

# The Triumph of Ethnos Over Demos in the Nouvelle Droite's Worldview

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"It wasn't a matter of tender heart, but a morbid, contagious excess of sentiment...the human race no longer formed one great fraternal whole--as the popes, philosophers, intellects, politicos, and priests of the West had been claiming for much too long. Man never has really loved humanity all of a piece--all its races, its peoples, its religions--but only those creatures he feels are his kin, a part of his clan, no matter how vast." – Jean Raspail, *The Camp of the Saints*, 1973

### 1. Introduction

The nouvelle droite (ND) or European New Right (ENR) generally, if not idiosyncratically, rejects immigration, multiculturalism, minority rights, and liberal democracy as negative phenomena that undermine the richness and diversity of the world as embodied by rooted cultural or ethnic communities. Like Raspail, the ND holds the "popes, philosophers, intellects, politicos, and priests of the West" partially responsible for opening the doors to uncontrolled immigration and choosing humanity, the masses of poor humanity, above their "own" European ethnic groups. In the long run, Raspail, like ND leader Alain de Benoist, argues that immigration and demographic trends will mean the steady demise of white European cultures to more demographically assertive Arab, African, Indian, and Chinese cultures. And as Raspail argued in a controversial politically incorrect piece entitled "The Fatherland Betrayed by the Republic" in *Le Figaro* in 2004, the "tender heart" of Christianity or liberalism will not save white Europeans from a "cruel" period of possible cultural extinction at some period in the future (*Le Figaro*, June 17, 2004).

Like numerous revolutionary forces of the interwar era, including Fascists, the ND's list of negations from anti-capitalism to anti-communism and anti-conservatism to

anti-liberalism is indeed encyclopaedic. Yet, born in France in the wake of the student and worker protests in May 1968, the ND sought to escape the ghetto status of a revolutionary Right battered by Nazi and Fascist excesses by working strictly on the cultural terrain in order to outflank the liberal-left. By the 1990s, as I argued elsewhere and in *Where Have All The Fascists Gone?* (2007), its positions were a unique synthesis of the ideas of the New Left and revolutionary (especially conservative revolutionary) Right (Bar-On 2001, 333-351; 2007).

Instead of delving into whether ENR is fascist or not, which I tackle in *Where Have All The Fascists Gone?* (2007), suffice it to say that with minimal definitions like those proposed by Roger Griffin of fascism as "a palingenetic form of populist ultranationalism," (Griffin 1995, 9; 2003, 5) the ND approximately fits the criteria of fascism as do other non-fascist right-wing movements. Yet, with maximalist definitions like those proposed by Stanley Payne along the lines of ideology and goals, the fascist negations, and style and organization, they meet some but not all the prerequisites of fascism (Payne 1995, 7).

Rather my main focus in this paper, in the context of this panel "European Atttitudes to Multiculturalism," is the underlying, primordial concern of the ND for about forty years, namely, its idiosyncratic rejection of multiculturalism and the survival and erection of rooted ethnic communities within a pan-European context. In the ND worldview, individual rights, human rights, multiculturalism, liberalism, socialism, capitalism, communism, and administratively imposed equality are all false dawns seeking to destroy local, particular communities in an "ethnocidal," global project (Faye 1983). Even democracy, which the ND has valorised in recent years in the ancient Athenian sense, is certainly a lower order concern for the ND than the advancement of a restricted notion of ethnic belonging. In short, it is my argument that despite its opening to the Left and democratic discourse in the 1980s and 1990s, the ND is wedded to a counterrevolutionary tradition dating back to the 18<sup>th</sup> century, which accords greater value to the community notion of ethnicity (ethnos) over democracy (demos). For the ND, the ethnos is the most "real," first order community identity. Or, to put it another way, the ethnos plus political autonomy is the "real" demos. The ND's view of the ethnos is opposed to the demos, particularly its modern representative form and the liberal,

multicultural model of identity, which are seen as "false" communities imposed by New Class administrators from politicians to cultural institutions on recalcitrant ordinary people and communities worldwide. In a Gramscian mould from the Right, the goals of the ND are to cause a rupture between people and leaders and cultural elites on questions related to cultural identity, immigration, and notions of belonging, as well as to undermine liberal multicultural notions of community and assist in the fall of what they consider a blocked, "totalitarian" system (De Benoist 1977, 456-60; 1979, 250-9; Griffin 1998, 5-6).

### 2. Basic Definitions: Ethnos vs. Demos

I will now turn to highlighting some basic terms, namely, the distinction between ethnos and demos. I will also underscore the relationship between the ethnos and demos in the ND's worldview. Ethnos connotes people of the same race or nationality who share a distinctive culture. The ethnos can be constituted in biological or cultural formulations. The demos, on the other hand, is the personification of the populace, especially in a democracy, and comes from the Greek word the people. Demos can then mean: 1.The common people or the populace or 2. The common people in an ancient Greek state.

For the ND, hierarchical, elite, "organic" aristocratic rule is generally favoured over the rule of the demos, or the common people, as evidenced by de Benoist's affinity for elitist thinkers such as Lenin, Le Bon, Carrell, Spengler, Junger, Schmitt, and Evola in his major work *Vu de droite* (De Benoist 1977). In this way, the ND's call for organic, hierarchical societies mimics conservative revolutionary, fascist, and non-conformist forces of the inter-war era. Yet, in the 1980s and 1990s in conjunction with the rise of far right-wing political parties like the *Front National* in France and the Freedom Party in Austria, as well as its debates with the French Greens, anti-utilitarians, and left-leaning *Telos* in North America (e.g., see the special double issue on the ND in 1993-4 entitled "The French New Right: New Right-New Left-New Paradigm?"), the ND became fascinated with the "new populism" and North American neo-communitarians like Charles Taylor (e.g., see the June 1994 issue of French ND journal *Krisis* entitled "Community"). In this context, the ND realized that that in light of a post-war anti-fascist consensus calling oneself a democrat scored you political points and that liberal democracies were themselves sensitive to internal critiques of democracy. In his assault on liberal democracy, the Anglo-American New Right, and the excesses of capitalist globalization, the ND leader Alain de Benoist almost sounded like a leftist of the 1968 generation (e.g., see De Benoist's "Hayek: A Critique," *Telos* 110, Winter 1998; "Confronting Globalization," *Telos* 108, Summer 1996).

Yet, there was a hitch in de Benoist's thinking for the liberal-left. It was not based on de Benoist's valorisation of the demos in its ancient Athenian sense. Rather it was in his primordial commitment to a political project based on the centrality of a *homogeneous* ethnos within the demos. In a 1995 Telos piece entitled "Democracy Revisited," de Benoist traced his fundamental views in respect of the demos and ethnos (De Benoist 1995, 65-75). He praises direct democracy in contrast to mass societies, which need political intermediaries because they have ceased to embody "collectively lived meaning," but carefully circumscribes his notion of direct democracy. That is de Benoist claims that direct democracy is "primarily associated with the notion of a relatively *homogeneous* people conscious of what makes them a people" (De Benoist 1995, 75). De Benoist elaborates on his rather specific, homogeneous and antimulticultural view of the democratic model:

The proper functioning of both Greek and Icelandic democracy was the result of cultural cohesion and a clear sense of shared heritage. The closer the members of a community are to each other the more they are likely to hold common sentiments, values and ways of looking at the world, and it is easier for them to make collective decisions in the regard to the common good without the help of mediators. (De Benoist 1995, 75)

Richard Wolin, who sees the postmodern left increasingly aligned to counterrevolutionary thinkers such as de Maistre and Gobineau, has neatly summarized the ND's preference for the ethnos over demos: "The prerogatives of cultural belonging trump considerations of 'right'" (Wolin 2004, 22). From this perspective, the ND's democratizing impulses in recent years can be read as a secondary, by-product of its primary goal: the reconstitution of relatively homogeneous ethnic communities within a "heterogeneous world". The ND might long for a more "heterogeneous world" to counter what they consider the "one-world" civilizational project of Pax Americana, yet internal homogenization is a necessary prerequisite and internal cultural heterogeneity is strongly valorised (e.g., De Benoist and Champetier 1999, "The French New Right In the Year 2000").

### 3. The Reconstituted Ethnos: From Race to Biology to Culture

ND theorists like Alain de Benoist in France or Marco Tarchi in Italy, who no doubt have their origins in revolutionary right-wing student activism in defense of French Algeria and the neo-fascist Italian Social Movement (MSI – *Movimento Social Italiano*) respectively, were too sophisticated to harken back to the race theories of the Nazis, virulent anti-Semitism, or even a defense of colonialism. A 1969 secret *Groupement de recherche et d'etude pour la civilisation europeenne* (GRECE – Group for Research and Studies on European Civilization) memorandum from the leading ND think tank urged its members to jettison "outdated vocabulary" (GRECE, *Elements* 1969, 16). Thus begun a long-term campaign to capture European hearts and minds by carefully omitting older language and themes connected to the Fascist and Nazi past, as well as reformulating the discourse of the revolutionary Right in the context of a decidedly anti-fascist post-war climate.

The French ND expert Pierre-Andre Taguieff has pointed out that the ND went through three discourse changes in three decades in order to stay faithful to the notion of a rooted ethnos and cultural particularism: A defense of the "white man" and colonialism along racial lines in the late 1960s; a biological based perspective influenced by science, anthropology, and IQ findings in the 1970s; and finally a defense of the "right to difference" of world cultures in a xenophile, ethnopluralist spirit in the 1980s and 1990s (Taguieff 1993-4a, 34-54). It is the latter position that the ND still holds in the new millennium, as evidenced by the contents of its manifesto to open the new millennium (De Benoist and Champetier 1999, "The French New Right In the Year 2000").

The ND's discourse changes revolved around a cultural defense of the ethnos that sought to get rid of outdated, discredited racial or biological notions of the ethnos. In fact,

the ND slogan of the 1980s became the "right to difference," which they co-opted from the French Socialists under President Francois Mitterand. The slogan was in turn picked up by Jean-Marie Le Pen's anti-immigrant FN. Taguieff has correctly argued that the "right to difference" can be utilized for diametrically opposed ends by both racists and anti-racists; the right and left; liberal republicans and radical anti-Jacobins; radical separatists and integrationists (Taguieff 1993-4c, 160; 1994; 1990; 1988).

As a result of the discourse changes, the ND's notion of the ethnos is today more nuanced, dialogical, and ambiguous compared to the 1960s or 1970s. It rejects the assimilationist bent of the nation-state and the exterminationist spirit of colonialism; it calls for the "right to difference" of all communities in a xenophile spirit; it rejects immigration as a cultural loss for both host and immigrant societies; it rejects both standard racism of the scapegoat variety and anti-racist discourses that seek to erode all cultural particularism; and argues that liberal democracy, an offshoot of "totalitarian" Judeo-Christian monotheism, seeks to abolish cultural differences through the twin evils of the global market and multiculturalism (De Benoist and Champetier 1999, "The French New Right In the Year 2000").

In the context of the "right to difference" discourse, Alain de Benoist wrote these words back in 1979: "We have the right to be for Black Power, but on the condition of simultaneously being in favour of White Power, Yellow Power and Red Power" (De Benoist 1979a, 156). In the 1970s, de Benoist developed his radical cultural "differentialism" after the wounds of French de-colonisation in Algeria and in this worldview France would belong to the French, Algeria to the Algerians, and Vietnam to the Vietnamese. (Bar-On 2007, 170) Le Pen's slogan of "France for the French" and "The French first" were indeed crude representations of de Benoist's radical new ethnic differentialism, although the historical genealogy can be traced to Charles Maurras' *Action francaise* and the racial legislation of the Vietny regime under Marshal Petain (Le Pen 1984; Bar-On 2007, 170).

### 4. Ethnic Identities: The Old "New" Absolutes

The ethnos, or strong, rooted ethnic identities, represent the "first order" loyalty for ND

theorists. Along with the ND's dedication to the cultural terrain as opposed to revolutionary Right parliamentary politics or extra-parliamentary violence, a defense of ethnic identities has been central to the ND's worldview since its founding in 1968. In a *Telos* interview in the mid-1990s, ND expert Taguieff said this about the ND: "Roots, identities: These are the new absolutes" (Taguieff 1993-4c, 172). In the same *Telos* issue, de Benoist stated the following in an interview: "National identity is a real problem and so is immigration" (De Benoist 1993-4a).

For the ND, the demos discourse in the context of valorising the "new populism" in the 1990s was certainly part of a survival strategy, as well as *equivalent* with the ethnos in the ancient Athenian sense. That is, a demos that did not represent a rooted ethnos in a homogeneous mode did not deserve the ND's support. The implicit argument was that elite political and cultural classes, unlike the popular classes, did not have sufficient love for the ethnos and were hijacking democracy by splitting it from its connection to the common destiny of particular, rooted ethnic communities.

Born in 1968, it was no accident that the ND focused on the ethnos and, to a lesser extent, the demos. In the wake of the 1968 protests, we witnessed a return to ethnic and democratic appeals against both liberal and dogmatic Marxist ideologies: the rise of black separatism, radical nationalist anti-colonialism, regionalism, and calls for democratic participation in institutions from the state to workers' councils. Moreover, ND leader de Benoist was especially indebted to the German thinker Johan Gottfried von Herder (1744-1803) and the tradition of radical cultural heterogeneity as beneficial for the evolution of humanity, which was far more important to de Benoist than a concern for democracy (Bar-On 2007, 132). This Herderian tradition stressed "the flowering of the world's cultural diversity and uniqueness; the inherent beauty and value and beauty of all world cultures; and the duty to preserve these cultural differences because they entail a rich multiplicity of different ways of feeling, seeing and living in the world." (Bar-On 2007, 132)

In a celebrated passage from de Benoist's magnum opus *Vu de droite*, which won him the *Academie francaise* prize in 1978, he echoes the Herderian tradition: "What is the greatest threat today. It is the progressive disappearance of diversity from the world. The levelling-down of people, the reduction of all *cultures* to a *world civilization* (De Benoist, 1979b, 25). In the same passage, he goes on to argue that there is a "joy" in travelling the world, seeing multiple "rooted" ways of living, and people proud of their "*difference*" (De Benoist 1979b, 25). He then continues with this line that certainly puts him out of the liberal democratic orbit: "I believe that this diversity is the wealth of the world, and that egalitarianism is killing it" (De Benoist 1979, 25).

### 6. The Reformulated Ethnos In the New Millennium

In the new century, the ND has reformulated the notion of the ethnos against both liberal and socialist assimilationist, state engineering projects, as well as the exterminationist orientation of aspects of colonialism, Nazism, or Fascism. This reformulated ethnos would be local, regional, and pan-European in nature (De Benoist and Champetier 1999, "The French New Right In the Year 2000"). The ND has called for a "Europe of a Hundred Flags" as an antidote to nation-state assimilation, the "technocratic" European Union project, global capitalism, and Americanization. (GRECE 1998, 118-119)

In the ND's manifesto, "The French New Right In the Year 2000," written by Alain de Benoist and Charles Champetier, the ND is still obsessed with the ethnos, albeit a smaller-scale variant than the past. In eight different sections of the manifesto, the ND directly or indirectly expresses its concern for the rooted notion of an ethnos. (De Benoist and Champetier 1999) In the manifesto, it is somewhat surprising that the ND comes out clearly against immigration after publicly criticizing Le Pen's crude anti-immigrant scapegoat logic in 1990 (De Benoist 1990; De Benoist and Champetier 1999, Section 3, Part 3, "Against Immigration; For Cooperation"), yet less surprising that it is allegedly against racism and for the "right to difference" (Section 3, Part 2, "Against Racism; For The Right to Difference"). In the post-9-11 climate de Benoist claimed to be against both the "tribalism" and "fundamentalism" of US President George Bush's administration and Osama bin-Laden's al-Qaeda terrorist network (*Padania* 19 September 2001). So it was not surprising that the ND manifesto denounced tribalism, while paradoxically calling for strong ethnic identities (Section 3, Part 1, "Against Indifferentiation and Uprooting; For Clear and Strong Identities").

A similar if abridged manifesto put out by the Polish New Right's Jaroslaw Tomasiewicz

and dubbed "The Ethnopluralist Manifesto" has definite ND affinities (see Appendix). The manifesto highlights the pan-European flavour of the ND. For the purpose of our discussion, a few critical lines from the manifesto related to the obsessive preservation of ethnic communities include the following: "The diversity of humankind is a fact beyond any discussion" (Point 7), an obvious link with de Benoist and Champetier's call for "clear and strong identities," as well as a jab at liberal and socialist internationalist doctrines that the ND argues seek to negate cultural diversity by preaching "abstract" notions such as multiculturalism and human rights. In the same point 7, the manifesto argues, "being rooted in a specific culture we are more sensitive to the uniqueness of other cultures," which is certainly not the case for a Le Pen or Haider. In point 5, in an attack on Benedict Anderson's notion of "imagined communities" (Anderson 1983), the author states that group identities are not "hypothetical" but "real". In point 3, in a model that negates the liberal individualist state's preference for individual over group rights, the author writes: "The freedom of man is expressed in his right to preserve his identity and unlikeness." Finally, point 1 has a long lineage in far right-wing political tradition going back to the counterrevolutionary thought of Joseph de Maistre: "A Man has a natural need to identify himself with a group. Only a part of our personality can be created by ourselves. The rest is obtained from other people in the form of culture."

It is rather stunning that in both the ND and Polish New Right manifestos the word multiculturalism is omitted. Yet this is carefully constructed. ND texts abound with criticism of multiculturalism as a destructive force for ethnic groups worldwide. Yet a public manifesto must be more careful since to be against multiculturalism is liable to get you pinned with the racist label. And the ND has long tried to claim, along with the *Front National*, that they are not racist and that liberal universalism, multiculturalism, and, even at times, the French state undertake policies that are leading to the destruction of French culture and undermining the "right to difference" of the "French French" in their own country. In a perverse reversal of discourse, the "homogenising," multicultural liberal-left is viewed as racist and an enemy of the "cause of peoples" (De Benoist 1982; Krebs in Griffin 1995, 349).

#### 7. The ND's Ambiguities: Multiculturalism in Practice

I have already pointed out that a major ambiguity in the ND worldview is that it combines revolutionary Right and Left and New Left ideas. Yet, there also remain serious ambiguities in respect of the ND's relationship to multiculturalism. In its idiosyncratic rejection of multiculturalism, it sits within the revolutionary right-wing milieu. Yet, in seeking to privilege the ethnos over demos, the ND has often straddled between pro- and anti-multiculturalism positions. The notion of the "right to difference" can be used for diametrically opposed ends, as French scholars learned with the rise of the FN and ND in the 1980s (i.e., liberal, universal anti-racism versus cultural separatism or even racism) (Wolin 2004, 14).

We often assume that the revolutionary Right is against multiculturalism, immigration, and minorities. They are certainly against democracy, as most of de Benoist's works show, including his most famous *Vu de droite* (1977), which deligitimises all the major tenets of liberal democracy from popular rule to the idea of administratively imposed equality. Today the ND merely gives democracy its tactical support as part of a Gramscian struggle to attain cultural hegemony within civil society and outduel its liberal-left opponents.

One concrete issue, namely, the *foulard* (headscarf) affair tested the ND's credentials in relation to multiculturalism in practice. In the wake of the second foulard affair in 2004, de Benoist defended the right of Muslim schoolgirls to wear the headscarf in the French public school system. His main quarrel was with the liberal-left mainstream who he called the "ayatollahs" of the French republican model, which he claimed was based on secular, Enlightenment values that were destructive of collective cultural and ethnic identities" (De Benoist, "Sur le foulard islamique"). This was not the standard Right of the past, predictable, shrill, racist, intolerant. Yet, it was a stance designed to shame the "French French" or other regional communities like the Bretons to wake up to the reality that Muslims have maintained their culture, while the French have lost theirs and are increasingly indifferent to the homogenisation of Western lifestyles, seduction of

capitalism, immigration or demographic trends, and the impact of American films.

This was not a new stance. In 1990, de Benoist and GRECE President Jacques Marlaud publicly critiqued the FN for its "sickening" and "disheartening" scapegoating of immigrants and pro-neo-liberal stances (De Benoist, *Le Choc du mois* 31, July-August 1990; Bar-On 2007, 169) As pointed out earlier, de Benoist also valorised the federal idea of a "Europe of a Hundred Flags," as well as defended the right to cultural particularism of Jewish and Vietnamese communities in France – presumably successful, law-abiding communities in France in contrast to Arab and African communities (De Benoist 1993-4, *Telos*, 98-99).

At the same time, we should not assume that de Benoist has all of a sudden embraced immigration, minorities, multiculturalism, or democracy. In 2004, de Benoist explicitly rejected the Rights of Man, a key aspect of liberal democracies, arguing that its universality was a threat to particular cultures (De Benoist 2004, "Interview in Present"). He continues to recycle and defend conservative revolutionary authors like Evola and Schmitt that were so close to fascism and Nazism ideologically (not to mention concrete collaboration of these scholars with Fascist and Nazi regimes) because he essentially laments the plebeian nature of those regimes. In a 2001 conference paper he said that the key struggle of the century was of defending cultural *communities* and called for the *right* of people to work in their country of origin (Bar-On 2007, 201). In a Telos piece, he essentially called for the erection of a "heterogeneous world of homogeneous communities," a key slogan of the German New Right (Woods 2007). Some of his personnel, perhaps tired of the long metapolitical march through the wilderness, jumped ship to the FN in the 1980s (Bar-On 2007, 50). More ominously, in another multiculturalism (or anti-multiculturalism) moment in practice, in 1999 the ND's antiwar manifesto was put out at the height of NATO's war in the former Yugoslavia, which decried the "American war" and never once expressed solidarity with one of the victims of ethnic cleansing, the Kosovar Albanians (Bar-On 2007, 82). Numerous left-wing and liberal scholars signed the manifesto, some no doubt aware of the ND's anti-multicultural orientation and others perhaps less so.

### 8. Ethnic Cleansing By Other Means?

In The Seduction of Unreason, Richard Wolin argues that in the ND worldview cultural belonging supersedes rights, with the ultimate goal being that European New Right politicians seek "to advance a type of *parliamentary ethnic cleansing*." (Wolin 2004, 22) Wolin is not shy to link the ND cultural project to historical fascism: "As with the proponents of interwar fascism, today's antidemocrats seek to exploit the openness of the constitutional state to undermine democratic norms." (Wolin 2004, 22) In short, no longer content with older right-wing tactics such as extra-parliamentary violence or even political parties, democratic structures are utilized by the ND to shift attitudes and policies on immigration, identity, and cultural belonging across the political spectrum. Unfortunately, since the mid-1980s both established political forces on the right and left have been willing to co-opt the call of far right-wing political parties for a more restrictive immigration regime, particularly towards non-EU citizens, as well as to join coalition governments with far right-wing parties as in Austria and Italy in the 1990s (Schain 1987). From the ND's perspective, the ethnos might still be saved by a more awakened demos, which has steadily been sold the lies of universalism, the brotherhood and sisterhood of humanity, and multiculturalism.

For the ND, the defense of rooted ethnic communities through the cultural terrain is in Clausewitzian language, a war by other means. The ND insinuates what Jean Raspail in his novel *The Camp of the Saints* and Enoch Powell in a 1968 speech "rivers of blood" spelled out unambiguously, namely, the coming, cruel "total ethnic war" between Europeans and non-Europeans from the impoverished south. For the ND, this war can be averted through a sort of "parliamentary ethnic cleansing," thus uniting the demos with the homogeneous ethnos in a pan-European context. If the anti-immigrant discourse and disdain for democracy spreads across the heart of the body politic, reasons the ND, then immigrants might choose a return to their country of origins; a "civil war" between immigrants and hosts ensues (thus fulfilling far right-wing prophecies); or more restrictive immigration programs are gradually implemented with a decided slant towards what the FN calls "national preference" in respect of government programs (e.g., the FN's 1993 policy platform, 300 mesures pour la renaissance de la France).

### 9. The Liberal Multicultural State: "Enemy of the Ethnos"

For ND theoreticians, the liberal multicultural state is, as one writer put it, "the enemy of the ethnos" (Johnson, "The State as The Enemy of the Ethnos," http://es.geocities.com/sucellus23/807.htm). One ND supporter, M. Raphael Johnson, argues that ethnicity is the primary basis of social life because it is what philosophers call a "first order" loyalty. The ethnos is based on a common culture, while the language of the state is ultimately force (Johnson, "The State as The Enemy of the Ethnos").

For Tomislav Sunic, a Croatian New Right thinker, the civil wars in the former Yugoslavia in the 1990s and what he terms the "artificial blending of people" under Tito's Yugoslavian communist state led him to the conclusion that there is a fundamental chasm between the liberal state and various *ethnies* (a homogeneous ethnic cultural community): "The rights of peoples are incompatible with universalism. Ethnic particularities cannot coexist in a state that places abstract principles of human rights over the real principles of peoples' rights" (Sunic, "A Global Village and the Rights of the Peoples?" http://es.geocities.com/sucellus23/559.htm).

For both Sunic and Johnson, the liberal multicultural state is destructive of rooted ethnic communities. Sunic and Johnson are arguing that political elites throughout Europe are destroying the cultural distinctiveness of Europeans through a combination of the capitalist market, EU bureaucratization, hedonistic American cultural lifestyles, and the pro-multicultural policies of the liberal state. The quicker ordinary people within the demos realize this grave "threat" to European existence, the faster they will rebel against the "artificial" liberal state.

In a frontal attack on the liberal multicultural state, Sunic writes these telling lines: "Peoples are not the same; they never have been and never will be" (Sunic, "A Global Village and the Rights of the Peoples?"). He less than subtly suggests that violence is either endemic to ethnic groups, or a reaction to the liberal universalist state, and can only be reduced through radical ethnic separatism (thus making a mockery of the "right to difference" slogan):

Ethnic groups can be compared to the inmates of large American prisons, who usually begin to respect each only when their turf is staked out and when their cells are separated by massive stone walls. Thrown into one cell they are likely to devour each other in a perpetual conflict over 'territorial imperative.' (Sunic, "A Global Village and the Rights of the Peoples?")

For Sunic, the ethnos connotes that "a people has a common heritage and a will to a common destiny" (Sunic, "A Global Village and the Rights of the Peoples?"). This ethnos, he adds, "exists despite superficial cleavages such as parties, interest groups, and passing trends in ideologies" (Sunic, "A Global Village and the Rights of the Peoples?"). Most importantly, echoing Dumezil, Eliade, and Jung, Sunic argues that a people needs a collective, founding myth that gives birth to its cultural goals and political destiny. For liberal states, Sunic implies that multiculturalism is that myth. This myth must be destroyed by the myth of homogeneous cultural belonging within a regional or national European framework. This would restore Europeans to their particular rooted cultures and would constitute an "authentic" freedom based on "the right to live with those with whom you share a common bond" (Roger Pearson, "The Misuse of the Term Nation State," *The Mankind Quarterly*, http://es.geocities.com/sucellus23/896.htm).

# 10. The ND's Ethnically-Centred Vision for the New Millennium: "The French New Right in the Year 2000"

As mentioned earlier, in 1999 the ND traced its social, political and philosophical vision for the new millennium in an *Elements* manifesto called "The French New Right in the Year 2000" (De Benoist and Champetier 1999). The manifesto is split into three sections: 1. Predicaments (a critical analysis of the contemporary period); 2. Foundations (outlining the ND's view of man and the world); and 3. Outlooks (positions on current issues and debates). In the manifesto, the ND claims that it is a metapolitical force seeking to represent "the excluded middle" in relation to dichotomies such as tribalism and globalism, nationalism and internationalism, liberalism and Marxism, individualism and collectivism, progressivism and conservatism ("Introduction"). The ND allegedly seeks to create a new, unique political synthesis beyond "outmoded" categories such as left and right ("Introduction"). It anticipates resistance to such a project because they argue that it is threatening for "the guardians of thought" wedded to outdated ideological orthodoxies ("Introduction").

What is most striking about the ND manifesto is the overwhelming and disproportionate concern with the preservation of rooted ethnic communities, as well as the linkage between the ethnos and demos. There is hardly a section that does not directly or indirectly express this preference for rooted, homogeneous communities. I would now like to more thoroughly examine the manifesto and show how it privileges ethnic belonging above democracy, as well as how it argues that the only authentic demos is one that is representative of the majority ethnos within a given state or region.

In section 1, part 1, "Modernity," the authors attack the Judeo-Christian tradition and its liberal, universal offshoot that "attempts by every available means to uproot individuals from their individual communities" and to eradicate diversity from the planet. This means that the ND implies that various European ethnic communities have been undermined by a "foreign" Judeo-Christian tradition that attacks pagan religions of the past. Modernity alone is not responsible for the decline of European ethnic groups, but also 2,000 odd years of Christianity.

In section 1, part 3, "Liberalism: The Main Enemy," the traditional right-wingers will be surprised that liberalism and not communism is the main enemy. For the ND, this change from a primary anti-communism to a primary anti-liberalism predated that fall of communist states after 1989 (Duranton-Crabol 1988, 227-9). The authors reject both liberalism and Marxism as mirror, materialistic, and "totalitarian" ideologies of the same coin: "In almost all respects, liberalism has only realized more effectively certain objectives it shares with Marxism: the eradication of collective identities and traditional

cultures, the disenchantment of the world, and the universalization of the system of production." It is instructive that both liberalism and Marxism are viewed as universal, moralizing ideologies and seen as enemies of ethnic groups worldwide. Yet, liberalism is the main enemy today since it is the dominant planetary model after the official fall of the Marxist-Leninist Soviet Union in 1991 and a hence a greater danger to cultural ethnic communities around the globe.

In section 2, part 1 "Man: An Aspect of Life," the authors allude to an older biological concept to defend the ethnos:

To the extent that life is generated above all through the transmission of information contained in genetic material, man is not born like a blank page: every single individual already bears the general characteristics of the species, to which are added specific hereditary predispositions to certain particular aptitudes and modes of behavior. The individual does not decide this inheritance, which limits his autonomy and his plasticity, but also allows him to resist political and social conditioning.

Yet, for the ND biology interacts with culture: "He (man) can construct himself historically and culturally on the basis of the presuppositions of his biological constitution, which are his human limitations." Claiming to be anti-reductionist, "the New Right proposes a vision of a well-balanced individual, taking into account both inborn, personal abilities and the social environment. It rejects ideologies that emphasize only one of these factors, be it biological, economic, or mechanical." The absence of the word culture might be purposeful, while the biological focus is a holdover from the ND's fixation with biology and scientism in the 1970s as supposedly rational explanations for the radical differences between ethnic groups. This biological position is generally downplayed in new ND publications, for obvious reasons related to the odious biological and racial anti-Semitism of Nazism and the Fascist and Vichy race laws.

In section 2, part 2, "Man: A Rooted, Imperiled, and Open Being," the ND moves closer to its main obsession with rooted ethnic or cultural communities. In a crucial passage echoing French counterrevolutionary Joseph de Maistre, de Benoist and Champetier attack the "abstract" notion of humanity:

From the sociohistorical viewpoint, man as such does not exist, because his membership within humanity is always mediated by a particular cultural belonging. This observation does not stem from relativism. All men have in common their human nature, without which they would not be able to understand each other, but their common membership in the species always expresses itself in a single *context*.

The authors then move towards a radical Herderian cultural ethnopluralism: "All cultures have their own "center of gravity (Herder): different cultures provide different responses to essential questions. This is why all attempts to unify them end up by destroying them. Man is rooted by nature in his culture."

In section 2, part 3, "Society: A Body of Communities," the authors argue that "Membership in the collective does not destroy individual identity; rather, it is the basis for it." For the ND, the most important collective form of belonging is the ethnos.

Section 2, part 8, "The World: A Pluriversum," is a key section for our discussion related to the ethnos. In this section, the ND valorises diversity and is not even afraid to use the politically incorrect notion of "race": "Diversity is inherent in the very movement of life, which flourishes as it becomes more complex. The plurality and variety of races, ethnic groups, languages, customs, even religions has characterized the development of humanity since the very beginning." Note the use of race, as biology before, which is not completely omitted in the new cultural understanding of the ethnos.

In a key passage from the same section, de Benoist and Champetier claim to reject the proselytizing, ethnocentric zeal of the West, which de Benoist once radically defended in the notion of French Algeria:

The West's conversion to universalism has been the main cause of its subsequent attempts to *convert* the rest of the world: in the past, to its religion (the Crusades); yesterday, to its political principles (colonialism); and today, to its economic and social model (development) or its moral

principles (human rights). Undertaken under the aegis of missionaries, armies and merchants, the Westernization of the planet has represented an imperialist movement fed by the desire to erase all otherness by imposing on the world a supposedly superior model invariably presented as "progress." Homogenizing universalism is only the projection and the mask of an ethnocentrism extended over the whole planet.

De Benoist and Champetier then reject Fukuyama's notion of the "end of history," endorse Huntington's idea of a "clash of civilizations," and attack the US superpower indirectly as a danger for cultural and civilizational pluralism:

The 21st century will be characterized by the development of a multipolar world of emerging civilizations: European, North American, South American, Arabic-Muslim, Chinese, Indian, Japanese, etc. These civilizations will not supplant the ancient local, tribal, provincial or national roots, but will be constituted as the ultimate collective form with which individuals are able to identify in addition to their common humanity. They will probably be called upon to collaborate in certain areas to defend humanity's common interests, most notably with respect to ecology. In a multipolar world, power is defined as the ability to resist the influence of others rather than to impose one's own. The main enemy of this pluriverse will be any civilization pretending to be universal and regarding itself entrusted with a redeeming mission ("Manifest Destiny") to impose its model on all others.

In section 2, part 9, "The Cosmos: A Continuum," the ND invokes what Roger Griffin has called a "mythical palingenetic" worldview by arguing that the ND "believes the return of the sacred will be accomplished by the returning to some founding myths." This founding myth will be no doubt centred on a regional or national ethnos within a pan-European, federal framework. "The French New Right is imbued with a very long memory: it maintains a relation to the beginning that harbors a sense of what is coming," adds the manifesto, which would mean a "long memory" for pagan Indo-European origins buried by the Judeo-Christian tradition and its liberal and socialist secular derivatives.

In Section 3, the Positions section that highlights the ND's stances on current

issues, seven of the thirteen positions are directly related to a concern for ethnic, cultural or regional communities.

In section 3, part 1, "Against Indifferentiation and Uprooting; For Clear and Strong Identities," the authors invoke capitalist globalization as the bogeyman responsible for the acceleration of ethnic conflict. Rejecting the idea of a "citizen of the world," the manifesto calls for a radical, pro-"Third World" ethnopluralism:

The French New Right upholds the cause of peoples, because the right to difference is a principle, which has significance only in terms of its generality. One is only justified in defending one's difference from others if one is also able to defend the difference of others. This means, then, that the right to difference cannot be used to exclude others who are different. The French New Right upholds equally ethnic groups, languages, and regional cultures under the threat of extinction, as well as native religions. The French New Right supports peoples struggling against Western imperialism.

In section 3, part 2, "Against Racism; For the Right to Difference," arguably the most controversial in the manifesto, the ND claims to take a radical "anti-racist" position – co-opting the insights of anti-racist groups like SOS-Racisme, which entered the French political scene in the early 1980s in conjunction with the rise of the FN. The manifesto claims that people cannot be blamed for being racist if they choose their own ethnic groups in marriage to others: "The term racism cannot be defined as a preference for endogamy, which arises from freedom of choice of individuals and of peoples. The Jewish people, for instance, owe their survival to their rejection of mixed marriages." The Jewish example is purposefully provocative, while cultivated to appeal to some anti-Semitic sectors of the far Right.

Racism is officially rejected in the manifesto: "Racism is an erroneous doctrine, one rooted in time." But the twist is that "anti-racism" is in fact a disguised form of racism that destroys ethnic belonging worldwide:

In contrast to racism there is a universalist and a differentialist anti-racism. The former leads to

the same conclusions as does the racism it denounces. As opposed to differences as is racism, universalist anti-racism only acknowledges in people their common belonging to species and it tends to consider their specific identities as transitory or of secondary importance.

For the ND, race should not be jettisoned as a concept and both racism and antiracism should be rejected:

For the New Right, the struggle against racism is not won by negating the concept of races, nor by the desire to blend all races into an undifferentiated whole. Rather, the struggle against racism is waged by the refusal of both exclusion and assimilation: neither apartheid nor the melting pot; rather, acceptance of the other as Other through a dialogic perspective of mutual enrichment.

In section 3, part 3, "Against Immigration; For Cooperation," we see the ND repairing its ties with the traditional, far right-wing milieu, which in the 1980s thought it was becoming crypto-communist as it had been critical of Le Pen's FN and flirted with the Left and New Left. Immigration is seen as a negative process for Europe today, in line with most radical right-wing populist parties from the FN to Freedom Party and Vlaams Blok to People's Party: "By reason of its rapid growth and its massive proportions, immigration such as one sees today in Europe constitutes an undeniably negative phenomenon." The anti-capitalist mantra is different from the FN position that directly blames immigrants for all of France's ills:

The responsibility for current immigration lies primarily, not with the immigrants, but with the industrialized nations which have reduced man to the level of merchandise that can be relocated anywhere. Immigration is not desirable for the immigrants, who are forced to abandon their native country for another where they are received as back-ups for economic needs. Nor is immigration beneficial for the host population receiving the immigrants, who are confronted, against their will, with sometimes brutal modifications in their human and urban environments. It is obvious that the problems of the Third World countries will not be resolved by major population shifts.

Yet, the restrictive immigration calls in the manifesto are similar to the FN. Both

FN and ND argue that restricting immigration will benefit immigrant and host societies alike since both will be able to maintain homogeneous ethnic communities: "Thus the New Right favors policies restrictive of immigration, coupled with increased cooperation with Third World countries where organic interdependence and traditional ways of life still survive, in order to overcome imbalances resulting from globalization."

Immigrants will not all of a sudden leave, thus citizenship should be connected to nationality, in an ultimate triumph of the ethnos over demos:

As regards the immigrant populations which reside today in France, it would be illusory to expect their departure *en masse*. The Jacobin national state has always upheld a model of assimilation in which only the individual is absorbed into a citizenship, which is purely abstract. The state holds no interest in the collective identities nor in the cultural differences of these individuals. This model becomes less and less credible in view of the following factors: the sheer number of immigrants, the cultural differences which sometimes separate them from the populations receiving them, and especially the profound crises which affect all the channels of traditional integration (parties, unions, religions, schools, the army, etc.). The New Right believes that ethnocultural identity should no longer be relegated to the private domain, but should be acknowledged and recognized in the public sphere. The New Right proposes, then, a communitarian model which would spare individuals from being cut off from their cultural roots and which would permit them to keep alive the structures of their collective cultural lives. They should be able to observe necessary general and common laws without abandoning the culture which is their very own. This communitarian politic could, in the long run, lead to a dissociation of citizenship from nationality.

In section 3, part 6, "Against Jacobinism; For a Federal Europe," the nation-state so dear to Fascists and the far Right in general is rejected as outmoded: "The nation-state is now too big to manage little problems and too small to address big ones." Belonging will be more European in nature, as well as federal and regional:

In a globalized world, *the future belongs to large cultures and civilizations* capable of organizing themselves into autonomous entities and of acquiring enough power to resist outside interference. Europe must organize itself into a federal structure, while recognizing the autonomy of all the

component elements and facilitating the cooperation of the constituent regions and of individual nations. European civilization will remake itself, not by the negation, but by the recognition of historical cultures, thus permitting all inhabitants to rediscover their *common origins*.

It is significant that Europe as a federalized, sovereign power bloc would be tied with Russia against the US, the key representative of liberalism, viewed by the ND as "the main enemy."

In section 3, part 7, "Against Depoliticization; For the Strengthening of Democracy," the demos ("people") and ethnos are united in an implied manner that valorises homogeneous forms of community belonging, while rejecting the US and French revolutions, as well as the communist revolutions in the East:

Democracy did not first appear with the Revolutions of 1776 and 1789. Rather, it has constituted a constant tradition in Europe since the existence of the ancient Greek city and since the time of ancient German "freedoms." Democracy is not synonymous with the former "popular democracies" of the East nor with liberal parliamentary democracy today so prevalent in Western countries. Nor does democracy refer to the political party system. Rather, it denotes a system whereby the people are sovereign.

In the key ingredient for the entire manifesto, after "abstract" equality in the liberal mode is rejected, the authors unite ethnos and demos in line with my thesis: "The essential idea of democracy is neither that of the individual nor of humanity, but rather the idea of a body of citizens politically united into a people." And this people, as I have shown throughout is not all of the people or demos, but a circumscribed, homogeneous people along rooted ethnic lines.

In an attempt to split the people from what the ND considers the pro-globalization New Class of politicians, media, and CEO's, the procedure of the referendum is invoked in order to allow the people the possibility to return to the ethnos and "counteract the overwhelming power of money" in political life. The nationalist Right certainly has a history of appealing to the people above the "corrupt" politicians, political parties, and power of industrialists. De Gaulle utilized the referendum to end French colonialism in Algeria. On 8 January 1961, de Gaulle organised a referendum on self-determination for Algeria, which gained acceptance of 75.2% of the voters. The Evian accords, signed on 18 March 1962, brought an end to the hostilities and officially gave independence to Algeria. In the referendum of April 8, 1962, the Evian accords were approved by 90.7% of the population of mainland France. The implicit argument by the ND is that in the new millennium France has become the colony of uncontrolled immigration, the new Algeria is mainland France, and perhaps the "common sense" of the popule united in the framework of an ethnos can vote to democratically reverse this "ethnocidal" project.

### 11. Conclusion

To reiterate, this paper has sought to argue that in the ND worldview ethnic belonging trumps concern for democracy. Or, if democracy is invoked, it is the Athenian model rather than representative liberal democracy. Moreover, if democracy is invoked it is to revive that notion of homogeneous ethnic belonging. For the ND, a "real" demos would be based on a homogeneous ethnos within the context of a heterogeneous, pluralistic world. The Italian *Lega Nord* (Northern League), a federalist, anti-immigrant party, which has participated in national coalitions, might be one concrete model of a political outfit that closely mimics ND ideas.

Two eminent historians, the late Stanly Payne and Roger Griffin, disagree about whether the ND is a fascist movement. Griffin says that its "palingenetic ultranationalism" is fascist, while Payne says that it does not strictly operate from the fascist tradition and thus cannot be fascist. Yet, Maurice Bardeche, the key neo-fascist thinker in France in the post-war era, said that fascism would be reborn under new names (Bardeche 1961), thus not excluding the ND, which sought to get rid of sterile and outdated vocabulary linked to the Fascist era. In Payne's 13 interpretations for the rise of fascism in his magisterial *A History of Fascism: 1914-1945*, one is a unique metapolitical explanation that certainly might include that ND under its ambit. (Payne 1995, 441-486; 459-61) Diverse non-Marxist scholars from Ernst Nolte and George Mosse to Roger Griffin and Eric Vogelin have viewed fascism not in simple political or socio-economic formulations, but as "a unique historical phenomenon that attempted to synthesize or symbolize the special features of a distinct early twentieth-century historical trend." (Payne 1995, 459) Nolte argued that fascism's meapolitical project was based on a "resistance to transcendence" of either liberal or communist Bolshevik ideologies, which nonetheless recuperated some of the forms and techniques of the latter (Nolte 1966). Mosse, the leading historian of Nazi and pre-Nazi culture, interprets fascism as a revolution of the right with "positive" goals of its own beyond a mere opportunistic rise to power (Mosse 1978). Griffin also stresses the "positive" goals of fascism in that it was not an agent of a specific class, its epochal framework, and the palingenetic ultranationalism that united fascists (Griffin 1991, 182-237). It is this metapolitical interpretation that can best be utilized to highlight the framework of the ND and the mutation of its discourse in a decidedly anti-fascist era. Yet, if we take Payne's separation of Right into fascist, radical Right, and conservative Right, the ND is indebted to all of them yet does not fit into any of the three categories. Or, if we take Payne's exhaustive checklist definition of fascism along the lines of ideology and goals, fascist negations, and style and organization (Payne 1995, 7), the ND meets some but not all the prerequisites of fascism.

In short, the discourse of the ENR, in conjunction with far right-wing populist parties, poses challenges for the liberal-left related to the struggle over different notions of community and the ability of far right-wing discourses to mutate in the post-war era. First, the ND's pro-communitarian discourse straddles pro- and anti-multicultural positions by valorising the "right to difference" of various communities, yet dreading multiculturalism as a form of "ethnocide" – an ND term for the destruction of a people or ethnic group. Second, the ND, in conjunction with far right-wing populist parties like the FN and the Freedom Party in Austria and fascists in another epoch, are willing to work within the liberal democratic framework in order to seek its demise. Third, the ND presents a cultivated sophisticated Right that the Left generally fails to acknowledge and is light years away from the brutal violence of the *squadristi* or brownshirts. Fourth, fascism was able to mutate in the post-war years and one intellectually impressive strand

was the ND. This raises questions of definitional issues over what constitutes fascism, whether it was epochal, and whether fascism is about core ideological goals and tactical and organizational framework. Fifth, the ND in combination with anti-immigrant parties like the FN, has been instrumental in shifting the European discourse against immigration, immigrants, minorities, and multiculturalism. It has sought to create a new rights framework in which the collective rights of the ethnic group trumps individual rights, as well as the rights of the demos as a whole.

Appendix A: "The Ethnopluralist Manifesto," Jaroslaw Tomasiewicz, Zakorzenienie Magazine

### I.

A Man has a natural need to identify himself with a group. Only a part of our personality can be created by ourselves. The rest is obtained from other people in the form of culture.

# II.

An eradicated person - meaning thrown off from the culture typical for his community is lost in the world. This situation makes his personality poorer. Without being backed by the culture - group identity - man can be easily manipulated by authority, and thoughtlessly follows fashions.

## III.

The freedom of man is expressed in his right to preserve his identity and unlikeness. So the right to preserve group's cultural identity is a result (in a certain way) of the right of every individual to preserve his individual identity.

# IV.

The group identity being the necessary binder of the social solidarity is an autonomous value. The unlimited freedom of changing someone's identity involves chaos for the group existence, weakens its unity, and facilitates the assimilation of small communities by big ones. The choice of the identity must be not be dependent only on an individual, but it must be accepted by other members of the group.

### V.

Group identities - cultures - may be created on different bases, but the most common form of the group identity is the ethnic (national, regional, tribal) identity. So these identities are not imagined or hypothetical but they are real.

### VI.

Cultures which were created during the historical changes of natural communities are based on tradition. Breaking off with the tradition always leads to the loss of own cultural identity. This is tantamount to the alienation of individuals and to disintegration of the community. That's why while not wishing stagnation or petrifaction of the status quo we demand to reconsider our idolatrous relation to progress, which is not good by itself. Proven, traditional forms are better than the experiments made on living organisms. The society must develop, but changes must have an evolutionary and unconstrained character. They must not lead to the disruption of the cultural continuity. The diversity of humankind is a fact beyond any discussion. It is manifested in all areas of human existence. The abundance of being is a crucial value and should be defended. Protecting this wealth we defend at the same time both: the richness, the diversity of the world around us and the real freedom of the group (the community can not be free without being conscious of its separateness). Furthermore, being rooted in a specific culture we are more sensitive to the uniqueness of other cultures. All cultures are equally alien and indifferent for the eradicated person. In such a situation we cannot talk about tolerance, but only about the lack of our own identity.

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