Robert Grunert, *Der Europagedanke westeuropäischer faschistischer Bewegungen 1940-1945* (Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh, 2012).

In the 1930s and early 1940s there existed in Western Europe a number of small to miniscule radical-right parties that, due to their willingness to collaborate with Nazi Germany, are often generally characterized as ‘fascist,’ despite displaying a number of significant differences. The Belgian *Rexists*, for example, emerged from the *Union Catholique* [Catholic Christian People’s Party] and long retained traces of this origin. The *Parti Populaire Français* (PPF) and the *Parti Social Français* (PSF), by contrast, came into existence after splitting from the Communist and Socialist Parties, respectively. Their membership in the family of fascist parties is questionable, since in most cases these are entities which, after enjoying momentary success, soon regressed to the status of sects. By the end of 1939 the *Rexists* and the Dutch NSB – Mussert’s *Nationaal-Socialistische Beweging* – were regarded by the population as a fifth column of Germany and no longer scored better than four to five per cent in elections. After Germany invaded France, the PPF under Jacques Doriot’s leadership dwindled to around five thousand members, while Marcel Déat’s *Rassemblement National Populaire* (RNP), an offshoot of the PSF, shrank to at most three thousand. Just how extremely unpopular and lacking in charismatic appeal these collaborationist splinter parties actually were is shown by the fact that the volunteer units from Western Europe which formed in 1941 to fight the war against Bolshevism propagated by Berlin could muster no more than 30,000 men, compared to the 600,000 who were mobilised from states such as Hungary, Romania and Finland.

Robert Grunert doesn’t answer the question of what made these splinter groups ‘fascist movements.’ However, he does provide a detailed panoramic view, based on thorough archival research, of the widely differing ideas that were held concerning the ‘New Order of Europe’ under the anticipated German hegemony. While the NSB was attached to the idea of a division into Germanic and Latin spheres, each of which would be organized as confederations of states from ethnically homogenised structures, the leader of the *Rexists*, Léon Degrelle, as of 1943 put his priority on bringing the Walloons, as ‘French-speaking Teutons,’ into the ‘Greater Germanic Reich’ that the SS was striving to form – without however abandoning the idea of a continued *Belgian* self-administration or the older wish to see ‘Burgundy’ resurrected within its medieval borders, i.e. including the Northern French *Départements*. In contrast to this, Grunert sees nationalistic ideas as being less strongly articulated

amongst the French groups, which is explained by the fact that France – unlike Belgium or the Netherlands – wasn't threatened by German annexation, but instead would be preserved as a satellite state. Precisely how this judgement can be reconciled with the simultaneously-presented view that the PPF and the RNP were striving to establish France as the second most important power in the New Europe and to ensure the preservation of its colonial empire isn't entirely clear, and more generally the relationship between nationalist and trans- or supra-national concepts of order in the discourse of the radical right requires further clarification. However, this by no means diminishes the book's value as a richly informative historical presentation.

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