

Corrupt French elites launch new McCarthyite inquisition

by Mark Burdman

In early June, the outgoing head of France's DSGE secret service, Claude Silberzahn, gave an extraordinary retirement speech. Addressing intelligence officers at DSGE headquarters in Paris, Silberzahn warned that France, and the West more generally, are heading toward a "civilization of chaos," caused in large part by the "corruption of the elites." He insisted that the way in which economic and political issues are discussed has lost almost all connection with the situation in France.

That these words characterize the problem in France is evident from the behavior of French elites. The deeper the economic, strategic, and philosophical-cultural crises in the country become, the greater becomes the tendency for leading members of the French policy establishment, driven by a form of moral and political corruption, to exhibit symptoms of acute paranoia and hysteria. Rather than admit that the prevailing policy axioms of the recent period have been absurd and self-defeating, the elites are lashing out at scapegoats, manufactured by themselves, as supposedly responsible for France's problems.

The state of things, as of mid-July, can be summed up by certain tell-tale economic-demographic facts. French unemployment is among the highest in all of Europe, second only to Spain, and the French press has begun to use the word "depression" to characterize the economy. Bankruptcies are at a record level. Forecasts are that industrial production will collapse by 6% this year. During the week of July 5, the INSEE national statistical agency forecast that overall Gross National Product would decline by 1.2%. Meanwhile, the *Quotidien de Paris* July 9 highlighted that France is now becoming, like many other countries of Europe, a "demographic desert," as the country faces an historically unprecedented collapse of births, a problem made worse by the Balladur government's austerity-dictated cutbacks in family allowances.

Vigilante atmosphere

In this environment, segments of the French political class have decided that they have discovered the cause of their problems: an amorphous entity called "the extreme right." To divert attention from their own responsibility for failures in the domain of economics, policy toward former Yugoslavia, the former Communist sector, and so on, French

spokesmen have launched a virulent campaign that can only be likened to the era of McCarthyism in the early-1950s United States, with the McCarthyite buzzword "communist" being replaced by "extreme right."

Representative of this, the July 12 daily *Le Monde* carried an "Appeal to Vigilance" by 40 professed intellectuals, who claim to be alarmed about the threat posed by "the extreme right." "Extreme right" is never defined, but is known to include, on the one hand, such admittedly dangerous types as unrepentant followers of the old pro-Nazi Vichy regime of the 1940s and advocates of "national bolshevism" and anti-Christian paganism, and, on the other, supporters of the current pope, advocates of a vigorous "war on drugs," and followers of *EIR* founder Lyndon LaRouche. LaRouche and his collaborators are routinely defamed in the French media as "extreme right," a slander which is circulated by French agencies, but which emanates from the Anti-Defamation League in the United States, from the British intelligence-run magazine *Searchlight* in the United Kingdom, and from what was known in the years of the Soviet Union as the "Comintern."

The statement might better be titled "Appeal to Vigilantism." Issued by a newly formed committee for an "Appeal to Vigilance," it began: "We are preoccupied by the resurgence, in French and European intellectual life, of extreme right anti-democratic currents. We are worried about the lack of vigilance and reflection on this subject. This is why some among us have begun, since the month of January 1993, to meet regularly, in order to exchange information and to deepen our understanding of these questions."

They claim that "ideologues of the extreme right" are more visibly involved than in earlier years in propaganda within "anti-democratic and neo-Nazi networks." The new danger, they claim, is that such individuals are falsely portraying themselves as having changed their nature, and, to make that change credible, are now conducting "a large operation of seduction aimed at democratic personalities and intellectuals," many of whom have agreed to write signed articles in magazines "edited by these ideologues. Once trapped, the signatories, of course, give credence to the idea that the pretended change is a reality."

This effort at duping well-meaning democrats is key to "the current strategy of legitimization of the extreme right. This strategy takes advantage of the multiplication of dia-

logues and debates on subjects as, for example, what is called the 'end of ideologies,' or the supposed disappearance between the left and right, or the presumed renewal of the ideas of nation and cultural identity." Those sucked into such "dialogues and debates" with the "extreme right," the signers claim, either suffer from "a lack of information or vigilance, from being too scrupulous in defense of liberty of expression, or from a concern for unlimited tolerance." Therefore, they "play the game today, without wanting to do so, of this operation of legitimization."

The appeal's "democratic" signers are apparently not comfortable with "liberty of expression" or "tolerance," and would be more comfortable with a police state. Indeed, they go on to complain that the "involuntary complicity" of those duped by the "extreme right" contains within it a greater danger, since "we cannot, in effect, forget that the words of the extreme right are not simply ideas among others, but are incitements to exclusion, violence, and crime." In other words, to be a member of the "extreme right" is in and of itself a criminal form of behavior.

To combat such dangers, the signers have decided to form a kind of intellectual gestapo. Hence, they have assigned themselves "the task of collecting and circulating as widely as possible, all information useful for understanding the networks of the extreme right and their alliances in intellectual life (publishing, press, universities), and to take a public position on all matters relative to these questions. We are committed to refusing any collaboration to magazines, collective works, radio and television broadcasts, colloquia directed or organized by individuals whose links with the extreme right would be proven."

They conclude: "France, from all the evidence, is not the only European country where such diverse strategies are unfolding. This is why we call for a Europe of vigilance, by asking any person who approves our initiative to sign this manifesto."

Derrida the Nazi

Among the signers of the appeal are France's Jacques Derrida and Italy's Umberto Eco, two of the leading cultural purveyors of gnostic, fascistoid irrationalism in Europe. Eco, the linguist and author of the *Name of the Rose* and other works, is one of the intellectual godfathers of the terrorist scene in Italy.

Derrida, were he to be logically consistent about his demand for the elimination of the "extreme right," would have to hang himself. He is the father of "deconstructionism," a radical irrationalist philosophy that has provided the impetus behind such destructive movements as "political correctness" in the United States. By his own admission, his theories derive from the writings of the Nazi-precursor German irrationalist philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche, and from the Nazi-era supporter of Hitler's regime, Martin Heidegger. The connection between his philosophy and that of the Nazis has

been the subject of much discussion in U.S. and British intellectual circles, including articles in the *New York Review of Books* earlier in the year.

'So many words for nothing'

How the appeal exemplifies the "corruption of the elites" that former DSGE head Silberzahn was pointing to, is underscored by a commentary by Roger-Pol Droit in the same day's *Le Monde*, entitled "The Confusion of Ideas."

Droit wrote that "the alliances that are being renewed today between several communist militants and neo-fascists must be taken seriously," even if the number of individuals involved in forming such alliances is small. "But," he went on, "it signals, as a small revelatory fact, a form of confusion, more vast and more diffused, that has overtaken intellectual life in the course of these last years, and which is increasing in strength in recent times. We must certainly not underestimate the risk that is developing in Europe of such convergences, which are seizing the opportunity represented by the chaos which reigns in Russia, by the racist murders that are multiplying in Germany, by the unpredictable consequences of the war in ex-Yugoslavia. . . . There exist in our intellectual life perilous tendencies." Droit outlined how various French socialists and leftists have opened up a dialogue with such "extreme right" pagan ideologues as Alain de Benoist.

Tinged with hypocrisy and intellectual dishonesty, Droit is turning reality on its head, and trying to blame this amorphous "extreme right" for the policy failures of the predominant faction of the French political class. As noxious as the ideas of an Alain de Benoist may be, it is absurd to hold him responsible for the abysmal policy of the French government. Respecting the Gulf war confrontation of 1990-91, it must be said, to de Benoist's credit, that he co-signed a declaration opposed to the war, other signers of which included dissident Socialists, Gaullists, Communists, and Catholics. By contrast, the majority faction in the French political class supported that genocidal adventure.

French intellectual and political activist Bernard-Henri Levy, in a commentary in the July 18 Italian daily *Corriere della Sera*, polemicized that if someone were really worried about "national bolshevism," he would mobilize against Serbian leader Slobodan Milosevic and his growing array of allies in the former communist sector. Levy, who has been active in organizing support for the besieged Bosnians, knows he is hitting a raw nerve, given France's flagrantly pro-Serbian policies.

He wrote: "The real national-communist danger is Slobodan Milosevic, a red-black synthesis, from Sarajevo to Moscow, from Sofia to Kiev to Vilnius." Levy advised intellectuals to "not forget priorities. . . . I'm afraid that, in those strange laboratories in the East, products of a really new synthesis are coming out. . . . which will make retrospectively pathetic our ritual gesticulation against 'fascism' and its 'ghosts.' "