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Anti-Semitism and the French “New Right”

Paris

On November 4, 1978, with the best intentions in the world, the weekly *L'Express* published an interview with Darquier de Pellepoix, former Commissioner General for Jewish Affairs in the Pétain government. Readers may remember that Darquier was appointed to this post as successor to another professional anti-Semite, Xavier Vallat, whom the Occupation authorities had found insufficiently effective. Subsequently, Darquier was sentenced to death, in absentia; he tranquilly whiled away some 20 years in Madrid, where he was protected by the Franco regime and, according to his own statement, enjoyed amicable relations with the French Embassy. Although a commentary accompanied his remarks in *L'Express*, many people questioned the usefulness of their being published at all. One distinguished contributor to the magazine, Raymond Aron, had been away when the interview appeared, and upon his return stated that he would not have favored its publication.

Darquier's anti-Semitic remarks contained a degree of violence that over the years had almost been forgotten. Their impact has been considerable, in that they have reinforced the anti-Semitic current that is manifest in French society; also, because of their violence, they came as something of a surprise.

No one should entertain any illusions: French anti-Semitism has never died, any more than have other forms of racism—directed against blacks or Arabs, for example. However, in the postwar years it was difficult for anti-Semites to vent their feelings freely. Any excesses were looked on with disfavor

even by anti-Semites, who did not want to be associated with memories of the atrocious racial crimes committed during the war. But years have passed, indignation has had time to subside, and today one has the impression that somehow anti-Semites have been waiting for a sign to resume their activities—overtly, that is. So, as soon as they observed that they could speak openly—though at the price of some protest—and even could congratulate themselves on what had been done to Jews during the Occupation and that it was possible with impunity to comment that in Auschwitz “they killed nothing but lice,” they realized that a page had been turned, that the time had come—or, rather, returned—when they could again speak out.

Laws now in effect in France do not, of course, permit publication of material such as one used to find in the anti-Semitic sheets of the prewar and Occupation years. Today, “incitement to racial hatred” is a crime punishable by law. Accordingly, anti-Semitism has reemerged primarily in terms of attitudes, in talk rather than in writing (unless clandestine). One notably significant instance occurred recently on the medical faculty of the University of Paris. In a speech, the dean of the faculty, Professor Maurer, interjected totally extraneous remarks in which he recalled having been a member of the S.S. He had not abandoned the S.S. ideal, he added, and he still favored a social organization based on elites. Thus it became public knowledge that a medical college had put an erstwhile collaborator at its head, whose past activities were known to those

who appointed him since he had been officially pardoned and released.

Professor Milliez, who played an outstanding part in the Resistance, has indicated that, in 1945, together with his colleague Valéry-Radot, he had taken steps to win freedom for their former student, Maurer, who had never denounced them during their Resistance activities. Milliez said, further, that they had the young man's promise that he would never try to obtain a university post. In his statement, which he released to the press, Professor Milliez added: "Of the people who acted to assure [Maurer's] career, some adduced as their reasons the young surgeon's gifts and his pardon; others were not shocked by his past, and even admired his Iron Cross with its diamond stars." Fortified by such support and borne up by current anti-Semitism, Maurer judged that, even with his post at forfeit, he could finally glory in his past.

An incident such as this seems more serious than all the attacks that have been made since 1977—against *Le Monde*, which is charged with being in Jewish hands, and against synagogues and cemeteries—with perhaps, the exception of the damage done the Jewish student hostel in the Latin Quarter, for which a group calling itself the League of French Fighters Against the Jewish Occupation claimed credit. In this incident, a bomb exploded at dinner time and wounded several people. Since the P.L.O. knew that suspicion would immediately fall on it, its Paris representative promptly and unequivocally condemned the attack. There are no grounds for thinking that the P.L.O. was in any way responsible for it.

Signs of a recrudescence of anti-Semitism are sporadic, yes, but disturbing. Disturbing not because they point to the existence of fascist groups in France—that has long been known—but because now these groups are moving into action more readily and more often. There are also indications that groups may be forming in which criminals find a haven. Clandestine movements—one calling itself Commando Delta and another known as Police Honor (this was the name of a group

of Parisian Resistance police during the Occupation)—have claimed responsibility for two murders: of Henri Curiel, an Egyptian Jew long associated with the Egyptian Communist party, whom a newsman had clumsily and falsely accused of being the pivot of terrorism in Europe; and of Lucien Goldmann, a former anarchist, whom an assize court had acquitted of the crime with which he had been charged. Henri Curiel was murdered in his own apartment in full daylight; Lucien Goldmann in full daylight in the street. These killings are going unpunished to this day, and the French police have not greatly exerted themselves to find the killers.

Can one then speak of a renaissance of anti-Semitism in France? As I have said, it is not a matter of a renaissance but of a continuation. Apart from the two crimes just mentioned, it is a question of incidents that are more premonitory than intrinsically grave, more foreboding than frequent. They are significant and troubling because they offer evidence not only that anti-Semites are recovering their courage but also that anti-Semitism is rediscovering what one could term its traditional partisans. It is a fact that, for a number of years and increasingly since 1968, anti-Semitism has become the business of small groups on the far left. Using anti-Zionism as a pretext, certain political groups, such as the Maoists, and certain publications, such as *Témoignage chrétien*, have waged such a sustained, blind, and violent campaign against Israel that most of the time it has been impossible to distinguish between attacks against Israel and those against Jews. One may, indeed must, qualify them as "blind" since even in a paper whose "leftism" is as rational and generous as that of *Libération*, the Entebbe operation was held to be unwarrantable interference in the affairs of a sovereign nation.

What with time doing its work, then, and with young generations being less sensitive to these matters, French anti-Semites are recovering their courage. One cannot say that at this point they constitute a real danger.

Today, however, you *can* meet people who call themselves anti-Semites—something that would have been impossible for the last 35 years.

Other people refer to themselves as rightists. Since the right was more openly compromised with Vichy than the left, people used to hesitate to claim kinship with it. The right used to call itself “center right” or “center,” or even “left center,” so that the right now identifying itself as such has promptly been dubbed the “new right.” But it is not all that new.

The leftist press began writing about a new right in 1978; however, the champions of this new right were correct in saying that it had been in existence for some ten years. Because its activities were confined to restricted circles it was little known, and not until some of its more prominent leading spirits began to appear in a paper as widely read as *Le Figaro* was public attention drawn to it.

Everything leads one to believe that the man who owns *Le Figaro*, together with numerous other papers, did not engage such collaborators by chance. Robert Hersant, who has put together a press empire closely resembling Axel Springer’s in West Germany, was a militant anti-Semite in his youth and, as such, put himself at the service of the Nazi occupiers and went so far as even to wear their uniform. Opportunism and business acumen led him to put distance between himself and his compromising friends quite quickly, and some time after the Liberation one found him heading a specialized paper, *L’Auto-Journal*, which rapidly proved profitable. He then got himself elected deputy from Seine et Oise, and had to defend himself publicly in the Chamber against a move to invalidate his election; in the course of these proceedings he was reminded, in detail, of his activities during the Occupation. Hersant was seated nonetheless and, serving under the tag of “reformer,” came to hold what is probably a record for absenteeism and silence in the Assembly. When the 1978 elections came around, with the—erroneously—expected surge from the left, he realized that his election from Seine et Oise was threatened, and he decided to run in

the middle-class, conservative district of Neuilly. Neuilly was represented by a Gaullist deputy, Mme. Florence d’Harcourt, who, in deference to her democratic mandate, does not use the title of duchess to which she is entitled. Jacques Chirac, in his capacity as the Gaullist party leader, tried to persuade Florence d’Harcourt to withdraw in favor of Robert Hersant—which, given the “Gaullism” of the one and the past of the other, was cause for some surprise. But M. Chirac argued that his Gaullist party must keep the good will of a “press lord” who, having acquired some ten provincial papers, had just become boss of *Le Figaro* and taken over *L’Aurore* and *France-Soir*—which is to say, the most important “information” organs in Paris, apart from *Le Monde*, and among the most important nationwide. Not only did Jacques Chirac ask Florence d’Harcourt to step aside but, when she refused, he withdrew the Gaullist party’s endorsement from her and gave it to Robert Hersant. Alas, poor Gaullism!

Florence d’Harcourt’s political past is irreproachable. She was undaunted, and proceeded to run as an “independent Gaullist” against Robert Hersant, who proceeded to use against her tactics that can readily be imagined. But Mme. d’Harcourt, whose campaign consisted mainly of informing her constituents about her opponent’s past, was elected in the first round of voting by a comfortable majority.

Was Hersant’s next move motivated by a spirit of revenge? Or did he simply feel that from then on precautions were pointless? The fact is that, one year later, Hersant enlarged the staff of *Figaro-Magazine* (the weekly supplement of the daily paper) with a group of writers headed by Louis Pauwels, Alain de Benoit, and Michel Marmin. Their joining the Hersant paper marked, for supporters of the “new right,” a passing from semiclandestine—or, rather, nonpublic—to public action.

Alain de Benoit now divides his energies between the “cultural” editorship of *Figaro-Magazine* and his activities at GRECE

(Research and Study Group for European Civilization) and the publishing house Editions Copernic. It is worth recalling the circumstances in which GRECE was founded. After the developments of 1968, the small groups that had always shared a nostalgia for Vichy or fascism could see that, set up as they then were, they had lost any chance of exerting even minimal influence. During the Events of May, they had been pushed aside, even forgotten. What's more, the subsequent election, which assured the success of the "center" (which means, in the main, the traditional right), had relegated them definitively to the sidelines. Some stuck by their old positions—for example, the Parti des Forces Nouvelles or what was left of the former (royalist) Action Française—but a handful of militants from a neo-Nazi organization called Europe Action decided to modernize their activities and to take on a new field of operations. To this end, in 1969 they founded GRECE, supplied it with one bulletin for members, *Elements*, and one lavishly produced magazine for general distribution, *Nouvelle Ecole*, of which Alain de Benoist, who was one of those who had moved over from Europe Action, became editor. Shortly thereafter, Editions Copernic was formed; its editorial board was made up of the same people who headed GRECE—notably, Alain de Benoist and Michel Marmin. Two other organizations soon rounded out this ensemble: the Club de l'Horloge, which was supposed to muster government officials; and a club called Nation-Armée, which was supposed to infiltrate military circles.

GRECE passes itself off as a "think tank." Indeed, its "thinking" is reflected in its various publications, which must now be considered to include *Figaro-Magazine*. If one refers to Alain de Benoist's "Vu de droite" and to articles that appear in *Elements* (the GRECE house organ), *Nouvelle Ecole*, and now *Figaro-Magazine*, one can summarize its thinking thus: GRECE is opposed to the "Judeo-Christian" ideology (and everyone knows what *that* means); it urges the need for a return to Celtic and "Indo-European"

sources (Louis Pauwels hammers on this constantly). The term "Aryan" is generally eschewed for reasons that need not be stressed. What the people who believe in the GRECE doctrine expound and defend is a "scientific" racism, not to be confused with Hitler's "romantic" racism. As Alain de Benoist puts it, "An 'intelligent' racism that takes cognizance of ethnic diversity is less harmful than an intemperate, leveling, assimilative antiracism."

GRECE's racism claims a scientific foundation, especially in biology. It purports to be based on American studies in sociobiology and on IQ research carried out in the United States by Aubrey M. Shuey [author of *The Testing of Negro Intelligence*, cited by Arthur Jensen as a source for his assertions] and in France by Debray-Ritzen. From his studies of children's IQs, Professor Debray-Ritzen draws these conclusions: children of working-class parents have lower IQs than do children of middle-class parentage; if the former perform less well in their studies than do the latter, the reason is that they are born of parents with lower IQs, which they have inherited. Intellectual inferiority is thus considered an innate characteristic that is virtually impossible to modify, and it warrants the division of society into classes—a "hierarchical" organization of society—according to an order established by the intellectual capacities of the respective groups. It should be noted in this connection that the Nobel Prize winner in biology, François Jacob, has commented on the view that assigns the totality of mental aptitudes to heredity, saying that the position is based on "measuring the IQ, a procedural method that utterly amazes the biologist, for he has not managed even to *define* the intelligence that others seek to measure and quantify."

The hierarchy and order "needed" by society have led some new-right theoreticians to concern themselves with eugenics. In this area, one can find nothing to admire except their skillful use of litotes. J. J. Moureau published an article entitled "Historical Overview" in *Nouvelle Ecole* (January-February 1971) in which he listed and gave

some account of the various works that have dealt with eugenics from the time of Plato to the present; however, one finds that whereas the practical measures adopted by Solon and Lycurgus are cited, no mention is made of those practiced by the Hitler regime.

The theories of the new right—based on “the most recent genetic discoveries,” as Louis Pauwels reiterates—have been set forth in books published, for the most part, by Editions Copernic (which shares its top management with GRECE). Outstanding among them is “L’Inégalité de l’homme,” by Hans J. Eysenk, which is the source of Debray-Ritzen’s work on IQ, as well as of “Race et intelligence,” published anonymously by “two French geneticists who are known for their scientific work but do not wish to compromise their careers by putting their signatures to scientific truths they profess.”

As to the scientific value of the new right’s theories, which propose that the differences among men as defined in biological terms prove their inequality, let us listen to some specialists as well.

François Jacob gave his opinion (*Le Monde*, July 19, 1979) of “La politique du vivant” (published by the Club de l’Horloge): if, in order to combat an “egalitarian utopia,” the new right claims to base its views on science, nowhere does it indicate what “the scientifically controlled elements” are to which it refers. “Here the biological argument is merely the mask for an authoritarian thesis,” Jacob wrote. Science does teach us that men are different; ergo, some will be superior, others inferior. Jews are different from Aryans; “therefore, they must be eliminated. . . . The abiding error,” Jacob wrote, “is to connect a difference in ability and a difference in nature.”

With regard to sociobiology, to which the new right is constantly referring, Professor Jean-Paul Escande writes:

What do sociobiologists do? They start out as real scientists, and then they inflate their extrapolations to compensate for the absence of hard evidence. The pope of sociobiology is Edward O. Wilson, who when he is studying the

social behavior of ants or termites or chimpanzees is a scientist of high caliber; when he extrapolates his findings about animals and applies them to human beings—to their sexuality, their feelings of altruism, or their religion—Wilson becomes imaginative, not scientific; he moves over into the realm of science fiction when he claims to relate all that to genes.

The long articles by Alain de Benoit and the peremptory statements by Louis Pauwels boil down to one simple idea: biology teaches that human beings are different, therefore unequal. In his article, “Différents, mais inégaux” (*Elements*, 1978), Alain de Benoit justifies the new right’s theories on “scientific racism” by calling to their rescue not only Darwin but also Sir Andrew Huxley, genetics as well as psychometrics—and, of course, “house” theoreticians of the ilk of H. J. Eysenk. Like everything that Alain de Benoit writes, this article is merely a series of statements that rely on the authority of “scientists” whose specific works on the subject are rarely cited, and to offer a precis of it would be pointless. So, to come quickly to his conclusions: “Not all differences, of course, determine hierarchy, but most do. As soon as diversity is *lived*—is perceived in daily life and is not merely imagined—it entails classifications, hierarchies, inequalities.” Of course, he adds, “a plumber is not ‘superior’ to a carpenter, but a ‘good’ plumber is superior to a ‘bad’ plumber.” One readily sees the kind of confusion in such thinking, which takes off from genetics only to arrive at such a commonplace. But one must also be mindful—and this is precisely the point—that a “bad” plumber is, on certain levels, perfectly equal, as far as his rights are concerned, to a “good” plumber.

It is apparent that while the new right’s notions about order, hierarchy, and elitism are no more “scientifically founded” than all earlier racist ideas, they are generally presented in more measured terms. “We must be prudent in our use of language,” declared

Jacques Bruyas, the founder of GRECE. Prudence may go by the boards, however, when these thinkers are among themselves. Two examples will suffice:

From remarks by Yvan Blot, president of the Club de l'Horloge, during a 1972 Club discussion of "Nietzsche and History":

Slaves are needed if a new aristocracy is to arise. . . . It will be necessary to mount large enterprises, large collective experiments in discipline and selection if one wishes to put an end to that frightful domination of the absurd and the fortuitous, which has, until now, borne the name of history.

And again Yvan Blot. On May 2, 1974, in drawing up a balance sheet for the labors of the secretariat of GRECE's Research and Study Group Blot wrote:

Ethnic identity and training are the two components of a superior humanity—which is to say, of the highest known form of life. Ethnic identity is the factor that establishes preferential differentiations on the scale of biological potentials. Training on an appropriate racial basis is the source of all civilization. . . . To safeguard and promote the specificity of ethnic identity is . . . the foundation of a profoundly humanist and superhumanist action. Social egalitarianism cannot, then, *from a scientific point of view* [italics added], be anything but regression. The more evolved a society is, the more it is hierarchically ordered. The very existence of the human species is bound to racial differentiation.

This quotation is a good résumé of the new right's attitude, of its "scientific" assertions, and of its racism. It also shows that, on the scientific level—if that term can be used—one is confronting a kind of Lysenkoism in reverse: innate—ergo, "genetic"—characteristics take the place that acquired—ergo, "social"—characteristics occupied in the theories of the notorious Soviet agronomist.

The quotations also show clearly what the political applications of this ideology must be. If I may, for the moment, adopt the language of the publications in which this ideology is set forth, they call on supporters to fight against egalitarianism, which, it is claimed, conflicts

with the findings of science; to affirm each ethnic group's "right to its difference" and to define a hierarchy among these groups and among individuals; to support an elitism that does not consist, as in democratic societies, in forming elites but rather in promoting those that already exist—which is to say, those that would be so identified by a "scientific" racism—those, indeed, that if given the opportunity are ready and willing to define themselves as such; to destroy the "Nazarene mentality"; to fight Marxism, which is nothing more than "laicized theodicy"—all this supporters are to do in order to rediscover the wellsprings of "Celtic and Indo-European culture." Finally, the new right's political action must aim at creating an "organic" society in contradistinction to the "trade-oriented" society that *Elements* (March, 1978) charged with having "continually besieged the three functions of Indo-European societies: the productive function . . . the military function . . . and the function of governance."

The men of the new right are employing a tactic in the service of this ideology for which some extreme-left movements in France once coined the term "*entrisme*." One must "enter" into society, do everything possible to insinuate oneself and to be admitted into it—hence their circumspect language—and, in particular, aim at securing positions in which one can exert influence. No more cudgels, helmets, punitive raids against leftist students, or demonstrations such as the extreme right has traditionally staged. The former neo-Nazis of Europe Action have been recycled. They now are well-bred people. They are found today not only on the staffs of the *Hersant* publications—where, indeed, they entirely belong—but also in the government. As an editorial in *Nouvelle Ecole* (No. 9) put it: "What we need is to have influential men placed in the decision-making spheres of today and, even more, of tomorrow." With the Club de l'Horloge, the new right is attempting to raise the issue of "metapolitics," which is to say, the issue of "the place and the role of ideology." The club's president, Yvan Blot, is a member of the Inspection Générale

and, as such, an official of high rank. In the past he served on the departmental staff of two Ministers of the Interior (Poniatowski and Bonnet), and has held the post of assistant first secretary to Alain Devaquet when the latter was secretary-general of the Gaullist R.P.R.

The Club de l'Horloge, although founded by members of GRECE, attempts to conceal both its origins and the ties it has maintained with organizations from which its founders have come. It would like to be the "doctrinal laboratory" of the current majority, and in relation to the Giscard people it seeks to play the role the Club Jean Moulin once played for the left. Most likely this was its objective in inspiring—if, indeed, it did not entirely prepare—a number of books published by prominent persons on the official right, notably *L'Avenir-n'est nulle part*, by former Minister of the Interior Michel Poniatowski, who is still a carefully heeded Elysées adviser; *La révolution libérale*, by Philippe Malaud, former Secretary of State for Information and one of the few men on the right with the courage of his convictions; and *Le terreau de la liberté*, by Jacques Médecin, erstwhile Secretary of Tourism, deputy, and mayor of Nice.

When Poniatowski's book came out, the press, with respectful astonishment, noted the author's broad knowledge of biology and sociobiology. This was not a competence necessarily to be expected of Inspectors of Finances, of whose highly respectable corps Michel Poniatowski was once a member, as was, indeed, the President of the Republic. Astonishment of a different sort was sparked later by the realization that Philippe Malaud and Jean Médecin were dipping into the same sources, and that all three were referring to the books of Konrad Lorenz and Georges Dumézil—so misinterpreting them that, in the case of Dumézil, Claude Lévi-Strauss had to make mention of the fact in his speech on the occasion of Dumézil's election to the French Academy.

In addition to the Club de l'Horloge, which is intended to enable the new right to penetrate the upper administrative and

policy-making echelons of the government, GRECE has founded the Club Nation-Armée. This organization publishes an expensive monthly magazine as a part of its officially self-assigned purpose of "ensuring better liaison and greater understanding between the nation and those responsible for its defense." In its area, the Club Nation-Armée is supposed to play the same role as the Club de l'Horloge—i.e., gain access to certain milieux, place trusted men "in the decision-making spheres." The Club Nation-Armée maintains close contact with reserve officer and NCO organizations, except, of course, those of leftist persuasions.

Such are the tenets and strategy of a right about which, patently, nothing is "new" apart from its name. The Comte de Gobineau and Houston Chamberlain would feel quite at home with this neoracism; it can seem new only to people who have forgotten or have never known about events in the '30s. The one difference between the old and the new right is tactical in nature. It is quite safe to say that the old French right was, of them all, the most stupid. But this is not true of the GRECE dogmatists: they are intelligent, well connected, well placed, and they give no indication that they can be pushed to the sidelines, as used to happen with French fascists and royalists. They may reject our "Judeo-Christian" culture, but they are sufficiently steeped in it to be able to talk and write well about it. They also are skillful enough to adopt watchwords that can mislead people. For example, they are against all forms of totalitarianism, they say. Upon examination, you discover that for them the most totalitarian society is the egalitarian, leveling democracy we live in; they demand, of course, in the name of an antitotalitarianism of this brand that the privileges of an elite be confirmed.

In electoral terms, the leaders of the new right amount to nothing, and they do not seek to be anything. As for the influence they can exert in the areas of "culture," government,

politics, and the military, everything suggests that they will never convert anyone to their views who does not already share them. For 35 years, whatever else the French extreme right may or may not have done, it has maintained itself at a constant level while experiencing a kind of molecular agitation, its particles in perpetual motion yet always the same (changes of name notwithstanding), its members always jockeying for position. It is obvious that the only chance for these extremist movements lies in their being given an assist from outside (but Franco and

Salazar are dead, and the Greek colonels have lost power) or in a profound political crisis that would suddenly push them to the fore.

The new right is not dallying with any such eventualities; it is launched on a long-term effort. Its sole chance for success, which will never be complete but which could be significant, lies in whatever influence it will be able to exert on the traditional—the Gaullist and Giscardian—right. And now that the left is divided, it is plausible to expect that the traditional right will remain in power in France for a long time to come.

Translated by ADRIENNE FOULKE □

Have You Written to Us and Not Gotten an Answer?

- A number of incidents involving tampering with *Dissent* mail (including First Class and Second Class mail) during the months of March and April of this year force us to call this to our readers' attention. These incidents include opening of envelopes and packages, emptying them of their contents, etc. The aim does not appear to be theft, since checks and money orders made out to *Dissent* cannot be cashed, but harassment and sabotage. We have reported these incidents to the postal authorities who are investigating.
- In addition, we have taken various measures to make it more difficult, if not impossible, for such acts to take place in the future. We are determined to protect our right to circulate our magazine legally and without harassment.
- Any reader or subscriber who has not received a response to a letter or request and who wrote in March or April of this year should write to us again and explain the request. We will take care of the matter immediately. Be sure to put a clear return address, and do not send cash under any circumstances. We regret the inconvenience and count upon your cooperation and understanding.

-- THE EDITORS
