A- Executive summary

Despite the strength of the far right in France, there has been no in-depth thinking about building a strategy against the forces of the radical right. Because the far right took the form of a political party, the political elite, but also the media and, to a lesser extent, even the NGOs, had an immediate goal, which was to prevent the Front national (FN; in English, National Front) from taking over the local, regional and national government. This strategy, which was built on a wide consensus of rejecting the FN outside of the democratic spectrum, proved effective in the sense that the party declined until it became a marginal force in 2007. But in the meantime, within the broader society as well as within political circles, the ideas of the FN made their way in and left their mark, so much so that they finally shaped the political agenda and had a lasting influence on the perception of national identity, immigration and the relationship between the people and the government. The reason is that there has never been a strategy of countering the far right by means other than the purely tactical, such as education, civic awareness and academic research on the radical movements. The emphasis was put, in public action and social mobilization, on *phenomena*, like racism and anti-Semitism, but not on *actors*, such as the far right. The main reason is certainly to be found (1) in the non-existence of political extremism as a separate political category in the French constitutional order and (2) in the traditional reluctance of France to admit that it has been, historically, one of the cradles of the extreme right.

B- Structure of the radical right

I-History

In the period 1990 to 2007, the far right was a major player in French politics. The National Front was a political party that many citizens voted for when they wanted to show their rejection of the governmental policies implemented by the social-democratic left and the conservative/liberal right, which alternated in power after 1981. The rise of the FN ended half a century of marginalization for the far right, and it also had an impact outside France. The charisma of Jean-Marie Le Pen and the ideas of the FN became models for many parties of the so-called "third wave" of extreme-right movements and for the leaders of those parties, both in Western and Eastern Europe. Somehow, the FN has become a trademark for right-wing, populist, xenophobic parties that are not directly the heirs of fascism, but which, nevertheless, have not completely rejected such ideas as anti-Semitism, the conspiracy theory and the craving for the authoritarian rule of a non-pluralistic society. In those years, the French far right became the main channel through which a considerable proportion of the voters, especially working-class and middle-class voters, expressed their distrust for the political establishment. Their desire was for a real ideological debate between the left and right (which means that they probably wanted the Socialist Party to be less liberal and the right to be more conservative [1]). Their opinion was that France needed to try "something new" after both coalitions of the mainstream parties had failed to deliver on economic and social issues. At the same time, the far right also gained voters because the Communist Party ceased to be the major anti-system force, and it became more acceptable, because it was the only party that dared speak about such issues as multiculturalism, immigration and the dark sides of French history (the war in Algeria, the Nazi occupation).

[1] "Liberal," in the French context, means supporting a deregulated, free-market economy and a smaller welfare state (the minimum state). It is not used in the American sense of the word.

However, the recent history of the National Front demonstrates that, even when it succeeds in escaping from the fringes of politics to become a force to contend with, the far right is still plagued by problems inherent to this ideological family and which set it apart from the mainstream parties. Those problems are factionalism; the inability to build a professional, lasting and stable party apparatus; the cult of the omnipotent leader, which endangers the future of the party should this leader step down or die; and the inability, despite claims to the contrary, to break away from the ideology of racism, anti-Semitism and contempt for democracy. These elements make the party unacceptable to the overwhelming majority of citizens. The fact that President Nicolas Sarkozy reduced the score of the FN from 16 percent to 10 percent (presidential election 2007) also shows that, when the right campaigns on sound conservative values and proposals, it can draw many former extreme-right voters and bring them back to the democratic fold. However, this can only be achieved by incorporating a part of the far-right ideology into that of the mainstream right, and this can transform the lost battle of the National Front into a partly victorious one, albeit in the realm of ideas only.

In addition to the FN, there remains the "lunatic fringe" of the far right, small in numbers but nonetheless deserving of the attention of scholars because it has been a training school for many politicians of the mainstream right, and because there remain many interconnections between the National Front and the radical "groupuscules."[2] The fringe groups are what sociologist Verta Taylor called "abeyance structures."[3] Abeyance structures are social movements whose task is to perpetuate an ideology that is marginalized through a vision of political action grounded in the prerequisite that society be divided along a friend-foe, "us vs. them" line. This finally shows what the far right is in reality. More than a political force, it is a counterculture.

The far right has a long tradition in French history, dating back to the Revolution of 1789 and the counter-revolutionary school of thought that remained strong throughout the 19th century. The rejection of the Republic by this movement explains why, to this day, Catholic integralism and royalism are more than marginal players on the far right. The ideology of the Action française, which supported anti-Semitic nationalism and opposition to democracy in the years 1899 to 1944, very much shaped the French intellectual landscape, even after World War II, and was a source of inspiration for the Vichy regime. Scholars still argue about whether there really exists something like "French fascism." What is certain, however, is that the reactionary, populist, authoritarian "Ligues," which fought against the Third Republic, were mass movements and that they were inspired, to some extent, by the fascist experience. The repression of the collaborationists after 1945, and the subsequent ban on their parties and press, was quickly followed by the amnesty of the lesser offenders, giving the far right an opportunity for a fresh start. The pro-fascist movements and the former collaborationists later transmitted parts of their legacy to the Front national.

In the period 1945 to 1983, the far right was marginal in French politics, except for the brief electoral success of the Poujadist movement (1956-58) and the action of the clandestine Organisation armée secrète (OAS), which staged a kind of civil war at the end of the Algerian War of Independence (1958-62). Certainly because of the trauma of World War II and Vichy,

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[2] It is significant that the only scholar who devoted several studies to the so-called "groupuscules" is British. See Roger Griffin: "GUD Reactions: The Patterns of Prejudice of a Neo-fascist Groupuscule," *Patterns of Prejudice*, vol. 33, no. 2 (April 1999), pp. 31-50.

[3] Taylor: Social Movement Continuity: The Women's Movement in Abeyance *American Sociological Review*, Vol. 54, No. 5 (Oct. 1989), pp. 761-775.

the far right did not have any electoral success, and also because the Gaullist party incorporated conservative values and patriotism while succeeding in making France a modern industrial country. After Gaullism vanished, there was room for a nationalist party of some significance. This is where the National Front comes in, presided over by Jean-Marie Le Pen (born 1928) since its creation in 1972. It is the FN which effectively put an end to the marginalization of the far right, not only because in the 1990s it became the third most powerful French political force (behind the conservative right and the Socialist Party), but also because some of the party's ideas later made their way into the ideology of the conservative right.

As in other countries, the French far right is riven with factionalism and is split into many groups. In the period under scrutiny, it has been divided into at least four subfamilies: the royalists, the national-populists, the national-revolutionaries and the neo-Nazis. As it grew into a major political party, the FN absorbed them all, for two reasons. First, although it is still seen as an extremist party by those who do not support it, the FN has gained credibility that no other nationalist, populist and anti-immigration party has ever gained, thus attracting those radical activists who seriously considered having a political career. Second, the charisma of Le Pen appeals even to those who are hostile to democracy, because the FN and its leader have, in many instances, shown that they do not really reject the legacy of the radical far right. The proof is that the party demonstrated against the European Constitutional Treaty on Feb. 6, 2008, which is the anniversary of the Feb. 6, 1934 riots staged by the Ligues in an attempt to overthrow the Republic. Although party regulations officially forbid dual membership with another movement, many individuals from the neo-Nazi, skinhead and neofascist groups were (and probably still are) also active in the party.[4] This partly explains the small size of the French skinhead movement (a thousand activists in the mid-1990s).

After the 2002 presidential election, the mainstream right began addressing the core issues that had attracted voters to the FN, such as national identity and immigration, law and order, and the purchasing power of the working class and middle class. As a result, the FN began to decline and is now a marginal player in French politics. But the fate of the party has to be seen in the wider European context: that of a competition between the far right and conservative-right parties which have incorporated some elements of populism, nationalism and ethnocentrism. That is the meaning of Nicolas Sarkozy's election.

II- Actors

1) The National Front

The most important political party is the National Front, whose president, Jean-Marie Le Pen, polled 10.44 percent in the presidential election of April 22, 2007. In the parliamentary election held on June 10, 2007, the party received 4.29 percent of the vote. The figures in the box are for the local, regional, national and EU elections, 1990 to 2007. Results for the 1995 and 2001 city-council elections are not included, because aggregate figures on the national level have no significance. In the city-council and local (cantonales) elections of March 2008,

[4] In the 1970s and until François Duprat's death in 1978, the Groupes nationalistes révolutionnaires (GNR) worked as a faction within the FN. In the years 1972-1983, the group that published the monthly *Militant*, under the guidance of several former Waffen SS volunteers, was also an FN faction.

the FN fielded no candidates in the major and medium-sized cities. The reason was its poor financial situation.

Regional 1992	13.8%
Local (cantonales) 1992	12.31%
National 1993	12.7%
EU 1994	10.5%
Local (cantonales) 1994	9.67%
Presidential 1995	15.3%
National 1997	15%
Regional 1998	15.4%
Local (cantonales) 1998	13.9%
EU 1999	5.69%
Local (cantonales) 2001	7.12%
Presidential 2002 (second ballot)	16.9%
National 2002	11.34%
EU 2004	9.8%
Regional 2004	14.7%
Local (cantonales) 2004	12.1%
Presidential 2007	10.44%
National 2007	4.29%

The sociology of the FN vote is changeable. Although it is impossible to assess all the changes in the FN vote during the period 1990 to 2008, the major point is that at the beginning of the 1990s, it was mostly supported by former voters of the conservative right belonging to the middle and upper middle class, whereas from 1995 on, its core constituency has been made up of working-class, under-educated male voters who previously voted either from the left or right or who did not vote.[5] While at the beginning of the 1990s, the vote for the FN was mostly motivated by the opposition to a conservative right which was seen as "too soft" in challenging the Socialist/Communist coalition, later on it became a vote of protest against the political class and the ineffectiveness of both the socialist and liberal policies in the field of the economy, after the left and the right had alternated in power. However, throughout the period, it has remained a vote primarily motivated by what Nonna Mayer calls "authoritarian ethnocentrism": that is, a combination of prejudice against the immigrants and the foreigners, a call for tougher laws on crime, and a feeling that "one can no longer feel at home in France like yesterday."[6]

In the period 2002 to 2007, the demographic structure of the FN vote was as follows:

	Presidential 1988	Presidential 1995	Presidential 2002	Presidential 2007
Total	15	15	17	11
Sex				
Male	18	19	20	12
Female	11	12	14	9
Age				
18 to 24	14	18	13	10
25 to 34	15	20	17	10
35 to 49	15	16	18	11
50 to 64	14	14	20	12
65 and over	16	10	15	9

[5] See Nonna Mayer (2002): *Ces Français qui votent Le Pen.* Paris, Flammarion.

[6] Mayer (2007): Les votes Le Pen du 21 avril 2002 au 22 avril 2007. Paris, CEVIPOF. http://www.cevipof.msh-paris.fr/PEF/2007/V1/rapports/VotesLePen_NM.pdf.

Formatiert: Deutsch (Deutschland)

Occupation				
Farmer	10	10	22	10
Managers	19	19	22	10
Mid-level executive	14	4	13	7
Low-level employee	14	18	22	12
Worker	17	21	23	16
Jobless	17	28	20	11
Sector				
Private	16	16	20	12
Public	14	14	14	11
Education				
Primary school	15	17	24	13
Secondary school	17	20	21	13
Abitur	13	12	15	8
Abitur+2	10	13	11	3
University degree	9	4	7	4
Catholic religion[7]				
High	13	8	12	5
Low	13	13	18	10
Never	16	19	20	12
Without	10	14	15	12

Since 2002, the FN has lost many voters, and it is estimated that 69 percent of those who voted for him in 2002 cast their ballot for the conservative candidate of the Union pour un mouvement populaire (UMP), Nicolas Sarkozy. The FN held its convention on Oct. 17-18, 2007 and re-elected Le Pen to another three-year term as president. His daughter, Marine Le Pen, was elected vice-president, and she seems to be the most likely successor to her father when he steps down in 2010. Marine Le Pen is the leader of the so-called "modern" wing of the party, which does not mean that she intends to drop the party's ideological fundamentals. The other vice-president, Bruno Gollnisch, is the leader of a more conservative wing, opposed to any change in the style of party leadership as well as in the program. It is to be stressed here that the "modernist" wing is not in the process of changing the party into a democratic one, as Gianfranco Fini changed the Italian MSI. Quite the opposite: Marine Le Pen is supported by the "national revolutionary" faction, Egalité et Réconciliation led by the former Communist Alain Soral, and by the most radical groups outside the party.[8]

The FN is the major force on the far right, but it is not the only one. Since 1990, three subfamilies of the far right have either split from the FN or established themselves on its side. The first is the neo-Nazi affiliate that is represented by the "militant" wing of FN (1972-1982).[9] It gave birth to the Parti nationaliste français (1983), a splinter of which in 1985 became the Parti nationaliste français et européen (PNFE), which was the only anti-Semitic, violent neo-Nazi party of significance in French history and which ceased its activities in 1999. Another affiliate that gained some strength by attracting activists who rejected the FN's

[7] The above date refers to the degree of religious belief and obedience to the Catholic Church's teachings: high; low; no religious attendance or observance; declares "no religion." There are no data for other religions.

[8] See http://www.egaliteetreconciliation.fr.

[9] The leadership of *Militant* was made up of veterans from the French Waffen SS. Among them, Pierre Bousquet was the first national treasurer of the FN.

official commitment to democracy is the "national revolutionary" family, which included the Mouvement nationaliste révolutionnaire, formerly Troisième Voie (1984); Nouvelle Résistance (1991); and Unité radicale (1998), which split in 2002 into Réseau radical and the Bloc identitaire. Finally, on the opposite side, several formerly radical groups chose to become allies of the conservative right. This was the case of the FN's rival, the Parti des forces nouvelles, which existed until the beginning of the 1990s, and of the FN defectors who in 1992 launched Espace nouveau, later to become the Parti national républicain (1995-1998).

The rise of the FN was seriously challenged by the split of Bruno Mégret, the party's No. 2 man, in 1998-1999. Mégret, a high civil servant and a former Gaullist party expert, influenced by the ideology of the "Nouvelle Droite," had built up his own faction within the FN since Le Pen had named him secretary-general in 1988. He had been challenging Le Pen's leadership and had been pleading for an agreement with the conservative right, a move Le Pen had always opposed. The rivalry between them reached the point of no return, and in December 1998, Mégret left the party to launch his own Mouvement national républicain (MNR). This party remained marginal: Mégret received 2.34 percent in the 2002 presidential election. However, the split considerably weakened the FN apparatus. The FN lost about half of its representation in the regional councils, dropping to about 150 councilors as of 2008, as compared to 277 in 1998. After 2006, it had also lost all the city councils it ran and was not represented in the National Assembly after 1998. In short, because of the Mégret split, the FN may have reached its electoral peak in 2002. But then, it was already on a downward slope, because of an aging leader, a dwindling membership, and financial resources that came less from the party members than from the state grant to political parties.

2) The Mouvement national républicain

The MNR was led by Bruno Mégret until his retirement from politics in May 2008. It probably has less than 2,000 members. Its electoral results are as follows:

European 1999	3.28%
Local 2001	3.03%
Presidential 2002	2.34%
National 2002	1.09%
Regional 2004	1.18%
Local 2004	0.36%
European 2004	0.31%
National 2007	0.39%

There are no data on the demography of the MNR voters, because the sample is too narrow. In 2003, the MNR had 67 regional councilors, and this number has probably fallen to below 50. The only regions where the MNR retains some strength are Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur and Île-de-France. The ideology of MNR is focused on immigration and opposition to Islam. The party was instrumental in making the Marseille administrative court cancel the contract between the municipality and the Muslim community (April 2007; decision reversed in December 2007), for the construction of a great mosque there. On other topics, the MNR is an archconservative, anti-EU party. In the local elections of March 2008, in several cities, MNR

and FN candidates were on the same slate. In a few other cities like Nice, the MNR may make an alliance with the Bloc identitaire.

3) Other nonviolent movements

Among those parties which contest the elections, few are of any significance. Alsace d'abord, a regionalist "identity movement" that shares the ideology of MNR, is led by Robert Spieler and polled 9.42 percent in the 2004 regional election in Alsace. It is part of the network "Cities against Islamization," launched in January 2008 by the Vlaams Belang, FPÖ and Pro-Köln. Among those groups that are active within the social movement, the Catholic fundamentalist movements play a major role. It is an important part of the "pro-life" movement; it publishes one of the very few independent daily newspapers (*Présent*, since 1982) and has launched an NGO that fights "anti-Christian racism" (AGRIF). The Catholic fundamentalist groups are divided between the schismatic St. Pius X Brotherhood, founded by the late Bishop Marcel Lefebvre, and followers of the St. Peter Fraternity, which remains faithful to the Vatican. Other groups are small in membership but very active and very numerous. In 1992, there were around 500 groups and publications, and although the figure is much lower in 2008, about half of that number remains.[10] The sociologist Fiammetta Venner constituted a database of all the demonstrations and public actions of the far right over the period 1981 to 2005. She registered 20,334 actions, 17 percent of which were organized by the Catholic fundamentalists; 9 percent by the radical extreme right; 20 percent by the National Front; 33 percent by the pro-lifers; and 20 percent by the royalists.[11] The ideological family which is the less active as far as mobilization is concerned is the new right, which is organized in the Groupement de recherche et d'études pour la civilisation européenne (GRECE) and publishes the quarterly *Eléments*. GRECE and its leading intellectual, Alain de Benoist, have distanced themselves somewhat from the far right since the beginning of the 1990s and can be considered to be at the margins of our subject, much like Junge Freiheit and Zur Zeit.

An interesting characteristic of the French far right is a royalist movement that retains some intellectual influence. Between 1899 and 1944, the Action française, led by Charles Maurras, was certainly the most influential rightist political movement, especially in the universities, in the Catholic Church and among writers or journalists. The heirs to the Action française are now the Restauration nationale, led by Hilaire de Crémiers, and the Action française, which publishes twice monthly a magazine by the same name and the bimonthly *Insurrection*. Led by Pierre Pujo until 2007, and since then by Stéphane Blanchonnet, the AF is a nationalist and "souverainiste" movement, the word *souverainiste* meaning hostile to the European Union to the point of demanding that France get out of the European Union and switch from the euro back to the franc. The royalist movement is divided on who is the heir to the throne. While the two aforementioned movements, called "Orléanists," support the French branch of the Bourbon family, the "Légitimistes," who gather in the Union des Cercles Légtimistes de France (UCLF), support the Spanish branch. The Légitimistes, who often belong to the old nobility in the provinces, are close to Catholic fundamentalism and are the heirs to the counter-revolutionary school of thought, while the Orléanists have allowed themselves, since the referendum on the Maastricht Treaty (1994), to work together with "republican" anti-EU

[10] Jean-Yves Camus/René Monzat (1992): *Les droites nationales et radicales en France.* Lyon : Presses Universitaires de Lyon.
[11] Fiammetta Venner: *Extrême-France* (2006). Paris, éditions Grasset.

groups, like the Mouvement pour la France and even the supporters of Jean-Pierre Chevènement.

Another French characteristic is the strength of the Catholic fundamentalist movement, the majority of which is close to the far right. The leader of the traditionalist opposition to the reforms of the second Vatican Council, Bishop Marcel Lefebvre, was French. His Fraternité Saint Pie X, founded in 1970, decided to leave the authority of the Vatican in 1988 and is considered schismatic by the church. It boasts of having more than 100,000 followers worldwide, and tens of thousands in France. The fraternity stands for a theocratic society and still supports (and teaches) the pre-Vatican II anti-Jewish theology of the "deicide people." Many FN executives belong to this sect, and its headquarters in Paris, the church of Saint Nicolas du Chardonnet, is a hotbed of far-right activity. Those fundamentalists who did not want to separate from the Vatican founded the Fraternité Saint Pierre, which is politically more moderate, although the Chrétienté-Solidarité faction of the FN, led by the former MEP, Bernard Antony, was very close to it.

Among other actors of the far right, one should mention the trans-ideological movements that bring together extreme-right, far-left and Islamist activists or militants of the black cause. This new phenomenon emerged around 2000 around a well-known comedian of African origin, Dieudonné M'Bala M'Bala.[12] In 1997, Dieudonné (born 1966) was an independent candidate against the FN local leader in Dreux, Marie-France Stirbois, and he was then considered to be close to the left. However, he became disenchanted with the anti-racist organizations and above all by SOS Racisme, which he came to see as a Zionist-inspired movement that did not pay attention to the discrimination against black people. From then on, he gradually became more and more anti-Jewish and anti-Zionist to the point of equating Zionism with Nazism. Around the Web site which carries most of his statements (http://lesogres.org) there emerged a strange group of people who supported Dieudonné's political ambitions when he tried to be a candidate in the 2002 and 2007 presidential elections. Dieudonné's chief of staff, Marc George, alias "Marc Robert," was a former FN candidate who in 2007 returned to his former party; in August 2006, he visited Lebanon and Syria, where he met with Hezbollah executives and was escorted by Frédéric Chatillon, a well-known neo-Nazi.[13] In November 2006, he also paid a visit to the presidential convention of the FN and met with Le Pen. The Dieudonné phenomenon is particularly interesting, because he is the man who made popular among black youth the idea that the slave trade was a Jewish business and that there is unequal treatment of the Shoah and the black "genocide" that slavery was. In Dieudonné's campaign staff, the far rightist George worked with the far-leftist Ginette Skandrani and the Islamist imam, Abdelhakim Sefrioui.[14] In the same period other examples of trans-ideological coalitions, based on a common anti-Zionism/anti-Semitism, was built around the Russian-born Israeli writer, Israel Adam Shamir, around whose books gather several far-right movements.[15] Among them are Réseau radical; Islamists such as his publisher, who is also that of Sheikh

[12] On Dieudonné, see Anne-Sophie Mercier (2005): *La vérité sur Dieudonné*, Plon, Paris.
[13] Thierry Meyssan, the chairman of the leftist Réseau Voltaire, who came to fame with his book claiming 9/11 was an Israeli/U.S. neoconservative plot, was also there. See Meyssan: *L'Effroyable imposture* (2002). Editions Carnot, Paris.
[14] Sefrioui heads the Comité Cheikh Yassine, named after the Hamas spiritual leader killed by the Israeli army.
[15] Especially *L'Autre Visage d'Israël* (2004), éditions Al Qalam, Paris.

Yussuf Qaradawi; and black supremacists of the Conscience noire movement.[16] Those facts of course blur the lines between ideological movements which used not to cooperate, but since the start of the Second Intifada and after 9/11, the importance of anti-Zionism to extremist movements of all sorts is such that there is greater understanding and cooperation among them.

4- **Radical fringe groups on the extra-parliamentary far right**

The Identity Movement (total membership, according to the police report, 500) revolves around Bloc identitaire, led by Guillaume Luyt, Philippe Vardon and Fabrice Robert. It publishes the quarterly *ID* (for Identité), which has an address in Belgium in order to avoid prosecution. The Bloc also maintains an online press agency, Novopress (www.novopress.info), and focuses its political activity on the city of Nice. A rival national revolutionary faction is led by Christian Bouchet, former leader of Nouvelle Résistance and Unité radicale. His organization, Réseau radical, which runs the www.voxnr.com Web site and publishes the magazine *Résistance!*, numbers about 40 loosely organized activists. The group promotes hard-line anti-Zionism and supports Palestinian jihad and Arab nationalist movements such as the Baath party and Muslim fundamentalist groups. Another identity movement is Terre et Peuple, led by former GRECE president and FN national leadership member Pierre Vial, who supports a völkisch vision of national identity. The RED (Rassemblement des Etudiants de Droite) is a student group with a record of violence and extreme anti-Semitism, led by a young black woman, Sophie Monlouis; it published the first issue of its magazine, *Le Dissident*, in November 2006.

The following ultra-nationalist movements comprise between 30 and 80 followers: Œuvre française, a rabidly anti-Semitic group led by Pierre Sidos, who supported Le Pen's candidacy in the 2007 presidential election; Renouveau français (publication: *L'Héritage*), (a fascist and Catholic fundamentalist group belonging to the transnational European National Front); and Jeunes Bonapartistes (publication: *La Cocarde*). Neo-Nazi skinheads are split between the Blood and Honor network and the Charlemagne Hammerskins, the former being dominant. The neo-Nazi scene reached its peak in the mid-

[16] For a description of Shamir's trial in Paris and the coalition around him, see http://www.voxnr.com/cc/politique/EEFpylEVVVyMAPcIGQ.shtml (Web site of the Réseau radical).

1990s, when the Charlemagne Hammerskin movement introduced in France the concept of "leaderless resistance" through its publications, *Terreur d'élite* and *14 Words*, and aimed at building small cells of terrorist activists on the model of the American organization The Order. Such attempts however, were short-lived for lack of activists and because of police repression. Neo-Nazi groups, like the Mouvement national-socialiste français (MNSF) or the French branch of the Church of the Creator, are usually one-man attempts and many activists distrust them, for fear that the leaders are police informants.[17] The skinhead scene is mostly active through the so-called "fanzines," which are self-made magazines dealing with politics and music, and which generally try to avoid prosecution by not registering the magazine with the "dépôt legal," that is, the mandatory legal deposit of a publication at the Bibliothèque nationale.[18] It would be useless to list these publications, as they often change titles and have a short duration, but it is remarkable that in the 1990s, a few fanzines with a semi-professional layout were issued. They did not survive the decade. Skinhead groups are usually organized on a local basis, such as La Meute de Fenrir and Blood and Honor Midgard, the former in northern France and the latter in Languedoc-Roussillon, or the former Elsass Korps in Alsace. Their major public activity is organizing concerts of "hate rock" or "Rock against Communism" (RAC). The hotbed of concert activity has been the Alsace region. For example, on July 30, 2004, around 400 skinheads met in the village of Hipsheim, near Strasbourg, most of them coming from Germany. The difficulty of countering such an action is exemplified by the fact that the hall where the concert took place, which was a communal property, was rented by a local resident under the disguise of a "soccer tournament followed by a festive meal," which means that the mayor had no reason for refusing to rent. In April 2003, around 800 skinheads gathered in Ringendorf, Alsace, most of them Germans too, to celebrate Hitler's birthday.[19] The mayor was unable to ban the event because it was considered a private gathering, and nothing said and done inside the building could be

[17] See http://www.phenix.mnsf.info. This is the French section of the American-based NSDAP-AO.

[18] The latest law on legal deposit is that of June 20, 1992. Prosecution of a publication that omits the formality of legal deposit is possible, but the individual who sues the editor of the magazine then needs to prove his claim by showing an original copy.

[19] See *Libération*, Aug. 10, 2004.

prosecuted.

Because of this void in the legal system, about the only way to counter skinhead concerts is through the action of anti-racist organizations. One of them, the anarchist SCALP/Reflex, keeps a close watch on the skinhead scene and usually knows of most concerts in advance.[20] The strategy is then to pass on the information to the local media and the authorities, in the hope that the police will then ban the skinheads from reaching the place of the concert or at least keep a close watch on the surroundings to prevent violence. This strategy has been at least partly successful: the concept of "Rock identitaire français" (RIF), launched around 1990 by members of the Front national de la jeunesse and later of the MNR, and which consisted of music groups that avoided the skinhead look or tried to play "mainstream" music such as folk or rock, has been a dismal failure, because of the mobilization of the underground anti-fascist scene (that is especially true for such subgenres as hardcore) and also because the bad quality of the fascist groups gave them no serious hope of success. As a result, the sale of the CDs has moved to the mail-order business, with such outlets as Memorial Records and Pit Records. But the far right has also moved to other musical genres. The biggest threat now, in terms of the spreading of hate music, comes from the National Socialist Black Metal (NSBM) and the larger black/death metal scene. Many groups in those subgenres follow a heathen, völkisch philosophy, sometimes blended with Satanism, and use such tools as the MySpace and YouTube Web sites to make their music available.[21] It is thus very difficult to counter the dissemination of such music, and one of the current problems is that some groups succeed in having their CDs reviewed in mainstream music magazines that cater to a young readership.[22] One notable problem with the extreme-right NSBM scene is its strident anti-Christian ideology, which often includes calls to murder the believers and the priests. In the present state of the legislation, it is possible to file a complaint against "anti-Christian hatred": the

[20] SCALP/Reflex has published an extensive book on the skinhead scene in the 1990s. Collectif (2004): *Rock haine Roll*, éditions No Pasaran, Paris.

[21] See such French groups as Seigneur Voland, Ad Hominem, Kristallnacht and Blessed in Sin on MySpace.

[22] In France, the quarterly metal magazine *Metallian*, which is sold at all newsstands, regularly reviews far-right groups without properly assessing their ideology.

AGRIF, an association close to the FN, has done so in several cases of cemetery desecrations and has also sued a rap band.[23] However, no complaint has yet been filed against an NSBM band.

Table: Election results for Alsace d'abord: 1992-2001

Election	Haut Rhin	Bas Rhin
1992 regional	6.16%	5.97%
1998 regional	5.52%	6.59%
2004 regional	9.38%	9.42%
2001 city (Strasbourg)		9.42%
1995 city (Strasbourg)		5.06%

4) The publications of the far right

It is a particularity of France that many newspapers and magazines oriented toward the far right have made their way into the newsstands, thus being available to a non-militant readership. Throughout the 1990s and even now, at an average newsstand one can find one daily that until 1999 was close to the FN: *Présent*, founded in 1982 by Bernard Antony; the former collaborationist, François Brigneau; and the Catholic fundamentalist thinker, Jean Madiran, who is certainly the last living individual to have been awarded the "Francisque" (the top civil distinction under the Vichy regime) by Marshall Pétain. One can also buy two weeklies, *Minute* and *Rivarol*. *Minute*, founded in 1962, is first and foremost a populist, anti-Gaullist newspaper, which tries to be a bridge between the far right and the conservative right, by publishing interviews with politicians from the RPR (then UMP) and UDF parties, mostly on such issues as law and order and immigration. *Rivarol*, founded in 1951, is a neo-fascist, Holocaust-denial publication, which relays the activities of all the extremist groups, including the FN. Distributed nationwide are also the monthly *Le Choc du Mois*, founded in 1987, which had to stop publication in 1993 after it lost a lawsuit for having published an interview with Robert Faurisson, but which resumed publication in April 2006; and *Monde et Vie*, a fundamentalist Catholic magazine published every two months. *Ecrits de Paris*, a monthly sister publication of *Rivarol*, was distributed at newsstands until 2003, as was *Itinéraires*, a Catholic quarterly which stopped being published by Madiran at the beginning of the 1990s. Although those publications reach a readership that is aging and declining, the combined readership is certainly in the tens of thousands. The strategies against those publications have been twofold (apart from actions in the court against racist and anti-Semitic articles): first, one of the two wholesale distributors who have a monopoly in France (the NMPP company), has tried to display those publications at newsstands so that they are less visible to the customer than a "normal" magazine; also, those publications have been boycotted by journalists of the mainstream media, especially on public-service radio and TV, so that

[23] See the AGRIF Web site: http://www.agrif.fr/combat/affaires/affaires.asp.

they are never quoted in press reviews and news bulletins. On Aug. 3-5, 1998, in his press review on the France Inter State Radio network, the journalist Fabrice Le Quintrec quoted the daily *Présent*. He was subsequently discharged from the job by his supervisor, although he was not an extreme-right militant and had regularly quoted far-left newspapers as well.

The problem of the far-right press also is the existence of many more bookshops with such an orientation than in other European countries. From the 1980s until now, there has been a steady number of such shops. There are five in Paris and one each in Lyon, Nantes, Bordeaux, Nancy, Nice and Grenoble. They range from the openly neo-Nazi (Æncre and Licorne Bleue in Paris), to Catholic fundamentalist (Librairie Dobrée in Nantes, Librairie Lorraine in Nancy), to one close to the Bloc identitaire (Librairie du Paillon in Nice). The constitutional concept of "freedom of trade" applies to such shops and makes it difficult to close them on the basis of what they sell. So, the Librairie Ogmios in 1991, and in 1995, La Librairie, which succeeded it, closed because the police found proof of tax evasion, which led to the conviction of the owners for bankruptcy.

5) **Violent acts and crimes with a radical right-wing background**

In the 1990s, the far right was associated with violent acts and crimes which attracted national, and even international, attention, because they were seen as linked to the rise of the FN. Several PNFE leaders were involved in the bombing of housing centers for immigrants on the French Riviera, an FN stronghold (1985-88; trial in 1991) and in the desecration of a Jewish grave in the Carpentras cemetery (1990; perpetrators arrested in 1996).[24] Michel Lajoye, a former FN member who switched to the PNFE, received a life sentence in 1990 for dropping a bomb on a café owned by Arab immigrants (trial in 1990). On May 1, 1995, a group of skinheads who also worked as stewards for the National Front pushed a young Moroccan (who died by drowning) into the Seine River on the day of the annual FN demonstration in honor of Joan of Arc. The damage to the image of the party was such that the security service of the party chose to sever all connections with the violent fringe of the radical right.[25] In 1996, a group of fascist-leaning black-metal devotees desecrated graves in the Christian cemetery of Toulon, then an FN-run city. Many other racist attacks were committed by neo-Nazi skinheads. However, the existence of the FN also served to restrain the recruitment capability of the violent groups. As a consequence, there has been no French equivalent of the "leaderless resistance" concept or of the underground paramilitary groups such as the British Combat 18. Between 1990 and 2001, physical violence from the far right was mostly against black and Arab immigrants, while symbolic violence such as mail threats or the daubing of buildings was often of an anti-Semitic nature. After the start of the Second Intifada, the trend changed. For example, in 2006, 28 percent of the anti-Semitic violence was perpetrated by youth with an Arab or Muslim immigrant background, with the far right being responsible for only 10 percent. However, when it comes to anti-Semitic threats, the far right is responsible for 25 percent. The far right is responsible for 41 percent of racist violence, 66 percent of which is targeted against Muslims, their mosques and their cemeteries.

I- Main traits

[24] Claude Cornilleau, the PNFE chairman, had been an FN candidate and city councillor.
[25] See Assemblée Nationale (1999): *Le DPS: service d'ordre du Front national ou garde prétorienne?* Paris, Les Documents d'information.

The following are the key topics of nearly all actors shown in the matrix.[26] They are ethnocentrism and opposition to immigration, especially when it comes from the former French colonies and involves Muslims; the rejection of multiculturalism; the feeling of decadence, most often associated with globalization and the European Union, but also with the loss of the colonial empire; contempt for the social and political elite; the call for tough law-and-order policies, including the re-enactment of the death penalty; the somewhat incoherent call for both the dismantling of the welfare state and state protection of the needy; and the call for implementation of the "préférence nationale" (national preference), which would restrict the benefit of state subsidies, housing and ultimately the job market to French citizens. Radical groups such as GUD, Bloc identitaire, Œuvre française, PNF and others reject democracy and call for an authoritarian, fascist-like system, while also praising the Vichy regime and the pro-Nazi collaborationists. A widening rift exists between the FN and those groups, which rests on a divergent approach of ethnicity: while for the FN, anyone who genuinely wants to assimilate can do so, regardless of his origin, the radical groups equate French citizenship with belonging to the "white race." Common ground exists, however, for all the groups under study: that is, as Velérie Lafont has shown, the feeling of belonging to the "two-centuries old galaxy" of movements which are considered "evil," "a threat to democracy," or which have always been defeated in their fight against the Republic.[27]

The most important problems, according to FN voters in 2007 (in %)[28]

	All voters	Le Pen voters
Unemployment	39	32
Purchasing power	25	20
Social inequalities	22	17
Education	17	9
Immigration	16	48
The environment	15	7
Crime	15	25
Pensions	15	15
Taxes	10	10
Housing	9	6
Public spending	6	4

[26] See Mayer, op. cit.
[27] Lafont (2006): France: a two-centuries old galaxy, in Nonna Mayer/Bert Klandermans, *Far-right Activists in Europe through the Magnifying Glass*. London: Routledge.
[28] CEVIPOF: Le panel électoral français, 2007 http://www.cevipof.msh-paris.fr/PEF/2007/V1/rapports/VotesLePen_NM.pdf (retrieved Jan. 13, 2008).

Medical insurance	4	4
European construction	4	1

The groups targeted by the far right are primarily two: the immigrants and the political class, including such supranational institutions as the European Union, NATO, the IMF and the United Nations. However, the attitude toward immigrants is often ambivalent. In the 2007 election campaign, the FN tried (unsuccessfully) to attract the Arab vote, by taking such surprising stands as refusing to ban the wearing of the hijab. Even the most radical groups such as GUD, Réseau radical and, in the past, Nouvelle Résistance, have supported the anti-Zionist propaganda of Iran, Syria, Libya, Hamas and Hezbollah. This does not mean that anti-Semitism has disappeared: Œuvre française is first and foremost anti-Jewish, while in 2007, the Parti national radical published excerpts from the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion* in its quarterly magazine. As a consequence, another important rift now separates the anti-Zionist/pro-Arab groups, from those like Bloc identitaire and Terre et Peuple, which do not want to take a side in the Middle East conflict, and from some influential pro-Israeli individuals like Guillaume Faye, whose book, *La Nouvelle question juive*, supports an alliance between French nationalists and right-wing Zionists against the "Islamization" of Europe. [29] [30] All groups also oppose, and eventually confront, the left and far-left, although the national-revolutionary movements such as Nouvelle Résistance and Réseau radical have theorized the necessity of an "alliance of extremes" against "the system." Finally, one can notice that the French far right, with the exception of the Catholic fundamentalists, does not pay much attention to the issue of homosexuality. Several groups, such as Terre et Peuple and Unité radical, have even drawn much from the Wandervögel movement and the ideas of Hans Bluher. On May 27, 1992, a decree banned the publication *Gaie France* (founded in 1986) for "incitement to pedophilia." *Gaie France* was published by neo-Nazis under the editorship of former FANE member Michel Caignet.

Since the collapse of the OAS in 1963-64, no extreme-right group or party has seriously threatened democracy, nor has any group seriously intended to stage a coup, or conspiracy, against the legal order. The attempt on July 14, 2002 by a Unité radicale member to kill President Chirac was a one-man action that did not involve a conspiracy.[31] The National Front itself acts within the boundaries of the Constitution, and its program calls for a "Sixth Republic," which, although presidential in style, remains democratic and pluralistic. However, what the implementation of the program would really give birth to is unclear, and it is certain that segments of the party stand for an authoritarian, undemocratic state. The far right, and especially the FN, has never been able to obstruct legislation in the Parliament. When it held seats there, in 1986-88, its 35 MPs were ostracized by the rest of their colleagues and the bills they introduced were not even put on the agenda of the Assemblée nationale. However, in 1998, in the Rhône-Alpes Conseil Régional, where the president, Charles Millon, had allied with the FN, the FN councilmen succeeded in blocking the vote of the subsidies to several associations they were opposed to on political grounds.

[29] Chevaigne, éditions du Lore, 2007.
[30] A founding member of the Ligue de défense juive confirms that his movement has met with Richard Roudier, one of the Bloc identitaire's leaders, certainly in 2005. Author's interview with Eliahou Nataf in Paris, Nov. 2007.
[31] In 2004, Maxime Brunerie, also a former MNR candidate, was sentenced to 10 years.

The overwhelming majority of French society thinks that the far right is clearly beyond the pale of acceptability. A SOFRES survey shows that between 1984 and 1998, the proportion of people who think that "FN and Le Pen are a danger to French democracy" was continuously rising, from 44 percent to 73 percent. In the 1995 presidential election, Le Pen was the most disliked of any candidate (24 percent positive opinion, 45 percent negative), and only 71 percent of those who said they agreed with "90 percent or more of what he is saying," voted for him.[32]

The influence of the far right, through the National Front, has been strong (more than 25 percent in the 1990s) in several regions of the country, especially Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur (PACA) and Alsace (around 25 percent in the Strasbourg-Mulhouse region), and to a wider extent, in the area bordering the Mediterranean, from Per. The far right is also strong in those areas, like Nord-Pas-de-Calais and Lorraine, which have been hit by the dismantling of the traditional industries (coal, steel and mining) and where the FN receives a large part of the working-class vote. Since 2002, there has been a change in the geography of the FN vote: it has eroded in PACA and Alsace, where the mainstream right has regained strength, but is growing in northeastern France, which is fast becoming the party's new stronghold. As proof of that, Marine Le Pen is a candidate in the city-council elections of 2008 in the working-class town of Hénin-Beaumont, in the Pas de Calais department, where she polled 42 percent in the 2007 legislative election.

Finally, the far right has developed different strategies to make inroads into civil society. Between 1990 and 1995, the FN made a great effort to build a network of associations that were active in nearly all areas of civic life, from the teaching professions (Cercle National de l'Enseignement) to non-legally recognized trade unions in the public transportation system and among the occupants of state-subsidized housing flats; to a women's branch (Cercle National des Femmes d'Europe) and even a Cercle National des Français Juifs (for the Jews). Not one of those actually had any influence outside of the narrow numbers of FN members who were part of the target groups, and all of them had virtually ceased to exist at the beginning of the 21st century. The Front national de la jeunesse, which never had more than 1,700 members nationwide, was an attempt at offering youth education, but it failed to reach anyone beyond FN members, and the ideological education of the young far-right activists was often done by smaller, more radical movements such as GUD, Terre et Peuple, Unité radicale and the skinhead groups. The far right organizes a lot of social events, but they are intended for the in-group, not the out-group. For example, in 1996 and 1997 in Toulon, there were two competing book fairs, one organized by the FN municipality, which featured far-right authors, and another one, supported by the Conseil Général (led by the conservative right): it is estimated that 12,000 people attended the "mainstream" one, and only 3,000, at best, the FN one.[33] The attempt to make inroads into civil society by the FN was a failure, but by the standards of the FN it was a success, because of the exposure the major media, especially TV, gave to the party, without trying to have an educational approach.

Sociopolitical environment and attitudes in mainstream society

[32] See Mayer, op. cit., pp. 354-355.
[33] Cf. Gilbert Rochu/Yasmina Salhi: Toulon, ville amiral du Front national, Le Monde diplomatique, juillet 1996, pp. 4-5.

There is ambivalence in the French attitude toward racism and immigration.[34] On the one hand, racism and xenophobia can be considered "high," because 30 percent of those surveyed say they are racist and 48 percent say "there are too many immigrants." On the other hand, immigration is considered slightly positive, as 79 percent say that "migrant workers should be considered to be at home in France, because they contribute to the economy," and 52 percent even agree that non-EU foreigners should vote in the local elections. Meanwhile, migrants are judged rather negatively when it comes to their behavior and culture: 54 percent say that the immigrants do not do what is necessary to integrate. This may be related to the widespread feeling that most immigrants are, at least culturally, Muslim. And the poll shows the massive level of intolerance against the Muslim religion (Islamophobia): only 21 percent have a positive opinion of Islam, against 29 percent positive opinions of Judaism and 44 percent positive opinions of Catholicism; 74 percent say that wearing the Muslim headscarf is "a problem" and while 40 percent agree that more mosques should be built, 38 percent are against. Meanwhile, 90 percent of those surveyed who say they are close to the FN also say that they are racist. On the whole, the French attitude toward racism and immigrants is ambivalent. Eighty-eight percent acknowledge that racism is a reality, and a majority think positively of immigrants, but only when they are perceived as "assimilated," and when they do not identify themselves with Islam.

As for anti-Semitism, it has been in continuous decline since 1945, according to the CNCDH report. Thirty-five percent of those surveyed think that the Jews are "a group apart" in French society, as compared to 54 percent who say so of the Muslims; 20 percent say that the Jews are "a group open to the others" (16 percent for Muslims) and 36 percent say that "the Jews form no specific group" (19 percent for Muslims). Those figures are the same as those for the previous years; nevertheless, the same report shows that anti-Semitic incidents increased by 6 percent in 2006 over 2005, and the number of very serious incidents, including assaults, has been on the rise. Once again, this shows an ambivalent attitude. Although there are no social barriers stopping Jews from entering any career or holding any position, the fact that only 29 percent have a positive attitude toward the Jewish religion, as compared to 44 percent positive attitudes toward the Catholic religion, and the high level of anti-Semitic actions, explain why we have chosen to rate the level of anti-Semitism as "high."

Finally, the common understanding of integration, in the French context, is that it means assimilation. The French Constitution, since the 1789 Revolution, does not recognize "minorities" or "minority languages," and anti-religious prejudice, regardless of religion, remains high.

V- Future trends

The future of the far right depends very much on that of the National Front. If Marine Le Pen succeeds her father, she will first have to prove that she is able to maintain the unity of the party. Then, she will have to adopt a strategy that, when the next presidential election comes up in 2012, will enable the FN to bring back to the fold those voters who defected to Sarkozy in 2007. To this day, there is no consensus on the ideological course the party needs to adopt to achieve this goal. Under the influence of Alain Soral and some of her closest advisers (among them, Philippe Péninque), Marine Le Pen is trying to appeal to those voters from the

[34] The data used are from the last available survey conducted by the Commission nationale consultative des droits de l'homme (CNCDH) and published in its report for 2006. The poll was conducted by the CSA institute on Nov. 6-9, 2006.

lower middle class and the working class, the less educated and the unemployed. Her ideological discourse blends nationalism and criticism of globalization in a way that the thinker of the Nouvelle Droite, Alain de Benoist, has described as follows: "The FN has yet to learn how to become a power that can change society in a way that can appeal to those classes with a social and cultural status that is precarious, and which have no cultural capital, not to speak of those who do not vote anymore."[35] As for the other subfamilies of the far right, they will remain fringe subcultures. There may be a blossoming of radical groups, if the National Front splits when Le Pen steps down or dies. The future of the Catholic fundamentalist movement lies in the return to the fold of the schismatic Lefebvrists, and talks are under way to that effect with the St. Pius X Fraternity. The Nouvelle Droite, which has lost its bid to become the think tank of the mainstream right, will remain a marginal force, although Benoist's writings are influential in both the national-revolutionary groups and the Marine Le Pen/Alain Soral factions of the FN.

VI- Current state of data concerning the radical right

The French Ministry of the Interior does not publish reports similar to those of the Bundesamt für Verfassungschutz. The only recent data which have been made (partly) public is a January 2005 report of the Renseignements généraux (the state security agency in charge of domestic intelligence) on the "far right in France."[36] It estimated the overall number of activists at 2,500 to 3,500. The report divided the far right into five subfamilies: the skinheads (1,000 to 1,500); the "identity" movements (700 to 800); the ultra-nationalists (120 to 320); the neo-Nazis (170) and the politically motivated soccer hooligans (figure not given). The National Front had 42,000 dues-paying members before the 1998 split.[37] Although the party boasts that it has 60,000 members, it is estimated that the real figure is around 20,000.[38] There are no figures for MNR membership or for other movements. In the absence of official figures, only educated guesses can be made from the data released by the groups themselves, which is then compared with on-the-spot observations made mostly during demonstrations.[39] Using this method, the largest fringe group seems to be Bloc identitaire/Jeunesses identitaires.[40] It has between 250 and 500 members. Terre et Peuple has around 200 and Œuvre française 100.[41] The Parti nationaliste français has around 100, and Réseau radical less than 50. To sum up, there is really a need for a French equivalent of the Verfassungschutz report, but this is made difficult by a decree of Jan. 16, 1995 that prohibits the agency from pursuing surveillance of the legal political parties and that restricts the scope of its activities to watching "violent groups."

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[35] Alain de Benoist: "L'élection présidentielle de 2007, une analyse"(June 2007). *Résistance*, Nantes, no. 46, vol. 6, p. 11.
[36] La France d'extrême-droite par ses Renseignements Généraux. *Le Monde*, Jan. 22, 2005.
[37] This is a documented figure: When the party split up in December 1998, a legal feud took place between the factions, which ended in a court decision in favor of Le Pen's keeping the party's assets. The court ordered legal seizure of the party membership files in order to know the real membership.
[38] Erwan Lecoeur, ed.(2007) *Dictionnaire de l'extrême- droite*, Paris. Larousse.
[39] http://www.tau.ac.il/Anti-Semitism/asw2006/france.htm.
[40] http://www.bloc-identitaire.com.
[41] http://www.oeuvrefrancaise.com.

The 2006 report of the Commission nationale consultative des droits de l'homme (CNCDH) gives official statistics on racist and anti-Semitic violence (both threats and actions).[42] In 2006, racist and anti-Semitic violence decreased by 10 percent, mostly due to the decrease in racist violence; anti-Semitic violence increased by 6 percent. The extreme right being responsible for most of the racist actions, the share of the overall violence that can be attributed to the far right also decreased by 11 percent. However, this figure hides two very distinct realities: First of all, the far right is responsible for only 10 percent of the anti-Semitic violence, but it is responsible for 41 percent of the racist violence, a big increase over the 2005 figure (25 percent). The CNCDH report is a useful tool, but the ban on ethnic statistics in France, which makes it illegal to register the ethnic/religious affiliation of people (including those arrested or convicted), means that the statistics it contains on the ethnicity of racist and anti-Semitic offenders are not scientifically valid.

According to the Commission nationale des comptes de campagne et des financements politiques (CNCCFP), in 2006, the FN received 4.557 million euros in public money.[43] The amount of money granted by the state being calculated proportionally to the election results of the party, it is estimated that the grant in 2008 will be only 1.8 million euros. The CNCCFP is a public body that controls the financial operations of election candidates and political parties. Its annual report is available at www.cnccfp.fr.

C- Strategies against the radical right

I- Legal order and law enforcement

1- Norms and developments

Table: Anti-racist legislation as of Feb. 1, 2008

Legal offense	Reference in the Penal Code	Liable to	Remarks
Public incitement to discrimination, racial or religious violence or hatred	Art. 23; 24 alinéa 5 loi 1881	Prison: 1 year Fine: €45,000 (maximum)	
Same incitement, in private	CP: art. R. 625-	Fine: €1,500	

[42] *Rapport de la Commission nationale consultative des droits de l'homme.* 21 March 2007. http://lesrapports.ladocumentationfrancaise.fr/BRP/074000226/0000.pdf (retrieved Jan. 5, 2008).
[43] Journal Officiel, 27 Dec. 2007.

	7		
Public defamation on ethnic, racial or religious grounds	Loi 1881: art. 23, 29 al. 1, 32 al. 2, 4 et 5	Prison: 1 year Fine: €45,000	Voted in the “Pleven Law,” 197
Racial, ethnic or religious libel, in public	Loi 1881: art. 23, 29 alinéa 2, 33 al. 3, 5 et 6	Prison: 6 months Fine:€22,500	idem
Apology for crimes against humanity	Loi 1881: art. 23, 24 al. 1 et 5	Prison: 5 years Fine: €45,000	Voted in the Gayssot Law
Challenging the existence of crimes against humanity, as defined by the Nuremberg Court in 1945	Loi 1881: art. 23 et 24 bis	Prison: 1 year Fine: €45,000	Voted in the Gayssot Law
Wearing uniforms or various insignias formerly used by the Nazis	CP: art. R. 645-1	Fine: €1,500	
Crimes against humanity perpetrated after 1994 (date of enactment of the New Penal Code)	CP: art. 212-1 à 213-3	Life prison sentence	
Refusal to provide a good or service on ground of racial, ethnic or religious discrimination	CP: art. 225-1 et 225-2	Prison: 3 years Fine: €45,000	
Sanctioning, firing or refusing to hire someone on	CP: art. 225-1 et	idem	

discriminatory grounds	225-2		
Using discriminatory grounds in order to prevent someone from running a business	CP: art. 225-1 et 225-2	idem	Law, June 7, 1977 voted in the
Subordinating the providing of a good or service to a discriminatory call for tender	CP: art. 225-1, 225-2, 225-4 et 225-5	idem	
Discrimination by a legal representative of the state's authority	CP: art. 432-7	Prison: 5 years Fine: €75,000	
Desecration of a grave on racial or religious grounds	CP: art. 225-18	Prison: 3 to 5 years Fine: €45,000 to €75,000	Never implemented in the case desecrations

There are no specific laws against the far right, but there are laws against racism and anti-Semitism that can be used against the far right. It was this political family which was, indeed, the main target of those laws when they were voted on, although since then the problem of Islamic anti-Semitism and that of extreme-left anti-Zionism have added new dimensions to the problem. Article 4 of the 1958 Constitution provides that "political parties operate freely and must support the principles of national sovereignty and democracy." Accordingly, in the French legal culture, the prohibition of political parties, even when they are extreme, is the exception, not the rule. Banning a political party or group is made by presidential decree, taken by the Council of Ministers after hearing a report from the minister of the Interior. The legal basis for the ban is a law of Jan. 10, 1936 on "combat groups and private militia."[44] Seven criteria can give grounds for banning a group or party. They are incitement to demonstrating in the streets with the use of weapons; having the intention of harming the integrity of the French territory (for example, in the case of an autonomist or a separatist movement); wanting to overthrow the republican form of government (but it is not clear whether this means that the use of violence is necessary, or if the mere advocacy of a non-republican form of the state is enough); supporting collaboration (with the Nazis), a provision that seems outdated, but which can still be used to ban a group that praises former collaborationists or which gathers former collaborationists; incitement to racial hatred or discrimination; incitement to terrorism.[45]

[44] On this law, see Bertrand Mathieu (June 1999): Etude de la loi du 10 Janvier 1936 relative aux groupes de combat et de milices privées, Paris, Revue de l'Actualité Juridique Française.
[45] Such groups still exist, namely the French branch of the Truppenkameradschaft IV, affiliated with the HIAG.

According to the law of July 11, 1979 and the decree of Nov. 28, 1983, the decision to ban a group must be grounded in facts and be preceded by a contradictory procedure: The legal person in charge of the group has to be warned by letter, by the Ministry of the Interior, that the government intends to ban the group. The legal representative then has two weeks to object to the decision and present his written defense, after which the ministry makes a final decision, which can always be contested in the higher administrative court, the Conseil d'Etat. The law of 1936 was used several times between 1990 and 2007.

Heimattreue Vereinigung Elsass	Sept. 2, 1993	Neo-Nazi	Ceased operations
Unité radicale	Aug. 6, 2002	"Identity" movement	Became Bloc identitaire
Elsass Korps	May 19, 2005	Neo-Nazi	Ceased operations
Tribu KA	July 26, 2006	Black supremacist, working with far right	Became Génération Kémi Seba (GKS)

The ban is not the only legal measure that can affect the activities of a far-right group. The mayor of any city or the representative of the state (the préfet) in any "département" can ban any public activity organized by such a group, on the ground that it is a threat to public order: this may concern a skinhead concert, a demonstration or even a so-called charity event, such as in the case of the "pork soups" organized by the Bloc identitaire for the homeless. As the distribution of free food and drinks ostensibly included pork and alcohol, and was organized by an association named "Solidarité des Français," the Conseil d'Etat, on Jan. 5, 2007, said the préfet de police de Paris was entitled to ban the event, on the ground that it was discriminatory toward foreigners, Muslims and Jews, which were de facto excluded from the benefits of the distribution.[46] Furthermore, an individual can be sentenced by a judicial court for "reconstruction of a prohibited party," even though this is not followed by an administrative decision to ban the new group: this was the case on Dec. 17, 2007 in Nice, where Philippe Vardon, a leader of the Bloc identitaire, was found guilty of reconstructing the banned Unité radicale, although neither the Bloc nor its sister organization Jeunesses identitaires are in the process of being prohibited.

The legal provisions targeted at the far right mostly consist of the various laws that forbid religious, ethnic and racial discrimination and incitement to racial hatred. The first such law was enacted in 1881, and prohibits racism in the press or through other means of communication. Defamation on racial or ethnic grounds was first forbidden under the Marchandeau Law of April 1939, which for the first time used the word "race" in a French legal text. This law, voted in the context of a strident anti-Semitic campaign by the far right, was completed by the Pleven Law, passed in 1972. Because most Jewish organizations called for a specific prohibition of Holocaust denial, which in France began to spread in 1978-80, the Gayssot Law was enacted in July 1990. All those provisions have been incorporated into the New Penal Code which came into effect in 1994. The table shows the various legal provisions that can be used. Since 1990, because of the rise of anti-Semitic actions after the start of the Second Intifada, the Lellouche Law of 2003 and the Perben Law of 2004 introduced the idea that racism was an aggravating circumstance for any offense, and that an offense committed on racist grounds makes the perpetrator liable to a longer jail term. The same law also

[46] See the ruling at http://www.conseil-etat.fr/ce/actual/index_ac_lc0619.shtml.

introduced a provision that is extremely useful when prosecuting racist or anti-Semitic books or brochures. Normally, the public prosecutor, or any individual or association, who discovered such a book had to sue the editor within three months, starting from the date of legal deposit of the book. Quite predictably, those kinds of books often had a deposit date that was previous to the real date, and this made legal action impossible. The Perben Law extended the time span to a year. It also contained provisions against racism on the Internet. The June 2004 law on e-commerce states that an Internet provider that has knowledge of a Web page with racist content must "promptly" delay it. Should he fail to do so, he is legally responsible for the racist content. The problem of racism and the far right on the Internet is probably the only one today for which an effective solution has yet to be found. In May 2000, following legal action by the anti-racist association LICRA and the Union of French Jewish Students (UEJF), a Paris court asked Yahoo, a U.S.-based company, to take the necessary technical steps so that the sale of Nazi paraphernalia through Yahoo's auction pages would be impossible from France. After a lengthy legal feud that ended in 2006 before a U.S. appeals court, Yahoo lost the case the court ruling that the company could not invoke the protection of the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution in a matter pertaining to a foreign country. However, this ruling has not changed much, and far-right groups, along with those of a different ideological orientation, still migrate to foreign-based hosts when they fear legal action will be taken against them in France.

To the best of our knowledge, new laws regarding racism, anti-Semitism and the far right are not under consideration now. The Rufin Report to the minister of the Interior on the problem of racism and anti-Semitism (October 2004) suggested that equating Zionism with racism, apartheid or national-socialism should become an offense.[47] However, the government chose not to legislate on this matter. Also, the call by several Muslim associations for a legal ban on "Islamophobia" did not materialize.[48] The priority of the government seems to be the training of civil servants (police officers and judges) who play a part in the fight against racism and anti-Semitism in the knowledge of those topics. This includes knowledge of the far right.

Finally, in France, there is no legislation that allows the state to deny access to, or ban one from working in, the civil service to militants of the far right (or of the extreme left, for that matter). Disciplinary action, however, has several times been taken against the militants, especially in education and the police, resulting in a sanction which put a definite end to those persons' careers as civil servants. Thus in 1997, Vincent Reynouard, a physics teacher in the Calvados department, was sanctioned for having stored Holocaust-denial material in his workplace computer. Reynouard, now living in Belgium, is a Catholic fundamentalist and former PNFE member who currently heads the French-language operations of Vrij Historisch Onderzoek (VHO). In 1990, four police officers who were PNFE members were fired from the police, and in 1994, Alain Camdessoucens, a police officer who led the Alsatian neo-Nazi group Heimattreue Vereinigung Elsass (HVE) was also fired after his movement had been prohibited. It is noteworthy that such disciplinary sanctions were never necessary in the other law-enforcement body, the Gendarmerie nationale.

[47] Jean-Christophe Rufin: Chantier sur la lutte contre le racisme et l'antisémitisme. http://www.aidh.org/antisem/Images/rapport_Rufin.pdf.

[48] The Union des Associations Musulmanes (UAM 93), in Feb. 2006, called for such a law. In the same year, the Conservative MP Jean-Marc Roubaud introduced a bill calling for the prohibition of "defamation of religion," a term coined to fit the claim that the cartoons of Muhammad were an offense to Islam. The bill was rejected.

2. Effectiveness

Scholars disagree on the effectiveness of these legal provisions, which of course do not only target the far right. With regard to the fragmentation of the far right, the laws do not have much influence. The far right is more fragmented when crises (either ideological or related to leadership struggles) occur within the National Front, and it is more united when a strong party emerges. The only possible consequence regards the fact that some movements, when they foresee a possible prohibition, create front organizations which can eventually be used to carry on their activity. For example, the Bloc identitaire, which succeeded the banned Unité radicale, is also known under the name Jeunesses identitaires and locally in their stronghold of Nice as "Nissa Rebella." They carry out some of their activities under the name "Solidarité des Français" and launched a Fédération identitaire in 2007. This tactic artificially inflates the number of active groups, but basically, the militants are the same. With regard to the change of names, some groups also prefer to change their name before they are hit by a prohibition decree. In 2005, rumor had it that the government would ban the neo-fascist Garde franque, which therefore chose to change its name to Renouveau français. The legislation has a bigger impact on the structure of the far-right groups. A good example is the inquiry led by a committee of the Assemblée nationale, in 1999, on the activities of the Département Protection Sécurité (DPS), the stewards group of the National Front. The inquiry was launched after, in 1996 and 1997, DPS members had used police uniforms during skirmishes with anti-fascist activists, and after, in 1995, a North African man had been drowned in the Seine by skinheads, alongside an FN demonstration which had been stewarded by the DPS. Some of the leftist parties, which at that time were the majority, wanted to prohibit the DPS. As a result, having anticipated a ban, the National Front created tighter rules for the activities of the DPS. The group ceased recruiting skinheads and openly neo-Nazi individuals and began to ask the employees of private security companies, often ideologically close to the far right, to steward the big FN demonstrations. The fear of a ban has certainly reduced the risk of the DPS becoming a seditious movement.

There are other points that should be stressed. Many legal experts point to the few results of the anti-racist laws: it seems that in 2001, there were only 137 sentences for racist libel; and in 2002, only 133, of which just nine were not suspended sentences. From a purely practical point of view, it can be noted that, despite this sophisticated legal apparatus: the quarterly *Le National radical*, sold at newsstands, in 2007, ran excerpts of the *Protocols*; the Web site herveryssen.blogspot.com still provides Sturmer-like anti-Jewish articles and cartoons by the neo-Nazi Hervé Lalin, aka Hervé Ryssen; the French Nazi Web site www. phenix.mnsf.info displays prohibited Nazi paraphernalia; the anti-Semitic and Holocaust-denial magazine *Revision*, published by Alain Guionnet, was on sale at the National Front's May Day parade in Paris, etc. The prohibition of publications seems to be more effective than that of a movement. The minister of the Interior can prohibit a publication when it is an apology for racism, anti-Semitism, or, for that matter, any illegal activity (terrorism, for example). There are total prohibitions and partial prohibitions. Total prohibitions have, since 1990, mostly hit Holocaust-denial publications (see table below), which were the common work of far-right and extreme-left activists, and openly neo-Nazi publications. A well-known example of a partial prohibition is that of *Mein Kampf*, which can be sold only when the book contains, as a first page, an eight-page ruling of the Paris Court of Appeals, dated July 11, 1979, which explains that the content of the book falls under the provision of both the 1881 and 1972 laws. Nevertheless, the legislation on hate publications, which is in fact targeted at the far right, has had the consequence that far-right publishers have designed new ways of circumventing the law. The first way is to offer the most offensive books and magazines through the Internet or

through mail-order companies which send the printed material as private correspondence. A good example of Internet sale is the Web site www.akribeia.fr, operated by the Holocaust denier Jean Plantin. Such books as *Le fanatisme juif* (*Jewish Fanaticism*) by Hervé Ryssen, and the complete collection of the publication *Tabou* (*Taboo*) can thus be sold through the Oscommerce on-line payment system, or by regular mail, as private correspondence. The pioneer of mail order in the French far right, the Poitiers-based Diffusion de la Pensée Française, was founded in 1970, has a catalogue of over 3,000 books, owns a Paris-based bookshop, and publishes three magazines as well as several books. It belongs to the Catholic fundamentalist Lefebvrist family.

Table: Prohibited Publications since 1990

Le Soleil	**November 1990**	**Fascist**	**Publication of Œuvre française**	
Tribune nationaliste	**December 1990**	**Neo-Nazi**	**Publication of PNFE**	
Revue d'histoire révisionniste	**July 2, 1990**	**Holocaust-denial**	**Editor: Henri Roques**	
Gaie France	**May 27, 1992**	**Neo-Nazi**	**Editor: Michel Caignet**	

With regard to the directives of the European Union, the Fundamental Rights Agency, formerly the European Union Monitoring Center (EUMC), published a report on the compliance (or noncompliance) of the EU member states with European directives in this field.[49] The report shows that very few countries record separate data on far-right hate crimes or offenses. Only four do: Austria, France, Germany and Sweden. Although the Charter of Political Parties for a Non-racist Society has been signed by the major mainstream parties, it has not been signed by the FN and MNR, and the restrictive measure that is proposed in the charter, of cutting the state funding of racist political parties, has not been implemented. Although the charter forbids any kind of coalition between a mainstream party and a racist party, such agreements were reached between the FN and the two parties of the mainstream right, Rassemblement pour la République (RPR) and Union pour la démocratie française (UDF), the same year (1998) the charter was adopted. On the other hand, France signed on Nov. 23, 2001, and ratified, on May 23, 2006, the European Convention on Cybercrime, which is essential in countering the growing use of the Internet by far-right groups. Furthermore, the French legislation on Holocaust denial is tougher than the April 2007 decision by the European Union to adopt common legislation on this issue. While the European compromise rules that Holocaust denial is punishable only when it is an incitement to violence or racial hatred, it is liable to judicial sanctions in any case under French law.

[49] Fundamental Rights Agency (2007): Trends and Developments 1997-2007: Combating Ethnic and Racial Discrimination and promoting Equality in the European Union, Vienna (http://fra.europa.eu/fra/index.php?fuseaction=content.dsp_cat_content&catid=3fb38ad3e22bb&contentid=46e8f66448a73).

In many European countries, antidiscrimination legislation has been reviewed and changed in the last few years. This major and unprecedented operation was set in motion with the adoption of two pieces of European legislation in 2000, namely the Racial Equality Directive and the Employment Equality Directive. The way those directives have been implemented in France is described in the Migration Policy Group's report written on behalf of the European Commission.[50] However, those directives do not contain provisions that are directly related to the far right. An indirect consequence of the Racial Equality Directive is the Dec. 30, 2004 law that created the Haute Autorité de Lutte contre les Discrimations et pour l'Egalité (HALDE), an independent public body which began working on Jan. 1, 2005. The task of HALDE is to receive complaints from citizens who are victims of discrimination based on race, sex, or sexual orientation and eventually to channel them to the judicial authority; to inform the citizens on the provisions of the antidiscrimination legislation; and to advise the government on those topics. HALDE primarily deals with racial discrimination in the workplace, housing and employment, but it can also deal with any instance of discrimination or offense perpetrated by the far right. Several leaders of anti-racist organizations, who have a strong record of acting against the far right, sit on the Consultative Committee of HALDE.[51]

Deficiencies in the police performance and the enforcement of the law against the far right

On the whole, although the French administrative authorities are less repressive than their German counterparts, the answer is that there are no major flaws. With regard to the police, the major problem is the above-mentioned change in the duties of the Renseignements généraux, who cannot perform surveillance on the National Front, although it is well-known that there are connections between that party and the more radical fringe groups. Another problem is that some police officers belong to far-right groups and that one professional union within the police is oriented to the far right. Among those PNFE activists who were involved in illegal activities in the 1990s, there were at least four police officers, who belonged to the Fédération Interprofessionnelle Indépendante de la Police (FPIP). This union was never very strong: In the 2003 professional election, it polled 5.48 percent; in 2004 and 2006, 4.73 percent. However, its members have been involved in several cases of violent behavior and racist abuse. In February 2008, five men shouted anti-Semitic and racist abuse at the clients of a pub in Amiens, claiming they were police officers but also proponents of "white power." One of them was an FPIP member, a former FN candidate and the husband of an FN regional councilor.[52] It is also certain that the same problem exists within the Army: many far-right activists have been or are reserve Army officers, especially within such youth groups as Groupe union défense (GUD). Among them, a sizeable minority has, at one time or another, also served as mercenaries in overseas operations, whether in Lebanon, alongside the Christian militia; in Croatia during the war in the former Yugoslavia; or in Burma, alongside the Karen guerillas. There surely is a long-lasting connection between the far right, the world of the mercenaries and that of private security companies and some elite units of the French

[50] Sophie Latraverse (2005): French country report on measures to combat discrimination. Migration Policy group; Brussels (http://migpolgroup.com/multiattachments/3480/DocumentName/frrep05_en.pdf.

[51] As of Jan. 1, 2008, they are the representatives of MRAP, LICRA, SOS Racisme and Ligue des droits de l'homme. Cf. http://www.halde.fr/haute-autorite-1/institution-2/comite-consultatif-22/comite-consultatif-4.html.

[52] Le Courrier Picard, Amiens, Feb. 9, 2008.

Army, like the paratroopers or the military intelligence services.[53] However, this is beyond the scope of governmental control.

Problems with the proper prosecution of crimes committed by the far right

One problem severely hampers proper progress in the fight against the far right. Under French law, there are two ways of prosecuting an individual, or a group, when it breaks a law against racism or anti-Semitism. One is that an association, registered legally for at least five years, sues the individual or group, in which case the prosecutor later chooses to indict the individual or to drop the charges against him. Another way is that the prosecutor himself decides to indict the individual. Many victims of racism or anti-Semitism, who belong to a minority group, often do not know their rights and fear reprisals. This makes a big difference, because if the prosecutor acts on his own initiative, the victim does not need to go through the hassle of administrative paperwork and does not even need to hire a lawyer in order to get reparations. The problem is that the prosecutors do not use this prerogative enough, so that the burden of acting against the far right in fact rests upon the major anti-racist organizations. But the five-years-existence provision makes the work of the organizations difficult: the Bureau National de Vigilance contre l'Antisémitisme (BNVCA), which gathers information about anti-Semitic incidents, and which was the first to act in the case of several incidents caused by the far right, has not yet reached the five-year mark, and thus cannot go to court.

Finally, can we say that there is some kind of clandestine affinity between members of the law-enforcement agencies, or other state agencies, and the radical right? The aforementioned examples of some police officers belonging to neo-Nazi groups suggests there is, to a limited extent. There are also cases of openly admitted membership in the FN or another legal radical-right group. However, in 1995, the National Front police, a would-be trade union affiliated with the FN, polled only 7.5 percent in the professional elections. It is also certain that a significant number of active Army officers have some sympathy for the extreme right, and the Catholic fundamentalist movement particularly. When they go to the Reserve Corps after retirement from active duty, some of them even appear publicly, especially in the Chrétienté-Solidarité and Contre-Réforme Catholique movement. But then, this is not a clandestine activity: It is totally public, and totally legal. One could also mention that since 2000, the Association pour défendre la mémoire du maréchal Pétain (ADMP) has been chaired by Général Jacques Le Groignec, a former commander of the Air Civil Defense. Although it is certain that some in the military are not shy about appearing publicly in support of the far right (much less than the police officers, by the way), the Cercle National des Gens d'Armes and the Cercle National des Combattants, set up by the FN to recruit in the Army, have had very limited success and are not really active. Most specialists consider that the major problem today is not with the police force, but with the private security companies and the mercenaries, two "milieus" that heavily recruit among radical rightists.[54]

The problem of racism or political bias within the police force is a difficult one. Several NGOs that are active in the field of human rights have launched initiatives (such as the Observatoire des Violences Policières and the Observatoire des Libertés Publiques) to look

[53] On this topic, see René Monzat (1992), Enquêtes sur la droite extrême, Le Monde Editions, Paris.

[54] On this topic, see Xavier Renou (2006), La Privatisation de la violence ; Mercenaires & sociétés militaires privées au service du marché, éditions Agone, Marseille.

out for violations of civil rights by the police forces. Their findings clearly show that the police have a tougher approach to people with an immigrant background, especially if the person is Arab/Muslim/black, and also to people who are asylum seekers or undocumented immigrants. However, there is an internal disciplinary unit, the Inspection générale de la Police nationale, which investigates the cases of civil-rights infringement, and the role played by the media is central in making those cases known. There are also reports that the attitude of the police is tougher against left-wing demonstrations, although one has to take into account the existence of violent left-wing groups, such as "Black Blocks," which target the police during demonstrations. The major problem of discrimination and racism in the police lies in the attitude of the law-enforcement officers toward the "jeunes des banlieues," a typical French understatement which means "young person of Arab/Muslim origin, living in a decayed suburb" or urban ghetto. The problem with the police is not the number of police officers but rather the proportion of the police force on active duty, in non-administrative jobs, in those parts of the country where they are most needed.[55] The dismantling, in 2003, of the "police urbaine de proximité" (PUP), has put an end to the emphasis that was previously (1998-2002) put on the action of the police in the "hot spots" in the suburbs and major cities.

3-Good practice and strategic outlook

In the French case, as there is no specific state agency in charge of tackling political extremism, the fight against the far right is heavily dependent upon the will of the government, the strength of the anti-racist organizations and, locally, the concern of a particular city prosecutor for the matter.[56] More than the intrinsic value of the laws and regulations, we thus have to evaluate the attitude of the government. On the whole, since 1990, it has been proactive against the far right, although most of the prohibitions against groups and publications have taken place *after* a serious incident involving the far right. In 1990, the Socialist minister of the Interior, Pierre Joxe, acted after the desecration of a Jewish grave at the cemetery of Carpentras. In 1995, the Gaullist minister of the Interior, Charles Pasqua, also banned neo-Nazi publications and took action against a Paris-based bookshop, Ogmios, after neo-Nazis threatened to abduct the son of his close adviser, Patrick Gaubert, who was in charge of the fight against racism and anti-Semitism. When he was minister of the Interior under the Villepin government, Nicolas Sarkozy also showed a commendable will to fight those groups. On July 26, 2006, he prohibited the black supremacist movement, Tribu KA, which has the distinction of working together with white supremacists of the Identitaires and the Renouveau français, but once again, the ban came only after the stridently anti-Semitic black group had physically threatened Jews in one of the Jewish quarters of Paris, on May 28, 2006. To sum up, the major strategic deficit is that the French government thinks that judicial action against the far right should follow a breach of the law, although it would probably be more efficient to take preventive action against those groups that are a potential threat to public order or inter-community relations.

What were the measures that were most successful in increasing the proactiveness of the police and other people in charge of law enforcement with regard to countering the radical

[55] The fugures for 2006 can be found at:
http://www.interieur.gouv.fr/sections/a_l_interieur/la_police_nationale/presentation-generale/effectifs/

[56] For example in Nice, prosecutor Eric de Montgolfier maintains a very close watch over the Bloc identitaire and Nissa Rebella: Philippe Vardon, their local leader, was indicted four times in 2006 and 2007.

right? Certainly, a positive measure was the decision to include a course on racism and anti-Semitism in the curriculum of the students of the École nationale de la magistrature (ENM), a course that is also open to elected officials from various European countries. The same courses now exist in the curriculum of the students in the "écoles de police" (where police officers are trained) and the Instituts Universitaires de Formation des Maîtres (IUFM), which train future teachers of the secondary schools. Once again, the topic of the courses is not specifically the far right, but racism, anti-Semitism and xenophobia. The positive aspect of this policy is that it aims at building a network of all those authorities which, at one point or another, may have to deal with extremist behavior. In December 2003, a decree created a Comité Interministériel de lutte contre le racisme et l'antisémitisme that, under the direct authority of the prime minister, coordinates the policy of the various state bodies on this matter.[57] That there are now specialized judges in charge of discrimination and matters of extremism also gives greater credibility and expertise to the judicial power, in the knowledge of the racist actors. It has to be remembered, however, that in the French context of the post-2001 years, everything which was done by the state in order to stop the growing number of racist and anti-Semitic attacks was mainly motivated by the will to fight the so-called "new anti-Semitism."[58] This anti-Semitism stems from the Islamist movement, the extreme left, and young, second-generation Arab immigrants, who sometimes use anti-Zionism as a disguise for plain anti-Semitism.[59] In this context, although the measures could also be used against the far right, it was clearly a secondary target, not a priority.

II- Political actors and institutions

1- Institutional responsibilities

The division of institutional responsibility in dealing with extremism and terrorism is about to change in France. At this time, and since 1945, the agencies in charge of such problems are divided between the Ministry of the Interior and the Ministry of Defense. The civil-security services are under the authority of the Ministry of the Interior. They are the Renseignements généraux (RG), which performs routine as well as operational surveillance of individuals and groups that may pose a threat to internal security; the Direction de la surveillance du territoire (DST), which is in charge of counterintelligence, with a heavy emphasis on the surveillance of radical Islam; and the Unité de coordination de la lutte anti-terroriste (UCLAT). On the other hand, the Ministry of Defense oversees those intelligence agencies that operate abroad, such as the Direction générale de la sécurité extérieure (DGSE), which is in charge of covert intelligence operations; the Direction de la Protection et de la Sécurité de la Défense (DPSD), which is a domestic counterintelligence agency; and the Direction du renseignement militaire (DRM), which is in charge of collecting intelligence that can help in the conduct of military operations abroad. Over the period 1990-2007, the only newly created agency was DRM, which was launched after Operation Desert Storm. The Conseil de la Sécurité, which will

[57] See the text at http://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/affichTexte.do?cidTexte=JORFTEXT000000608031&dateTexte=.

[58] Apart from the CNCDH reports, figures for the racist and anti-Semitic acts, as well as a description of the main racist/anti-Semitic groups, regardless of their ideology, can be found in Jean-Yves Camus, "France" (country report), The Stephen Roth Institute for the Study of Contemporary Racism and Anti-Semitism. http://www.tau.ac.il/Anti-Semitism/CR.htm.

[59] On this "new coalition" of anti-Semites, see Pierre-André Taguieff (2005): La République enlisée. Pluralisme, communautarisme et citoyenneté, Paris Éditions des Syrtes.

probably become operational in 2008, will not merge those agencies, but it will oversee them all and is modeled on the U.S. National Security Council. Unless a very specific situation takes place (e.g., a far-right activist is suspected of working for a foreign power), the intelligence-gathering and surveillance activities regarding the far right are performed by the Renseignements généraux. Normally, in France, all the administrations (including the RG) in a department are under the authority of the sole representative of the state in the department, that is, the préfet. But there are exceptions in Paris and several of the big cities such as Marseille, Lyon and Lille, where there is also a "préfet de police" as well, who has authority over the law-enforcement agencies. In Paris, as a result of this division, there are two units of the RG, one under the authority of the minister of the Interior (Direction centrale des renseignements généraux) and one under the authority of the préfet de police (Renseignements généraux de la préfecture de police de Paris). In both administrations, one unit is specifically in charge of "violent and threatening groups," including the far right. Apart from the well-known fact that those two branches of the RG have not always cooperated smoothly in the past, one obstacle to the efficiency of their mission against the far right is that the current emphasis is on terrorism, the surveillance of urban gangs and the prevention of civil unrest and not on the surveillance of the extremist groups from the right. In a recent interview, Michèle Alliot-Marie, the minister of the Interior, said there were two priorities: the fight against radical Islam and the fight against "the radical extreme left."[60] The fact that the intelligence agencies now consider the far right a minor threat does not enable them to properly understand and tackle the new issue of "red-brown-green" connections between the anti-American, anti-Israel leftist movements, those of the far right with a similar ideology, and the Islamists. Another obstacle to the proper surveillance of the far right is, as mentioned before, the 1995 decree that bans the RG from monitoring registered political parties such as the FN and MNR. Although one has to understand the context that led to this ban (some RG officers wiretapped a Socialist Party leadership meeting, without any order to do so), it is counterproductive, because the FN and MNR have a troubled but constant relationship with the actors of the nondemocratic, extra-parliamentary far right. For example, the FN and the MNR-led municipalities of Vitrolles and Marignane employed several GUD activists and did business with a public-relations company named Riwal Communication, founded by Frédéric Chatillon, formerly leader of GUD. In Toulon, the official city publication was edited by Christophe Picard, alias Henri de Fersan, one of the most extreme anti-Semites on the scene, who worked under the authority of Serge de Beketch, another radical activist.[61] Those connections cannot be properly understood by artificially separating the political parties from the extra-parliamentary groups.

Among the other flaws in the monitoring of the far right, there is the fact that the Institut national des hautes études de sécurité (INHES) does not take into account the study of far-right (or far-left) threats in its curriculum. The INHES, created in 1990 under another name, is a think tank placed under the direct authority of the minister of the Interior, and it is in charge of assessing risks in the area of public security, with a heavy emphasis on economic intelligence and the use of new technologies.

There is an ombudsman's office on the national level: the "Médiateur de la République," who is appointed by the president and heads a network of 338 local correspondents. There is also a

[60] Michèle Alliot-Marie, Feb. 1, 2008: "Je veux mettre fin à la propagande terroriste," *Le Figaro*

[61] Cf. http://henridefersan.blogspot.com; Nov. 22, 2007. Fersan heads the tiny Parti Français Chrétien, while Beketch published the *Libre Journal de la France courtoise* newsletter.

médiateur on the Paris City Council (since 2001), who is an elected official. However, the limit of the médiateur's action is that an individual cannot file a complaint with him directly but needs to have his local MP file the complaint with the médiateur. While the médiateur can receive complaints that have to do with discrimination, the HALDE (see below) is also competent. The difference is that the médiateur can only act as an ombudsman between the citizen and an administration, but HALDE can receive complaints that have to do with discrimination in the private sector.

2. Political interaction with the radical right

There is a wide consensus, from the extreme left to the UMP, that the ideas and actors of the far right, among them the FN, are nondemocratic, if not legally, then at least ethically. There is nothing like a legal ban on certain jobs or positions for far-right activists belonging to an extremist party. But the public endorsement of such a party (being a candidate or party official) is known to have negative consequences on an individual's career, social relations and job prospects. As a matter of fact, while membership in a fascist groupuscule of the 1960s like Occident or Ordre nouveau has not stopped the career of several militants who later were ministers (Gérard Longuet, Alain Madelin, Patrick Devedjian, Frédéric de Saint-Sernin), membership in the FN has, so far, prevented anyone from pursuing a political career in a mainstream conservative party. Yvan Blot, a former FN member of the European Parliament, returned to the RPR where he started his career, but he stayed as a rank-and-file member, not as an officeholder.[62] This situation is not definitive but will probably persist for a few more years.

Parties that do not belong to the far right officially have a policy of "cordon sanitaire." Officially also, the policy of the parties, left and right alike, is to do whatever is necessary to prevent a candidate of the far right from being elected, should there be one on the second ballot. This could mean withdrawing a candidate if it can help stopping the far right or asking the constituents to vote for a party from the opposite side of the spectrum. A good example of this policy, which is called "front républicain," was in the 2002 presidential ballot, when Le Pen confronted Jacques Chirac on the second ballot, and all the other candidates from the left, except the Trotskyite Arlette Laguiller, asked their voters to support Chirac, lest Le Pen be elected.[63] Whatever the declarations of the national leadership of the conservative parties such as Rassemblement pour la République (RPR, now Union pour un mouvement populaire), and Union pour la démocratie française (UDF), the policy of cordon sanitaire has not always been implemented at the local level.

The first widely known local agreement between the mainstream right and the FN dates back to the election in Dreux, in September 1983, when the RPR candidate merged his slate with that of the then-secretary-general of the FN, Jean-Pierre Stirbois. This decision, which created a huge controversy within the right, with the highly respected former minister Simone Veil leading the fight against agreements with the FN, was motivated by the need to unite the "larger right" against the Socialist/Communist government. In fact, such local agreement had

[62] The only exception is the former FN and later MNR mayor, Daniel Simonpieri, who is now supported by the UMP, of which he is not formally a member.

[63] See the press release from Lutte Ouvrière, "Le 5 mai, surtout pas Le Pen, mais pas Chirac non plus," May 1, 2002 (http://www.lutte-ouvriere.org/elc/pre2002/txt/2002-2.html). LO chose to abstain, while the Trotskyite Ligue communiste révolutionnaire supported Chirac, as did the Communist and the Socialist parties.

already taken place, albeit there were few, in 1977 and 1983, both to the benefit of the FN and, in large cities such as Paris, Toulon and Aix-en-Provence, to that of its rival party, Parti des forces nouvelles (PFN). In 1986-1988, the right did not have to bargain with the FN in the legislative elections, because in 1986, the Socialist government introduced proportional representation, which gave the FN 35 seats in the National Assembly. But such agreements became necessary in 1988, when the new rightist government switched back to the majority system. In two departments in southern France, the right supported FN candidates, while elsewhere, the FN voted for the right. Also, in the 1986 regional elections, the UDF/RPR right had to rely on the votes of the FN in order to win the presidency in five regional councils (Languedoc-Roussillon, Franche-Comté, Haute-Normandie, Picardy and Aquitaine). Although those events took place before 1990, it is necessary to know them in order to understand what happened later.[64]

In 1991, the official stand of the party leadership of the UDF and RPR was that no agreement should be reached with the FN, whatever the kind of election and whatever the electoral cost. President Chirac was personally very insistent on that because of his genuine distaste for Le Pen as a man, and because of his ideas.[65] At the local level, this policy was not always implemented. In the 1992 regional elections, the RPR president of the Haute-Normandie region, Antoine Rufenacht, was elected with the votes of the FN councilors, as was the center-left president of the Burgundy region, Jean-Pierre Soisson. However, the real problem with FN/right alliances took place six years later, in the regional elections of 1998. At that time, the conservative right was in a situation where the FN siphoned away so many votes from it that it helped the left win elections, such as in the general election of 1997. The reason was that, when there was no agreement between the right and the FN in a constituency, the FN candidate remained on the second ballot, and this mathematically enabled the left to take the seat.[66] This explains why many conservative politicians pushed for local agreements that would not break the nationally proclaimed policy of "no alliance with the FN" while enabling them to retain their seat. In 1998, this is exactly what happened: In Burgundy, Franche-Comté, Rhône-Alpes, Picardy and Languedoc-Roussillon, the president of the Conseil regional accepted or solicited the votes of the FN in order to be elected. There ensued considerable internal strife within the RPR and UDF parties and although at the moment several of them were excluded from the ranks of their own party, they were quickly re-integrated after the controversy had become less intense. The alliance with the FN had a cost for those elected: Rhône-Alpes president and former defense minister Charles Millon, after he was forced to leave the UDF, formed his own movement, "La Droite Libérale-Chrétienne" and had to drop all hopes of becoming mayor of Lyon or resuming a ministerial career; the Languedoc-Roussilon president, Jacques Blanc, was excluded from the UDF but remained a member of the Démocratie liberal party, and although he remains a senator, he also had to withdraw from the national political scene. The whole affair, however, proved that politicians who did not want to achieve national fame and were content with the power in the regions could ally themselves with the FN and still be elected. This is a clear case of the far right

[64] On all those events, see Bruno Vallalba (1998), "L'esquive. La gauche et la droite face au Front national," in Delwit P., De Waele J.-M., Rea A. (ed.), L'extrême droite en France et en Belgique, Bruxelles, éd. Complexe, pp. 203-226.

[65] On March 23,1998, Chirac declared that "the Front national is a party which is of a racist and xenophobic nature".

[66] The French electoral law stipulated that any candidate who wins the votes of more than 12.5 percent of the registered voters can go on the second ballot. In 1997, an FN candidate was present in 131 out of 577 constituencies.

being perceived differently on the national and local level. For the right, there was damage, nevertheless, from those alliances, which most citizens considered to be unethical. As a result, the right became much more cautious in dealing with the FN, and the alliances ceased. On the other hand, the FN realized that there was no chance that the RPR and UDF would build a lasting coalition with it, and stopped asking its voters to vote for the right against the left, "freedom of choice" becoming the official party policy. Since 1998, there have been no alliances between the right and the FN or MNR, and the policy of cordon sanitaire has been enforced everywhere.

Although one cannot speak of open cooperation between the far right and the mainstream conservative parties, there is a tradition of some small parties becoming a haven for far-right activists who want to quietly drop from the extremist scene and start a new political career. At the beginning of the 1990s, the Centre national des indépendants et paysans (CNIP) played such a role. The CNIP had been founded in 1949 as a party aiming at reconciliation between the Resistance fighters and the former supporters of the Vichy regime. During the Algerian War of Independence (1954-62), it was staunchly anti-Gaullist and in favor of French Algeria. From being a major party under the Fourth Republic, it became a minor partner in the governmental coalitions, and was ideologically halfway between the conservative right and the National Front. The personal relations between the CNIP and FN worked both ways: After the left came to power in 1981, far-right activists tried to get ahold of CNIP, and having realized that the party would not break away from the coalition with Chirac's RPR, left for the FN. This is the case of Bernard Antony, who founded the Catholic fundamentalist Chrétienté-Solidarité and the daily newspaper *Présent*.[67] On the other hand, until the beginning of the 1990s, the CNIP served as a refuge for former far-right activists who wanted to join the major conservative parties, but had first to adopt a low profile by remaining a minor party for a while. Most of the former leadership of the Parti des forces nouvelles transited through the CNIP before joining the RPR or UDF, as is the case with Hervé Novelli, now minister for Small Business in the Fillon cabinet.[68]

The Groupe union défense, a student neo-fascist group founded in 1969, which has now become the Rassemblement étudiant de droite (RED), has also been a starting point for many a conservative politician's political career. In the wake of the 1968 student movement, GUD was the only anti-communist, activist and violent movement that dared confront the Trotskyite and Maoist groups on the campuses. It thus emerged rapidly as the spearhead of the anti-Gaullist, anti-leftist far right, and more or less became the youth movement of the Ordre nouveau (1969-73) and the PFN (1974-1982). At that time, future RPR/UDF ministers and MPs like Gérard Longuet, Frédéric de Saint-Sernin and Bernard Carayon were members, along with a sizeable number of future high civil servants, lawyers and police officers. The importance of GUD declined somewhat after 1990, when the group became overtly neo-Nazi, but past members retain responsibilities in the FN, or achieve some notoriety in the professions. Philippe Péninque and Jean-Pierre Emié, two key members of Marine Le Pen's closer staff, are former GUD leaders; and in 2007, it was learned that the major in the prestigious "agrégation d'histoire du droit," a university degree in law which is the most

[67] FN executives who were disgruntled by Le Pen's tactics and personal use of power also joined the CNIP after leaving the FN. This was the case of former FN MPs Yvon Briant and Olivier d'Ormesson. The former was president of CNIP in 1989-1992 and the latter held the same position in 1996-1998.

[68] On CNIP and its relationship with the far right, see Serge Dumont (1985), Le système Le Pen, EPO/Vie ouvrière, Bruxelles-Paris, p. 268.

difficult in France, was Benoît Fleury, the GUD leader from 1995 to 2000, who was known for his record of violence and anti-Semitism.[69] The closeness within some circles of the right and the far right is also shown by the fact that one particular party, the Mouvement pour la France (MPF), led by former Minister Philippe de Villiers, serves as a harbor for former FN members who have broken with Le Pen's party. Villiers, a former high civil servant who was close to the Action française when he was a student, is something of a French version of Geert Wilders: an arch-conservative politician with a past in the mainstream right who has built his fame on the denunciation of non-European immigration, the "Islamization" of the country, the fight against the loss of moral values, a "pro-life" stand and a traditional Catholic outlook on society, coupled with free-market economics and opposition to the European Union. His movement was founded in 1994 and has never succeeded in finding its place on the map of the right. It has only three MEP seats and five MPs. In the 2007 presidential election, Villiers won 2.87 percent of the vote. As a result, one of the only hopes of the MPF is to attract former FN members and militants, a strategy that is doomed to failure because of Sarkozy's wider appeal to the Le Pen voters. However, Villiers's party has attracted a host of former FN local executives who left as the prospects of the FN became gloomier. Jacques Bompard, Norbert Chetail and Guillaume Peltier now belong to the party's national committee, and Peltier, the secretary-general of the MPF, is a former deputy leader of the Front national de la jeunesse (FNJ), the FN's youth wing, who later headed the Mouvement national de la jeunesse (MNJ), MNR's youth wing. He also founded Jeunesse Action Chrétienté (1999), a fundamentalist Catholic, pro-life movement.

This description of the organizational links between the right and the far right leads us to a topic that has become central in French political life, the more so since Nicolas Sarkozy was elected president: the extent to which discourses of the far right have been incorporated into the mainstream political debate. In order to properly understand the issue, it is necessary to know that it is now seriously documented that, in 1984-85, President Mitterrand and part of the Socialist Party chose to give the FN wide access to the state-controlled media, in order to divide the mainstream right.[70] The left was sure that the FN's ideas belonged to a political tradition that was now totally marginal and thought that the success of the FN would only be temporary. What it did not envision, then, is that when the FN emerged, a "conservative revolution" had been under way in France since the end of the 1970s. Ideology was not very much present in the Gaullist party, and much less in the UDF, which was mostly concerned with running the state as a well-managed private company. So, several groups that had their roots in the far right tried to fill the void. GRECE and its sister think tank, Club de l'Horloge, became influential in the higher civil service and among younger politicians who were concerned with the ideological hegemony of the Marxist left and wanted to counter it. Throughout the late 1970s, and until 1981, GRECE and Club de l'Horloge set the tone for the ideological line of such influential conservative newspapers as *Le Figaro Magazine* and *Valeurs actuelles*, and it is then that some of the far right's main ideas came to irrigate the mainstream right. Among those ideas are social Darwinism; the importance of heredity and ethnicity in defining an individual's ability and social role; the insistence on ethnic cohesion of the nation as a necessity and, above all, the insistence on differentialism and what Alberto

[69] See Alexandre Sulzer: "Militant connu d'extrême-droite et major de l'agreg," 20 Minutes, Feb. 11, 2008 (http://www.20minutes.fr/article/212246/France-Militant-connu-d-extreme-droite-et-major-de-l-agreg.php).
[70] See Thomas Legrand/Emmanuel Faux/Gilles Perez (1991): La main droite de Dieu, seuil, Paris.

Spektorowski rightly calls "ethnophilian exclusionism."[71] This notion of ethnophilian exclusionism is the key to understanding the far right of the 1990s. It means a move from the old-style racism, which bluntly acknowledged the superiority of the white "race," to the more subtle idea that ethnic groups are equal in theory but that they should live separately from each other in order to retain their uniqueness. It is on the issue of immigration that the conservative right has taken on the ideas of the FN, even before 1990. The well-known scholar of immigration, Catherine Withol de Wenden, said back in 1988 that in the 1980s, "There had been a move from the non-political, technocratic approach [of immigration] to an ideological, passion-ridden one," and she singled out the Club de l'Horloge and *Le Figaro Magazine* in developing a campaign about the "demographic Islamic threat" to the French identity, adding that, because the conservative/liberal right had no unified position on the issue of immigration, it was indeed the National Front which "had set the tone of the debate, by hiding, behind its would-be economic discourse . . . arguments that have to do with passion, culture and the negative consequences of immigration."[72] As a consequence of the electoral rise of the FN until 2002, the right, and also to a certain extent, the left, did not elaborate a sound, dispassionate policy on the issues of national identity and immigration. They merely reacted to what the FN said, either by repudiating it totally or by enacting legislation that was in fact following in the steps of the far right. This was in the hope of stopping the rise of Le Pen's party. As for the left, it had to take into account the fact that in 1995 and 1997 for example, as much as one-third of working-class voters voted for Le Pen and the FN, often because they believed immigrants were a threat to them in the workplace and on the job market. The result was that legislation on immigration changed almost every time the political majority changed: The basic legislation of 1945 was changed in 1984 by the Socialists, in 1986 by the right, in 1989 by the Socialists, in 1993 and 1997 by the right, in 1998 by the left, and in 2003, 2006 and 2007 by the right. Basically, the reforms introduced by the left after 1981 tend to give permanent residence status to undocumented foreigners on the basis of the length of their stay in France or their situation as refugees, while reforms voted in by the right tend to restrict immigration and deport undocumented immigrants while at the same time being more stringent on the conditions for granting asylum status. The last reform, introduced by President Sarkozy, seems to favor what he calls "chosen immigration," that is, introducing quotas for immigrants according to their nationality and profession. Many observers believe that this is a subtle way of replacing African and Arab immigration, which is often made up of unskilled workers, with East European or Asian immigrants, who are not only more skilled but are also supposed to be more prone to integrating into French society. The left has not been immune to the racist discourse of the far right. In 1992, the mayor of Hautmont in the department Nord, Joël Wilmotte, a former Socialist, organized an illegal vote in his city, asking his fellow citizens to approve his call for restrictions on the number of foreigners in the city. The president of the Languedoc-Roussillon region, Georges Frêche, has a long record of making controversial declarations about minorities, and in January 2007 he was sacked from the Socialist Party because of a statement in which he compared the "harkis," that is, the Algerian members of the French Army during the Algerian War, to "lower human beings."[73] Finally, two former Socialist prime ministers also made controversial statements, which certainly would not have been possible in a context where the far right would have been marginal. As early as 1984, Laurent Fabius stated that "Le Pen asks

[71] Alberto Spektorowski: The French New Right: Differentialism and the Idea of Ethnophilian Exclusionism. *Polity*, Vol. 33, No. 2 (Winter 2000), pp. 283-303.
[72] C.Withol de Wenden (1988): Les immigrés et la politique, Presses de la Fondation Nationale des Sciences Politiques, Paris, p. 332.
[73] *Le Monde*, Feb. 28, 2006.

good questions, but he gives them bad answers."[74] In 1990, Michel Rocard said that "France cannot be a haven for all the misery of the world, but she can take care of some part of it."[75] This statement has been often reprinted wrongly, by cutting the second part, and has been interpreted as condoning the FN's rhetoric.

Apart from the problem of immigration, the far right has also influenced the policy of the right on the issue of national identity. The academic Gérard Noiriel, who in 2008 writes about the way Nicolas Sarkozy dealt with the issue when he was a candidate for the presidency, has looked at all his speeches and concludes that Sarkozy raised the issue of identity as if it were that of immigration, which he wanted to push to the forefront during the campaign. Under the influence of his adviser, Henri Guaino, Sarkozy made a synthesis between two opposite ideological traditions, that of the republican left and that of the nationalist right. "The miracle in Sarkozy's discourse," writes Noiriel, "is to propose a definition of national identity which reconciles the right and the left" by quoting both Maurice Barrès (France as "a soul" and "a spiritual principle") and Jean Jaurès's "republican values."[76] While Sarkozy remains in the republican tradition, some of his speeches would certainly not have been possible if he had not tried to capture the FN vote. In Metz on April 17, 2007, he quoted Barrès, "Who wrote for the youth of France, the novel of national energy," while in fact, Barrès was a staunch anti-Semite at the time of the Dreyfus affair and wrote: "That Dreyfus is guilty I conclude from his racial belonging." Other decisions of the new government also seem to have been inspired by the agenda of the FN: the creation of a "Ministry of Immigration and National Identity" in May 2007 suggests that national identity is determined by immigration; on Feb. 22, 2008, the minister for Overseas Territories, Christian Estrosi, visiting the French island of Mayotte in the Indian Ocean, proposed that the *jus soli* be withdrawn on the island, which faces massive illegal immigration from the neighboring Republic of the Comoros. The fact that this statement was made during an election campaign, and that Estrosi is a UMP candidate for mayor of the former FN stronghold of Nice adds to the impression that since 2002 the right has decided to fight the FN by borrowing from its concepts. This is something that Sarkozy has half-acknowledged by saying there is nothing wrong with "taking back the FN voters" as long as the "means I use are in the republican tradition."[77] The question is whether Sarkozy crosses the line between the right and the far right when, in the same interview, he points at "the (Islamic) veil, the supervision of the elder brothers, the forced marriages, the Turkish community where a lot of women do not speak one word of French, the newcomers who live together, the no-go areas with the ghettos" when he answers a question about integration.

In conclusion, it can be said that the discourse of the entire political spectrum, except the extreme left, has become more repressive and conservative on those issues because of the impact of the National Front. Even President Chirac, who was certainly more open-minded than his successor, once complained of the "noise and the smell" of immigrants "who have three or four wives."[78] Chirac also said that he was not able to stop his party from voting the controversial (and later withdrawn with his approval) article 4 of the law of Feb. 23, 2005, which recognized "the positive role of the French presence in the overseas territories, among others in North Africa." This law shows us that what has been at stake in the years 1990 to

[74] Cf. Stany Grelet (1999): "Is security a value of the left?", Vacarme No. 7, Paris (http://www.vacarme.eu.org/article95.html).
[75] Rocard commented on this in an article published by *Le Monde* on Aug. 24, 1996.
[76] G. Noiriel (2008): A quoi sert l'identité nationale? Editions Agone, Marseille.
[77] Interview with *Libération*, April 12, 2007.
[78] Speech in Orléans, June 19, 1991.

2007 is not only the question of national identity and immigration but that of the relationship of France with its colonial past, which in turn has, of course, an influence on the way African (black) and Arab immigrants are perceived here. There is, however, one issue on which the discourse of the FN has not had any influence on that of the mainstream parties and the government: that of anti-Semitism and the perception of the Jewish community. Quite the opposite: during this period, anti-Semitic slurs from mainstream politicians were very few (with the exception of the former prime minister, Raymond Barre, who complained about the "Jewish lobby" which tried to portray him as an anti-Semite).[79] Many positive steps were taken to acknowledge the participation of the French state in the deportation of the Jews, something President Chirac did in a speech on July 16, 1995 before giving financial compensation to the survivors and heirs of the survivors (decree, July 14, 2000). This shows that, as opposed to the racist discourse of the FN, the anti-Semitic remarks of Le Pen and several of his party's executives were rebuked by the mainstream parties, including the MPF, and strengthened the consensus on the need to fight anti-Semitism. This very different reaction to racism on the one hand and anti-Semitism on the other had a consequence: Among the immigrants and French citizens of black or Arab descent, some now say that the intellectual and political elite does not fight racism and anti-Semitism with equal determination and equal means.

In France, there are no specific measures, programs or projects initiated against the far right; there are only actions targeting racism as a whole. The existence of a telephone hotline against racism (toll-free number: 114) is an example, and so is the creation of the Commission Départementale d'Accès à la Citoyenneté (CODAC), of which there is one in every department.[80] Also, with regard to the skinhead/neo-Nazi scene, there is nothing like an "exit" program. One possible explanation is the reluctance of the authorities to enact legislation or implement measures that target a specific ideological family. In the French Constitution, "extremism" is not a category, and the French are not used to seeing both extremes of the spectrum, or new forms of extremism like Islamism, as threats to the constitutional order. Thus, programs that would target *both* the extreme left and the far right are also not possible. We find it a major problem that such programs are not implemented, especially in the school system, where far-right groups such as the FNJ or the Identitaires have been known to spread their propaganda. Nevertheless, France has tried to implement a number of European programs designed to fight racism, such as the "All Different, All Equal" program set up by the Council of Europe. On the individual level, research centers have applied for, and have submitted findings to, several EU-funded projects that have to do with the monitoring of the far right, such as the "Socioeconomic Change, Individual Reactions and the Appeal of Extreme Right" SIREN program (2001-2004), sponsored by the European Commission, and the various EUMC (now FRA) reports that deal with the associated topics of racism and anti-Semitism, and which are written with the help of the French RAXEN "focal point," the Centre d'Etudes des Discriminations, du Racisme et de l'Antisémitisme (CEDRA), a subsidiary of the Commission nationale consultative des droits de l'homme.

2- Good practice and strategic outlook

[79] After the bomb blast that killed four in October 1980, the then prime minister spoke of the "odious attack aimed at killing Jews in the synagogue, and which hit innocent Frenchmen crossing the street."

[80] Creation by a prime ministerial order, May 2, 2000. This "order" is the lowest form of recognition in the French administrative law system. It means that the CODAC can be dismantled at any time.

Several institutional arrangements, structures, measures and programs have proved their worth against the far right. First of all, the 1990 Gayssot law, added to the previous anti-racist legislation, has proved to be one of the most effective in Europe, especially against Holocaust denial. The annual reports of the CNCDH, which have been published since 1990, are also a valuable contribution to the knowledge of the extremist scene, although specialized contributions dealing with the far right and written by hired experts are fewer now than they were in the 1990s. On the political level, one very positive step was the change from the proportional representation to the majority system in the general (legislative) elections, which suppressed FN representation in Parliament. The election system at the local level, set by the law of Nov. 19, 1982, is also positive: only the slates that receive at least 5 percent of the vote can merge on the second ballot, and only those that receive 10 percent can contest the second ballot. This means that the right can avoid merging its slate with that of the FN or MNR in many cities and that the far right cannot contest the second ballot in the majority of the cities. Another interesting finding is that the law of June 6, 2000, which imposes equal representation of men and women on the slates, is very detrimental to the far right. Because of the "gender gap" within the militant community, it is hard for the FN and MNR to find women candidates, and in 2008, this often makes it impossible for those parties to contest the city-council elections. As for the strategic deficiencies, there are many. The major problem is the lack of a comprehensive strategy against the far right because of the widespread feeling that it is not a threat, or not the major threat, or, after 2007, no longer the major threat, to the institutions. After the start of the Second Intifada and 9/11, especially because of the high level of anti-Semitism, the shift has moved from the far right to Islamism, and there is now an increasing focus on the violent, extreme left (Autonomen Bewegung). The minister of the Interior, Michèle Alliot-Marie, recently gave an interview to the *Le Figaro* in which she renewed her fears of an Islamist attack in France, but she also pointed to the rebirth of the "Autonomen," without saying a word about the far right.[81] This means that the French state is concerned about political extremism when it is a law-and-order issue but that it is not seriously confronting the political problem.

III-Civil society

1- Organizations and civic engagements

The NGOs that deal with the radical right can be divided into two subgroups: general-purpose NGOs, whose main goal is the fight against racism and anti-Semitism, and which consequently also counter the far right; and ad hoc, specialized NGOs that were created with the specific goal of fighting the far right, especially the FN and MNR. The anti-racist NGOs are primarily five: the Ligue des droits de l'homme (LDH, founded in 1898 at the time of the Dreyfus affair); the Ligue internationale contre le racisme et l'antisémitisme (LICRA, founded in 1927 by Jews who wanted to confront the fascist "ligues" and their anti-Semitic propaganda); the Mouvement contre le racisme et pour l'amitié entre les peuples (MRAP, founded in 1949, in the wake of the anticolonialist movement) and SOS Racisme (founded in 1984 with the help of the Socialist government to promote the integration of immigrant youth). The specialized NGOs are Ras l'front (RLF, founded 1990) and Sections Carrément Anti-Le Pen/Reflex (SCALP-Reflex, founded 1984). All of them are organized nationwide, with local branches in the regions and cities, and all of them except MRAP maintain a network of international contacts at the European level. All of them have their headquarters in

[81] *Le Figaro*, Feb. 1, 2008.

Paris and maintain a rather small permanent staff (usually under 10) which relies heavily on volunteer work. The leaders and volunteers of those NGOs have different social profiles. At LICRA, the chairman is usually a Jewish figure of political life (the former Socialist Minister Pierre Bloch; the Socialist mayor of the third Paris district, Pierre Aidenbaum; the conservative MEP, Patrick Gaubert) and most other leaders are lawyers. The LDH was chaired by people with a distinct socialist imprint (Resistance leader Daniel Mayer, lawyers Yves Jouffa and Michel Tubiana, currently Jean-Pierre Dubois), but the links with the Jewish communal institutions are weaker, even though some chairmen have been Jewish, and this is because of the critical approach of the LDH toward Israel.[82] The rank-and-file members often belong to the teaching professions or the civil service. MRAP lost, in the 1980s, most of its founding members, several of whom were communist, non-Zionist Jews, and has loosened its ties with the Communist Party, although the chairman, Mouloud Aounit, is a regional councilman in the Seine-Saint-Denis department, elected on the Communist slate. The movement, which now faces a leadership crisis because part of the leadership opposes Aounit's approach toward "laicité," Islam and the Middle East issue, has a membership mostly made up of teachers and people who are active in local politics within the broader left. SOS Racisme, which is still close to the Socialist Party, caters to a young, student membership, and includes Jewish, Muslim and Christian activists. RLF and SCALP are much more heavily oriented politically. They do not have a permanent staff and are primarily a loose network of local initiatives, with a young (SCALP) or middle-aged membership (RLF) socially closer to the popular classes.

It is difficult to give figures on the annual budget of those NGOs. For the year 2000, the annual budget of LICRA was 486,312 euros, 74.9 percent financed by public subsidies, which is the maximum amount of public money allowed by law (75 percent). Those public subsidies came from the Fonds d'Action Sociale (37.6 percent); the city of Paris (11.6 percent); the prime minister's office (6.9 percent); the Ministry of Justice (6.3 percent) and other ministries. As for MRAP, the 2005 budget was 725,586 euros, public money accounting for 62 percent. The budget of SOS Racisme for 2006 was 1.478 million euros.

All the general-purpose NGOs receive subsidies from the state, the regions and many city councils, but Ras l'front and SCALP never applied for subsidies. They do not receive constraints by the government or the political parties, although in Paris, several elected officials of the rightist parties have asked the city to stop supporting MRAP because it is allegedly a pro-Islamist group which is lenient in the fight against anti-Semitism. The subsidies are usually voted for one year and, with the exception of those for MRAP, are voted by all the political parties, except FN and MNR, which consider those NGOs to be "anti-French." Actions that target the fight against ethnic discrimination can be funded either by the local authorities or by state agencies such as ACSE (the Agence nationale pour la cohésion sociale et l'égalité des chances) and the Fonds d'Action Sociale.[83] However, contrary to what the Centre pour l'égalité des chances et la lutte contre le racisme does in Belgium, for example, this agency does not directly target the far right.

Other NGOs that are active in the social, trade-union or migrants'rights field also take part in actions against the far right, as do the left-wing political parties (and occasionally, right-wing parties), masonic lodges and intellectuals. This was the case in 1995, when the leftist satirical weekly *Charlie Hebdo* published a "Pétition pour la dissolution du Front national"; and in

[82] LDH is a member of the Plateforme des ONG pour la Palestine.
[83] Created by law, March 31, 2006.

1997, when an "Appel contre le congrès du Front national" was circulated in Strasbourg, and all those NGOs took part in May 1990, in the major demonstrations which took place after the desecration of the Carpentras cemetery. During the 1990s, the presence of ministers and political leaders in the demonstrations against the far right was a common occurrence: President Mitterrand, and the minister of the Interior, Pierre Joxe, took part in the demonstrations after Carpentras. Later on, the presence of politicians was considered counterproductive, because it strengthened the citizens' feeling that the FN stood alone, against the whole political class. On several occasions, such as the demonstrations against Le Pen that took place in Paris before the second ballot of the 2002 presidential election, an unorganized form of civic engagement took place: On May 1, the anti-Le Pen demonstration attracted 400,000 nonaffiliated individuals in Paris and 1 million in the regions, while the FN demonstration on May 1, which has been organized since 1981, never attracted more than 12,000.[84] The major problem with the anti-racist NGOs is that they used to work together against the far right but very seldom do so any more. The reason is ideological, and is a consequence of the rift that occurred within the anti-racist movement after the Second Intifada and 9/11. LDH and SOS Racisme are close to the socialist left; the LICRA is now close to the conservative right.[85] MRAP was a sister organization of the Communist Party and is now chaired by Mouloud Aounit, who has moved to the anti-globalization left. Two organizations, namely LICRA and SOS Racisme, are now very active against Islamism and regularly denounce the anti-globalization left when it tries to forge political alliances with the Islamist movement. They also put the fight against anti-Semitism at the forefront, considering anti-Semitism a prejudice distinct from racism.[86] On the opposite end of the spectrum, MRAP is mostly concerned with the traditional far right and "Islamophobia," a word that other anti-racist groups in France are very reluctant to use because they think it has been pushed by the Islamists into the vocabulary of the anti-racist movement. The LDH is close to the positions of MRAP and is also very active in the field of the migrants' and asylum seekers' rights. Both organizations have been accused of downplaying anti-Semitism, and especially anti-Semitism stemming from Arab/Muslim immigrants. This rift in the anti-racist movement is widened by a divergent approach to the question of "laicité," that is, the secular state and the visibility of religions in public life. In 2003-2004, before Parliament voted on a law that bans the wearing of the Islamic headscarf in public schools, those organizations took opposite stands: LICRA and SOS Racisme, supported by the women's rights organization "Ni putes, ni soumises," supported the law, while MRAP and LDH were opposed to it. So as to blur the lines even more, new actors have emerged in the field of anti-racist NGOs that are totally antagonistic when it comes to the issues of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, anti-Semitism and Islamophobia: the Union des étudiants juifs de France (UEJF) and J'accuse, are two NGOs that regularly go to court against the far right and especially against Holocaust deniers and racists on the Internet, but they are also very active against what the philosopher Pierre-André Taguieff has called "the new anti-Semitism, that is, anti-Jewish prejudice from the left and the Muslim immigrants in the disguise of anti-Zionism."[87] At the other side of the spectrum, new "anti-racist" NGOs have emerged that stem from the immigrant community and are mostly, if not only, concerned with Islamophobia: those are the Mouvement de l'immigration et des

[84] According to Radio France Internationale: http://www.rfi.fr/francais/actu/articles/029/article_14443.asp. For the FN demonstrations, it is the author's own observations since 1984.

[85] The chairman of LICRA, Patrick Gaubert, is an MEP for the UMP party.

[86] The triggering event was the participation of the Swiss Muslim thinker, Tariq Ramadan, to the European Social Forum in Paris in 2003.

[87] See Taguieff (2002): *La Nouvelle judéophobie*, éditions Mille et une Nuits, Paris.

banlieues (MIB) and the Indigènes de la République, which are anti-globalization left, and are a problem to the strategy against the far right, because they tend to label "fascist" or "extreme" whatever is conservative, including, for example, President Sarkozy and his party.[88] To sum up, the unity of the anti-racist movement was built in the 1990s against the far right and collapsed after 2000 because of the consequences of the Middle East situation and the emergence of political Islam.

The specialized anti-far-right NGOs have been strong as long as the FN was (that is, until 2007, with a peak in 1995-2002). Ras l'front (RLF) was deactivated in 2007 as a result of the decline of the FN.[89] It was a network of local groups (more than 100) that mobilized against the initiatives of the FN, put in the broader context of a leftist anti-racist ideology, as many RLF activists belonged to the Trotskyite Ligue communiste révolutionnaire. RLF, which published a monthly magazine by the same name, has had an important role in the strategy against the FN and MNR. First, it raised the awareness of many young people, and it also helped raise the issue of the far right in the workplace and among trade unions, a milieu that was often reluctant to take the far right seriously. Then, it organized demonstrations that were widely publicized in the media, and which by far outnumbered the FN's: 50,000 demonstrated in Strasbourg against the 1997 FN convention, and although not all of them were RLF activists, the network played a prominent part in staging the demonstration. The fact that the mainstream media relayed the activities of the RLF, and also uncovered many facts about the far right's internal life, was harmful to the FN and MNR and certainly helped both the citizens and the political parties to see the far right for what it really was. Another network, SCALP/Reflex, had (and still has) a similar role, albeit on a smaller scale. Its work had the effect of making the anarchist activists sensitive to the issue of the far right, whereas they generally tend to dismiss such parties as the FN and MNR as "just the other side of the coin" when compared to the other "parties of the system," the left included.

2- Activities

Although there are no specific programs or measures aimed at strengthening civic engagement against the far right, there are indeed cases in which public agencies and NGOs worked together to fight the far right. First, all the major anti-racist NGOs are represented on the board of the major antidiscrimination institutions such as HALDE and CNCDH and in the CODAC in the departments. In 2007, the Ile-de-France region set up a Conseil de l'Egalité (Council for Equality), whose members are appointed by the president of the regional council. Although this institution has a consultative status only, a representative of SOS Racisme sits there, as do several representatives of immigrants' associations. Collaboration in actions which specifically target the far right is, however, almost nonexistent, and is limited to a city council allowing an NGO to hold a conference in the city hall or on a communal property or to those NGOs having a booth at the annual NGO festival day sponsored by the municipality.

Some of the aforementioned NGOs belong to transnational networks. LICRA has had a policy, since 2000, of launching branches in foreign countries in Europe (Switzerland, Italy) and even overseas (Congo-Brazzaville) and is currently trying to build a network on the issue of the "Durban 2" conference. SOS Racisme has branches in Austria, Switzerland, Italy,

[88] The most important theorist of this ideology is the philosopher and former Maoist Alain Badiou in De quoi Sarkozy est-il le nom? (2007). Nouvelles éditions Lignes, Paris.
[89] On RLF, see: René Monzat (2003): RAS L'FRONT, DOUZE ANNEES DE MILITANTISME ATYPIQUE, OUTRE-TERRE n° 3 2003/2, pp. 73-88.

Portugal, Denmark and Norway, but the only international action it has set up lately is on the issue of "genocide" in Darfur. The LDH is part of the Fédération internationale des droits de l'homme (FIDH), which does not normally target the far right, although it is paying great attention to areas such as Russia and Latin America, where racist and anti-Semitic actions are often perpetrated by the far right. In 2006, the FIDH invited representatives of the Moscow-based Sova Center to Paris for a press conference on those topics, and the issue of the far right was on the agenda.

The NGOs that have specialized in the far right also set up some kind of international collaboration in the 1990s, which is of course partly dead now because of the closure of Ras l'front. RLF was part of the UNITED network, the ICARE (Internet Centre Anti-Racism Europe) and the INACH (International Network against Cyberhate) networks. Its Web site featured links to the Anti-Nazi League (United Kingdom), the German www.antifa.de Web site and the www.magenta.nl database. However, not much was done on a practical level. The SCALP/Reflex works closely, on a much more consistent and regular basis, with similar European organizations through the "No Pasarán" network and is the only one to maintain contact with organizations in Poland (Niegdy Wieciej) and Russia (Memorial). It has a regular column in the monthly British magazine *Searchlight*, it organizes conferences with foreign delegates, and it stays in touch with Rosa Antifa (Vienna) and various German groups, including the publications *Antifaschistische Nachrichten* and *Antifaschistische Infoblatt*.

3- Good practice and strategic outlook

It may seem strange that the European country where the far right has been the strongest is also the one where it can be said that almost everything has yet to be done. It seems to us that the public institutions have been fearful of building a lasting relationship with the anti-far-right NGOs for two reasons: first, those that existed clearly belonged to the extreme left, and second, any collaboration between an elected body and those NGOs was fated to be controversial, because the FN and MNR sat on the city or regional councils and saw this as an attack on parties which, they insisted, were "democratic." Once again, another problem, if not *the* major problem, is the reluctance of the major NGOs to focus on the far right instead of institutional racism and the promotion of ethnic diversity. One enormous strategic deficit is that the anti-FN NGOs are now almost entirely defunct and that there is no public authority or institution willing to take charge of both the watchdog work and the grassroots work against the far right. What it means is that the existence of the anti-FN NGOs was mostly a *reaction* to that party's success. When the FN is low, the need for such NGOs may seem low too, but should there be another upsurge in the FN vote in the future, there will be almost no structure in place to fight against the far right. This is the major strategic deficit.

Conclusion

In France, this is not the time to mobilize actors on the issue of strategies against the far right. There is a widespread feeling that the National Front has been a thing of the past since the 2007 presidential election. More than that, the debate on the issue of the FN has often revolved around the question "Is the FN in a position to take over?" There was much less interest in the real issue, which is, "Is the ideology of the far right insidiously becoming, if not mainstream, then at least a matter for discussion? Some intellectuals say that the greater acceptability of the FN's ideas comes from the long-term evolution of French society, which

has become "neo-conservative."[90] Others point to a French tradition of opposition to the Enlightenment that ran throughout the 19th and 20th centuries and that united part of the left and part of a right in a common rejection of liberal values, a common hatred of everything "un-French," and after 1945, a common rejection of the United States.[91] Whatever the ideological reasons, the success of the far right also comes from the alternation of both the left and the right in power after 2001 and the rejection of the major parties that resulted from the existence of broad coalitions, from which only the Trotskyite far left and the FN/MNR were excluded.

Because the coalitions against the far right were so broad, the political parties took it for granted that the success of the FN was only temporary, and that they would eventually finish off that party either by ignoring it or by appropriating some of its ideas. Not much attention was paid to the in-depth effects of what was not perceived at its true value and meaning: For the first time since the end of World War II, a political party that overtly despised democracy and which used fascist, Holocaust-denial, racist and anti-Semitic language represented 15 percent of the electorate and became a beacon for similar parties all over Europe. To this, there were reactions, but against this there was not much strategy.

Some might think that it is too late, now that the FN is much weaker, to devise a strategy. However, *because* it is weaker, and certainly will be weaker for several years, it may precisely be time to reflect on the mistakes and shortcomings of the years 1990 to 2002. We have first to assess the exact extent of the dissemination of the FN ideology in the political and social field and then build the educational and legal tools that will enable us to effectively fight those ideas. For the parties of the mainstream right, this will certainly mean the emergence of two distinct attitudes, one liberal and the other conservative/reactionary. For the parties of the left, the problem is to admit that the struggle against racism was a failure because it was mostly grounded in ethical, emotional attitudes rather than in political thought.

[90] D. Eribon (2007): D'une révolution conservatrice et de ses effets sur la gauche française, éditions Léo Scherr, Paris.
[91] See Taguieff (2004): Prêcheurs de haine. Traversée de la judéophobie planétaire, éditions Mille et une Nuits, Paris.