-box before it; its virtue is gone, and it must wait till its instant of despotism again returns". (Bagehot 1867, 19)

issue, either on the grounds of the prevailing discussion or for tactical or interest-based reasons, or because of political pressure. In any case, this flexibility and lack of a fixed discipline on the part of political parties provided the possibility – and autonomy – for anyone to take part in real deliberations, to be a real “actor of parliamentary government,” as Roussellier (2000, 261) argues.

Roussellier also adds that parliamentary governments have, therefore, had the possibility to govern beyond political parties. The struggles between political movements within the parliament did not necessarily mean that there was by any means a sense of continuing combat outside the Chamber, or that the struggle for power had become an instrument with which to eliminate one’s political adversary. Roussellier also points out that, in many respects, parliamentarism in the France of the Third Republic has developed more freely and completely than in the “model country” of parliamentarism, Great Britain. (ibid., 261-262)

Because the formation of groups or coalitions was by no means stable, it signified the continuous use of political “play” and discussion in order to define the boundaries and form majorities. And this was precisely the matter that irritated those Boulangists who criticized governmental instability and parliamentarism for “playing games” with majorities and coalitions. According to Boulanger, “le gouvernement parlementaire, tel que nous le pratiquons/.../ ressemble plutôt à une anarchie constitutionnelle qu’à un Gouvernement.” (Cf. Boulanger’s speech in the Chamber of Deputies 4.6.1888) Boulangist criticism toward the separation of powers must be interpreted in this context, namely as a critique against the parliamentary type of government.

The emphasis on the executive is also illustrated in Boulanger’s speech in the Chamber. He claimed (receiving vivid protest in the hemicycle) that the current constitutional and “bizarre” situation “fait du premier magistrat de l’Etat un soliveau,” and, therefore, wanted to bring back the “respect” and powers of the Head of State. In sum, Boulangist enthusiasm toward strong leadership would have certainly led toward firm presidentialism. At its peak it might have led toward authoritarian caesarism; even toward dictatorship masqueraded as a direct democracy by means of the consultation of the people (referenda/plebiscites), to which we turn in the following.

3.2.3 Popular sovereignty

Points five and six

- 5° Sanction de la Constitution par le peuple.
- 6° Soumission à la nation, par la voie de référendum, des questions pouvant susciter un grave conflit d’opinions que seule la nation peut résoudre

refer to the hard core Boulangist critique of the system of political representation that centered on the demands of direct democracy through popular referendum. Because the Boulangists viewed representative

parliamentarism as incompatible with the democratic ideal, they regarded a direct government as a political alternative or supplement that could return to the people the power that was now in the hands of their representatives.

In his speech in the Chamber of Deputies (4.6.1888) Boulanger argued that "Dans une démocratie, les institutions doivent se rapprocher autant que possible du gouvernement direct. Il est juste et bon qu'on interroge le peuple par voie directe chaque fois que s'élèveront de graves conflits d'opinions qu'il peut seul résoudre. C'est pourquoi je pense qu'il est indispensable d'introduire dans notre constitution le jus ad referendum." Boulanger also referred in his speech to the Swiss model and stated that "turning directly to the opinion of the people," as in Switzerland, would serve as an excellent instrument of social pacification.²⁴

Before focussing more closely on social pacification, which is also emphasized in point six of Barrès' program, one should first consider point five, which stresses the importance of "popular sanction". Considering point number five, it seems that here, the Boulangists assume that the "sanction" from the people (i.e. the referendum) would be the mere ratification of the constitution. Therefore, it directly implies purely formal consultations à la Bonapartism, in which the people merely endorsed the government's proposals by means of plebiscites. The demand for referenda is thus unavoidably reminiscent of Bonapartist plebiscites. Although Boulanger used the word referendum instead of plebiscite – apparently quite deliberately²⁵ – one might wonder whether the Boulangists nevertheless interpreted the referendum more in terms of the plebiscite.

In other words, would the referenda à la Boulangism have been similar to the Bonapartist plebiscites merely in terms of having endorsed and ratified decisions already made, or would they really have had the power to change things? Would the referendum really have broadened as opposed to simplified the sovereignty, and would the referenda have presupposed deliberation or would they have remained as a ceremonial manifestation of national quasi unanimity? (Cf. Rosanvallon 2000, ch. VIII) At this point, and referring to the text below, the answer to these questions seems to lean more toward the side of pessimism.

In point six the referendum is regarded as an instrument through which social and political pacification could be guaranteed. The issues that were considered suitable for popular consideration were, along with the

²⁴ The question of whether or not to introduce the referendum was a topic of political debate in France as well in other parts of Europe at the end of the 19th century. General Boulanger was the first in France to use the word "referendum" in political discourse. In Republican France, the demands for political referenda have been commonly associated with Caesarism, and because of this connection the use of referenda had been rejected until the foundation of the Fifth Republic. (Rosanvallon 2000, 287, 300)

²⁵ In order to act moderately and to legitimate the principle of "popular sanction" as "republican" – and perhaps to gain wider approval for his statements- Boulanger, in his speech in the Chamber, even quoted Gambetta, who had mentioned that "le plebiscite est une sanction désormais nécessaire dans les sociétés qui reposent sur le droit démocratique".

confirmation of the new constitution, principally questions of serious dispute, such as the relationship between church and state. According to Boulanger, such "conflicts of opinion" are problems "that neither the government nor the parties can legitimately resolve as they like, because they touch on the universality of citizens."²⁶

In this connection, referenda are seen as opinion polls about issues of controversy. Accordingly, the people are seen as a uniform entity that is assumed to be politically unanimous in order to arrive at unanimous decisions on problematic questions. It is assumed that there exists an inherent and natural harmony of interests among the people – or, to put it in more nationalistic terms – an intuitive sentiment of national interest or national instinct. This is indicative of a general philosophy which lies behind the demands for direct government: an idea that "the natural harmony of interests" of the people can override the divisions between parties and politicians. (Rosanvallon 2000, 174)

The same ideal of pacification was also the political aim and a natural consequence of constitutional revision. Boulanger argued in the Chamber in 1888 as follows:

Je crois qu'un gouvernement fondé sur des institutions ainsi renouvelées ouvrirait dans la République une ère de paix et d'ordre, de travail et de crédit, d'harmonie et de réconciliation que le régime parlementaire ne peut même pas essayer de réaliser. La stabilité gouvernementale succéderait aux crises; une politique vraiment nationale et féconde remplacerait l'intrigue, les coteries disparaîtraient et les réformes sociales depuis si longtemps promises, si impatientement attendues, seraient enfin mûrement étudiées et réalisées pour le plus grand bien de la justice et de la paix. (Boulanger 4.6.1888)

Here, social pacification is associated with an attempt to harmonize political action. Harmonizing political action is, thus, seen as an ultimate political aim – a solution that is linked directly with the ideal of uniformity and of political simplicity, to which I shall turn below.

Moreover, there is a typical statement in Boulangist discourse according to which parliamentary representation is grounded on mendacious anonymity. As

²⁶ General Boulanger said on 4.6.1888 that: "Ainsi, les rapports de l'Eglise et de l'Etat, la liberté religieuse, toutes les grandes questions qui ont absorbé la politique depuis bientôt quinze ans, divisé et irrité tant d'esprits, sont des problèmes que ni un gouvernement, ni les partis, ne peuvent, selon moi, résoudre légitimement à leur gré, puisqu'ils touchent à l'universalité des citoyens".

This is quite a peculiar statement because, first of all, it suggests that the representative system as such (e.g. in the form of governments or parties) is a fictional form of sovereignty. Second, it implies that no real decision-making is possible by means of representation, especially with regard to "matters of controversy" directly concerning citizens. According to Boulanger, instead of parliamentary or any other forms of representation, such issues should be solved by the sovereignty of the people in the form of referenda, which is thus interpreted as a sort of "direct decision-making" or even direct legislation. (The exact role of referenda, e.g. merely consultative or binding, was not specified at this point.) Additionally, one can only wonder which issues were considered to not directly concern the "universality of citizens," leaving them instead in the hands of the representative government. Here, if one follows the logic implicated in Boulanger's statement, the only issues that should be left to the representative system are, paradoxically, those that do not concern the "universality of citizens".

mentioned earlier, the representative system was not democratic enough for the Boulangists because the elected representatives were not capable of representing the real national interest, the common good, but only their own private interests. Therefore, the power should be returned back to the people and, here, a referendum served as a tool used in order to directly convey the political will of the people instead of relying on "anonymous" deputies. Boulanger, for example, stated in his speech in the Chamber that: "Le suffrage universel élit des représentants qu'il ne connaît pas toujours, sur la foi de programmes que les élus s'empressent d'oublier." Barrès, for his part, has said that in parliament, "anonymous" deputies represent multiple personal interests but not the "real national one".

In light of these quotations one can see that, on the one hand, representative government is regarded as an obstacle or a wall between the people and those who govern (Cf. Soulier 1939, 25). In other words, representation allegedly suppresses the "real voice of the people", which would be better manifested through direct government. In this connection, the representative model is, then, in conflict with popular sovereignty. In fact, representation is interpreted as a fictional sovereignty that is in contradiction with the real sovereignty of the people in the form of direct government. (Cf. Rosanvallon 2000 *passim*.)

On the other hand, as indicated above, the Boulangists wanted to give to the people the direct power to decide on substantial matters instead of leaning on anonymous representatives whose political actions would be more or less unpredictable. This reveals a political alternative suggested by the advocates of the direct government, according to which they are willing to represent a new political culture that concentrates on political substance instead of "old politics," which accentuates the administration, bureaucracy and politicking of elected persons. The calculated politicking of persons (*politiciens*) who are inherently vulnerable to corruption is thus substituted by the pure, honest and simple politics of the people, which concentrates directly "on political issues". This signifies that the simple decision-making on purely substantial matters substitutes the difficult choices – and play – of persons, and as such prevents them from engaging in vain politicking. In other words, it is a question of moving from the complex governmental procedures of persons to the simple administration of "political substances". "À un choix difficile des hommes succède une détermination facile des décisions substantielles", as Pierre Rosanvallon crystallizes the idea. (Rosanvallon 2000, 168,174)

When analyzing the Boulangists' call for the implementation of a system of direct government, one can say that the support of the very idea of direct government is an assumption according to which politics is, in principle, a matter of simplicity. Behind the simplification of politics thus lies an inference according to which legislative work, for example, is basically simple and therefore not limited by any questions of capacity or availability. Victor Considerant, one of the first advocates of direct government, noted in his "La Solution ou le gouvernement direct du peuple" (from 1851) that "Quand on est dans le vrai, les choses s'arrangent toujours beaucoup plus de facilité qu'on ne

l'imaginer. La fausseté compliquée; la vérité simplifiée." (Quoted in Rosanvallon 2000, 169) This argument also appears to be in force in the Boulangist discourse.

In this context, politics is regarded as a mere form of administration or a simple "decision-making process" with regard to substantial issues that are also taken as clear in essence. In this light, representative parliamentary politics is considered as an autonomous and arbitrary system with of mystifying procedures and insufficient representation (because the "real voice of the people" cannot be heard through elected representatives), which only obscures real political aims and tricks the common people. The key is that, ultimately and irrespectively of the politics of the governors, the common people would instinctively know the right thing to do; they would have the common sense to realize the common good. In other words, the common people would possess a true and humble instinct for politics if only this "real sovereignty of the people" was seriously taken into account. These types of views are again reminiscent of those in Bonapartism. According to Napoleon III, "public opinion could not be represented faithfully by Chambers". Instead, a direct appeal to the people would tell what the people actually think, and, hence, the plebiscite would serve as an autonomous expression of general will. (Cf. Rosanvallon 2000, ch. V)

Overall, Bonapartist politics was constructed on the apparent assumption of social unanimity. This was most notably revealed by the Emperor, who, in addition to incarnating and representing himself as the people, conceived of the people in the singular: "le pays, le peuple". The people were, as in Boulangism, interpreted as a unanimous collectivity without any political divisions. (ibid.)

Accordingly, in the Second Empire, plebiscites played an essential role in this world of monism: they were rituals in which the unanimity of the people was materialized and indicated. The unanimity and cohesion of the entire nation was symbolized by these ceremonial plebiscites: the events of plebiscites were solemn proclamations confirming the union of the "peuple-un" with its Emperor. "The united people" were concretely perceived and viewed through these ceremonial acclamations as democratic subjects, and by emphasizing the plebiscites the unity of the nation was implicitly equated with democracy. The plebiscites were, then, used as quasi-democratic instruments that reinforced and manifested nationalism. (Especially, but not only, when e.g. certain localities had the right to decide by plebiscites whether they wanted to join France). Rosanvallon clarifies the idea into the formulation that: "with plebiscite, the manifestation of nationalism is substituted by an expression of democracy". (Rosanvallon 2000, 197-201)

Similarly, since the people/the nation, which was concretized by the plebiscite, inhabited a sphere that was outside the realm of political divisions and conflicts, it signified an implicit detachment between the "external" and "internal" components of the people. The plebiscite thus provided substance and strength to the "internal" and united sovereignty of the people that was in contrast to the other "external" nation of political conflicts. (Rosanvallon 2000, ch. V, esp. 197-201)

The Bonapartist view according to which the social and political unanimity of the people was combined with national unity was also

characteristic to Boulangism (and to later populist and nationalist discourses as well [see below]). Likewise, when considering on a general level the demand for the use of the referendum in Boulangist discourse, it can be concluded that, in a sense, it is associated with the overall political ideology of the camp. Supporting this kind of political philosophy is the conception of and appeal to a coherent, unanimous and undivided nation.

In this context, the nation – the people – is always regarded as unified and undivided, paradoxically following the example of revolutionary tradition: the overall consensus of the unified and indivisible French nation stems from the French Revolution. In this context, however, this radicalization of the revolutionary concept of “peuple-un” is not unique. Put differently, this longing for national unity is praised especially, although not exclusively, in the nationalist camp. A similar conception has been quite prevalent not only in Jacobinism but also in moderate and official republican nationalism, and this outlook is thus by no means the exclusive property of either the Boulangists or the Bonapartists, or the later national-populists for that matter.

In Boulangist and later populist discourses the reference of different nations in a nation is emblematic. Very commonly the nation is written in singular when referring to an ideal and allegedly united nationalist nation and people, and in plural when referring to foreign elements in it, that is, foreign nations inside the ideally constructed *Nation Française*. By naming these foreign elements as “nations” (Cf. Ch. 5.5.), they implicitly include the element of exclusion in it because, one nation, in these discourses, implicates one people, one coherent community. This is an ideal and frequently a major premise behind the political program and ideology of nationalist movements.

Finally, Pierre Rosanvallon (2000, 171-173) criticizes the French political tradition in which a longing for a direct government has wide roots. Rosanvallon claims that the advocates of direct government simply follow the “*idéologie française du pouvoir simple*,” the model which minimizes and simplifies political action and the contingency inherent in it, that is the very principle of the “art of politics,” as has been indicated above.

3.3 Maurice Barrès: from an assault against futile parliamentary discussion...

As has previously been noted, in the beginning of the Third Republic the Chamber of Deputies was emphatically the scene of political speech despite the ever-expanding press, which diffused political points of view and acted, to an increasing degree, as a channel for political influence. In the parliament-dominated regime, the Chamber of Deputies remained the place of discussion and eloquence to the extent that, for example, Nicolas Rousselier sees the impact of the prevalent parliamentary practices as having covered all levels of political representation, from the local to the national level. According to

Roussellier, the political society of the Third Republic was, namely, a "société de l'éloquence". (Roussellier 2000, 264-268) From this point of view, I will now consider how, both as a Boulangist and a deputy, Maurice Barrès conceived of the parliament as a special place for speech and how he viewed parliamentary eloquence in general.

Although Barrès acted as a moderate parliamentary politician both in some of his texts and in his acts as a deputy in the Chamber, he condemned parliamentary politics as corrupt and fervently proclaimed himself to be anti-parliamentary, thus rendering himself somewhat of a revolutionary. After serving his first term in the Chamber of Deputies, and following a number of subsequent electoral setbacks, he remained defiant in the speech he gave on the anniversary of the Action Française in 1901, when he announced (to loud applause) that "nous sommes nettement et résolument en révolte et en dégoût total contre le régime parlementaire!". (Barrès 1902b, 92) In his novels, and later in his diary (at least to some degree), he continued to criticize both the prevailing form of parliamentarism as well as parliamentary eloquence. (Cf. Barrès 1902a and Barrès 1929-50 [Mes Cahiers] esp. vol. V, 3-127²⁷).

Generally speaking, Barrès' attitude toward the parliament, government by discussion and parliamentary eloquence was in line with the political circumstances of the time and became increasingly moderate as Barrès aged. In the days of Boulangism, and during the Panama, Dreyfus and so-called Rochette (1914)²⁸ affairs, the tone of his speeches was more radical than, say, after his re-election in 1906 to the Chamber of Deputies (when he criticized the separation of church and state and defended Catholicism in the name of patriotism and the national interest. cf. Mes Cahiers V, 84-87).

The role Barrès played in the Chamber was more passive than active. He was regularly in attendance but rarely contributed to the discussions. During his first legislative period (1889-1893) he only participated in a few discussions (short speeches on five different subjects), and during the First World War he published daily articles but remained silent in the Chamber. The subjects of his speeches varied from minor issues, such as the fire at the telephone center in Gutenberg, to various issues "of national interest" that he happened to be dealing with at the time in his other public contributions, such as in meetings or writings. Some of these issues were, for example, primary education, the death penalty, discussions surrounding churches and religious heritage in France, the development and financing of scientific research, and numerous discussions

²⁷ In order to be as clear as possible, I shall use the complete title, "Mes Cahiers" when referring below to the volumes that make up Barrès' diary.

²⁸ The Rochette Affair: former prime minister Caillaux was named minister of finance in the government Doumergue at the end of 1913. In 1914, Le Figaro mounted a quite violent verbal attack against him, accusing him of partaking in suspicious procedures with regard to the legal proceedings in the case of Rochette, who was a crook. Caillaux's wife subsequently fatally shot Gaston Calmette, the director of Le Figaro, numerous times. Caillaux resigned from the government. The following day an investigation commission was founded that was presided over by Jean Jaurès. During this case Barrès once more had the opportunity to express his virulent anti-parliamentarism. The case is reported by Barrès in his booklet entitled "Dans le Cloaque" (1914).

concerning the politics of the Rhineland in the aftermath of the First World War. (Cf. Barral 1963; Zarach 1951)

It may not be far from truth to assume that in the Chamber Barrès remained more of an outside observer who commented on the "club" both in order to improve his "inner self" and his literary works and to satisfy his passion for action – and indeed politics. In relation to this notion, Barrès himself has remarked in a somewhat ironic and self-critical tone that: "A défaut de talent, il m'a été donné d'être placé à la Chambre pour voir, pour écouter et pour noter." (Mes Cahiers X, 291)

In fact, Barrès intended to publish a book about his years in the Chamber: from 1906 onwards he gathered material for the future "Livre de la Chambre," or "Livre du Parlement," which he never completed due to his early death. His notes regarding the parliament, however, have been collected into the volume *Mes Cahiers* by his son Philippe Barrès (see especially volume V of *Mes Cahiers*). (Cf. Bécarud 1987, 32-53 about Barrès' personal thoughts on being and not being a member of parliament.)

In the following, we turn our attention to the analysis of Barrès' views on parliamentary discussion both from his early and later days. Let us begin with probably one of the most frequently quoted phrases describing Barrès' profound anti-parliamentary sentiment.

Oui, Boulanger entendait que le parlementarisme est un poison du cerveau comme l'alcoolisme, le saturnisme, la syphilis, et que, dans les verbalismes et la vacuité de ce régime, tout Français s'intoxique.
(Maurice Barrès in *Appel au soldat 1900*, 807)

Here, Barrès is presenting an analogy between the prevalent form of parliamentarism and a poison that destroys the brain in the form of some negatively connotated diseases or phenomena. Apart from the colorful expressions and metaphors, the point, however, lies in his use of the words "verbalisms" (in the plural) and "vacuity," which are allegedly intoxicating every French citizen living under the parliamentary regime, which has been rendered questionable. And, the inescapable conclusion is that the parliamentary regime is notably under suspicion because of its verbalism and vacuity, two epithets that are presented in this context as complementary.

Let us now examine another quotation of Barrès, which provides us further insight into what he really meant by "verbalism".

22 novembre 1906. – Contre le gouvernement par l'éloquence. – Étrange système de chercher la vérité par l'éloquence./.../Et partout. Dans les bureaux, s'il s'agit de nommer un membre de la Commission du budget, qui choisir? Celui qui parle le mieux." (Mes Cahiers V, 59-60) (Cf. the article of Barrès in *Courrier de l'Est*, 21.6.1891, titled "La limitation du bavardage à la chambre," republished in Barrès 1994, 38-39.)

This passage is indicative of the Barres' denial of the rhetorical essence of parliamentary politics. In other words, here, Barrès seems to be against the notion of the defining feature of the parliament as being a forum for debate,

argumentation and deliberation. Additionally, the expanded parliamentary practices, in the form of "société de l'éloquence," as Roussellier puts it, appear to puzzle him. The quotation above also indicates that Barrès associated the work of the deputies in the parliament with the search for truth, and that the truth, according to him, could not be achieved by eloquence alone.²⁹

In relation to this idea, Barrès goes on to say that:

Ce qui est incroyable pour qui ne fréquente pas la Chambre, c'est qu'un homme puisse parler pendant plusieurs heures pour ne rien dire. Voilà pourtant de quoi nous devenons capables, sitôt que le suffrage universel nous a envoyés, sous l'oeil de M. Floquet³⁰, pérorer au Palais-Bourbon. (Barrès in *Le Courrier de l'Est*, 21.6.1891, republished in Barrès 1994, 38)

The passages above illustrate the attitude toward the parliament as a forum of futile argumentation and, accordingly, futile deliberation. This futility of parliamentary discussions is frequently expressed in Barresian discourse by the word "bavardage". He also used expressions such as "*discussion de bureau*" or "*harangue académique*," and accused the deputies of "saying useless phrases without substance". Barrès regarded the plenary sessions as a theater (or a "*grand ballet barbare*," even a "*tauromachie*") of professional politicians: "ils tiennent un emploi, ils récitent soit des rôles, soit des centons." (Cf. *Mes Cahiers V*, *Le livre que je veux faire*, passim.)

The profound contempt for the parliamentary "*parole*" also highlights the controversy between words and deeds by implying that words are not (sufficient for) actions; that instead of playing with words, parliamentary work should be directed toward action, that is toward efficient decision-making³¹. It thus follows that allegedly useless parliamentary discussion and deliberation only ends up causing unnecessary delays and increases disorder in the process of decision-making. The rhetorical aspect of politics as a form of deliberation is, therefore, useless. As a result, the denial of parliamentary politics altogether is associated with the denial of political rhetoric in terms of deliberation and contingency.

But how could this "political wisdom" about the common good, this political *Besserwisserism* to which Barrès, too, aspired, be achieved if it can not be attained through parliamentary deliberation? The answer is in the people, in the "popular instinct" – as I have already noted above when covering the emphasis of referenda and direct democracy. In this connection, true political wisdom is ultimately out there: it already exists among the people and is merely waiting to be put to good use. Actually, Barrès is longing for some sort

²⁹ Cf. *Mes Cahiers V*, 165, in which Barrès explicitly said about parliamentary work that: "Il s'agit de trouver la vérité, d'atteindre à ce qui est réel."

³⁰ Charles Floquet was the President of the Chamber of Deputies at the time.

³¹ In 1908, Barrès said somewhat ironically: "*Magie et parlementarisme*. - Le principe de la magie antique, c'est qu'il suffit de dire ou d'écrire certaines choses d'une certaine façon pour que ces choses se réalisent. Amiel reprochait aux modernes de croire que quand les choses sont dites, elles sont faites; les primitifs ont fait de cette croyance une des bases de leur magie'. C'est notre parlementarisme dans bien des cas. Briand a dit telle chose, que voulez vous de plus?" (*Mes Cahiers VI*, 260-261)

of absolute truth which is inherent in "the people" and which can be attained by means of direct democracy, and, therefore, it would be incompatible with parliamentary argumentation and debate.

This point is equally evident when considering Barrès' argumentation about regarding abstention in the process of parliamentary decision-making. In one particular article from 1909, Barrès' main point is that sometimes abstention is the best way for a deputy to act³². In that article he writes that:

Pitoyable époque, misérable Chambre où la sagesse est d'attendre et de dire: 'Je suis ni avec ceux-ci, ni avec ceux-là. Je suis avec la raison et avec la France, avec une République que desservent nos grévistes d'aujourd'hui, mais que ne peuvent bien servir leurs complices d'hier'. Qui oserait dire que là n'est pas l'exacte vérité politique?'. (L'Abstention est une opinion; c'est parfois la meilleure. L'Écho de Paris, 15.5.1909 in Barrès 1994, 55-58)³³

In fact, here Barrès is criticizing the voting procedures in the Chamber, claiming that abstention should be considered as a third opinion in addition to the votes for and against. He insists on creating a third ballot-paper, which could serve as a substitute for abstentions in a conflict situation (when a deputy has a third opinion in a decisive vote). Barrès' point here was to say that parliamentary procedures actually restrict the freedom of political opinion and prevent deputies from being politically honest. This implies that he is once again longing for an absolute and inherently valid and true political alternative that surpasses the two presented alternatives – that is, an alternative that is above parliamentary deliberation. The aforementioned article indicates that Barrès was actually convinced that "political truth" cannot be achieved by parliamentary procedures, as it was, at this point, beyond it. This indicates the overall contempt for both parliamentary procedures and the principle of decision-making – even in difficult questions. In other words, there is a profound contempt for the fact that procedure takes priority over substance in parliamentary politics.

Barrès' longing for an alternative truth that would surpass parliamentary procedures is, indeed, entirely opposite to Bagehot's conception of government by discussion that is "open to free choice" and, therefore, does not require that any "sacred authority" whatsoever be obeyed. (Cf. Bagehot 1872, 161) For Barrès, the "sacred authority" was above all else the natural instinct of the humble people, which in itself was parallel to the inherent (*raciné*) national sentiment among the people. But parliamentary representation alone was not sufficient to express this deep-rooted ideology, which was also associated with

³² "C'est fréquemment que l'abstention, dans la vie parlementaire, est une opinion, la plus étudiée, la plus nuancée, la plus sage." (L'Abstention est une opinion; c'est parfois la meilleure. L'Écho de Paris, 15.5.1909 in Barrès 1994, 55-58)

³³ In the article Barrès refers to the postal strike and state employees' right to strike (*fonctionnaires*), which was under discussion in the Chamber. Barrès suddenly found himself in somewhat of a conflict situation, because this time he actually agreed with Clemenceau's cabinet's refusal to support the right to strike, although at the same time he found it difficult to support Clemenceau, whom he had consistently attacked since the scandal of Panama.

national truth. Only a direct government in the form of referenda will do. (Cf. ch. 3.2.3.)

In the passages quoted above, Barrès criticized the parliamentary government in terms of the politics of voting. At the same time, he did not accept that pure substantial issues were linked with taking a stand for or against the government, nor that issues were sometimes associated with a tacit vote of confidence or no-confidence toward the government.³⁴ In the prevailing system, which was lacking stable majorities, this was really a case of decisive propositions and much debated interpellations. According to Roussellier (2002, 366-367), it signified that in a situation in which the formation of a majority became uncertain, the debate in the parliament subsequently became highly politicized because the future of the cabinet was brought into play in the form of an implicit or explicit vote of confidence. (Cf. also Roussellier 1997, 14)

The Boulangists, like most critics of Third Republic parliamentarism, did not view the situation as an opportunity for a complex and extremely politicized discussion that had any inherent value of its own. Roussellier (2002, 366-367) claims that it was the moments of "dramatization" that provided the opportunity for "les plus grands morceaux d'éloquence et les duels oratoires les plus fameux, toujours en proportion des enjeux. Ils permettaient aussi la recomposition et la clarification permanente des clivages qui séparaient les différents courants politiques." (Cf. Roussellier 2000, esp. 260)

The Boulangists, on the contrary, interpreted the situation merely as a negative deadlock that both "distorts the discussion" and "clogs the liberty of the vote" in the parliament. In Barrès' eyes, this kind of majority parliamentarism created a situation that "sterilized the deputy" and in which "Les intérêts privés priment l'intérêt public et l'Administration se désorganise". (Barrès 1900, 824) Here, the only possible remedy was the strict separation of powers: "Dégager ceux qui administrent et ceux qui légifèrent". (ibid., 824-825) (Cf. ch. 3.2.2. above)

When considering the criticism of Barrès or other Boulangists toward government by discussion, one must not overlook the fact that an environment of general criticism toward parliamentary procedures prevailed at the time, and no real praise for deliberative parliamentarism or government by discussion even existed – either on the left or the right. If this critique of the period around 1900-1910 is referred to as the "crisis of parliamentarism," Nicolas Roussellier emphasizes that the "crisis" did not as much concern the deliberative method, that is "talking" as a decision procedure, as the "political spectacle" of conflicting interests in the parliament. In other words, "parliamentarism shocked those who wanted to place unity and the destiny of the nation above vicissitudes", as Roussellier argues. (Roussellier 1997, 17-20)

³⁴ In "Leurs figures" (1902a,1052), Barrès wrote with contempt about the "dominant law" in the parliament, according to which "on ne vote jamais d'après son sens propre et sur la question présentée, mais toujours pour ou contre le ministère." In "Appel au soldat" (1900, 824-825), Barrès also wrote that: "Le mal gît dans les institutions parlementaires. Un régime qui place les ministres dans les Chambres stérilise celles-ci; nous ne discutons jamais ce qui semble à l'ordre du jour, mais la chute ou la conservation du cabinet".

There is much truth to this attitude when regarding Barrès, especially in the light of his novel "Leurs Figures". From 1892 onwards the routines of parliamentary life were electrified by the breaking of the Panama Scandal. The sessions in the Palais-Bourbon began to turn more virulent and feverish, especially when the Boulangists accused the republicans of being corrupt and degrading the country. The Boulangists had eagerly jumped at the opportunity to carry out a new *revanche*, and Paul Déroulède, for example, accused Clemenceau of being a foreign agent.

Barrès described these events in his novel "Leurs Figures," which mercilessly attacks the parliament and its deputies during the Panama Scandal. Albert Thibaudet (1921, 279) interestingly categorizes the novel as belonging to the genre of "*théatrocration parlementaire*". By this "parliamentary theatrocration" Thibaudet is referring to the French Assemblies, which, contrarily to the "real" Chambers in England, adhere to revolutionary tradition by providing circus-like spectacles for the audience. According to Thibaudet, this aspect of dramatization that is characteristic of the French mentality is still present in the Third Republic (although it is so full of hatred that it is better to use the analogy of a bullfight instead of the theater when referring to the images in "Leurs Figures," notes Thibaudet).

The use of this theatrical metaphor in various forms is typical in Barrès' descriptions of the Chamber. In "Leurs Figures," Barrès characterizes the Chamber as a zoo and subsequently compares the deputies to beasts of prey³⁵ (Cf. Thibaudet *ibid.*, 280). In "Mes Cahiers," Barrès portrayed the best sessions in the Chamber as "music in the opera," while the worst ones, the so-called "boring" ones, were, on the contrary, the moments when "we had trouble breathing thick air". Additionally, Barrès viewed the night sessions as: "les députés de droite étaient gris et ceux de gauche saouls". (Bécarud 1987, 47, 101-103)

In passing, it must be added that the contempt for professional politicians and for parliamentarians was also at its height at the time. A clear token of this was that in French a new, pejorative noun *le politicien* was introduced in the 1870s. This was linked to the new role of deputy which was "professionalized" in a sense: the deputy got salary, was not that much dependent on huge fortune nor the support of the "notables". Instead, his future depended on the electorate merely. (Cf. Estèbe 1992, 334)

In the anti-parliamentary and Boulangist camp, the new image of the deputy was stereotyped as negative, and Barrès was especially prolific in creating pejorative expressions (Cf. e.g. Barrès 1902a and *Mes Cahiers* V, 158-163). According to Barrès, General Boulanger could be primarily characterized by "cette parfaite honorabilité de n'être pas un politicien". (Cf. The article entitled M. Le Général Boulanger et la nouvelle génération. *La Revue*

³⁵ To quote just a few of Barrès' colorful depictions of politicians of the time: Alexandre Ribot: "ce grand épervier sur cet étang glacé"; "le petit taureau au large poitrail au mufle carré, celui qui épouvante les meilleurs espadas, M. Clemenceau" or Waldeck-Rousseau who is "figé dans son silence comme un brochet dans sa gelée". (Cf. Thibaudet 1921,280, and Barrès 1902a.)

indépendante, April 1888 in Barrès 1994,125) But what, then, were the politicians' negatively connotated traits?

In brief, Barrès, for instance, accused politicians of being "*bavards*," "*chequards*" and "*barbares*". These epithets refer, respectively, to futile parliamentary discussion, corruption (the diametric opposite of "honesty") and the fact that parliamentarians represent ("barbaric") values that are not in line with those of the "humble people"³⁶. The parliamentary world was, then, "antinational," it was against the idealized nationalistic nation.

Moreover, Barrès criticized the parliamentarians for being "mediocre," which implies that the elected representatives (the Few) were not good of high enough caliber to represent the people (the Many). The key concept expressed by the Boulangists was that parliamentarism might work in theory, but in practise the representatives can never be as impartial, unselfish and capable as they should be.³⁷ The Boulangists' disappointment with the existing system of government was also manifested as a longing for a certain kind of representative and selected aristocracy, although they elsewhere criticized "the new aristocracy that was elected to the parliament". (Cf. also Rosanvallon 2000, 280-283 about the characterization of the deputy)

Related to this, Barrès occasionally views the representatives of the people in the parliament as a sort of positively valued representative minority. In the following quotation, for example, Barrès considers the representative elite, which was selected mysteriously by the people not only as the best and therefore the most representative part of the people, but also as a group of experts (*spécialistes*) to whom the people have given a mandate to represent them. In this sense, the views expressed by Barres are along the same lines as Maurras' respect for political expertise – for Maurras, though, the expert was the King.

Dans cette enceinte, voici que le peuple prend conscience de soi-même par les spécialistes qu'il a délégués. Lui peuple, il est l'instinct de la nation; porte par un sentiment mystérieux de ses besoins, par un désir obscur de tirer le meilleur parti de toutes époques, il choisit spontanément celui qui a prononcé le mot auquel pour l'instant il a foi. (Le Figaro 21 octobre 1889, article entitled Notes d'un nouvel élu, republished in Barrès 1994, 27)

Here, Barrès praised the deputies for being "the best part of the people" selected spontaneously by the mystic popular instinct, namely the instinct of

³⁶ "Education parlementaire est contraire au génie national", wrote Barrès in *Mes Cahiers* V, 161.

³⁷ In the speech he gave in the Chamber on 4.6.1888 General Boulanger spoke about parliamentarism, which is "very appealing in theory" (Cf. Ch. 3.2.1), and stated that in order to work it should fulfill the criteria as follows: "il suppose une représentation homogène, impartiale, attentive et désintéressée qui s'inspire uniquement de l'amour du bien public ...(interruption from the Chamber)...des ministres choisis exclusivement parmi les membres du Parlement les plus capables et les plus dignes, joignant à l'aptitude professionnelle l'autorité du caractère et le prestige du talent". Boulanger concluded that the current parliamentary government did not fulfill these criteria, and he described the prevailing regime as "constitutional anarchy". (Cf. Ch. 3.2.2.).

the nation. He considered the representatives to be a "representative elite," a selected minority that mirrors the majority, the people. This view thus follows the descriptive or mimetic model of political representation (Cf. Ankersmit 1996, Jones 2000). At this point, Barrès echoed neither the complete refusal and contempt for parliamentarism that was supported by the Boulangists nor the dichotomy that they typically emphasized between parliamentary representation and the autonomous rule of the people in the form of so-called direct democracy.

Perhaps what this article published in *Le Figaro* immediately after Barrès was first elected to the Chamber of Deputies primarily echoed was his enthusiasm toward the work that was planned to be carried out at the Palais-Bourbon, "délicieuses après-midi du Palais-Bourbon!," as Barrès exclaimed. In any case, this seems to be more the words of a newly elected deputy than a devoted Boulangist revisionist. Furthermore, the passage expresses faith in authoritarianism and the longing for a saviour that would incarnate the fundamental wishes and political will of the people either in the form of a representative in the Chamber or, more extensively, an *homme national* who would lead the masses. (Cf. ch. 4.3.)

Let us now return to Barrès' critique of the parliament, and, more specifically, to the point that characterizes the parliament as "*bigarrure*" (Cf. Barrès 1902a, 1051). This refers to the Chamber as being a forum of divided opinions and competing parties, that is, as an allegedly heterogeneous and disorganized place. As I have mentioned above, the Boulangist constitutional revision was intended to override this parliamentary chaos and restore the peace in politics. The aim of the Boulangists and Barrès at the time was thus to create a harmony of opinions in the assembly instead of emphasizing the plurality of attitudes.

This attempt to harmonize political action also reinforces the overall definition of the ideal France that is typical to nationalist discourse, according to which the nation, France, is regarded as a uniform entity – both politically and culturally. Barrès regarded this ideally uniform national identity through the ties that linked individuals to the soil of their motherland, to the dead and to France's long historical continuum. The image of the diversified parliament was, therefore, completely opposed to the image of the ideal French people as understood as "one and undivided," and, accordingly, the alienation of "the corrupted parliament of politicians" from the "humble people" was once more discursively verified.

According to Bagehot (1872, 158), government by discussion is equivalent to a civilization whose spirit lies in progress, change. "A free state, a state with liberty, means a state, call it republic or monarchy, in which the sovereign power is divided between many persons, and in which there is a discussion among persons". In a way, the implicit assumption in nationalist discourse to avoid discussion, to have contempt for "useless" discussion between different points of view and alternatives, is a position against the state of liberty and the democratic principle. In addition, for nationalists like Barrès, the customs of the individual (religion, family, traditional physical surroundings etc.) and the

society (history, model of ancestors, tradition etc.) were sacred values that were to remain unchanged. And if one considers this kind of nationalistic ideology, one can conclude that it includes the implicit idea that questioning a society's customs will inevitably lead to its demise. (Cf. Bagehot 1872, 184-185)

3.4 ... to the tacit approval of the government by discussion

During the latter part of his life, Barrès became much more approving in his attitudes toward the parliamentary republic. From 1906 onwards, when Barrès was re-elected to the Chamber of Deputies, his attitude toward the parliament changed slightly. Generally speaking, from this point on Barrès grew increasingly conservative, and during the First World War he became "one of the nation's leading spokesmen". (Soucy 1972, 174) He supported the Sacred Union against the enemy and eventually compromised most of his anti-parliamentary ideology for the sake of national unity as sustained by the Establishment.

In 1906 he still saw the parliament as being composed of a range of different opinions, but at this stage he appeared to accept this diversity. He saw the Chamber of Deputies as:

/.../la plus complète série des échantillons de la nationalité française/.../C'est ici l'assemblée de la France. Voici tous les Français. Non pas des gens nés d'un même père (comment s'est formée la France. La Terre et les Morts), mais convoqués successivement à travers les siècles. Les voici tous, les plus anciens et les plus récent, les Algériens et les Savoyards. Et j'y vois des manques, les sièges des représentants de la Lorraine et de l'Alsace. Cette construction a été arrosée de sang; elle a fleuri dans quelques génies. (Mes Cahiers V, 172)

Barrès now regarded the parliament more as a mimetic representation of the various, although equally respected, opinions and ideologies that were prevalent throughout France. To put in Barrès' own words, the parliament was thus interpreted as a synthesis, "a map" of France's *diverses familles spirituelles*, which mirrors various dimensions of political life in the country. (Cf. Bécarud 1987, 64) (Cf. mimetic theory of political representation by F.R. Ankersmit in Ankersmit 1996) His book, "Les diverses familles spirituelles de la France" (published in 1917), provides a perfect illustration of his mature and more moderate outlook. This is evident not only with regard to his opinions about parliamentarism but also his views on nationalism, which thus began to take a more pluralistic turn from exclusionary nationalism.

Turning back to the quotation cited above, one can also note Barrès' extended conception of the French nation, into which persons who are already dead and those who are to be born are included. This idea – which echoes the thinking of Edmund Burke – is the cornerstone of Barrès' nationalist doctrine and is based upon a view in which a nation is seen as "transgenerational": generations are assumed to exist entangled in now-time and contemporary

space through individuals who are inevitably tied to their "dead and soil," that is to their biological and historical inheritance.

Tradition thus speaks to us through the voices of our ancestors, who pass on the accumulated heritage and wisdom of the past and, in so doing, form the patriotic consciousness of the people. To quote Barrès, who in the following crystallizes the ideal behind "the cult of the dead" as establishing a "united" nation: "We are the sum of a collective life that speaks in us. May the influence of our ancestors be permanent, the sons of the soil vital and upstanding, the nation one". (Barrès 1902b, 68; English translation taken from McClelland 1970, 192)³⁸

In a sense, Barrès appears to also link this view of great importance (in the context of Barrès' nationalism, of course) to the Chamber of Deputies, which, therefore, represents not only currently existing issues and opinions, but also potential issues, which are not topical. Here, one can see that Barrès' conception of political representation is extended to include those people, opinions and even provinces that are absent. He also assumes that the "voice of the ancestors" can and should be heard in the parliament by means of maintaining French traditions and heritage. One may regard this kind of Barresian conception as an extension of the mimetic representation discussed by Ankersmit (1996, 2002) because Barrès assumes that the parliament should mirror the opinions and traditions of the French citizens as accurately as possible regardless of whether or not they are visible or tangible.

Ankersmit, in turn, has emphasized the inevitable and necessary aesthetic gap between representant and representative: the representatives may and should not mirror the voters and their opinions as such, because there is always an inherent distance between the representatives and the voters. (Ankersmit 2002, 107-112) Ankersmit's theory of aesthetic political representation emphasizes political representation as "making something present that is absent". More accurately, the point in Ankersmit's theory is to underline the fact that "political reality does not exist *before* political representation" (as assumed by mimetic representation), "but only exists *through* it". Political reality is thus constructed "in and by the procedures of political representation". (Ankersmit 1996, 48)

Without tackling the philosophical essence of representation, it can be said that Barrès' conception of the Chamber of Deputies corresponds with the rhetorical figure of the "*nation assemblée*" as depicting the parliament, and this was also explicitly expressed by Barrès. Put differently, the parliament was thus regarded as a sacred place where the politically diversified nation "begin to exist *physically*". (Roussellier 2000, 252, cf. Barrès in *Mes Cahiers V*, 154-155) This view is related to the "fragmented political culture," which at the time was divided into numerous different political fractions. Under these circumstances the parliament was thus interpreted as *the* place for the assembled political

³⁸ In French: "Nous sommes le produit d'une collectivité qui parle en nous. Que l'influence des ancêtres soit permanente, et les fils énergiques et droits, la nation une".

nation to convene. A deputy was not elected by a single electorate³⁹, nor was he reliant upon a single political current. Instead, the simultaneous "representation" of numerous political lines left more room for a deputy to manoeuvre, both in terms of the potential future electorate and as regards the formation of parliamentary coalitions. (Roussellier 2000, 252-253)

One could argue that, at this point, Barrès' view on national representation in the parliament merely echoed his general doctrine of nationalism emphasizing the historical and biological heritage and continuum of the national community. This is clearly visible in the aforementioned quotation in this chapter, which stresses Barrès' view of the biologically defined "transgenerational" national assembly in comparison with his overall vision of the nation.

Regardless of the fact that Barrès regarded the discussion in the Chamber more or less with contempt, he did highly value oratorical art, namely the aesthetics of eloquence. It is also a well-known fact that Barrès overtly admired the eloquence of certain speakers, such as Jean Jaurès. Barrès admired Jaurès greatly in spite of their different political attitudes (see Bécarud 1987, ch. 4, about Barrès' own estimations of "grand orators"). In relation to this point, one might ask whether Barrès gave priority to the aesthetics of speaking while simultaneously looking down on "political speaking," or, rather, the political value of the speech in forums such as the Chamber of Deputies.

Overall, it can be said that Barrès' depictions of the Chamber were sometimes sentimental, literary and "poetic", as he himself liked to put it, and he often emphasized the eloquence, oral skills or external habitus of an orator over the substance or political impact of the speech itself. But it should not be forgotten that here this claim concerns the texts (notes about deputies, sketches of politicians, impressions of the Chamber etc.) that Barrès intended for inclusion in his book about the parliament and which were eventually published posthumously. Barrès' approach in some of the notes (they remained only gathered notes) he made for the book was both observational and personal, mainly because they were written spontaneously whilst he was in the middle of carrying out everyday tasks. (Cf. Bécarud 1987; *Mes Cahiers I*, Introduction by Philippe Barrès)

Apart from his almost furious criticism of the parliament in the days of Boulangism, he also spoke about it warmly and confessed as early as 1906 that he had had fun there. He described some sessions with such epithets as "beau spectacle!". In the latter part of his life, he also confessed in his diary that: "Je puis penser beaucoup de mal du système. Mais le club me plaît." (*Mes Cahiers VI*, 137-8)

As a matter of fact, Barrès wrote in 1911 that he was trying to go beyond the contempt of parliamentarism⁴⁰, and in 1920 he summarized as follows:

³⁹ Cf. Bécarud 1987, 36-38 about Barrès' personal thoughts about his defeat in the second tour of general election in 1889.

⁴⁰ "Le mépris du parlementarisme, on peut croire que je l'éprouve. Mais, l'ayant longuement expérimenté, je cherche à le dépasser." (*L'Écho de Paris*, 6.5.1911 in Barrès 1994, 67)

Au Parlement - J'ai commencé par sentir ce qu'il y a d'excitation et de spiritualité dans la bataille (fraternité, risque, etc.). Puis j'ai senti la poésie des idées. Deux étapes. Troisièmement, c'est bien intéressant de voir l'histoire de France, la politique française dans le cerveau de ceux qui la font. (Mes Cahiers XIII, 6)

Additionally, Barrès also regarded the Chamber of Deputies as "la meilleure des tribunes pour un orateur qui veut répandre ses idées" (Mes Cahiers II, 60, cf. Tharaud 1928, 146-147) In this phrase from the year 1898, Barrès already recognizes the importance of the parliament as a special and public place for political discussion. From this quotation one might also conclude that the motive behind Barrès' constant running for parliament and unending political ambition ultimately lay in the special controversial character of politics, or, at least, in his personal ambition to participate in it, to observe or exploit it.

Robert Soucy (1972, 129-130) seems to support the latest alternative because he views Barrès' relationship toward the parliament as more instrumental. According to him, for Barres, the Chamber of Deputies was a "means to an end, the end being to prepare the masses for a second nationalist revival". Barrès no doubt thought that Boulangism had failed because of its lack of a doctrine, which meant the absence of the indoctrination of the masses and, subsequently, the lack of any real chance for success. But, although it is true that Barrès was convinced that moderate means, persistent nationalistic education and persuasion rather than temporary violence, were the best way of achieving positive electoral results, I do not suppose that Barrès regarded the Chamber any more instrumentally than any other politician might do.

In sum, I am inclined to believe that Barrès, who admired debates and "belles séances orageuses," eventually – after years in the Chamber – grew to like the rhetorical and controversial character of parliamentary politics and, thereby, also eventually came to terms with the principles of parliamentarism in general. Put differently, I am not certain if Barrès ultimately regarded the rhetorical culture of parliamentary politics as futile, perhaps even coming to sustain it and even, later in his life, to understand the parliamentary style of politics as contingent, or to put it perhaps more like Barrès, as an opportunity⁴¹. (Cf. Roussellier 1997, 281)

Concerning Barres' overall expression of anti-parliamentarism, it must not be forgotten that he stated the following well-known phrase in his diary: "J'aime la République, mais armée, glorieuse et organisée". (Barrès in Mes Cahiers IV, 11) This still refers to the authoritarian and firm government in substance, but it also implies that institutional questions had not been among Barres' most primary political concerns – and that Barres' brand of anti-parliamentarism was not formed upon any in-depth doctrinal analysis, as Sternhell (1972, 131) also remarks. Barrès' electoral manifesto from the year

⁴¹ In 1912, Barrès noted, for instance, that "De la tribune un orateur perçoit, enregistre très bien les moindres effets de sa parole sur l'auditoire. Des mouvements de corps, des expressions de visage l'avertissent./.../Un orateur qui sent de la résistance peut dans certains cas louvoyer. Qui de nous n'a pas vu cent fois Briand prendre le vent, filer sous la tempête. On en cite qui changent tout simplement d'opinion et sans vergogne". (Mes Cahiers IX,401)

1889 is also his only political program which focused specifically on constitutional reform.

Nevertheless, the impact of Boulangist Barresism may be regarded as important even though Barrès did not contribute significantly to the analysis of political regimes. What he did contribute to was the formulation of modern political protest populism (and nationalism, of course), and in this sense Barrès' influence on populist anti-system protest during the era of Boulangism must not be neglected. Sternhell, too, notes that Barrès had a good grasp of both the modern politics of the masses and universal suffrage, and he knew how to make use of both. In this respect, Sternhell adds, Barrès' conception of politics was much more elaborate than that of Naquet or Boulanger. (Sternhell 1972, 230)

Barrès' main distinguishing characteristic is the "lack of ideological coherence" in his writings in the long run, and this aspect is worth of pinpointing when examining his texts in hindsight. Some scholars have found this feature annoying, while some have even interpreted it as an deliberate act on the part of Barrès, or a natural consequence of the development of his thinking. Regardless of how it is characterized, this ideological "unevenness" also concerns Barres' anti-parliamentary views, as indicated in the text above. In relation to this point, Maurras has characterized (Boulangist) Barrès as "le dernier contrefort de la France contre les mauvais vents de la République et de la Démocratie" (Collection of Maurras, entitled Barrès, p. 32, quoted in Touchard 1963,170). Barrès's statement in his diary, however, says something entirely different:

Voilà pourquoi la cause de la démocratie moderne est désormais indiscutable. Elle est la force, il faut que nous lui accordions, contre nos prédilections d'aristocrates, contre notre goût de la grande culture, la qualité de la justice. (Barrès in Mes Cahiers quoted in Touchard 1963, 170)

In relation to the aforementioned quotations, Touchard (1963, 170) argues that "in spite of Maurras' pleas (to convert to monarchism), Barrès has always refused to condemn democracy and to despair over the of Republic". This claim might look peculiar after reading paragraphs dealing with the Boulangist revolt against the establishment. However, one can also regard the Barresian anti-republican attitude, especially after the Boulangist period and from the Dreyfus Affair onwards, not as subversive but more as a criticism against the republican political culture and its predominant values.

This is to say that if French republicanism is considered to be about the philosophy of natural rights or human rights, about individualism and "contrat social," these are precisely the premises that are not accepted in nationalistic circles. Consequently, nationalists, like Barrès, or Le Pen nowadays, might "basically be republicans" when it comes to the regime (and whatever they themselves say), but pluralistic republican political culture and values are certainly beyond their nationalist programs. (Cf. Berstein 2002a, 284)

3.5 Toward the simplification of politics

In this section I scrutinize Boulangist revisionism in detail – that is, Boulangist and Barresian anti-system attitudes and anti-parliamentarism with their specific reference to Third Republican parliamentarism and the dominant role of the legislature. As one has seen, Barrès criticized the existing system of political representation and the overly powerful parliament, short-lived governments, lack of true sovereignty of the people and lack of true power of the executive. The form of government that was denounced was characterized as corrupt and as engaging in squabbling, politicking and vain discussions, and the political establishment in power was considered an aristocratic oligarchy, more selected than elected, and therefore as not truly representative of the popular will. The political alternative that the Boulangists provided on the level of political institutions was a direct democracy by means of the direct consultation of the people, firm government and the centrality of an authoritarian Head of State.

The Boulangists were willing to move away from Third Republican parliamentarism: away from the continuous construction of coalitions and governments interpreted as “overpolitized” due to their participation in the political game and theater seasoned with futile debates intended to confuse and mislead the electorate. The parliamentary discussions were considered useless because they did not change anything *factually* but instead only provided the electorate with various impressions (Cf. Barrès 1893, 6) For most Boulangists and Barrès, the main advantage of the direct consultation of the people was the fact that it would serve to simplify politics: instead of vain politicking between persons, decisions could be made by concentrating simply on “pure substance”.

Behind Barrès’ anti-parliamentarism and his model of plebiscitary democracy lay an attempt to harmonize political action, an attempt to go beyond political controversies and to prevent political conflicts. The Boulangist Barrès interpreted politics as the search for truth and unanimity instead of the act of submitting different opinions for competition – dealing with them through open deliberation and contingency. The ultimate aim of practicing politics without conflict, which is emblematic for authoritarian populism, is thus to be against the plurality of opinions, against contingency, and, finally, against the nature of politics as a sphere of controversies and conflicts. The simplification of politics implied in Boulangism thus went along with the minimization of the political.

Finally, it must once again be pointed out that constitutional revision was not an exclusive demand of the Boulangists at the time. Rather, the Boulangists continued along the path that had been paved earlier by some leftist radicals. Simultaneously, the influences of some individuals from the extreme left-wing (Naquet, Laisant) were clearly perceivable in the revisionist program. (Cf. Néré 1964, 77-121) This does not overrule the fact that the Boulangist protest in itself also paved the way and provided both the rhetorical and strategic model for further nationalist and populist protests against the existing political system, as

one will see later in this work. In this sense, Barrès may be regarded as a "link" between protest populism and exclusionary nationalism: with Barrès, the populist protest was inherently linked to modern extreme nationalism.

Against the backdrop of this chapter one may turn now to the famous French antithetical dichotomy between *pays légal* and *pays réel*. The Boulangists' anti-system attitudes may also be conceived as a critique against the *pays légal*, the legal nation. In turn, the alternative political program that the Boulangists offered France, which was to save the country from decline, rhetorically created the real nation, the *pays réel*. The *pays réel* as interpreted by Barrès is, generally speaking, a deep-rooted French national civilization, and as one has seen, the Boulangist constitutional revision aimed at direct democracy through the bolstering of popular consultations, since it is only through referenda that the real voice of the people in the nation may be heard.

I also argue that the dimensions of the anti-system rhetoric may also be discussed through the dichotomy of the *pays légal* and the *pays réel*, which will be my precise aim in the following chapter.

4 FOR THE PEOPLE AND AGAINST ILLEGITIMATE ELITES - THE PAYS RÉEL VERSUS THE PAYS LÉGAL

As has been emphasized in the previous chapter, the Boulangist appeal to the people was promoting the conviction regarding the unity and unanimity of the people. If presented in a pointed way, one may even say that the entire demand for direct democracy and referenda was based on a supposition about the uniformity of the people that supported the ideas of the Boulangists. As also described above, the conception of the people as a united entity has served as one of the implicit premises in Boulangist discourse, although this premise prevails in the contemporary discourse of the Front National as well (see below Ch. 7). One must admit, however, that in these discourses this view has in some respect been taken more as an utopian ideal or political aim than an existing reality.

The utopian aspect behind this view does not overrule the fact that the presumed collective uniformity ultimately metamorphosized into an absolute value in the political program. The discourse of directly appealing to and addressing the people, as the saying goes, implicates an implicit distinction between those who form the unity of the collective and those who are automatically excluded from it, in other words who are not included in the ideally conceptualized national community. In this sense, the nationalist discourse creates both an ideal France, an image that goes along with the political program of the party, and another France, which is occupied by political and ideological enemies. This opposition may also be formulated as the dichotomy of the *pays légal* and the *pays réel*. (Cf. Taguieff 1995)

The French distinction between the *pays légal* and the *pays réel* is a very illuminating rhetorical antithetical dichotomy in this context. One may note that nowadays this distinction between the legal nation and the real nation is interpreted quite broadly, although historically the comparison between the *pays légal* and the *pays réel* dates back to the Orleanist July Monarchy (1830-1848), in which *suffrage censitaire* (i.e. suffrage on the basis of property qualification) prevailed. During that time the *pays légal* signified both those

citizens who had the right to vote and *les gouvernants*, the representative government chosen by a limited number of citizens. The *pays réel*, in turn, referred to the people who did not have political rights, that is the right to vote, or, alternatively, it might also have referred to those who disagreed in one way or another with those in power¹.

This dichotomy was manifested by François Guizot,² who distinguished the citizenry from the people and according to whom politics was a rational reflection of the public good that was not reducible to private interests or wills. The Orleanist representative model was, then, not to "reflect the nation as it is, but to represent the rational element in the nation. So political rule was about the supremacy of reason over will, passion and instinct", to quote Stuart Jones (1993, 24).

From the Orleanist point of view, the dichotomy between the *pays légal* and the *pays réel* may, thus, be seen as a rhetorical dichotomy that formulates the distinction between political order and civil or moral order, or, from a broader point of view, between the public realm and the private realm. The state authority is in any case distinguished from the civil society, or, to be more exact, from the rest of the nation without political rights. The distinction between the *pays légal* and the *pays réel* implies that public political order can not be traced back to the popular will, and, furthermore, that equality in the context of civil and moral order does not necessarily imply equality in the political order, which is to say that universal human rights cannot be the legitimate reason for the extension of equal political rights. (Cf. Guizot's speech in Chambre des députés, 5.10. 1831 in Guizot 1863, 308-310)

In this and the following chapters one will be able to observe that the interpretation of the dichotomy of the *pays légal/réel* introduced by Guizot has acquired new nuances and emphases in the nationalist discourse over the years. In other words, for Guizot, both the *pays réel* as an expression of the socio-cultural relations and the *pays légal* as the politico-juridical order that transcended these relationships in terms of rational change were legitimate. His point lay in the recognition of this difference.

In the nationalist discourse, as one will see below, the interpretation of the dichotomy of the *pays légal* and the *pays réel* was the subject of an entirely different kind of emphasis and evaluation. The *pays réel* was considered as the primary dimension, as a natural order, whereas the *pays légal* was experienced as an artificial and vain attempt to change the natural order.

¹ In the "Trésor de la langue française, Dictionnaire de la langue du XIXe et du XXe siècle" (1986, 1230), the *pays réel* as the opposite of *pays légal* is defined originally as follows: "L'ensemble des individus d'une nation qui, soit ne peuvent exprimer leurs choix politiques (absence de droit de vote), soit sont en désaccord avec les gouvernants en place". (Cf. also Dubois 1962, 90-91)

² François Guizot (1787-1874), historian and statesman, leader of the conservative constitutional monarchists during the July Monarchy (1830-48) and chief minister of King Louis-Philippe. Guizot was also a political theorist and commentator belonging to the so-called "doctrinaires group". Guizot defended the restricted suffrage and considered the aristocratic governing class to be a natural and ideal elite which, however, "must recruit itself constantly from the people," as Guizot himself put it.

Although the epithets of *pays réel* and *pays légal* were not explicitly discussed by the Boulangist Barrès, the basic idea implied by this dissociation is implicitly present in the Boulangist discourse, and, therefore, the anti-system protest of Boulangism may be justifiably analyzed through this rhetorical opposition. It is also obvious that, as such, this implicit antithetical distinction, which can be easily discerned in Barresism,³ gave rise to the later nationalist and more explicit interpretation of the dichotomy of the *pays légal/réel* that was launched specifically by Charles Maurras. In fact, the explicit notions of the *pays réel* and the *pays légal* are contemporarily associated with the nationalist and neoroyalist Charles Maurras — to the extent that the early history of the rhetorical pair is often forgotten.

The dichotomy between the *pays légal* and the *pays réel* provides us with a further and more extensive perspective from which to approach the anti-system reaction and rhetoric. In addition to the strictly reduced attack on the political system and parliamentarism, populist protests tend to be assaults against multiple adversary elites, such as heretical, corrupted and globally-oriented politicians or *déraciné* intellectuals. In other words, not only has the political establishment been the target of an attack, but so, too, have, for example, the intellectual elite (notably *la République des professeurs* and Kantism as an "official doctrine" of the state in the Third Republic) as well as the global (*mondialiste*) and "pro-immigrant" elites (especially in the Fifth Republic).

Related to this, the national unity is seen as being in danger because of the threat posed both by the political "enemies" within the nation (e.g. erroneous forms of government, the political establishment with its "false values," corrupt politicians) and those outside of it (Germans, foreigners in general etc.). Both internal and external threats form the basis on which the pessimistic discourse on decadence in general and the declining nation in particular is formed under the umbrella of the nationalist discourse.

This aspect of anti-elitism, which has been common in the anti-system protest discourses since Boulangism, is revealed especially when examining notions such as "the people" in itself, its opposites and various meanings. Briefly, what is this mysterious people which is commonly interpreted as a homogeneous unity and against which there exist differently interpreted elites, a France of adversaries? As one can see, the dichotomy between opposing elites and the people may be seen as analogous to the distinction between the *pays réel* and the *pays légal*. On the one hand, the *pays réel* depicts the idealized people and the way in which the concept of the (real) people is interpreted in nationalist discourse. On the other hand, it also sheds light on the other pole, not only those who exercise formal authority but also political or ideological adversaries against whom one wants to execute an attack, that is, the *pays légal*.

Let us now turn our attention more closely to the various aspects and reformulations of this dichotomy of the *pays réel* and the *pays légal* in the nationalist discourse, beginning with one frequently used reformulation which

³ Both from the early Boulangist Barresism and the later, more ultra-nationalistically oriented Barresism.

is manifested in the absolute praise of the "little people" in the opposition to differently interpreted "gros". Let us first focus on the late nineteenth century, when the dichotomy between the "true" people and the elite, notably in the form of "*les petits vs. les gros*," began to appear in Boulangist and Barresian discourse. Because these rhetorical figures are nowadays commonly associated with Maurras, the Maurrasian doctrine stemming from this perspective will be studied in the next chapter.

In addition to highlighting historical references, I shall return to the issues of antielitism, the people and the opposition between the *pays légal/pays réel* when dealing with the contemporary discourse of the Front National in Chapter 7.

4.1 "Les petits" versus "les gros"

In spite of Maurice Barrès' Boulangist program for constitutional revision, some commentators have argued that the attainment of national greatness was of primary importance for Barrès, while the form of government, whether a republic or a monarchy, was ultimately a question of secondary significance. (Cf. the quotation of Barrès in Ch. 4.2. ["Notes d'un nouvel élu"]) Whatever the interpretation, in Barresian discourse national greatness went hand-in-hand with popular greatness, the grandeur of the people was simultaneously seen as a way out of the declining Republic and a means of achieving national greatness. This is to say that once the political power is directly in the hands of the people and the social and economic circumstances are adequate for workers, farmers and local shopkeepers, the unity of the nation is guaranteed and its national greatness is subsequently energized. In this sense, for Barres, the moment of Boulangism represented a return to the source of national energy, as Chastenet (1954, 232) puts it.

The concept of national energy is very illuminating in this connection because it clarifies the instinctual nationalism of the masses, especially the very cult of masses praised by Barrès during Boulangism. Barrès' first trilogy of novels, "*Le Culte du Moi*", introduced certain main Barresian concepts, such as *âme populaire, inconscient*⁴ or the notion of *énergie nationale* – although more on

⁴ In his "Notes d'un nouvel élu" (from 1889, in Barrès 1994, 25), Barrès states that he had encountered the *âme populaire* during his electoral campaign among the *ouvriers* in Nancy. This experience of mingling amongst the gathered crowd was crucial to Barrès: he saw moments such as the incident in the Gare de Lyon (when the cheering crowd accompanied Boulanger toward Clermond-Ferrand) or the Boulangist electoral victory day of 27th January 1889 as genuine and special manifestations of national energy. He already discussed the notion of this popular soul and its manifestation during mass events in the third volume of his first trilogy, "*Le Jardin de Béatrice*" (1891, 236), noting that: "Les hommes réunis par une passion commune créent une âme, mais aucun d'eux n'est une partie de cette âme. Chacun la possède en soi, mais ne se la connaît même pas. C'est seulement dans l'atmosphère d'une grande réunion, au contact de passions qui fortifient la sienne, que, s'oubliant lui et ses petites réflexions, il permet à son inconscient de se développer. De la somme de

the individual level. In his second trilogy, which was aptly entitled "Le Roman de l'énergie nationale," Barrès developed the national energy more collectively and as related more to specific events which touched the "collective emotion" of the nation.

The first of these kinds of moments described by Barrès was the funeral of Victor Hugo, the second genuine expression of national energy was Boulangism, and others were still to come in the form of the Panama Scandal or the Dreyfus Affair. The Barresian idea behind the concept of national energy was thus that it resides permanently in the masses but will only clearly surface at certain moments. General Boulanger, charismatic leader that he was, crystallized this latent national energy, manifested the "forces of national subconscious" by leading the forces representing the national instinct – that is, the people.

Barrès' conviction at the time was that approaching the genuine people, who possessed the national instinct and energy, would add momentum to the Boulangist movement. Boulangism was an outburst of French national energy: the movement had turned the people's vitality, political enthusiasm and passion into action – and the most important source of power was the people themselves. The virtue of the people lay in their folk wisdom and the experience of their natural roots, in their natural, un-perverted national consciousness. (Soucy 1972, 119-120)

Barrès, like Boulanger, wanted to return the ancient greatness of France back to the nation and the people and, as such, he specifically appealed to the "sane part of the country", to the working people, "the living force of the nation", who would ultimately lead the nation out of decline and with whom Barrès politically identified himself despite the fact that the life of *ouvriers* could not have been more distant from his own. (Cf. Soucy 1972, *ibid.*) Before tackling the topic of the workers as "the allegedly sane part of the country", let us briefly examine which other groups of people Barrès regarded as opposite forces to the established order.

Maurice Barrès wrote in 1888:

Que nous font à nous, nouveaux venus, ces vieilles querelles: républicaines, royalistes ou bonapartistes? Nous sentons qu'il est d'honnêtes gens dans toutes les factions, et que ces haines où ils s'empoisonnent l'existence, n'aboutissent qu'à l'installation de quelques farceurs de politiciens, qui, vainqueurs ou vaincus, vivent toujours à nos détriments et pour notre ridicule. Ce mépris des exploités, depuis quelques années déjà, sourd comme un vague sentiment chez les honnêtes gens de quelque caste qu'ils soient. Dilettanti, industriels et ouvriers en ont assez de lire des comptes rendus des deux chambres et d'être *l'ami du député*. Mais surtout interrogez les jeunes gens: artistes, élèves des écoles scientifiques, médecins, officiers, unanimement, ils vous assurent de leur profond mépris pour ces êtres de platitude et d'insolence, dont l'insuffisance clabaudes dans les couloirs des assemblées et dans les seins des commissions. (Barrès in *La Revue indépendante*, April 1888. The article entitled M. Le Général Boulanger et la nouvelle génération, republished in Barrès 1994, 126-127)

ses inconscients naît l'âme populaire. Pour la créer, seuls valent des ouvriers, des gens du peuple, plus spontanés, moins liés de petits intérêts que des esprits réfléchis."

This quotation summarizes and illustrates the Boulangist themes covered in the previous chapters: not only does Barrès have a vigorous contempt for futile parliamentary practices and deteriorated politicians but he also praises honest people, who are presented as diametrically opposed to the realm of old political disputes. Barrès introduced himself in the article as an upholder of a new political generation that trusted "only the clairvoyant", General Boulanger, and he emphasized his role as that of a role model for the youth (*prince de la jeunesse*, as he was labeled at the time).⁵ Barrès also made political appeals to a number of different factions ("*dilettanti, industriels, ouvriers*"), but above all he wanted to address one specific audience: young people in general.

Similarly, he opposed "the honest people" to the prevailing political elites, although at the same time he also determined a new legitimate elite, the allegedly fresh and young generation of his peers, who were collectively searching for something that extended beyond political parties and the *bavards* of the parliament. Curiously, this new elite, among whom Barrès counted himself, was opposed to the ancient elite of politicians and was – in addition to being young – also intellectual. The young intellectual elite were, then, culturally – and positively – determined: at this stage one can find no signs of anti-intellectualism, which was to become a constitutive property of nationalist protest during the Dreyfus Affair.

Instead, Barrès confronts the politicians, "*ces pauvres illettrés,*" "*la bande opportuniste,*" with his own generation and is simultaneously concerned about the "ignorance" of the establishment concerning "our intellectual (and literary) patrimony" as represented by such persons as Voltaire, Hugo or Michelet. (Barrès in *La Revue Indépendante* April 1888, republished in Barrès 1994, 127) In the first place, Barrès was initially captivated by the Boulangist mass movement and saw it as an occasion to appeal to the young intellectuals of *Quartier Latin* "to overcome their snobbism and mix with the masses" because "vitality was awaiting them not in the salons but in the streets". He was also concerned about the fact that the most important posts went to elder politicians instead of the less deteriorated younger generation. (Soucy 1972, 119)

Hence, as the quoted passage above indicates, Barrès endeavored to break what he presumably saw as archaic and old-fashioned political boundaries, which was a typically Boulangist view. In fact, the old divisions between the right and the left and between republicans and monarchists were more or less substituted for a division between oligarchy (*pays légal*) and universal suffrage/real democrats (*pays réel*). (Winock 1997b, 79) Here, the antithetical

⁵ Barrès sent the article cited above to the *Revue indépendante* while visiting Venice, Italy, where he had decided to join Boulanger. The political enthusiasm for the General expressed in this article is a perfect example of the Barresian idea of Boulangism as the rebellion of a new generation against the old establishment and the bourgeoisie. Over twenty years later Barrès reflected somewhat ironically on the rebellious phase in his diary "*Mes Cahiers*": "*Le boulangisme. Je ne vais pas raconter le boulangisme. Comme je me suis amusé! Il y avait bien de la fantaisie, de l'allégresse, de jeunesse, l'idée d'embêter le pion, le philistin, les grandes personnes*". (*Mes Cahiers*, vol. XIV, 199, quoted in Sternhell 1972, 108) (Cf. Dupré's Introduction for Barrès and Maurras 1970.)

terms *pays légal* and *pays réel* clearly illustrate the discrepancy between the system of representation and the authentic will of the people.

In the Boulangist era this dichotomy was manifested in a variety of different ways. Barrès conceived of the *pays légal* as a "*classe dirigeante*" (bourgeoisie) or an "*aristocratie de hasard*" (representative parliamentarism), while the *pays réel* represented the "instinct of the humble", honest people, *déshérités*, or *France enraciné*, as he put it in his later works. And the political reform suggested by the Boulangists would ensure that the truly democratic political power would be returned to the people, to this *pays réel* as a firmly rooted part of the nation. Barrès noted that Boulangism was a revolt of all those "qui plaignent qu'on a rien fait pour eux, que la vie leur est difficile". It was a revolt of "les petits": "les petits commerçants, les ouvriers, les paysans, les petits retraités" against "dur gouvernement d'argent", "la société financière organisée pour l'exploitation de la France". (Quotations of Barrès from the year 1889, taken from Sternhell 1972, 156)

These were the "little people" into whose hands Barrès was willing to shift the direct political power from the bourgeoisie and the parliamentarians with their unending discussions. Barrès presented the workers (*ouvriers*) as the opposite of the bourgeoisie, the "new aristocracy", which is "faite de quelques familles parlementaires" and which holds the political and economical power and is thus the enemy of the workers. Barrès' Boulangist revolt may, accordingly, be interpreted as the will to recapture the Republic from "oligarchic bourgeoisie" and to return it to the real democratic forces, to these "little people". In this sense, Barrès' Boulangism followed in the footsteps of the French revolutionaries because he saw the workers as "partie saine du pays, cette classe ouvrière qui a su fonder la République", whereas the existing political elite is only maintaining its own position, which more closely resembles the system of the *ancien régime*.⁶ (Sternhell 1972, 154-155)

In this connection one must, however, note that the Barrès' sympathy toward the "little people" had a nationalistic bias: Barrès spoke neither on behalf of the unprivileged *foreign* workers nor the Jews. In this sense, Barrès' conception of the "people of the margin" was very selective and became even more so as the years went on. (Cf. Barrès 1893)

For Barrès, the humble people, the masses, were "the most direct expression of national instinct, loyal guardians of ancestral tradition". They simultaneously represented energy, vitality and virility and were therefore considered to be "full of truth". They were inherently more nationalist because they were closer to the soil and more "rooted" than urban intellectuals, "their minds less corrupted by abstract rationalism". (Soucy 1972, 116, 120)

Here one encounters one of the typical anti-intellectual attitudes that went hand-in-hand with the hostility toward the political establishment in Barresism

⁶ On 26 May 1889, Barrès wrote in the paper "Le Courrier de l'Est" as follows: "Il s'agit simplement de substituer une vraie République au despotisme odieux des opportunistes. Il s'agit d'avoir une République soucieuse des intérêts démocratiques des travailleurs, des malheureux, en place de cette oligarchie de bourgeois." (Quoted in Sternhell 1972, 154)

at least from the Dreyfus Affair onwards. In the same way as Barrès opposed the little men to the "gros," he opposed the humble instinct to the logic of intellectuals ("*les logiciens de l'absolu*"). Barrès disapproved of the rootless intellectuals, who were educated according to universal and abstract Kantian principles which made them an "*aristocratie dégradée*" (Cf. Barrès 1897, ch. V).

In his "*Scènes et doctrines du nationalisme*" (1902b), Barrès wrote that "a surplus of diplomas creates what we may call, after Bismarck, a 'proletariat of graduates'. This is our indictment of the universities: what happens to their product, the 'intellectual', is that he becomes an enemy of society". Briefly, according to Barrès: "Kantian doctrine uproots him from the soil of his ancestors". (Barrès 1902b, 46, English translations taken from McClelland 1970, 178) This notion underlined that people "deeply rooted in the French soil" possess a certain ancestral wisdom that intellectuals, "with their abstract and cosmopolitan ideas", never possess because they are alienated from the national conscience and the soil of France.

After being elected to the parliament for the first time in 1889, Barrès recounted his sentiments about the electoral campaign in Nancy in *Le Figaro*. In the article, entitled "Notes of a newly elected deputy",⁷ Barrès praises his working class electorate by accentuating the sincerity, instinctiveness, braveness and healthiness among the *ouvriers* ("*Pas de milieu plus sain.*"). "*Lui peuple, il est l'instinct de la nation*", Barrès declared. (*ibid.*, 27)

What is the "national instinct" that formulates the political will of the people? The qualifiers related to this instinct are, for example, that it be "mysterious", "obscure", "spontaneous", as in the quotation above. Additionally, Barrès defines it as follows: "*/.../ de l'instinct rien ne peut naître que de bon et de curieux; tout au moins c'est une force fatale contre laquelle rien ne sert d'aller.*" (Barrès in *Le Figaro* 21.10.1889. Taken from Barrès 1994, 28) The national instinct is, first and foremost, associated with the character of the humble people, which is seen as naturally good. It is always described in the singular – the national instinct of the people – which alludes to the fact that the fundamental truth, the instinctual wisdom of the masses, can be found among the people as interpreted, once again, as a homogeneous and uniform entity.

Second, it is allegedly a "fatal force," a deterministic factor that can neither be altered nor interfered with. This determinism implies that the political will of the people is mysteriously formulated in advance, and is therefore unable to take into account the contingency of the political circumstances or adapt itself to the ever-changing topics on the political agenda. Likewise, Boulangism's basic aim of surpassing political parties, and especially party conflicts, attempted to harmonize political action in order to attain ultimate national harmony, and as such the Boulangists saw factional rivalries and opposite points of view primarily as negative factors that weakened the national strength and energy. According to the Barresian view, situations of conflict and controversial stands tend to debilitate both individual and national energy. (Soucy 1972, 121)

⁷ "Notes d'un nouvel élu," *Le Figaro* 21.10.1889, republished in Barrès 1994, 25-29.

Zeev Sternhell (1972, 157) notes that Barrès fantasized of a France that existed in total harmony and had no class distinctions, a return to the golden age of the "little people". If one further scrutinizes this notion of the people in Barresian discourse, it is interesting to see how Barrès appeals to the entire people as a classless whole, as an entity without primary antagonisms, and, at the same time, he also appeals directly to one specific part of the people: to the sane part of the people (uncorrupt, not spoiled by political opportunism etc.).

On the one hand, Barrès thus made his appeal to the whole *nation*, while on the other hand, he appealed specifically to the humble people, to the *plebs*, which he by no means defines exactly or limits. In this latter connection, however, Barrès implicitly, and often even explicitly, highlighted the class antagonism between the oligarchic bourgeoisie (*les gros*) and the little people (*les petits*). This dichotomy between *les gros* and *les petits* is actually parallel to the formulation of the dichotomy between *la France d'en bas* and *la France d'en haut*, those "at the top" and those "at the bottom", which may also be expressed differently in the form of the dichotomy of the *pays réel* and the *pays légal*. (Cf. Taguieff 2002, 9)

As one saw above, the appeal to the people is ambiguous because of the ambiguity of "the people" as simultaneously being both the *whole* and *part* of the people, as Pierre-André Taguieff (1995, 28) remarks. Taguieff also adds that "all demagogues, especially nationalist ones, play with both these meanings". Related to this, Jacques Juillard (1992, 185) notes quite correctly that the people (and the concept of the nation, or *patrie*) is, on the one hand, "un concept social discriminant" – it necessarily includes some categories or classes of the population while simultaneously excluding others. On the other hand, the people is seen as a principle of democracy as "un concept politique englobant," which means that social distinctions are transcended, voluntaristically evaded. (ibid.) This same ambivalence of the word *peuple* is also revealed when considering the two meanings that are implicated by the concept, which are expressed in Latin as *populus* and *plebs*, the first one referring to the whole nation and the second to part of it, thereby underlining the differences between the social classes. (art.cit., 186-187)

4.2 The social question

Barres' defense of the little people was evidently connected to his political program, which in addition to being revisionist was also labeled as "social". For Barrès, as for Déroulède previously, the primary social question during the Boulangist era was that of defense, and it was also a central theme used to rally the little people. "Defense" in this connection meant that French labor, as well as French businesses and industry, should be protected from foreign labor and competition, and hence the nationalist protectionism was also extended to include social policies. (Sternhell 1972, 71)

As mentioned above, and as the quotations above indicate, by standing as a revisionist candidate for Boulanger⁸, Barrès attempted to appeal to as wide a crowd as possible. Instead of underlining conflicts of interests between various social groups, Barrès attempted instead to bypass them altogether by persuading as many people as he could. The use of polyvalent rhetoric and themes (such as tax reform or the decrease of foreign labor [Cf. Barrès 1902b, 303-308]), the emphasis on a certain anti-party attitude (beyond old political boundaries) and the realization of the ingenious synthesis of social questions and nationalism are the main defining characteristics of Barresian thought at this stage.

Barrès emphasized his role as a "social reformist" after his first election to the Chamber of Deputies as follows:

Or le mot du jour n'est pas de politique: ce n'est ni EMPIRE, ni MONARCHIE; la forme républicaine nous satisfait; – ce n'est pas non plus un appel à la GLOIRE; quelque souvenir que nous gardions dans l'Est, nos ouvriers se préoccupent peu des complications extérieures: les efforts profonds du peuple son uniquement pour réclamer des réformes sociales. SOCIALISME, c'est le dictame où la France contemporaine a mis son espoir.' (Notes d'un nouvel élu, Le Figaro 21 october 1889, republished in Barrès 1994, 27)

As this passage explicitly indicates, Barrès excluded social reforms from the sphere of the "political". From this came the idea that the solving of social questions and problems was merely administrative, beyond the sphere of political action, and from Barrès' perspective this kind of "state of affairs" was acceptable, even desirable. Alternatively, the emphasis on social questions can be seen as more broadly connected to the basic attitude behind Barresian discourse according to which political action is interpreted in a simple manner as a mere procedure of problem solving – in this case as solving the actual problems of working labor. Barrès' overall social program, both in 1889 and also ten years later, can also be viewed in this light. Moreover, socialism was a label under which Barrès wanted to gather potentially hostile tendencies toward the existing system – but after being elected to the Chamber he also wanted to stress more practical (social and "socialist") policies as opposed to revisionist subversiveness.

Accordingly, from this quotation one can notice a certain kind of withdrawal from the absolute revisionism that was central to Boulangism, or to put it differently, one can discern the appearance of a more moderate approach to the prevailing republicanism than prior to the election. In this connection and context, the basic meaning of the concept "republicanism" in Boulangist discourse is interesting because it seems not to refer exclusively to the regime but also to a more broad system of values and political ranking order. At this point, as in his later days, Barrès was content with republicanism. (Cf. Ch. 3.4.)

⁸ See "Programme social du Comité Révisionniste de Meurthe-et-Moselle" in "Courrier de l'Est" in 1889, quoted in Sternhell 1972, Ch. IV. This program was the basis for the Programme de Nancy in the election of 1898, when Barrès failed to get elected to the parliament. The latter program is published in full in Barrès 1902b, 303-308.

The economic crisis and unemployment that affected French workers at the time was clearly reflected in Boulangist discourse. The general trend at this time was for social discontent to be channeled toward foreigners (in the form of calls for social reforms such as the establishment of pension funds for French workers), which would later serve as a kind of rhetorical figure that would force them to play the role of the scapegoat. Additionally, although (or because) Barrès has not familiarized himself with the industrial age and technological progress, he appealed to "all victims" of the industrialized society. In this sense, the industrialized society appeared "sick" and was seen as a source of decadent advancement, according to Barrès. (Sternhell 1972, 157)

Barrès proclaimed that socialism did not, generally speaking, emphasize economic and class conflict, and it seems that Barrès voluntaristically wanted to avoid any kind of in-depth focus on economic questions. For this reason, Barrès' "socialism" has been characterized as anti-Marxist despite the fact that some of his articles during the period of Boulangism may have had a different tone. (See Sternhell 1972, Ch. IV) Nevertheless, Barrès' defense of French labor from foreign workers later took an ideological turn toward strict protectionism in economics, especially during his second campaign in Nancy in 1898 (when Barrès tried to gain re-election by using the same kind of platform he had used successfully ten years earlier).

The latter program is a good example of how Barrès ultimately combined his ideas about socialism, protectionism (of French workers, i.e. patriotic principles included in economic policies) and nationalism, and in so doing explicitly emphasized the solidarity between nationals and national cohesion at the expense of the exclusion of foreigners. In fact, Barrès seemed to maintain that the systematic and legitimized exclusion of foreigners would fortify the national solidarity within the nation (Cf. Barrès 1893) According to Barrès, "the new French politics" is to "protéger tous les nationaux contre cet envahissement [l'étranger, comme un parasite, nous empoisonne], et c'est aussi qu'il faut se garder contre ce socialisme trop cosmopolite ou plutôt trop allemand qui énerverait la défense de la patrie". (Le programme de Nancy 1898, in Barrès 1902b, 303)

The major points of Barrès' second manifesto in Nancy⁹ clearly confirms the analysis made by Sternhell (1972) according to which Barrès, as a Boulangist candidate, practiced a kind of social demagoguery that was flavored with xenophobia, anti-Semitism and anti-intellectualism under the guise of socialism. (Cf. Barrès 1902b, 303-308) Overall, and in retrospect, it may even be said that the "socialist program" of Boulangism offered Barrès a political opportunity that he seized rather than the opportunity to thoroughly fulfill his own ideological ambitions.

From a narrow perspective, Boulangism can ultimately be considered as a populist working class movement of the time. Overall, the social question

⁹ Among the major points and under the title of "Mesures à prendre tendant à assurer l'union de tous les Français" were clauses such as "contre le produit étranger", "contre l'ouvrier étranger", "contre la féodalité financière internationale", and "contre le naturalisé". (See Barrès 1902b, 306-307)

played a more or less central role throughout the entire Boulangist campaign, and Hutton (1976, 96), for example, notes that in the later phase of the campaign the "candidates recognized the need to address themselves more directly and precisely to the social and economic grievances of the urban electorate to which they appealed". In this respect, as Hutton continues, "if Boulangism did not begin as a precursor of socialism, it did in fact end on a socialist note," and it had at least somewhat of an indirect impact on the later calls for social reform. (see *ibid.*, 97) As a matter of fact, the Boulangists collaborated with socialists in parliament: they joined forces and supported and voted for certain social reforms, such as a bill dealing with retirement pensions and the 1890 bill dealing with working women and children. (See more on this in Sternhell 1972, 167-170)

One must keep in mind that, in this context, the first wave of Boulangism stemmed ideologically from the radical far left, specifically from radical leftist antiparliamentarism, which, for its own part, directly influenced the programs of both Barrès and Boulanger. At this stage therefore, Boulangist antiparliamentarism could not be identified entirely with the right. (Cf. Sternhell 1972, 81-93) Along with the influence of radicals such as Alfred Naquet, A. Laisant and former *communard* Henri Rochefort, there were also the Blanquists, who were fascinated by Boulanger. Some French socialists, who were divided into three rival fractions in 1888 – the Marxists, the Possibilists and the Blanquists¹⁰ – some of whom, for example Ernest Roche, joined Boulanger, ran for the parliament and were elected. (Dansette 1946, 190; Defrasne 1990, 37)

In fact, there were close ties between popular Boulangism and the growth of the organized labour movement, perhaps most notably in areas where the socialists did not play a significant role. Nancy was precisely this type of city, and it was from this constituency that the Boulangist deputies Barrès and Alfred Gabriel were elected.¹¹ (Hutton 1976, 97) Many of the Boulangist

¹⁰ The "parti possibiliste" was a name by which Paul Brousse (1843-1912) and his "Fédération des Travailleurs socialistes de France" were known. This moderate and republican fraction was against both Boulangism and militant nationalism during the era of Dreyfusism. The Blanquists, in turn, were followers of Auguste Blanqui (1805-1881), a revolutionary socialist who spent over 30 years in prison for his political action.

¹¹ William Serman (1991,125-126) writes that Barrès and Alfred Gabriel, who were both elected deputies of Nancy in 1889, "owed their success to the revisionist votes on the extreme left and particularly to the mass rallying electors, three quarters of whom had previously voted for the government republicans and only a quarter for monarchist conservatives. Soon, however, the two men revealed themselves unequal to the task of maintaining the stability of such a heterogenous coalition". Serman also adds (*ibid.*, 127) that in spite of their devotion to socialism, many workers in their constituencies distanced themselves from Barrès and Gabriel and felt politically betrayed and neglected. In the next local elections workers once again voted *en masse* for the moderate republicans, and by 1893 the socialist-revisionists, now simply "socialists", had lost "virtually all their members". Gabriel subsequently disappeared from politics and Barrès campaigned in the legislatives of 1893 for Nancy but was *not* elected (contrary to Serman's claim). Actually, Barrès experienced a succession of electoral failures until 1906, when he was finally elected deputy for the first arrondissement of Paris (Les Halles). Just before the elections he was selected as a

candidates presented demands for social reform, which came in the form of proposals for old-age and accident insurance, consumer cooperatives, labour organization, public works projects and urban renewal. (Hutton 1976, 96) According to Hutton's (1976) interpretation, Barrès even developed a relationship between populism and syndicalism in his articles in "Courrier de l'Est" in 1890.

The emphasis on social question in the Barresian discourse also brings us to the disputable issue of French protofascism, which is connected most notably to the role of Maurice Barrès. This is related especially to Barrès' original combination of nationalism and socialism, to his anti-Semitism, his admiration for strong leadership and the themes of the *élan vital*, generational continuation in blood and *la terre et les morts*. There are some non-French scholars, for example the German Ernst Nolte and the American Robert J. Soucy, who defend the thesis according to which Barrès is seen as a precursor of the brand of protofascism that lay the groundwork for Hitler's Nazi doctrine. One of the advocates of this thesis, the Israeli Zeev Sternhell (2000, 15-16), claims that it was Maurice Barrès who invented the concept of "national socialism" during his second electoral campaign in Nancy in 1898. According to Sternhell, Barrès had realized, much before the other enemies of the Enlightenment, the mobilizing power of this new synthesis of modern nationalism and anti-Marxist socialism, and therefore ideologically paved the way for Nazism.

Without tackling this issue further here, one might just note that the question at hand is curiously formulated between two academic camps: the French and the non-French. French historians generally tend to deny that the "roots of fascism" could be found in the history of French thought as such, although Pierre Milza (1991), for example, recognizes the existence of a certain ideological parallel between fascist ideology (not the system) and French nationalism at the turn of the 20th Century. More broadly speaking, the overall issue of French fascism is sometimes seen by researchers as problematic partly because of the vagueness of the fascist movements in the 1930's and the lack of a fascist system in France, with the exception of the Vichy government. The question of French fascism is more or less culminated in the overall definition of fascism, which, however, is not my aim in this study. (For more on this see Berstein 1984, Milza 1991, Nolte 1966, Rémond 1982, Soucy 1966, Sternhell 1972 and 1978)

Let us return now to the nationalist and populist emphasis on the little people. In chapters 3.3 and 3.4 one has seen how Barrès' attitude toward the parliament and its special role as a sphere of political discussion began to take on more moderate nuances in his later days and as a result of the specific historical events that took place during that time (e.g. *union sacrée*). A similar kind of development toward moderation, or perhaps toward his more authentic "inner self," can also be seen in Barrès' conception of the masses. As much as Barrès admired the instinctual wisdom of the masses, had he also felt scorn

member of the French Academy. For more about the campaigning and characteristics of the "Comité Républicain Révisionniste Socialiste de la Meurthe-et-Moselle" see art.cit.

toward the intellectual banality of the little people as well as disgust, and even fear, toward this "instinctual side" of the mob. (Cf. *Mes Cahiers* II, 11)

It has also been reported that irrespective of Barrès' programmatic appeal to the little people, he, in practice while visiting Lorraine, for example, did not speak to the common people but maintained a certain voluntaristic distance to them. To quote the Tharaud brothers (1928, 193), one of whom was Barrès' personal secretary during his years as a deputy: "Ce qu'était un ouvrier, un paysan, un domestique, un instituteur, un soldat, il n'en savait rien. Il ne les connaissait pas et ne voulait pas les connaître. 'Je n'aime pas les petites gens', disait il."

Related to this direct citation from Barrès, the Tharaud brothers add (*ibid.*, 193-194) that Barrès' dislike of the little people was not due to his arrogance (according to Tharaud, Barrès was "l'homme moins arrogant qui fût") but to the fact that Barrès "ne pouvait supporter cinq minutes de conversation avec quelqu'un qui n'avait pas dans l'esprit des préoccupations de même ordre que les siennes". If in this sense Barrès was "elitist by nature or by intellect," was he also convinced that the crowd needed a leader to follow. Because of his faith in the national saviour he was convinced that the masses should be led by a firm leader who would exist above the crowd and who could guide the masses toward ultimate political victory. (Cf. Soucy 126-131)

The following short passage from Barrès' diary¹² illuminates his reservations toward the masses and perhaps to mass politics in general at this point.

Je suis plébéien, mais je proteste contre la démocratie si elle veut faire de mon pays une étable à porcs. (*Mes Cahiers* II, 196)

Finally, one may note that a certain paradox is revealed when one considers the anti-elitism described above in discourses such as that of Boulangist Barrèsism (Cf. also the notes about the contemporary national-populist movement, the Front National in Ch. 7 below). In Barrès' rhetoric, anti-elitism in the form of underscoring the little people very often goes hand-in-hand with the need for a certain legitimate elite, or at least with the need for an authoritarian leader who would guide the masses. On the one hand, elitism is neglected, especially when appealing to the common people, while on the other hand, however, elitism plays a certain role in defining the people to whom one is appealing. (Cf. Taguieff 1995) This is to say that Barrès is in some way willing to substitute the "false" elite of politicians and the bourgeoisie with a "real" French elite, which he defines differently depending on the occasion: whether the true elite representing the deep-rooted Frenchness is seen as the young generation, workers, shopkeepers or other social groups defined as "the common French people".

In this light, and related to the quotation from "*Mes Cahiers*" above, it appears that Barrès sometimes had reservations with regard to the model of direct democracy and to the literal interpretation of the sovereignty of the

¹² Barrès wrote the passage some time between 1899 and 1901.

people. At least Barrès was willing to see – in the case of parliamentary representation – that the minority elected by the people had the best possible political expertise and was as representative as they possibly could be: this is to say that representatives in the parliament would mirror, albeit in a condensed form, the best and the most representative part of the French people. (Cf. also Ch. 3.3 and the chapter about Maurras below)

4.3 Hero worship

At this stage it may be appropriate to briefly examine some points regarding Barrès' hero worship and his subsequent longing for authoritarian political leaders, such as General Boulanger. It is worth noting that Barrès' relationship to Boulanger as the leader of the *Parti national* appears to be ambiguous. On the one hand, hero worship was one of the major elements in Barresian thought and he had a profound personal admiration and longing for the leadership of "great men."¹³ On the other hand, though, Barrès seemed to realise from the very beginning that Boulangism lacked any kind of real doctrine, and he waged quite fierce personal attacks against Boulanger, at least in his novels. (Cf. Thibaudet 1921, 277-278) From the latter statement one cannot, however, conclude that Barres' hero worship vanished as Boulangism died out. On the contrary, Barrès was certain that there would be both other Boulangisms and Boulangers. (Cf. Barrès 1900, 756, 968)

Barrès' praise of "great men" becomes clear especially in the passages that he wrote for his planned yet uncompleted "Livre sur la Chambre," in which he painted portraits of "grands parlementaires" such as Jaurès, Clemenceau and Briand. What is particularly interesting at this point is the specific admiration of great men as "grands orateurs" (which Barrès himself was not¹⁴). A case in

¹³ In the secondary school in Nancy, Barrès found, for the first time in his life, "a man of exception". This extraordinary man, "le premier homme supérieur que j'ai rencontré", was his philosophy teacher, Auguste Burdeau, who had a profound influence on him and whom he, at least partly, describes in his novel "Les Déracinés" as a character of Bouteiller. (Burdeau, like Barres himself, later became a member of the Chamber of Deputies.) Although Burdeau inspired Barrès spiritually, Barrès was not in agreement with him about his Kantism. (see *Mes Cahiers* I, 94; Preface of Eric Roussel in Maurice Barrés 1994, IX-X, see also Soucy 1972, 189-190)

¹⁴ Although not an orator, Barrès himself hungered for glory: he wanted to become a great man of France. He even confessed in his diary that "what differentiates me from others/.../ is my feeling for grandeur". He was also attracted to the question of genius. He posed the questions: "From what [was] genius made?" and "What is it therein which excites us to higher activity and makes us feel more alive?". (Barrès in *Les Maîtres* quoted in Soucy 1972, 192; *Mes Cahiers* I,116) Nevertheless, according to Barrès, great souls were not only reserved for men like Victor Hugo or Goethe (though it was only logical that their genius or superior spirit be compared with one's own *moi* in order to elevate one's soul to new heights [Soucy *ibid.*]), but occasional genius can potentially hit almost anybody, as can be concluded from this overtly humanistic passage in *Mes Cahiers* I,29: "L'homme de génie, c'est celui qui nous donne ce dont nous avons besoin et qu'un autre ne pouvait pas nous offrir. Le

point was the socialist leader Jean Jaurès, whose personal and parliamentary eloquence – although not his ideas – Barrès admired without reserve. It was characteristic of Barrès to admire charismatic figures and their eloquence over their principles to the extent that some scholars have interpreted Barrès as being less interested in the thoughts and ideas of great men than in their reputation, "their aura of greatness itself". (Cf. Soucy 1972, 193-194) In any case, even though Georges Clemenceau was *la bête noire* of patriots (Thibaudet), Barrès was also able to make *less* polemical observations about Clemenceau's behaviour in the parliament. (See Bécarud 1987, Ch. IV; Barrès' *Mes Cahiers* V)

Thus Barres saw great men as representative of a certain type of hero, although not necessarily of *national* heroes. Barres did, however, see Boulanger as a national hero, as the Saviour on whom Barrès placed high hopes, as is clear in the following passage:

...Ô maître, si tu existes quelque part axiome, religion ou prince des hommes...
(Barrès in *La Revue indépendante* April 1888, republished in Barrès 1994, 123)

This phrase was first published as the final words in Barrès' first novel, "Sous l'oeil des barbares" (1888), and Barrès himself has said that the passage crystallized the major "obsession" of his life. (*Mes Cahiers* XII, 300) Barrès's longing for a national saviour was that passion, and Barrès was undoubtedly "the most dedicated apostle of the Boulangist legend" (Hutton 1976) throughout the Boulangist movement. After the decline of the movement Barrès dedicated himself to the formulation of descriptions about the *élan* of Boulangism in his novel, "Appel au soldat" (1900), and he thereby continued to cultivate the myth associated with the General.

More "abstract" national heroes played a different role in Barrès' thinking, and here I am referring most notably to heroes such as Jeanne D'Arc or Napoleon. For Barrès, these heroes were "sublime educators," because "to imitate the great figures of history is the road to salvation for peoples as well as individuals" and "heroes act as intercessors between the individual citizen and the nation". (Barrès in *La Cocarde*, quoted and translated in Soucy 1972, 211) The role of the cult of heroes was thus to concretize the abstract collectivity and, in so doing, to enforce the national unity. (Cf. *ibid.*) It may be noted here that in 1920 Barrès proposed that a law be passed that would establish the "fête nationale de Jeanne D'Arc", which would be a patriotic national day celebrating national hero worship and national unity in the name of *union sacrée*. (Cf. *Mes Cahiers* XII, 362-364) (Cf. also Goyet 2000, 174)¹⁵

plus misérable individu s'il nous offre un verre d'eau quand nous mourons de soif est un grand homme, un bienfaiteur."

¹⁵ There is no such national holiday nowadays in France, but the contemporary Front National has named the First of May as their own "Fête de Jeanne D'Arc," in the name of which they celebrate "la patrie, la nation, les Français". The ceremonies around this "fête" in Paris include speeches by party leaders and a patriotic march led by Jean-Marie Le Pen. The hero cult and demand for a sort of authoritarian leadership continues today to be an essential feature of contemporary nationalists as well. Notably, the praise of so-called national heroes, such as Jeanne D'Arc or Clovis

In passing, one may remark in this connection that General Boulanger himself rallied the masses, and actually quite extensively, by means of his publicly diffused legend. Boulanger was a true folk hero of his time, and stories about his humble origins and his rise through the army ranks were disseminated. Boulanger was depicted as an honest and ordinary public servant, contrary to the self-serving politicians. Some observers of the Boulangist period have also claimed that it was the popular demonstrations rather than the electoral successes that created the Boulangist myth and legend. (Hutton 1976, 90-91)

These Boulangist rallies are described by Barrès in "Appel au soldat" (1900), and, according to him, these occasions gathering enthusiastic crowds of cheering Boulanger supporters were the moments of *fièvre nationale* that symbolized the renaissance of the national energy. (Cf. Ch. 4.1.) The social psychologist Gustave Le Bon has, in turn, emphasized the irrationality associated with mass events and stressed how open to suggestion the popular mind may be. Concerning Boulangism, Le Bon interestingly remarked that the broad popular support that the General enjoyed would easily have ensured that 100,000 men would have been prepared to die for him. (Le Bon 1895, 31) (Cf. also Hutton 1976)

There is no doubt, then, that Barrès' faith in Boulangism was strong at the beginning of the Boulangist mass movement, and the young Barrès was convinced that the General was "seul en France capable d'expulser les bavards du Palais-Bourbon, qui nous assourdissent et qui sont de vilaines gens". ("La jeunesse boulangiste" in *Le Figaro* 19 May 1888 in Barrès 1994, 130-133) Nevertheless, Barrès recognized the vacuity behind the mythology of General Revanche quite early on, and he also noticed Boulanger's deficiency with regard to the post of Head of State. (Sternhell 1972, 121)

In fact, Barrès' own campaign in Nancy (with the Comité Révisionniste de la Meurthe-et-Moselle) and his electoral publication "Courrier de l'Est" (in 1889) aimed at patching up the holes in the Boulangist doctrine. In order to hide the doctrine's weaknesses and, naturally, to appeal to as wide a crowd as possible, Barrès was eager to use the occasions of his own campaigns to glorify Boulanger's personal cult and to repeat the General's famous slogans. Barrès also realized that emphasizing purely institutional matters, polemics against parliamentarism, does not in itself rouse the interest of the audience toward Boulangism. Instead, the continuous repetition of simple and clear ideas is a better means of appealing to the masses. (Hutton 1976; Sternhell 1972) (Cf. the overtly populist electoral manifesto of Boulanger from April 1888, which is in Appendix 5 in this work)

Later, in his retrospective novel, "l'Appel au soldat", which covered the topic of Boulangism, Barrès criticizes Boulanger for not being an ideologist, for not using the opportunities he had to achieve any radical results (i.e. Barrès interpreted Boulanger as being too soft with regard to the events of 27 January

to a lesser extent, are still the points of reference in the construction of the "national identity".

1889 [Cf. Barrès 1900, 862-865, 999] and the Affair Schnaebelé in 1887¹⁶ [ibid., 961]) and for failing to seize the anti-Semitic moment and reap the benefits of the influences offered by Edouard Drumont during Boulangism. (ibid., 998-999)

From Barrès' thinking about the masses and authoritarian leadership, it follows that the role of an authoritarian leader was, first and foremost, to unite the otherwise divided people and nation. With its nationalistic and even military principles, the strong authority was intended to lead the masses and simultaneously maintain national coherence and fortify national greatness both inside the nation and in relation to other nations. Furthermore, Barrès appears to suggest the existence of a direct link between the people and the authoritarian leader. In other words, instead of useless and corrupted parliamentarians and politicians who made the country even more divided, France needed an *homme drapeau*, a national saviour – which Boulanger personified during the Boulangist era – who would represent and incarnate *the* will of *the* people.

4.4 The people: a vague yet effective rhetorical figure

In the following I will recapitulate the major points concerning the notion of the "people". The discussion below may be seen as regarding either the Barresian discourse exclusively or the movements and ideologies covered in this study on a more general level. Supplementary comments regarding Maurras and the Front National in this sense will be made in further chapters.

Broadly speaking one may note that in nationalist discourse the term "the people" is construed as a single, quite cohesive body that is bound together historically and ethnically: the people is conceived of as having deep historical "roots" in a nation (or within the same kind of cultural civilization) and as being more or less ethnically cohesive. The term "people" is almost systematically used in the singular, which refers to the assumption of social unanimity. Accordingly, when the nation is ideally seen as a uniform, united and unanimous collectivity, its social and political unanimity is easily assumed and consequently becomes combined with its national unity. Politically speaking, the people is then idealized as a subject, as an assumed collective will that in the case of genuine and direct democracy – although not during the existing "pseudo-democracy" – might achieve its full potential.

It must be noted that in the context of the beginning of the Third Republic, common attitudes toward the doctrine of the appeal to the people were quite different than they are nowadays because of the fresh memory of the

¹⁶ The Schnaebelé Affair (1887) was a frontier incident which brought France and Germany to the brink of the war. The Germans arrested Schnaebelé, a French police official, on the frontier and accused him of espionage. The French believed that the arrest took place on the French side of the border, and Boulanger, as a Minister of War, proposed a mobilization. President Grévy did not agree and Bismarck released Schnaebelé, which led to the normalization of Franco-German relations.

experiences of the Second Empire. The idea of the sovereignty of the people was thus considered to be a curse to be avoided: the people were associated with an inorganic and threatening crowd, whereas the nation was, contrarily, seen as an organized collectivity. This distinction between the sovereignty of the nation and the sovereignty of the people (already discussed during the July Monarchy) was advocated by republicans, political theorists and jurists at the time. (For more on this cf. Rosanvallon 2000, ch. VI, Jones 1993, e.g. 27-28)

Additionally, the term people continues to be ambiguous in the sense that it may refer both to the whole nation and to one specific part of it, notably the lowest part of it, which can be interpreted in a number of ways, for example as the working class in general, the "have-nots" within it and so forth. It can be used as a unifying entity, in which case the appeal is directed to "the people" without divisions or antagonisms (as it usually is in the context in which the notion of unanimous people is seen as an opposition to the more or less corrupted political establishment [*pays reel* - *pays légal*]). Or, as I have indicated above, one can also use the notion of the people to refer to a certain part of the people and that part alone, which is the case when directly addressing the "genuine" French people, those who share the same political values as the speaker. And as I have also mentioned previously, it is a common trait in these discourses to refer simultaneously both to the entire people and to a part of the people. (Cf. Taguieff 1995)

The accentuated division between the people and the elite results in a situation in which the role of the so-called "have-nots" is emphasized. In other words, the social gap featured in this discourse is supporting the scheme according to which the speaker – quasi logically and following common sense – is on the side of the "little man". This anti-elitist speech is essentially linked to the overall populist rhetoric and to its various dimensions: it is a part of the anti-parliamentary speech as it is also a part of the social political dimension and even associated with various anti-immigrant¹⁷ points of views.

The problem is indeed the term "people", because it can take a variety of different forms in a variety of different contexts. It can refer, as Canovan (1981, 295) points out, "to the electorate (on the basis of universal suffrage), to the nation, to everyone except one's political opponents, or to no determinate group at all." In addition, as Taguieff (2002, 31) also remarks, populist rhetoric usually idealizes the people as interpreted as a nation, a class or an ethnic group. (Cf. the case of contemporary Lepenist "ethnonationalism," in which the people are idealized as a pure ethnic community).

Nevertheless, one of the core aspects of populism remains its appeal to the people despite the fact that "the people" can be defined and identified differently. It can even be concluded, as Canovan (1981, 261) argues, that the notion of the people lacks precise meaning. Although the term is academically vague (or perhaps precisely for this reason), it is an effective and emotional rallying cry to be used by a politician. Put differently, because the entity of the

¹⁷ For instance when Barrès (1893) proclaims that he is on the side of France's "little people", he is logically excluding foreigners (whether they be "little" or "big" people), who he alleges are taking jobs away from French workers.

people commonly refers to a potential, undetermined and unrestricted audience, it is a very useful figure in populist rhetoric. Paul Taggart (2000, 98) points out quite correctly that "the people" "serves populists well by mobilizing what might otherwise be diffuse interests". In this light, one can endorse Taggart's characterization of the people as a "powerful tool with great symbolic resonance". This idea might also lead us to question whether it is better to simply view "the people" as a symbolic entity, that is merely as an effective yet un-definable figure in populist rhetoric, without attempting to analyze it in any greater detail. (Cf. Taggart 2000, 98)

A further aspect of the vagueness and complexity of the term people is provided by Pierre Rosanvallon, who has extensively discussed the historical complexity and banal vagueness surrounding the notion of the sovereignty of the people and subsequent democracy. In the second part of his trilogy (1998) he introduces the *introuvable* ("which can not be found") character of the people. The point is thus to acknowledge a certain amount of fictiveness along with the vagueness surrounding the concept of "the people" (on the will of which democracy is based). It is essential to note, as Rosanvallon (1998, 14) does, that democracy is a "regime of fiction" in terms of two features. First, sociologically, because it creates a symbolic and an artificial body of the people. Second, technically, because it forms a constitutional state that presupposes that the social is generalized ("*généraliser le social*"), that is abstracted in order to govern it according to universal rules. The people neither possesses a concrete form nor is embodied within a democracy – instead, the people become a number, a serial of equal votes concretized through universal suffrage.

Due to the fact that the concept of "the concrete people" remains vague, it should be manifested in one way or another through democratic representation or personal incarnation (as was the case with Caesarism, for instance), in which case the point becomes, to quote Rosanvallon (1998, 18) that "Le peuple ne préexiste pas au fait de l'invoquer et de le rechercher: il est à construire". (Cf. *ibid.*, introduction) Later, Rosanvallon concludes (2000, 408) that "Loin de former un bloc, dont une unanimité livrerait le secret de la substance, le peuple reste une puissance que nul ne peut seul posséder ou prétendre incarner. Le peuple est le sujet central et absent du processus politique; il excède toujours les approximations que l'on en donne". In this sense, the materialization of the sovereignty of the people remains approximate, momentary and evanescent, for example, as is the case with regard to elections and referenda.

Through this concrete approximation concerning the sovereignty of the people, it becomes even more clear why the requirements set by nationalists regarding the "true" sovereignty of the people often remain vague, and, parallel to this idea, why it is even more simple to refer to oneself as a "real" democrat or as being politically in favour of "the people".

4.5 "The nationalistic people"

In this chapter, on the one hand I have discussed how the people is generally conceived in the nationalist discourse, while on the other hand, I have illustrated how some elites are interpreted as the opposite of the allegedly true and authentic people. My aim in applying this perspective was to present a broader demonstration of the distinction between the objects of nationalist anti-system rhetoric and the strict critique of political institutions and forms of government.

The dichotomy of the *pays légal* and the *pays réel* has also provided a more extensive approach, and it is easy to detect that the attack against the "system" also includes the attack against variously interpreted illegitimate elites. These "false" elites include not only the political elite but also the bourgeoisie and intellectual elite. One essential point concerning the opposition of the *pays légal* and the *pays réel* is that if one were to apply this rhetorical dichotomy to the Boulangist and Barresian discourse and argue that Barrès based both his attack against the existing political system and the establishment and his defense of direct democracy and the deep-rooted French nation on the implicit distinction between the *pays légal* and the *pays réel*, it would be easy to discern the appearance of a certain change in its interpretation.

Namely, the *pays légal* may be interpreted in the Barresian context as a notion intended to attack as opposed to defend, whereas the *pays réel* is the natural and traditional order, the essence to which one should return and which is idealized and formulated as an ultimate political goal in the nationalist discourse. In the Orleanist context, the *pays légal* was a concept that described the Orleanist style of political representation, in other words the government of elites, which was to be defended and not criticized.

This is to say that the advocates of the censitarian Orleanist regime, like Guizot, wanted above all to recognize the distinction between the politically rationalized *pays légal* and the *pays réel* of the people, as well as to defend the elitist *pays légal* – the political rights of the restricted wealthy and hereditary elite – from the excesses of democracy, popular will and universal suffrage. They focused primarily on the *pays légal* and tried to form theoretical and legitimate reasons that would support its existence. In the later militantly nationalist discourses (implicitly in Barresism, explicitly in Maurrasism or Lepenism, as will become clear below), however, the doctrines are constructed as attacks against the existing *pays légal*. This conceptual modification is clarified in the writings of Maurras, who explicitly used the dichotomy, and on whom I shall focus in the following chapter.

Furthermore, the people into whose hands Barrès wanted to place the direct political power was conceived by him mainly as an idealized entity that would be inherently nationalist, honest, sane and deeply rooted in the soil of France. For Barrès, this truly French people was a humble people, the workers, whose national instincts and authenticity was a constant subject of Boulangist

Barrès. The people, precisely the "little people", were a source of national energy for him, and Boulangism as a popular movement was seen as a moment in which to manifest this national energy.

Barrès' Boulangist program was supposed to appeal to the common, working people, which is why it also included social questions. Barrès' "social program" already emphasized the distinction between the French people and foreigners and thus aimed at the improvement of the social conditions of the French labor force at the expense of foreign workers.

This aspect of Barrès' political program may also be regarded as an example of the application of nationalist principles to "social policies". Although the societal context was obviously different in Barrès' era than it is in the present era of the welfare state, it is still possible to claim that the suggestions made by Barrès concerning the social question are comparable to the contemporary demands for national preference presented by the Front National. (Cf. Ch. 7.4.) This is to say, on the one hand, that Barrès already interpreted nationalist social policy as a legitimate means of excluding undesirable foreigners within the nation-state. Barrès also maintained that this kind of separation would fortify the coherence of the national community, and thus one may see here an implicit reasoning according to which the exclusion of foreigners as such would strengthen the national and nationalist *énergie* among the people. As such, the demand for this kind of exclusion is legitimized if viewed as serving the national interest.

On the other hand, these types of demands inherently imply that politics be reduced to the mere procedures of solving problems – in this case the "problem of foreigners". Related to this, one may also note that since the Barrès era there has been an implicit assumption in nationalist rhetoric that solving the so-called problem of foreigners would result in the immediate improvement of the French people to solidify and thereby manifest their *énergie nationale*. In other words, the path to national salvation would thus be open.

In the previous chapter I demonstrated that the Boulangists' goal of achieving a more directly conceived democracy and using referenda was in fact an attempt to simplify politics and attain a simple form of government in which political decision making is reduced to the direct consultations of the people with regard to specific important substantial issues. In this chapter, both the character of the people and Barrès' interpretations of the people have been described further. On the basis of what has been discussed earlier in this work, one may thus draw the following conclusion.

The point here is to recognize that political decision-making on the basis of the instinctual wisdom of the people is seen as an allegedly sufficient means of dealing with important political issues. This outlook implies that there is no need to question the people's instinctual wisdom. In other words, it is taken for granted that the standpoints of the people are naturally good because they are both determined by nationalist instinct and "deeply rooted in the soil" of France.

This also implies that there is no need to question or revise the political standpoints of the people once they have been established. This implies, in turn,

that since political deliberation between different points of view is interpreted as useless, the result is thus unavoidably the rejection of changes, sticking instead with the already decided standpoints: in other words, political passivity. This is one distinctive aspect that is associated with nationalist politics and it clearly highlights the nationalist aim of attaining simplified governance. On the one hand, the notion of the people as a sovereign power is stressed but, on the other hand, the political authority at the very top of the strata is also accentuated, although in a way that tends ultimately to leave the definition of the concrete role of this authority somewhat ambiguous. What we can, however, conclude about this authority is that it is necessary in order to incarnate the will of the people and to ultimately "guide" and command the people in their apparent political autonomy.

5 CHARLES MAURRAS' POLEMICS AGAINST THE REPUBLIC

In previous chapters I have referred on various occasions to Charles Maurras (1868-1952)¹ and his nationalist doctrine. When speaking about the polemics made by the nationalists against the Third Republic, we cannot forget Charles Maurras, a figure head of the Action Française movement, and his anti-parliamentary conceptions and view on the dichotomy of the *pays réel* and the *pays légal*, which are considered here in greater detail. Charles Maurras can be seen as a political ideologist who continued the nationalism introduced by Maurice Barrès even though his political solution differed from Barrès' plebiscitary democracy.

The following presentation of Maurras' assault against the republic will shed more light on the nationalist anti-system rhetoric from a slightly different perspective than that of Barrès. The aspects of exclusionary nationalism and anti-Semitism in particular, which have continued to gather momentum since the Dreyfus Affair, clearly influenced Maurras' interpretation of the *pays réel* and *pays légal*, as becomes clear in the following.

Generally speaking, Maurras' doctrine belongs to the school of counterrevolutionary traditionalism in the sense that his political doctrine was basically founded not only on anti-individualism, authority and hierarchy but also on "tradition" and "natural order" – epithets that were thought to be unchanging and permanent². Nevertheless, he differs from classical counterrevolutionary thinking à la Joseph de Maistre and Louis de Bonald, not to mention the ultra-royalists or legitimists (see e.g. Rémond 1982), because of his *neoroyalism*. This is to say that Maurras – like all the other members of the Action Française movement – were nationalists first and monarchists second because they arrived at royalism by means of logical reasoning and practical

¹ See the biographical history of Charles Maurras in the Appendix 3.

² These basic political principles are concisely presented in Maurras' "Mes Idées politiques" from the year 1937.

empiricism³ as opposed to following a specific religion or a particular dynasty or line of kings. (Rémond 1982, ch. VIII)

Moreover, Maurras put politics above the faith in Providence (his thesis of *politique d'abord*), and he also considered himself a converted royalist, as it was expressed in his "Confession politique": "Bien qu'on l'ait beaucoup dit, je ne suis pas né royaliste".⁴ (Maurras 1931, 1) Accordingly, Maurras defended Catholicism and the Roman Catholic Church as an historical institution that is an essential part of France's Latin heritage and something that will sustain social order and natural hierarchies. At the same time, Maurras thought that the church would form a spiritual framework for the monarchist order despite the fact that he personally proclaimed himself as agnostic with regard to religious matters.

Along with the influences taken both from counterrevolutionary thinking from 1789 onwards and from Auguste Comte, Maurras' spiritual sources lay also in the neotraditionalism of Ernest Renan and Hippolyte Taine. Maurras' originality lay in the fact that he absorbed the lines of "old" counterrevolutionary thinking (de Maistre, de Bonald), modernized them and then syntethisized them with positivism (Comte), with so-called neotraditionalism, with nationalism (Barrès) and anti-Semitism (Édouard Drumont). (Cf. Nolte 1966, 29-53) It can be said that Maurras' doctrine has taken various influences from the *courant*, which, broadly speaking, can be referred to as traditionalism, and which may be divided into three groups in the French context, namely counterrevolutionary thinking, positivism and nationalism. (Cf. Philip 1998, Ch. 1) Briefly, the ideological basis for Maurrasism, very generally speaking, thus follows the line of traditionalistic values such as reactionary passeism, anti-individualism, trust in natural hierarchies and inequalities and the emphasis on authority.

In the following, I will consider Maurrasism mainly from the viewpoint of his dichotomy between the *pays légal* and the *pays réel*, which forms a two-sided perspective to Maurras' conception of democracy and parliamentarism (*pays légal*) on the one hand, and monarchism (*pays réel*) on the other. In fact, the opposition between the real nation and the legal nation are nowadays generally associated with the Maurrasian doctrine, and it is indeed true that the philosophy of this dichotomy was thoroughly elaborated upon by Maurras.

³ Organizing empiricism (*empirisme organisateur*) was Maurras' political method of elaborating his political doctrine. Empiricism meant positivism for Maurras in the sense that, according to him, "notre maîtresse en politique, c'est l'expérience". (Maurras 1937, 167) Additionally, Maurras denounced universal abstractions (especially those related to the Revolution of 1789) and regarded Auguste Comte as his "spiritual father".

⁴ In fact, Maurras "converted" to royalism during his trip of reportage to the Olympic Games of Athens in 1896. From a distance, Maurras observed the "smallness" and "isolation" of France in relation to Great Britain and Germany and was consequently convinced that the only way for France to avoid general decline was through monarchism. "L'évidence m'en arrachait enfin l'aveu: il nous fallait rétablir enfin ce régime si nous ne voulions être les derniers des Français. Pour que vécut la France, il fallait que revînt le Roi. La décision de mon royalisme intellectuel était prise." (Maurras 1931, 43-49)

Below, I will concisely discuss the ways in which the existing political system was seen by Maurras as the false appearance of a nation (*pays légal*) and how he conceived of his ideal France (*pays réel*) as a political regime and community.

5.1 Integral nationalism

Integral nationalism is the term which best crystallizes the core of Maurras' doctrine. As a matter of fact, by definition, integral nationalism was seen by Maurras as synonymous with monarchism, and vice versa. Maurras equated his integral nationalism with monarchism by arguing that being a patriot inevitably means being a royalist, and that by in order to avoid the complete decline of France it is obvious that "il nous fallait rétablir enfin ce régime si nous ne voulions être les derniers des Français. Pour que vécut la France, il fallait que revînt le Roi." (Maurras 1931, 49)

Royalism was a logical necessity for Maurras, a theorem whose legitimation lay in empirical history, and this history, for its own part, has proven that the best form of government for France is monarchy. The restoration of monarchism was, in other words, a natural solution for integral nationalism – on the basis of history and reason, he who demands nationalism inevitably demands monarchism, as the following quotation indicates:

On démontre la nécessité de la Monarchie comme un théorème. La volonté de conserver notre patrie française une fois posée comme postulat, tout s'enchaîne, tout se déduit d'un mouvement inéluctable. La fantaisie, le choix même, n'y ont aucune part: si vous avez résolu d'être patriote, vous serez obligatoirement royaliste. Mais si vous êtes ainsi conduit à la Monarchie, vous n'êtes pas libre d'obliquer vers le libéralisme, vers le démocratism ou leurs succédanés. La raison le veut. Il faut suivre et aller où elle conduit. (Maurras 1937, 298)

Integral nationalism was "integral" and complete in the sense that the nationalist objectives were only attainable through its logic, and integral nationalism was seen as ultimately achievable solely through rule by monarchy. Maurras' integral nationalism actually bolstered his conception of *politique naturelle*, which, in turn, was based on inescapable biological inequality and its subsequent natural hierarchies.

Maurras' *politique naturelle* was based on the thesis according to which man is not born free. Instead, the new born human being is subordinated from the very beginning to protective inequality (*inégalité protectrice*), which is to say that he/she is completely dependent on the care of the family around him/her, and his point is that the family into which the baby is born is "parfaitement pur de toute égalité: aucun pacte possible, rien qui ressemble à un contrat". This early phase of human being is described by Maurras as "spectacle d'autorité pur, ce paysage de hiérarchie absolument net". (Maurras 1937, 18).⁵

⁵ In order to clarify Maurras' ideas, I shall quote his "avant-propos" for his "Mes Idées politiques," which was entitled "politique naturelle" and written during his

This protective inequality represents for Maurras a model from which natural hierarchies, *inégalités nécessaires* and the demand for strict authority were derived, and which ultimately provided the foundation for his integral nationalism. To put it briefly, in this connection, the individual is necessarily subordinated to the social collectivities, such as family, society or state, which cannot be founded on the "myth of equality" or "abstract liberty," because otherwise they are doomed to failure, as the democratic government is.

Maurras' positivistic outlook denounces pure abstractions and relies on precise, concrete facts a posteriori. Maurras was actually, like Comte, against all forms of liberalism. One may also note in passing at this point that the contemporary Front National is echoing Maurras by arguing in favour of concrete liberties as opposed to the abstract concept of liberty and, additionally, following Comte, the contemporary party even more enthusiastically emphasizes the priority of the duties of the citizen over his/her rights. The Front National equally shares Maurras' repudiation of toward the "abstract" ideas of 1789, which, in turn, is one of the main aspects of old-school traditionalism since the time of Edmund Burke.

Maurras' integral nationalism, in the form of monarchism, would serve as a solution to the problems created by democracy, and it is only through hereditary monarchism that national salvation becomes possible and the national interest sustainable (i.e. the idea that "love of the Fatherland" comes first). Hereditary monarchism was, hence, the means of providing unity in the otherwise divided nation, and because the unity of the nation demands centralized and personified power, "the hereditary monarchy is the natural, rational and only possible constitution of centralized power in France." (Maurras 1937, 297) As Maurras himself concluded: "Essentiellement, le royalisme correspond à tous les divers postulats du nationalisme: c'est pour cela qu'il s'est nommé lui-même le NATIONALISME INTÉGRAL." (Maurras 1937, 297)

In a nutshell, Maurras' *pays réel* is based on a traditional, hereditary, anti-parliamentary and decentralized monarchy in which traditional values, hierarchy, Catholicism, inequality and absolute neglect of individualism prevails. Maurras' political program, namely his "integral nationalism", was made to achieve all this as a reaction against the decline of France, and the monarchy that was to be restored would, therefore, be traditional, hereditary, anti-parliamentary and decentralized, as indicated in the following passage:

imprisonment in 1937. "Le petit poussin brise sa coquille et se met à courir. Peu de choses lui manque pour crier: 'Je suis libre...'. Mais le petit homme? Au petit homme, il manque tout. Bien avant de courir, il a besoin d'être tiré de sa mère, lavé, couvert, nourri. Avant que d'être intruit des premiers pas, des premiers mots, il doit être gardé de risques mortels. Le peu qu'il a d'instinct est impuissant à lui procurer les soins nécessaires, il faut qu'il les reçoive, tout ordonnés, d'autrui. Il est né. Sa volonté n'est pas née, ni son action proprement dite. Il n'a pas dit *Je ni Moi*, et il en est fort loin, qu'un cercle de rapides actions prévenantes s'est dessiné autour de lui...il ne vit que parce qu'il en est le petit citoyen."(Maurras 1937, 17)

Ce n'est qu'une petite synthèse à déterminer! *Les éléments sont en présence.*

La royauté doit être traditionnelle: il y a justement une orientation toute neuve des esprits, favorable à la tradition nationale et, comme dit Barrès, aux suggestions de notre terre et de nos morts.

La Monarchie doit être héréditaire: il y a un mouvement favorable à la reconstitution de la famille, fondement de l'hérédité.

La Monarchie doit être antiparlementaire: le parti nationaliste, presque tout entier, se prononce contre le parlementarisme en faveur d'un gouvernement nominatif, personnel, responsable.

Enfin la Monarchie doit être décentralisatrice: un puissant mouvement décentralisateur se dessine et grandit de jour en jour dans le pays. (Maurras in *Enquête sur la Monarchie* 1900, 169)

This description of ideal monarchism presented by Maurras above forms the basis upon which he established his conception of the future of France. Maurras began using these epithets after interviewing the representatives of the pretender, the Duke of Orleans, namely André Buffet and Count Lur-Saluces, living in exile in Brussels. These interviews and the related analysis were published in Maurras' "Enquête sur la Monarchie," which was first released in 1900. (Cf. Chevallier 1997)

The various aspects mentioned above will be considered further below, and, therefore, it is perhaps only worth mentioning at this point that if the positive adjectives and definitions mentioned above and linked directly to monarchism were to be expressed in opposite terms, Maurras' *pays légal* would be revealed. This is to say, for example, that if the aforementioned epithet of "traditional," which here is indicative of Barrès' views and his emphasis on the earth and soil and their subsequent generational continuity, was replaced by the term "anti-traditional," then in the Maurrasian discourse it would describe the type of republican democracy that is not built by the traditions and instincts of our ancestors (as Barrès might have put it and Maurras might have subscribed to). Thus, according to Maurras, a lack of continuity and continuum was one of the weaknesses of the republican and parliamentary forms of democracy.

Generally speaking, Maurras wanted to eliminate all democratic, parliamentary and republican institutions from politics, as well as to separate the political state from the social life of the nation. Integral nationalism, which was the union of patriotism and hereditary monarchism, was also seen as serving to ensure and reestablish the ancient greatness of the France of the past. Finally, the monarchy would put an end to the rule of the republic in France, which was, according to Maurras, the rule of the foreigner. In the context of the existing regime, the "foreign" element refers firstly to Maurras' argument about the foreign (i.e. English) origins of parliamentarism, secondly to "étrangers de l'intérieur," who, according to Maurras, hold the power in France. (Cf. Ch.5.5. below)

5.2 Contempt for the masses

At the time of Boulangism, the political interests of the young Charles Maurras were just awoken, or, to put it more precisely, he was, at that particular time, more or less unconcerned with the future of France. One might even go so far as to say that he felt contempt toward politics despite the fact that quite early on he had been personally convinced of the fallacy of the democratic system.⁶

Although the young Maurras participated in civil demonstrations organized against political corruption and the Wilson Honours Scandal of 1887 (as "a patriot and a quite good citizen" [Maurras 1931, 16]), he did not initially warm to the "demagogic aspect" of Boulangism. However, in 1889, when Maurras cast his first vote, it was for Alfred Naquet, a Jewish Boulangist. This single act indicates that as much of an *anti-Semite de coeur* as Maurras was, he was also fascinated by Boulanger's authoritarian presence. (Buthman 1939, 235; Guy Dupré in Barrès and Maurras 1970, XIII, cf. also Maurras 1931 [Confession politique])

Against the backdrop of Boulangist and Barresian populism, it goes without saying that Maurras did not share the same emphasis of the people and its assumed virtue nor did he attempt to use demagogic tactics by appealing to the people, as was the case with earlier Boulangists. Analogously, if we compare Maurras' explicit description of the *pays réel* and the *pays légal* with the dichotomy between "the real nation" and "the legal nation," which is implicitly present in Barrès' discourse, it becomes clear that there are obvious differences. Maurras' real nation was not based on and idealized in terms of popular sovereignty, as in Boulangist Barresism, but was founded instead on the system of absolute monarchy. Moreover, Maurras' hostility toward the legal nation was conceived as a critique of the prevailing democracy, parliamentarism and the (Third) Republic, but, we must also note that Maurras' attack against the republican form of government was based on the premises of his doctrine on integral nationalism and, therefore, was elaborated theoretically as opposed to on the basis of Barresism.

In addition, Maurras' brand of anti-republicanism may be seen not only as a strict response to the existing political context but also as a more "abstract"⁷ doctrine. Maurras' doctrine was created through his journalistic work: Maurras wrote daily articles for the paper "Action Française" from 1908 to 1944, when the paper was suppressed. The daily articles, entitled "La Politique," covered current events but also included more general political or philosophical topics,

⁶ In his "Confession politique" (e.g. in Maurras 1931, 16), Maurras notes of the era surrounding Boulangism that: "C'est peu de dire que la politique active ne m'attirait pas. Je la tenais plus qu'une horreur: presque en mépris./.../Si ma propre doctrine m'en faisait un reproche, je l'endormais en considérant que le mal démocratique était définitif et insurmontable. Osais-je consentir à la mort de la France? Pour cela non. Mais j'y pensais le moins possible".

⁷ Despite the fact that Maurras himself was violently against "abstract ideas" and, therefore, was unwilling to create any "abstract" doctrine whatsoever outside empiristic realities.

which meant that it was possible to publish them much later as more "decontextualised" works, for example in the collection of essays entitled "Dictionnaire politique et critique"⁸. (Natter and Rousseau 1972, 49)

There are, however, also obvious similarities between Barrèsism and Maurrasism, especially concerning the nationalist exclusion of the entities interpreted as "anti-national," in other words the definition of the forces of anti-France with regard to the promotion of prevalent decadence. That is to say that both Barrès and Maurras share the same kind of nationalist exclusion that is inherent to the dichotomy of *pays réel-pays légal*: some groups of people have legal status, while others do not, which thereby leads to their inevitable interpretation as outsiders or Others. However, regarding the people, the masses, Maurras is highly "anti-plebeian", as Hermet (1997, 38) puts it when referring to Maurras' contempt toward "*légitimité démocratique*" and the role of the people within it. Therefore, it would be inappropriate in this sense to depict Maurras as a "populist," although he was indeed a nationalist. Let us now take a closer look at Maurras' "anti-people" and anti-democratic standpoint below.

Maurras did not conceal his contempt for the masses (*la foule*) when he wrote in 1912 that "the masses have feelings, but they have no memory. To depend on the initiative of their judgment and their votes is the greatest folly that can be committed under the guise of rationalism and philosophy". Therefore, the contempt for the masses formed a basis from which Maurras' denial of the sovereignty of the people and parliamentarism emerged. For Maurras, who fervently struggled against the republic and democracy, "government by numbers inevitably meant the hidden government of the worst". (DPC II, 76, DPC III, 202; English translations taken from Osgood 1970, 60) (see also Maurras 1937, 42-46, Ch. 5)

Generally speaking, Maurras assaulted parliamentary democracy by employing the well-known phrase "*la démocratie c'est le mal, la démocratie c'est la mort*". Maurras characterized democracy with epithets such as "un régime d'opinion," "un gouvernement de parti" and "une souveraineté de nombre". Additionally, for him, democracy was a "*règne de l'Étranger*" and "*règne de l'Argent*". (Maurras 1936, 12) Overall, to Maurras, the parliamentary system of government of the Third Republic represented instability, competition, anonymity and irresponsibility – epithets that will be studied next.

The basis for Maurras' anti-democratic attitude can be found in his *politique naturelle*, the grounds of which lay in natural inequality. Maurras saw the natural inequality between individuals as the basis for outlining human society, and therefore the idea of democracy was seen as profoundly false: it is "at odds with nature"⁹. (Maurras 1936, 17) According to Maurras, "*le Nombre démocratique vise à construire une société formée d'unités égales, qui n'existent pas et qui ne peuvent pas exister. Le Nombre démocratique vise ainsi*

⁸ From now on, when referring to Maurras' "Dictionnaire politique et critique" I shall use the abbreviation "DPC".

⁹ In the original: "*L'idée démocratique est fautive en ce qu'elle est en désaccord avec la nature*". (Maurras 1936, 17)

à détruire la société fondée sur des groupes inégaux seuls capables de vie et qui existent seuls". (Maurras 1937, 53-54)

In other words, Maurras opposes authority and inequality to "the dreamy hypotheses of liberals and democrats". (ibid., 18-19) These dreamy hypotheses refer most notably to the abstract ideas of revolution, liberty, egalitarianism and individualism, which, according to Maurras, form the foundation of the *pays légal* and basically exist in enduring conflict with "la Nature des choses". The principles of liberalism expressed in Rousseau's "du Contrat social" or in the Declaration of Human Rights are based, according to Maurras, on the "false" assumption of liberty – as well as the false assumption of equality – on the notion that human beings are born free and equal. (Maurras 1936, 12-13)

According to Maurras, the democratic principle as such was in itself absurd because "nulle part, en aucun temps, n'a pu exister le gouvernement de tout le monde par tout le monde". (Maurras 1936, 16) Maurras did not swear by the "sovereignty of the people," as was the case with the nationalists, who advocated direct democracy, because, according to Maurras, "it does not exist". (Maurras 1937, 187) Because there is no such thing such as sovereignty of the people, there is subsequently no "real sovereign" and therefore "les fonctions souveraines sont désormais exercées par n'importe qui, par le premier venu, ou par le dernier, et surtout par personne: les affaires d'État sont livrées au hasard des hasards ou tombent en pleine carence". (ibid.)¹⁰

Put differently, the parliamentary republic, which claims to base itself on the "national will" expressed by elections (or by referenda in the plebiscitary system) rests, according to Maurras, upon a very hazardous and random foundation. This is a direct result of the incompetence of electors and the fact that the elected government is inherently unstable and uncertain about its own future. (Maurras 1936, 54) Moreover, the state becomes "a slave of the parliamentary parties, of electoral deals", and "at the very moment when it is most necessary to stand firm, the system compels the foundations to be shaken," Maurras (1899, 225¹¹) adds. The inherent weaknesses of parliamentary democracy were, at this point, its lack of both competent and continuous direction and of unity in terms of its views – aspects which would be the exact opposite within the anti-parliamentary monarchy due to the responsible and personal style of governance.

Furthermore, Maurras adds that "l'idée démocratique est mauvaise en ce qu'elle soumet constamment le meilleur au pire, le supérieur à l'inférieur: au nombre la qualité, c'est-à-dire la compétence et l'aptitude." (Maurras 1936, 17; italics in the original) Here, the opposition between quantity, in other words

¹⁰ At this stage, one may also note that Maurras' rhetoric against democracy was highly polemical. What Maurras criticized seemed not to always be the prevailing democratic practices under the Third Republic but, as Maurras himself also stressed, the democratic principle as such. This "democratic principle" which Maurras attacked may, however, be conceived as an extreme example, almost as a travesty of democracy, as the citations above illustrate.

¹¹ Here I use the English translation of Maurras' manifesto *Dictateur et Roi* (Dictator and King) from the year 1899. The article has been published in French, for instance, in Maurras' "Enquête sur la monarchie" (1900, 446-463), to which I may also refer.

government by numbers, and quality, or monarchism, is clearly exposed. The adjectives describing what in this specific context is qualitative monarchism were: hereditary, personal, national and responsible, whereas the government by numbers was regarded as anonymous and irresponsible. Maurras writes that "the French elector spends his time giving blank cheques to men he does not know". Additionally, the elective system provokes "the greatest possible number of scandals and disasters in order to bring about as many changes as possible at each new election. In this way party interest replaces the public interest. In this way France sinks into decay". (Maurras 1899, 225)

For Maurras, the profound reason behind France's prevalent decadence lay in the development of democracy and in the Revolution of 1789, and against this backdrop the elective system of government is seen as a basis leading France toward ultimate decadence. Maurras was convinced of the natural suitability of monarchism for France when he wrote that "le système du pouvoir électif...détruit depuis cent quarante ans, une nation qui a été faite par un pouvoir monarchique et héréditaire". (Maurras 1936, 118)

The advantage of having a hereditary king in comparison to the representative democracy was, hence, the fact that the political power would be in the hands of a so-called expert in the personal royalist regime, whereas it would remain in the hands of "invariably ignorant and limited, often impoverished and corrupt" (Maurras 1899, 221) rulers in a representative democracy. In his manifesto from the year 1899, Maurras actually compares the ignorance of the elected and the incompetence of the electors to the competence of the sovereign king.

On the one hand, an authoritarian leader in the form of a king has, according to Maurras, inherent and paternal wisdom that enables him to make the right decisions, because in a hereditary monarchism the king has been raised and educated to reign since his birth and is thus incontestably an expert in the ruling of the state. The competence of the king was based on the fact that "a dauphin is brought up in preparation for the throne," as Maurras argued (1899, 235).

On the other hand, the election of rulers promotes incompetence because the vast majority of the electorate is ignorant. Maurras wrote (1899, 225) that "however independent, however honest, however intelligent the elector may be, he can never be competent to decide the majority of the questions put to him. This disability makes him either violent and blind or hesitant and fickle, or all simultaneously".

In parliamentary republics, however, the electorate has the right to choose its leaders, in other words "the government authority" resides in the "national will," as Maurras (1899, 224) put it. This inevitably means, according to Maurras, that representatives are haphazardly elected (i.e. the elector gives "blank cheques" to anonymous candidates whose political intentions are only expressed in writing on election posters) and, therefore, the elected are not necessarily competent, and even in cases in which the electorate does choose wise men, they will inevitably become corrupt sooner or later due to the inherent logic of parliamentary rule.

In fact, here Maurras is echoing the Boulangist tone by arguing that "if these newcomers¹² are honest on their arrival, they will soon be corrupted by the working of the regime. The Count of Paris has rightly observed: These institutions corrupt their men, whoever they may be". (Maurras 1899, 221) At this point, both the Boulangists and the Maurras claim that representative parliamentarism is vulnerable to corruption as such. Maurras depicted parliamentary rule as "la domination de l'Argent," in other words as a regime naturally inclined to toward corruption, electoral intrigue and political horse trading. As Maurras argued: "La Presse vérifie, jour par jour, anecdote par anecdote, comment, de l'électeur à l'élu, de l'élu au ministre, du ministre encore à l'élu et à l'électeur, tout se traite, se règle et se solde, ou plus ou moins, par de sales histoires d'argent". (Maurras 1937, 220)

However, whereas the Boulangist critique pointed more toward the parliament-dominated regime and the continual change of governments, Maurras' offensive, which was also directed against these aspects, points here to the "invariable ignorance" of elected parliamentarians, who are a "horde of agitators" and "catchers of the popular vote". For Boulangists, the way out of the corrupted regime indeed lay in direct plebiscitary democracy, whereas for Maurras it lay in absolute monarchy, that is in "independent" monarchy, as expressed in the Maurrasian vocabulary.

Analogously to the differences between Maurras' and Barrès' political solutions and doctrines, there were also differences in their concrete relationships with the prevailing political institutions. Whereas Barrès participated in parliamentary politics despite his criticism of it, Maurras' political action remained "extraparliamentary" and was manifested through his writings. Maurras' profound contempt for the *vox populi* effected the entire movement's attitude toward elections, and, generally speaking, the Action Française movement usually played no decisive role in electoral contests. However, the movement supported its royalist sympathizers and friends in elections even though it had no candidates of its own, and it even worked for men "with whom it had nothing at all in common except mutual hostility to another candidate," as Eugen Weber (1962, 126) notes. Maurras actually lent his support to some candidates, even providing detailed instructions to the readers of the Action Française newspaper on who to vote for and who not to vote for, thus tactically and wisely serving the movement's nationalist interests. (Cf. Weber 1962, 126-129, 303, 370-371)

In this sense, the elections of 1919, in which the Action Française's own candidates stood for election, were quite important. After the First World War, the nationalists and royalists were perhaps more highly esteemed than usual due to their overt patriotism, and at this point Maurras, too, was more moderately opposed to the regime than usual. Maurras even appeared to see the possibility for legal monarchical restoration in this situation and in these elections, since he later wrote that "we did not deem it useless for us to penetrate the Chamber at a time when a general reorganization was imperative.

¹² Maurras is referring here to newly elected parliamentarians.

Hostile to the electoral system, its customary use, and its necessary tactics, we nevertheless judged that our presence in a new Assembly would be useful under the exceptional circumstances of the moment"¹³. (Maurras 1943, 170) Furthermore, in the same book, Maurras added somewhat ironically that "il suffisait d'ouvrir le journal pour avoir idée de ce qu'aurait fait et pu faire un tel groupe dans la Chambre et ce qu'auraient fait pour le pays les gouvernements qui en fussent sortis. A mettre les choses au pis, on aurait rendu sa monarchie à la France." (Maurras 1943, 171)

At the time, many nationalists from the list of the conservative anti-socialist coalition Bloc National – Maurice Barrès, to name just one – ran for the Chamber, and this same opportunity was also afforded to Maurras. In his book, "La contre-révolution spontanée," Maurras writes about how the Action Française was offered one or two places from the Bloc National's electoral list in exchange for their cooperation. Although Maurras did not object to the deal as such (he even mentioned that his deafness allowed him not to be ambitious in this domain [op.cit., 170]), he nevertheless rejected the alliance because he was unable to negotiate better terms due to his uncompromising character. (Osgood 1970, 100; Weber 1962, 127-128) In any case, Léon Daudet¹⁴, who directly represented the Action Française movement, was elected from Paris, from the Action Française list entitled *Union Nationale*, whose program, however, neither mentioned nor even hinted at monarchism. (Cf. Weber 1962, 129)

The conservative period experienced by both Maurras and the Action Française, however, soon came to an end: Daudet lost his seat in the Chamber, and during the 1920's, the tone of the Action Française paper began to become stricter along with the violent street demonstrations and personal assaults carried out by the Camelots de Roi, the military fraction of the movement. (Cf. Osgood 1970, 101-106) The Vatican's condemnation of the Action Française in 1926 would also serve to diminish the movement's political chances in the eyes of potential royalist and catholic voters.

Finally, one may conclude that the most predominant common feature of both Barrès and Maurras was their mutual longing for firm authority. Before turning to the promotion of this kind of strong authority, let us, however, continue to examine the "weaknesses" of the form of parliamentarism denounced by Maurras.

¹³ English translation taken from Osgood 1970, 99.

¹⁴ Léon Daudet (1867-1942), the son of the famous writer Alphonse Daudet, was, unlike Maurras, a brilliant orator. He was deputy until 1924, and, according to Eugen Weber (1962, 129), "the most forceful spokesman of extreme nationalism at a time when extreme nationalism was much in fashion".

5.3 Against political struggles

Parallel to Barrès, Maurras saw the parliament as a forum of divided opinions and interests, that is as a forum in which *the* national interest is subordinated to the private interests of the deputies. Maurras' argument – which echoed that of the Boulangists – that parliamentary representatives do not act according to the national interest but solely according to their own private interests referred directly to corruption. Furthermore, Maurras spoke about "tyrannic diversity," that is about diverse points of view which cannot be reconciled with the national interest, rendering it impossible for anyone to represent this national interest in a parliamentary government.¹⁵ This view regarding the lack of unity was, according to Maurras, one of the most profound weaknesses of the parliamentary republic.

Related to this diversity of interests in the parliamentary regime, Maurras, again parallel to Barrès, interpreted parliamentarism as an arena of negative political struggle, of negative competition between rival interests (Cf. Maurras 1936, 59-60). With regard to the political struggle and, more precisely, the politicking that goes on in parliamentarism, which in itself was also criticized by Maurras, there is one respect in which he differs from the earlier Boulangists and Barrès as well as the later Front National. I demonstrated earlier that the Boulangists had been willing to solve the personal squabble between politicians and calculated politicking by focusing exclusively on so-called "political substances," which is to say that they wanted to go from quarrels between individuals to the contention between issues. This was, of course, related both to the character of the direct democracy and to the assertion of the use of referenda, which was seen as having the potential to reduce vain politicking to the handling of pure and simple issues. One may find this same outlook in the discourse of the contemporary Front National as well.

Maurras, however, was calling for a more personal politics (which as such naturally bolsters the notion of the personal power of the king). Maurras' point regarding parliamentary politics is that politicians, the persons, are hiding behind legislative work, that the acts of politicians and the effects of their acts are not connected to them as individuals. "'On a fait cela, on va faire cela...' Le pronom indéfini cache tout. ...On a fini par signifier *chose*, et chose inconnue. Tout vient de *chose* et vient de *machin*...Ensuite personne n'y a plus pensé." (Maurras 1936, 32, italics in the original) As we can see, here, Maurras is not calling for the reduction of politics to pure substance, but, contrarily, is demanding the establishment of a more "personified" politics. This certainly does not refer to personal political conflict, but, rather, Maurras is criticizing the party machine (which, however, was quite vague in the Third Republic) and political groups, and, more importantly, demanding a higher level of morality

¹⁵ He wrote that "nulle sélection, nulle coopération, nulle aristocratie française ne sentira et se représentera exactement l'intérêt national de notre France au point de pouvoir la gouverner". (Maurras 1937,290-291)

and responsibility amongst individual politicians in carrying out legislative work. (Cf. Maurras 1936, 31)

In any case, Maurras, like the Boulangists and Barrès, was searching for a kind of political harmony, which, in Maurrassism, could be achieved by the establishment through the personal, hereditary and traditional monarch. According to Maurras' conception, useless and harmful political and electoral struggles would be surpassed if the political power was centralized and placed exclusively in the hands of the king, or, to put it more precisely, in the hands of one royal family, the best being "the race of Capet", "the oldest royal line in Europe," as Maurras noted. Maurras wrote in 1889 as follows: "in order to spare ourselves fruitless and dangerous electoral contests, to forestall the periodic recurrence of political agitation, and finally to ensure peace/.../it is agreed that power must be entrusted to a family". (Maurras 1889, 236) Maurras thus contrasted "peaceful" royal hereditary power to democracy, which he saw as "warlike goddess" (*déesse guerrière*) resulting in endless conflict.

Additionally, as a sovereign person the king would be free from futile political intrigue and discussion. (Cf. Maurras 1936, 52) He is able to act and think more prudently and wisely and is oriented toward the distant future because he is not dependent on electoral terms and the pressures they produce, as is the case with presidents elected by universal suffrage. Moreover, the royal family behind the king guarantees that "the head of state will not idly gamble away the future of his dynasty". In other words, the future of his family and dynasty is linked directly to the future of the nation and vice versa. (ibid.) Finally, there would be no question of who was governing France. In other words, in a hereditary monarchy, the "two political maladies," namely "the administration ruled by all, the state ruled by none" and "the administration master of all, the state with no master at all," would be surpassed. (Maurras 1899, 234)

With regard to the topic of parliamentary discussion, Maurras criticized the republic for being "le régime de la discussion pour la discussion" (1936, 52), which refers directly to useless debates. Furthermore, Maurras is explicit in arguing that there cannot be such a thing as government by discussion.

Il n'ya pas de *Gouvernement de la discussion*: gouverner, c'est encore se confier, risquer. Mais ce risque de l'action morale, religieuse ou politique est le risque sage par excellence; rien n'y serait plus imprudent ni plus irrationnel que de ne pas risquer. Car on risque davantage encore à s'abstenir, à discuter et à délibérer, on risque le plus grave et on risque le pire, puisque l'ennemi est en armes, si l'on n'arme pas contre lui avant lui, le risque que l'on court est celui de tomber désarmé sous ses coups. (Action Française 22.3.1913 in Maurras 1937, 184 and in DPC I, 367)

The passage above refers to the political deliberation par excellence à la Maurras, that is to the personal deliberation carried out by the king himself. In other words, no parliamentary discussion is needed because "the good and national dictator," the king, would act and make decisions much more efficiently than any deliberating forum, and, additionally, one independent (*absolut* in Latin, as Maurras notes) sovereign would best represent (in the literal sense of the word)

and even incarnate the national interest. From the quotation above in particular and the entire chapter, entitled "Du vice de la discussion" (Maurras 1937, 183-184), in general, one can conclude that discussion, for example that taking place in the assembly, is entirely futile. Maurras is especially astonished about the useless and lengthy discussions between incompetent parliamentarians. He argues that instead of these useless discussions, which often times drag on for hours on end, the technically competent elite would act in no time at all.

As the citation above implies, Maurras seems to distinguish political governance and practical deeds from "theoretical" discussion, which is to say that discussion plays no role at all since politics is reduced to the practical governance by and deeds of one person. Although the government should be concentrated in the hands of one sovereign, a king in the flesh, it seems, however, that Maurras leaves a certain space for contingency. The allowance for this kind of contingency implies that the independent power, the political sovereign, is not entirely preoccupied with predestined natural laws but instead at least has the possibility and choice to take wise (*sage*) risks. Because risks are inherently unpredictable, one can catch a glimpse of contingency of politics in the Maurrasian doctrine.

What follows, however, is that by his call for hereditary monarchism, Maurras appears to minimize the sphere of politics, of political opportunities, conflicts and overall deliberation. Maurras' *mon-arche* leaves no room for political maneuvers – apart from the ones made by the king himself.

At this point, it is interesting to note that Maurras' integral nationalism, in other words his neoroyalism, is based, at least to a certain extent, on a conception that minimizes politics in the same way as the earlier Boulangists and Barrès had done, although Maurras himself crystallized his doctrine in the slogan *politique d'abord*. This famous slogan has been interpreted in various ways, however, specifically with regard to his neoroyalism, in other words in the way in which Maurras goes beyond the Providence with his calls for restoration: he puts politics ahead of the Providence. In "Mes idées politiques," he clarifies the idea as follows:

Quand nous disons 'politique d'abord', nous disons: la politique la première, la première dans l'ordre du temps, nullement dans l'ordre de la dignité. Autant dire que la route doit être prise avant que d'arriver à son point terminus; la flèche et l'arc seront saisis avant de toucher la cible; le moyen d'action précédera le centre de destination. (Maurras 1937, 155)

The core of this slogan, which in itself is a point of departure in Maurrasism, is associated with Maurras' conception of the *raison d'État*, which is to say that the national interest and subsequent policies always extend beyond morality, religion and justice. (Cf. DPC I, 459) For Maurras, the principle of national interest was the primary principle on the basis of which he defined all his other demands.

The *raison d'État* was, according to Maurras, "in the nature of things" and, therefore, the public interest should always be placed before individuals or parties. (DPC I, 461) It was also the foundation that demanded personal power,

because he (i.e. the king) will use his authority "for purely national objectives". (Maurras 1899, 220) Additionally, the royal personal power would guarantee the "*salut national*" and ensure that the *raison d'État* would not become transformed into a "*raison de parti*" that is at the mercy of the continuously "changing interests of persons and offices". (Maurras 1936, 50) One of the malaises of the republican regime was, according to Maurras, that party interests replace the public interest.

The French interest thus formed a comprehensive starting point in Maurras' integral nationalism, which dictated that all issues – whether they dealt with the form of government or the Dreyfus Affair – should be considered in relation to the best interest of France, which is to say that Maurras' politics was based upon national relativism. (Cf. Thibaudet 1920, 135)

It must also be added that the same kind of national relativism was supported by Maurice Barrès as well, although Barrès preferred to use terms like national interest or *raison nationale* in place of *raison d'État*. According to Barrès, the aim of nationalism was not only the acceptance of determinism but also "to resolve each question in the best interest of France".¹⁶ The public salvation (*le salut public*) was dependent upon this nationalist premise, and without it the decline of "notre France dissociée et décérébrée" would continue unchecked. (Cf. Barrès 1902b, 31-33)

Finally, one may note that both Barres and Maurras eliminated certain dimensions that could have been conceived as essential to politics and the parliamentary style of politics in the name of national unity and national interest, or the *raison d'État*. In other words, both men denied political struggles, the rivalry between parties, controversial debates and discussions in assemblies etc. For them, the ultimate aim of politics appears to have been the restoration of harmony and the return to a system of true and traditional order, which, thereby, would strengthen the national unity. National unity was for these men a sort of umbrella concept that included the diminishing internal diversity of the nation and the increasing national cohesion and greatness of France on a symbolic level. By denying political struggles and "competition," neither the Boulangist Barrès nor Maurras assigned any value to either the sphere of politicking or parliamentary discussion as such.

Furthermore, the exclusion of certain undesired groups of people and "estates" was often carried out in the name of national unity and the national interest. (Cf. Ch. 5.5.) The ideal-typical model for this kind of procedure took place in conjunction with the Dreyfus Affair, during which the argument of nationalists was that the French nation could and should not sacrifice and degrade its military forces in the name of one man, Captain Dreyfus, since the national interest must always, under all circumstances, be placed above individual interests.¹⁷ This was an extreme example of the brand of national

¹⁶ In French: "de résoudre chaque question par rapport à la France".

¹⁷ In connection with this, Barrès wrote that "And we have never felt the need for a sense of relativism so much as in the course of this Dreyfus Affair, which is nothing but a metaphysician's orgy. They (intellectuals, i.e. Dreyfysards) judge everything with reference to the abstract. We judge everything as it accords with France".

relativism that was directly related to Barrès' and Maurras' nationalism. It was also a premise that was undersigned by most anti-Dreyfusards, for whom the case was not primarily a "legal matter".

5.4 Political expertise and firm authority

As I have noted above, Maurras did not rely on the people as a sovereign power capable of making decisions on any and all *political* issues, as was the case with the advocates of direct democracy. Maurras was, however, certain that on the provincial and local levels, the people are capable of making decisions regarding their own *administrative* issues. Let us begin our consideration of the distinction between the political and the administrative with Maurras' clearly illustrative views on universal suffrage and women's rights to vote.

With regard to universal suffrage, Maurras questioned the capacity for judgment amongst the masses, especially in broad and far-reaching issues, because of what he viewed as the inherent incompetence of the electorate. (Cf. DPC II, 39) Accordingly, Maurras denied the right of women to vote by employing the same argument that he used in his rejection of universal suffrage.

En matière de suffrage féminin, comme dans toutes les autres matières, il convient de commencer par le commencement qui est la révision de l'erreur démocratique et parlementaire. Donner le commandement au nombre mâle ou femelle est folie. (Maurras in Action Française 2.7.1929, DPC V, 285. Cf. the footnote on the same page)

Since in Maurras' view "le vrai mal vient de la subordination de l'État au caprice électif et à la routine électorale" (ibid.), it did not matter *who* or *how many people* cast a vote. (Actually, Maurras was not opposed to the notion of the right of women to vote as such, i.e. he did not see the potential votes of women as inherently less valuable than those of men. [He even makes light of the matter by bringing up the subject of the right of babies to vote (see ibid.)¹⁸.] Instead, Maurras seems to have wanted to somehow protect the women from the malaise of democracy ("*notre anarchie générale*") when he argued: "Ne leur donnons donc pas la peste". (Action Française, 16.12.1927 in DPC 285-286, footnote) (Cf. DPC II, 38-39)

(Barrès 1902,62, English translations taken from McClelland 1970, 183) And Barrès noted with even more clarity in this same 1889 article that: "le cas de Dreyfus, en lui-même, est insignifiant. Ce qui est grave, c'est qu'on a inventé et qu'on utilise Dreyfus pour servir des doctrines antimilitaires et internationalistes". (Barrès 1902, 52)

¹⁸ Cf. also Barrès' serious proposition about "suffrage des morts" in "L'Âme française et la guerre" (1919). Barrès proposition was to give the dead the possibility to express their opinion through votes cast by their relatives. The dead to whom Barrès was referring were men killed on the battlefield during World War One.

As we have noted earlier, Maurras accepted the view according to which competence, that is being thoroughly competent, legitimizes certain types of action. This argument holds especially true here because, as Maurras (1936, 41) himself has stated: "Le mal ne vient pas du nombre des votants, mais *de l'objet sur lequel ils votent*" (italics in the original text). It all depends, consequently, on the competence of the voter and the issues that happen to be on the agenda. Maurras, for example, defends the right of women to participate in local, in other words purely *administrative*, decision making (e.g. *conseil municipal, conseil professionnel*), which he clearly differentiates from *political* voting. According to Maurras, "administrative voting" on issues about which a voter (male or female) *really knows* something is acceptable, but:

Hors de là, c'est une noire fumisterie qui revêt quelquefois une couleur de sang, comme, par exemple, quand la loi ou la constitution raconte aux malheureux votants qu'ils sont les maîtres de la paix et de la guerre ou que leur suffrage peut arbitrer ces intérêts généraux que, par position, ils ne sauraient même percevoir. (Action Française 17.2. 1917 in DPC II, 39) (Cf. Maurras 1899, 224)

This point about women's right to vote enables us to see Maurras' point of view with regard to representative democracy in a broader framework. As a matter of fact, Maurras' conception of the future monarchist France would have been based on *centralized political power*, that is it would have had an absolute reigning sovereign, the king, and a *decentralized local administration* that would have been organized autonomously by each representative entity. Organized, in other words, by various genuine small and natural local, professional, moral and religious republics, which would be an example of self-governing through free association. Maurras was, then, ready to accept the representative system on the local level: parliamentarism could "take refuge in these inferior states as long as it did not infringe upon the central power". Accordingly, the political questions, which is to say matters involving the "general interest such as diplomacy, the armed forces, national police, high justice" could be settled only by sovereign, independent power.¹⁹ (DPC II, 6; English translations taken from Osgood 1970, 63)

In other words, politics should be left to the expert, to the absolute king, whereas administrative matters can be left in the hands of virtually anybody. This primary distinction between civil society and political authority was, as we have seen here, linked with Maurras' assertion with regard to decentralization. Maurras' monarchist theory, which united political centralization and administrative decentralization, also ensured that absolutism at the top did not mean the arbitrary rule of the nation but the promotion of tangible liberties (not the abstract concept of Liberty) for its citizens. This meant that the citizens of local communities would become "masters of their own affairs" and, thereby, "the citizen of the new kingdom of France will find himself a member of all

¹⁹ In French: "Le parlementarisme, expulsé de l'État central, peut se réfugier dans ses États inférieurs, à condition que l'État central soit demeuré le maître de la diplomatie, des armées de terre et de mer, de la haute police, de la haute justice, et qu'il veille à toutes les fonctions d'intérêt général." (DPC II, 6)

kinds of strong and free communities (family, town, province, professional organization, etc.) which will deploy their strength to protect him from any injustice". (Maurras 1899, 231)

In relation to this, Maurras (1899, 231) stated: "From this royal authority, thus placed at the apex of the whole structure of civil liberties, will of necessity flow greater freedom for the individual and greater strength for the nation". For Maurras, the natural and rational order of things (i.e. the royalist constitution) meant that "liberty is below and authority is at the top," and not the other way round as it is, according to Maurras, in the parliamentary republic. On the one hand, the citizens will be "masters of their own affairs" in villages, towns etc. without any state intervention. On the other hand, there will be the authority at the top — a permanent, personal and hereditary power, the king, whose sole purpose is the achievement of purely national objectives and whose only interest lies "in the preservation and development of the state". (Maurras 1889, *passim*.)

This is to say that the separation of quality from quantity and the emphasis of traditional collectivism on the local level would restore the family, the corporation, the Province and the Church to their places and proper level of independence in society. As far as quantity and majority were concerned, Maurras was also convinced that "c'est au minorités qu'appartiennent la vertu, l'audace, la puissance, comme la conception. Et l'on donne le pouvoir aux majorités!"²⁰ (Maurras 1936, 29; cf. Maurras 1900, 137-138)

Maurras claimed (1899, 217) that "the reign of the king is no more than the return to our true order". The royal power will reestablish the state's natural and rational prerogatives, "namely independence and authority". Moreover, the royal dynasty is truly traditional because it is "truly of the *earth* and of the *soil*, since it rounded out our *land* and shaped our *country*" (1899, 229, 237; italics in the original) In Maurras' view, once the royalist dictatorship has resolved the crises of republican rule and restored order, justice and peace, it is time for "the normal government of the kingdom". Maurras' idea was that the kingship has "a double function": first, serving as a transitional royalist dictatorship, and second, acting as the constant royal regime. (Maurras 1899 in Maurras 1900, 447)

According to Maurras, the dictatorship would precede the "normal" kingship. The dictatorship would be an instrument with which to repair and rebuild the *corps politique*, to restore the natural order by punishing the state

²⁰ The question of majority was also raised by Barrès in his letter that was published in Maurras' "Enquête sur la monarchie" (1900, 134-135) and to which Maurras replied in his book (the correspondence published in the book concerned Maurras' monarchist theory, which Barrès criticized on the grounds that there is no royal family or aristocracy in France around which the majority of French could rally.). Barrès asked in the letter why Maurras was unwilling to accept the majority principle since "au sommet de l'État l'autorité, sur le sol et dans les groupes, la décentralisation, voilà des réformes que permet le système républicain et qui assureraient le développement des forces françaises aujourd'hui gravement anémiées". Barrès' proposal did not convince Maurras, and he remarked that the majority of electors do not create a royal authority, but, on the contrary, the existing royal authority rallies the majorities and their confidence. (Cf. Maurras 1900, 133-143)

"criminals" in the name of the "love of France and hatred of the nation's enemies." (Maurras 1899, 215-216) Additionally, Maurras emphasized that he was not demanding sovereign power for one man or for a whole people, but rather for "one family which represents the people and is itself represented by one man".

The firm authority, the firm government of one person, was, for Maurras, a means of escaping the weaknesses and decline that the prevailing republic represented. As both the Boulangists and Barrès had done earlier, Maurras, too, criticized the Third Republic for its weak governments and for its "unstable ministerial direction" and hence concluded – again similarly to Barrès – that "the weakness of the nation" is caused directly by the prevailing "political anarchy". In keeping with Barrès, Maurras writes that: "*cette autorité d'un seul et qui seule peut faire le salut public, ils²¹ l'appellent avec Rousseau 'la dictature'. Ils pourraient l'appeler également Mon-Archie.*" (Maurras 1900, 136, italics in the original) Maurras and Barrès, therefore, came to a similar conclusion about the existing situation: both agreed that "le moins de gouvernement possible" was destroying France and, therefore, that strict authority was required, although their views about the "final solution" differed. (Cf. notably Maurras 1900, 133-143)

Maurras called for a government in which "la souveraineté est concentrée dans l'âme unique et dans la personne vive d'un homme" (Maurras 1937, 188). This refers, of course, to the hereditary monarch, to the (dictator) king, and does not include the plebiscitary dictator, whose election would, according to Maurras, include the element of "hazard" that is inherent to all elections. In the preface to Maurras' "Mes idées politiques" (1937), Pierre Gaxotte claims that Maurras in fact considered plebiscitary dictatorship as the worst of political regimes, even ranking it below democracy. Maurras' contempt also extended to include presidentialism as a plebiscitary dictatorship (Cf. *ibid.* and DPC I, 354), since he argued that "a head of state elected by universal suffrage is in the same position as a parliament" (Maurras 1899, 234). This is to say, to quote Maurras, that a parliament, "created by elections and dependent upon them, confers upon the state neither authority nor independence." (*ibid.*)

At this point, Maurras appears to share Renan's idea according to which it is better to select elites by birth than by election. In comparison to the Boulangists or Barrès, Maurras expresses himself far more clearly in this connection than the advocates of plebiscitary or direct democracy, because he unquestionably rejected the notion of the election of an elite. For Maurras, the rational choice would guarantee – even among the people – that hereditary monarchism was indeed the most convenient and natural choice for France. Barrès, in turn, assumed that only through the use of referenda could the "true voice of the people" really be heard, although at the same time he was "forced to" admit that the "corrupt" and "false" representative elite could be replaced through elections and universal suffrage.

²¹ This "ils" refers here to Barrès and the French masses, who followed Barrès.

In sum, the Boulangists called for true authority in the form of a (preferably charismatic) elected leader, and they even went so far as to aim at a establishment of a plebiscitary dictatorship, if one interprets the situation provocatively. The target of the Boulangist critique was weak governance, the aspect that was also seen by Maurras as parallel to the existing general decay and decadence of France. Maurras' political solution was, however, different, and one may also say that Maurras' doctrine concerning the absolute hereditary king was clearer and more thoroughly represented than that of the Boulangist doctrine.

5.5 Foreign elements and national salvation

One further aspect of Maurras' monarchist theory and his repudiation of democratic parliamentarism is the thesis according to which parliamentarism is described as a "foreign regime" on the one hand, and that "le royauté nationalise le pouvoir" on the other. As mentioned earlier, Maurras was convinced that France was full of "eternal divisions," that is geographical, cultural and racial divisions which are historically formed in the distant past and which cannot, therefore, be tamed under any kind of democratic system. (Cf. e.g. Maurras 1921, 203-205 and 1937, 288-291) The eternal diversity of France was thus an obstacle to the development of democracy in France. Besides the fact that Maurras regarded democracy as "a political disease" and "a universal lie" (Maurras 1937, 288), he also argued that parliamentarism does not suit France because of its foreign origins and its English and German features²². (see justified criticism related to these arguments presented by Albert Thibaudet 1920, 230-234)

In Maurras' view, both France's cultural diversity and its geographical breadth were factors behind the need for fast and continuous decisions by a personal power. (Maurras 1936, 47) More importantly, however, Maurras' point was not only that republican parliamentarism was a foreign regime for France as such, but also that the elective republic and its free political competition provided the possibility for the domination of "le parti de l'Étranger". Maurras

²² "Le parlementarisme est une institution née anglaise et restée anglaise en dépit des transplantations: c'est le gouvernement des Chambres ou plutôt d'une Chambre". (Maurras 1900, 271) Maurras considered the ideal of democracy as an impossibility, an absurdity even, and he saw the English form of democracy more as aristocracy. Maurras' famous and frequently quoted arguments, such as *La démocratie, c'est la mort'*, must, therefore, be seen in the connection that is emphasized in *Mes Idées politiques* (1937, 288), in which Maurras writes: "La France n'est pas faite pour vivre en démocratie. Ni la France, ni aucun pays. La démocratie est un 'mensonge universel', le mot n'est pas de moi, il est de Pie IX. La démocratie est une maladie politique. On en sort ou en meurt. On ne vit pas en démocratie. Et ceux qui parlent de la 'democracy' des pays anglais ne la connaissent pas. La démocratie anglaise est ce que nous appelons, en bon grec et en bon français, une aristocratie (république à trois têtes, Couronne, Lords, Communes, conversations, *parlement* entre ces trois têtes." (see above remarks on Maurras' interpretations of "government by discussion".)

accused the prevailing Third Republic of being an arena "où la passivité de la masse, la venalité du parlement et le gouvernement de l'Étranger de l'intérieur se touchent du doigt chaque jour". (Maurras 1936, 60) For Maurras, this "government of internal foreigners" was "le gouvernement d'une oligarchie," namely "oligarchie étrangère ou demi-étrangère, formée de juifs, de protestants radicaux sectaires, de franc-maçons et de *métèques*, unis par les liens de la religion, du sang et de l'or, contre tout ce qui est national, c'est-à-dire héréditaire en France". (ibid.)

Maurras was, hence, convinced that France was being governed by antinational groups (*les dynasties d'étrangers*), namely four confederated estates (*les quatre États confédérés*), which were comprised of freemasons, Protestants, Jews and *métèques*²³. From Maurras' standpoint, this conspiracy perpetrated by the internal enemy combined with the false ideas related to the Reformation, the philosophy of the Enlightenment (especially Rousseau) and the "anti-French" Revolution of 1789 served as evidence of the decadence of France. Maurras' reasoning was that once major decisions were made "par rapport à la France," and from that frame of reference only, France would be given back to the French. (see DPC II,10-11; Osgood 1970,60-64; Winock 1994,127)

In passing, one may also note that Maurras' "populism," or rather his verbal violence and demagoguery, if one desires to actively seek it out, is revealed most clearly in his furiously anti-Semitic descriptions of the Anti-France, that is in his descriptions of the *pays légal*, which accentuate the role of either the external (e.g. Germans) or internal enemies (e.g. Protestants, Jews) of the nation. To highlight one extreme example, in 1935, Maurras wrote about Léon Blum, socialist and Jew, in the paper *L'Action française* as follows: "Ce juif allemand, naturalisé ou fils de naturalisé/.../n'est pas à traiter comme une personne naturelle. C'est un monstre de la république démocratique/.../C'est un homme à fusiller, mais dans le dos." (Quoted in Philip 1998, 80-81)

Here, the anti-national forces, the four confederated estates, are explicitly described and the plot they were assumed to be hatching in the government clearly highlighted. This also illustrates the way in which Maurras conceived of his *pays légal*: it was not only the questionable regime as such that Maurras condemned, but he also interpreted the potential danger that this kind of false liberalism and the false ideas connected to parliamentary republicanism might cause as equally destructive.

²³ By *métèques* Maurras was referring to foreigners who have been "nationalized" too recently, that is those who do not have long family roots in France and should therefore be regarded as foreigners regardless of the fact that they might enjoy French citizenship. Behind the Maurrasian concept of *métèque* is, of course, the model of the Athenian polis, from which foreign residents were excluded. (Cf. DPC III, 41-50) According to Osgood (1970, 61), Maurras has also stated that he wanted to attack the Protestant and Jewish estates and not their individual members, and that individual Protestants, or even Jews, might become "good Frenchmen". This same reasoning is still valid in the contemporary nationalist discourse: the Front National claims that they are not against individual Muslims or North-African "Arabs". Instead, they are willing to emphasize the profound difference and incommensurability between Western and Christian culture and the Islamic world, which is, in addition, quite often described pejoratively.

In any case, in Maurras' view, one crucial advantage of hereditary monarchism was the stability of the personified power and the certainty that it would not slide to the hands of foreigners. Maurras summarizes the blessings of monarchy as follows: "La monarchie héréditaire nationalise le pouvoir, parce qu'elle l'arrache aux compétitions des Partis, aux manoeuvres de l'Or, aux prises de l'Étranger". (Maurras 1936, 87)

5.6 For "the real France"

Maurras' polemic against the Third Republic was based on his intransigent doctrine combining nationalism with monarchism. He criticized the prevailing political system and parliamentarism on a regular basis as a journalist and his violent opposition to "the system" remained primarily verbal, although later in his life he was also sentenced to prison not only for issuing death threats against parliamentarians but also, for example, for the possession of illegal weapons.

In this context, it is appropriate to remind ourselves that from its inception the Action Française movement was "anti-conformist," and Maurras, too, saw violence as an acceptable means of carrying out a possible *coup d'État*, although he was ultimately not a man of action – at least not to the extent that he wished himself to be – because, after all, his subversiveness remained theoretical. To a certain extent, however, Maurras supported the deeds of the *action directe* of his movement.

But when finally faced with the chance to overthrow the Republic in February 1934, Maurras was not personally prepared to take action and instead simply let the occasion pass him by. It has been said that while the Action Française was out rioting against the government with other right-wing groups in Paris near the Palais Bourbon, possibly attempting a *coup d'État*, Maurras was preparing the next day's article for the Action Française newspaper and writing Provençal poems. (Weber 1962, 337-338) This clearly indicates that Maurras was ultimately either "too much of a legalist" or "did not really believe in the revolution, or even want it, and talked about it only to satisfy his young followers' desire for a change". (Osgood 1970, 121; Weber 1962, 340) In any event, it is commonly recognized that there was no thoroughly organized or coordinated conspiracy amongst the various militant groups that were out rioting that night regarding any serious attempt at a *coup*. Overall, the movement directly linked with Maurras himself may be regarded as a think-tank promoting the assault against the Republic, existing political institutions and the establishment with primarily verbal albeit very fervent violence.

To sum up this chapter with regard to Maurras' interpretation of the distinction between the *pays légal* and the *pays réel*, one may argue that it is slightly different from the Orleanist conception introduced earlier. First, Maurras continues along the line of the Orleanist interpretation of the *pays réel*

and *pays légal*, as he clearly distinguishes the political sphere (that of the king) from the private one by arguing that the political should be left to those with political expertise, i.e. the king, while the civil society may organize itself as it will.

Second, Maurras continues to make a clear distinction between those who have legal status in the nation and those who are excluded from it and thus regarded as outsiders. But whereas Guizot's dichotomy between the legal nation and the real nation seemed to be bolstering the censitarian regime and the governing elite's natural position within it, Maurras stresses the aspect of exclusion implied in the dichotomy. Maurras' view is thus much more nationalistically oriented, which simultaneously signifies that the character and connotation of the distinction slightly changes with Maurras' explicit contribution to it.

Although Maurras continues to conceive of the *pays légal* as a state apparatus and a political form of government, he does not defend it but instead attacks it. For Maurras, the *pays légal* is hence the false appearance of political institutions, whereas the *pays réel* is formulated as a "real and true France," both on the level of political institutions (absolute monarchism) and on the broader national and even biological-cultural levels (the traditional France comprised of "truly French" groups and "races" etc.). Apart from being the false appearance of mere political institutions, the *pays légal* thus also represents for Maurras a false – politically or otherwise defined – elite (Jews, Freemasons, foreigners, Protestants), which actually forms a plot that conspires against the *pays réel*. The plot, in other words these false "nations" within a nation, allegedly hold the political power, and the currently existing form of government, the republic, is subsequently the result of the ideas, philosophies and theories (Revolution, Reform, Human rights) connected in one way or another to these false "nations" or estates and their representants.

My thesis here is to illustrate that in a contemporary nationalistic sense, the dichotomy of the *pays légal* and the *pays réel* can be traced to the conceptual modification that was already recognizable, at least implicitly, during the Boulangist era but became more fixed and explicit with Charles Maurras, whose interpretation, in turn, was significantly influenced by the Dreyfus case (which is, however, not the primary focus of this study). Maurras actually introduced this rhetorical pair to the extent that in contemporary literature the dichotomy is often attributed to him. The obvious reason for this, as we will see in next chapter, is that the current interpretation of this antithetical pair follows the more general line of Maurras' thought. In other words, it accentuates the exclusion implied in these concepts and stresses the fact that the *pays légal* represents the false appearance, whereas the *pays réel* represents the true essence of the nation and, therefore, is the essence worth defending and pursuing politically.

The distinction between the *pays réel* and the *pays légal* was intended to demonstrate certain aspects that were linked directly to the nationalist hostility toward the existing political rule and establishment. Until now I have dealt with the offensive against the Third Republic, but in the next chapter I shall

study the more contemporary polemic against the prevailing political system, that is the Front National party and its dimensions with regard to the repudiation of the Fifth Republic. I will also demonstrate how Maurras' nationalistic conceptual change regarding the dichotomy of the *pays réel* and the *pays légal* continues to prevail in the contemporary discourse.

6 THE FIFTH REPUBLIC

In the following part of my study I shall examine the attack against the Republic in the contemporary context, namely concentrating on the anti-system discourse presented by the Front National, a party that was established in 1972 and has since been led by Jean-Marie Le Pen (see the short history of the party in the Appendix 4). I shall focus primarily on the Front National as a movement that has manifestly criticized the existing political system but has simultaneously been willing to participate in parliamentary elections and the system of political representation on the local, national and European levels as well. Because of this attempt to act not beyond but within the parliamentary system, the Front National provides us with a better perspective from which to examine the general polemic against the Fifth Republic than the study of extra-parliamentary radical nationalists, who exist much more on the periphery. Additionally, the present day Front National can be distinguished as one of the most influential "extreme right" or ethnonational parties in Europe, despite the fact that it currently has no representatives of its own in the National Assembly.

Because the present framework for the Lepenist anti-system protest differs from the historical framework of the Boulangist or Maurrasian critiques, it is appropriate to begin this section by presenting an overview of the institutions of the Fifth Republic in light of the perspective that has been opened up by the aforementioned examination concerning the context of the Third Republic.

6.1 The legal and political framework

After the Second World War and the experience of Marshal Pétain's *État français*, the supreme authority in the Fourth Republic (1946-1958) was once again in the hands of the National Assembly, and the role of the President of the Republic remained largely ceremonial. The reasons behind the return to the parliamentary dominated government lay in the fears regarding the threat to "democracy posed by personalized power" as a result of the experiences of the

Vichy Regime and Charles de Gaulle, who headed the provisional government after the Liberation.

The Fourth Republic thus concentrated power in the hands of *le président du conseil*, that is in the hands of the prime minister. Additionally, the authors of the constitution attempted to make it more difficult for a government to collapse by introducing restricting procedures such as a motion of censure (*motion de censure*) and a question of confidence (*question de confiance*). Nevertheless, the problem of political instability remained unsolved; governments came and went with the same frequency as before the war. In a nutshell, this form of government was referred to as "rationalized parliamentarism" (*parlementarisme rationalisé*). (Cf. Morris 1994, 15-19; *Institutions et vie politique* 1997, 15-16)

The constitutional context of the Fifth Republic, created in 1958, differs from the Third and Fourth Republics in variety of ways, which are outlined below. Briefly, the main points concern the role of the parliament and the overall constitutional balance. As was the aim of the "founding father" of the Fifth Republic, Charles de Gaulle, the constitution of the Fifth Republic put an end to the dominance of the National Assembly and, accordingly, reestablished both the authority and stability of governments – and the overthrowing of governments became more difficult. As a result of the introduction of referenda and the creation of a Constitutional Council, which supervised the constitutionality of the laws upon which the parliament voted, the parliament lost its supremacy, not only with regard to the government but also partly with regard to legislation. The emphasized role of the presidency, which notably characterizes the Fifth Republic, was also the work of Charles de Gaulle. (Morris 1994)

The Fifth Republic is commonly described as semi-presidential or "hybrid" constitutional order in which a separately elected president works in conjunction with a prime minister and a cabinet drawn from and accountable to the National Assembly. Although the letter of the constitution implies a "dual executive" system "in which a prime minister and a government 'rule' the country and the president of the Republic 'referees' the political game," as Peter Morris (1994, 25) formulates it, in practice, the presidents have played a dominant role in the Fifth Republic, with the exception of the periods of cohabitation during which the prime ministers have had more power than usual.

Political conventions have consolidated presidentialism, and, for the most part, the strong presidential power has been confirmed by the supportive parliamentary majority. Exceptions to this general rule have been the periods of cohabitation during which there has been no presidential majority in the parliament because, after the legislative elections, the president has found himself facing a parliament controlled by his opponents. During these periods¹,

¹ So far, the periods of cohabitation in the Fifth Republic have been during 1986-1988: socialist president François Mitterrand and conservative prime minister Jacques Chirac; 1993-1995: socialist president Mitterrand and conservative prime minister

a president and prime minister from rival political parties (i.e. coalitions) have been forced to "cohabitate," and this has naturally tested the prevailing system and resulted in a significant amount of critique.

According to Nicolas Roussellier (2000, 305), the periods of cohabitation have actually served as the realization of the dream of the authors of the constitution of the Fourth Republic regarding the introduction of the English model of parliamentary democracy into France. In these situations, the election of legislating and governing branches coincided with one another: a government was formed as a result of assembly elections. Namely, having chosen the majority or coalition that would serve in the National Assembly, the electorate simultaneously elected those it wished to see occupy the top positions of the executive power, which, in practice, means the prime minister. (ibid.)

However, as Roussellier immediately adds, the similarities to the English model end here. The president and his/her presidential powers still exist regardless of whether there were, due to this situation of cohabitation, some logical restrictions of the political power of the president concerning the formation and supervision of the government or the right to call a referendum. (Cf. Morris 1994, Ch. 3) Furthermore, the situation of cohabitation between the president and the prime minister necessarily gives rise to speculations as regards the future presidential elections, and, consequently, both individuals and their policies are judged from this perspective. In this sense, the French *cohabitant* prime minister is not comparable to his/her English counterpart because he/she "becomes *ipso facto* a candidate for the presidential elections," as Roussellier (2000, 305) notes. Additionally, the incumbent president has the benefit of not being directly involved in the inconvenient decision-making process within the government. (ibid.)

In contemporary parliamentarism, however, it is common for the cabinet to be formed both on the basis of and by political (i.e. also electoral) majority. In other words, the party or coalition which received the majority of votes in the assembly elections will hold the power. "*Le sens politique du parlementarisme contemporain n'est pas en ceci que le ministère doit avoir la confiance de la majorité du Parlement, mais dans le fait que c'est la majorité qui compose le cabinet,*" as Roussellier quotes the constitution theorist Boris Mirkin-Guetzévitch's analysis of the development since the 1930's (2000, 279).

Therefore, it is also self evident that parties will fight for power in order to obtain the majority and form the cabinet, and they are thereby not strictly speaking struggling merely over "political principles". In this sense, the cabinet becomes – if presented in keeping with Roussellier – the executive committee of the party in power because it carries out the orders of the party. This is, of course, self evident nowadays, although this has not always been the case in the history of French parliamentarism, as has been illustrated in the previous chapters of this book. (Roussellier 2000 *passim*.)

Édouard Balladur; 1997-2002: conservative president Jacques Chirac and socialist prime minister Lionel Jospin.

In passing, concerning the presidentialism in the Fifth Republic, Roussellier draws an interesting parallel between the election of deputies in the Third Republic and the election of the Head of State in the Fifth Republic. He argues that the way the president is elected (and the way in which the role and powers of the president are interpreted) in present-day France is reminiscent of the way deputies were elected from single-member constituencies in the Third Republic, that is more on the grounds of personality than political programs. Moreover, like the deputies in the Third Republic, the presidents in the Fifth Republic have always been elected with the support of more than one political faction (always after the second round), and therefore the present-day presidents, like the deputies in the Third Republic, are not spokesmen of one party or "political family" but more like representatives, "*représentant-magistrats*," as Roussellier put it, of the nation. (Roussellier 2000, 303-304)

In presidential parliamentarism, the role of the parliament as a main legislator is, in any case, reduced in the favor of the executive branch, that is the President of the Republic, government and prime minister, which Roussellier (2000, 304) names as "*nouveaux 'élus de la nation'*". In the (normal) situation in which the president has a political majority in the parliament, the prime minister and the government are in practice responsible only to the president, and like the Chamber of Deputies in the Third Republic, today, the president can change ministers and reinforce his/her influence within the government. Here, as Roussellier (*ibid.*) remarks, "the 'national sovereignty' seems to shift entirely from the deliberative assemblies to the personal power of the president".

Partly because of the experiences of cohabitation and partly because of the will of the incumbent president Jacques Chirac to reduce – at least nominally – the presidential powers, the presidential term was reduced from seven to five years in 2000 after a constitutional referendum on the subject. In so doing, the presidential term became theoretically equal to that of the National Assembly, and consequently the potential for awkward cohabitation was somewhat reduced. (Cf. Duhamel 2001) Overall, the actual presidential system itself has been called into question, and the need for constitutional modernization, which would lead toward the establishment of the Sixth Republic, has also occasionally been the subject of debate.

Turning now to the role of the parliament in the French Fifth Republic, it can be stated that it is one of the weakest in Europe, which becomes particularly clear when comparing it to the context of the Third Republic, the heyday of the strong parliament. As noted earlier, the constitutional reform of 1958 aimed at the restriction of the role of the parliament, and despite De Gaulle's alleged skepticism toward parliamentarians, his lieutenant in the drafting of the constitution, Michel Debré, wanted to follow the line of so-called rationalized parliamentarism with its tendency toward limiting the powers of the parliament. Due to the fact that the lawmaking process is virtually dominated by the government, the parliament may nowadays be regarded as subservient to the government. (Cf. Morris 1994, Ch. 5; Keeler 1993)

On the one hand, both the use of referenda and the role of the Constitutional Council restrict the formal sovereignty of the parliament as a lawmaker. Additionally, article 49/3 in the Constitution affords the government the curious possibility to pass a law by making it a question of confidence. In such cases, unless there is a unanimous majority against the government in the vote of censure taken in the National Assembly, the bill in question automatically becomes law (even if there is not a majority in favor of the government in either the Senate or the National Assembly). (Morris 1994, 78-79)

On the other hand, the authors of the constitution wanted to restrict the power of the National Assembly to dissolve the government, in other words governments would not be as easily replaced as was the case, notably, in the Third Republic. This was partly guaranteed by introducing the incompatibility rule, which prevents ministers from simultaneously being members of parliament; a deputy is required to relinquish his/her parliamentary seat upon accepting a ministerial post. It was assumed that this reform would prevent "office-hungry" deputies from overthrowing governments without sufficient grounds for doing so – with the sole intention of replacing the ministers in power. More importantly, a vote of no confidence with the intention to force a government to resign now requires the support of an absolute majority of all the deputies. (Morris 1994, 77-79)

According to Nicolas Roussellier, the "ultra-rationalised parliamentarism" of the Fifth Republic has in fact made the question of confidence a prerequisite, and it is therefore no longer the result of a debate regarding the assessment of the responsibility of the government. This signifies that the long tradition of "*régime de la discussion*" no longer prevails with regard to either parliamentary practices or legislative work. "En voulant chasser le spectre de la valse des ministères, le système de la Ve République a là aussi abattu le régime de la discussion," concludes Roussellier. (See Roussellier 2000, 308)

Based on the aforementioned argument, does it follow that the decrease in parliamentary power necessarily means the decline of government by discussion? What has happened to the "parliament of eloquence" that accentuates the politics of speech for and against as a hallmark of the parliamentary style of politics? (Cf. Ch. 3.1.: the citation of Nicolas Roussellier) Has it become completely buried under the overall suspicion toward parliamentary democracy – not only in the circles of the advocates of parliamentarism but also more broadly and commonly? These are interesting yet rather general and broad questions which cannot be thoroughly answered at this point, but if following the analysis made by Nicolas Roussellier regarding parliamentary representation in France since the Third Republic, the response, after summing up some particular points outlined in the following, is positive: the Fifth Republic has corroborated the decline in parliamentary power and in so doing has witnessed the decline of government by discussion.

The text above has also illustrated the power of political parties, a typical feature of the Fifth Republic that differs distinctly from the traits of the Third Republic (fragmented multipartyism). The increasing influence of political

parties has in itself effected the altered nature of the role of the parliament as a forum of political debate. The engagement of political parties has signified that parliamentarians have begun to represent ready-made party programs in the Assembly, and, therefore, the situational contingency of the parliamentary discussion no longer plays as decisive a role in individual decision making as it did in the beginning of the Third Republic, that is in the heyday of government by discussion. In other words, the emergence of party machines and party discipline has pushed aside the aspect of individual deliberation and, correspondingly, the parliamentary style of politics as the politics of speech for and against tends to become diminished, as Nicolas Roussellier points out in his writings (e.g. 2000).

Accordingly, the representatives of the people are nowadays regarded not so much as individuals but more as representatives of political groups and parties. Therefore, and notably after the reform of 1926, which was led by Joseph-Barthélemy and which altered the practices of debate in the Chamber², "le régime de la discussion n'était plus fondé sur l'expression du raisonnement d'une conscience individuelle mais engageait dorénavant l'expression collective d'un groupe politique", as Roussellier (2000, 285) stresses. (Cf. Roussellier 2000, 278) The increasing emphasis on the official role of political groups, which continued even after the abolishment of Barthélemy's resolution in 1932, thus changed the nature of the parliament from an assembly of individuals who "individually incarnated the 'national sovereignty' to an 'assembly' divided by parties and politically organized groups". (Roussellier 2000, 465, note 73) In this sense, Barthélemy's reform served as a model that has been realized not only in the Fourth but also in the Fifth Republic.

Furthermore, various modifications in the area of lawmaking and its techniques and the reduction of the responsibility of the assemblies for legislation have led to changes concerning the nature of speech and discourse in the Fifth Republic. (For more details cf. Roussellier 2000, 285-289) Roussellier (2000, 285) claims that the act of speaking in the Chamber of the Fifth Republic rarely includes the chance for "creation or impulsion," and scarcely includes the possibility to change the predetermined stances of the assembly. The role of parliamentarians is thus reduced to keeping the power of the government in check, to the processing and passing of legislative information. "La prise de parole et la nature même des discours/.../ ne participent plus du processus de délibération à proprement parler," Roussellier (ibid.) reckons.

The decline in parliamentary power has accordingly signified the decline in the level of power yielded by the representatives in favor of ministries and state administrations. The shift in power from the legislative branch to the executive branch can also be seen as a "necessity" that responded to the

² These modifications aimed at the rationalization of the parliamentary work and limited, for example, the speech time of an individual deputy in the Chamber. Instead of the debate between individual deputies, the reform favored speeches made by different groups and their spokesmen (such as chairmen of committees, rapporteurs, official spokesmen of parliamentary groups etc.) by reserving the primary right of speaking and the most time for speaking for them. (Cf. Roussellier 2000, 284-285)

demands of effectiveness and rapidity regarding the lawmaking process. In fact, a minority of the laws passed today have started off as bills proposed by a parliament member (*propositions de loi*); instead, the majority of laws are initiated by the government, or are government bills (*projets de loi*).

Additionally, the expansion of the state in the form of economical interventions and welfare provision (*État-providence*) has significantly increased the level of public decision making and reinforced the role of the government and the state administration, and, as such, the legislative work has taken on vast new dimensions requiring special skills. Because of the increasing number of bills and the increasingly heavy work load, the status of the representatives has changed "from universal legislator to specialized legislator". This has meant that the deputy has become a specialist in one particular field instead of being a *magistrat-législateur*, who is capable of handling any issue in the name of the common good and, who is first and foremost an individual representative of the nation acting according to his/her conscience. (Cf. Morris 1994, Ch. 4; Roussellier 2000, *passim*)

As to the general "decline" of government by discussion, it can be added that mediatization of the sphere of political debate has also reduced the role of the parliament as an exclusive forum of political speech: instead of being restricted to the hemicycle of the Palais Bourbon, politicians currently represent their political views and debate current issues through the media. Another facet of the "depoliticization" of the parliament, if one puts it provocatively, is the preponderance of the centralized and autonomous State, and the notion that the higher ranks of the administration form a governing elite that exercises strong influence over policy-and makes decisions in the name of a "general interest" that is beyond political control. This aspect is viewed critically even in France. In this critique, the top public officials are thus interpreted as an undemocratic administrative elite or even France's real "governing class". (Cf. Morris 1994, Ch. 4 and Roussellier 2000, 310-321)

In sum, despite the fact that the parliament has lost its political dominance in the Fifth Republic when compared to the situation of the Third Republic, and despite the fact that some parliamentarians themselves claim to be frustrated with their work and devalue its significance (Cf. Kimmel 1991, 26), one cannot – and indeed should not – completely play down the role of the National Assembly as an essential arena for public political debates, political struggles and the expression of contradictory point of views. This is to say that the discussion between political agents that takes place in the plenary sessions is, nonetheless, still a significant part of the democratic legitimization of the process of political decision-making. The ultimate power in decision-making thus still belongs to the democratically elected representative parliament, which votes on new laws and budgetary issues. (Cf. Kimmel 1991, 14-18)

It is interesting, as we will see below, that the alleged decline of the French National Assembly is also a problem that is facing the contemporary Front National Party. This aspect of the partial rehabilitation of the parliamentary functions is a feature that differentiates the Front National's anti-system

rhetoric from the anti-parliamentary discourse of Maurice Barrès or Charles Maurras, although some similarities associated with the rhetoric against the prevalent political system exist as well. In the next chapter, the contemporary variation of the anti-system rhetoric, that of the Front National, is studied in greater detail.

7 THE FRONT NATIONAL'S QUESTIONING OF THE FIFTH REPUBLIC

The French Front National (FN) is one of the first of the numerous anti-system parties that emerged all over Europe in the 1980's. (Cf. e.g. Milza 2002, 313-353, Mudde 1996b) Over the years, the Front National¹ has explicitly proclaimed itself to be a "*courant de contestation*" of the Fifth Republic. (Le Pen 1985b, 20) This *contestation*, which is directed against the legitimacy of the prevalent establishment (previously against *la bande des quatre* (RPR, UDF, PS, PC)², nowadays against *oligarchie cosmopolite, totalitaire, corrompue*), implies that the Front National is willing to determinate itself as a protest party, as a party that offers an alternative to established parties, and, notably, as a party that differs characteristically from the institutionalized party system and its values, that is as "*une vraie* opposition," as the party proclaims to be.

The demand for the constant questioning of the establishment is paradoxical, as the political program and values of the Front National could not be more traditional and, in this sense, sustaining. The Front National is dreaming of the France of a golden age, a mythic and heroic utopia established around the legends of Jean d'Arc or Clovis³, and, in the name of this dream, the party's main goal is to preserve and reestablish ancient traditionalism – in other words to renew France – which is expressed in slogans such as "pour la renaissance de la France" or "la France est de retour". This recovery or renewal nevertheless signifies a return to the past and not a change toward something new, although the rhetorical formulations of the Front National willingly

¹ See the party history in the Appendix 4.

² The "band of four" referred to the four established parties, RPR (Rassemblement pour la République), UDF (Union pour la Démocratie française), PS (Parti Socialiste) and PCF (Parti Communiste Français), from which the Front National omits the letter F, which stands for *français*.

³ Clovis was a converted king of the Franks who was baptized as a Catholic in Reims around 496. To the Front National, Clovis' baptism symbolizes the spiritual birth of the French nation. The anniversary of Clovis' baptism was even celebrated officially in France in 1996 by the secular Republic, which was the subject of a significant amount of critique.

present this return as a change. This implication of a change is presented, for example, in the way in which the Front National defines itself as a third, and allegedly more important, force of questioning the existing system in the wake of the forces of *gauchisme* (the events of May 1968) and *écologisme*. (Le Pen 1985b, 20) At any rate, the electoral rallying cry for a change of any kind is an efficient rhetorical figure not only with regard to the leftist electorate but also for all those who feel disappointed in the prevailing political establishment. One may also note at this point that the Front National's aim to restore ancient traditionalism and traditional values related to the family and Catholicism and to sing the praises of cultural and national heritage clearly echoes the nationalist rhetoric of both Barrès and Maurras.

The Front National questions the existing political system and political establishment in different ways: in fact, the political program of the party can be summed up in terms of the various aspects of *contestation*. These aspects of protest include anti-system and anti-establishment programs, which are presented in a wide context and which are interlinked with the rest of the program, such as themes of anti-immigration or anti-globalisation. This is to say that the Front National's "anti-system rhetoric" is directly associated with the party's anti-immigrant program, and vice versa. One may even claim that all of the party's political views are formulated in such a way that they support the general argumentation against Third World immigration and its assumed cultural and religious impacts (i.e. Islam) in France.

In the following, I shall study these themes in greater detail, concentrating particularly on the party's anti-constitutional critique and the themes related to it. The main focus of my study is on the Front National, but the Movement Républicain National of Bruno Mégret, the fraction that separated from the main party at the beginning of 1999, is, when necessary, also examined.

The Front National has attempted to call for the reform the Constitution of 1958. In the party congress at Strasbourg in March 1997,⁴ the party distributed papers dealing with the subject of constitutional reform. In the following, I shall analyze the content of these papers along with other references concerning the issue. The aim of the party was to submit their proposal for a constitutional reform to be decided by popular referendum. The principal points in their proposal of March 1997 were as follows:

- 1) Réaffirmer la souveraineté nationale
- 2) Relever le Parlement
- 3) Élargir le rôle du peuple
- 4) Constitutionnaliser le principe de préférence nationale. (Front National: Projet de référendum tendant à reformer la Constitution. Exposé des motifs. Xe Congrès du Front National, 29, 30 & 31 Mars, Strasbourg 1997⁵)

These points are taken here as preliminary perspectives through which various aspects associated to them are covered. It must also be noted that these

⁴ 10th Congress of the Front National, 29, 30 & 31 March 1997, Strasbourg.

⁵ Hereafter referred to as the Manifesto of Strasbourg 1997.

demands are still on the agenda of the Front National today (Cf. http://www.frontnational.com/doc_prop_souverainete.php, notably the section entitled *Institutions*), although there have been slight changes in emphasis and a few aspects have been omitted entirely from the latest platforms in comparison to the party programs from the 1980's.

Let us begin with the first point, which aims at the reaffirmation of national sovereignty. According to the Front National, "la souveraineté du peuple est en voie de disparition" (Manifesto of Strasbourg 1997). This point refers primarily to France as a member state of the European Union, a fact that the Front National would like to see reversed. Accordingly, the party wants France to pull out of the European accords and treaties (e.g. Maastricht and Amsterdam) it has ratified, abandon the common currency, the euro, return to the franc and end the easing of restrictions on global trade. (cf. http://www.frontnational.com/doc_prop_souverainete.php)

The reform called for under the first point concerns, therefore, the articles in the Constitution concerning the European communities and the European Union. According to the Front National, the articles based on the treaties of Schengen and Maastricht should be abrogated. This includes, for example, article 53-1 in the Constitution concerning asylum matters and article 88-3, which provides the right to vote and stand as a candidate in municipal elections to citizens of the European Union residing in France. The party objects to the article because it gives "the right to vote to foreigners". (Manifesto of Strasbourg 1997)

Generally speaking, one essential point in the Front National's hostility toward the European Union is formulated as follows: "car l'objectif de cette Europe-là est de détruire les nations, d'abolir les frontières et de se constituer comme une première étape vers le gouvernement mondial". (FN, Programme de gouvernement 1993, 16) The Front National accuses the establishment (named in this connection as "*oligarchie cosmopolite*") of selling out with regard to its duty to uphold the national interest and of pursuing a project of "*l'empire euromondialiste*". (Cf. http://www.frontnational.com/doc_prop_souverainete.php)

The Front National highlights two conflicting views on Europe: on the one hand, the federalist and supranational utopia of the bureaucrats in Brussels, and, on the other hand, the Europe of fatherlands (*Europe des patries*⁶) with its centuries of history, civilization and culture. The latter conception is defended by the Front National, and the European civilization is, in this connection, defined as upholding "Western values," Christianity and Hellenic culture. Additionally, the European community is preferably seen as a "realm of white men" (Mégret 1990, 208) and not as a "*melting-pot mondialiste*" submerged under the weight of Third World immigration⁷. As one can see, the alternative offered

⁶ "Europe des patries" was originally Charles de Gaulle's device against the supranational European organization.

⁷ "L'Europe est quand même la patrie de l'homme blanc, pas celle de l'homme gris," as Le Pen (1989, 103) once noted.

to the institutional integration of Europe is not based on a political but more on an ethno-communitarian conception of Europe.

Briefly, the anti-European attitude of the Front National is linked with the party's overall skepticism toward both globalization and "Americanization". They want France to pull out of Nato and reestablish its ancient political, economical and military *grandeur* in the world's eyes. (See e.g. Mégret 1996, Ch. 11) Additionally, the Front National sees, and willingly manifests, a line of division that runs down the domestic political spectrum not between the Left and the Right but between pro-European and anti-European blocs. In a 1997 interview, Bruno Mégret was also prepared to substitute the old division between the Right and the Left with a new division between *mondialistes* and *nationalistes*. (Interview with the author 21.3.1997)

At the time, the Front National was eager to build up "a new political debate" around the theme of globalization and to present itself as a party that was merely attempting to defend French identity. Apparently, this was not, however, seen as an appealing theme, or perhaps it was just not quite "populist" enough to generate a response from the audience of the Front National. The other division, that between pro-Europeans and anti-Europeans, did, however, incite a more enthusiastic response from the electorate. Related to the anti-Europe program, a topic of enduring critique by the Front National has been the Maastricht Referendum of 1992 and the subsequent acceptance of the treaty on the basis of the very narrow victory of "Yes" votes. The party is also critical of the fact that the text adopted as a result of the referendum is not the one that is applied today.

(http://www.frontnational.com/doc_prop_souverainete.php)

In passing, it is, however, clear that in the increasingly integrating Europe, parties such as the Front National with its radical Euroskepticism exert a paradoxical force: by their contempt for the bureaucracy of Brussels they can alternatively present themselves as the only political force that is truly defending the national – and "purely" the national – interest. This defense of national values and patriotism, which has more or less been monopolized in France by the Front National, has at times been interpreted by other parties as problematic. Some scholars have questioned whether it is wise to leave the definition and defence of anything and everything "national" to the discretion of the Front National and its one-sided reading of the term. (Cf. Taguieff 1996b, 59-60)

The Front National's aim of "reaffirming the national sovereignty" does, however, refer, as described above, to the alleged weakening of national sovereignty due to the combination of the integration of Europe and the globalization of the world economy. From this perspective, the overall critique of the Front National concerning the subsequent decline in the political sovereignty of the French nation-state may be interpreted as a discourse denouncing, above all, the crisis of representative democracy within the national framework. Although this point might not be thoroughly analyzed in the platforms of the Front National, it can be stated that it is, however, one tacit premise behind their discourse, which, however, tends to be more oriented

toward achieving broad popular support than to providing practicable policy alternatives. Related to this, some scholars have even interpreted the rise of populist movements from the 1980's onwards as a phenomenon that is a reaction to the presumed crisis of representation in Europe, in other words as a symptom of representative and democratic malaise. (See e.g. Taggart 2000 and Taguieff 2002, Ch. 1)

This critique toward the overall unification of Europe is an aspect that I will take as a given in the context of this work, leaving a more in-depth examination for another occasion. In my view, the anti-EU speculations require an additional study focusing more broadly on the complexity of institutions on the European level.

7.1 The Parliament

Point two of the Strasbourg manifesto is entitled "Relever le Parlement" and goes as follows:

Le Parlement est abaissé: intégralement prisonnier de l'ordre du jour gouvernemental, dépossédé d'une partie de ses compétences par les organisations européennes, il se voit souvent censuré par le Conseil constitutionnel super-législateur de moins en moins juge en droit, de plus en plus juge en idéologie.

Interestingly, the Front National is concerned about the reduced power of the parliament, both in regard to the government and the institutions of the European Union. Related to the decline of the parliament, the Front National also highlights the role of the Constitutional Council, whose role is seen by the party as highly questionable. The function of the Council, according to the Constitution, is to supervise "the proper conduct" of presidential and parliamentary elections and to judge the constitutionality of laws voted on by the National Assembly prior to their promulgation. (Cf. Title VII The Constitutional Council in the Constitution of October 4, 1958) In other words, the Council has the power to overturn measures that have already been approved by both houses of the parliament, and, in this sense, it has a kind of judicial control over the political process. (Morris 1994, 35) The critique of the Front National appears not to be directed to the same extent against the role of the Council as a juridically "*super-législateur*" that supersedes parliamentary sovereignty as it is to its judgments, which are allegedly based more often on "false ideology" than on law.

In its proposal, the Front National explicitly demands, regarding the role of the parliament as follows: "le rétablissement plein et entier de son rôle de législateur (Parlement) sans censure idéologique du Conseil constitutionnel". This "ideological censorship" practiced by the Council is connected to the general conception of the Front National, according to which the establishment forms an "ideologically false" conspiracy against the party and is, therefore,

categorically opposed to its propositions, which are hence consistently interpreted as inherently anti-constitutional. Accordingly, the Front National has a vested interest in denying the legitimacy of the Council because the party's demand for the establishment of the principle of national preference would certainly go against the existing Constitution. (See chapter 7.4. on national preference below)

Bruno Mégret (1996, 60), the former second in command of the Front National, who originally expressed the idea concerning the Constitutional Council, said the following about the asserted "ideological court": "Il statue désormais par référence à la Déclaration des droits de l'homme visée par le préambule de la Constitution". The point of the Front National is that the Declaration of Rights of Men forms an official ideology to which the institutions and politicians are forced to adapt. According to the Front National, this "ideology of the rights of men" also serves as a kind of conspiracy, as it is an establishment which is ultimately against the true interests of the people. As Mégret adds:

le fonctionnement de nos institutions n'est pas sans rappeler le schéma en vigueur dans la défunte Union soviétique, où la légitimité ne découlait pas de la volonté d'une majorité populaire, mais de sa conformité au dogme. Les Français sont majoritairement favorables au rétablissement de la peine de mort ou à l'instauration de la préférence nationale? Qu'importe! Même si les députés votaient ces mesures, le Conseil constitutionnel s'y opposerait, considérant ces lois comme hérétiques. (Mégret 1996, 60)

Here, again, the basic message of the Front National is that the political establishment, and at this point the parliamentary institution in itself, is more or less ensnared by a false ideology and, therefore, forms an entity that is partially voluntaristically against the genuine will of the people (the rival parties) and partially forced to adapt itself (due to the Constitutional Council) to the official ideology of the republic, which is allegedly against the true interests of the people.

If one wishes to sharply depict the Front National's attitude toward the spirit of the preamble of the Constitution, it follows that the Front National is definitely anti-constitutional, and, as such, forms a undeniable bloc against the republican and universal principles of 1789 represented by the official state and the Constitution. This bloc – or rather a fraction represented by the Front National – of anti-republican values is reminiscent of the basic conflict between the two Frances that was concretized during the Dreyfus Affair and that represented two opposing value systems during this specific historical moment.

In passing, I shall expand on this idea briefly. Pierre Birnbaum (1993), for example, has made a distinction between the "two imaginary communities" that were formed during the Dreyfus Affair, one of which was built upon the universal values of Enlightenment, Revolution and *laïcité* and supported by the republicans of the Third Republic. The other "ideal typical" value system was, then, formed around the church and Catholicism, and various brands of nationalism were linked with it. This conflict between values is typically

depicted as *guerre franco-française*, and over the course of the Third Republic it culminated in the separation of Church and State in 1905.

Although passionate conflicts of this caliber have not been that common in recent history, there have been occasional glimpses of this type of political emotion. In 1996, for instance, when the officially secular French Republic and its president Jacques Chirac celebrated the anniversary of the baptism of the converted king Clovis, rather loud voices of opposition could be heard. The opponents viewed the official celebration of a Catholic conversion by a secular state based on the values of Enlightenment and Revolution as quite curious. For the Front National in the context of 1996, the sacred baptism of the Frankish King Clovis in 496 symbolized the conversion of France – which is known as the “eldest daughter of the Catholic Church” – to Catholicism, and the anniversary was seen (not only within the Front National) as an official anniversary of the 1500 year old France.

The events and debates of 1996 were, then, an example that both illuminated the dormant division between the secular, universalistic France and the France of Catholics and nationalists and, simultaneously, clearly manifested the value system of the Front National, which in this sense follows the anti-Dreyfysard line of thought. My point here is that in spite of the contemporary consensus surrounding the principles of 1789, the Front National is continuously revolting against them both implicitly and explicitly depending on the situation and the political context.

To return to the quotations above, the Front National suggests not only that the hands of parliamentarians are ideologically bound due to the censorship of the Constitutional Council but also that the representative elite in the parliament is actually too far removed from the people, from the “true” sovereign. The way out of “cette dérive oligarchique et totalitaire” would be, to quote Mègret (*ibid.*), “de s’employer à restaurer une démocratie plus authentique qui rétablisse le peuple en position de souverain”. In other words, this is referring to the proportional electoral system, which the Front National supports, and to direct democracy by means of referenda. But, additionally, the Front National wants to reinforce the overall role of the parliament and to halt the so-called decline in parliamentary power – but not merely with regard to the Constitutional Council and the European Union. Let us consider this aspect of the rhetoric of the Front National in greater detail below.

According to the Front National, one means of strengthening of the parliament would be moving to a proportional electoral system. According to the Front National, the current system of parliamentary election, which is based on a majority, “represents only a reduced minority of the French people,” and therefore, “does not correctly assure its function of control nor its duty of representation”. (FN, Programme de gouvernement 1993, 391) Here, the idea is that since all facets of public opinion are not represented in parliament due to the prevalent electoral system, the mimetic representation of the nation remains incomplete. In other words, the people are not represented as accurately as they should be in the parliament – the parliament does not mirror the whole entity of the people. (Cf. Ankersmit 1996) The Front national has a vested interest here

as well, because it has enduring difficulties in getting in to the parliament due both to the majority system and the political isolation of the party (lack of electoral coalitions). At the moment (2004), for example, the party does not have any deputies in the National Assembly, although it received approximately 12% the vote in the legislative elections of 2002.

Another aspect of the Front National is its denunciation of the domination of the executive power over the legislative decision-making. According to the Front National, "le Parlement est dessaisi dans les faits de ses pouvoirs au profit de l'exécutif et de la haute administration". (FN, Programme de gouvernement 1993, 400) Moreover, the party poses the following question:

Le gouvernement...détermine-t-il la politique de la Nation? Rien n'est moins sûr: les ministres, y compris le premier d'entre eux, délèguent aux cabinets ministériels et à une caste de hauts fonctionnaires, l'essentiel de leurs pouvoirs. Certains fonctionnaires politisés font la loi, au sens littéral du terme... (http://www.frontnational.com/doc_souv_institutions.php)

The core of the critique that lies at the heart of the Front National's party platform is, firstly, that the legislative power and the drafting of the political agenda⁸ has become too centered in the hands of government bureaucracies, which end up making decisions in place of the parliamentary politicians. Secondly, the party is claiming that the governmental power to which the high administration is directly linked is sliding beyond parliamentary control, and, additionally, that – in addition to being susceptible to the influences of various extra-parliamentary "lobbies" – the government bureaucracies ("technocrates non élus") are actually beyond any kind of political control whatsoever. One such "lobby" is that of the Freemasons⁹. In the program of 1993, this idea is argued as follows: "la réalité technique du pouvoir est détenue par un petit nombre d'hommes qui, sans mandat ni contrôle du peuple, prennent des décisions sous l'influence de lobbies de tous ordres". (Cf. FN, Programme de gouvernement 1993, 391)

As is clear from above, the Front National is referring to the strict distinction between the legislative and executive powers, as was also the case with Boulangism earlier. However, due to the differences in the parliamentary contexts of the Third and the Fifth Republics, the interpretations of the Boulangists and the contemporary Front National differ quite significantly. The Front National does not question the principle of parliamentarism as such, that is the accountability of the government to the Assembly, as the Boulangists did. On the contrary, the Front National is actually demanding that the government should be subject to greater control, although not necessarily by the representative parliament but by the people via direct democracy and

⁸ Cf. the first direct quotation in this chapter immediately under the title, "The Parliament".

⁹ The Front National insinuates that the public powers plotted with certain "lobbies," such as the Freemasons. In its newest program, the party notes that: "Le Docteur Simon, personnalité maçonnique du plus haut rang, a déclaré que toutes les lois importantes prises depuis 25 ans avaient été préparées au sein des loges". (http://www.frontnational.com/doc_souv_institutions.php)

referenda. In this sense, the Front National sees the ideal political system as polarized between the government and the people, with the people controlling the actions of the government by means of elections and referenda. (Cf. Chapters 3.2.2 and 7.3.)

It may be noted that in relation to this common development in contemporary Western democracies in which the executive power – comprised of the government bureaucracies – is gradually, to a greater or lesser extent, moving toward the “territory” of legislative power. F.R. Ankersmit (2002, 122) might be correct in concluding that in the contemporary context it would be better to override the traditional division between legislative and executive powers à la Montesquieu and to handle the democratic state as a single entity.

In this connection, one should also ask whether the Front National is willing to rehabilitate the parliamentary style of politics along with the parliamentary institution and, subsequently, the parliament as an arena of political speech, controversy, contingency, and perhaps also eloquence. The reply might be “yes” to a lesser extent and “no” to a greater extent. On the one hand, the party is demanding an increase in the parliament’s power of initiative, with regard to both legislative work and the drafting of the political agenda, and, in this sense, it is promoting an increase in the level of discussion within the Assembly. In its Strasbourg Manifesto, for instance, the Front National called for the establishment of an extra weekly parliamentary session, which would be, to quote, “réservée à la discussion des propositions des lois suivant un ordre du jour complémentaire adopté par l’Assemblée”.

However, the Front National views the parliamentary discussions neither as a form of political struggle in itself nor as a means of weighing alternatives, but more as a means of presenting opinions and making public the debate surrounding various issues. As it is put in their program of 1985: “Le rôle du Parlement c’est enfin d’éclairer le débat politique en portant à la connaissance de l’opinion les raisons des choix effectués”. (Le Pen 1985a, 41) In this connection, no mention is made either of parliamentary eloquence or parliamentary discussion as being inherently futile, as was the case in the Boulangist anti-parliamentary rhetoric. One can even claim that even if the contempt for politicians were to remain on the platform of the Front National, it would address more against a “non-virtuous and corrupted political class” than against useless political discussion within the parliament. This obvious difference between the attitudes of the Front National and the Boulangists is a natural progression of the change within the overall parliamentary context, although it does not entirely explain the difference away.

On the other hand, for the Front National, the role of the parliament remains more that of an instrument of controlling the government. From one perspective, this control implies the surveying of the political elite, which, according to the party, has an inherent tendency toward corruption, and the direct consultation of the people would serve as a means of preventing this kind of scenario. In this light, the reinforcement of the parliament does not necessarily mean the strengthening of parliamentarism in itself, as the main remedy concerning political institutions lies, however, in direct democracy.

This is to say that although the Front National is not strictly speaking anti-parliamentary, it is also not pro-parliamentary because the main political issue on the Front National's party agenda continues to be direct democracy, which, according to the party, is the only means of guaranteeing genuine democracy and, in so doing, concretizing the real sovereignty of the people.

Accordingly, the representative parliament seems to the Front National to be an imperfect albeit necessary supplement to direct democracy. It may even be said that, according to the outlook of the Front National, the parliament is important as a national institution symbolizing not only the political sovereignty of France but also the importance of France as a "Western democracy" in relation to the rest of the world.

At first glance, it might appear peculiar for a national-populist party to call for the "rehabilitation" of the parliament. However, upon closer examination it becomes clear that the question of primary importance to the party is direct democracy, while the parliament merely plays a secondary role. Compared to Boulangism, the representative parliament might not be as decorative and supernumerary for the Front National as it was for the Boulangists, but, nevertheless, contemporary national-populists do not radically promote either parliamentary sovereignty à la the Third Republic or an increasing in "government by discussion".

As we have seen here, the Front National does not question the legitimacy of representative democracy as such, although it does occasionally call for the implementation of a more authoritarian model. But authoritarian in what sense?

Regarding political institutions, the Front National is willing to extend the presidential term back to seven years. In their latest program, the party claims that the five year term is inherently dangerous because by aligning the length of "*magistrature suprême*" with other mandates it actually undermines the role of the president. At the same time, the party claims that the reduction of the presidential term is indicative of the will of governing politicians to ruin France, adding that:

Mais c'est aussi significatif de l'euromondialisme de l'Établissement: en banalisant le mandat du chef de l'État, elle souligne sa volonté de passer de l'État national souverain à l'État fédéré, ayant à sa tête un simple gouverneur prenant ses ordres d'une Fédération.

(http://www.frontnational.com/doc_souv_institutions.php)

By this allegation against the "Euroglobal establishment," the Front National is expressing its fear of the decline of the authority of the head of state within the context of the European Union. The shortening of the presidential term is interpreted here as a step toward the establishment of a federal state supported by the "pro-European plot" (i.e. the political establishment) – and there is no mention of the referendum by which the issue (the shortening of the presidential term) was, however, decided in 2000. According to the Front National, "la fonction présidentielle ne vaut guère plus qu'un mandat de gouverneur dans un État fédéral".

(http://www.frontnational.com/doc_souv_institutions.php)

Overall, the demand for a more authoritarian head of state has been included in the Front National's platform since its inception. (Cf. Camus 1989) The demand for authoritarianism has been commonly formulated in the context of the presidentialist regime, although the explicit demand for charismatic leadership or a national saviour is not emphasized to the same extent in the discourse of the Front National as it was in that of the Boulangists. The contemporary authoritarianism is revealed more in the hyper-personalization of the party (Taguieff 1995, 33) through its leader Le Pen, under whose authoritarian control the entire party structure is organized. (See Birenbaum 1992, 195-219)

Also, if compared to the "personality cult" of Boulanger, we can see the appearance of a phenomenon that can be directly related to the figure of Le Pen. In the party propaganda, for instance in photographs and posters, Le Pen is represented as a strong leader who is captivating the attention of his wide audience with his paternal eloquence and "ordinary man" behaviour. Also the "statesman" Le Pen's "warm relationships" with carefully selected and internationally influential politicians and other powerful figures are willingly disseminated. (Cf. the English pages of the Front National website: <http://english.le-pen.info>) But because not all of Le Pen's merits are exclusively positively connotated (for example the image of the "war hero" Le Pen has been questioned due to his alleged involvement in the torture of prisoners during the Algerian War), his public image remains ambivalent.

Accordingly, the role of a fronton that Le Pen plays in the party has had both positive and negative effects for the movement. Sometimes Le Pen the man has been interpreted as a major burden for the party, and sometimes the idea of a future without Le Pen has seemed nearly impossible. As much as the future of the party may be doubtful, it will not necessarily be without the influence of a "Le Pen," because Jean-Marie's daughter Marine Le Pen is steadily climbing the ladder of the party organization.¹⁰

¹⁰ In 2003, the daughter of Jean-Marie Le Pen, *conseillère générale* Marine Le Pen (born in 1968), was elected to the *bureau politique* of the Front National. The matter was depicted as the anticipation of a time after Jean-Marie Le Pen, and, accordingly, was seen as a clear indication of how things should be arranged in the party post "father Le Pen". Since the division of the movement in 1999, the party has been forced to search for a new dynamic image to replace its description of itself as the "Front National of the old guard". The party has actively searched for a "new moderation" (one aspect of the *démégréritisation* of the party) and new faces, especially those of women. As such, the view that being a young woman is in itself a political asset has become quite common.

An illustration of this outlook can be seen in the interview in the Front National newspaper in which another new member of the *bureau politique*, Sophie Montel, aged 33, confessed that "being a woman is an unquestionable political asset" because it breaks the fascist image often associated with militants of the Front National. "It is absolutely ridiculous to treat someone like me, a woman in her thirties, especially if I am with my baby, as a fascist. If someone calls you names like that, it will certainly hurt the credibility of that person, not yours," concludes Sophie Montel, adding that: "In this sense, women have this asset: their potential opponents have a tendency to be less virulent". (National Hebdo, 29 May - 4 June 2003,11)

7.2 The establishment

Before turning to the political role of the people in the rhetoric of the Front National, let us view the basic antagonism between the prevailing political elite and the people, which is emphasized in the party's discourse. In other words, I will focus in the following on the opposition between the *pays réel* and the *pays légal* as interpreted by the Front National.

According to the Front National, the prevailing "establishment is against France". This point is clearly expressed in the following citation:

L'ÉTABLISSEMENT CONTRE LA FRANCE. En matière institutionnelle, le bilan des vingt dernières années est accablant. Les institutions françaises sont schizophrènes: il y a une apparence, celle de la Constitution et des lois, et il ya une réalité, celle des factions qui se partagent les prébendes et entendent les garder. Sous la coquille "républicaine", "démocratique", "citoyenne", s'est installée une oligarchie cosmopolite, totalitaire, corrompue. /.../ La vieille distinction, qu'on croyait révolue, entre pays légal et pays réel, demeure bel et bien.
(http://www.frontnational.com/doc_souv_institutions.php)

In this quotation from the latest Front National party program (2004) one may observe the hostility both toward political institutions and the political establishment. Here, the establishment is depicted as entirely corrupt and the establishment is interpreted as holding the political power behind the institutional facade that appears to be legal but is actually false. Here, the authors of the program seem to underline the opposition, or dichotomy, between the false appearance of legal institutions and the true political reality behind the scenes.

The point, then, is that in spite of the appearance of legality perpetuated by political institutions in support of the prevailing political establishment, the politics of this establishment is nevertheless false: corrupt, self-serving, ideologically distorted, totalitarian and quite possibly illegal. Accordingly, in reality, the establishment is ultimately working against – that is conspiring against – France and the French people. As is clear from the passage above, the *pays légal* stands for the false appearance of the political institutions dominated by the prevailing establishment, while the *pays réel* is seen as reality in France, as the real France. The legal nation is interpreted as an evil plot that is conspiring against the real nation (*complot contre la France*), and, accordingly, the official conception (that of the establishment) of France is also false because it does not take into account the epithets and values of the "real nation" represented by the nationalists.

Put differently, the Front National not only claims that the establishment actually works against the interests of France but also that the people of France are fundamentally being misled and that it is the Front National that is actually aware of the real thoughts of the French people. Here, France is presented as a living subject that is not only one undiversified unity but also the

property of the Front National, because France is only interpreted as the "real France" in its definition by the party.

In a nutshell, the main idea supported by the Front National is that the prevailing political establishment, the "political class," conspires against the Front National as it conspires against the "real people," who possess the ultimate virtue and who can only truly be represented by the Front National. In fact, the Front National argues that it is the only party that personifies the real nation. As Le Pen himself has asserted referring to the enthusiasm of the grass-root level party militants: "Croyez-moi, c'est un sérieux avantage à l'heure où s'agrandit quotidiennement le fossé entre le pays prétendument légal et *le pays réel, que, seuls, nous incarnons.*" (Le Pen interview, "Le Front national vu par Jean-Marie Le Pen," in *Le National Hebdo* 1997, 3. Italics mine.)

One may easily note that the Front National's rhetorical logic regarding the *pays légal-pays réel* dichotomy is analogous to Maurras': in other words, the *pays légal* represents the false appearance of political institutions and the subsequent political establishment, whereas the *pays réel* is identified with the speaker's own conception of France. Maurras' and the Front National's substantial interpretations surrounding these antithetical concepts do, however, differ at least on the institutional level. It is clear that for Maurras the political remedy could be found in monarchism, while the contemporary Front National adheres more closely to the line of the Boulangists in terms of the emphasis placed on the sovereignty of the people. Nevertheless, both ultimately view the *pays réel* as the incarnation of the nationalistic renaissance, the final victory of traditional values and the natural French order.

From a broader perspective, the Front National's version of the *pays légal* includes elites, or groups that are portrayed as illegitimate: the political establishment, globalized economical oligarchies, the ideologically distorted media, cosmopolitans, organizations or groups which favor foreign (cultural/religious) influences or cultural Americanization and so forth. The *pays réel*, in turn, covers the nationalistically oriented France and the notion of Frenchness with its inherently traditional values (family, fatherland, respect for one's roots and French historical heritage), in other words the "real nation" is identified directly with the ideology of the party, while, simultaneously, the party and its leader are identified with the people. This identification, emblematic to populist rhetoric at any given time throughout its history, is crystallized in slogans such as "Le Pen – Le Peuple".

This anti-elitism, which was also characteristic of Boulangist discourse and continues to be present in the rhetoric of the Front National today, brings us to the ideal-typical definition of populism introduced by Pierre-André Taguieff (1995, 1996a). According to Taguieff, anti-elitism is one essential feature of protest populism, and if one considers the act of protest itself, it is inherently a reaction stemming from hostility toward something. Put differently, one main characteristic of movements such as Boulangism and Lepenism is populism, which implies a tendency toward hostility: in a word, the rhetoric of protest implies a general sense of negativism. Behind this negativism, as one may observe from above, often lies a conspiracy theory: a conviction that some sort

of evil plot is at work against the people. (Ionescu and Gellner 1969, 3-4; Taguieff 1995, 24-25, 1996a, 119-120) The appeal to the people is, in this connection, intended as a denunciation of elites (political, economic etc.). The people, who are very much trusted, are also defined as ordinary citizens, and it is on their behalf and in their name that the Front National speaks.

One can actually discern the same ambiguity of the term people in the Lepenist discourse as has been noted earlier with regard to Boulangism. On the one hand, the party is appealing to the entire people, and, on the other hand, there is an "exclusive" appeal to the "authentic" people, defined as "simple" and "honest" French citizens. This "humble" part of the people is allegedly instinctively good, "culturally intact, free of foreign influences, uncontaminated by the mental Aids affecting elites cut off from the people," as Taguieff (1995, 28) has it put.

Related to this, Pierre-André Taguieff (1995, 2002) brings out two variants of how "the people" are represented in the populism of the Front National: on the one hand, as a political entity the people is victimized, on the other hand it is represented as a potential threat to the existing political system and social peace. For example, Le Pen willingly represents himself as an advocate of the little people, even as a partisan for the working people, whom Le Pen describes by using the expression "*sans grade*"¹¹. Additionally, in the contemporary discourse the people is commonly depicted as a victim of the "new imperialism", or globalization in the vocabulary of the Front National. The people are thus seen as involved in a confrontation with the global elite, with the establishment, whose interests are diametrically opposite to those of the common people.

But, the rhetoric of the Front National is also willing to use these ordinary local people, who are socially excluded and marginalized due to increasing globalization and internationalization, in order to promote their stance regarding the appearance of an implicit threat. Despite the fact that the supporters of the Front National are not necessarily presented as an organized revolutionary force that would launch some kind of an actual assault against the system, there is an *arrière pensée* behind the defiant rhetoric of the party that one day the "real France," the *pays réel*, will beat the allegedly legal France. Those "at the bottom" are ultimately willing to "make the rich pay" for their sufferance. (Cf. Taguieff 2002, 9-10)

Related to this, Jacques Julliard (1992, 192) argues on the basis of the revolutionary context that the emphasis of the "have-nots" is referring to the subclass within the class of the plebs, or perhaps to a distinct part of the people. Julliard's definition of "*le peuple des bras nus et des miséreux*" refers to the poor and the destitute, to the permanent part of people that is in one way or another excluded, and, that, furthermore, poses a threat to the existing social order. In a sense, the have-nots are seen as posing a sort of threat to the existing system and order, and, more importantly, they are commonly described as a potentially threatening group that could – one fine day – end up fighting in the

¹¹ In English "without a university degree".

streets. The threat is commonly expressed in the sense that failure to take action will inevitably lead to social disorder.

Concerning Le Pen's identification with the working class and the "people on the margin"¹², one may note that nowadays the Front National enjoys such a high level of support among the working people that the party is sometimes labeled, at least willingly by the Front National itself, as "the principal working class party in France". The French researchers who have carried out extensive analyses on the electoral support of the Front National have stated that this electoral phenomenon, which began to emerge in 1995, should be interpreted more as *ouvriéro-lepénisme* than *gaucho-lepénisme*. (Cf. Mayer 2002, *passim*.) In other words, that particular part of the Front National electorate can be categorized sociologically as working class, although these people themselves tend to identify more with the political right than the left. (See also Evans 2000)

In any case, it is undeniable that the proportion of workers voting for the Front National has increased over the years. There could be a number of reasons for this. Along with the general social and economical reasons that have been prevalent in the French society, the evolution concerning the political spectrum has also played an important role. There is a link between the decline of the Communist Party and the emergence of the Front National, although the electorate of these two parties are not congruent. Even if the Front National is appealing to the workers, or to the so-called "have-nots," it is also attracting groups which do not belong to the traditional electorate of the *Parti Communiste*, such as shopkeepers or small and medium-sized business owners, who might also be experiencing a sense of insecurity in this era of economic globalization.

Related to this, Dominique Reynié has argued that a vote for the Front National is no longer necessarily motivated by nationalist sentiment but more by the increasing feeling of insecurity among the French people. In other words, the other side of the so-called coin of insecurity is the demand for more protection from the state, which is then partly channeled into support for the Front National, whose main themes include the issue of insecurity. (Cf. L'Express N° 2751, 22-28 March 2004)

Overall, one may say that the so-called "social question" is still an important theme in the nationalist programs, as it was already during the days of Boulangism, for example in Barrès' campaigns in Nancy. Nowadays, social issues are naturally emphasized in the programs of any political party due to the contemporary era of the welfare state and related social security system.

Regarding the Front National's general hostility toward the existing political system and establishment (*pays légal*), there is a curious ambivalence between the party's "theoretical" attitudes and party members' concrete "political behaviour". Despite the party's fervent protest, the Front National overtly underlines that it is willing to operate in the framework of the Fifth Republic, but it is simultaneously calling for a certain break with the allegedly "established disorder". The political model that the Front National is

¹² The Front National's sympathy for those on the margin is selective. The party does not feel sympathy for unemployed French citizens of foreign extraction, homosexuals or other "margin groups" who are not considered by the party to be *vrai Français*.

suggesting may be summarized in the demand for a "Second French Revolution," which will be "the true one". (Cf. Taguieff 1989) This is referring to the shift toward a "true Sixth Republic," which in itself echoes the Boulangist demand for a "definitive and uncontested Republic" that was stressed in the first point of Barrès' electoral platform in 1889. (Cf. Ch. 3.2.) The Front National has described its position as follows:

Vive la VIe République à construire avec le septennat de 1995-2002 et bien sûr l'approbation de Peuple Français par référendum. Que sera cette République? /.../ Une République populiste, mais oui populiste, c'est-à-dire que le peuple pourra exprimer sa volonté non seulement par le référendum mais par le référendum d'initiative populaire en complément d'un système parlementaire rénové et réellement démocratique.

(Speech by Jean-Marie Le Pen at the 1994 celebration of "Bleu-blanc-rouge", National Hebdo 15.9.1994, quoted in Souchard et al. 1997, 138-139)

As one might notice from this quotation, the Front National views the establishment of the Sixth Republic, which would be populist and, consequently, "truly" democratic, as absolutely imperative. The party thus draws a direct rhetorical analogy between being a populist and being a democrat. The reformed and "truly democratic" parliamentary system would thus be a "populist republic". Previously, the Front National has called for the establishment of a "popular democracy," nowadays they refer directly to a "populist republic", a term that perhaps corresponds more to their own style of rhetoric and vocabulary. The Front National has spoken out in favor of the democratic model à la Switzerland for years. (Cf. the "old" programs e.g. Le Pen 1985a, 43-46; see also Canovan 1981, 199-202 for the Swiss model of democracy) More recently, related to its demands for constitutional reform, the party has introduced the idea of a shift toward the Sixth Republic, which would allegedly be a "populist republic".

What does the demand for "populist democracy" actually mean? Basically, if we take the concept itself as a point of departure in our analysis, it can be said that the idea of a populist democracy inherently implies a lack of a sufficient amount of both populism and democracy in the existing political system. If this is the case, it is also assumed that the prevailing style of democracy does not fill the criteria of populism, in other words that the existing democracy – democracy conceived of as the sovereignty of the people/ government by the people – is not ipso facto populist, or, in this connection, it is not "democratic" enough. This same assumption of the insufficiency of the prevailing political regime with regard to the principle of the sovereignty of the people was already introduced during the Boulangist era in the form of anti-parliamentarism and the subsequent calls for direct democracy.

Furthermore, democracy and populism are identified with each other in the sense that populism is presented as a quasi logical necessity for democracy and vice versa. If being a populist simultaneously means being a democrat, it also means that the political enemy is first identified and revealed and then accused of "not being enough of a democrat". The logic of this argumentation, which drew an analogy between democrats and populists, thus implies that

"being a populist is being a real democrat" and that democrats who claim to be democrats but not populists are not "real democrats".

Additionally, as Pierre-André Taguieff (2002, 150-151) demonstrates, the Front National has taken advantage of the undefined and negatively interpreted word populism by "rehabilitating" the term within the party's own circles. It goes without saying that populism is nowadays a negatively connotated term which is commonly used in political arguments to label one's political enemies. In fact, the Front National has once again resorted to its famous rhetorical technique of discursive retortion (*retorsion discursive*) in order to cause confusion. The retortion of an argument means, in this connection, that the original argument or term, which has a somewhat negative connotation, is redefined positively. The Front National has done just that with the word populism. Their slogans, such as "Populiste et fier de l'être,"¹³ perfectly illustrate this method.¹⁴

In the following, the basis for the Front National's populist republic, the sovereignty of the people, will be studied further.

7.3 The sovereignty of the people

Another means of breaking with the established (dis)order in the discourse of the Front National is the direct appeal to the people, formulated commonly as "rendre la parole au peuple". This slogan of the Front National crystallizes "the solution," manifested in the form of direct democracy, to the overall problems of French society and is expressed in point three in the section on constitutional reform in the Strasbourg Manifesto (1997) as "Élargir le rôle du peuple".

This proposal aims at extending the scope of the application of referenda and, this time bizarrely, on the grounds provided by article 6 of the Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen: "The law is the expression of the general will. All citizens have the right to take part, personally or through their representatives, in its making". Bolstering this clause, the Front National's intention is to broaden and increase the scope of the topics submitted to a

¹³ This was the theme of the "université d'été du Front National de la jeunesse" on 17th July 1994. On this same occasion Le Pen spoke in favor of a *front populiste* in order to save France. This rhetorical figure is also an example of the party's retortion tactics and refers implicitly to the *front populaire* of the left that took place after the riots of 6 February 1934, when the left-wing parties decided to unite against fascist tendencies. (Cf. Taguieff 2002, 151)

¹⁴ In the discourse of the Front National almost every argument that is used against the party has been retorted, which means that the meaning of an argument has been modified in favor of the party. For example, when the Front National was labeled as "extremist," the party began to attack its political adversaries by using the argument "*extrémisme de la classe politique*". Similarly, the allegations of racism that were made against the party have been retorted in terms of "*racisme anti-Français*". Additionally, the Front National tends to play with words and concepts by changing familiar terms or modifying people's names to form new ones, and these new terms are often pejoratively connotated.

referendum. Second, it wants to create a popular initiative referendum on any constitutionally sanctioned legislative proposal upon the request of a million voters. Third, the Front National also demands the possibility to arrange local referenda, which could also be arranged based on popular initiative. Once these proposals are put into practice, France would "join advanced democracies such as Switzerland and California," claims the Front National in its party platform. (Manifesto of Strasbourg 1997)

Interestingly, in its program of 1985, the Front National was still clinging to the idea of expanding the "rule by poll" to the so-called "*référendum-veto*" following the Swiss model. By this procedure, legislative proposals that had already been dealt with in the National Assembly could eventually be rejected by the people. More precisely, the promulgation of a law voted on by the parliament would be postponed for a period of two months during which time the public could demand a referendum on the issue at hand. (Le Pen 1985a, 44) This proposition is no longer (not publicly at least) on the Front National's agenda.

It goes without saying that the Front National would like to increase the frequency with which referenda are organized. Despite the fact that referenda are occasionally used in the Fifth Republic, the party claims that "*le peuple n'a que rarement l'occasion de s'exprimer directement: les référendums sont rares; les questions de société n'y sont jamais posées.*" (ibid.) The major point, however, concerns the broadening of the scope of topics that can be submitted to popular consultation, as had been the case with Boulangism earlier (Cf. Ch. 3.2.3.).

The point for the Front National here is that so-called "subjects of major concern," such as immigration (e.g. the terms on which non-European immigrants may stay in France), taxation, security or the death penalty, have not been decided publicly through referenda. In order to fulfill the tasks mentioned in article 6 of the Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen and article 3 of the Constitution of 1958 (according to which "national sovereignty shall belong to the people, who shall exercise it through their representatives and by means of referendum"), the people should be consulted by means of referenda in the decision-making process regarding these types of "societal topics," claims the Front National. (Le Pen 1985a, 43-44; Manifesto of Strasbourg 1997)

The fact that the Front National demands that referenda be organized with regard to all "*grandes questions dites de société/.../qui en réalité engagent l'avenir de notre nation*" (Programme de gouvernement 1993, 400-401) is reminiscent of the Boulangists, who demanded popular consultation in questions of serious dispute. The national-populists are thus demanding the organization of referenda on controversial issues that are, at least in their own camp, seen as major concerns. On the one hand, behind this logic lies the assumption that the people share the same outlook as these nationalists with regard to whatever issue happens to be under consideration – in other words, the assumption of unanimity. This aspect of the presumed unanimity of the people has been brought out previously on various occasions.

On the other hand, it is quite peculiar that both the Boulangists and the Front National assume that the alleged issues of *major* concern, the most important political questions concerning the existing society, could be reduced to a "Yes" or "No" answer – the only answers a popular referendum allows. According to this stance, such crucial issues do not require any kind of parliamentary deliberation or discussion between the representatives of the various related points of view but merely simplistic decision making based on a choice between "Yes" and "No". (Cf. Weber M. 1994, 225) In other words, the presupposition that the right (not wrong) answer lies with the people implies that in order to solve crucial problems such as immigration one need only consult the people. Here, we once again encounter the beloved characteristic of nationalists: the simplification of politics and the aim at achieving simple governance.

Related to this, Max Weber (1994, 225-226) has demonstrated that the direct legislation by the people has its limits notably when concerning controversial issues with conflicting interests in mass states. Weber had doubts as to whether the creation of laws should or could be based on a compromise achieved through a referendum. Despite the fact that the most obvious outcome of a referendum is a compromise between conflicting interests, the referendum, to quote Weber, "knows nothing of compromise". In other words, Weber appears to argue that due to the lack of negotiation, the outcome of a referendum can be random, and it would also seem that he viewed with some skepticism the political competence of a population in mass states to vote "objectively" in referenda. Weber does, however, wonder how "any taxation laws could be accepted by referendum in a mass state with powerful class antagonisms".

A very illuminating chapter concerning the referendum and direct democracy can be found in the program of the Front National from the year 1993, a program made for the legislative elections held the same year and optimistically entitled "programme de gouvernement". Nor is this overall idealism limited to the main title, as the following quotation indicates.

La démocratie directe favorise la concorde précisément parce que les référendums remettent en cause les majorités constituées autour des partis et leur substituent des majorités d'idées éminemment variables. La vie politique cesse alors d'être l'otage exclusif de partis occupés à alimenter les uns à l'égard des autres une haine constante néfaste à l'unité nationale. La démocratie directe, en réhabilitant les gouvernements à harmoniser leurs décisions avec les sentiments du peuple, les incite à la sagesse. (FN, Programme de gouvernement 1993, 397)

Here, direct democracy is depicted as true democracy because it puts politics (which is interpreted in this context as the solving of societal problems) above the parties. Instead of the political rivalries that go hand-in-hand with party positions and programs, the Front National is willing to bring out *genuine* differences in opinion allegedly without party political pressure. Moreover, as indicated in the passage above, the aspect of hostility related to party politics disintegrates national unity, it is seen as "harmful" to it.

What follows is, of course, the idea that direct democracy is supported by the assumption of social unanimity and the unity of the people as such. Bolstering the demand for direct democracy is a harmony and unanimity which is simultaneously regarded as an implicit presupposition and a political aim. On the one hand, the people, always expressed in the singular, is interpreted as a single entity, and, on the other hand, the assumed national unity is presented as something to be conserved, or, in the case of gradual decline, as it is usually interpreted, to pursue. But, in addition to this presupposition, which precedes the assertion of direct democracy, there is also an evident consequence: the presumed unity is backed by the fact that direct democracy by means of referendum would in itself favor social harmony and reduce political hostility, that is "dédramatise et calme la vie politique" and "favor concord".

Social pacification is thus an obvious and most desirable result of direct democracy, which not only reduces political conflicts to "natural" and substantial differences in opinion but also educates the "rulers" in terms of the electorate. By popular consultation, the rulers catch a glimpse of the natural wisdom of the people, which thus inspires them toward wisdom and harmony in their own decision-making. Along with promoting wisdom, direct democracy also develops an overall *civisme*, as added by the Front National: "La démocratie directe développe le civisme et oblige les médias à traiter des sujets de fond, au-delà des querelles de personnes." (FN, Programme de gouvernement 1993, 397) Similarly, it is also assumed that the substantialization of the sphere of political debate replaces the political squabble, and in so doing purifies politics and, accordingly, the behavior of the media covering political matters.

To take another passage from the Front National concerning direct democracy:

La démocratie directe, en plaçant les pouvoirs publics sous le contrôle du peuple français, en donnant aux citoyens, par le moyen de pétitions, l'initiative des lois, introduit plus de liberté dans la vie politique. En rapprochant les gouvernants du peuple, elle les enracine dans la sagesse populaire. Lier liberté et enracinement, telle est la règle d'une démocratie authentique car, sans les traditions et les coutumes qui garantissent les libertés, la démocratie pourrait s'auto-détruire. (FN, Programme de gouvernement 1993, 397)

As we can see, the control by the people, in the form of initiatives, is accentuated. The control is made tangible by initiatives, but the legitimization by the people is interpreted here through the "*enracinement*" of the rulers. Generally speaking, the aforementioned passage suggests that if the rulers are not controlled by the "popular wisdom" of the people, the democratic government itself could eventually self-destruct. Put differently, if the people in political power are not under popular control, they automatically tend to ignore the common good and the public's best interest – in other words, they become corrupt.

More precisely, though, the character of this control is interesting. *Enracinement*, *traditions* and *coutumes* are the terms connected to authentic

democracy and, notably, its rulers. This implies that only the rulers that fill these criteria can act without destroying the democratic principles upon which the system of democracy is based, thereby rendering them beyond corruption. Here, the traditionalistic view of the importance of roots, of course, echoes the Barresian thematic. Additionally, the party assumes that direct political participation somehow increases freedom in political life. Taken together, the liaison between the liberty provided by the initiatives of citizen and the enracinement of the rulers are associated through – and reduced to – traditionalist values.

The aspects of direct democracy that are highlighted here can be seen as completely parallel to those presented in Boulangism in terms of the referendum as a means of social pacification and control by the people linked with an attempt to harmonize political action. The Front National, analogously to Barrès, is demanding the emergence of a new political culture (which it claims to represent) that would be based on matters of substance instead of futile politicking and political intrigue. Formulated in the vocabulary of the Front National, the referendum is presented as “a weapon against the corruption of political class” (an “*arme absolue contre la dictature*”). The popular initiative provides an opportunity to bring up issues that are allegedly “censored by the establishment” (FN, Programme de gouvernement 1993, 397) and, parallel to this, claims the Front National, “popular and violent revolts” are made pointless. As I have noted above in relation to Boulangism, this effect of social pacification also serves as a sort of “liberation” of the people, as an assured but curious “political autonomy” of the people guaranteed with regard to the political elite.

If one further examines the aforementioned citations, such as the claim that some political issues are “censored by the establishment” and that, therefore, the popular initiative is “a weapon against the dictatorship,” one may recognize elements of the view supporting the existence of a conspiracy, which was intentionally linked with the establishment. The political establishment, political class and the prevailing political system in general are represented in these kinds of arguments as plotting against the people and, simultaneously, because the Front National is allegedly on the side of the people, also against the Front National.

Moreover, both Boulangism and the Front National assume that concentrating on and attempting to “solve” purely substantial issues as opposed to deliberating and consolidating conflicting political views and their representatives would purify and increase the efficiency of political decision making. The depoliticizing aspect – to purify conflicts of politics – common to both Boulangism and the Front National, becomes quite interesting at this point, because, according to this view, politics is reduced to solving questions as simply as possible instead of weighing controversial points of view.

This is also interesting because, as we saw above, the conflictual characteristic of politics was voluntaristically surpassed. In another connection, however, Bruno Mégret (a former member of the “think tank” Club de

l'Horloge, which was closely ideologically linked to Alain de Benoist's so-called *Nouvelle Droite*) recognizes that "la politique est par essence conflictuelle" (Mégret 1990, 176) and accentuates the strategic importance of being aware of one's political enemy. Mégret bases his conception on Carl Schmitt's distinction between friend and enemy and curiously deduces that "cette triple hiérarchie, fondamentale, voire vitale, en politique: nous, nos amis, nos ennemis. D'abord défendre les siens, puis aider ses proches, et combattre ses adversaires". (Mégret 1990, 177)

Without tackling the issue of how Schmitt's distinction should be interpreted (Cf. Schmitt 1932), one may note that Mégret uses the dichotomy without hesitation for his own purposes. Instead of concentrating on the distinction's political character and substance, Mégret extends Schmitt's basic political antagonism between public enemy and friend to the threefold hierarchy of one's own family or nation (*siens*), one's close relations (*proches*) and, finally, one's enemies (*adversaires*). As such, it would seem that Mégret uses Schmitt's theory in order to attempt to illustrate the "legitimate" theoretical foundation of the Front National's conception of hierarchical structures and their political principle of preference (which is examined in below more in detail [see Ch. 7.4.]).

In other words, the principle of preference is deduced from the Schmitt's defining distinction of the concept of the political and then applied as a major principle in defining the borders of a national community (who to include, who to exclude), that is of a political community, which in the discourse of the Front National is based much more on ethnic-cultural and even biological than strictly political grounds. In connecting his conceptions of the political to Schmitt's distinction, Mégret, however, adds that "la politique étant antagonisme, elle ne peut se fixer un objectif qui soit uniquement moral". (Mégret 1990, 177) Here, Mégret once again identifies the presence of antagonism within the sphere of politics, although in terms of morality, which is the antithesis of the political (in this connection Mégret refers to the establishment, which has moralized politics through the question of immigration). The point in Mégret's conception is, however, that "le propre du politique est d'être partisan, d'être engagé dans un camp. Dans l'action publique, on ne peut donc poursuivre que des objectifs limités: oeuvrer efficacement pour le bénéfice des siens". (ibid.) (Cf. Ch. 7.4.)

As we can see, the conflictual essence of the political does not offer alternatives for Mégret, nor does it provide the possibility for weighing different points of view or initiating negotiation or dialogue. For Mégret, politics and the political appear to represent a mere aggressive struggle in which one is forced to adhere to a previously determined stance. If we put this provocatively, politics is thus reduced to the handling of one's own predetermined and prearranged interests, which are preferably not exposed to any type of review or discussion.

Let us now return to the brand of direct democracy suggested by the Front National. The Front National's view of direct democracy stresses an unmediated link between the rulers and the ruled, in other words it is assumed

that this link can be achieved by means of the use of referenda as a supplement for a system of parliamentary democracy, and, therefore, it actually provides a more genuine guarantee of popular sovereignty than parliamentary representation alone ever could. It is thus assumed – as the above quotation suggests (FN, Programme de gouvernement 1993, 397) – that the closer the rulers are to the ruled, the better. According to this outlook, the entire representative system is idealized as the direct relationship between the electorate and the representative, and, in this sense, it may not only imply so-called direct democracy but it also comes close to the idea of an imperative mandate, in which the representative is bound tightly to the mandate given by the electorate.

Alternatively, this idealization of “direct representation” may be depicted using the vocabulary of F.R. Ankersmit, according to whom the “aesthetic gap” between the represented and the representation, that is the autonomy of parliamentary representation with regard to the represented (the electorate) is, in the conception of the Front National, denied. The Front National does not recognize the existence of “a gap or difference between the voter’s opinions and those of his representative in Parliament,” and, in this sense, after having been elected to the parliament the representative acquires a certain political independence in thinking and in acting with regard to the electorate. (Ankersmit 2002, 112)

Although it is often argued in the sphere of contemporary public discussion that the distance between politicians and voters is too great, that politicians do not know about the “real” life of common citizens (which is a common argument among the Front National as well), Ankersmit (2002, 117) defends the idea of an even larger “aesthetic gap” between voter and representative. According to his aesthetical theory of representation, “politics, political issues and political debate” require a certain distance between government and citizen in order to both avoid bureaucratic “closeness” and remain legitimate.

Ankersmit’s point is that “in a representative democracy all legitimate political power is essentially aesthetic,” and therefore the legitimate political power in a representative democracy is not owned by anybody, neither voter nor representative nor state, and, in this sense, the doctrine of popular sovereignty should also be abandoned. (Ankersmit 2002, 118) This comes close to Pierre Rosanvallon’s notion according to which the sovereignty of the people as such is ultimately based is ultimately fictitious. (Cf. Ch. 4.4.) Here, the metaphor presented by Ankersmit clearly highlights the legitimate aesthetic distance between voter and representative: “when a population unfolds itself into a group of people that is represented and another group of people representing the former one, legitimate political power wells up, so to speak, in the hollow between the two groups”. (ibid.)

If we further examine the demand of direct democracy in the light of Ankersmit’s thinking, certain additional aspects must also be taken into consideration. According to Ankersmit, the development toward plebiscitary democracy does not exist only in the heads of those who advocate direct

democracy, but is in fact a feature that concerns most Western democracies. Ankersmit's point (2002, 122) is that both Anglo-Saxon and continental democracies have been transformed themselves from pure representative democracies to plebiscitary democracies because "parliaments nowadays often do little more than acclaim what has been devised already by government bureaucracies" and, subsequently, elections "have gradually acquired the character of a plebiscite on the state's most recent behaviour". Moreover, if the national scale of politics has become "less democratic" in this sense, the pressure by the people on the local level has increased, and, in this sense, is partly undermining the national government.

It is not, however, my principal aim at this point to analyze the contemporary development of Western democracies as such, and, therefore, the above outlook will have to remain an interesting sidebar in this broader discussion. From my point of view, the notes made by Ankersmit regarding the plebiscitary democracy as a political system and with regard to the "bureaucratic closeness" are of much greater importance. If one follows Ankersmit's (2002, 123) thinking regarding plebiscitary or direct democracy, it is seen as a "crude instrument for controlling the government" because the control it exercises, through elections and potential referenda, is far more distant and random than it is in representative parliamentarism, in which the representatives of the people can interfere in the acts of the government at practically any time.

Similarly, as has been noted above, the plebiscitary democracy is the democracy of *fait accompli*, as Ankersmit (ibid.) puts it – it can only legitimate or reject, and, hence, referenda (or elections, according to the conceptions of Ankersmit's modern plebiscitary democracy) are often mere expressions of "public happiness or unhappiness". The ultimate point regarding direct or plebiscitary democracy lies in the following paradox concerning the shift of political gravity from the state to the citizen: "the closer this center of gravity is to the citizen, the less political influence he will have," to quote Ankersmit (2002, 124). The apparent "triumph of direct democracy" will thus signify, paradoxically, "an irretrievable loss of control of the government by the citizen". (ibid.)

7.4 National Preference

Point four in the 1997 Manifesto of Strasbourg crystallizes an enduring demand and a sort of symbol of the Front National doctrine as follows: "Constitutionnaliser le principe de préférence nationale". From the point of view of the party, this is currently perhaps the most important aspect in their demand for constitutional reform due to centrality of this proposal to the overall party program.

The demand for national preference might not initially appear to be an issue that should be studied in the context of "anti-system rhetoric". Nevertheless, national preference is an essential rhetorical weapon used by the Front National in its attack against the political establishment and its "false ideological values". The offensive against the political system is indeed often formulated as an offensive against the political establishment: one may even claim that the political adversary against whom the Front National is fighting is more often the "false ideology" of the "political oligarchy" than the "political oligarchy" itself or the form of government as such.

Moreover, the notion of national preference simultaneously reveals some important aspects of the party's anti-immigrant rhetoric; the party is known to many mainly for its fervent anti-immigration attitudes. The national preference may in this sense be regarded as a basic foundation of the party's anti-immigration rhetoric or an umbrella concept under which many anti-immigrant statements are included and legitimized.

According to the Front National, the proposed constitutional modification would affect Title I "On Sovereignty", Article 3, of the 1958 Constitution as follows:

La solidarité naturelle découle de l'appartenance à une nation commune. En conséquence, la citoyenneté française ouvre en tous domaines sociaux le droit à la préférence nationale.
(Manifesto of Strasbourg, Xe Congrès du Front national, 29, 30&31 Mars 1997, Strasbourg)

The addition of a clause regarding national preference would mean that the status of citizens would be clearly differed from the status of foreigners. In practice, the Front National is calling for the implementation of legislation according to which employment, education, housing (*logement*) and public health services should be reserved primarily for French citizens and social security benefits of all kinds, including child benefits and RMI (minimum welfare payments), should be paid only to French citizens. The party suggests that a separate social assistance fund should be established for foreigners¹⁵ and that the social contributions made to it should be used as savings for their "return to their countries of origin" (i.e. the so-called *plan d'épargne-retour*). (Cf. Le Pen 1985a, Ch. IX; Mégret 1990, 273-274; http://www.frontnational.com/doc_id_immigration.php) Over the years, the Front National has demanded more "efficient" deportation procedures with regard to illegal immigrants residing in France as well as the deportation of

¹⁵ It must be noted at this point that the group of "foreigners" to which the Front National is referring here concerns primarily foreigners of the Third World (*étrangers du tiers monde*). In other words, Europeans are not categorically excluded from the national community because they share the same "civilization" and are "easily assimilated" into the French culture, unlike the so-called "*immigration extra-européenne*". (Cf. e.g. Mégret 1990, 55-57) This distinction between European (desirable) and non-European (undesirable) immigrants is a general distinction on the grounds of which the Front National establishes its political demands regarding immigration.

unemployed legal immigrants to their "countries of origin". (See e.g. Front National 1993, 41-45; Mégret 1996, 91; http://www.frontnational.com/doc_id_immigration.php)

The Front National is thus suggesting that social policy in general should be founded on the idea of national preference, which, consequently, would "*arrêter les pompes aspirantes*"¹⁶, as the saying linked to national preference goes. According to the party, the legislative legitimization and application national preference would in itself be a natural "solution to the problem of immigration" since it halts new immigrants from entering France and discourages the Third World immigrants who are already living in France from staying. Bruno Mégret (1996, 93) has said that the kind of "simple and efficient acts" suggested by the party would solve the "problem of immigration" in less than ten years.

The demands that the Front National has presented in the name of national preference are directed both at controlling the current immigrant population and preventing future immigration completely. Simultaneously, the party wants to improve the status of the native-born French at the expense of foreigners who may not hold French citizenship but who may have been living in France for years or even been born in France of "foreign parents". This idea is clarified in the party's emphasis on *jus sanguinis* as opposed to *jus soli* (the principle which the party is willing to abolish), in other words the Front National's conception of the national community is based strictly on blood ties (consanguinity).

At this point, the party idealizes the nation as a monocultural community and is explicitly against the idea of a multicultural France. The main argument applied by the party in its rejection of multiculturalism is, to put it briefly, that it will destroy the true "identity" and even the existence of France and lead to overall "*déracinement*" (Cf. Barrès) and the "*melting-pot mondial*" (*Africanisation* or *Islamisation* of France). To quote the newest party program: "les Français doivent rester maîtres chez eux" and "chaque peuple doit disposer d'un territoire qui lui soit propre".

(http://www.frontnational.com/doc_id_immigration.php) (See more on this cultural neo-racism of the Front National in e.g. Vaarakallio 1997)

Despite the fact that the principle of national preference goes against the prevailing Constitution, the party has attempted to apply it in towns in which it has held political leadership. In the 1995 municipal elections, three party candidates were elected mayor in three different towns in Southern France: Toulon, Marignane and Orange. In 1997, the town of Vitrolles, also in Provence, joined the aforementioned *Lepénie* towns, which have been commonly – after

¹⁶ By these "suctions" the Front National is referring to the French social security system, which, according to the party, is encouraging immigration from the Third World to France. The expression "*pompes aspirantes*" was used in the 1992 manifesto entitled "Les 50 mesures concrètes du FN, 50 mesures efficaces et humaines" (Le Gallou and Olivier 1992, 83-90), which encouraged the restriction of immigration. The principal points of this manifesto (which was produced in the fraction of so-called *mégretistes* in the Front National) can still be found in the programs (of both Le Pen's and Mégret's parties) concerning immigration.

the model of Jean-Marie Le Pen – labeled as practical political “laboratories” of the Front National.

The party has tried to apply its principle of national preference in various ways in these cities, resulting in rather vocal opposition to and condemnation of the policies of the Front National leadership by the political opposition and, notably, various citizens organizations. Among the things that have been criticized, are, for example, nepotism (municipal posts given to politicians’ family members), alleged “cultural restoration,” which has meant, for instance, that cultural subventions have been directed to associations sharing the values of the Front National and denied the associations and occasions that are opposed to the party. One example of this is overt discrimination toward *Maghrébins* and Muslims, for instance by the suppression of school meals intended for Muslim children. (For more on this see e.g. Martin 1996; the article by Christian de Brie “L’enracinement durable de l’extrême droite en France. Voyage au coeur des laboratoires du Front national” in *Le Monde Diplomatique*, March 1998)

In the town of Vitrolles, the Municipal Council even decided in 1998 to provide an allowance of 5,000 francs to every family in which a baby is born to parents of whom at least one is a French citizen or the citizen of one of the member states of the European Union. This decision was, however, soon nullified by judicial act, and ultimately the mayor of Vitrolles, Catherine Mégret (representing the Movement national républicain), and her *premier adjoint*, Hubert Fayard, were fined and given short suspended sentences and two-years ineligibility. (*Le Monde* 19.9. 2000 and *Le Monde* 9.11.2000). At present (2004), only one of the cities is still lead by the Front National party, namely Orange with its mayor, Jacques Bompard.

As demonstrated above, the call for national preference crystallizes one practical political demand in the Front National’s party program, but, more importantly, it must be taken as an ideological point of departure on the grounds of which a great part of the party’s exclusionary doctrine is based. In addition to this, it is also important to notice that the rhetorical figure of preference is not the brain child of former Front National militant Jean-Yves Le Gallou (though he had developed the idea in the Club de l’Horloge and later in the Front National¹⁷), but has been used in the nationalistic discourse at least since the late nineteenth century, as I shall demonstrate below.

¹⁷ In fact, it is unclear whether Jean-Yves Le Gallou introduced the thesis of the national preference to the program of the Front National in his book (Le Gallou 1985), or whether it was the other way round (i.e. that Le Gallou merely developed the ideas presented earlier by Le Pen [cf. Taguieff 1987, 580]). Jean-Yves Le Gallou was one of the leading figures who founded the “think tank” of Club de l’Horloge in 1974. He himself, like some other members of the Club, was a former member of Alain de Benoist’s Nouvelle Droite theoretical movement, the GRECE (Groupement de Recherche et d’Etudes pour la Civilisation Européenne). The former second in command at the Front National, Bruno Mégret, was also a member of the Club de l’Horloge, and, notably, Mégret introduced “New Right influences” into the Front National (despite the fact that Mégret himself was never a member of the GRECE). (See e.g. Dély 1999, 19-44; Taguieff 1993 and 1994) In any case, both Le Gallou and Mégret joined the Front National and were influential members of the party prior to

The principle of preference emerges in the ideology of the Front National in the form of hierarchical structures (circles) that are connected to the concepts of proximity and fraternity. The following, very famous utterance of Le Pen illustrates how the common sense logic of natural preferentialism and, along with it, the egocentrism of preference and hierarchy are prevalent throughout the party program.

J'aime mieux mes filles que mes cousines, mes cousines que mes voisines, mes voisines que les inconnus et les inconnus que des ennemis. Par conséquent j'aime mieux les Français, c'est mon droit. J'aime mieux les Européens ensuite, et puis ensuite j'aime mieux les Occidentaux, et puis j'aime mieux dans les autres pays du monde ceux qui sont les alliés et ceux qui aiment la France. (Jean-Marie Le Pen in the television broadcast "L'Heure de Vérité" 13.2.1984, quotation taken from Le Pen 1984, 239)

As one can see from this quotation, the focus is on proximity, according to which the natural hierarchy is constructed and on the basis of which the position of others is valued. In other words, the only criterion used to rate "others" is his or her distance from "oneself" – the closer the "other" is, the more respected he or she is. (Cf. Taguieff 1986, 125) The principle of preference also implies the element of fraternity, which in the vocabulary of the Front National very often serves as a substitute for the term "solidarity" with its Marxist and cosmopolitan connotations. (Cf. Mégret 1990, 226-228) Unlike solidarity, fraternity can never be universal, claims Mégret (1990, 227), and therefore fraternity exists only by making the distinction between "those who belong to the community and the others". "Fraternity implies the sentiment of preference," maintains Mégret (*ibid.*). This distinction, which is based on the "natural hierarchy" presumed by fraternity, may therefore exist only in a closed national community which is analogous to a family, with its inherent elements of tight blood ties, mutual fraternity and love.

The principle of fraternity is indeed the only one of the three principles of the Revolution that is accepted without reserve by the party. The two others, liberty and equality, are denounced, the first being described as "an abstraction" and the second as a "myth" and "stupid". In fact, in this connection, Le Pen underlines Barrès' assertion according to which equality can only materialize in death. (Cf. Le Pen 1985b, 156)

In the aforementioned Le Pen quotation, the reasoning goes from the individual level to the collective level, based upon which the analogy is made.

its division. (Le Gallou is currently a member of Bruno Mégret's party Movement national républicain) The thesis of national preference is currently included in the agendas of both parties, Le Pen's Front National and Megret's Movement national républicain. Overall, the programs of the two parties remain identical despite the party split.

When it comes to the origin of "national preference," it is, nevertheless, clear that the idea of preference has been a common topic in nationalist rhetoric for at least a century. Accordingly, one may assume that even if the main theoretical elaboration of the thesis of national preference has been made in "theoretical camps", such as the Club de l'Horloge, the basic idea of preference was already present in nationalist rhetoric long before these theoretical reflections.

This aspect is even more clearly expressed in the following passage regarding the idea of hierarchical circles:

En effet, pour faire face à un monde difficile, les hommes s'organisent en 'cercles de solidarité' concentriques: la plus petite des sociétés est la famille, la plus grande, du moins parmi celles qui sont concrètement organisées, est la nation. Chacun de ces cercles repose nécessairement sur la distinction membre/étranger. (Le Gallou 1985, 60)

It is essential to view preferentialism as a step toward exclusion, in other words as a foundation for exclusion based on a type of logic that is widely accepted in the common sense thinking as self-evident. The main advantage of the argument of preference is, furthermore, that it gives the appearance of being moderate. It defends the positive and very abstract value of national identity and legitimizes the exclusion of "Others" in the name of the survival of "Our own people". By appealing to such a thing as natural preference one would appear not to be excluding or discriminating against anything or anyone but merely defending one's fellow men on the basis of natural and self-evident everyday truths, and, accordingly, the rhetoric that is based on preference appears to be defensive as opposed to aggressive. What the Front National does is simply radicalize these prevailing common sense stereotypes and exploit them politically.

This discursive strategy thus has two advantages: on the one hand, it may be seen as flattering and even reasonable on the part of the audience since it identifies the ordinary common sense thinking with politically wise measures. On the other hand, it explicitly defines its ideal political audience as "common people" who are, however, capable of using common sense, thus simultaneously offering them a political party that does the same thing and is therefore above the corrupted political and intellectual elite and their incomprehensible jargon. This aspect, which rhetorically identifies the party of the little people with the genuine and common French people, is obvious in the flyers and handouts distributed by the Front National. For example, one of these propaganda leaflets made a direct causal connection between immigration and the phenomena of unemployment, insecurity and high taxes, and offered for the following solution: "Front national – le bon sens".

It follows that since the principle of preference is part of commonly recognized everyday thinking and, as such, is generally accepted as self-evident in social relationships, preference *on the national level* runs parallel to it. The basic idea supporting the argument of national preference is, then, not only the apparent unquestionability of preference but also the legitimized distinction that is implicated in the principle itself. This is to say that preferentialism is necessarily both inclusive and exclusive, since it prefers one thing or group over another. This aspect is also emphasized in the following quotation:

La distinction entre le national et l'étranger est légitime dès lors que la nation l'est. Elle ne peut s'exprimer que par des droits et des devoirs inégaux, c'est-à-dire en termes de *préférences*. (Le Gallou 1985, 61)

This quotation from Le Gallou illustrates how nationalists emphasize the fact that the principle of preference inheres not only in social relationships but also in nationalism or patriotism. Put differently, the requirement of national preference may be seen as a logical necessity in the framework of a nationalist nation-state. Accordingly, to quote Mégret's party's present program, "rejeter la préférence nationale c'est condamner la patriotisme". (<http://www.m-n-r.com>, Program of the MNR, Ch. 2 Identité) Nationalism, as an evident fact in the framework of any nation-state, thus legitimizes the distinction between *nationaux* and *étrangers* here.

In relation to this "natural distinction" in the framework of the nation, the Front National claims to be defending the principle of "political equality" (Cf. de Benoist and Champetier 1999) based on the belonging of a group of people to the same political community and according to which membership in this community guarantees the political, but not necessarily the natural equality of the people. The point of "political equality" is that it only materializes between those who share the same political rights, and, in this sense, the distinction between citizens and non-citizens is legitimized.

This idea is strongly emphasized by the Front National when it comes to the party's exclusionary politics. Nevertheless, it appears in the context of the Front National that the strong defense of political equality simultaneously implies a strong rejection of the natural equality between human beings, and often times the stressed inequalities go beyond this assumed sphere of the political and become more or less reduced to biological differences. In this sense, the only equality that the Front National is defending is "political," but the emphasis, in any case, seems to be on rejecting the egalitarianism between human beings that is outlined in the Declaration of Human Rights, to which the party is fervently opposed. (Cf. e.g. Mégret 1990, 26-33)

It is also quite interesting that although the entire scope of the Front National's rhetoric of exclusion is based on the principle of preference (i.e. preference may be seen as euphemism for discrimination), preference as such also serves as a legitimating factor with regard to exclusion. In this connection, national preference begins to signify a desirable return to the natural and essentialist order of things. This *essentia* lies in the traditionalism that is manifested in preferentialism, which is represented as natural and imperative sentiment based on the existence of a natural and traditional order. In this context, Alain de Benoist's¹⁸ criticism of Le Pen's preferentialist "metaphysics" is extremely interesting. According to de Benoist, the sociobiological hierarchy that is characteristically inherent in Le Pen's famous quotation (above: Le Pen 1984,239) is "absurd" because it assumes that preference exists parallel to

¹⁸ Alain de Benoist (born in 1943) is the founding father of the leading French organization of the Nouvelle Droite, GRECE (Groupement de Recherche et d'Études pour la Civilisation Européenne). This organization of the French New Right was founded in 1968, and it can be characterized as a metapolitical think-tank and school of thought. (Cf. de Benoist and Champetier 1999) Despite the fact that the leader of this loose movement, de Benoist, has been quite critical of Le Pen's party, the movement has lost members to the Front National party over the years.

genetic proximity. This implies that sociobiological proximity and genetic preference would be the only criterion in social and in national life and, therefore, that no potential social or political conflict, search for the truth or any possible contract should be taken into account.¹⁹ (de Benoist quoted in Taguieff 1994, 59. Cf. also op.cit., 201-202)

In this sense, preferentialism is by definition essentialist in the same manner as racism (Cf. Memmi 1994) since it is based on genetic or biological preference. In other words, the preference here leans toward those who are biologically closest to oneself (Cf. the passage of Le Pen [1984, 239] above) and thereby follows the model of the family. The principle of preferentialism which is assumed to prevail in the family is, however, extended to a broader principle that prevails in wider contexts as well, that is on the national level. Related to this, the ideal national community is defined ethnically (e.g. the emphasis on *jus sanguinis*) in the discourse of the Front National. The point here is that the nation is conceived as an extended family, a fact that is even explicitly expressed in the present day program rhetoric: "la Nation est conçue comme le prolongement politique de la Famille," as the Front National states on its Internet site.

(<http://www.frontnational.com/argumentaires/preferencenationale.php>)

Thus, even though preferentialism appears to be rhetorically moderate, it is, nevertheless, founded on the basis of biological essence and, therefore, the core of the preferentialist discourse implies biological or racial discrimination. As in explicitly expressed racialism, the enduring and unchangeable similarities and differences between people and ethnic groups are also accentuated in seemingly moderate preferentialism (oneself in relation to others and the preference of those others who most resemble oneself), and, in this sense, the argument bases itself upon biology, thus rendering it undeniable in this context. As Albert Memmi (1994, 70) has aptly noted with regard to racism in general: "la biologie est une figure de la fatalité".

For Charles Maurras, too, the principle of *proximus* was "un véritable superlatif," as Maurras himself put it (Maurras 1937, 280). Both Maurras and Barrès spoke about "national egotism", and Maurras (1937, 281) maintained that "la nation est le plus vaste des cercles communautaires qui soient". Maurras' preferentialism may be seen as associated with his struggle against the false dogmas of 1789 and, especially in this connection, against false egalitarianism. As a matter of fact, the basic premises of Maurras' *politique naturelle* support the natural and inevitable preference that is linked directly to the inevitable and natural *inégalité*.²⁰ (Cf. Ch. 5.1.)

¹⁹ At this point it must not be forgotten that behind de Benoist's ideas is his own *Weltanschauung* about "European nationalism," which stresses the ethnocultural premises on the European as opposed to the national level (the emphasis is on European civilization).

²⁰ The following passage clearly illustrates Maurras' conception on necessary inequality: "Inégalité est un fait, nous voulons qu'il soit tout d'abord reconnu, comme fait, comme un fait vital, un fait hors duquel il n'y a point de vie possible. L'inégalité ou la mort, avons-nous dit. Nous le répétons. Ce n'est pas tout. Nous voulons que ce pays-ci renonce à l'obsession, à l'idée fixe, à l'idée judéo-protestante,

The idea of the existence of concentric circles around individuals is also central in Barrèsism in general, which in the early days was based upon ego-worship, the cult of the inner Self discussed in Barrès' first trilogy, "Le Culte du Moi". In the first part of this trilogy, "Sous l'oeil des Barbares" (1888), Barrès' reflections focus on human existence and how to cultivate the individual Self, but gradually, in the second part of the trilogy, "Un Homme libre" (1889), the individual nothingness of the Self ("*le néant du Moi*") is fulfilled by the social element, and his central point regarding the worship of the Self was to declare that "le moi individuel était supporté et nourri par la société" (Barrès in the preface of *Un homme libre* 1889, 93).

In this sense, Barrès' "*culte du Moi*" does not remain on the individual level but encompasses the collective and national levels, which is to say that individual is dependent on – and subordinated to – the collective community, history and the past (*le passé*) – to quote Barrès: "nous sommes le produit d'une collectivité qui parle en nous" (Barrès 1902b, 68). In order to be free (*un homme libre*), an individual must recognize this basic deterministic view of the past, historical collectivity and his or her ancestors – in other words, the heritage provided by "*la terre et les morts*". (see Barrès 1902b, 67-68) The individual Self as the national Self are mere moments in a linear time line which unites the dead to the living and the past to the unknown future, and as Barrès himself (1889, 159) put it: "Je ne suis qu'un instant d'un long développement de mon Être".

In the same manner as Barrès transformed the individual Self (*Moi individuel*) into the national Self (*Moi national*) and in so doing maintained the idea of national egoism, the distinction between *Moi* and *Barbares* was equally transformed from the early "existentialist" and metaphysical distinction between *Moi* and *non-Moi* (*Sous l'oeil des Barbares* 1888) into a more concrete and political distinction between the collective "*notre Moi*" and "*étrangers' /'adversaires*". (Cf. Barrès 1892)

In order to cultivate one's Self and to reach for freedom (along with the necessary acceptance of collective historical and even biological determinism) one should also "fuir les Barbares," which is the principle that becomes transformed more aggressively into "haine des étrangers" with regard to collectivity. This attitude toward the "Barbarians" was a sort of legitimate right to "purify" the community of foreign influences which not only prevent France

à l'idée suisse d'égalité, considérée comme le bien absolu. Pourquoi? Dans l'intérêt de ce pays-ci. Parce que cette idée l'empêche de voir clair. Parce qu'elle le prive de force, de richesse, de durée, de solitude, de prospérité. Parce que, militairement, d'idée d'égalité, qui bouleverse depuis trente ans l'organisation de l'armée, aboutit, de l'avis des plus compétents, à l'abaissement national. Parce que, au point de vue religieux et moral, l'idée d'égalité met sur le même pied les doctrines bienfaites et malfaites, anarchistes et organiques, nationale et cosmopolite. Parce que, dans la famille, l'égalité provoque le partage forgé, la liquidation des biens, l'instabilité des foyers. Qu'il faille, après cela, dans tel et tel objet, par exemple dans la balance de la justice, une égalité rigoureuse, ce n'est pas la question. Il faut de l'arsenic dans votre souricière, en mettez-vous en tartine sur votre pain? L'inégalité humaine est un fait. L'égalité n'en est pas un. Il faut mettre de l'égalité en certains objets. Il ne faut pas en mettre en tout. Voilà l'essentiel de notre doctrine." (Maurras 1948, 19-20)

from freeing itself (i.e. rooting itself in the soil and in the earth) but also give rise to an increasing level of decadence. On the collective level, the Barbarians thus begin to signify an imagined group (foreigners, Jews etc.) against whom an attack should be mounted. (Cf. Sternhell 1972, 47-60) Throughout the Boulangist era and later during the Dreyfus Affair, Barrès developed his fundamental distinction into a political program emphasizing the virulent exclusion of foreigners and protection of the French as both a citizenry and a national labor force. (Cf. The second program of Nancy from 1898, republished in Barrès 1902b, 301-308; Barrès 1893)

In this concrete political connection, the distinguishing characteristics of Barrès' brand of preferentialism become even more evident and, moreover, are reminiscent at various points of the contemporary rhetoric of the Front National. In Barrès' political declaration from the year 1893, published under the title "Contre les étrangers. Etude pour la protection des ouvriers français," Barrès, for example, comments on French hospitality toward foreigners as follows: "Certes la France hospitalière, c'est un beau mot, mais hospitalisons d'abord les nôtres". (Barrès 1893, 7)

Further, parallel to the present-day LePenists or Mégretists, who speak about increasing "préférence étrangère"²¹, Barrès stated that "l'idée de patrie implique une inégalité, mais au détriment des étrangers et non comme aujourd'hui au détriment des nationaux". (op.cit., 13) In addition, Barrès demanded the expulsion of all foreigners who "tombent à la charge de l'Assistance publique" (op.cit., 21), and stressed "combien nous sommes déjà impuissants à secourir les misères de nos nationaux" (ibid.). It is easy to notice that this same idea of "taking care of our nationals first" continues to prevail in and serve as a dominant aspect of the rhetorical formulas in the genre of nationalist discourse.

It is also worth mentioning that in the contemporary discourse of the Front National, national preference is expressed in its most condensed form in the slogan "Les Français d'abord" – "Put one's own people first". Related to this, it must not be forgotten that this same idea and almost identical slogan were used by various nationalists around at the turn of the 20th century. For example, in the camp of anti-Semites, a campaign that reemerged due to the publication of Édouard Drumont's book "La France juive" (1886), the slogan was used in the form of "La France aux Français". In fact, it was a device used by both the Ligue nationale antisémite française (established in 1889) and the daily "La Libre Parole" (founded in 1892), both of which were under the direction of Drumont himself. (Girardet 1983, 142; cf. Maurras 1941, Ch. IX) Since then, both the idea in general and the slogan in particular have been widely used in the nationalist camp: Maurras's variant of the slogan was "La France seule," which crystallized his nationalistic conception and also included a dimension of the emphasized *raison d'État*.²² (Maurras 1941)

²¹ I.e. "la préférence nationale renversée". See e.g. Bruno Mégret's speech of 1 May 2000 in Saint-Denis (<http://www.m-n-r.com/discoursstdenis.html>).

²² The entire spectrum of national preferentialist slogans can also be found in the marching song of the Camelots du Roi, which was the group of action in the Action

7.5 Electoral protest –The case of the “political earthquake” in 2002

It has been commonly noted that in the contemporary context the electoral success of alleged anti-system parties is a direct reflection of the general atmosphere – with its sliding scale of shades of contempt toward the representative political system, political parties and politicians. The parties themselves eagerly exploit this situation, and, by representing themselves as the only party opposed to the prevailing policies they effectively create a halo of martyrdom and uncorruptability above them. (Cf. e.g. Mudde 1996b; about the FN and its "image" in the media see e.g. Birenbaum and Villa 2003) For these reasons, in this chapter, I shall briefly review the Front National's electoral success and its significance in relation to the party's contemporary position on the French political spectrum as an "anti-system" or protest party.

The Front National's forced peripheral position in relation to the political establishment and notably the National Assembly (which is due in part to the system of election by majority and electoral isolation [lack of electoral alliances]) is characterized in its party rhetoric as voluntary – in other words, the party uses its peripheral position to its own advantage. Some scholars, such as Pierre-André Taguieff for example, have argued that the rise of the Front National is quite simply the consequence of the party's lack of its own place in the representative system. According to Taguieff (mentioned in the interview of 29.5.1997), the best way of correcting this situation and preventing the rise of the party would be the "political integration" of the party ("Il faut intégrer le mal, le négatif"), because in a democracy, political adversaries should be respected, and electors who vote for Le Pen should not be rejected or banished to the political periphery regardless of whether or not Le Pen himself and his party are demonized. (ibid.)

More recently, after the first round of the presidential elections in 2002²³ – which was reported in the media as a "political earthquake" (*le séisme politique*) – it seemed that the Front National had consolidated its position on the French political spectrum as an "official" voice of protest, that is an anti-establishment party capable of drawing votes from the have-nots, from the so-called *La France*

Française movement. In their particularly anti-Semitic *chant d'assaut* entitled "La France bouge" one may find the following variants of the nationalist dictum: "la France aux Français", "France d'abord" and "La France renaîtra, Les Français sont chez eux." (Tannenbaum 1962, Appendix 287-289) The titles of the programmatic books of the contemporary Front National echo these slogans, for example "Les Français d'abord" (Le Pen 1984) and "La France est de retour" (Le Pen 1985b).

²³ In the first round of the presidential elections in 2002, the Front National received 16.9% of votes (including the votes of Bruno Mégret's MNR, the share of votes received by the extreme right was 19.2%), which meant that Le Pen came in second, right after the incumbent president-candidate Jacques Chirac (whose share of votes was 19.8%). The candidate with the third highest number of votes, Lionel Jospin, who surprisingly placed only third, received 16.2% of votes. (Perrineau and Ysmal 2003)

d'en bas. In these elections it was specifically Le Pen who increased support from the unemployed and blue-collar workers. (Cf. Mayer 2002; Perrineau and Ysmal 2003). What was illuminating, however, was the fact that these voters did not necessarily want Le Pen to win. Instead, the main motivation behind voting for Le Pen was pure protest, "to give a kick to the system" (Atkin and Tallet 2003), and after the first round of elections the media published comments made by horrified voters who had voted for Le Pen but emphasized that this was not their intention and that they did not want Le Pen as their president, but wanted instead merely to give a sign of warning to the system, which according to them "sucks".

These "anti-system votes" for contemporary populist parties are commonly seen as canalizing and reflecting "the protest without hope" which is emerging on the margins of society. Analyses of the voters and supporters of the Front National have revealed that a vote for Le Pen is indeed frequently the manifestation of protest without hope. In other words, a large amount of those who voted for Le Pen in the 2002 presidential elections are, in one way or another, on the margins of society.

Based on the election results and voting behaviour in both presidential and legislative elections, one can not, however, conclude that the Front National has achieved the position of a "legitimized" protest party in France. Even if Le Pen proclaimed after the first round that "N'ayez pas peur! Vous les exclus, les sans-grades, les paysans, les métallos, entrez dans l'espérance!," the outcome of both the second round of the presidential elections and the legislative elections was not that optimistic. In the second round of the presidential elections Le Pen actually lost a part of his previous share of votes to the incumbent president Jacques Chirac, and some of the voters who had cast their ballot for Le Pen in the first round of the elections chose to abstain in the second round. Going into the first round of the legislative elections the Front National had already lost more than half of its potential electorate, some of whom abstained and some of whom cast their votes for conservative candidates.²⁴ (Perrineau 2003)

Pascal Perrineau (2003) provides some explanations as to why the votes of protest that were cast for Le Pen did not carry through to the second round of the elections. According to him, due to the logic of the second round, it is almost impossible that an extreme right candidate could present himself as a candidate of *rassemblement*. As noted, Le Pen tried to rally his own, the so-called "*front populiste*," after the first round of the presidential elections by appealing to that heterogeneous camp which had voted "No" in the referendum on the approval of the Maastricht Treaty in 1992, and which during the first round had either abstained or voted for candidates from the disparate extreme left or other protest fractions. Le Pen was aware that there had been a significant correlation between the those who had voted against the Maastricht Treaty and the supporters of Front National ever since the referendum, and, therefore, he

²⁴ The Front National received 12.4% of votes in the first round of legislative elections in 2002, which was an average electoral result for the party compared with the result of the legislative elections in 1997, which was 15%. (Perrineau 2003)

shifted the emphasis of his campaign rhetoric from exaggerated moderation to radical Euro-skepticism between the first and second rounds. (ibid.)

The anti-Europe issue is by no means the most mobilizing theme in the context of presidential elections. Instead of a referendum on the question of Europe (as Le Pen chose to interpret the second round), and instead of manifesting itself as a real political struggle between two candidates, the second round was transformed into a specific "referendum" on the "defense of republican values". Therefore, the general political mobilization between the rounds turned, to some extent, into a campaign against Le Pen, even into an anti-Le Pen campaign with its impressive street demonstrations.

In this situation, the overall refusal of and repulsion that was felt toward Le Pen as a person lacking basic governmental credibility was emphasized and he was interpreted more as "a threat to democracy". Likewise, during the legislative elections, the main issue that attracted the electorate to the polls concerned the avoidance of a situation of cohabitation, and, hence, the votes in favor of achieving a presidential majority in the parliament outweighed the votes for the moderate right. Additionally, the Front National's other beloved theme, insecurity, lost some of its significance during the legislative campaign because of the efficient activity in the fields of security and crime prevention by the new conservative government of Jean-Pierre Raffarin. (Perrineau 2003) At the time of these elections, the problem of security in large cities had been a general topic of discussion and, therefore, was a hot electoral issue.

Based on these elections, one may also infer that Le Pen's success in the first round of the presidential elections might be an indication of a broader banalization of the political image of the Front National among voters and the public. We should not, of course, refer to it as a broader acceptance of the Front National – this was illustrated quite convincingly after the second round of the elections – but perhaps we might acknowledge that the themes of the Front National, such as security, to name just one, are weighing on the minds of the French people, and in this sense, casting one's vote for Le Pen was a simple act of protest based on the desire for increased security without any kind of broader acceptance of the party program.

Conversely, Atkin and Tallet (2003) conclude that the moderate right and Jacques Chirac has been playing right into Le Pen's hand, which is to say that the conservatives have used the same discourse and thematic as Le Pen in order to canvass his votes. From this perspective, the Front National's strategy has not been all that efficient. Instead, it has fortified Le Pen's ideological and discursive strength in the battle to determine the dominant themes on the political agenda. In 2002, Chirac for example campaigned on the issue of security – a theme that is widely associated with the Front National and on which Le Pen is able and willing to say more than Chirac ever could. As much as the position of the theme of security on the political agenda benefited Le Pen in the first round of the presidential elections, it did not help him much in the legislative elections. As Pascal Perrineau (2003, 218-219) demonstrated, during the legislative electoral campaign a large portion of the Front National's

electorate claimed to be satisfied with the activity of the new Minister of the Interior, Nicolas Sarkozy, in the area of increasing security among citizens.

Here, we come closer to the banal and notorious slogan of the Front National according to which "Le Pen dit tout haut ce que tout le monde pense tout bas". The slogan indicates that the Front National has on its agenda important yet delicate themes that are weighing on the minds of citizens and to which they would like to get some sort of answer and solution. Because the establishment does not dare include these delicate issues on the political agenda, they are left to the populist Le Pen, who can make promises and inspire political defiance. Moreover, the slogan implies that while the majority of French people probably think like Le Pen, they, alas, dare not express their views publicly. As we can see, here again the rhetoric of the Front National identifies the party with the people.

On the one hand, this can be seen as a sort of *lépenisation* of political ideas at this point. Along with dominating the thematical and ideological political discourse, that is defining the political debate, Le Pen is also capable of turning the public debate toward himself and his movement. As a manipulative populist and an experienced politician, Le Pen knows how to "seize the moment". On various occasions, and especially during electoral campaigns, Le Pen has been able to "create" a public discussion around his own ideas, or around himself as a person.²⁵

On the other hand, the *lepénisation* of political ideas can be interpreted as a radicalization of common sense ideas by the Front National itself. That is to say that the party is actually radicalizing themes that go hand-in-hand with political common sense and are thus not the private property of extreme movements. Different variants of this theme, such as security for example, might well be found on the agendas of moderate parties, but the most radical version can usually be found on the agenda of the Front National. For the Front National, the exploiting of "common sense logic" and stereotypes is a conscious strategy, as the banal slogan already illustrated above.

²⁵ The most recent example can be found in the 2004 regional elections. In the spring of 2004, prior to the elections, two of the Front National's most important themes were under public discussion: immigration and corruption. The question of immigration was brought up during the debate regarding the use of Islamic headscarves; the National Assembly voted not to allow any public signs of religious observance (headscarves, crucifixes etc.) in officially secular schools. Corruption was an issue because of a number of scandals, the largest of which concerned the leader of the moderate right UMP (Union pour un Mouvement Populaire) Party, Alain Juppé. Finally, the *lepenisation* of ideas prior to the regional elections reached its climax in the discussion concerning the eligibility of Le Pen himself as a candidate in the PACA (Provence-Alpes-Côte D'Azur) region. The common opinion among political commentators as well as other parties was that, once again, Le Pen had won because all the attention was on him prior to the elections. No matter what the outcome, Le Pen was victorious because he dominated public discussion. Ultimately, the Front National did not win the election, the Left and its allies did by causing a so-called *vague rose* over the country. Only one region, Alsace, remained under the dominance of the Right.

7.6 Democracy for the people

In this chapter I have studied the contemporary nationalist anti-system discourse through the Front National's program, which was aimed at the constitutional reform of the Fifth Republic. The main points in the party's reform program concerned strengthening national sovereignty, introducing the principle of national preference and the roles of the people and the parliament.

In the Third Republic, the anti-parliamentary critique was generally aimed at the dominance of the parliament, while in the Fifth Republic the critique of the Front National is focused against the dominance of the government over the legislative assembly. In this sense, both the Boulangists and the contemporary Front National would like to draw a clearer distinction between those who legislate and those who govern. Both also accentuate the role of the authoritarian Head of State and both view the role of the people as a sovereign power as decisive.

Therefore, taken together, the Front National is not so far removed from the anti-parliamentarism of the earlier Boulangists, because the primary goal of the Front National is the establishment of a "popular" or even "populist" democracy, if we use the party's own vocabulary, and the role of the parliament, and parliamentarism as such, remain secondary regardless of the fact that they question the parliament's minimized role to some degree. This is to say that the aim of achieving direct democracy and the attempt to minimize the distance between the rulers and the ruled (i.e. the aim of establishing a kind of simple government) are, along with the emphasis on an authoritarian leader, more important aspects in the program of the Front National than the accentuation of the parliament. One may assume that the emphasis on the parliament is the other side of the party's denunciation of state bureaucracies and the administrative elite who are educated in state schools – or the ENA (Ecole Nationale d'Administration). In this sense, the high-ranking administrative elite which is not elected is viewed negatively, whereas the parliamentary representatives are interpreted as being closer to the people and are therefore more positively valued.

Furthermore, regarding the role of the parliament in the Fifth Republic and in the discourse of the Front National, one may conclude that the polemic of the Front National is not directed against futile parliamentary discussions, as was emphatically the case with the earlier Boulangists. This is naturally associated with the change in political context, but, alternatively, it may also indicate that the Front National does not regard the parliament mainly as an arena of political discussion or as a field of political struggle between government and opposition but more as a legislative body – strictly speaking, as a purely legislative institution. Related to this, one may, however, assume that in the Fifth Republican context, the general conception of the parliament is not viewed through its function as a polity of discussion to the extent that it

was perhaps in the Third Republic, in the heyday of the sovereignty of the parliament.

The contemporary Front National continues to demand strict authority in the form of firm presidentialism. In my view, this aspect of stressing the strict authority at the top of the political hierarchy, at the level of the Head of State and his (not hers, I would think) sovereign powers, is conceived similarly with regard to the European Union and, therefore, is one way of stressing national political sovereignty. In the contemporary context, however, an overzealous accentuation of the importance of a firm president is not strategically wise because it could easily link the party too directly to its historical precursors, thus causing it to become labeled as "fascist". For these reasons, it is much more convenient to direct the contemporary critique toward an overly powerful administrative sector and the minimized power of the parliament.

We must also keep in mind that the national parliament gains more significance for the Front National because of the framework of the contemporary European Union. In other words, in the discourse of the Front National the parliament remains more of a concrete political symbol of national sovereignty. By emphasizing national sovereignty the Front National is engaged in a rhetorical struggle against both European integration and increasing globalization and multiculturalism. The principle of national preference, which is one of the main political issues on the party's agenda, would allegedly strengthen the national sovereignty and simultaneously put "our own people first" in national policies. In this sense, the concrete demand for national preference is a new and modern weapon in one's self-proliferation as a constant *courant de contestation* and the formulation of one's nationalist protest against the predominant laws and political establishment in power. It is also a surefire means of inspiring public debate from time to time.

Related to this, the Front National also questions the basic French republican values, such as the clause about the Rights of Man expressed in the preamble of the Constitution. This is revealed especially in the party's attitudes toward the Constitutional Council, which is seen by the party as the watchdog of "false ideology".

Concerning the direct democracy and popular initiatives suggested by the Front National one may add the following remarks. As demonstrated, the Front National offers its political program to an audience that is assumed to be comprised of common, little people who are rooted in the soil of France (i.e. *vrai Français*). In my view, however, it seems that the common people themselves would not have the final political initiative, even if the party supports this idea in its discourse. This is to say that, ultimately, the dictation of the political program and the suggestion of policy-related initiatives are carried out from top to bottom, thereby robbing the common people of the possibility to fulfill their own political ambitions even if the aspect of "being on the side of the common people" is accentuated by the party. The question is, rather, that the authoritarianism implied in parties such as the Front National always overrides the demands for the apparent direct democracy of the people. Actually, the fact that the party wants to be on the side of the people and to speak for the people

inherently implies that the emphasis is not only on the people as having the potential to participate in law making but also on political authority, on the leader, who commands and who is potentially most aware of the people's political intentions.

If one refers to Abraham Lincoln's famous formula about a "government of the people, by the people, for the people," the second element, *by* the people, is disregarded by the Front National although the demands for referenda and direct democracy seemingly aim at this end. The populism and politics of the Front National's "populist democracy" signifies that the party is acting on behalf of the people, for the people. In this political framework, the political best interest of the people is seen as self-evident to the political authority, which also knows how to act in the best interest of the people. In this sense, it instrumentalizes the assumed opinions of the people as a means to achieving its own end, and its accentuated anti-elitism is authoritarian and dictated from above. This kind of authoritarian and anti-parliamentary populism, which is willing to represent itself as being as closely linked to the people as it possibly can, dates back to Bonapartism and continues to this day to play a certain role in French politics. (Cf. Rémond 1982, Ch. 5)

Finally, then, the demand for the use of referenda is a very convenient political tool for populists to use in order to highlight their willingness to introduce real democratic reforms, as well as to show their "political sincerity" to the electorate. Referenda can, therefore, have a quasi-democratic appearance in a sense that is parallel to the Bonapartist plebiscites as being mere symbolic weapons used in order to maintain the unanimity of the nation. Behind the contemporary Front National's demand for the use of referenda one may catch a glimpse of the mythical and enduring narrative of eternal France, a narrative from which the whole exclusionary nationalism of the party is deduced, including the demand for strict immigration policies (immigration being the factor that is threatening the alleged national unity). And as I have demonstrated above, this typically nationalist outlook may be found both at the turn of the 20th and the 21st centuries.

8 CONCLUSION

In the following, I shall argue that the populist and nationalist rhetoric studied in this research may be regarded on a general level from a very specific point of view. That is to say that the nationalist rhetoric is rather curiously dualistically structured in a way in which political life is standardized and valued in antithetical terms, which, on the one hand, represent (or aim at representing) the essential reality and, on the other hand, the false manifestation or appearance of reality. The most obvious of these types of antithetical pairs is the dichotomy between the *pays réel* and the *pays légal*, of which the former describes a true, idealized or politically attainable reality, while the latter portrays the false yet "unfortunately legal" appearance of France – in a word, the anti-France. In addition to this dualism, there appear to be numerous other similar and more or less explicit distinctions in the nationalist discourse.

The rhetorical analysis forms the first part of the conclusion. In the second part, I shall deal with more general political observations and conclusions.

8.1 An appeal to essence

In my view, the logic of dichotomy, in other words the antithetical pairs, form a kind of a hallmark of the nationalist rhetoric covered in this study. In order to illustrate this dichotomy, let us review the following passage from the latest Front National party program (2004), in which the authors themselves reveal the rhetorical essence behind the dichotomy.

Les institutions françaises sont schizophrènes: il y a une apparence, celle de la Constitution et des lois, et il ya une réalité, celle des factions qui se partagent les prébendes et entendent les garder. Sous la coquille "républicaine", "démocratique", "citoyenne", s'est installée une oligarchie cosmopolite, totalitaire, corrompue. /.../ La vieille distinction, qu'on croyait révolue, entre pays légal et pays réel, demeure bel et bien. (http://www.frontnational.com/doc_souv_institutions.php)

The aforementioned opposition between appearance and reality brings us to the dissociation of ideas in the form of the philosophical pairs discussed by Chaïm Perelman (Cf. Perelman 1982, Ch. 11 and Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca 1958, § 90). In his "new rhetoric," Perelman analyzes an argumentative technique denominated as philosophical pairs based on the Kantian dissociation between phenomena and things in themselves. Behind this argumentative method, the use of antithetical philosophical pairs in any given rhetorical genre is the ultimate Kantian dissociation into both phenomenal reality (reality as it appears) and noumenal reality (the reality of things in themselves), which corresponds the pair appearance/reality.

The point of this argumentative method founded on the dichotomy of appearance/reality is to present two terms, term I and term II, and to analyze the philosophical relationship between them. According to Perelman, "term II provides a criterion, a norm which allows us to distinguish those aspects of term I which are of value from those which are not". Term II is both normative and explanatory and enables us to classify the aspects of term I. The philosophical dissociation "into terms I and II will attach value to the aspects that corresponds to term II and will lower the value of aspects that are in opposition to it". In this sense, the appearance of term I is, as Perelman puts it, a "mere illusion and error". (Perelman 1982, 126-128)

According to Perelman, this kind of reasoning by dissociation "can be applied to any idea, as soon as one makes use of the adjectives 'apparent' or 'illusory' on the one hand, and 'real' or 'true' on the other." (Perelman 1982, 134) "The pair-factor" is also evident when adjectives are used determinately: the expression "apparent peace" highlights the absence of "true peace," which demonstrates that "one adjective is a reflex of the other," as Perelman (1982,134) argues.

The same holds true for expressions such as "true democracy," which emphasizes the "apparent" character of existing democracies and the opposite of which is, in the nationalist context, often explicitly formulated as "pseudo-democracy". Here, the prefix *pseudo* even accentuates the fact that democracy really is at issue. Similarly, in the above cited passage from the Front National, the quotation marks around the words republican, democratic and *citoyenne* indicate reality as it appears, and it is depicted as corrupt, totalitarian and a cosmopolitan oligarchy. Following the same rhetorical logic, it may be noted that the praise of the "little people" simultaneously implies that rhetoricians view the "big people" with contempt.

This illustrates the fact that the other part of the philosophical pair need not be expressed explicitly in order to reconstruct the pair and highlight the opposing concept. In the nationalist discourse, as we have seen above, the use of philosophical pairs is not always explicit – yet, it is possible to reconstruct these pairs by directly extracting them from the text. As a matter of fact, I applied the pair of the *pays réel* and the *pays légal* as an antithetical pair à la Perelman to the Boulangist and Barresian discourse despite the fact that these rhetorical figures were not yet explicitly expressed at the time. Thus, the point is to highlight a certain antagonism that was already implicit but only later

emblematically formulated. In other words, the dissociation of ideas already existed but had not yet been expressed explicitly.

Furthermore, one should recall that the theme of the *pays réel* and the *pays légal* may have different connotations depending on time and era in which they are applied. In relation to this idea, I demonstrated above how the meanings associated with these concepts have been modified since their Orleanist interpretation. My additional point here is to underline that the dichotomy between allegedly false appearance and genuine reality seems to be an enduring aspect of the nationalist rhetoric, and, therefore, the concept of antithetical pairs discussed by Perelman is, in this connection, very elucidating.

Put differently, this model of argumentation appears to run parallel with the rhetoric of nationalists covered here: their overall view of the world and politics is commonly divided, first, into the idealized and true reality that corresponds not only to their own ideology but also to the hidden, unconscious and unrevealed reality of the "true and average" French people. Second, at the other end of the spectrum is, naturally, the falsified image, the alleged false appearance of France, of French politics. Overall, this division corresponding to the dichotomy of appearance-reality is used as a political criterion in valuing any number of different things.

My principal aim here is not to tackle the philosophical essence or values behind these terms (Cf. Perelman 1982, 131) but to draw an analogy between the philosophical pair (false) appearance/(true) reality and the pairs frequently used in the discourse examined here, which thereby correspond this argumentative strategy. Let us now examine other rhetorical pairs that have, in addition to the *pays légal* and the *pays réel*, been brought out in the previous chapters but have not necessarily been viewed here from this specific rhetorical angle. Considering the nationalist rhetoric against the existing system and establishment, the following dichotomies may be outlined.

One manifestation of the antithetical pairs in the discourses of Boulangism and the Front National is the opposition between politicians and people (*politiciens* or *politique politicienne* (FN) vs. *peuple*), in which politicians are seen as erroneous actors with regard to politics, whereas the people are seen as possessing intact political wisdom, and, therefore, the "real and rooted" people are represented as a truly legitimized source of political sovereignty. Politicians are, in this context, viewed with suspicion for a number of reasons: politicians represent falsified ideologies, they are or ultimately become corrupt when surrounded by existing political practices, they are self-serving and tend to think only of the next elections and their own interests. These allegations are, as one can clearly see, common to virtually any protest and populist movement criticizing the political establishment.

Another aspect in this sense and regarding the discourse covered here is that politicians, in addition to representing multiple stances and political factions, also create divisions, provoke conflicts and voluntaristically scatter an otherwise united nation. This confrontation between politicians and the people thus positions self-interested and quarrelsome politicians against the alleged "joint interest" of the allegedly united people.

Provocatively speaking, according to this kind of view, political life and politicians are enemies of the people. The movements using this kind of dichotomy present themselves as pro-people, they claim to be standing together with the united people and against the self-serving politicians. In this sense, these nationalists and populists present themselves as being above politics, and notably above squabbling political parties. And as parliamentarians or "politicians" themselves, they seem to know better than their political adversaries how to put their own selfish interests aside and "put the people first".

The antithetical pair of politicians/people once again reveals the depoliticizing aspect of the nationalist discourse. Behind this outlook is the assumption according to which it would be better to get rid of politicians, replace the conflicts of political life with an authoritarian leader whose decisions would be applauded by the people. Taken further, the leader who is above political conflict will rally the people and put its interest first; in this sense the leader and the people form a direct yet inherently nonpolitical relationship – nonpolitical in the sense that the relationship is far more paternalistic and commanding than questioning or deliberative in the strictest sense of the terms. And because the people is conceived as "one," it is also assumed that the existing divisions among the people (e.g. political controversies), which cannot be completely denied, are not natural conflicts of interests but "are manufactured by a few men of ill will," as Canovan (1981, 265) puts it. This *classe politicienne* is thus ruining the nationalists' sacred attempt to harmonize politics.

Hostility toward the existing system and its politicians are an inherent aspect of the conspiracy theories related to illegitimate elites. This phase was clearly illustrated by Maurras, who saw the prevalent Republic (i.e. the *pays légal*) as being in the hands of those behind the "anti-national" plot against nationalistic forces. In addition, the contemporary Front National turns to this kind of reasoning in their offensive against the establishment. In the contemporary context, the Front National accuses the anti-national and cosmopolitan establishment of sacrificing the national interest to the European Union and to forces of globalization, and thereby the interests of the little men, who are considered to be naturally nationalistic and virtuous, are completely overridden.

Other antitheses related directly to the aforementioned dichotomies are, for example, political struggles or politicking, which are confronted with "substantial" politics or personal political expertise. Hostility toward competitive politics, vain political struggles and politicking, and the distrust of politicians are features that are common to all of the nationalists studied here. Barrès and Boulangists confronted parliamentary politicking with "substantial" decision-making, which is to say they reduced politics to direct popular consultations. Instead of parliamentary deliberation, confrontation and the weighing of different standpoints, the Boulangists were willing to concentrate "on pure political substance," which may "solved" quite easily through

referenda. Parallel to the Boulangists, the contemporary Front National calls for direct democracy, or, as the party itself puts it, "populist democracy".

Maurras, too, viewed politicians and political squabbles with a similar contempt as the Boulangists had earlier, although he did not rely on the sovereignty of the people. Instead, Maurras drew a clear distinction between the incompetence of the masses (electorate) and competence of the hereditary king. According to Maurras, parliamentary politics and politicking should be substituted with personal power, that is with wise political manoeuvres of the king. Royalism thus also ensures that the political decision-making remains firmly in the hands of an expert, the king, who possesses the natural competence to reign, contrary to the incompetent representatives of the people: parliamentarians.

Futile verbalism and bavardage are also opposed to efficient decision-making in the nationalist discourse. Rhetorically, this may be considered as a distinction between futile words and efficient political deeds. This division was clearly manifested in anti-parliamentary Boulangism, which regarded the practices of the "government of discussion" in the Third Republic with contempt. For the Boulangists, "efficient politics" would have meant firm government and authoritarian leadership. According to Maurras, in turn, the sovereign king would have saved France from ongoing decline, the indications of which were, among other things, unstable governments and squabbling parliamentary practices.

The Front National does not attack the parliament in the same manner as the former movements. One reason for this, of course, is the weakened role of the contemporary parliament compared to the situation of the Third Republic. In fact, the party even tends to rehabilitate the role of the parliament of the Fifth Republic, at least as a nationally sovereign political institution within the framework of an integrated Europe. The main emphasis of the Front National, nevertheless, remains on the sovereignty of the people by means of referendum, that is on the "populist democracy". The term "populist democracy" reveals one typical feature of the rhetoric of the Front National which is perhaps accentuated more in the rhetoric of the present-day party than it was in the discourse of Barrès, for example.

My aim here is to highlight the idea of the identifying rhetoric with which an orator makes an identification between two expressions. The expression "populist democracy" is a case in point in this sense. By using this figure, the Front national is playing with words in order to make a quasi-logical argumentative chain from the appeal to the people to populism to democracy, thereby demonstrating that being a populist actually means being a democrat. (Cf. Perelman 1982, Ch. 7; Taguieff 2002, 148-151) Similarly, the Front National identifies itself with the people by using slogans such as "Le Pen – le peuple". These kinds of identifications are commonly used in any kind of populist discourse which makes an appeal to the people and claims to be on their side.

Furthermore, if one views the foundational dualism related to antithetical pairs from a broader perspective, one may realize that it is associated with a general strategy which may sometimes be conscious and explicit and

sometimes more implicitly associated with the party's rhetoric – perhaps either consciously or unconsciously.

Related to this conscious side, the technique of antithesis was a structure that Barrès used, for example, in his novel "*Déracinés*" (1897). Albert Thibaudet (1921, 265-266) demonstrates how the chapters of the novel are based on ten different antithetical oppositions. The major dualistic pair in the novel is undoubtedly the opposition between the youngsters from Lorraine in Lorraine versus the youngsters from Lorraine in Paris, which presents a sketch of the *déracinement* of the youth. In other words, here, the chief antithetical pair related to the sense of being uprooted and overall decline may be expressed in the form of authentic/genuine/uncorrupted versus declined/uprooted/alienated.

The use of rhetorical dichotomies may also be viewed even more extensively, not merely on the level of political rhetoric but also as an extended political strategy that highlights the movement's oppositional position in relation to the establishment and the political system. What I am saying is that the rhetoric of antitheses supports the movement's intentional position as "being against" and stresses the fact that the movement identifies itself as being on the opposite side of the establishment, in fact claiming to be a "political alternative" to it. Additionally, the strict dichotomy between two poles implies the well-known thesis that if one is not on "our side," he or she is inevitably on the other side, on the side of the political adversary.

The contemporary Front National has actually succeeded in exploiting this situation in the sphere of public discussion, especially concerning delicate issues such as immigration. That is to say that the public discussion surrounding immigration seems impossible to carry out without including the themes of the party in it. Moreover, when discussing the topic of immigration, the speaker appears simultaneously to be obliged to express his or her opinion of the Front National: to situate him or herself as being either pro or con Front National. In other words, the discussant dealing with the issue of immigration cannot express him or herself without being labeled either a *lepéniste* or an *anti-lepéniste*, or, alternatively, as a racist or an anti-fascist. (Cf. Taguieff 1994, 58) This phenomenon might not necessarily indicate the *lepénisation* of the general discussion, but in my view it is one example of the rhetorical force that is connected to antithesis and dualism. The Front National has indeed succeeded in creating the strict juxtaposition between nationalists and "cosmopolitists," between allegedly genuine nationalists and *mondialistes*, between the "true defenders of France" and those who are willing to sell the nation to "European bureaucrats" or "Third World immigrants".

Overall, my point is to emphasize that the nationalist rhetoric covered in this study is ultimately appealing to essence, and it simultaneously bases its arguments on essence. This is to say that in this rhetoric, the alternative to the existing political order, to its manifestations, practices etc., are reduced to nationalistic and deterministic essence: it is assumed that there already exists a true traditional order, the natural reality on the grounds of which the political alternative should be based and which need not be discussed. The reasoning of these nationalists is based on the idea that the present political life and political

order are mere false appearances and reflections of the decadent state of affairs. The true reality, instead, is waiting to be rehabilitated and put into actual political practice. The point in this dissociation is to highlight that which is real and concrete on the one hand, and that which is interpreted as an abstraction, illusion or error in the discourse on the other.

In relation to this, one may also consider why the nationalists are willing to provide this kind of two-part image of the world, in which one part represents "the truth"? Why does the nationalist ideology in a way resist playing with nuances and reject the need for reinterpretations? One explanation for this might be that this scheme offers a clear and simple political alternative to the audience, which is assumed to need simple solutions grounded on the "natural order and essence". Moreover, this kind of nationalist ideology offers a solid foundation for the expression of traditional, unchanging values, which might serve as a source of comfort to some people in this rapidly changing and globalizing world in which we live. (Cf. Taguieff 2001)

8.2 Continuity in protest

As it is clear from above, there appears to be a kind of persistent hostility toward the prevailing republic amongst the nationalistically-oriented movements covered in this study. It is nevertheless unclear whether this enduring *courant de contestation* in the French context is a specific French feature, or whether these movements, both at the turn of the 20th as well as the turn of the 21st century, are an outcome of the general crisis in representative democracy, as is often assumed by some scholars. It is in any case obvious that the offensives against the republic that has taken place since its foundation has been more or less constant and associated with certain eras (that may be sociologically diagnosed as periods of crisis), although the manifestations may have varied.

The beginning of the Third Republic was a period that planted the seed of pluralistic democracy in French political culture. The political forces against the Republic, as well as the crises of Boulangism and Dreyfusism, were testing the endurance of the prevailing form of government and the existing establishment, but alternatively, this "test" by contradictory forces can also be interpreted as strengthening the position of the republic and, perhaps, also parliamentarism.

The Boulangist antiparliamentary protest has been associated with Boulanger's personal ambitions and his attempt to pave the way for the establishment of his own personal dictatorship (although he did not seize his opportunity). Because of this association, constitutional revision after Boulangism took on a negative connotation, and therefore some scholars have interpreted its effect as a force that consolidated the republican bases of institutions, which up until that point had been quite weak. (Roussellier 2002, 376) This is not to say, however, that all expressions of protest against

parliamentarism suddenly vanished with the disappearance of Boulangism. Instead, the voices of protest only became more marginalized, occasionally emerging more visibly in conjunction with incidents like the Panama Affair or being manifested in bouts of militant violence as was the case with the various *ligues* between the world wars. (Cf. Defrasne 1990) However, as Roussellier also mentioned and as I have attempted to show in this study, a certain style of political vocabulary that still exists today is undoubtedly rooted in this kind of anti-parliamentary rhetoric. For example, the negative image of a deputy as being a traitor, a thief etc. seems to be reminiscent of explicit anti-parliamentarism.

As we have seen over the course of this study, the Boulangists reacted against the new Republic, as well as against the dominant role of the parliament and the parliamentary and political practices associated with it. The Boulangists saw the actual form of the parliamentary republic as a symbol of political decadence and therefore wanted to move toward plebiscitary democracy, that is toward a "true Republic". Maurrasism, in turn, was more hostile toward the republican form of government as such, as well as toward democracy in general, harboring an especially bitter contempt for the sovereignty of the people.

Nowadays, the protests carried out by the Front National emerge more precisely as a reaction against the political establishment, against those who hold the power and who, according to the party, conspire against the people by applying "false politics," as was the case in the discussions surrounding the topic of European integration. The form of the regime is not as much of a focal point in the party's critique as it had been in the past. On the contrary, the framework of the European Union and the overall trend of globalization are even stressing the "defensive" aspect of nationalized politics in the rhetoric of the Front National.

Therefore, it appears that the Front National echoes the populist tone of the Boulangists more than the technocratic, tightly organized political expertise represented by Maurras. This is self-evident when regarding Barrès' and Le Pen's demand for direct democracy and their direct appeal to the people. However, some rhetorical figures of the Front National, such as the dichotomy between the *pays réel* and the *pays légal*, can be traced back to Maurras, although this dissociation was also implicitly present in Barrèsism.

The Front National also repudiates some of the values associated with the French form of republicanism. Especially the principles of the 1789 Revolution are denied: the party does not accept "abstract" liberty or equality, which it views as "a myth that leads to decadence". In addition, the ideals set forth in the Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen are also loudly denied. When these latter aspects are taken into account, one may claim that the discourse of the Front National synthesizes the former historical nationalist thinking, with the outcome thus being a combination of old and new theses.

The overall philosophical basis reinforcing the attack against parliamentarism and the republican values of the establishment can also be crystallized through the concept of determinism. In all the discourses covered

here (Barrès, Maurras, Le Pen), and irrespective of the era in question, determinism is seen as literally determining political premises and is therefore implicitly or explicitly implied in the ideology. That is to say that nationalism implies a lack of recognition of alternatives – nationalism prefers to provide “one truth,” one essence from which political solutions are deduced, or preferably to which possible political alternatives are finally reduced. Perhaps the clearest indication of this is the national-populist politics of the Front National, which emphasizes natural laws, binding historical and biological heritage and so forth. This same logic of the reduction to tradition and “essence” is also demonstrated in the blind faith in the “little people”: no political alternatives are necessary because the truth is ultimately in the hands of the people, who will instinctively select the best policies.

It becomes clear, especially when the anti-parliamentary points of view are scrutinized from the nationalistic angle, that parliamentarism is largely denied because it supposes pluralism, controversy and unpredictable deliberation. These same epithets, however, are precisely those which are the diametrically opposed to nationalist ideology, which, instead, aims at uniformity, harmonizing unanimity and presupposes determinism. In this sense, parliamentarism offends the basic principles of nationalism, namely the view according to which the unity of the nation is interpreted as the main political interest of the nation, under which all other interests are subordinated, and, therefore, the political conflicts that are publicly performed on the parliamentary stage are viewed with skepticism. Nicolas Roussellier (1997, 20) argues the point by saying about the parliament of the Third Republic that: “Théâtre des intérêts inconciliables, il décevait ceux qui voulaient que le pouvoir par le peuple devienne un pouvoir pour le peuple.”

Finally, one may argue that a typical characteristic of nationalist and populist discourse, almost a hallmark of it, is that one theme, often an ancient theme or a rhetorical figure that has been used successfully on some previous historical occasion, runs throughout the entire discourse, characterizing and labeling similar kinds of rhetoric at various historical points. Apart from the dichotomy between the *pays réel* and the *pays légal*, another illuminating example of this is the rhetorical figure of decadence, which has been a part of the nationalist anti-system rhetoric both at the turn of the 20th and 21st centuries. The diagnostic of decadence, the sentiment of *déclin* or *fin d'un monde*, is not a unique experience of one generation, it is more like a perspective from which to interpret the current situation – and this has been done emblematically and repeatedly throughout the history in the nationalist camp.

TIIVISTELMÄ

”SYSTEEMI ON MÄTÄ”

Ranskalaisten nationalistien järjestelmän vastainen retoriikka.

Poliittisen systeemin vastaisuus on piirre, joka on kuulunut ranskalaiseen äärinationalismiin aina 1800-luvun loppupuolelta alkaen. Poliittisen systeemin vastaisuudella tarkoitetaan tässä nimenomaan edustuksellisen demokratian, parlamentarismien ja poliittisen eliitin vastaisuutta. Tässä tutkimuksessa tarkastellaan kolmea tällaisen järjestelmän vastaisen retoriikan edustajaa kahtena eri aikakautena, 1800- ja 1900 -lukujen vaihteessa sekä nykypäivänä, 2000-luvulle tultaessa. Nämä tarkasteltavat poliittiset liikkeet ja henkilöt ovat protestipopulistinen boulangismi-liikehdintä (1886-1889) ja sen ideologi ja kansanedustaja Maurice Barrès (1862-1923) ja nationalisti-monarkisti, Action Française-liikkeen johtohahmo Charles Maurras (1868-1952) sekä nykypäivänä usein äärioikeistolaisuuden alle määritetty Front national -puolue.

Tutkimuksen tarkoituksena on analysoida yksityiskohtaisesti niitä poliittisia sitoumuksia, muutoksia ja samankaltaisuuksia, joita protestipopulistiseen ja äärinationalistiseen ohjelmankirjoitukseen on näiden tiettyjen esimerkkien valossa liittynyt. Pitkä tutkimuksellinen aikahyppy reilun sadan vuoden takaisesta liikehdinnästä tämän päivän politiikkaan on tehty siksi, että boulangistista liikettä voidaan pitää ranskalaisen suuriin massoihin vetoavan populistisen ja järjestelmänvastaisen perinteen mallina, jonka poliittiset vaikutukset ovat selkeästi havaittavissa tämän päivän äärikansallisessa Front national puolueessa. Myös nationalistiteoreetikkojen, Maurice Barrèsin ja Charles Maurrasin vaikutukset ovat nähtävissä edelleen, vaikkakin heidän vaikutuksensa on osittain erilainen miesten erilaisten poliittisten näkemysten vuoksi.

Tutkimuksen ensisijaisena aineistona on käytetty poliittisia ohjelmatkstejä, joita on tarkasteltu sekä sitoen ne muuhun primääriaineistoon että analysoiden niitä vallitsevan historiallisen ja poliittisen kontekstin, Ranskan kolmannen tasavallan ja viidennen tasavallan valossa. Metodologisesti tutkimuksen voidaan katsoa sijoittuvan retorisen ja historiallisen lähestymistavan välimaastoon siten, että tarkoitus ei ole ollut pitäytyä pelkkään retoriseen erittelyyn vaan nähdä nationalistinen puhe, käytetyt käsitteet ja kielikuvat sidottuna historialliseen tilanteeseen ja reaktiona vallitsevaan politiikkaan.

Populistisen retoriikan yhtenä tunnuspiirteenä voidaan pitää halua ”olla vastaan”. Tämä vastustamisen halu kohdistui boulangistisessa protestissa varsinkin kolmannen tasavallan vahvaa parlamenttia ja parlamentarismia vastaan. Boulangistinen liike tuomitsi edustuksellisen demokratian mallin ja pyrki kohti ”todellista demokratiaa” mikä tarkoitti sekä konkreettista populistista vetoamista kansaan että ns. suoran demokratian vaatimusta eli kansanäänestysten laajaa käyttöä. Boulangistit, Maurice Barrès heidän joukossaan, asettivat siten vastakkain ”korruptoituneen”, ”turhaan puhumiseen” ja politikoimiseen omis-

tautuvan parlamentin ja ”rehellisen pienen kansan”, joka pystyisi kansanäänessä ratkaisemaan poliittiset kiistakysymykset.

Tutkimuksen toisen luvun jälkeen, jossa tarkastelen boulangismin historiallisia taustoja, keskityn luvussa kolme erityisesti boulangistiseen antiparlamentarismiin ja suoran demokratian vaatimukseen. Boulangistisen ”perustuslaillisen revisionismin” ja siihen liittyvien näkökohtien lisäksi tarkastelen myös Maurice Barrèsin omaa roolia toisaalta ”järjestelmän vastustajana” ja toisaalta järjestelmän sisällä toimineena parlamentaarikkona, ja tuon esille erityisesti Barrèsin oman suhteen aikakauden vahvaan parlamenttiin ja sen rooliin nimenomaan poliittisen puheen ja retoriikan foorumina.

Luvussa neljä laajennan näkökulmaa järjestelmän vastaisuuteen tuoden esille nationalistisessa ja populistisessa retoriikassa ilmenevän vastakohtaisuuden erilaisten ”perusteettomien” eliittien ja kansan välillä. Jo boulangisteilla oli implisittisesti näkyvä jako ns. *pays réel*’in ja *pays légal*’in välillä, eli toisaalta oli olemassa todellinen Ranska, jota kansa inkarnoi, ja toisaalta, poliittisesti vääristynyt parlamentaarinen tasavalta, jota vastaan siis taisteltiin.

Tämä ranskalaiseen politiikkaan kuuluva klassinen jaottelu ”todellisen kansakunnan” ja ”legaalisesta kansakunnan” välillä liitetään nykyisin useimmiten juuri Charles Maurrasin, joka kehitti tätä dikotomiaa omassa nationalistisessä teoriassaan. Vaikka Maurras oli Barrèsin aikalainen ja hänen poliittisen järjestelmän vastaisuutensa kohdistui samaiseen poliittiseen todellisuuteen kuin Barrèsilla, oli hänen tarjoama vaihtoehtonsa kolmannelle tasavallalle kuitenkin toinen. Perinnöllistä monarkismia tavoittelevaa Maurrasia ja ”suoraa demokratiaa” kannattavaa Barrèsia yhdisti - heidän traditionaalisen nationalisminsa ohella - kuitenkin molempien tavoittelema autoritaarinen johtajuus, joko kuninkaan tai presidentin muodossa.

Luvussa kuusi tutkimus kääntyy kohti nykyistä Ranskan viidettä tasavaltaa ja sen poliittista kontekstia, jonka pääpiirteitä kuten puolipresidentiaalista ja hallituskeskeistä järjestelmää vastakohtana kolmannen tasavallan vahvalle parlamentarismille taustanomaisesti aluksi kartoitan. Tämän jälkeen keskityn tarkastelemaan nykypäiväisen Front national -puolueen järjestelmän vastaista puhetta ja sitä millä perusteilla puolue on asettanut tavoitteekseen pyrkiä kohti ”kuudetta tasavaltaa”. Front national puolue jatkaa boulangistien jalanjäljissä siinä mielessä, että myös se vetoaa suoraan kansaan ja pyrkii kohti ”todellista demokratiaa”, joka puolueen omassa sanastossa kulkee nimellä ”populistinen demokratia”. Toisaalta, boulangistinen jyrkkä antiparlamentarismi ei enää saa täysin samanlaista vastakaikua nykypäivän puolueelta, sillä Front national itse asiassa on halukas nostamaan parlamentin arvovaltaa, mutta ei välttämättä niinkään politiikan ja poliittisen deliberaation paikkana vaan pikemminkin kansallisen instituutiona, kansallisen suverenisuuden symbolina yhdyntävää Eurooppaa ja globalisoituvaa maailmaa vastaan.

Yhteistä kaikille tutkimuksessa tarkasteltaville järjestelmän vastaisille puhetavoille on, että ne pyrkivät harmonisoimaan ja yksinkertaistamaan politiikkaa sekä tavoittelemaan oletusarvoksi nostettua nationalistista yksimielisyyttä. Tämä tarkoittaa sitä, että nationalistien pyrkimyksenä on päästä eroon poliittisista vastakkainasetteluista, turhasta politikoimisesta ja konflikteista ja sen si-

jaan joko redusoida politiikka kansanäänestyksiin (boulangistit, Front national) tai antaa "poliittinen" valta yksinvaltaiselle kuninkaalle (Maurras). Lisäksi nationalistiseen retoriikkaan kuuluu olennaisesti poliittisen pluralismin kieltäminen ja sen epääminen, että erilaisia poliittisia vaihtoehtoja olisi syytä punnita ja niistä keskustella. Sen sijaan vallalla on käsitys "yhdestä totuudesta", joka perustuu luonnolliseen järjestykseen, tietynlaiseen nationalistiseen, osittain biologisävytteiseen essentiaan, jonka olemassaolon perusteista ei voi kiistellä. Tähän liittyen nationalistista retoriikkaa leimaakin filosofinen kaksijakoisuus: maailma jaetaan toisaalta vääristyneeseen ilmiömaailmaan ja toisaalta todelliseen olemusmaailmaan, jonka ainoita oikeita edustajia nationalistit väittävät itse olevansa. Tästä nationalisen puheen tyypillisestä dikotomiasta nimenomaan jako "todelliseen" Ranskaan ja vääristyneeseen, poliittisen eliitin edustamaan Ranskaan on edustava esimerkki.

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Interview with Pierre-André Taguieff 29.5. 1997 in Paris.

APPENDIX 1

Georges Boulanger (1837-91) was born in Rennes as the son of a solicitor. He entered the Army in the 1850's, serving e.g. in North Africa and Indochina and earning a reputation as a brave soldier. Boulanger advanced swiftly through the ranks and was supported politically by Georges Clemenceau, who was behind Boulanger's appointment to the post of Minister of War in the radical-backed Freycinet Government of 1886.

The reforms that were carried out during Boulanger's tenure included the reduction of the military service requirement to three years and improvements in the living conditions of soldiers. The Schnaebelé Affair, the minor frontier incident that occurred between France and Germany in 1887 and escalated to the brink of war, brought him the admiration of the public as the admired, patriotic *Général Revanche*, but cost him his post in the ministry. The government fell, and Boulanger was assigned to a command post in Clermont-Ferrant.

A huge crowd of his supporters came to see him off at the railway station at Gare Lyon. Now enjoying broad popularity, he became politically active but was forced to retire from his post. Thanks to his broad popularity - and due to the system of single-member constituencies in which one could simultaneously run for office in various places - he won several by-elections and a seat in the Chamber of Deputies in 1888. However, he resigned from the Chamber in protest of the poor reception he received after giving his speech on constitutional revision.

In the by-elections held in Paris in January 1889, however, he easily won a seat in the Chamber with the overwhelming support of the electorate. A crowd comprised of his supporters in Paris attempted to incite Boulanger to launch a *coup d'État* but he refused to seize the moment. Because he was now seen as an open menace to the parliamentary Republic, Boulanger fled to Brussels in order to avoid prosecution for high treason. In 1889, he was tried and convicted *in absentia* for plotting against the state. In September 1891, he committed suicide by shooting himself at the gravesite of his mistress, Marguerite de Bonnemains, in Brussels.

APPENDIX 2

Maurice Barrès (1862-1923) was born in Charmes-sur-Moselle (Vosges, in Lorraine) into a prosperous, bourgeois provincial family. The Franco-Prussian War (1870-1871) and the German occupation in Charmes had a strong impact on young Barrès. After finishing his secondary school in Nancy, Barrès entered to the Faculty of Law at the University of Nancy, where he completed his degree. He moved permanently to Paris in 1883, where he joined the city's literary *société* and began to publish his own, albeit short-lived, journal, "Taches d'encre," and also contributed to other publications.

In 1888, Barrès published his first novel, "Sous l'oeil des Barbares". He, too, decided to join General Boulanger's popular movement and thereby launched his Boulangist journal "Le Courrier de L'Est" in Nancy. The following year Barrès campaigned on the Boulangist platform and was elected to the parliament as a Boulangist deputy from Nancy. In 1893, Barrès failed to be reelected to the Chamber, and he also experienced similar electoral setbacks in the elections of 1896, 1898 and 1903. Finally, in 1906, Barrès was reelected to the Chamber of Deputies, this time from the first *arrondissement* of Paris (Halles), a position which he retained until his death. That same year, before Barrès won his seat in the Chamber, he was also elected to the Academie Française, which was a clear sign of his increasing conservatism and his gradually diminishing fervently anti-parliamentarist and anti-Semitic views.

During the Dreyfus Affair, Barrès still campaigned vehemently against Jews and was profiled as a leading figure in the nationalist movement. He was also an influential member of the Ligue de la Patrie Française, which was founded in opposition of the Dreyfusard Ligue des Droits de l'Homme. Ligue de la Patrie Française brought together academics and writers not in support of Dreyfus, but in support of the fatherland and the Army. In 1898, Barres was quietly supportive of Paul Déroulède's ridiculously pathetic attempt at a *coup d'État* in order to move toward the establishment of "a plebiscitary Republic". During the First World War, however, Barrès became one of the nation's leading spokesmen for the cause of national unity and thereby explicitly supported "the Establishment" and the *union sacrée*. Barrès died suddenly in 1923 and received a state funeral.

Barrès' literary production is extensive, including the novel trilogies of "Le Culte du moi" (1888-1891) and "Le roman de l'énergie nationale" (1897-1902), a collection of his main political and nationalist ideas entitled "Scènes et doctrines du nationalisme" (1902) and numerous other books, newspaper articles and 14 volumes of posthumously published personal diaries.

APPENDIX 3

Charles Maurras (1868-1952) was born in Martigues (Bouches-du-Rhône in Provence) into a lower middle-class family. At the age of 14, Maurras became almost completely deaf, which forced him to abandon his dream of one day becoming a naval officer. After completing his studies at the Catholic secondary school in Aix-en-Provence, Maurras settled in Paris, where he dedicated himself to journalism, Provençal literature and literary critique.

During the Dreyfus Affair, Maurras devoted a great deal of time and attention to political writings and the anti-Dreyfusard campaign. Maurras found the Ligue de la Patrie française too conservative and therefore joined the Action Française movement, soon becoming its intellectual leader. In 1899, Maurras was still just a monarchist within the Action Française, and he tried to convert people with his royal manifesto "Dictateur et Roi," which was later extended into a book entitled "Enquête sur la monarchie" (1900). Maurras also wrote for the "Revue l'Action Française," which later became the daily paper "Action Française," from 1908 onwards. Maurras wrote daily articles for the paper until it ceased to be published in 1944.

Maurras was sentenced to prison numerous times during his life for various offenses, primarily due to his verbal violence. In 1926, the Vatican also condemned several books written by Maurras and placed them in the Papal Index. In 1938, Maurras was nevertheless elected to the Académie Française.

In the 1930's, Maurras became more isolated from his nationalist compatriots, and the young radical militants around him lost gradually their faith in his willingness to carry out a *coup de force* and turned to fascism. Maurras himself was somewhat impressed with Italian fascism, but as a fervent anti-Germanist he did not sympathize with Hitler. Maurras did, however, welcome Philippe Pétain's rise to power as a "*divine surprise*" and was satisfied to see how the Vichy regime implemented Maurras' extreme ideas in practice.

After the war in 1945 Maurras was condemned to national degradation and sentenced to life imprisonment for conspiring with the enemy. Maurras was pardoned in March 1952 for medical reasons and died the following November.

Maurras' literary production is extensive and includes daily articles in newspapers, novels, poems, pamphlets and books. His chief political work is undoubtedly "L'Enquête sur la monarchie," which was published in 1900.

APPENDIX 4

The Front National Party was founded in 1972 by a group of different far right factions. After the Algerian War, the far right movement was highly fragmented and the failure of success of the far right's presidential candidate Jean-Louis Tixier-Vignancour in the presidential elections of 1965 augmented this fragmentation. The main motivation behind the foundation of a new coalition party was to gather together both radical forces, such as the *Ordre Nouveau* movement, and more moderate forces in order to increase their chances of success in the legislative elections in 1973. Because the new party aimed at becoming active in parliamentary politics, the founding members wanted its figure head to be a moderate president who possessed extensive experience in the far right movement.

The anti-Gaullist and partisan of French Algeria **Jean-Marie Le Pen** (born in 1928 in Brittany) was elected as president. Le Pen is the orphaned son of a fisherman, has a degree in law and is a veteran of the French Paratroops, having served in Indochina, Suez and Algeria. Le Pen was already an active participant in the student political movement in the late 1940's, and was also involved in right-wing activities then. Le Pen's political career began in earnest in 1956 when he was elected to the National Assembly as the youngest deputy from Pierre Poujade's shopkeepers' and artisans' party UDCA. A year later he broke with Poujade and was reelected to the Assembly in 1958 as a member of the *Centre national des Indépendants et Paysans* (CNIP). In 1965, Le Pen led the electoral campaign of the presidential candidate Tixier-Vignancour.

The Front National was a marginal party until 1983. The party received only 1 % of the votes cast in the 1973 legislative elections, and a year later, when Le Pen was himself a presidential candidate, the result was less than 1 % of votes. In the party's own historical account, the period prior to the first electoral successes is referred to as "*traversée du désert*", or "desert crossing," and during that time the party's main themes, such as the promotion of anti-system attitudes, the struggle against the political establishment and anti-immigration, were all profiled.

The party achieved its first real electoral success in the 1983 municipal elections and was also quite successful in the European elections the following year, receiving over 10% of the vote and 10 seats in the European Parliament. In 1986, the Front National managed to get 35 of its own deputies elected to the French National Assembly as a result of the propositional electoral system. In the legislative elections two years later the party received the same percentage of votes (around 10) as it had in the last elections, but only one deputy was elected to the National Assembly due to the majority vote and the strength of the moderate right coalitions.

The late years of the 1980's may be characterized as a period of party moderation. Since then, the party has created a new public and increasingly moderate image with the help of party members like **Bruno Mégret** (born in

1949), who brought New Right influences into the Front National and rewrote the party programs with the support of a faction of "young intellectuals". Mégret soon became the party's "number two man," focussing a great deal of his attention on the education of party militants, the production of general propaganda, political strategies, discourse and language.

Joining Mégret's new conservative and moderate faction were also a faction of more radical "revolutionary" nationalists and an influential faction of traditional Catholics, to name only the most influential groups within the party. In any case, Le Pen himself was a leading figure who helped to hold the party together until 1999, when the party finally split. The long-standing struggle between the two men behind the scenes ended and Bruno Mégret and his supporters were forced to resign from the Front National (i.e. a fourth of the party's member base). Mégret then founded a new party, Movement National Républicain (MNR), whose electoral success has remained marginal even in local elections.

Overall, the Front National has achieved success primarily in European elections and presidential elections, and constantly has representatives serving on both the regional and municipal levels. In the first round of the presidential elections in 2002, Le Pen even managed to edge out Prime Minister Lionel Jospin and faced incumbent president Jacques Chirac in the second round of the elections. At the moment, (2004) the Front National has seven deputies in the European Parliament and none in the French National Assembly.

APPENDIX 5

The electoral manifesto of General Boulanger, April 1888.

(Taken from Wieviorka and Prochasson 1994, 91-94)

"Les trembleurs hypocrites qui nous oppriment depuis trop longtemps s'évertuent à prétendre que le général Boulanger n'a pas de programme, qu'on ignore ce qu'il veut, ce qu'il pense, ce qu'il peut.

A ceux-là, nous allons répondre: vous voulez savoir ce qu'est Boulanger?

Boulanger, c'est le TRAVAIL!

Boulanger, c'est la LIBERTÉ!

Boulanger, c'est l'HONNÊTÉ!

Boulanger, c'est le DROIT!

Boulanger, c'est la PAIX!

BOULANGER C'EST LE TRAVAIL!

Que voulez vous, travailleurs?

Vivre en travaillant!

Que vous manque-t-il?

Du travail et du pain!

A qui devez-vous le chômage, la ruine et la misère?

A ceux qui font passer, avant vos intérêts qu'ils devraient défendre, leurs besoins, leurs appétits, leurs ambition malsaine et qui voient, d'un oeil sec et d'un coeur léger, l'ouvrier pâtre et mourir de faim!

A eux les places, les honneurs, le luxe, le pouvoir!

A vous la misère!

Il est temps que cela finisse!

Place au vengeur!

Place à celui qui vous débarrassera de ce troupeau de parasites, vivant de vos peines, trahissant votre confiance et qui n'a rien fait pour vous, si ce n'est envoyer vos enfants mourir au loin, sans profit pour la France qu'il laissait désarmée!"