Strategies of Survival: Reviving the Neo-Fascist Network Through a Transnational Magazine

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Abstract
In the late 1970s, a group of far-right activists launched a geo-political magazine named Confidentiel and published in Paris. Far from being a domestic project, the magazine was also launched in Spain, Italy and Argentina, thanks to the wide transnational network of which its founders formed a part. Although the magazine was relatively short-lived and enjoyed a modest circulation (despite its transnational reach), its history illuminates the trajectories of some key nodes of the neo-fascist transnational network after the fall of Franco’s regime in Spain, where distinct generations of far-right activists had found a safe sanctuary. By exploring the personal trajectories of its founders and examining material published in the magazine, this article argues that members of the neo-fascist transnational network developed Confidentiel as part of a survival strategy and used it to maintain a stable presence in Europe after the mid-1970s, as well as to revitalize the network itself. Our analysis of Confidentiel shows that its founders’ choice to rely on cultural tools to revitalize their network was crucially influenced by the Nouvelle Droite’s meta-political turn, which allows us to place the magazine within the European right-wing milieu. The magazine echoed neo-fascism’s Pan-European vocation and the call for an independent, sovereign Europe. Nonetheless, its main goal was not to develop comprehensive and innovative geo-political analysis: as the vagueness of its political elaboration reflects. Instead Confidentiel was mainly a survival tool. The existence of several editorial seats across Europe and Latin America justified the network’s movements and relations, significantly allowing them to support their allies by using the magazine to counter negative propaganda. In this sense, Confidentiel helps illuminate fascism’s transnational dynamism and activism after 1945.
Keywords
Avanguardia Nazionale, Cold War, Confidentiel, Latin American Military Regimes, neo-fascism, neo-fascist network, Nouvelle Droite, Ordre Nouveau, transnational history, transnational neo-fascism

Introduction
In 1979, a group of former Ordre Nouveau activists founded Confidentiel, a geo-political magazine, in Paris. While this was its main editorial seat, Confidentiel had other offices in Barcelona, Rome and Buenos Aires and was therefore a transnational magazine. It was published by the Institut européen de recherches et d’études politiques (IREP), a self-declared institute for political research founded in Paris at the end of 1978, while an Italian branch was founded in Rome by Avanguardia Nazionale militant Adriano Tilgher in 1979. Only eight issues of Confidentiel were published in France between 1979 and 1981. Fewer issues were published in Italy (with the last released in the Spring of 1982), Spain and Argentina. The magazine had a modest circulation, but its history deserves greater scholarly attention. Confidentiel is mentioned in a few works on the French far-right, but its transnational dimension is generally overlooked. Picco crucially places it within a far-right transnational network, although she neglects the study of the magazine’s content, which in fact lends itself to a more thorough problematization of the project. This paper combines an analysis of the editorial team’s personal trajectories with a focus on its issues and aims to develop a comprehensive view of Confidentiel and to demonstrate that it was not a mere cultural initiative but a strategy to revitalize the neo-fascist transnational network in Europe after the mid-1970s. The first part introduces Confidentiel as a transnational project, while the second part explores its founders and editors’ personal trajectories, highlighting their interactions within the neo-fascist transnational network. The third part develops a focus on Confidentiel’s stated aims, contributors and analysis, which allows us to delve into its declared mission and critically evaluate its pro-European stances. Due to the collapse of the Franco regime in Spain, a country which had been ‘a substantial transnational landmark for European neofascist activity in the Cold War years’, some members of the neo-fascist network felt increasingly marginalized and under scrutiny for their subversive

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1 Direzione generale della pubblica sicurezza-investigazioni generali-operazioni speciali-Ufficio Centrale del Ministero dell’interno, Nota nr. 224/17404.II, 10 May 1982 generale della pubblica sicurezza, Nota nr. 224/17404.II
2 Ibid.
3 Gérald Penciolelli, verbale di interrogatorio, 8/07/1981.
4 J. Gautier, Les extremes droites en France (Paris 2009), 231.
5 P. Picco, Liaisons dangereuses Les extrêmes droites en France et en Italie (1960–1984) (Rennes 2016), 157–78.
6 A. Mammone, Transnational Neofascism in France and Italy (Cambridge 2015), 43.
performance in Europe. In the late 1970s, they launched the magazine to maintain and broaden their connections while remaining active in Europe, thereby challenging marginalization. As will be shown, this strategy was evidently inspired by the *Nouvelle Droite* (ND) meta-political turn: nonetheless, since the magazine was first of all a survival strategy, and not a thoroughly planned cultural project, the tactic did not represent a political novelty.

The transnational turn in right-wing studies has helped reveal the dynamism of far-right groups and networks during the Cold War. As Finchelstein shows, it has also revealed that fascism, ‘as a term and a reality’, partly ‘refers to a transnational network of shared ideological subjectivities’. Accordingly, transnational approaches effectively question the understanding of ‘the extreme right as a specific national product’, and bring to light ideological transfers and shared political agendas across movements, parties and individuals. This paper subscribes to the conceptual, historical and methodological approaches developed within this transnational turn. Conceptually, the transnational turn allows scholars to challenge the ‘ahistorical reading that the extreme-right saga started only in the final stages of the past century’ and highlights the ‘pattern of “continuity” within the history of right-wing extremism in some European countries’. This feeds into the debate around the dismissal of neo-fascism in contemporary right-wing studies and in turn informs our use of ‘neo-fascist’ and ‘far-right’ in this paper. Fascism did not disappear after 1945; therefore, Mamonne argues that the term ‘neo-fascist’ properly highlights the historical continuity between the interwar and post-war experiences. Furthermore, by illuminating the overlooked continuity between the extreme right and neo-fascism, he is able to use ‘neo-fascist’ and ‘extreme right as overlapping terms’ in which neo-fascist serves as ‘an overall all-inclusive term … to include the whole political family at the right of the right’. This conceptual

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7 See T. Bar-On, ‘Fascism to the Nouvelle Droite: The Dream of Pan-European Empire’, *Journal of Contemporary European Studies*, Vol. 16, No. 3 (2008), 327–45; A. Mamonne, ‘The Transnational Reaction to 1968: Neo-Fascist Fronts and Political Cultures in France and Italy’, *Contemporary European History*, Vol. 17, No. 2 (2008) 213–36; A. Mamonne, ‘Revitalizing and De-Territorializing Fascism in the 1950s: The Extreme Right in France and Italy, and the Pan-National (“European”) Imaginary’, *Patterns of Prejudice*, Vol. 45, No. 4 (2011), 295–318; M. Albanese and P. del Hierro, ‘A Transnational Network: The Contact between Fascist Elements in Spain and Italy, 1945–1968’, *Politics, Religion & Ideology*, Vol. 15, No. 1 (2014), 82–102; Mamonne, *Transnational Neofascism in France and Italy*; M. Albanese and P. Del Hierro, *Transnational Fascism in the Twentieth Century: Spain, Italy and the Global Neofascist Network* (London 2016).

8 F. Finchelstein, ‘On Fascist Ideology’, *Constellations*, Vol. 15, No. 3 (2008), 320–31, 326–7.

9 Mamonne, ‘The Transnational Reaction to 1968’, 214.

10 Mamonne, *Transnational Neofascism in France and Italy*, 9–10.

11 See Nigel Copsey, ‘“Fascism … but with an Open Mind”. Reflections on the Contemporary Far Right in (Western) Europe. First Lecture on Fascism – Amsterdam – 25 April 2013’, *Fascism: Journal of Comparative Fascist Studies*, Vol. 2, No. 1 (2013).

12 Mamonne, *Transnational Neofascism in France and Italy*, 11.

13 See Copsey, ‘“Fascism…but with an Open Mind.” Reflections on the Contemporary Far Right in (Western) Europe’.

14 Mamonne, *Transnational Neofascism in France and Italy*, 12.
premise informs our paper. We understand neo-fascism as an ‘umbrella term’\textsuperscript{15} referring to post-1945 movements and parties, which claimed a relationship with the interwar experience. However, where this relationship with the interwar experience is not immediately evident, we use the broader term ‘far-right’.

The transnational turn acknowledges the existence of a dynamic fascist transnational network, established in the 1920s in Europe, which managed to survive after the end of the Second World War and throughout the Cold War.\textsuperscript{16} The network comprised of ‘individuals, groups, parties and regimes’,\textsuperscript{17} and members of both the interwar fascist and Nazi generations as well as the neo-fascist generation. As our focus falls mainly on the post-war, ‘neo-fascist’ generation, we define the network as ‘neo-fascist’. Studying networks can be problematic: social interaction\textsuperscript{18} lies at the core of their survival, hence they are loose and informal\textsuperscript{19} by definition. Nonetheless, understanding networks as ‘sets of nodes, linked by some form of relationship, and delimited by some specific criteria’, where ‘nodes may consist of individuals, organizations’,\textsuperscript{20} allows scholars to narrow down their focus and explore in depth the specific nodes of a network. It goes without saying that the dynamism and fluidity of network relations often implies the overlapping of different networks. We nonetheless refer to a loose, single ‘transnational neo-fascist network’ in order to highlight its historical continuity with the transnational fascist network signalled by Albanese and Del Hierro.\textsuperscript{21} Hence the network can be understood as the context within which the interaction between specific ‘nodes’ developed.

The Italian nodes of the network have attracted scholarly attention.\textsuperscript{22} The main neo-fascist movements, namely \textit{Ordine Nuovo} (ON), founded in 1956, and \textit{Avanguardia Nazionale} (AN), founded in 1960, played a key role in the infamous Strategy of Tension\textsuperscript{23} (late 1960s–early 1980s) in Italy. This entailed several bomb attacks carried out by neo-fascist movements in public spaces such as banks and town squares, which were often blamed on the left to spread terror in the country and prompt an authoritarian turn supported by sectors of the intelligence services and the armed forces. Investigations into the attacks prompted several neo-fascist activists to flee Italy and move to Spain in

\textsuperscript{15} A. Cento Bull, ‘Neofascism’, in R. J. B. Bosworth, ed., \textit{The Oxford Handbook of Fascism} (Oxford 2008), 586.

\textsuperscript{16} See Albanese and Del Hierro, \textit{Transnational Fascism in the Twentieth Century}.

\textsuperscript{17} Ibid., 161.

\textsuperscript{18} T. Faist, ‘Transnationalization in International Migration: Implications for the Study of Citizenship and Culture’, \textit{Ethnic and Racial Studies}, Vol. 23, No. 2 (2000), 189–222, 192–3.

\textsuperscript{19} S. Khagram, J. V. Riker and K. Sikkink, eds, \textit{Restructuring World Politics: Transnational Movements, Networks and Norms} (Minneapolis, MN 2002), 7.

\textsuperscript{20} M. Diani, ‘Introduction: Social Movements, Actions, and Social Networks: “From Metaphor to Substance?”’, in M. Diani and D. McAdam, eds, \textit{Social Movements and Networks: Relational Approaches to Collective Action} (Oxford 2003), 6.

\textsuperscript{21} Albanese and Del Hierro. \textit{Transnational Fascism in the Twentieth Century}.

\textsuperscript{22} See ibid.; P. Picco, \textit{Liaisons dangereuses}; G. Ravelli and A. Cento Bull, ‘The Pinochet Regime and the Trans-Nationalization of Italian Neo-Fascism’, in R. Leeson, ed., \textit{Hayek: A Collaborative Biography: Part XIII: ‘Fascism’ and Liberalism in the (Austrian) Classical Tradition} (Basingstoke 2018), 361–93.

\textsuperscript{23} F. Ferraresi, ‘The Radical Right in Postwar Italy’, \textit{Politics and Society}, Vol. 16, No. 1 (1988), 71–119, 89.
the early 1970s to avoid prosecution. Given their involvement in such a prolonged terrorist campaign, it is unsurprising that their transnational trajectories have attracted scholarly attention. After the fall of Franco’s regime, and the failed attempt at hampering the democratic transition in Spain, some of the Italo-Spanish nodes of the network moved to Latin America, where they found a friendly and safe refuge, while still maintaining relations with their comrades in Europe. Significantly, there has been scant scholarly attention paid to the fate of these individuals after the end of the Spanish sanctuary in the mid-1970s: while the performance of some of them in Chile has been researched, their overall trajectories are still partly overlooked. The analysis of Confidentialiel allows us to address this historical gap and reconstruct the interaction between different nodes of the network in (and outside) Europe. The Italian judiciary and intelligence services (often in collaboration with foreign counterparts) made consistent efforts to track down and document neo-fascists’ activities abroad. The documentary trail left by their investigations provides a rich insight into the membership of Confidentialiel’s editorial team, and its members’ transnational trajectories.

Transnational history, an approach ‘motivated by the desire to highlight the importance of connections and transfers across boundaries at the sub or supra-state level’, allows us to explore the transnational dimension underpinning Confidentialiel. Transnational history drives the following analysis of the personal connections and ideas that shaped the Confidentialiel project. Far from being a structured methodology, transnational history is ‘largely social history’, as its focus is on ‘the people who forge these connections’ and it ‘is a relational approach that focuses on relations and formations, circulations and connections’.

Confidentialiel as a Transnational Project

At first glance, Confidentialiel was simply a geo-political magazine, printed and released in France. However, legal materials, combined with the autobiographies of some emblematic neo-fascist militants, bring to light a dynamic transnational network, whose nodes and interaction underpin its launch and working. As exploring personal relations is pivotal to transnational history approaches, the present and following sections look at the personal trajectories, interactions and narratives of the main actors involved in Confidentialiel. This allows us to shed light on its political mission and the way in which distinct actors recounted it. This section focuses on three individuals: Stefano Delle Chiaie, Enrique Sixto de Borbón-Parma, whose names do not feature in any of the

24 Ravelli and Cento Bull, ‘The Pinochet Regime and the Trans-Nationalization of Italian Neo-Fascism’.
25 Ibid.
26 The magistracy’s interest in the magazine was triggered by the involvement of a few AN activists in Confidentialiel, including its leader Stefano Delle Chiaie.
27 P. Clavin, ‘Time, Manner, Place: Writing Modern European History in Global, Transnational and International Contexts’, European History Quarterly, Vol. 24, No. 4 (2010), 624–40, 625.
28 Ibid., 628–9.
29 P. Saunier, Transnational History (Basingstoke 2013), 8.
magazine’s issues, and Ernesto Milá, editor of the Spanish edition. As we will see, they all played a pivotal role in Confidentialel: their relationship and political activism are illustrative of its transnational dimension and contribute to clarify its political scope. To understand their relationship, we need to consider their interaction in Francoist Spain, as well as their involvement in the transnational mobilization against the democratic transition, which culminated with the Montjuïc attack in 1976.

Delle Chiaie, leader of the previously mentioned neo-fascist movement AN, was one of the first Italian militants who moved to Spain in the early 1970s, to avoid prosecution for his alleged involvement in the Strategy of Tension. In Spain, Italian activists interacted with ‘French and German Nazis’ as well as with the ‘Spanish extreme right-wing’.30 Ernesto Milá was a Spanish national and member of Fuerza Nueva,31 who had established close relations with the Italian ‘expats’ in Barcelona and Madrid. At that time, Spain offered a safe sanctuary not only for Italian neo-fascist militants, but also for members of the inter-war fascist generation, who had moved there after the 1945 defeat. Notable members of the latter included Otto Skorzeny, a former SS colonel; Junio Valerio Borghese, a loyal supporter of Mussolini and Commander of the infamous far-right paramilitary body Decima Mas during the Second World War;32 Leo Negrelli, a supporter of Mussolini’s Italian Social Republic33 and Radu Ghenea, ‘former Ambassador of the Romanian collaborationist government in Madrid’.34 According to Milá, it was around these historical figures that between the 1950s and the 1960s the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Frente de las Juventudes organized summer courses (all based in Spain) involving activists from European organizations (including the Italian MSI and Jeune Nation) and Latin American ones (like the Argentinean Tacuara).35 These courses proved pivotal in establishing an ‘informal network’ of relations36 between Spanish and foreign activists, members of the interwar and post-war generation, which embodied the mentioned continuity between fascism and neo-fascism after 1945. The involvement of Italian neo-fascists in the courses, and later their presence in Spain, explains Milá’s relationship with Delle Chiaie,37 which paved the way for the creation of Confidentialel.

30 Albanese and Del Hierro, Transnational Fascism, 148.
31 Fuerza Nueva was a Spanish far-right association that became a political party in 1976, pursuing a strategy aimed at attracting conservative and integralist voters, while the youngest members of the party were following a violent revolutionary path throughout the democratic transition (J. M. González Sáé, ‘La violencia política de la extrema derecha durante la transición española (1975–1982)’, in Carlos Navajas Zubeldía and Diego Iturriaga Barco, eds, Coetánea: III Congreso Internacional de Historia de Nuestro Tiempo (Logroño 2012), 365).
32 He moved to Spain in 1971 to avoid prosecution for coordinating a (failed) coup attempt in Italy.
33 Albanese and Del Hierro, Transnational Fascism, 75.
34 P. Adriano and G. Cingolani, La via dei conventi. Ante Pavelic e il terrorismo Ustascia dal Fascismo alla Guerra Fredda (Milan 2011), 441. This and all other translations are those of the author.
35 E. Milá, Ultramemorias (VIII de X) Visicitudes políticas en la transición (18ª parte). Hacia una estrategia y una estructura internacional, http://infokrisis.blogia.com/2009/051804-ultramemorias-viii-de-x-visicitudes-politicas-en-la-transicion-18-parte-.hacia-.php (18 May 2009, accessed 1/03/2019).
36 Ibid.
37 E. Milá, Ultramemorias I (Kindle version, available at http://www.amazon.co.uk/kindlestore), 2012, loc. 243.
De Borbón-Parma stood among the Spanish nationals interacting with the expat milieu in Spain. A former member of the French Foreign Legion (1962–1965), he had ‘established relations with members of the Spanish and international far-right’\(^{38}\) in Portugal, Angola and Mozambique. As a French resident since the early 1970s, he had been involved in the activities of the far-right party *Parti des Force Nouvelles*, which strengthened his relations with the French far-right.\(^{39}\) Most importantly, de Borbón-Parma served as the leader of a conservative wing of the Carlist movement which, after Franco’s death, tried to hamper the transition to democracy. The Carlist movement was a conservative, Catholic movement originating from a dynastic dispute within the Bourbon family in the nineteenth century. It supported Franco in the Civil War, hoping to pave the way for the restoration of the monarchy and the establishment of a traditionalist regime in the country.\(^{40}\) However, in the 1960s, under the leadership of Carlos Hugo de Borbón-Parma (a member of the family claiming the Spanish throne and brother of Enrique Sixto), the movement drastically shifted its ideological positions, embracing democratic socialism and then becoming an opponent of Franco’s dictatorship,\(^{41}\) a move starkly condemned by Enrique Sixto. The annual gathering of the Carlist movement in Montejurra (Navarra) in 1976 tragically embodies the feud between the two Carlist factions: the ‘leftist’ faction was attacked by a neo-fascist squad, who killed two activists.\(^{42}\) As Italian investigations reveal,\(^{43}\) the squad comprised of Spanish (including Milá), Italian (including Delle Chiaie), Argentinian, Portuguese and French activists, allegedly guided by Enrique Sixto de Borbón-Parma. Their presence in Montejurra illustrates the wide transnational mobilization around the fate of post-Francoist Spain. The activists who had found a safe sanctuary in the country were desperate to preserve it and to gain ‘some form of political space’\(^{44}\) by spreading terror in the country in the hope of preventing the transition to democracy. As Albanese and Del Hierro have shown, Enrique Sixto de Borbón-Parma represented the ideal leader to drive this operation: an aristocrat who, unlike his brother, had not compromised his values to survive.\(^{45}\) Milá, who Delle Chiaie introduced to de Borbón-Parma, stated that he and his *Fuerza Nueva* comrades were fascinated by the former’s European education and international links, a key asset that contrasted with the nationalist focus found across most Spanish far-right groups.\(^{46}\) Furthermore, Delle Chiaie praised

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\(^{38}\) UCIGOS Roma, Nota sulla missione del dottor Fasano in Francia del 14–20 aprile 1982 indirizzata al direttore dell’UCIGOS, 1982 (Annex 3).

\(^{39}\) Ibid.

\(^{40}\) Daniel Jesús García Riol, ‘La resistencia tradicionalista a la renovación ideológica del Carlismo (1965–1973)’ (Doctoral Dissertation. National Distance Education University, 2016), 38.

\(^{41}\) Sentenza-Ordinanza del GI presso il Tribunale Civile e Penale di Milano, dr. Guido Salvini, nel procedimento penale nei confronti di Rognoni Giancarlo ed altri, 1998, parte 64.

\(^{42}\) Albanese and Del Hierro, *Transnational Fascism*, 153.

\(^{43}\) Sentenza-Ordinanza del GI presso il Tribunale Civile e Penale di Milano, parte 64.

\(^{44}\) Albanese and Del Hierro, *Transnational Fascism*, 155.

\(^{45}\) Ibid., 154.

\(^{46}\) Milá, *Ultramemorias vol. I*, pos. 2097.
de Borbon-Parma’s ‘supranational view on politics’, and therefore supported his battle to take over Spain.\textsuperscript{47} The tragic outcome of the Montejurra operation led to de Borbón-Parma’s expulsion from Spain,\textsuperscript{48} while several foreign activists, including Delle Chiaie, left in search of safer sanctuaries. Yet, events at Montejurra represented an unprecedented convergence of actors revolving around Spain, which for decades had been the European sanctuary par excellence for distinct generations of far-right activists. To some extent, \textit{Confidentiel} revived this convergence in the late 1970s.

Its origins are ambiguous. In 1981, the Paris \textit{Brigade Criminelle} broke into the IREP headquarters (the Institute was in liquidation and apparently no longer active)\textsuperscript{49} to interrogate the editorial team about its alleged involvement in the bombing attack against the Paris Synagogue (3 October 1980). After Milá was arrested on suspicion of being the perpetrator, the IREP’s activities drew the investigators’ attention. The names of Milá, Delle Chiaie and de Borbón-Parma were known to the French authorities for their subversive activities in Spain; it was therefore almost inevitable that they would be linked to the synagogue bombing. While this trail was eventually abandoned, French and Italian authorities (involved because of their interest in Delle Chiaie’s whereabouts) reconstructed the activities and relations of the individuals involved in \textit{Confidentiel}. The evidence they gathered, combined with the voices of Milá and Delle Chiaie, allow us to shed further light on the origins and scope of the magazine. Both activists underline that \textit{Confidentiel} represented a cultural project. At the same time, they understand it as a key phase in their transnational political activism and so imply that the magazine formed part of a broader project. In his autobiography, Milá insists on the word ‘relations’ to explain the context within which the project originated:

This venture [\textit{Confidentiel}] needs to be placed in its own context: the network of international relations established at that time was, firstly, an informal network of relations based on past experiences and collaborations, revolving around a relatively small group of people who had maintained ties and bonds for more than a decade. It was not a mere activist structure, but also and foremost a network of informal relations, which crystallised into specific moments and actions. Its development had been lengthy and, in fact, it consisted of distinct networks.\textsuperscript{50}

While Milá does not thoroughly recount the foundation of \textit{Confidentiel}, he clarifies that it provided the means to launch a ‘new international political strategy’, whose goals and drivers remain obscure. He only discloses that the strategy entailed intervention in Latin America and Africa, where ‘sanctuaries’ were established in order to ‘return to Europe’ in the future. What we can infer from his account is that \textit{Confidentiel} offered the ideal continuation of the transnational mobilization that culminated in the Montejurra attack: as he implies, the network of relations crystallized into ‘specific moments and

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\textsuperscript{47} S. Delle Chiaie, \textit{L’aquila e il condor. Memorie di un militante politico} (Milan 2012), 209.

\textsuperscript{48} Garcia Riol, ‘La resistencia tradicionalista a la renovación ideológica del Carlismo (1965–1973)’, 373.

\textsuperscript{49} UCIGOS Roma. Nota sulla missione.

\textsuperscript{50} E. Milá, Ultramemorias (VIII de X) Visicitudes políticas en la transición (18ª parte).
actions’, such as the 1976 events. In a similarly vague fashion, Delle Chiaie summarized his involvement in Confidentiel before the Court of Rome.51 In 1979, he decided to launch a magazine devoted to the analysis of distinct, international political forces, with which he was in contact at the time. Accordingly, the magazine represented a preliminary step in creating a new political movement (his movement AN was officially dissolved in 1976, although it continued operating underground).52 He maintained that living abroad had shown him that ‘it was even possible to discuss with groups with whom we had clashed in the past’, thereby developing new forms of political analysis. Curiously, his autobiography, published more than twenty years later, slightly downplays his role in the project. This would already have been in progress when, in Paris in 1979, Gérald Penciolelli53 personally invited him to plan the magazine’s launch. An ‘international politics magazine’, he argues, was timely, since it aimed at focusing on topical issues such as the rise of neo-capitalism and the increasing influence of finance on national governments.54 Delle Chiaie reports that over a series of meetings held in 1979, it was decided to launch Confidentiel in different countries: in Italy, Spain, but also Chile, Venezuela and Bolivia (since he and other nodes of the network were operating in Latin America). Although this account undermines his role as founder of the magazine, he ultimately argues that, between 1979 and 1980, he ‘oversaw’55 the activities of Confidentiel in Paris, designating his loyal AN comrade Adriano Tilgher as director of the Italian IREP. While Delle Chiaie’s actual contribution to the launch of Confidentiel remains vague, the foundation of a Rome IREP branch under Tilgher’s supervision is illustrative of his involvement in the project. The establishment of a Confidentiel editorial branch in Argentina provides further evidence.

After the fall of the Spanish sanctuary, Delle Chiaie and a handful of Italian neo-fascists were initially welcomed in Chile, thanks to the support they had offered the military junta in its work targeting exiled opponents in Rome.56 Their collaboration with the Chilean secret police (DINA) opened the gates to other Latin American countries, firstly Argentina (between 1977 and 1980) and then Bolivia, where Delle Chiaie and his men, including Milá, collaborated with the García Meza regime. Although most of the group operated clandestinely in Argentina, a Confidentiel office was established in Buenos Aires in 1980.57 AN militant Maurizio Giorgi and Argentinean Miguel Angel Schettino, whose name appears on the list of the Battalion 601 members released by

51 5A CORTE DI ASSISE di Roma, PROCEDIMENTO 60/85 e 61/86 c/Delle Chiaie + altri udienza del 3/02/1988 di Stefano Delle Chiaie.
52 A. Giannuli, Relazione di Perizia, Tribunale di Milano Ufficio Istruzione, procedimento penale n. 2/92F RGIG e n. 9/92 ARGPM. 1997, p. 197.
53 See next section.
54 Delle Chiaie, L’aquila e il condor, 233.
55 Ibid., 236.
56 Ravelli and Cento Bull, ‘The Pinochet Regime and the Trans-Nationalization of Italian Neo-Fascism’.
57 Tribunale di Bologna Ufficio Istruzione. Interrogatorio di Maurizio Giorgi. n. 344/80. 4/05/82.
the Argentinean government in 2010, acted as coordinators. The Battalion 601 was an ‘Argentine army intelligence apparatus’ that had collaborated with the Chilean DINA’s clandestine activities within the context of the infamous Operation Condor, launched on Chile’s initiative. The connection between the Italians and Schettino (and hence the Argentinean junta) is therefore consistent with their previous collaboration with the DINA, and it points again at Confidential’s political dimension. Some articles are particularly illustrative of its versatile role in consolidating the network’s relations with specific political actors.

In this sense, it is worth mentioning a vicious report on Amnesty International’s work, published in the first Confidential issue in 1979, with a telling focus on its ‘interference’ in the Argentinean situation. The article presents the NGO as an ideologically biased organization, whose tendentious reports predominantly targeted non-communist countries. Amnesty’s human rights campaign on Argentina is analysed as a key case study to demonstrate its skewed approach. In particular, the author Marc Orens ridiculed the campaign against the military junta and sarcastically wondered whether Amnesty’s opposition to Moscow as the next Olympic games host would be as strong as their opposition to Argentina as the FIFA World Cup host. When campaigning for the liberation of political prisoners in Argentina, Orens argued, the organization should not protect ‘terrorists’, nor should it question the regime’s political, economic and social policies. Evidently, Orens echoes the junta’s crusade against any criticism of its performance. After Amnesty International released a damning country report in 1977, the regime needed to clean up its image in the eyes of the international community: considering the link between Confidential’s Argentinean editorial team (Schettino) and the military junta, it is reasonable to argue that Orens’ article was essentially a propaganda service offered to the regime. This corroborates the thesis that some nodes of the neo-fascist network relied on Confidential to expand and strengthen their relationships with other political actors and to defend their reputation in Europe.

It is worth noting that only Milá mentions de Borbón-Parma in his account, signalling him as the head of the IREP without further explaining his involvement. Judicial investigations confirmed that he was one of the IREP’s founders, as well as its main sponsor and spokesperson. Nonetheless, when interrogated by the Brigade Criminelle in 1981, de Borbón-Parma was apparently poorly informed about the IREP’s transnational relations and denied any connection with the Spanish edition of Confidential. He clarified that the Institute’s main task was to ‘analyse social and political situations in France and abroad’, and that it generally subscribed to the right-wing tradition, although not exclusively.

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58 D. Martinez, ‘El Fin Del Secreto En El Batallón 601’, Pagina 12. https://www.pagina12.com.ar/diario/elpais/1-138988-2010-01-24.html (24 January 2010, accessed 1/03/2019).
59 J. P. McSherry, Predatory States: Operation Condor and Covert War in Latin America (Lanham, MD 2015), 7.
60 ‘Amnesty International et les idéologies’, Confidential, No. 1 (Winter 1979).
61 M. Feitlowitz, A Lexicon of Terror: Argentina and the Legacies of Torture (Oxford 1998), 7.
62 UCIGOS Roma. Nota sulla missione.
63 Ibid. (Annex 21).
Confidentiel was the key means through which the IREP developed its analysis, which, as he underlined, was by no means translated into political activism. Most of his deposition was devoted to downplaying Confidentiel’s transnational dimension and to denying his alleged relations with the Spanish editors, including Milá.⁶⁴ The existence of a Spanish edition of the magazine, he argued, was merely due to the IREP’s critical financial conditions: in an attempt to rescue the Institute, Confidentiel’s copyright was sold to a group of Spanish individuals. This was a mere transaction, which in his words did not involve any collaboration with the Spanish editors.

Given the pressure posed by the ongoing investigations into the synagogue bombing, de Borbón-Parma’s reticence in admitting his relationship with Milá, as well as Confidentiel’s transnational dimension, is unsurprising. While his testimony does not clarify why he was involved in the project, his existing relationship with Delle Chiaie and Milá, culminating with their collaboration in the Montejurra attack, allows us to outline an explanation. Montejurra was the peak of an unprecedented mobilization of transnational activists prepared to defend ‘the last bastion of authoritarianism in Europe’⁶⁵ and de Borbón-Parma emerged as the leading figure of this desperate fight. This is evident from the words of both Delle Chiaie and Milá – both praised his leadership skills and his European reputation. His ‘European hub’⁶⁶ role survived the fall of the sanctuary: his connections with French, Spanish and Italian militants proved pivotal in keeping the network alive after the democratic transition and the dispersion of its members across Europe and Latin America. Confidentiel provided the medium through which these relations were maintained: Borbón-Parma had both the connections and the potential financial resources to support the launch of a transnational magazine. Notwithstanding his – understandable – reticence in admitting his role and connections, these elements clarify his crucial involvement in Confidentiel.

The Paris Editorial Team

Confidentiel was launched in France in 1979, with the Paris branch providing the main hub of interaction between the individuals involved in the project. A great part of the Spanish, Italian and Argentinean editions, which were launched after 1979, comprised of translations of the original French articles. The Paris editorial team comprised individuals from different European countries: Gérald Penciolelli and Jean-Marc Brissaud (France), Paulo de Castro⁶⁷ (Portugal) and de Borbón-Parma (Spain). Catherine Barnay, a former Ordre Nouveau activist, also stood among the IREP founders, as well as forming part of the editorial team.

⁶⁴ Ibid.
⁶⁵ Albanese and Del Hierro, Transnational Fascism, 153.
⁶⁶ This expression highlights the relevance of personal connections to transnational history approaches and was coined by Mammone to define the role of Maurice Bardèche’s thought in revitalizing Fascism at a European level between the 1950s and the 1960s. (See Mammone, ‘Revitalizing and De-Territorializing Fascism in the 1950s’, 311.)
⁶⁷ De Castro was a Portuguese national, whom the investigators labelled as a ‘right-wing’ individual, with rumours of extremism charges pending for him in Portugal (UCIGOS Roma, Nota sulla missione, Annex 7).
Both Brissaud and Penciolelli were former *Ordre Nouveau* activists, and both had a background in journalism. While the Italian component of the *Confidentiel* project was linked to the neo-fascist movement AN, the French one was linked to *Ordre Nouveau*. This was a far-right, anti-Marxist organization founded in France in 1969, whose main goal was ‘to unite the diverse forces of the far right within a broad-based “front”’, ideally imitating the Italian MSI. While promoting French nationalism, it also campaigned for European unity, and had a widespread transnational network of contacts, which included Italian neo-fascist activists, Croatian Ustaschas and members of the military in Uruguay. Although the organization was dissolved in 1973, its transnational contacts and de Borbón-Parma’s European connections explain Brissaud, Penciolelli and Barnay’s involvement in *Confidentiel*. Brissaud joined *Ordre Nouveau* in 1972 and oversaw propaganda activities for the movement until its dissolution. Penciolelli, a ‘particularly active far right militant’, had been a member of *Ordre Nouveau*’s National Council in 1970, and later of the *Front National* Central Committee, from which he was expelled in 1975. Penciolelli admitted to having met Milá before 1981 at some ‘public meetings’ in Madrid but denied any personal connection to him, evidently rejecting any allegation of involvement in the synagogue bombing.

The Paris team’s testimony portrays *Confidentiel* mainly as a domestic, cultural project. According to Penciolelli, the IREP’s main purpose was ‘to compare documents, analyses and personalities who shared a political stance about European and international issues’. *Confidentiel* was the medium to circulate these analyses. Penciolelli decisively underlined that the IREP was a mere research institute and not a political party, which was substantiated by its engagement with a variety of individuals with distinct views. Brissaud and Barnay echoed this point, with the former insisting on the ‘objectivity’ of their editorial approach, and the latter underlining the ‘cultural’ features of the project, downplaying the political implications of its analysis. Both denied any direct or personal connection to Milá, insisting that they had never met him. Furthermore, they vigorously distanced themselves from the foreign editions of the magazine. According to the interrogation documents, these operated independently from the French one: they had merely sold the copyright to the Spanish and Italian editions to increase ‘the magazine’

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68 UCIGOS Roma, Nota sulla missione.
69 J. G. Shields, *The Extreme Right in France: From Pétain to Le Pen* (London 2007), 159.
70 Ibid., 161.
71 N. Lebourg, J. Preda and J. Beauregard, *Aux racines du FN L’histoire du mouvement Ordre nouveau*, Fondation Jean Jaurès, https://www.jean-jaures.org/publication/aux-racines-du-fn-lhistoire-du-mouvement-ordre-nouveau/ (2014, accessed 25/01/2019), 39–40.
72 UCIGOS Roma. Nota sulla missione (Annex 5).
73 Picco, *Liaisons dangereuses*, 267.
74 Gérard Penciolelli, verbale di interrogatorio.
75 Ibid.
76 Ibid.
77 Ibid.
78 Catherine Barnay, verbale di interrogatorio, 10/07/1981 (Annex 23).
reputation’. Furthermore, the French editors denied any connection to Delle Chiaie: they admitted knowledge of his political activism but underlined that this was only due to having read his name in the papers.

The authorities also heard Eduard Six, the IREP’s financial consultant, who claimed to not to know of the existence of foreign editions of Confidentiel. His testimony helped clarify the circulation of the French edition: the magazine was mostly sold to around 800 subscribers. The few books published by the IREP had little success, thereby contributing to its dire financial condition. This was also confirmed by de Borbón-Parma, who declared that a few months before his deposition (1981) the team had decided to suspend the publication of Confidentiel, given its scant revenue.80

Evidently, the depositions of the Paris team and de Borbón-Parma are in stark contrast with the accounts of Delle Chiaie and Milá, as they present Confidentiel as a domestic, cultural project that had no political ambition other than developing an original analysis of contemporary geo-political issues. However, Italian and French investigations undoubtedly show that Confidentiel was not a domestic project, and that there were close links between all its editorial seats.81 Firstly, the authorities reconstructed the interactions between the Paris team, Italian neo-fascists and Milá, which revolved around a Pizzeria known as a meeting point for right-wing activists in Paris. Secondly, during the raid of the Paris IREP branch the authorities retrieved an address book including names of Italian neo-fascist activists and addresses located in Spain, the US and several other countries, thereby corroborating the transnational dimension of its activities. Thirdly, the IREP Italian branch, which coordinated the publication of Confidentiel’s Italian edition, was raided in 1980 by local authorities, revealing frequent correspondence between its director Adriano Tilgher (AN) and members of the Paris editorial team.82 This element further clarified that Confidentiel operated as a transnational magazine and that there were constant contacts between distinct editorial offices. The raid of the IREP Italian branch also demonstrated that both the Italian and Argentinean editions circulated only via subscription and that copies of the magazine had been sent to several embassies based in Rome, as well as notable Italian politicians and members of conservative sectors, in the hope of persuading them to take out a subscription. Letters between Tilgher and potential authors illustrate the attempt at widening the network via Confidentiel: relations with right-wing intellectuals and journalists were established in the name of a common cultural project. Finally, with reference to the investigations run in Paris, the Italian authorities pointed out that these

allow for the identification of a widespread and branched out structure … characterized by a common denominator: the activism of its actors within far-right organizations. It cannot be ruled out that such structure, widely funded by prince Sixto Enrique de Borbón-Parma,

79 Brissaud Jean-Marc, verbale di interrogatorio.
80 UCIGOS Roma, Nota sulla missione.
81 Ibid.
82 Sequestri A vol 12 cart 39–40 materiale sequestrato ad Adriano Tilgher dalla DIGOS di Roma il 17 settembre 1980.
covered a central entity managing international subversive activities under the pretence of cultural and commercial activities.\textsuperscript{83}

We can therefore argue that the creation of \textit{Confidentiel} was functional to its founders’ political activism, in that it justified movements and relations between militants across countries. As recalled by Milá:

The fact that there were four national editions enhanced contacts and movements, and the fact that apparently [sic] this was a magazine and not a party, facilitated the access to any organization with your business card … This apparently confused situation was very clearly defined for us, but for the media and state intelligence it was an opaque plot, very difficult to penetrate.\textsuperscript{84}

This is well illustrated by a US intelligence report forwarded to Italian intelligence services in 1982,\textsuperscript{85} which reconstructs Delle Chiaie’s movements and activities in Bolivia. Until 1981, he frequently travelled to ‘supervise the magazine affairs in France and Italy and … extensively across Latin America’. Hence, \textit{Confidentiel} was evidently used as a \textit{passe-partout} that allowed the network’s nodes to move across countries and establish relations in order to maintain its transnational reach, in the hope that this would have fostered the creation of a political movement in the near future. Alongside the IREP’s dire financial condition, the increasing judicial pressure on the French, Spanish and Italian editorial teams explain the decision to cease publication of the magazine and to dedicate their political efforts to Latin America.

\textbf{A Realist and European Magazine}

The previous sections showed that \textit{Confidentiel} served as a key medium to revive the neo-fascist transnational network and ideally to relaunch the transnational convergence symbolized by the Montejurra mobilization. This highlights \textit{Confidentiel}’s instrumental role: we will nonetheless assess its political analysis and the extent to which this represented a political novelty, in order to further corroborate our thesis that it formed mainly a survival tool.

The editors present \textit{Confidentiel}\textsuperscript{86} as a ‘realist magazine’, aimed at developing ‘a rigorous and lucid gaze upon the contemporary world’ by shedding light on ‘facts and ideas which, despite not being subjected to official censorship, are nonetheless little known, if not unknown, to the audience’.\textsuperscript{87} \textit{Confidentiel} claims to be a non-mainstream magazine focused on geo-politics, aimed at breaking the barriers that allegedly limited ‘the reach of

\textsuperscript{83} UCIGOS Roma, Nota sulla missione.

\textsuperscript{84} E. Milá, Ultramemorias (VIII de X) Visicitudes políticas en la transición.

\textsuperscript{85} SISDE, ‘Da servizio Americano’, ST 129, 23 April 1982.

\textsuperscript{86} As the French and Italian versions were not released simultaneously, the issue numbers do not always correspond. To avoid confusion, the titles are referenced in the original language.

\textsuperscript{87} ‘La redaction. Une nouvelle revue’, \textit{Confidentiel}, No. 1 (Winter 1979), 2.
Europeans’ gaze’. In line with the French editorial team’s testimony, the magazine did not feature any radical political message, nor referred to its founders’ political background. Penciolelli argued before the investigators that its analytical approach was ‘more academic than journalistic’, in that all the sources were accurately verified; such a rigorous approach appealed to readers with ‘different political opinions’. However, the individual trajectories underpinning the Confidentiel project evidently invalidate its editors’ claims of a neutral and apolitical approach. The magazine was created by a group of far-right individuals, hence Confidentiel needs to be placed and analysed within the context of the European right-wing milieu. The focus and tone of its editorials and articles echo in fact the fascist pan-European vocation, at that time vigorously relaunched by the Nouvelle Droite. However, Confidentiel’s approach often entails a rather generic analysis of key geo-political issues that merely reiterates the call for a sovereign and independent Europe already circulating within the right-wing milieu. Therefore, Confidentiel does not represent a political novelty. Nonetheless, the way its editors embraced the ND meta-political turn and used the magazine to support their allies outside Europe provides further illustration of the network’s survival strategy. The dominant themes emerging across the magazine’s eight issues are the analysis of Europe’s situation in the Cold War context, a recurring critique of Soviet hegemony (often developed through a focus on extra-European geo-political affairs), and a moderate critique of the US foreign policy. Significantly, the focus on extra-European affairs often covers areas where the network operated, such as Spain and Latin America (as in the case of Orens’ article on Argentina), to support its allies by countering negative propaganda.

The first editorial emphasizes the magazine’s ‘European’ stance on the ongoing bipolar clash:

Neither Marxist utopia, nor liberal idealism have managed or will manage to help us. We believe that the research path needed today must be empirical in its spirit, and European in its dimension. This was our ambition in creating Confidentiel, a magazine both realist and European.89

East and West, argues Mario Tilgher (director of the Italian edition and father of Adriano), embody two apparently opposed ideologies that are ultimately identical, although the methods employed to assert their supremacy might be different.90 Confidentiel’s call for a European dimension did not translate into a thorough elaboration: notwithstanding a positive assessment of political, military and economic integration as a response to the two blocs’ hegemony, the values and principles through which integration should be implemented are vaguely developed. Crucially, Confidentiel was launched in 1979, when the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan officially marked the end of détente. The magazine offered a rather critical stance on détente, which the first Confidentiel

88 Gérald Penciolelli, verbale di interrogatorio.
89 ‘Qu’est-ce que Confidentiel’, Confidentiel, No. 5 (Spring 1980), 5.
90 M. Tilgher, ‘Il ricatto sul pianeta’, Confidentiel, No. 5 (Spring 1982), 29.
The last editorial blamed European great powers for passively accepting the détente doctrine, thereby downplaying the threats posed by the East and crucially overlooking the continent’s fragility in terms of defence. ‘It is time to face the reality, which is that the Soviet Union is a political and military threatening power, therefore “peaceful coexistence” or “détente” are to the exclusive advantage of the URSS’, the editors argue. The proposed solution was for European people and politicians to ‘resist and defend the continent’, but the drivers of this resistance strategy were not clearly enunciated. Tilgher praised the promotion of single nations’ pride and natural resources, which would then foster the reaffirmation of a European civilization opposed to the armaments race imposed by the two blocs. The author did not clarify how a coexistence of nationalism and European integration would be possible, nor did he discuss the origins of European civilization. The analysis developed by Confidence lacks a thorough elaboration of Europe’s ideal features and values. The European dimension, apparently crucial to the magazine’s creators, is merely conceptualized by contrasting it to the bipolar order. As this excerpt shows, Europe is depicted as a spiritual entity, opposed to the materialism of both Marxism and liberalism, but it remains a rather utopian dimension, which exists primarily as a negation of the two blocs’ values and strategies:

Europe has a universal mission to accomplish, which is to make possible an option beyond the Manichean alternative United States/Soviet Union, which is often presented as a fake alternative. Such an ambition is the measure of the past and future of Europe. It requires will, rigour, and continuity of both ideas and actions. It implies first of all a sentiment of belonging to a historical and geographical entity which could become an economic, political and military community, should its people desire it.

The recurring references to an independent Europe, as well as the rejection of both Marxism and liberalism, echo the ND’s ‘Pan-European vocation’. The ND originated in France as an attempt to revitalize the right by countering ‘the cultural ascendancy of the left’ after 1968. Its founder Alain de Benoist argued that consensus was pivotal to gain respectability and challenge the alleged cultural hegemony of the left. Accordingly, the right needed to re-think its strategies: neither ‘violent confrontation’ nor ‘parliamentary politics’ seemed to pay off in terms of gaining respectability. The European right needed a meta-political turn, which required dropping the more radical instances of the revolutionary right, ‘such as extreme chauvinism, excessive militarism, quasi-mystical leader cult, the totalitarian one-party state and police brutality’ in order to

91 ‘La redaction. Une nouvelle revue’, 2.
92 Tilgher, ‘Il ricatto sul pianeta’, 53.
93 ‘La redaction. Absence de l’Europe’, Confidential, No. 5 (Spring 1980), 6.
94 Bar-On, ‘Fascism to the Nouvelle Droite’, 327.
95 Shields, The Extreme Right in France, 143.
96 T. Bar-On, Where Have All the Fascists Gone? (London 2016), 30.
make right-wing ideas ‘more palatable to French and European public opinion’. The only way to counter the marginalization faced by the revolutionary right was to re-negotiate its continuity with the inter-war experience by launching an adaptation process that would obliterate any references to the past, including nationalism (hence the focus on the European dimension), relying on cultural tools to gain respectability. The ND’s pan-European mission was inspired by the post-1945 elaboration of a Pan-European fascist doctrine, which was regarded as vital in revitalize fascism after the defeat in the Second World War. The European dimension was key to fascism’s de-territorialization post war: a sovereign Europe, independent from both the West and East, represented a valid response to the endless clash between Marxism and liberalism, and was crucially a non-nationalist dimension. While Confidetiel’s call for an independent and sovereign Europe is evidently aligned with the ND’s Pan-European dimension, at times it significantly departs from its claimed dismissal of nationalist stances. This is the case for the aforementioned article by Tilgher, which puts an important emphasis on ‘national pride’ as a key driver to revitalize Europe. At the same time, Confidetiel’s editors undermine the call for an independent Europe by acknowledging that European defence, in the immediate future, could only be secured within NATO, ‘the lesser evil’, according to an article published in the Italian edition in 1982. The vague reference to Europe’s spiritual dimension contrasts with the ND’s more precise ‘celebration of a lost Indo-European heritage’, supposedly at the core of its European understanding. These inconsistencies, and the decision not to delve into the drivers of European identity can be understood through the editors’ declared intention to appeal to a wide range of readers. Nonetheless, in light of their transnational trajectories, Confidetiel’s ambivalence can be more coherently interpreted as evidence of the fact that the magazine was not the medium for a detailed academic discussion between geo-political experts, but rather the means through which the network’s survival strategy was implemented. Milá and Delle Chiaie’s accounts reveal that the magazine was launched to support a vaguely defined political project: clearly, Confidetiel was a work in progress, mainly allowing the network to maintain its transnational reach in Europe, after the loss of the Spanish sanctuary. Therefore, since geo-political analysis was a means and not an ultimate goal, its ambivalence and superficial analytical approach are far from being surprising.

Despite the inconsistency of its pro-European stance, it can be argued that Confidetiel’s editors evidently embraced the ND’s meta-political turn. Importantly, one of de Benoist’s points of reference in arguing for the failure of violent confrontation

97 Ibid., 31.
98 Bar-On, ‘Fascism to the Nouvelle Droite’.
99 Tilgher, ‘Il ricatto sul pianeta’, 52–3.
100 G. Gentile, ‘Europa terra di nessuno’, Confidetiel, No. 5 (Spring 1985), 64.
101 Evidently, this echoes Evola’s consideration that in light of the Soviet threat, the US could still be considered as ‘the lesser evil’, although ‘the West does not represent a superior ideal’ (Ferraresi, ‘The Radical Right in Postwar Italy’, 85).
102 Shields, The Extreme Right in France, 147.
was the Italian ON103 and its terrorist downward spiral, a trajectory well known to the Italian nodes of the network. As Milá admits, after the collapse of Franco’s regime, and with the increasing state repression, ‘operating in Europe turned out to be impossible’.104 The only strategy to be successfully implemented in Europe was therefore a purely ‘defensive’ one. By obliterating the subversive instances that had characterized the network’s past performance, Confidentiel allowed its members to remain active by establishing and maintaining contacts with the right-wing milieu, at the same time conforming to the makeover of the right initiated by the ND. The network’s notable members, such as Milá, Borbón-Parma and Delle Chiaie, chose not to be at the forefront of the project, selecting instead ‘authoritative’ voices that justified Confidentiel’s mission without attracting questions about their political background. This choice evidently recalls the ND’s strategy, and the role played by the think-thank GRECE105 in driving the meta-political turn. GRECE’s composition is illustrative of both the ND’s quest for respectability and, at the same time, of the meta-political turn’s ambiguity. While its founding committee included respectable professionals such as doctors and academics, among its founders there were also at least forty ‘superannuated nostalgics’, whose background did not reflect the ND’s claimed distance from the revolutionary radical right milieu.106 Hence, what was presented as a turn, can be more pragmatically understood as a ‘makeover’.107 The individuals involved in Confidentiel shared a far-right background, hence fitting Shields’ definition of ‘superannuated nostalgics’. They strategically implemented a ‘makeover’, by involving a number of academics and journalists in Confidentiel with a conservative (hence ‘respectable’) background, whose expertise in a specific geo-political area corroborated the magazine’s intention to ‘research, compare, study and understand’.108 The contribution to several issues of the magazine by Geoffrey Stewart-Smith, a British Conservative politician, through his Foreign Affairs Research Institute, is illustrative in this sense. Furthermore, French journalist Bernard Hamel collaborated in a few issues: his expertise in South-East Asian affairs evidently substantiated Confidentiel’s geo-political focus. On the other hand, a few contributors were far-right sympathizers, like the French activist Roland Gaucher.109 This is also the case with Pierre Hofstetter, an openly anti-Semitic110 Swiss journalist who defended the apartheid regime in South Africa.111 Finally, it is worth recalling that Confidentiel was officially the output of the IREP, which on paper was a research institute on European issues, hence resembling GRECE’s mission. Its existence was evidently

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103 Bar-On, ‘Fascism to the Nouvelle Droite’, 338.
104 E. Milá, Ultramemorias (VIII de X) Visicitudes políticas en la transición (18ª parte).
105 Groupement de Recherche et Etudes pour la Civilisation Europeenne, founded in 1968.
106 Shields, The Extreme Right in France, 145.
107 Ibid.
108 ‘La redaction. Une nouvelle revue’, 2.
109 P. Milza, L’Europe en chemise noire. Les extrêmes droites européennes de 1945 à aujourd’hui (Paris 2002), 139.
110 ‘French Nationalists in Disarray’. Patterns of Prejudice, Vol. 1, No. 3 (1967), 10–11.
111 Mammone, Transnational Neofascism in France and Italy, 101.
supposed to boost *Confidentiel*’s prestige: a magazine edited by an allegedly renowned research institute was to be considered far more authoritative than one run by a handful of unknown individuals. The fact that copies of the magazines were sent to diplomats, as previously mentioned, formed a clear attempt to establish the reputation of *Confidentiel* outside the right-wing niche, and to exert some sort of cultural hegemony, as praised by the ND. Therefore, the ND’s meta-political turn had a significant impact on the network’s survival strategy. On the other hand, we saw that the magazine was distributed only via subscription: this evidently limited its circulation and raises further questions on its claimed intent to reach a wide readership.

Despite its emphasis on the European dimension, *Confidentiel* was mainly vocal in attacking the Eastern bloc. Alongside the recurring portrayal of Europe as a passive victim of two equal calamities, *Confidentiel*’s editors chose to publish articles that could reiterate the portrayal of the Soviet Union as the absolute evil. In the second issue (1980), Hamel, who had authored two books on the Cambodian Civil War, reconstructs the key developments in the Indochinese wars.\(^\text{112}\) His outlook on the events is illustrative of *Confidentiel*’s anti-communism and benevolent criticism of the US foreign policy. The US, according to Hamel, intervened rather naively in the Vietnam War, simply believing in the fairness of the cause. Nonetheless, it eventually fell victim to a blaming campaign orchestrated by the Vietnamese communist forces, and ‘endlessly magnified by European and American liberal-progressive media’,\(^\text{113}\) which overshadowed the real causes of the conflict, namely North-Vietnamese expansionism, by simply presenting the conflict as ‘unfair’. Vietnamese (and Cambodian) communist forces are depicted as the only villains: Indochinese populations, argues Hamel, prefer non-communist, even authoritarian rule. Crucially, this article is followed by a piece written by the London Foreign Affairs Research Institute, evocatively titled ‘The Final Solution’. The article, introduced by a brief editorial note, focuses on the victims of communism in the world: ‘a scourge of humanity’, with the Vietnamese and Cambodian tragedies merely representing the tip of the iceberg.\(^\text{114}\) The evocative title is illustrative of another recurring element in *Confidentiel*’s analysis: the allegation that mainstream media and Western politicians had constantly downplayed the Soviet Union’s misconduct across the globe. This attitude, also evident in the abovementioned article on Amnesty International’s campaign in Argentina, reflects the editors’ claim to represent an alternative media outlet, strongly opposed to the ‘conformism’ of the ‘mass-media’.\(^\text{115}\) To some extent, this approach echoes de Benoist’s call for a meta-political engagement: to counter leftist hegemony, the tenets of its dominant ideas had to be identified first,\(^\text{116}\) and eventually replaced by the ND’s agenda. *Confidentiel* is consistent with this call: by emphasizing its non-mainstream focus, it denounces recurring myths (such as détente) and ‘fake’ narratives spread by the mass media. A further example is an article on the

\(^\text{112}\) B. Hamel, ‘Il dramma indocinese:origine ed evoluzione’, *Confidentiel*, No. 2 (Winter 1980), 2.
\(^\text{113}\) Ibid., 35.
\(^\text{114}\) Editorial team, ‘La soluzione finale [introduction]’, *Confidentiel*, No. 2 (Winter 1980), 47.
\(^\text{115}\) ‘La redaction. Une nouvelle revue’, 2.
\(^\text{116}\) Mammone, *Transnational Neofascism in France and Italy*, 158.
‘Allende myth’, written by Pascal Gauchon, a militant of the Parti des Force Nouvelles, which aims at debunking the mainstream celebration of Salvador Allende as the martyr par excellence of the 1973 military coup. Allende’s electoral coalition (Unidad Popular) is portrayed as the main culprit for the Chilean crisis, due to the pre-dominance of the ‘powerful and ultra-Stalinist’ Communist Party within the alliance. Accordingly, Allende did not reform Chile, but rather attempted to establish a collectivist state, in close alliance with Cuba and the MIR, a leftist guerrilla movement. His plan entailed a progressive repression of media and political freedom: according to Gauchon, a few days before the coup, the army uncovered a government plot to physically eliminate the opposition. After extensively analysing Allende’s ‘misdeeds’, Gauchon concludes by presenting the 1973 military coup as an ‘uprising’, which merely ‘brought to an end a regime on the verge of collapse’. Besides providing an alternative reconstruction of the Chilean tragedy, which overlooks the US’s interference with Chilean affairs and the bloodshed triggered by Pinochet’s coup, this article further demonstrates that the network used Confidentiel to counter negative propaganda on its allies. As mentioned, Chile was one of the sanctuaries welcoming Delle Chiaie and his comrades in the late 1970s. Therefore, they loyally supported the junta’s attempts at boosting its reputation in Europe in the early 1980s. Gauchon’s vicious attack on Allende’s government is illustrative in this sense. An article condemning the Spanish democratic transition, presented as an actual coup d’état (allegedly allowing for Soviet infiltration in the country), follows a similar approach. On the one hand, it counters the mainstream narrative of the transition as a positive turn. On the other hand, it clearly sends a message of support to the regime nostalgics, who allegedly represented ‘a wide opinion movement’ repressed by the democratic government and the monarchy. Evidently, such an ‘opinion movement’ coincides with the network’s former allies under Franco: despite the failed attempts at hindering the transition and the eventual collapse of Francoism, loyalty remained. Hence, Confidentiel was once again used to maintain and consolidate personal and political links across national boundaries.

**Conclusion**

The history of post-war European fascism has been marked by the necessity to reinvent itself so as not to disappear from the political scenario. The 1950s’ pan-European turn aimed at revitalizing fascism after the disastrous Second World defeat, and the post-1968 meta-political turn promoted a makeover to effectively counter ‘leftist hegemony’: these were evidently survival strategies in a bipolar context that had allegedly marginalized the far-right after 1945. The neo-fascist transnational network, and the history

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117 P. Gauchon, ‘Le mythe Allende’, Confidentiel, No. 5 (Spring 1980).
118 Movimento de Izquierda Revolucionaria.
119 S. Delle Chiaie, L’aquila e il condor, 236–7.
120 ‘L’Espagne a la dérive’, Confidentiel, No. 5 (Spring 1980).
121 We use this comprehensive term in light of the previously mentioned historical continuity between fascism and neo-fascism.
of some of its nodes, is further illustrative of this physiological survival need: the Montejurra attack, carried out by a squad comprising several European activists, is emblematic in this sense. The fall of the last right-wing sanctuary in Europe deprived the network of a pivotal and friendly meeting point, where its identity was not a source of political marginalization. Although Latin America became an alternative sanctuary, the network hoped to maintain a relationship with Europe. Personal relations sit at the core of networks’ survival, therefore a medium allowing for interaction in the continent was needed: the network conformed itself to the ND meta-political turn, embracing its quest for respectability via cultural means to maintain a presence in Europe. Hence, CONFIDENTIEL originated from the network’s survival needs: it was the medium to preserve and expand its contacts in Europe, whilst also collaborating with right-wing regimes in Latin America.

CONFIDENTIEL dealt with geo-political issues, as claimed by its creators. Without considering their personal trajectories, the magazine could be understood as an attempt at geo-political analysis driven by an approximate political intent, which broadly embraced neo-fascism’s pan-European aspiration and equidistance from the two superpowers. However, we highlighted here that the vagueness of CONFIDENTIEL’s analysis and political message was the precise consequence of the pressing survival need lying at the core of its creation. Analysing contemporary geo-political issues was not the ultimate goal of its creators, but rather a means to maintain their network alive. This is evident also with regard to its readership: notwithstanding the attempts at attracting a ‘respectable’ readership (such as diplomats across the Western bloc), the decision to circulate the magazine only via subscription evidently hampered any attempt at reaching a wide public. This does not imply that CONFIDENTIEL did not voice its creators’ ideas: several articles exemplify the network’s transnational relations, as shown in the cases of Spain, Argentina and Chile. Furthermore, the emphasis on the European dimension genuinely echoes neo-fascism’s ambition to represent a third force in the bipolar context. Nonetheless, its need for survival proved far more pressing than the search for a comprehensive and innovative analytical approach. As some of its creators admitted in their autobiographies, CONFIDENTIEL was supposedly the first step to recreate a political movement in the future, which would have allowed them ‘to return to Europe’. This project was never realized: the political background of individuals such as Delle Chiaie and Milá inevitably drew the attention of the authorities, eventually disrupting the magazine’s activities. If CONFIDENTIEL was a short-lived experiment, it is nonetheless telling of the dynamism and resilience of the neo-fascist transnational network after the mid-1970s, whose story in the final Cold War decades is still under-researched. Most of the individuals animating this project had an impressive record of movements and relations across national boundaries, hence representing a vivid example of fascism’s transnational reach in the Cold War. As Snyder argues, ‘unless we attempt to see the Cold War transnationally as well, we will miss the people and ideas that are not contained by national borders’.122 While fascism was arguably a marginalized actor within most national

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122 S. B. Snyder, ‘Bringing the Transnational In: Writing Human Rights into the International History of the Cold War’, Diplomacy & Statecraft, Vol. 24, No. 1 (2013), 100–16, 102.
contexts after 1945, the network’s nodes life stories and their impressive transnational trajectories reveal that it was far from being dead. Therefore, our focus on *Confidentiel* as a transnational project contributes to illuminating an overlooked part of the Cold War’s history, namely the persistence of fascism in Europe after 1945.

**Declaration of Conflicting Interests**
The author declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship and/or publication of this article.

**Funding**
The author received no financial support for the research, authorship and/or publication of this article.

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