

the latter radicals and socialists. Their attitudes prevented working class solidarity from emerging among skilled and/or unskilled workers just as it prevented the easy submission of these men to the capitalist bosses. Smout in several chapters recurs to the inability of Scots to "work together as hard and productively as possible, ... [so that] everyone's income would rise and everyone's conditions would gradually be improved" (p. 107). This prevented the sorts of cooperation found in nineteenth century Denmark or in West Germany after World War II. It was not Scottish Whigs, Liberals, radicals or socialists who most alleviated Scottish poverty. That came largely after 1940 and was "the blessing" of the collectivist State, of the rule of the expert, and of a policy of welfare determined from above and afar." He goes on to say: "If there is a message in this book, it is how limited were the gains for most of the Scottish people between 1830 and around 1920, when heavy industry flourished and both radical tradition and socialist idealism attained their height. What was shocking to contemporaries, and is shocking to us, is how little one of the top two or three richest countries in the world did for its citizen until well on into the twentieth century" (p. 275). Scots by 1950 may have been as well off as many in England, Wales and Ireland and "probably better off than at least four fifths of the inhabitants of Europe" (p. 117) but they were also tinged with class bitterness, held unhelpful attitudes toward work and experienced a cultural depression which is still with them.

This interesting, well-written book has many good illustrations and helpful bibliographies. The index is not as detailed as one might like and the volume is not as handsomely printed and cased as its predecessor. It does, however, mark a new beginning for social histories of Scotland.

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Robert Soucy — *French Fascism. The First Wave, 1924-1933*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1986. Pp. xix, 276.

Fascism is a poorly understood subject because it has no obvious doctrine and, worse, no successful or well established literary apologists. On the other hand, there have been many writers associated with fascism who long preceded the opprobrium of specific fascist association. These often begin with Gobineau and Wagner, though some extend the accusatory finger as far back as Luther.

Robert Soucy's *French Fascism. The First Wave, 1924-1933*, a scholarly, yet ringing, denunciation of fascism, asserts at the outset that "fascism remains one of the most glaring examples of political evil in modern history" (p. xi). That writers such as Jacques Maritain, André Maurois, Abel Bonnard, Henri Massis, Pierre Benoit, Georges Suarez, Pierre Dominique, Xavier Vallat, and the Tharaud brothers, according to Soucy, could write articles for fascist newspapers was a "sad commentary on the moral limits of intellectual ability" (p. 105).

Despite reference to such literati as those just named, Soucy has not given us in this book the kind of intellectual history of the problem of fascism or the far Right that he offered in his earlier work on Barrès and Drieu la Rochelle. With the extremely interesting exception of a discourse on the development of the theoretical fascism of Georges Valois, Soucy in this most recent book has hewed close to the politics of the French Rightist leagues of the years from the election of the *Cartel des Gauches* to the rise of Hitler.

His thesis specifically critiques those who would identify fascism as a foreign import without indigenous political roots in France and, therefore, deny that organizations such as the *Jeunesses Patriotes* and the *Croix de Feu* were fascist (p. xiii). He also argues against the occasional claim that French fascism was leftist in nature (p. xiv). Soucy uses Valois' Faisceau as a major example to argue that fascist social thought was rightist rather than leftist, and that fascists and conservatives often agreed on social and economic matters, though he added that "French fascists and conservatives did disagree

on certain issues, primarily on matters of tactics...'' (p. xix). The willingness of Charles Maurras to plot a Right wing coup and be jailed for incitement to murder (p. 13), however, reminds us that differences in tactical views could be fundamental and that conservatism and the radical Right are hardly identical. The *Jeunesses Patriotes* were also ready to use "any means necessary" to defeat communism (p. 39) and their leader, Pierre Taittinger, was ready to use communist means to defeat communist ends (p. 47). Taittinger, whom Soucy correctly puts in the fascist camp, wanted to lead a dictatorship to destroy the Third Republic and quash the threat of the *Cartel des Gauches* in 1925 and 1926 (p. 61). Taittinger's defense of social solidarity was certainly closer to the Right than the Left, but neither he nor Maurras nor Valois defended the status quo any more than did Hitler, as Soucy in fact reminds us (p. 69). Taittinger's "populism" (p. 76) was designed to stir things up and so was Valois' call for war veterans to run the government, even while leaving control of the economy in the hands of the bourgeoisie (p. 166).

That the fascists wanted a reorganization of society based on bourgeois control of the economy did not make their schemes less radical in their demand for change. The value of Soucy's argument for linking the French fascists of the 1920s and early 1930s with defense of middle class interests lies precisely in his showing that there were elements within the middle classes in France who were extremely dissatisfied with the French state as it was and wanted fundamental change. A French state under Taittinger or Maurras would have been very different from the France of the Third Republic, just as, in fact, the Vichy Regime was after 1940, as I have attempted to show in my own book, *Collaborationism in France during the Second World War*. The political radicalism of the French fascists after 1940, combined with their unwillingness to overthrow the middle class social order, led them to the same kinds of calls for radical political reorganization as those of Maurras, Valois, and Taittinger. Rather than conservatism, these groups represented an ongoing radical Right in France.

Finally, Soucy analyzes the reasons for the failure of the 1924-1933 wave of French fascism. The economic crisis of 1926 in France was not as severe as those of 1922 and 1933 in Italy and Germany, respectively. The French Left posed less dangerous a revolutionary threat than did the Italian and the German and the fascist appeal to violence to preserve middle class interests was rendered irrelevant by the ability of the parliamentary Right and the police and military institutions of the Third Republic to blunt any threat from the Left. The anti-fascist attitude of the majority of the French population, educated by the lay schools of the Republic and lacking the keen edge of betrayal felt by many Italians and Germans after World War I, also worked against the success of the French fascists.

The problem of fascism is that it is a cultural climate of opinion that clearly predates the 1924-1933 period and has much broader implications than appear in Soucy's book. Even the term "fascism" has roots in the pre-World War I years. The "Fasci siciliani" were a coalition of urban petty bourgeoisie, sulphur mine workers, and peasants who rioted between 1892 and 1894. Dynamism, voluntarism, and Social Darwinism have complex roots in the work of Ernst Haeckel, whose writings attracted the young Heinrich Himmler, and, in France, Edouard Drumont and his epigones. What is needed is a serious attempt by historians to grapple with the *conjuncture* that made fascism a success in so many different areas of Europe and, at least to this historian's eye, to Asia, Africa, and contemporary Latin America, as well.

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Bailey Stone — *The French Parlements and the Crisis of the Old Regime*. Chapel Hill and London: University of North Carolina Press, 1986. Pp. x, 326.

The *Parlements* of France played the leading role in the defeat of the government's economic and financial program of 1787-88, a political defeat which led to the royal bankruptcy of August 1788,