

SERGE THION

A MATCHSTICK ON AN ICE FLOW

AAARGH

"A Matchstick on an Ice-flow" is the first chapter of *Une Allumette sur la banquise – Ecrits de combat (1980-1992)* published privately in 1993 by Le Temps Irréparable, in France, and displayed in full on the Aaargh's web site.

"European history and the Arab World" is the fifth chapter of the same book.

This text has been displayed on the Net as a tool for educational purpose, further research, on a non commercial and fair use basis, by the International Secretariat of the Association des Anciens Amateurs de Récits de Guerres et d'Holocaustes (Aaargh).

The E-mail of the Secretariat is: [aaarghinternational@hotmail.com](mailto:aaarghinternational@hotmail.com). Mail can be sent at PO Box 81475, Chicago, IL 60681-0475, USA.

We see the act of displaying a written document on Internet as the equivalent to displaying it on the shelves of a public library. It costs us a modicum of labor and money. The only benefit accrues to the reader who, we surmise, thinks by himself. A reader looks for a document on the Web at his or her own risks. As for the author, there is no reason to suppose that he or she shares any responsibility for other writings displayed on this Site. Because laws enforcing a specific censorship on some historical question apply in various countries (Germany, France, Israel, Switzerland, Canada, and others) we do not ask their permission from authors living in those places: they wouldn't have the freedom to consent.

We believe we are protected by article 19 of the Human Rights Charter: "Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers." (The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on December 10, 1948, in Paris.)

# A Matchstick on an Ice-flow

The war ended in 1945. Rassinier wrote in the fifties and sixties. We are in the eighties. Perspectives have changed. Nobody thinks any longer that the world war was to give birth to universal peace. All the great powers are actively preparing for the next, which promises to be bloodier. While the image of Nazism became darker, the horror grew and proliferated in colonial wars, particularly ours, but also those of the British, the Portuguese, the Americans. We have seen Korea, Vietnam, Cambodia, Cyprus, Biafra, Rhodesia, Bangladesh, the Horn of Africa, Timor, the convoy of bloody dictatorships blessed on all continents, the flourishing of apartheid, Budapest and Poznan in 1956, the almost immediate halt of destalinization, the supposed cultural revolution in China, the massacres of Pol Pot, the famines of the Sahil and elsewhere, largely provoked by the extension of our modes of production and the irruption of wages in the most backward corners of the planet. We are a few who have not lived through the Spanish War and the resistance, and for a good reason, but we were to be sent to Algeria to do exactly what the Germans did in Europe: to occupy it. We refused.

We had to know what was going on there and elsewhere. Like a few others, I wanted to stick my nose in some of these witches brew: From Panmunjon to Johannesburg, from Beirut to Phnom Penh, from Dacca to Mogadiscio, from Amman to Saigon, from Maputo to Borneo, from Algiers to Luang Prabang, passing, as one has to, through Moscow, Tokyo and Washington. Everywhere cops, torturers, concentration camps, official lies, psychological and heavy artillery wars, stifling bureaucracies and occasional massacres. A lot of horror and sadness. And life, survival, which ends up everywhere to be that of the stronger.

Travel broadens the mind. We have been enlightened. There is nothing more to learn about human nature, about savagery in all its forms, including the state capitalism of bureaucracies called socialist. How can one put Nazism on one side, make it a phenomenon with no precedent or sequel without being restricted to a metaphysical view of politics? Such metaphysics may be anchored in a dogmatism such as Judaism, whose history is made out to be the relationship of the Jewish "people" with a terrible divinity who elects or punishes them. The line often drawn between all forms of tyranny and Nazism proceeds from the idea that the persecution of Jews is a completely specific and unique phenomenon. This specificity of the victim would thus be implicitly reflected on the executioner. This affirmation is refuted by the facts. On the one hand, many other categories of human beings were perceived and treated by the Nazis as inferior: Slavs, gypsies, blacks, Orientals, etc. There were Buddhist victims, too, at Auschwitz. . . . On the other hand, the treatment of minorities (religious, cultural, linguistic) by totalitarian tyrannies varies but often leads to their more or less complete destruction as entities: Armenians, Kurds, Tatars of Crimea,

Germans of the Volga, Chams of Cambodia, not to mention innumerable small peoples who have disappeared during the last two or three centuries during the inauguration period of the modern states. They could be drawn up in a list that would occupy several pages and would send readers to their dictionaries, which they would doubtless find fairly incomplete, so much so that these peoples have disappeared from memory. See, for a single example, the article *Guanche*. The systematic extermination, by hand, of these Berber speaking natives of the Canary Islands, prelude to that of the Arawaks and the Caribs, inaugurates the era of grand navigations and colonial expansion (1). Who mourns today the tragic fate of the Guanche?

Auschwitz is only a stage; not long ago, the Indonesian army "was methodically slaughtering the insurgent population of the former Portuguese colony of East Timor that it had invaded: half of the population, estimated at about 360,000 people, rotted in concentration camps. Since 1975, military operations caused over 100,000 deaths, almost all civilians." (2) The weapons are, of course, supplied to Indonesia by the Americans and, incidentally, with full knowledge of the facts, by France (heavy helicopters). I look in the press, I search the publications of the Jewish community, the dispatches from Israel: not a word on this genocide. A new shame for the West. Is it cruel to have to say to the massacred people of Timor that it is their fault not to have been Jewish? This is precisely what the specificity of Nazism is used for: closed eyes and deafened ears on the product of the same inhuman inspiration, of the same contempt for the other, because this voluntary silence and blindness bring the West political, diplomatic, economic, military and oil dividends. It is better to get thick with the junta in power in Jakarta, already responsible for at least 500,000 political assassinations in 1965-66 (communists . . . ), some anti-Chinese pogroms, thousands of deaths in its own ill-acquired province of New Guinea (Irian Barat), and an attempted genocide in Timor, because this pays. And the lukewarm Muslim Suharto does not give antisemitic speeches. Mr. Claude Cheysson, ambassador in Jakarta, covered in his 1969 dispatches the travesty of a referendum used by the Indonesians to take over Irian. I was going through there and I read them. . . . I am telling you: a shame.

I feel that I could write thousands of pages detailing the swindles, expropriations, massacres and tortures of all sorts of political regimes, and, in particular, of the French government (these pages are, in fact, already written, they can be read in existing books), and yet some people do not see what all this has to do with Nazism. Based on facts, I could spend hours showing them that religious or cultural minorities, more or less immigrant, more or less dealing in commerce, like the Chinese in South-East Asia, the Greek or the Lebanese in Africa, the Indians in the East or South of Africa, have at times been subjected to persecutions very similar to those that befell the Jewish communities of Europe during the 1930's and 1940's. They would say that it is not the same thing.

I could then limit the problem, deal strictly with Nazi behavior in the occupied territories, mention that they detained and deported huge quantities of diverse peoples, political and religious opponents, military and civilians, Russians, Poles and Yugoslavs, that the Jews, as such, were doubtless a minority (but we are far from having precise figures); that the same holds for the *Sonderkommandos*, the commandos chasing partisans in Soviet territories.

They will dismiss everything, no comparison of the present, no matter how sinister, or of other victims of Nazism with the fate of the Jews. The dividing line is the gas chamber. This is the blind spot at the center of all evaluations, of all judgments. That is why it is absolutely inevitable that the question of the historical status of this homicidal device be investigated at some point in time. The history of the guillotine is known. I had a close up look at a model of it in a museum in Saigon. It is a legitimate subject of historical and philosophical reflection. Why would it not be the same for the gas chamber?

The writing of *Vérité historique ou vérité politique ?* (Historical Truth or Political Truth?) was completed in 1979. The book was released at the end of April, 1980. During the winter, Nadine Fresco took advantage of my absence and, using a ploy, got a hold of a copy of the manuscript, and circulated it among the beacons of thought at *Le Nouvel Observateur* and *Les Temps Modernes*. **Two months** prior to the release of the book, I was denounced in a "Warning to readers" of the March 1980 issue of *Les Temps Modernes*:

In our January issue, devoted to Indochina, we have published two articles by Serge Thion, a former occasional contributor to the magazine. The issue had just come out when we learned that concerning the extermination of the Jews, the same Thion defends the sinister views of Faurisson, who denies, as we know, the reality of the extermination of the Jews and the existence of gas chambers. This obviously leads us to warn our readers that they should have reservations concerning the information given by Thion about Indochina.

The truth is that the editorial committee even though ignorant at the time of Thion's position on the Jewish question was widely divided as to the appropriateness to publish at least one of his articles (*Despote à vendre*) and that this was done only after some wrangling.

This was a surprise to our good faith: *Les Temps Modernes* have never knowingly been a platform for antisemites of either the right or the left or for falsifiers. As an editor of the magazine, I insist on warning the readers and apologizing to them.

Jean-Paul Sartre

The tone was set. If I dwell for a moment on this text, it is because it already contains the impulse behind the **reactions** to the Faurisson affair. As the reading of the 1980 book makes clear, what seems to me the most interesting is that these reactions shed a light on the ideological cage we live in. First of all, we have to realize that this text was not written by Sartre. Blind, sick, exhausted and in agony, Sartre died three weeks later. Had he even given his verbal approval of this text? It is not known. Hiding behind Sartre's signature was the intrepid Claude Lanzmann, one of the stars of the Parisian Holocaust hysteria(3). As a contribution to the ethnography of the Parisian intelligentsia, I would like to expand here on the circumstances which preceded the elaboration of this ridiculous excommunication bubble .

## THROUGH THE SARTRIAN HAZINESS

"The future will refute many of my affirmations"  
Jean-Paul Sartre (4)

In March of 1979, I was approached by one of those young individuals that the Sartrian old guard recruited from time to time to the staff of *Les Temps Modernes* in order to inject some new blood and mainly to find a work force likely to fill its pages. It has been known for ages that the old guard no longer wrote almost anything. So I met a certain Rigoulot, the exact opposite of his namesake, the one who in my youth filled the newspapers that depicted him as "the strongest man in the world."

It was about a special issue on Indochina. Anybody could and still can write in *Les Temps Modernes*. The proof: haven't I myself done it several times (5)? There or elsewhere, the thing seemed to me possible and I proposed to gather some articles from people who were friends and competent, neither of which qualifications applied to the individual who approached me. In no time, I collected some contributions and passed them on to Rigoulot and they were to fill 120 out of 220 pages of that issue. Among them was a translation of an excellent text by Michael Vickery, an American historian of Cambodia, who, having lived in the country in the fifties sixties, gave an analysis of the internal politics of this era and blamed the Sihanouk authoritarian rule for a good part of the responsibility for the failure that degenerated into catastrophe.

The manufacturing of the issue dragged on for months. During this time, I was working on the Faurisson affair. Toward the end of November 1979, I was summoned by Jean Pouillon and Claude Lanzmann, the guardians of the sepulcher. It seems that the "Beaver," meaning Simone de Beauvoir, had read the Vickery article after six months and did not like it. Pouillon and Lanzmann had to convince me to pull it out. As they were too cowardly to engage in a discussion about the content of the article on a subject rather exotic for them but who were reluctant to criticize Prince Sihanouk, at a time when the Socialist Party, aligning itself with Washington and Peking, was supporting him, they at one time pleaded that the Vickery article was badly written, and at another time said that the translation was bad. All this doesn't hold water. I finally accepted to pull out the Vickery article on the condition that I could replace it with another, expressing an identical point of view but "well written." As there remained four days to put the paper to bed, the two accomplices thought that their trick had worked. But in three days, I dashed off an article called "*Despote à vendre*" (a despot for sale), which was not devoid of some alacrity (6). Since it would have been ridiculous for the editors to intervene in questions of interpretation of the history of Cambodia, and since they had given me their approval, the article was published. That was the "wrangling."

The issue contained, in addition, some mediocre articles, one of which was about the "*guerre des gaz*" (gas war) in Laos, a vulgar byproduct of American propaganda. I followed closely this affair of "yellow rain" and I can easily dismantle this story. On the Cambodian border, I personally asked American civilians sent into the Khmer Rouge zone by a CIA agent, and a physician at the American Embassy in Bangkok (and later in Moscow), to find with the help of Khmer Rouge cadres, samples of

mycotoxins, the last incarnation of the myths of biological warfare. On the scientific level, it was a real farce, and American labs in charge of the analysis have, in general, refused to lend their support to what is obviously a poor disinformation campaign. The aim of the operation was to prepare American public opinion for the resumption of production of biological weapons, the new composite gases called "binary." After that, nobody heard anything anymore about this famous "yellow rain." It is not surprising that the idiots of *Les Temps Modernes* fell for it (7).

My introduction to the Faurisson affair, the "How of the Why," was circulating since the month of September. Many people around *Les Temps Modernes* and even a number of the editors knew of it. I obviously had nothing to hide and I was circulating the text in order to elicit reactions to it. These people carefully hushed up the existence of my text to Lanzmann, who had been busy for years in the fabrication of his film, Shoah. I even invited them to look at my text, knowing that the explosive violence of Lanzmann might sooner or later compromise the publication of the text on Indochina. This seemed to me quite appropriate and with no direct relation with the former text.

The Indochinese issue having come out and the manuscript on the Faurisson affair being in the printer's hands, I took off for other lands to take care of other business. However, the exuberant Nadine Fresco, afflicted by the double disgrace of being one of my friends at the same time as of those of Lanzmann, and of many other disreputable people, went to Edgar Morin to whom I had given a manuscript of the book for his personal edification. He took hold of it and carried it straight to *les Temps Modernes*. I can imagine the scene.

So it was under the palm trees of the island of Tahiti that I received a billet-doux, warning me that I was no longer welcome in the Sartrian sanctuary. Possessed by a tropical lyricism, I answered the five lines with a definitely longer letter on March 3, 1980:

It was with great surprise that I received your brief memo dated February 21, stating: The board of directors of the magazine no longer welcomes your presence in its offices," with a stamp and illegible signature.

I don't believe, for the life of me having spent a lot of time in these editorial offices, except recently on the occasion of a special issue on Indochina, due to the enormous delays understandable only if one realizes that it takes at least six months for some editors to read a manuscript. It would be an understatement to tell you, since I have the opportunity to do it, that I was disappointed by the weak general level of this issue and the whining incoherence of the short introduction. And I skip the little treacheries hurled at my two articles. Should I believe that you are so ashamed of your mediocre exploit that you wish to disappear from my sight? Unfortunately, you don't have a reputation for such humility.

To my knowledge, I have no other business with *les Temps Modernes*. I would've certainly rushed to the magazine offices to find out the reasons for this farcical ostracism, had I not presently had some business on the other side

of the world. Here I ponder on a sequel to "*Supplément au Voyage de M. de Bougainville*."

As the local proverb says, '*o tei tapo'i te rira ra, 'e vaha ha'avare tona*' (he has deceiving lips, he who spreads hate)(8). In fact, highly indicative or not indicative enough of the editorial committee's decree. If I am reproached for something, the most elementary honesty would have been to mention it. But if you think that an anonymous excommunication is quiet enough so that no word of it would get out, you have picked the wrong person.

Let us talk clearly, if that is at all possible. I have written several critical and even polemical short articles during the past few months. I posed some questions on several aspects of contemporary political history that, rightly or wrongly, I think should be considered. The point being to wonder whether the formulation of judgment should be based on facts. I have no doubt that they may sometimes be annoying, but after all, the main role of any criticism is to annoy the "sleeping dogmas." If *les Temps Modernes* has any comments on this issue, I will be glad to read them. On the other hand, if the magazine chooses to bury its head in the sand, it may be desirable to bring into the open its incapacity to intervene in an already ongoing debate.

I ended my letter with a remark that if the magazine published a list of the board of directors, nowhere was there a mention of a "board of directors." This phantom institution was a thin cover for Lanzmann alone, as will be shown later.

Issue 404 of March, 1980 ended with the above mentioned "warning to readers" on p. 1765. Sartre passed away a few days later. At the time that he was supposed to have written and signed the last page of this copious work, he was, as we know, blind and very ill. It was physically impossible for him to have written this text. It is therefore highly unlikely that it was written by other than the fanatic Lanzmann, the only one for whom my book came as a direct shock affecting the fabrication of his film. He would delay its release for several years. Lanzmann had to get around the questions raised by Faurisson's work by finally resigning himself to avoid any presentation or analysis of historical documents, with the exception of a rather fragmentary one. He restricted himself to more or less rigged interviews. Nadine Fresco, who had stolen my manuscript and who, in order to soothe her own anxieties, had written a piece that Lanzmann published in *Les Temps Modernes* of June 1980, under the incredibly macabre heading of "Les redresseurs des morts " (the justifiers of death), was not completely forgiven for her compromising friendships: her name is no longer on the credits of *Shoah* in spite of her personal contribution to the filming in Poland and elsewhere. She takes her revenge in publishing, from time to time, some empty texts (9), by pretending to be a "historian," while she is a professional psychologist. What trifles!

La Vieille Taupe published the text signed by Sartre with the title, "*Le Testament politique du roi des cons* " (The Political Testament of the King of Idiots).

Back in Paris, I sent this to Jean Pouillon on May 14, 1980:

I understand political attacks coming from adversaries in panic. I am not surprised that they include excesses and untruths. Of course, I deplore that they reach to the point of slander.

But you could have acted in such a way as to prevent its use to propagate a lie. My article, "*despote à Vendre*" (despot for sale) was not published due to wrangling, but as a result of a verbal agreement with you in the presence of Rigoulot, Lanzmann and Etcherelli. The fact that the editors were divided changes nothing. It is you, who took it upon yourself that if Vickery's article were rejected by Simone de Beauvoir, my text would essentially say the same thing. (It was rather Lanzmann who substituted for Beauvoir.)

You promised, too, to write to Vickery to explain the thing to him. You failed to keep your promise. Vickery tells me that he likes my article and that he received no word from you.

Not only did the brave Pouillon publish no correction, but another publication, *L'Homme*, an anthropology magazine, for which he is something like a general secretary, and which used to regularly solicit some South African ethnology articles from me, ceased to do so (10). Knowledgeable people about South Africa are not legion, but little acts of clannish revenge are more important than other things.

At the same time, I wrote a "Reply to *Les Temps Modernes*," which I started by saying that readers of the magazine had the right to know that Lanzmann was hiding behind Sartre:

I am far from sharing Mr. Lanzmann's opinions (*T.M.* No. 395) on the "Holocaust." I maintain that this event and this period are much less known than it seems, and that a historical and critical approach is absolutely necessary. This history is currently shielded with taboos which seem to me to be harmful to everybody.

In defense of his ideas, Mr. Lanzmann does not hesitate to distort the truth. It is not true to say that I "defend" Faurisson's theses; I maintain that they deserve to be examined and that historians must answer Faurisson, and not ignore or insult him. Besides, I never took any "position," in writing, on the "Jewish question," but I would, if I were asked to do it. Moreover, readers are cautioned to "approach with reservation" my articles on Indochina, and I am blamed for the negligence of editors who do not read the articles they publish on subjects that they clearly do not know.

In the end, it is more of a hindrance than a help: the good old big slander that will terrorize and reduce the victim to silence: "Come on, antisemite!" Lanzmann is quite funny.

This inextricable mixture of half-truths and half-lies, livened up with threats against heretics, has covered with sediment the atrocious events of the Hitlerian period. Lanzmann's panic intimidation attempts to justify all suspicions.

Needless to say that this reply was not published. Like a fool, I still believed that the right to reply existed. The proof is that, following the June article of the refreshing *Fresco*, I still wrote a word, the last, on 10 July, to Mme. de Beauvoir:

*Les Temps Modernes*, of which you are henceforth the chief executive officer, has not published my reply to the harmful attacks against me in the March issue, despite the unambiguous legal and moral obligation in this regard.

Your June issue contains a long article, of a remarkably uplifting spirit, which turns in a strangely playful mode around a book I recently published.

This, in turn, put me under the obligation as well as the duty to rectify the distortion of my views ...

Wasted effort. I still lacked experience on the subject of slander. It was a novelty for me. I had a hard time understanding that that could come from people who knew me well and for a long time. I soon got a good lesson, thanks to *Nouvel Observateur*, many of whose contributors entertained quasi filial ties with Sartre and his entourage.

The first issue of this *Observateur* was new because it was taken over by a team of journalists from L'Express, with the financial help of a bidet manufacturer. They threw out the few leftist journalists who had transformed it from a militant weekly during the dark Algerian period into a respectable paper. The first issue was placed under the emblematic figure of Sartre, who fascinated the post war generation that faithfully followed the political transgressions of the one who inspired Céline's immortal article, "*L'Agité du bocal*" (Agitated Head). (Recall that this extremely violent short text was a reaction to blatant slander by Sartre, who claimed that Céline was paid by the Germans.)

It is hard to imagine, after a long time, the degree of shaky love and shady maneuvers among the entourage of the most famous couple of the French intelligentsia. We also have to recall the stream of exclusions and excommunications pronounced by the one who only cafe waiters had the right to call "master" and his entourage who were unable to form a group intent on terrorizing such self righteous people as the surrealists of that time. I knew one of them, Marcel Peju. Acquisitions, like exclusions of the entourage, were really done over the head of the client and for reasons that were not at all philosophical. Thus, one of the obscure editors of *France-Dimanche*, Claude Lanzmann, achieved fame by initiating Simone de Beauvoir into new trances that were not of a strictly philosophical nature. This was sufficient to quickly make up for his misdemeanor, such as having been taken by Lucien Bodard's book on Indochina. Lanzmann published a call for the "rehabilitation" of Bodard, this old nostalgic of colonial times, in the *Nouvel Observateur*, a sort of weekly annex of *les Temps Modernes*, but especially a new intellectual fashion magazine. I am not saying that Bodard's books were bad or that it would be unpleasant to read them, but that the virtuous Sartre entourage got thick with this old remnant of the empire, which had something deeply grotesque about it (11).

This grotesque quality, an indisputable Lanzmann specialty (anecdotes about him abound), can be found in his preface to Filip Muller's book published in "document of the week" by *Nouvel Observateur* of April 28, 1980. He launched attacks against

revisionists, but without citing names or precise texts. The work would certainly deserve a comment, at least to place it where it belongs in contemporary context. I wasn't the only one to react, and with my friend Gaby Cohn-Bendit, we wrote a review of the book prefaced by Lanzmann. As we had done some times before, my friend Pierre Guillaume and I had a long conversation with Jean-Francois Kahn, who was then the editor of *Nouvelles littéraires*. He had shown a certain disposition to admit that there could be some viewpoints other than his. He was vaguely involved with reissuing Rassinier's books. His staff had at least one former student of Faurisson who would not buy stories about his former professor. And especially, in every one of his editorials, Kahn fulminated against censorship and pretended to fight for a true freedom of expression. We sent him our "judgment" of Lanzmann-Muller. Needless to say that the great defender of freedom threw it quickly in the waste basket, thus showing his true nature as a swaggerer. Pulled out of my archives, here is the text written in 1980:

## THE DIFFICULT ART OF FALSE TESTIMONY

by Jean-Gabriel Cohn-Bendit and Serge Thion

Here is a book with the sensational title, "*Trois ans dans une chambre à gaz d'Auschwitz*" (Three Years in an Auschwitz Gas Chamber) and a subtitle that describes it as "*témoignage de l'un des seuls rescapés des commandos spéciaux*." (Testimony of one of the only survivors of the special commandos.) This title is surely an innocent blunder, because according to official historiography, the longest functioning gas chamber in Auschwitz-Birkenau would have been in operation for twenty months, from March, 1943 to November, 1944. The title is the more eye-catching as the witness, Filip Muller, worked in fact at the crematoria and did not stay "in" a gas chamber. There is a play here on the usual confusion in peoples' minds between the "gas chambers," an instrument of death, and the "crematoria," which served to incinerate bodies, irrespective of the cause of death. Hindus, Buddhists and still others have a marked preference for cremation. Sartre was cremated, at his request, in the "crematorium" of Père Lachaise.

Why this false and unrealistic title? Why now? Claude Lanzmann's preface is very revealing: "At the moment when living history is changing to dead history, when truth is disguised in legend if it is not simply falsified and denied, the appearance of this book takes on an essential importance. It is an answer to those who, hiding behind their ignorance, their refusal to get informed, their bad faith and their antisemitism masked by motives of "revisionist" caution, ask the funny question of the "how" and the "why," in other words, of the technical possibility of such a mass murder." (p. 10)

This question of the "how" and the "why" is now asked publicly. Lanzmann is therefore addressing us and is proposing that Muller's book is an ultimate proof of our transgressions. Hence the care needed to examine this testimony.

## AN INCOHERENT DESCRIPTION

First of all, Muller works at crematorium I, in the first Auschwitz camp. It is a relatively small installation, partially reconstructed for tourists. The work is hard and painful, but obviously necessary from a sanitary point of view. What is horrible is the camp not the furnace. The text is quite imprecise and stuffed with contradictions. The translation, which seems at first sight to take a few liberties with the German text, doubtless contributes to multiply these contradictions.

The first part suffers from common lapses of memory, which recalls only paroxysms of violence and pain, selective memory, desire to prove: this is well known. It is regrettable that a "document" of this importance does not give a clearer image of daily life. Much better sources exist.

The few passages which mention the gas chamber of Auschwitz I are classic but incoherent in the details. It had *doors* (p. 67) or one "heavy iron door with rubber gaskets"(p. 73) strangely manufactured by carpenters (p. 76). These carpenters were necessary because one of the walls of this room was ... in wood (p. 81). There are many other incomprehensible details, such as the affirmation that the chimney was reconstructed without interrupting the functioning of the furnaces (pp. 83-84). Here, some questions are in order, but let's see what comes next.

## AN IMPRESSION OF UNREALITY

The next installment takes place at Birkenau, the big extension of the Auschwitz camp, where four big crematoria were finished between March and June, 1943. We are told that they were equipped with gas chambers and that they formed a real death factory. We are given even approximate maps (by inverting the legends) but without a scale to convert to real measurement. No photos.

The questions posed by those conventionally called revisionist historians about the practical possibilities of an industry such as it is usually described, *receive no answers in Muller's book because he completely ignores these questions*. According to him, Zyklon B is no longer dangerous right after it has killed. Muller thus pretends that he was able to enter a gas chamber where there were still crystals (of cyanide acid), where "corpses had not yet stiffened," where ventilators were roaring, and where he found food, obviously saturated with cyanide acid, that he *avidly consumed* (p. 39). He wore no mask. Such a totally unlikely story makes Muller's joke rather macabre.

He repeats the traditional figures about gassing rates: how can two to three thousand people go through two doors less than six feet wide (see the plans)? How can they be evacuated as corpses, hoisted to the furnace level by a minuscule elevator, all in two to three hours, even oblivious to the dangers of the gas, even by considerably cheating, as he does, about the real incineration time? His description of the open air incinerations is quite extravagant.

His story about Birkenau has a rather different tone: it is very impersonal. It is not exactly known what Muller was doing there, but he was everywhere, knew everything. He moved surreptitiously from the witness mode to the ubiquity of the novelist. Entire scenes give the curious impression of "old hat," The description of the functioning of the "gas chamber" at Krema II is obviously borrowed from Miklos Nyisli's book, "*Médecin à Auschwitz*" (cf. pp. 17-71) and purged of its most unlikely tales, such as the four invented big elevators. Excerpts from this rather suspect book had already been published in *Les Temps Modernes* in 1951.

The story of the beautiful woman who stripped off and emotionally paralyzed an S.S. took him by surprise and killed him, is an already old myth. It can be found, for example, in books by Aaroneanu (she was Belgian), by Kogon (she was Italian), and by Karl Bartel (she was French). In Muller's book, she comes from the East. Just like the strange Kurt Gerstein (12), Filip Muller wants to enter the gas chamber, but he gives up the idea because he must testify. Here, young nude beauties "in the prime of youth" push him out of the gas chamber in front of the dumbfounded S.S. The same theme is treated by Gideon Haussner, the prosecutor in the Eichmann trial, with the dentist Lindwasser.

The bulk of the book, these scenes that were supposed to have been lived, is quickly unmasked by anyone familiar with the literature on this subject, as a montage of texts, a juxtaposition of "high points," with no chronology at all. Why? The editors tell us in a "warning" that this text is a "historical document" that they have respected "to the letter" and that: "any manipulation for esthetic or literary reasons would, in our opinion, have totally eliminated the meaning and the impact." This admirable probity has only one defect: it is a pure lie. It can only fool French readers to the extent that the editors carefully avoid to mention that the book was not written by Muller himself but by a ghost writer. The German edition mentions a *deutsche Bearbeitung* by Helmut Freitag, which leads one to believe that Muller, who is Slovak, either taped or wrote a draft that was given to a "rewriter." The American edition has the elementary honesty of stating the "literary collaboration" of Freitag. The French editors and Mr. Lanzmann did not only forget this detail, but swore by their great gods that the document is a "draft." If Mr. Freitag's name appears in Germany, it is because he was paid for "literary manipulations," which does not necessary mean that the meaning or the impact of this text have been "totally eliminated." But it is the conclusion that the editors would soon turn to their own advantage.

This childish practice of hiding Freitag's role in order to give the book greater "credibility" may have resulted from an unfortunate precedent sparked by the memories of Martin Gray. It seems that the higher the unlikelihood, the better is the guarantee for the veracity of the text.

## NO NEW INFORMATION

The impression of unreality given by Muller's book comes also from the fact that he is extremely discreet about the material privileges he enjoyed by belonging to these special commandos, about the part he played in gold and

currency traffic and in the black market, and about the multiple contacts he had with other prisoners in several sections of Auschwitz, despite the isolation to which he says he was condemned. He is very evasive about his relations with the prisoners' political organization. But his insistence on talking about "our chiefs" and "our leaders," without the least precision, leads one to think that he was a part (but at what level?) of the Stalinist apparatus, or of one of the groups affiliated with it. Is it useful to insist on the primary role the communists have played in the "production" and dissemination of testimony about Auschwitz ever since the liberation of this camp?

If we compare this book to the mass of already published texts, it is hard to understand Lanzmann's elation, for *Muller's book contributes no new information* (except, maybe, that prior to dying, gypsies screwed, while Jews didn't, p. 206). It is clear, even though not explicitly, that there were no *systematic* liquidations of the *Sonderkommandos*, unlike what is written everywhere. (The critic at *L'Humanité* has even seen in his crystal ball what the book never said, namely, that Muller had escaped "five selections.") Muller, who was part of a *Sonderkommando* for three years, did not have to escape liquidation because, to his surprise, nobody tried to liquidate him. He survived because he was young, strong and lucky to work at the crematoria, which allowed him to be properly fed. He was also lucky not to have participated in the *Sonderkommando* revolt at the end of 1944.

*Les Temps Modernes* had already given their support to Nyizli's book. In 1966, Simone de Beauvoir wrote a preface in support of *Treblinka* of J.F. Steiner, stating that he described "exactly how things happened." However, this book had been considered everywhere as a bad fiction which blithely mixed the true and the false.

Muller's book comes out today as a prologue to Lanzmann's film on the "Holocaust." People will certainly go the movie. Mr. Lanzmann is obviously a first rate historian: he is the only one in the world to have found "the intact archives of the Nazi bureaucracy" (p. 11). It wasn't too long ago, in the midst of the Vietnam war, he wanted, in the *Nouvel Observateur*, to rehabilitate Lucien Bodard as a historian of the first Indochina war.

Bodard's book was funny. But the work of Muller and Freitag is not. We know of people who massacred other people in order to save their own skin, but they didn't dare claim to be heroes. Filip Muller pretends that he participated in a gigantic massacre and makes the excuse that he had to do it and survive in *order to testify*. But if this is true, why would this man wait more than thirty years to give his testimony? Lanzmann attempts to answer this obvious question in *l'Arche* (June 1980, p. 38). It turned out that, contrary to what is said in the preface by the same Lanzmann, Muller had already testified. That was in 1964 in the Frankfurt trial. And it was then that he got the idea to write a book. It doesn't look like this occurred to him when he was in Auschwitz. It's strange that it took him fifteen years to act on his idea. . . . This muddle becomes grotesque.

We are sorry to have to rank this book as a fake. We would have liked it to have shed some new light, to have once and for all answered the nagging question of what exactly took place in Auschwitz. Some do not want to know what *exactly* happened. This is their right. Ours is not to think that the moon is made of green cheese.

(June 1, 1980) (13)

It must be added that Lanzmann seems to have ignored that Muller had already recalled his memories in 1946, in a Czech book, later published in East Berlin in 1958 as *Die Todesfabrik*, of Ota Kraus and Erich Kulka. It was translated into English in 1966 with the title, *The Death Factory*. And finally, his testimony in Frankfurt in 1965 was deemed not very clear by a court that was not lacking in sympathy for the incoherence of the accusation. Needless to add that the testimony of 1966 is quite different from that of 1980.

Soon afterwards, in its issue of June 2, 1980, *Le Nouvel Observateur* attacked Faurisson. Under his right to reply, the latter sent a response which was not published. He sued and the court ruled in favor of those who refused his right to reply. This confirms the fact that in France, the right to reply is play acting. On June 21, *Le Nouvel Observateur* published under the rubric of "document of the week" a so called "great debate: Chomsky-Claude Roy" entitled "Le gauchisme, maladie sénile du communisme" (Leftism, a Senile sickness of Communism?), an amusing paraphrasing of a famous pamphlet by Lenin, who talked about infantile sickness. In it, Claude Roy refers several times to my book without mentioning the title or the author, an old trick aimed at avoiding an eventual right to reply. *Le Nouvel Observateur* published 412,664 copies of this issue. I wrote and disseminated 200 copies of a vigorous refutation of Roy, with a letter to Chomsky commenting on Claude Roy's manipulations in his "document of the week" (14). It took six months, a paper in *Esprit* (15) on Cambodia and the press where I publicly brought up this affair (pp. 109-110), for Claude Roy to react with a postscript to an article in *le Nouvel Observateur* (No. 843, January 5, 1981). Here it is:

Moving rapidly rightward (which anybody can see), Serge Thion reproaches me for veering leftward when the Nazis occupied France (which everybody knows). He has the nerve to write in *Esprit* that I published there a letter by Chomsky "amputated of about half its length in a dozen places. A rare carelessness." Rare carelessness, in fact, that of Thion. I asked Chomsky for a reply. He wrote a letter that would have occupied four pages in this magazine and I requested from him that he shorten it himself, which he did. He wrote me on February 15, 1980: "Thank you for sending me the translation. I realize the problems involved in its full publication [...]. I will try to reduce it by half [...]. Thank you for the trouble you took in doing the translation." Mr. Thion knows this as well as he knows that I have not "falsified" or "truncated" any astounding citations by his friend, Faurisson.

Yet, it was Roy who had said and written that the reply would be published in its entirety. The record is there and Roy's reply is remarkably weak. What is more amusing to learn is that Roy "was veering leftward," which really means that he had moved from the royalists and friendship with Brasillach to Stalinism and the

abandonment of Brasillach. I wouldn't like to be in the shoes of somebody who has to try to give some coherence to this kind of thing. A few weeks later, he wrote his canard that I am in good standing in the Reagan entourage. This idea seemed funny to me and I sent a short missive to its author:

Claude Roy (*Nouvel Observateur*, No. 843) said that I am moving "rapidly rightward." He sees me today (*Nouvel Observateur*, No. 849) as an advisor to President Reagan on "moderate repression." Mr. Roy is very funny. At the beginning of January, I was still moving rightward. Having come from the extreme left, I was then at the same position with him. But it would seem that his motion had landed me in February at some place fixed by C. Roy. So here I am, arrived at the White House, well established in an office all to myself, located between Chomsky's, advisor on repressive linguistics and that of Faurisson, advisor on repressive falsification. It is with great pleasure that I invite Claude Roy to Washington. I will show him in the third sub-basement our intellectual torture rooms, and as a souvenir of his visit, I will give him the charming little present of a portable Procuste's Bed on which any text can be made to say the contrary of what it says. But maybe Claude Roy is already equipped with this vital work tool.

If I had gotten rid of this aging idol of Parisian salons, I had not paid for my sins as far as the people at *Le Nouvel Observateur* were concerned, even though I never wrote a line for this paper. This is not quite exact. When my friend, Breytenbach, was arrested in South Africa during the summer of '75, I was ready to write anywhere even in the devil's agenda. Breytenbach was at that time abandoned by everybody on the left, because his trial lacked the appeal of a hero's role. Blame was all he got from the hardened purists of the Parisian left, sitting comfortably on their buffs. Two or three of us thought that the most important thing was to get him out of there by any means possible. We even sought the help of Dominique de Roux, who, prior to his sudden death, had promised to bring up the matter with his friend, Botha, the then defense minister of Pretoria. At that time, I proposed to K.S. Karol, whom I had met by chance, a paper, which he accepted. I wrote it fast since I was traveling. When I came back months later, I found out that the paper was not published, that *it was lost* by the innocent Kenize Mourad, and that it was "too late," the opportunity having passed. But Breytenbach was still in jail (16).

Fresco's article was reviewed by Kathleen Evin, the daughter of a socialist deputy of the Rocard faction. Sudden fame. The lady talked about "pseudo-scientists" linked to a "black international." She referred to me as a "researcher" in quotes, and a "former leftist" (*Le Nouvel Observateur*, No. 823, August 16, 1980). This irritated me, the rest is ridiculous. "Former leftist" smelled of Maoism, or of the Krévine type of fellow travelers, all the things that I have always fought, before, during and after May, '68. I wrote a short letter stating that "I have never dipped into Leninist absurdities, where others got compromised. All this goes back to old Stalinist methods. Would I be the last of the Hitler- Trotskyists, as far as your paper is concerned?" I circulated this letter among twenty or so people that I knew and who knew me and who wrote in this canard. Lost cause. The subtle Evin told me over the phone that the paper did not want to print my reply, because as far as *Les Temps Modernes* was concerned, I was not "implicated."

Bypassing this lady's ignorance of the most elementary rules on the right to reply, I thought it not entirely useless to reply. I consulted an attorney specifying that I did not want to sue, given the freedom of press, but only to negotiate the execution of my right to reply. There were protracted negotiations with the president of the Bar Couturon and the paper's attorney. My attorney proposed a compromise where he said: "As long as it remains loyal, the debate about gas chambers can only clarify and reinforce the struggle against Nazism and racism, for in order to prove its permanence and current relevance, we must neither owe nor concede anything to mythical history, but must always rely on historical truth."

That was too steep. Things could have dragged on still longer, hadn't my protest met with a response in the form of some soothing words by Jacques Julliard. In issue No. 831 of October 13, 1980, he devoted an article to the affair, clearly taking sides against Faurisson's affirmations. He did that only by remaining calm, trying to remain rational, and trying to see what lessons could be drawn from it; in short, a disagreement not only devoid of hysterics but critical of hysterics (18). Jacques Julliard's paper was one of the very rare articles that came from an honest and loyal adversary during all those years. There are hundreds of others full of striking ignorance and aggressive stupidity that I will not even mention here because that would quadruple the size of this book and because stating their arguments would be deadly boring. They copied from each other and had only one thing to say: "ugly Nazis." It's rather short. The reason is simple: every time this affair resurfaces because of some event or other, the thing is entrusted to some young journalist, who obviously knows nothing about it, has neither the time nor especially the desire to read anything on the subject. He has to deal with and relies on "press files" where he finds previous articles written under the same conditions of haste and ignorance, and that he reproduces under a more or less sloppy form, so that next time around, he will serve as a reference to a future colleague who will have to deal with the subject under the same conditions of improvisation and prejudice. This is how the journalist functions in closed circuit, repeating simplistically and eternally his predecessors' rubbish. I have made this observation about many other subjects which, from time to time, make the headlines in the press, and with which I could fill a book or two.

To conclude with the specifically Sartrian galaxy, I would like to mention a correspondence with a satellite of his "outer entourage," so to speak, Dr. Norbert Bensaid, who writes in *Le Nouvel Observateur*, possibly because the editor is his cousin. It is known that "Jean Daniel" is the pen name of Mr. Bensaid. This gentleman, a physician who later became a psychoanalyst, had visited with me. We broke bread together. I thought it normal to send him my book. Here is his reply to me, on May 12, 1980:

Sir, you thought it good to send me your book. What a strange idea! Did you really believe that I could take any interest in it?

I don't share your contempt for "politics." Except when it is concealed and disguised as morality. Those who think that they are innocent of the motives and consequences of their actions and who proclaim themselves the zealous and disinterested servants of the Truth, inspire in me disbelief, fear and suspicion. Certainly, not respect.

I can't bring myself to believe, either, that the jealous concern for historical truth could not be expressed through means other than the all-out ostentatious dissemination of aggressive doubts, harmful suspicion and malicious insinuations.

As for me, it's enough to know that a large number of innocent human beings had been humiliated, mistreated and destroyed.

Yet, I can understand that a scrupulous historical account would lead one to want precise figures, detailed techniques, and an evaluation of the circumstances. This doesn't really change anything. The horror remains the horror. The unacceptable remains unacceptable. And when these historians look for accuracy and not for Truth, for exact facts and not for Justice, wouldn't they lay themselves open to suspicion? One wonders if their zeal was not directed towards exonerating the guilty party and denouncing those who want to pass as victims.

You deliberately attribute to others the dirtiest work, the crassest lies and the most repugnant bad faith. This is contagious. You should expect to be yourself subject of such suspicion. You will never convince anybody that you are driven only by the desire to rescue the poor Faurisson and the Truth. I don't even feel like I want to know more about your intentions. Curiosity is quickly overcome by nausea. And this is your problem. Not ours.

I really think that my being Jewish is a secondary matter. But you are free to think the opposite and keep intact the comfortable certitude that only Jews can be appalled by your enterprise. They are blinded by the passion and the desire to remain victims. And by making the world feel guilty, they will dominate it. It's a stupid but commonplace idea.

You also think that you are alone against everybody. Don't worry. You will be heard. But by whom? It was obviously unwise to muzzle a feeling as enduring as antisemitism often through the use of the "camps." It was inevitable that one day, it would reemerge. There we have it. And it would not be in your interest not to take some credit for it. It's to the credit of the "bloody idiot" to have refused you, before his death, the moral guarantee of *Les Temps Modernes*

I replied on May 29:

Dear Norbert (or Mr? or Dr?)

It is a little frightening to think that there could be any connection between the letter you sent me and the book I just published. It's difficult for me to imagine that you really read it, but I can see that you must have scanned it with an accusatory mind.

You draw the picture of antisemitism and you fantastically project it on me. Well, I defy you to find any sentence I wrote or any idea that could reasonably be characterized as antisemitic. Lacking such proof as others could find

convincing, I would have to charge you for insults and defamation. If you don't know me enough, please look around you. It will be my way of sending you my witnesses.

One more word. You say that "it was obviously unwise to muzzle a feeling as enduring as antisemitism often through the use of the "camps." You, whose profession is psychology (subtitled a book with the word, "dialogue"!), should know that feelings can't be muzzled. The famous "return of the repressed"! The camps, suffering and death should certainly not have been "used." We should rather have tried to understand all that took place. It is this understanding, and not some political religion, that will allow us to not accept all the unacceptables that we can see today all over the world. I was not in Warsaw (you, neither), but I was in Teheran, I was in Kwangju (South Korea, the place of enormous massacres) a few years ago. Do you understand why I "understand" what is happening there? The horror remains the horror, as you say.

But why go on? You haven't given me the impression that you want to hear much. I am a little concerned for people, more or less close to me, that your role is to "listen to."

## THE GREAT CONTROVERSY

The same reaction came from *Le Monde diplomatique*, for which I stopped writing after 1975, subsequent to a difference of opinion with its editor about an article I wrote on Indonesia, which, irony of fate, ended up at *Les Temps Modernes*. "We will obviously not take the trouble to mention this book, had it not been one of the manifestations of this currently raging obscurantist offensive: a thinly disguised rehabilitation of Nazism, a resurgence of mysticism and of irrational thought, a genetic reductionism, and a "biologisation of social phenomena" ... (Maurice Maschino, a veteran of Sartreism in the July, 1980 issue.)

It would be hard to find in the pages of this book any genetic or biological consideration whatsoever. Maschino read another book. But never mind for these people. It's a war where they have no projectile other than mud to throw at "enemies" they invent.

One of the most incredible commentaries in the register of sanctification was that of Max Gallo, a well known leftist writer and regular contributor to a rightist weekly. He wrote in *L'Express*: "It is, in fact, a question of rehabilitation of Nazism." His main argument (issue of October 18, 1980) deserves a prize: "Counting corpses during the television broadcast of *Holocaust*, a magazine was thus able to show that Stalinism was deadlier than Nazism and that the bombardments of Dresden and Hiroshima by the British and the Americans were equally barbaric actions. The aim was clear: trivialize evil. Highlight the virtues of Nazism by revealing the guilt of its enemies. In the name of historical truth, make Nazism a globally positive regime like all other regimes."

Here is a gentleman who pretends to be a historian, who states facts that he himself qualifies to be historically true, and therefore he does not deny them, but he is up in arms against the fact that others cite them because these facts may lead to conclusions that he doesn't like, and which are morally neutral. Here is the most superb proof of the bad faith of a self-righteous crowd: **It's true, but it must not be said because it might benefit the enemy.** The thing is the more so comical that this Gallo is known as a falsifier: already actively mixed up in the literary fake known as *Papillon*. He was hired as a ghost writer for the autobiography of Martin Gray, a supposed survivor of the Warsaw ghetto, where he invented all kinds of hallucinating scenes.

There is nothing really that can come out of these people for whom literature is a business and the simple truth is an ingredient controlled by the needs of the market. The honest Max Gallo had no problems getting elected a deputy in 1981. His "trade" in pure fabrication was a particularly useful asset in his rather unsavory position as government "spokesman." Preening his feathers on his golden perch, he even thought it good to launch an appeal to the "intellectuals" to show more clearly their enthusiasm for the new socialist government.

As for the article published by Nadine Fresco in *Les Temps Modernes*, I simply note that its main substance comes from my book, livened up with some thin files of the Center of Contemporary Jewish Documentation. The rest can be summarized as: great indignation, a lot of cheap irony and especially, fairly fragile psychological considerations. As is, this article is not worth much, but it would serve many people who don't want to take the risk to judge for themselves and who found in the ironic tone of Fresco a protection against the doubts that may have beset her. This article has even found its way, under a fairly manipulated form, into an American magazine with which I had collaborated (19).

It's worth mentioning that, in this affair, the Americans have practically no experts and that they have to resort to the rather mediocre production of French writers, who are not experts either, but who have written under the influence of motives that are at the same time personal (their former relationships with me, for example) and political (their ambiguous relations with political Judaism), such as Nadine Fresco and Pierre Vidal-Naquet (20).

It is worth stopping to look at a short text by Pierre Vidal-Naquet. It is the only attempt at a response, of a rational appearance, to Faurisson's argument (21). We could also mention the book by G. Wellers (22). But unfortunately, not understanding the question posed by Faurisson, it's difficult for its author to supply answers, so he is content with bringing up the usual documents, already known for a long time, without ever seeing that their interpretation may occasionally be subject to discussion. To him, the German word "Sonderbehandlung" (*special treatment*) means "extermination of the Jews." That's all.

Yet he harbors no illusions. In his introduction, he states that he is not addressing "the instigators of this campaign, for there is no hope of persuading them of anything," for these are those who want to rehabilitate Nazism and those for whom "the taste for truth" has been pushed to such extremes that the starting point got lost." Wellers is right to admit it; he quickly drops the thread. He prefers to address "men and women of good faith, ignorant of real facts." This is quite clear (23).

But going back to Vidal-Naquet, a man very well known in France, not for his works as a historian of ancient Greece, which have remained confidential, but for his political interventions, especially during the Algerian war. He led the Audin Committee that played an essential role in the denunciation of torture practiced by the French army. Since then, he has often participated in anything having to do with human rights, by writing articles and signing all kinds of petitions. An eager polemicist, he projects the image of honesty and moral rectitude: all in all, the conscience of the left.

He launched a crusade. He put himself at the head of those who want to destroy Faurisson's views. He fired all his artillery in an article where he brags of having succeeded in completely demolishing Faurisson's arguments. Yet, he keeps fighting, conferences here, conferences there. He is behind several lawsuits against Faurisson, even though he pretends to disapprove of them. He uses portions of the wording in the lawsuit before the trial, without citing the source, since he can't do that without admitting that he is part of the plaintiff side. He came to court to show his personal hatred for Faurisson, his former fellow student, to the point of getting booed by the audience. He attacks ferociously in *le Monde*, meticulously avoiding to cite names so that those he insults have no way to respond. In his devouring passion, he is not even reluctant to use flatly racist arguments: Serge Thion can't be antisemite, he says because "he has a Jewish wife" ("Quando le idee sono omicide," *Il Messagero*, October 18, 1980) (24).

I met Pierre Vidal-Naquet in 1963, if I recall, at the time when I was trying, with some friend, to form a committee against apartheid. This is not because I found some particular charm in this kind of action, but because some South-African comrades in exile in London had requested us to establish such a committee in order, according to them, to create a movement of solidarity with the ANC, to collect a little money, to publicize the atrocious situation of Blacks under South-African rule, and to possibly have some influence with the French government, which, under General De Gaulle, had a powerful and discreet complicity with the Pretoria government, particularly in the military and atomic spheres.

So we had to heroically jump into the Parisian quagmire in order to get signatures on a petition, set up a committee, collect some money, give press conferences, and conduct discussions with representatives of political parties, unions, churches, and other high society types.

The thing was boring to death. Go to the Socialist Party (SFIO), talk with Robert Pontillon back from Moscow, where he accompanied a party delegation led by Guy Mollet, tell him sad stories of maltreated blacks deep in Africa, see him raise an eyelid to filter through an icy look, all this had something frightening about it that took the shape of irrepressible weariness. All these people didn't give a damn about what we came to tell them. Inside the holy of holies of these political or union bureaucracies, big or small, we felt a coldness, an inhumanity typical of people in power who look in a certain way towards the great currents of history, and in another way towards the cheapest intrigues of those who want to keep their positions and who calculate the exact tone of voice they will use in greeting a colleague or a rival. It is the more so striking that those people were no longer in power, but had exercised it a few years earlier, and the self-importance stayed with them. As they had joyfully

broken many fellagha, our little stories of tortured Negroes did not have much interest for them.

This was a bogus committee because the cause of abolishing Apartheid did not mobilize many people. It does not usually arouse people's interest in a country like France unless blood is shed. Unfortunately for the cause of their liberation and for the delight of the press, not enough blacks were dying in South Africa. They didn't succeed in making the headlines except every four or five years, thanks to a little well organized massacre. The rest of the time, they suffered in silence, and this does not have much interest for the managers of our conscience (25).

We gathered some well-known intellectuals. Pierre Vidal-Naquet shared with me the secretariat of the committee, Paul Thibaud, the then editorial secretary of *Esprit*, Claude Lanzmann, the hired hand delegated by Sartre. The latter agreed to speak at the inaugural press conference. Sartre was a valuable asset and the French and international press were there. An hour before the conference, I gave him a quick briefing on South Africa, about which he obviously knew nothing. Facing journalists as ignorant as himself, he did remarkably well, an old stager who gave the impression of being a gold mine of information on a subject that he had always known.

The committee meetings, cheered up by Lanzmann's outbursts and grumbling, did not last very long. Little by little, the "personalities" slipped away and I was left to cope with the "organizations," especially the PCF, the CGT, and the MRAP that were interested in our action mainly in order to swallow and stifle it. After some time, I passed the torch to a group of dynamic protesters, gathered around the tireless Mme. de Felice.

For lack of space, we will only give a brief sample of Vidal-Naquet's analysis. If I had to respond, point by point, to each contributor, I would fill a thick volume, something that I have neither the desire nor the time to write. Some selected pieces will be enough.

The article starts with a reminiscence, that he sets as a model, of a discussion among anthropologists about cannibalism. It was mainly about a book by W. Arens, *The Man-eating Myth*, where the author indicates that anthropological facts told by western travelers were second hand. They did not see a cannibal meal. Vidal-Naquet concludes that this is essentially "an invention of the anthropologists based on inconsistent testimonies," and he adds: "That this theory is purely grotesque can be demonstrated in a few lines." Vidal-Naquet cites in a footnote a report by somebody better placed than he is to give an opinion, the anthropologist Rodney Needham, in the *Times Literary Supplement* of January 25, 1980.

Certainly, the thing seems surprising. I don't think that we can call into question the ritual anthropophagy of the Aztecs, for example, which was massive and based on ideological considerations of the highest importance for their political system (26). At the Suva Museum, in Fiji, I saw, not without smiling, the sandals of the last missionary who might have been eaten by the Fijians around the beginning of the century. But I also know that for some populations, like the Batak of Sumatra, there is already a fairly ancient controversy about the real or supposed existence of a ritual anthropophagy. And the Batak themselves are today divided over this question that

has become historical. Could Arens be a fool? The answer is simple. Vidal-Naquet did not read it. Me neither, but I have Needham's report, which tells me that we are dealing with a "provocative, consistently interesting book, and that it bears consequences in certain respects," that it is a "courageous exploration, and that it should "be taken seriously." Vidal-Naquet deforms completely Arens' argument, for the sake of the future polemic. Needham says that Arens "has avoided suggesting that customary cannibalism, under one form or another, had never existed." (This is a sentence of Arens himself.) And Arens, quoted by Needham, adds: "But if custom prevailed among some groups, this is not sufficient to account for the general tendency to qualify others as cannibals." Arens states "that it is not possible to conclusively show that a certain practice did not exist."

The work has therefore a completely different dimension: it calls into question ready made ideas (27), numerous accusations of cannibalism leveled by XIXth century explorers against peoples who never practiced it. And if I wanted to pull the cover, I would say that this book poses the question of knowing how we think that we know. But the purpose of this simple anecdote is to show how Vidal-Naquet is capable of writing about a book he never read and to draw from it absurd conclusions. This lightness or bad faith I don't know yet which lead to the evidence of a visceral desire to put an end to Faurisson's thesis.

Let's see how Pierre Vidal-Naquet fuels my argument. In a section entitled, "Of history and its revision," he explains that "like all historical narratives, this history needs obviously to be critiqued (yet this is not so obvious for many people). The critique may and must be conducted at several levels." His timid attempts on this subject lead him to reject some documents and testimonies deemed crucial by others, for example, the testimony of SS Pery Broad reprinted by G. Wellers in his book against Faurisson (28). Like me, Pierre Vidal-Naquet would like that research and investigative work be conducted. He realizes that this will not happen without wondering why. He blames Faurisson for stating that "the findings of the Committee of History of WW II on the number of French deportees are inaccessible" (p. 17, No. 23). "They were published in 1979." But Faurisson complained in 1978 that these findings had not been published since 1973. So Faurisson was right to complain and Vidal-Naquet, once again, showed fickleness or bad faith.

Later on, he states the obvious by saying that "an ideology that gets hold of fact does not eliminate the latter's existence" but by gently attributing to me the ambition to prove the opposite. It's as though he doesn't know that part of the historian's job is to establish facts. And as a strong argument, he adds: "Why couldn't LICRA state the truth about Auschwitz and at the same time use the services of a racist juggler like Paul Giniewski?" Here we sink in confusion, for it's not clear exactly what makes LICRA the holder of historical truth. It is an organization that calls itself antiracist. But I have shown that it holds racist opinions about Arabs and Blacks. So it is not antiracist, which is its only *raison d'être*. In the same argument, Vidal-Naquet deems it unbelievable to consider Vincent Monteil "simply as an outspoken man," while he sees him as a "passionate supporter, almost paranoid, of the most extreme Arab views on Israel and the Jews." Yet, I had stated that Monteil was "outspoken" about the army when he was in the military and about Gaullism when he was a Gaullist. But Pierre Vidal-Naquet does not like Arab views on Israel and obviously forgets that Monteil was in Palestine with Count Bernadette when the latter was assassinated by

the Zionists. In order to please him, we should have eliminated "outspoken" and written "paranoid." A wonderful technique. But to paraphrase our censor, couldn't a paranoid tell the truth about Israel? (And in particular, about the murders committed by the Israeli secret services in France?) and be outspoken too, and possibly even about the Arabs? Is Monteil honest? Vidal-Naquet seems to have doubts that one can honestly support causes that he considers repulsive (29). Pierre Vidal-Naquet doesn't like to hear about a school of revisionist historians, because this might give the impression that there is truth on one side and a lie on the other. He puts me on the lying side. But he simply forgets to say what I lied about. Fickleness or bad faith? Maybe simply oblivion.

Subsequently, Vidal-Naquet reconstructs what he calls the "revisionist method." This consists in a hodgepodge of procedures borrowed from several sources and attributed to everybody. Then he declares sanctimoniously: "As anybody can see by going back to the sources, I didn't invent anything." True, he does not invent anything, but he manufactures a composite, a fantasy that exists only for the needs of his cause. Yet, I anticipated this type of procedure. Sensing this deficiency, Vidal-Naquet responds without the least justification: No, "there is really no hodgepodge, no polemic," just at the moment, he achieves a hodgepodge dedicated to polemical ends. Blindness or bad faith?

This is nonetheless an opportunity to focus on some points. According to him, this method is based on six simple principles:

**1) "There was no genocide and its instrument, the gas chamber, has never existed."** First, let's talk about the word, "genocide." As I wrote elsewhere, "if words have a meaning, there was certainly no genocide in Cambodia." (30) But many people died. This is the problem with new words. Their meaning changes rapidly, before they either get established or disappear. Like others, this one is a casualty of inflation. If there is fighting in Ireland, it's genocide. The Occitans screams against cultural genocide. Traffic accidents are our weekly genocide. If we take the word at its current market value, there is no doubt that the Nazis caused the genocide of the Jews, and by the same yardstick, practiced the genocide of Poles, Russians, etc. The word extermination was previously used. If the word "genocide" is to keep its original meaning of "murder of a whole people," then it can be said that the Nazis engaged in the process of genocide of all those people they deported. In Cambodia, where human losses of the 1975-78 period reached around 20% of the population, the term remains questionable, especially when Lacouture, who did not set foot in the country in the last 20 years, coins the word "auto genocide." After all, there still remain a Khmer people, 6.5 to 7 million, around 1981. The same holds for Jews in general, even if it is true that entire communities have disappeared.

The use of the term poses implicitly the question of the number of those who disappeared and the proportion they represent in the whole community prior to the catastrophe. There will obviously be no agreement about a percentage above which a massacre becomes a genocide: 10%, 50%, 90%? All this is meaningless, for the main reason for these neologisms (genocide, Holocaust, Auschwitz, taken as a universal reference) is to stir up emotion not knowledge. Incidentally, it may not be useless to note that, strictly speaking, the word "genocide" refers to "race" (genos) and not people (demos) and that it belongs therefore to a mental universe with racist tone. The

real ideological key in the use of the word is found in its justification role of the occupation of Palestine by the Jews as a "compensation" for the genocide. This is seen in the sometimes bloody struggle, waged by some nationalist Armenian groups, to get the West to call "genocide" what was known until then as a "massacre" of the Armenians in 1915, in order to use it as a basis for their irredentist territorial claim on Turkish territory populated until then by Armenians (and many other ethnic groups).

Basically, Vidal-Naquet has to admit that the figures are not known. He runs some risks in saying that "the six million figure that comes from Nuremberg is neither sacred nor definitive." (31) Let's say that it has a symbolic value, and that it is precisely this value that renders it unquestionable except, with thousands of precautions, inside a discreet inner circle of "respectable" historians, meaning those with solid political loyalties. Vidal-Naquet himself told me that Leon Poliakov did not want to include the classical study by Reitlinger (*The Final Solution*) in the bibliography of the petition by thirty-four historians (*Le Monde*, February 21, 1979) because this study comes up with a figure of around four million. This shows that the six million figure is sacred. For me, there is no doubt that Jews perished by the millions, that this was a direct result of decisions made by the Nazis, who wanted to purify (*Judenrein*) the territories they occupied. The deportation and the concentration are extremely deadly practices, as is well known in this century, from the Boer War to Pol Pot policies in Cambodia. And Jews were only a minority among those who perished in this death machine, carried away by the war and its apocalypse.

There remains the question of the gas chambers. As Vidal-Naquet ingeniously says, it symbolizes the genocide. It is the evidence itself, and since this question functions as a symbol with all the charge of the sacred that accompanies the evocation of death and of ancestors, Faurisson takes the form of a sacrilege, we appear as iconoclasts, and the Vidal-Naquets of this world set themselves up as guardians of the temple.

We can probably clarify further this aspect of the reaction to the Faurisson affair by relating the ideas of Dan Sperber (32) on the general functioning of symbolism. Pierre Vidal-Naquet likes Sperber's ideas (33). "The symbolic device is a mental device coupled with a conceptual device," writes the latter (p. 152). The conceptual device constructs representations based on external information, on its memory and on its system of categories. But, says Sperber, "the conceptual representations that could not be regularly constructed and evaluated make up the input of the symbolic device." In other words, the latter is fed ideas that the mind was not able to integrate in a logical representation. Then, Sperber says, there are two stages: first, the symbolic device focuses on whatever made the representation defective, on what prevented the intellection. "Secondly, he explores the passive memory in search of information likely to reestablish the unmet condition. When this evocation process succeeds, the information thus arrived at is subjected to the conceptual device which uses it together with the previously unmet condition, to reconstruct a new conceptual representation. This last one is the interpretation of the initial symbolic representation." There is a feedback between the conceptual and the symbolic.

What derails the conceptual in the German camps is obviously the fact that a great uncountable, quasi-unthinkable mass of people perished there. For lack of a complete intellection, definitely difficult because it requires an enormous quantity of information on a very complex reality, the problem is transferred to the symbolic level

where the data are simplified and put into a representation that is vague and schematic but conceptually digestible. This takes place very often in the domain of political representation. We can't escape this alternating conceptual-symbolic motion without great effort of information gathering and analysis and an acceptance of the complex character of conceptual construction. The symbolic is beyond the true and the false.

The first lawsuits against Faurisson generated tens of kilos of documents presented by the plaintiffs, who sent emissaries to Warsaw and Tel Aviv to collect definitive documentation. But, curiously, the attorneys used almost none of it in court. The piece that was pushed most was a report written in 1945 in Cracow about ventilation holes in the supposed gas chamber of Birkenau and a bundle of hair. Faurisson had said in January 1979, that no report existed. "A lie, pure and simple," says Vidal-Naquet who produces a hitherto unknown text, photocopied from the Polish archives on June 13, 1979, translated into French and presented to the court in 1980 (34). Vidal-Naquet did not look at the dates. Bad faith? Fickleness? Furthermore, the report is not about the place under litigation.

Chemical analysis shows traces of cyanide acid components. Since Zyklon B is basically cyanide acid (HCN), a powerful insecticide used for the past sixty years, such report is subject to several interpretations. This piece, an annex to the Hoess case, was not considered crucial because it was not published prior to the Faurisson case. As for the remaining documents assembled by his adversaries, none amounted to much and most owed their appearance to Faurisson.

This may be the place to answer again the question: have there been gas chambers? In these matters, we become so demanding, so precise and so committed to accept only absolutely irrefutable proofs that I am not able to reach a conclusion. Faurisson's argument has not convinced me. Those of his adversaries don't seem to be decisive. Everywhere, there are troubling elements and unanswered questions. I see every reason to discount the most current versions of "death machines." But I don't see any reason to exclude completely the fact that many people were killed in this manner, but not in a regular massive manner, which would have been impossible. In any case, many people died in many ways and, morally, the result is the same. I leave it to others to settle these questions, if at all possible, in an exclusively rational manner, for this is how history is written (35).

Finally, I don't know if a direct proof can be elaborated. Vidal-Naquet did not read Faurisson's best critique. It is the one that Rodney Needham addresses to W. Arens. I quote it and leave it for anyone to transpose: "There is a more serious error in his procedure: he does not stipulate clearly what constitutes a proof [of the existence of cannibalism]. In the beginning, he talks about "first hand satisfactory tales" and seems to claim that the practice in question was observed. But at the end, he talks about a "complete, valuable first hand tale by an anthropologist," and these conditions are much more restrictive. Basically, in his assessment, Arens does not seem to take into consideration the difference between direct and circumstantial evidence. He seems to insist on direct evidence, but he should have listened to A. M. Hocart (36): "A common error, no matter how natural, consists in believing that direct testimonies are necessarily more valuable than indirect (circumstantial) testimonies," but "indirect testimonies are not a substitute of lesser value than seen and heard testimonies: they are the foundation of all knowledge" (37). I quote Hocart from the translation

published by Seuil (1978) of *Rois et courtisanes (Kings and Councillors*, Un. of Chicago, 1970) (pp. 87 and 102) with a remarkable introduction by the same Needham.

Like the whole book, this chapter makes for an invigorating reading. At the end of this chapter, Hocart again says: "Nothing is proved, nothing could be if, by proof is meant seeing things happen or knowing somebody who has seen them. But seeing is not proving. To prove is to provide such a complete explanation of disjointed testimonies that no satisfactory alternative be conceivable. Maybe some day an alternative can be found. In the meantime, had our hypothesis had any value, it would have helped us make some discoveries and this is what is really important" (38). Now, on the one hand, Faurisson asks for authentic testimonies, direct valid evidence, but, on the other hand, he also proposes a complete explanation of the use of the places in question. I would like that there be an alternative, but it should be stated that the "Faurisson hypothesis" would contribute to deeper thinking, research of documents and a more refined understanding. As to his adversaries, they present "disjointed testimonies" in such an incoherent and contradictory explanation that easily calls for an alternative. How many correct hypotheses have been forgotten over the years, like that of the continental drift? How many false hypotheses have led to real advancement of knowledge? All this noise and fury...

We might think that this first point of Vidal-Naquet sums up all the others. No, because a "method" is needed. Let's move on.

**2) "The 'final solution' has never been [for revisionists] other than the expulsion of Jews to Eastern Europe."** Vidal-Naquet tells a crude joke in comparing this to the French government's pushing the Algerians, during the wars, to their "place of origin." Grottesque. The final solution is openly described in several German documents as the deportation of European Jews to the *Ostgebiet*, the "new" Eastern territories. This policy deserves an analysis. It is stated, if we want to read it, in the famous protocol of the Wannsee Conference, for administrative internal use. We have to really tamper with the text, as is done in some textbooks, to make it say that the Jews were going to be assassinated. They were going to be deported and subjected to forced labor, and that resulted in heavy losses. Labor in the East was perceived as a kind of natural selection that would "regenerate" a "race" of useless parasites: I am paraphrasing the underlying idea of this protocol, which tells us nothing about what the Nazis thought of Jews. But in Wannsee, anyway, in 1942, and in this internal conference of the Nazi authorities, nowhere was there a question of systematically killing them. Vidal-Naquet and other weekend historians who are interested in these questions should have the honesty to admit that if this policy had effectively become massively murderous, it is attested to only by its outcome, and that there are no documents, unless completely deformed, that would decisively clarify the real intention behind it. The "final solution" for Nazis is the absence of Jews. For them, the means to induce this absence are numerous: internments, deportation, emigration (massive before and during the war), expulsion, massacres on the spot, deferred massacres, etc. Assassination is but one way, and not the first, among others that war has rendered less practical. In the symbolic constellation called Auschwitz, the term "final solution" serves mainly as a trigger. Only political authorities would wish to make history a series of conditioned reflexes.

**3) "The number of Jewish victims of Nazism is less than what it is said to be."** I believe that some revisionists were mistaken in tossing figures, especially ridiculously lower figures than those given by Vidal-Naquet. But, all options taken together, be it Poliakov, Wellers, Rassinier, Butz or others, they all use doubtful, possibly far-fetched, data. It doesn't make any sense, for example, to use, without serious analysis such Soviet demographic sources for which the term "Jewish" does not mean the same thing as for the Germans at that time or for the Israelis today or for French or American sociologists. "Nationality" in the USSR is primarily a matter of native language, which is quite far from Mosaic law. Over the years, individual or family needs of more or less multilingual groups or individuals, and not only Jews, have the power to change their "nationality" when a census is taken (not counting that some nationalities have, at times, been eliminated by decree). This individual latitude is the explanation of important variations from one census to another. This, in addition to variations in government policy towards minorities directly affected by global conflicts, such as the Ukrainians and Germans of the Volga, should prompt the researcher to exercise prudence in the study of Soviet census data, which is not the case of amateur demographers. There is also the question of the division of Poland in 1939, and the number of Polish Jews who remained on the Soviet side and of the number of those among them that were deported to the Gulag. There is the question of the number of survivors who emigrated at the end of the war, in particular to the United States where, at that time, the new immigrant's religion was no longer recorded. Certainly, all estimates are possible but if, as Vidal-Naquet says, many historians lean towards figures *lower* than six million, we should conclude that "many historians" are revisionists. In reality, everybody knows very well that the real figure, carefully suppressed, is much lower than these "six million." But Vidal-Naquet prefers to wiggle around a "symbolic figure" in order to not simply admit that it is imaginary and false (39).

**4) "Hitler's Germany does not carry the major responsibility of the Second World War. It shares this responsibility, for example, with the Jews. . ."** The quotation, truncated by Vidal-Naquet, is by Faurisson, talking about "Allies and Jews" while referring to a Zionist leader.

These statements cost Faurisson violent attacks, and Vidal-Naquet takes up the question again later, pp. 36-40. He is unquestionably mistaken, like Faurisson, in saying that Chaim Weizmann was the president of the World Jewish Congress in 1939. He was the president of the Jewish Agency, which changes radically everything. He did not have the power to rally Jews all over the world against Germany, as Vidal-Naquet says. But this was not Weizmann's opinion when he wrote to the British prime minister that "the Jews support Great Britain and fight on the side of democracies." Yet, this was a permanent feature of Zionists, to speak in the name of all Jews, and it is for this reason that many Jews fought them vigorously.

In other words, Vidal-Naquet confirms the substance of Faurisson's statements: a prominent Zionist leader promised the commitment of the Jews (which? is another question; with what authority? is yet another question) on the side of the British. Faurisson, who made a mistake about Weizmann's title, made another mistake about the date. The same mistake was made by the English neo-Nazi, Harwood, in his famous pamphlet, which is probably Faurisson's source. But Vidal-Naquet did not wonder where Harwood's error came from, for he doubtlessly thinks that a neo-Nazi is

an idiot. But these errors can be traced directly to Hitler's table talks, Hitler's *Tischgesprächen*, certainly read by Harwood and mentioned by Faurisson. These considerations about the involvement of the "Jews" in the war, or at least of the authorized or not Jewish Agency, are of no value for explaining the causes of the war, but they take on a completely different dimension if we take into consideration Hitler's thinking. In this context, Weizmann's declarations may very well have played a role in the decisions of the Reich's chancellor. All this is therefore far from being benign and ridiculous, as Vidal-Naquet seems to think, having neglected to push his inquiry far enough to the source. Fickleness? Bad faith?

As for me, I would add that Faurisson's considerations about certain aspects of the war are very incomplete, that they are almost worthless out of the context that only a historical study would provide for them, and that it is not up to Faurisson to write history, but it's rather up to historians to integrate in their vision of that time the essential material elements uncovered by Faurisson.

**5) "The main enemy of humankind during the Thirties and Forties is not Nazi Germany but Stalin's USSR."** This type of reasoning, which is doubtless that of some revisionists, seems to be shared by Vidal-Naquet, because he seems to only want to reverse the propositions. For me, and for many others, Hitler, Stalin, and a whole string of bastards, less harmful because less powerful, deserve the rarely awarded title of "enemy of the human race".

**6) "The genocide is an invention of the mainly Jewish and particularly Zionist Allied propaganda."** This is a vast domain. For my part, I reject the terms of "invention", of "conspiracy", of "lie", that are used by both sides. The question of war propaganda has just begun to be studied, but there's a lot more work to be cut out (40). It comes out that Allied propaganda never ignored what was taking place in Poland. Directives of the British Political Warfare Executive mention, for example, on December 10, 1942, a so-called "Hitler plan to exterminate the Jews in Europe." At the same time, a white book was published in London about German war crimes, with mainly Polish sources. Among the documents published by the PWE and bound for Germany, especially through radio, figure information about the "extermination camps" of Treblinka, Belzec and Sobibor (December 24, 1942), about the construction in Auschwitz of a crematorium capable, it was said, of burning 3000 bodies per day (April 8, 1943), about the liquidation of Jews in Poland (April 13, 1944), etc. An overview of the Anglo-Saxon press shows that information was plentiful. It is a complete mystification to make believe today that the Allies did not know what was happening in the camps in Poland, or worse, that they remained silent. They spoke at great length, to each other and to the Germans.

What the mystified view blames them for is that they didn't make it the main focus of their propaganda. They never made of this affair one of the main goals of the war. (Let's add parenthetically, that had they done that, they would have justified the above mentioned Hitler suspicions, about a war waged against Germany for and by the Jews, which would allow the same hacks today to blame the Allies for falling into Hitler's propaganda trap.) Those who today think that the war comes down to the extermination of a part of European Jewry, assuming probably that other victims are less important or have less "meaning" as though death had a meaning should be reminded that much more was at stake, it was the fate of all of Europe, and

incidentally, of the future of the planet. At least, this was what people on all sides, including the Jews, believed then. Besides, many Zionists were not displeased by the rise of Nazism, for by separating the wheat from the chaff (to each his viewpoint), it favored the immigration of Jews to Palestine (41).

It's quite unpleasant to have to recall that the terror and the massacres caused by the German occupation affected very many communities in Europe, and that the fate of the Jews, however horrible it was, doesn't make that of others more enviable, especially on the Eastern front. And it is somewhat chauvinistic of some like Vidal-Naquet (*Esprit*, p. 49) to wince when Polish historians say that Auschwitz was used to exterminate Slavs (Polish, Russians, etc.) and Jews, or "Polish victims of Fascism," as though it was improper to call "Polish Jews" Polish. To them, dead Jews are more sacred than dead Slavs, who are probably thought of as anti-Semites, since all other populations of the East are thought to be such.

To my knowledge, the first person to conduct a systematic inquiry on the manner in which information reached from Poland to the Allies and on what they did with it, is Arthur Butz. It is remarkable that the elements he provides on the subject are confirmed and amplified by a writer with opposite convictions: Walter Laqueur in *The Terrible Secret*, recently translated into French (42).

This remarkable book has many titles. This brilliant specialist of international politics, who was the Director of the Center of International Strategic Studies in Washington, one of the Reaganist temples, was at one time highly connected with Zionism and the Intelligence Service at the time of the British Mandate in Palestine. Remember his *Nationalism and Communism in the Middle East*, published in the fifties, drawing heavily on British intelligence sources and outrageously stolen by Lacouture and others in their *Egypte en mouvement*. His investigation is wide-ranging and covers several countries, except, curiously, the United States. The subtitle is explicit: "The first and troubling story of the manner in which the announcement of Hitler's 'Final Solution' was first hidden and finally revealed."

This book is absolutely paradoxical: it shows that the Allies could not have not known what was going on in Germany and in the occupied territories. Laqueur reviews the sources: diplomats of neutral countries, resistance movements, especially in Poland, churches, Red Cross, travelers, traders, engineers, persons liberated from the camps or escapees, etc., without counting that radios were listened to and that the main German codes had been decrypted. In short, Hitler's Germany, without being a house of glass, discharged daily an enormous mass of information that the Allied Services had to only receive and analyze. More precisely, Laqueur shows that the information about the persecution and massacres of the Jews of Central and Eastern Europe reached London and Washington through many channels. He radically destroys the widespread myth which pretends that "everything was hidden" and that "nobody knew." And even the general public, for, he says:

there was a lot of information in the daily press. A report published in October 1941 (my underlining, ST) in a German language newspaper published in London [*Die Zeitung*], with the headline, *L'Apocalypse*, said that Jews deported from Germany were killed in one way or another. It was based on a report published in the Swedish *Social-Democraten* of October 22 and said

*expressis verbis* that "it was most probably a premeditated mass murder." The article also mentioned Adolf Eichmann was "chief of the operation" (p. 67).

This appeared in the October 24, 1941 *Sunday Times*. From then on, such information never stopped appearing in the press, and pages and pages can be filled with simple references. But, and this is the question today, all this did not change the course of the war. What Laqueur and the current dominant ideology reproach the Allied leaders of that time for, is not to have given since 1941 a sense and vision of the conflict that started to be elaborated at Nuremberg after the war. It was the Jewish centrality of the war, and it did not flourish until the sixties. According to this view, the Nazis' main aim in the war was the extermination of the Jews, and the Allies (including the USSR) should have had as their main mission an early intervention to save the Jews. Political and military leaders of the "free world" might have resisted pressure by Zionists to adopt this vision. (Laqueur confirms Butz's view to such a point as to be himself accused of antisemitism.) This quickly led to the accusation that they wanted to hide the truth and that they insidiously gave in to a subtle antisemitism.

All this erudite discussion in well documented books, such as that of Laqueur, and in editorials in the mass media, is the outcome of another revisionism. This one has no shore. To reach it, one has to bury most roots of the conflict, gum up most of the issues, in short, look at contemporary world history from a judeocentric angle, the crown jewel of which today is the political behavior of the State of Israel.

This is why it is fascinating to see Laqueur at work. He systematically selects and pulls out of context all the information about Nazi politics. The *Einsatzgruppen* in Russia killed so many Jews. We wouldn't know that they also killed a larger number of Russians, Ukrainians, Balts, political commissars, partisans, peasants, Buddhist Mongols, etc. This is not pertinent, and so it is not mentioned. Carried away by his unilateral thinking, Laqueur is totally unable to understand the explanation of the historian Balfour: while mentioning Nazi atrocities everywhere in occupied Europe, Allied propaganda should not exaggerate them, first in order to be more credible than in 1914-18, and especially in order not to frighten and discourage the resistance and support movements in the occupied territories, and eventually, in Germany, where it was hoped that developments in leading circles were going to hasten the end of the war.

Laqueur was surprised by the incredulity with which some totally or partially false information was received. He shows, for example, that Zionist leaders in Palestine refused for a long time to believe alarming reports and that they changed their opinion when a few dozen Jews arrived from Poland in November, 1941. "Paradoxically says Laqueur the inaccurate details [provided by the arrivals] had greater influence on public opinion than the preceding more exact reports." The false being truer than the true. . . . We see this everyday in the newspapers! Yet, it is understandable. There were so many noises, rumors and testimonies, more or less worthy of belief, that in any case some had to be discounted. The book teems with information that Laqueur decrees false or inexact. But he sorts out without justifying himself or giving any reference. He probably had a grid that allows him to tell, at first sight, what is true and what is false. He gives the bearers of information good or bad grades, according to the criterion of whether or not they support his thesis. History would be easy to write if

one could uncritically pick and choose in this manner from the available information of the time. That is how so many people fatten their paychecks.

A detailed analysis would show how Laqueur forgets facts that do not support his thesis. This book is a gold mine for revisionism insofar as it succeeds in completely destroying its own argument.

But let's return once more, after this diversion, to the amusing Vidal-Naquet, suddenly transformed into an epistemologist:

1) **"Every direct testimony given by a Jew is a tale or a lie."** Pure hysteria on his part. The argument will allow him to lump together revisionism and antisemitic writings.

2) **"Every testimony, every document prior to liberation is a fake or is entirely ignored or is treated as rumor."** Example: documents written by *Sonderkommando* members and buried in Auschwitz.

These documents were found after the liberation at the time when Auschwitz was closed due to construction work to transform it into a museum (43). Everybody talks about these documents as though they contained revelations, but they have not been seen. They are so important that they are not translated into French. Three of them are apparently written in Yiddish. Vidal-Naquet mentions translations which appeared in Poland about twenty years after their discovery. This is quite strange. I found the complete text of the fourth document, the one which was written in French only in the book of Andy Brille published by the FNDIRP, an organization of deportees very close to the PCF. This book contains excerpts of a book known as pure and simple fakes (M. Gray, V. Grossman) or others, altered or apocryphal (Hoess, Nyizli, etc.) Never mind.

What does this document say? It was written a few weeks prior to the liberation of the camp by somebody, a certain Bermann, who spent twenty months in the *Sonderkommando*. Vidal-Naquet says that it gives a "precise description corroborating what we already know about gas chambers" (p. 23). Nothing. Not a single word on gas chambers, except to repeat, as rumor had it, that on arrival in Auschwitz, "a hundred people were selected to go down to the camp and I was among them, then the rest went to the gas in the furnaces." He describes his work there as an undertaker. He says later that he has a clear conscience. If I understand him well (his French is very faulty), he apologizes to his family for having had to do such shameful work, but he says he did it with humanity, hence with respect for the dead. He has certainly not participated in any murder. He totally contradicts before the liberation his colleague, the liar Filip Mueller. When he mentions the disappearance of his *Kommando* comrades, he talks about "transport to Lublin," and certainly to gassing on the spot. He thinks that he will be liquidated but he doesn't talk about gas. If the document is authentic, it is perfectly Faurissonian. If Vidal-Naquet chose it as a proof, there is only one alternative: either he has not read it or he is a hidden partisan of Faurisson, for there has to be a high degree of imagination to find in it a "precise description" of totally absent gas chambers. Fickleness or bad faith.

**3) "Every document, in general, with first hand information on Nazi methods is either a fake or tampered with."** And to blame Faurisson for having classified the chronicle of the Warsaw ghetto by Emmanuel Ringelblum among the "fake, apocryphal or suspect" works. It is, in my opinion, a very remarkable document, highly instructive, written by an admirable man, whose content can be found in a very beautiful novel, *La Muraille*, [The Wall] written by John Hersey. "This chronicle has been effectively amputated, especially in the Polish edition," piously adds Vidal-Naquet, who never thought of checking. So it is ("effectively") thanks to Faurisson that our censor realizes that his bedside book has been censored. And this is a little stupid because the translations were necessarily made from the Polish text. I have an American edition of 1974 (Schacken Paperback), which is a reprint from that of McGraw Hill of 1958. It contains the warning: "This English version of the *Notes du Ghetto de Varsovie* is based on the selection published in the *Bleter Far Gezichte*, Warsaw, March 1948, and the volume published by the Jewish Historical Commission of Warsaw in 1952. Unfortunately, it has been impossible to obtain the complete text, either the original of Warsaw or the copy in Israel." There was no need for Faurisson to find "suspicious" a censorship exercised at the same time in Poland and in Israel. So this is the place to pose the question of why so many documents like this one, or the Theodore Herzl archives, or even some Dead Sea Scrolls are locked up in Israel. As to Vidal-Naquet, he once more exhibited fickleness. Or is it bad faith? (45)

And since we have this document, assuming that the censored parts are of no concern to us, let's see what it tells us. The index has fourteen Oswiecim (Polish for Auschwitz) entries, but we easily see that there is no single entry for gas chamber. It rather mentions internments, often individual deaths and even the liberation of a Jewish gangster. There are eight references to the "penal camp" of Treblinka. In July of 1942, families some of whose members had been deported to Treblinka, sent a Bundist to Warsaw to check on the spot rumors that were circulating about a real extermination. The man never reaches the camp but meets on the way Esrael Wallach, who escaped and "who confirmed the worst tales," Ringelblum records (pp. 320-1), the tales of prisoners who say they escaped from Treblinka: "Method of killing: gas, vapor, electricity."

Here is a typical situation. Ringelblum, a marvelous scribe, records everything and fast because of the rush of events. On Treblinka, which is not very far from Warsaw, rumors abound. They will keep going after the war. Soviet journalist Vassili Grossman arrives on the heels of the Red Army and collects testimonies thirty-five years before Lanzmann. He talks about three million killed in Treblinka and mentions the use of "vacuum pumps." Ringelblum notes the source as hearsay, testimony of the existence of a rumor. It is now incumbent upon historians of the Vidal-Naquet style to explain why and how they abandoned the contemporary "vapor," "electricity" and "vacuum pumps" explanations, why they lowered the 45 figures following what material investigation and what critique of testimonies. They must justify their revisionism with the same rules they want to apply to Faurisson. And in the end, they must answer to the same courts.

**4) "Every Nazi document supplying direct evidence is taken at face value if it is written in coded language but ignored (or undervalued) if it is written in direct language."** And to quote Himmler and Goebbels. It is in fact complicated to interpret

texts and speeches of diverse nature issued in very different conditions. It would be ridiculous to apply to them all the same decoding standards. Some speeches may have been coded, others only allusive, and still others pure boasting propaganda. If Vidal-Naquet, historian of antiquities, possesses all the codes to read all the German texts of the period, we will be reassured. He has to only publish them and explain to us, in passing, why we have recorded "secret speeches" of Himmler.

**5) "Every piece of postwar Nazi evidence brought by a court either in the East or in the West ... is considered as having been obtained by torture or intimidation."** And to maintain that no S.S. leader denied the existence of gas chambers. This is absolutely wrong, as shown by the minutes of German trials. As to court confessions, one must at least wonder what they are worth, and try to find under what conditions they were obtained. This is an activity the young Vidal-Naquet engaged in during the Algerian war, but he seems to have forgotten its usefulness. Finally, it should be noted that, in German trials, a conviction is generally the result of a simple participation in "selection," this term being interpreted by the courts as synonymous with "murder" by simple reference to the Hoess "confessions" (46). Through this evasion, the courts spare themselves the trouble of producing a proof.

**6) "Every pseudo-technical arsenal is mobilized to show the physical impossibility of massive gassing."** Vidal-Naquet hides his incapacity to understand technical problems by baptizing them "pseudo-technical." He thinks that he can provide answers in this domain by appending to his article an opinion of the chemist Pitch Bloch. Unfortunately, instead of giving technical arguments in support of his Hellenist friend, the chemist copies a report, well known since war time and full of serious improbabilities. This chemist's work must be in cosmetics.

In this profusion of technical arguments, we better refer to Wellers rather than to the specialist of the myth of Atlantis. This is not a debate for laymen. What criteria can be used to determine the exhaustibility of a gas? What gas mixture is needed in a furnace for the combustion of a body? It is obvious that anyone talking about an industrial operation can't avoid looking at the technical side. Unless this someone is the Holy Spirit or Mao Tse-tung or Vidal-Naquet.

**7) "The ontological proof": "The gas chambers don't exist because inexistence is one of their attributes."** This is a cultivated joke. For example, he cites the German word *Vergasung*, understood by Faurisson as *gassing* in one case and *carbonization* in another. This good joke hides a stupidity that our scholar could have spared himself by opening any dictionary, for example, the little Weis/Mattutat (47): "*Vergasung*: tech. gazeification; mot. carburation; (Von Menschen) gazeage." In other words, it's a matter of context, my dear Watson.

**8) "Finally and especially, anything that can make this terrible history conceivable or believable, mark the evolution, or provide terms for political comparison, is ignored or falsified."** And to be blamed for not talking about the atrocities of the German special forces in Soviet territory or euthanasia of mental patients in 39-41 in Germany.

True, there are so many things not talked about. Questions should be posed about so many things, we should look closer, remove the deformations and the exaggerations.

There too, there are probably atrocities on a large scale, but there too, the documentation seems to be incomplete, and very easily reconstructed or completed by some writers. The trial of General Von Manstein, commander of the German Army on the Russian front is revealing because the prosecution ended up abandoning the question of the *Sonderkommandos* (48). And the gypsies, whose interests have recently been taken up by Simon Wiesenthal (whose past in Western Ukraine during the war is still intriguing), and the homosexuals. . . . There would be things to say. The "rose triangles," Vidal-Naquet says nothing about them either. We can think of many things that are not in the encyclopedia! So we should recommend the reading of the diary of Heinz Heger, a deported homosexual with a preface by Guy Hocquenghem (49). You will see what the camps were, seen by more *untermensch* than the Jews! We are told in the preface that this book should be read "so that the hypocritical mask of the cold and censoring humanisms be removed from the face of those who, still today, lie to us about the camps." There would still be a lot to say about all this. . . . If one would not be quickly attacked by a pack of memorial guards and museum curators. . . . How much time is wasted. . . .

A long time could be spent going through more and more. After all, Vidal-Naquet has a strange attitude. When Faurisson makes a critical study of documents (S.S. confessions, Nuremberg or Jerusalem trials, etc.), our Hellenist finds that unbearable, stupid and blind. And then he admits that there have to be nuances, that some confessions are not good, that some parts of the trials are not all of good quality, that there has to be a "selection." And then, having formulated his critique, or more exactly the rhetorical clause which opens the eventuality of a critique, having been formally elaborated, he ends up accepting everything. The technique of the soft concrete: Obviously, we have to sort out, but I will not do it myself. Since Faurisson has no right to do it, things will remain as they are. And in order to flatter his accomplice, Leon Poliakov, who typically never sorted out anything in the documentation, the only final expert he could find is Adolf Eichmann (50), locked up for a year before his trial, with revenge literature as his only fare. Eichmann advises us to read Poliakov, but somehow Vidal-Naquet is careful not to advise us to read Eichmann's "final declaration." It's total madness.

Of what follows a long attack against Rassinier I shall not discuss the demographic computations, which seem to me to have as shaky a foundation as those of his adversaries, especially Hilberg. I will only pick up one aspect of the "method" of Vidal-Naquet. He quotes Rassinier in order to show that he was prey to antisemitism. Let me make myself very clear: Rassinier, who, during the war had helped many Jews take refuge in Switzerland, while he was up against real persecution towards the end of his life, made some ambiguous statements that are open to criticism. How is his antisemitism proved? By choosing some sentences, taken from among the many writings of Rassinier, such as this one, in the Vidal-Naquet version: "If tomorrow, the International Zionist movement gets 'a hold of Wall Street' and the Israeli home base of the Diaspora will become not only the commercial roof of the Atlantic world, but (thanks to oil) also the command post of all its industry" (51). But it happens that these statements are not at all Rassinier's. They can be found in *Drame des Juifs européens* (The Drama of European Jews) where Rassinier discusses *L'Etat d'Israël* (The State of Israel) published by Kra in 1930, whose author's name is Kadmi Cohen (the father of J.F. Steiner, author of a fiction novel entitled *Treblinka*). The statements of Rassinier considered to be antisemitic are in fact the Zionist statements of K.

Cohen. I am not surprised at all by this confusion, but that of Vidal-Naquet shows lack of thinking, if not even open bias.

There is also a long discussion of the physician Johann Paul Kremer's diary. The thing was predictable because at that time the charges brought by LICRA and other groups against Faurisson dealt only with the fact that the latter had falsified the said diary. Kremer was a German physician who had worked at Auschwitz and had kept a personal diary. The falsification accusation was itself grotesque because Faurisson was not the publisher of this German text.

Owing to this lawsuit, Faurisson took up completely the question of this document a question which seems to me for the time being devoid of any interest, because Kramer does not clarify anywhere in his personal diary the meaning of words he employs only for his own personal use which resulted in a book published in 1980 with the title *Mémoire en défense, contre ceux qui m'accusent de falsifier l'histoire* (La Vieille Taupe). It was supplemented by an article by Jean-Gabriel Cohen-Bendit: *Mon analyse du "Journal de Kremer,"* 17 pp. (1980) (52).

Further in-depth investigations produced nothing new. Attention then shifted to Vidal-Naquet's practices. He devoted about a page (pp. 45-46) to discuss Faurisson's interpretation of an expression of Kremer. He concludes his philosophical remarks by saying that Faurisson "was duped by a translation of the Polish publisher"; then he discusses the type of disease Kremer suffers from. In conclusion, he states that: "It is true that when Kremer talks about the camp of devastation, he is not referring to a legal administrative concept, which did not yet exist on the official tablets of the Third Reich. He was simply talking about what he saw. On the level that he held dear, that of philological exactness and of correct translation, what Faurisson did is a misinterpretation."

Certainly, a misinterpretation is very annoying, very unpleasant. In reality, this affair is rationally debatable, as Vidal-Naquet has just done. A good part of academic life consists in chasing after misinterpretations that slipped by erudite colleagues who committed an error of interpretation that can be used to doom them to disgrace, and stand on the dead bodies to claim the prize. Misinterpretation! In school, we give a bad grade, we correct, we move on. Vidal-Naquet's statement does not stop there, he goes on to say: "On the level of intellectual morality and scientific probity, it's a falsehood." This is absolutely astounding. How can a simple misinterpretation be a "falsehood"? It may be an error, a mistake, the outcome of bad reasoning, an illusion, ignorance or it may even be wrong. But a falsehood? There is a logical impossibility (an apple is not a pear) that Vidal-Naquet resolves by semantic brute force (an apple is a pear) highlighted by his formulation *in cauda venenum*: "This is a falsehood." This wrangling would seem simply ridiculous, had Vidal-Naquet not been shouting from the rooftops that he had *proved* that Faurisson is a *falsifier*. He said it to everybody, he repeated it in the press. He is the Saint George who slew the dragon by the unique force of his logic, and he is acclaimed as such by the ignoramuses and the cautious types who preferred not to get involved in this affair and to delegate instead a champion. But this proof, in reality, **is based only on verbal fraud**. For the ideological needs of the lawsuit and the manipulation of public opinion, the concepts of "falsehood" and "falsification" had to be found somewhere in order to associate

them with revisionism. It's no longer simple fickleness on the part of Vidal-Naquet. Such verbal contortion can only result from passion and its companion, bad faith.

An assessment of the blunders, contradictions and signs of bad faith of Vidal-Naquet shows the staggering mediocrity of his performance. It is perfectly understandable and acceptable that he is carried away by the passion of his family's painful history. But this doesn't justify his role of a spiritual adviser and a professor of scientific morality. I repeat what I already said in my first book about this question: nobody is expected to participate in this discussion because it is painful for everybody. Vidal-Naquet thought he had taken the lead in order to defend what he considered to be the left's position and also the official (State) position in this affair. All the respectable left got in line behind him, as it does behind any low level ideologue. So, let's examine what he has to say. It turns out that he joined this discussion with tools so incomplete and competence so deficient that he squandered the illusion of his reliability. In an introductory note to the publication of his article in a book, he says that it was fairly easy to get acquainted with these questions in a few months. This is really presumptuous. That Vidal-Naquet flounders around in this manner is not in itself a proof that Faurisson is right, but it would have been desirable to generate more knowledge from a true confrontation.

## THE BOILING POINT

Vidal-Naquet's article triggered a cowardly relief in the Parisian left circles. They congratulated each other in sidewalk cafes. The revisionists were screwed. From now on, we can rest easy. Thion had barely opened a sacred Pandora's box, but by sitting on it, Vidal-Naquet had saved civilization. We were given friendly advice to let go, to get lost.

But some people and small groups from the extreme left decided that the controversy lacked a political framework something that I had abstained from giving it in my book so that the reader would first look at the facts, rather than reject them because of personal political disagreements. They drafted a statement and started the distribution of twenty thousand copies of it in October, 1980. I was not party to it, but I approved of its tenor. Here it is.

## Our Kingdom is a Prison

A class society has to offer its oppressed people false enemies and false horrors instead of the true ones. Religion played this role of distraction and unification of society across its antagonisms. Social opposition was displaced from earth to heaven: God and the Devil. The unequal sharing of wealth in society was transformed into a just sharing of rewards and punishments according to merit. Terrifying visions of hell and of eternal flames made it easier for the exploited to accept their misery. Extreme mythical horrors are concocted in order to render poverty and daily suffering bearable.

Today, religion and morality are losing their strength, but class society and its basic needs remain. Politics and ideology come to the fore. People have to find some unifying basis, to gather against the same enemies, the same terrors. False political oppositions are substituted for real social oppositions. Exaggerated or invented horrors must allow the proletarians to better appreciate their present "comfort" hiding the true nature of their real misery. The madness born of this social malformation is every bit as bad as that of religious obscurantism.

### *Freedom is Slavery*

In contemporary political thought, fascism, more than any other ideology, plays the role of the devil. The Nazi concentration universe provides the most convenient hell. The anti-fascist ideology intends to save democracy with all means against fascism and state dictatorships more or less assimilated to it. But, in reality, this ideology is first of all the means to drown in confusion the perspectives of the proletariat and to integrate the latter in the defense of the capitalist world.

The opposition between fascism and antifascism, which was made into an absolute, has, first of all, been a bad joke that the exploiters and politicians have sold to the proletariat. What a cover for hypocrisy! Before declaring war against fascism, democratic states, such as Stalin's, and leftist parties in Italy, Germany and Spain, tried to compromise, to sign pacts. After the war, the cops or officials who had served Mussolini or Hitler were put back in the service of the democratized State. As for France's regime, it was naturally integrated into the new Western order. The mythology of antifascism, liberal or Stalinist, rewrites history and conceals the profound unity of the democratic and dictatorial forms of the State. Democracy is always ready to transform itself into a dictatorship, and vice versa, in order to save the State! It's by attacking the State and the wage system at their root, and not by preserving them in order to avoid the worst, that we can really struggle against dictatorships or dictatorial measures (restrictions of the freedom of expression, movement, employment . . . all prerogatives of every State).

Italian fascism and German Nazism were defeated by Western and Stalinist armies. This does not preclude that today's antifascist States be the heirs of fascism. Fascism was a trial run for modern capitalism: state intervention in the market economy, a car for everybody . . . permanent brainwashing; fictitious unity beyond classes, "perversion" and appropriation of proletarian and socialist ideals.

Hitler had succeeded in unifying and leading the Germans by channeling their resentment towards a false enemy: the Jews. That was a terrible intellectual and popular hypocrisy. Weakened by the 1914-1918 war, German capitalism made cynical use of antisemitism to politically unify heterogeneous classes and rally them in support of the State. Antifascism has the same political function and pulls the same psychological strings, even if the target has changed. We must end this antisemitism. We must end this antifascism. They are both the "socialism of fools."

Antifascism is a more advanced, more subtle form of antisemitism, but no less counter-revolutionary. It creates an attitude and reflexes of hate. Faced with fascism, we no longer think: we must not think it's taboo. Faced with fascism, everything is allowed dirty tricks, lies, lynching, a call for the State. Antisemitism works just as well against a rival grocer as against "Judeo-Bolshevism," or "Judeo-capitalism. . . ." The assimilation capacity of the term fascism will become even greater. Whatever disturbs or whatever we don't want to understand becomes "fascism."

Since the 19th century, the left has played the guard dog of the state. It barks at the least provocation by the proletariat or any social unrest, joining the right in an atmosphere of racial attack: in Berlin (1919-1923), in Barcelona (May 1937) or in Sétif (8 May, 1945). It is the left which denounces and disarms rebel movements by appealing for popular support against the enemies of the established order. In Italy today, it assumes the concrete form of a united front around the State.

But how dare we compare a racist behavior and ideology with antifascism which likes to think of itself as antiracist? In fact, antifascism is used as a cover and a justification for a good many dirty tricks against such and such group. First, it served to cover a repugnant anti-German racism. But also colonial repression: Algerian rioters butchered in Sétif they were "Hitlerians." In general, antifascism has made antiracism hollow. Everybody is against racism and everybody puts up with all kinds of anonymous racisms. So behavior which is not racist is attacked as such.

But how dare we compare those who put the Jews in "gas chambers" and those who came to stop the "genocide"? There is a big difference: fascists and Nazis assassinated deliberately, our democratic and "socialist" world makes do with letting die of hunger every year tens of millions of people who could be saved by a better distribution of available food.

It's not the will of its leaders which made fascism murderous. Like its enemies, it was caught in war, and like them, it wanted to win by all means, including the most horrible. If it had the atom bomb, it would have certainly used it. Deportation and concentration of millions of people can't be reduced to a Nazi infernal idea, it was the result of the lack of labor necessary for the war industry. With diminishing control of the situation, the continuation of the war, and the gathering of much superior forces against it, fascism could not sufficiently feed the deportees or dispatch food adequately. The individual was reduced to a number, the concentration camps with their dehumanization, their internal bureaucracies, their devastating epidemics, malnutrition and mad rumors are no more than an exacerbated expression of the world we live in. Not a hell which would be outside of it.

### *Ignorance is Strength*

These "gas chambers" (about which they go on and on and which would have been the instrument of the most horrible crime in history and where in several concentration camps, SS "confessed" and deportees "testified" to their

existence, and which continue to be shown to tourists, it is officially recognized that they did not exist), these "gas chambers" are the horror that allowed the avoidance to confront the real horror of Nazi or other deportation and concentration camps. The "gas chambers" rumor, made official by the Nuremberg Tribunal, allowed the avoidance of a real profound critique of Nazism. It is this mythical horror which allowed the concealment of the real and actual causes of the camps and of the war!

Deportees who did not return died because of the war. Their deaths are exploited in order to relegate to a secondary level the tens of millions who died during the Second World War. And if this little world is not shaken up by a social revolution, a few years from now, we will certainly see intellectuals do a mea culpa and seriously wonder about the causes of their transgressions. Others will explain that the lie was provisionally necessary.

After the 1914-1918 War, the disgust with such gigantic killings was general. Pacifism had an echo among wide strata of the population. The 1939-1945 War was a clear victory for capital. The return to peace was quiet, with little proletarian turmoil. This war, much deadlier than the previous one, seemed a justifiable enterprise. Hitler had to be beaten, the devil had to be crushed. Never again the absurdity of Verdun! But Stalingrad, the landing, the Resistance, it's different, think some people who pretend to be revolutionaries.

### *War is Peace*

In factories, we're ready to rally under the leadership of responsible unions, we're ready to go back to the front, if we're given to believe that we are struggling for Freedom, for Socialism, and for Human Rights. Never before had so many weapons and such murderous weapons ever been produced. All over the world, people are dying in conflicts fueled by imperialist powers. But War ministries have become Defense ministries, and as in George Orwell's 1984, they may become Peace ministries. Belligerent nationalist ranting of the past have been replaced by pacifist speeches of modern heads of State. Make war, yes, but in order to better preserve peace. Modern war propaganda is no longer limited to one nationalism against another. It needs to stage produce monsters and to cultivate horror. In this way, it makes people forget or it justifies its own barbarism.

Recently, in Cambodia, the number of deaths increases and the real causes of a catastrophic situation are blamed on a gang of murders, Pol Pot style – new Hitlers! The figures were inflated in Hanoi and taken up by the rightist press in the U.S.A. Everybody used them for their own purposes: Vietnam found in them a pretext to justify its intervention; the Americans used them to fuel their anti-communism and to blot out the harmful role they played in the region. When a lot of noise was being made in the West about Cambodia, massacres of the same magnitude were taking place in Timor, which was being taken over by Indonesia the weapons used were French and American made. In France and in the U.S., we were, therefore, more involved and we had the possibility of acting. But the press, both of the right and of the left, was silent.

The only possible revolutionary attitude is not to exaggerate antifascism, to see fascism everywhere, like the leftists. It can't be other than the subversion of all war propaganda. Our enemies are social relations, even if we have to confront men who defend them. It is by attacking money and the State that humanity could, not reach an impossible paradise but be formed as a community. Fascism was a social movement designed to strengthen the power of the State, which no longer maintains order and unifies society. Antifascism remains the means of avoiding the critique of the State: participation of the left in the State in order to prevent it from becoming fascist, support of and appeal to the State to struggle against real or imaginary fascisms.

1936 marked the repudiation by Spanish Anarcho-syndicalism of its anti-state principles after the Franco putsch: antifascism and workers' blood were put in the service of the republican State. In Italy, today, antifascism allied to anti-"red terrorism" serves to rally the people around the State, which is supposed to protect them. But here, too, it's madness. The cops of this antifascist State themselves organize massacres or kidnappings like that of Aldo Moro. Then some extreme right or extreme left elements are flaunted as the criminals. And the mass media whips up so much hype that none other than the State version can be heard (cf. Gianfranco Sanguinetti, *Du Terrorisme et de l'Etat*).

### *In the Land of the Disconcerting Lie*

Yet, while skepticism about official declarations is widespread, this lie works. People don't really believe it, but it's good enough to keep them disinterested true, false? What's the difference! Isolation and passivity have led to a frightening intelligence failure. Far from being a society of freedom in which to think, democracy is that of supreme sweet-talk with the greatest respect for individual stupidity.

The most striking aspect in the history of official truths is the ease with which those who peddle them change sides when they no longer have a choice. During the "hot" period of reports on Cambodia, figures were modified every day without any explanation to justify the incoherence. A flood of contradictory information on recent events in Poland was dumped on us in the greatest confusion, without any answers to any precise questions How much? Where? When? As for the supporters of the existence of "gas chambers," they are giving in, step by step, admitting facts, but never admitting that what they pretended before was a lie.

Compared to the feudal world, the democratic universe of the bourgeoisie is unable to produce a unanimous monolithic religion. But it has its sacred truths and it pays those who protect them. For us, there is no point in correcting sacred truths, we have to undo them, to deconstruct them and to expose the liars. We may never have "scientific" proofs of the nonexistence of these "gas chambers" (whose existence is questioned by an increasing number of Jews) which resist criticism. It is by reversing the ideologies that we will, at the same time, understand their function and the reality they conceal. It is important, in practice, to impose another version of certain facts and especially, to insist on

a different understanding of social reality, and to block the frightening production of tall stories that we are made to swallow.

This period produces the stubborn indifference of some and the strong hostility of those who are prisoners of the political reflexes and thinking; and we have to clash with this indifference and this hostility. But this period produces also people who are capable of understanding us and forces which are capable of subverting it.

Only the communist struggle of the proletarians and the destruction of the wage system, of commodities and of States will allow us to get rid of political madness and its parallel ideologies.

A few days later, a bomb explodes. Friday, October 3, 1980, towards the end of the afternoon, at the time of religious services, a powerful bomb goes off in front of a synagogue, Copernic Street in a fancy neighborhood of Paris. Several passersby are killed or wounded. Nobody claims responsibility.

Immediately, the political circles are carried away by fever of excitement. Emotions, declarations, demonstrations, great hype in the media give to the event the aspect of a national crisis, yet barely felt by people in the street. Politicians, journalists and intellectuals are struck by growing hysteria. They unanimously point an accusing finger at the only monsters thought to be capable of such an attempt, not so much against human lives, but against the dominant ideology, the fascists, neo-Nazis and other ultra-nationalists.

They are not so much taken by surprise, these pale heirs of ruined fascisms. For months, they are tracked down by the police and by a press which, here, feels free to say anything. Infiltrated by cops and by Zionist spies, divided in cliques implacably pit against each other, they were overcome by fear and powerlessness. Hence the attempt to take the dangerous jump and say that the spoilsports Faurisson and The Vieille Taupe and their friends are morally implicated in this kind of criminal activity. There remains only one step happily crossed by the political commissars of *Nouvel Observateur*: "From the New Right which, by its Indo-European vaticinations, has prepared the ground (for neo-Nazis), to the writings of those who, in doubting the existence of gas chambers, try to clear the Nazis from the Holocaust, all the barriers gave way," (October 6, 1980). Overcome by the Walkyrie of motherly love, Elizabeth Badinter: "Perverse questions . . . contagious questions . . . how not to notice the simultaneity of racist statements and actions that have increased as have the warnings in the past two years?" (*Le Matin de Paris*, October 8, 1980) And some rabbis too: "The outrage has reached the point of robbing us of the sacred memory of our martyrs." (Grand rabbi Sirat, *ibidem*) And everybody calls for more police, more repression, the ban on some group or on some doctrine. We know the story.

This great confusion culminated four days later in a big demonstration attended by all political and union (syndical) organizations and some others. All these people, who were used to be against each other, were quite uncomfortable marching for the first time together in a total political vacuum. The only new element was a small rightist group, very tied to Israel: "*le Renouveau juif*" (Jewish renewal). Its aim was to assemble French Jews in order to make them into a docile tool of political pressure.

Close to twenty thousand people marched under its banners. Some passersby were beaten up, for their rather short haircut was enough evidence that they were antisemites. During that time, the tract "Our Kingdom is a Prison" was being distributed like hot cakes, with no incident. There was such demand for it in Paris and elsewhere that two new runs had to be made for a total of sixty thousand.

It seemed appropriate to me to put some order into this absurd confusion. After all, we were singled out for popular vindictiveness by a pack of croaking hacks. This counter-attack took the following form.

## FROZEN BOMBS

### *Cui Prodest?*

The frozen bombs of a cold and calculating terrorism exploded in an anxious Europe. Milan, Belfast, Madrid, Bologna, Munich, Paris, knots of instability and latent conflicts in our provisional republics. Any explanation that did not take into account the recent extension of terrorism would not be acceptable. The Irish, the Basques, the Bretons, the Corsicans, the Armenians, the Israelis, the Palestinians and others carry out or have carried out terrorist acts under well known conditions, with established references. They want to set up, manage, and defend a tool of exploitation which would be their own, a national State which will oppress them in a complete, intimate and definitive manner. There are bourgeoisies which never have enough. This crisis of nationalities has been going on since the beginning of modern capitalism and will end only with it. Those who have no homeland and no borders look at it with the detachment of a reflection about a legacy of the past.

But the bombs that explode are not wrapped with hypothetical national flags, are not directed at the secession of any periphery, are claimed by nobody, even if rumor attributes them to anybody. They explode for no reason. They frighten without having any apparent significance. If we have to ask why the *train station* in Bologna, why *Oktoberfestplatz* in Munich, there is no reason for not asking why the *synagogue of Copernic Street*.

The oldest adage of our criminal code is *cui prodest?* Who profits from the crime? To answer this question and identify the authors of these terrible crimes, there is no need for rigged police investigations, special courts with proverbial servility or leaks by mysterious oracles for the great benefit of advertising executives. These questions get resolved by themselves with the observation of the social climate.

Set aside the phantasmagoria floating about everywhere. For obsessed Zionists, the guilty party is obviously Kadhafi, or the Palestinians, or the Arabs. For conservatives and the "new right," it's the KGB. For the center left, it's the extreme right and for the center right, it's the extreme left. All these projections come under mass psychoanalysis. Let's be clear: the question is not

to determine the skin color or the convictions of the subordinates who handle guns or explosives. Those, certainly, do not know whose job they are doing. This is the least self-protection for those who figure out the charge and its political impact.

The possibility of an assassination attempt by the Israeli secret service, the Mossad, crossed everybody's mind, at least for a moment. The Mossad has never been reluctant to assassinate Arab militants in France, or to blow up a factory where an atomic reactor that was to be shipped to Iraq was being manufactured, or even to bomb it, taking advantage of the war between Iraq and Iran. It is known that the Israeli special services are driven by a tried and tested cynicism, and in view of the extent to which this is exploited in Jerusalem, it is not unreasonable to think that they wanted to frighten the French Jews to make them emigrate to Palestine. The only decent reason against this line of thought is that terrorism functions on a European scale and that's where it will be explained.

Let's quickly deal with the supposed neo-Nazi culpability, for whatever it's worth: These minuscule groups, with no following, led by nobodies, are clearly incapable of shaking a state, no matter how close it is to decomposition. For several months, they have been, in France, the target of a sterile and hypocritical police persecution. These people spend half of their time being interrogated in police stations in France as well as in Germany and Italy. The police, too, after spending their time, have to release them, unable to get them on anything other than some motives. And the hoary heads of the self-righteous left are indignant: How can we let the Nazis free to have Nazi thoughts? Listen to these demands that people who do not think like them be put in prison while they themselves well deserve it for their stupidity!

Do we want to take a closer look? FANE, a tiny group set up and blown out of proportion by cops, judges and journalists, is made up of twenty percent cops, according to the latter's information. The suckers are not surprised by this inversion of reality: if one out of five militants is a cop, it follows that fascists can join the police as easily as one can join a fishing club. Better still, this famous inspector Durand, member of FANE, lost his anonymity thanks only to the blunder of Italian investigators, who had a pressing need for young bodies. And what was the official job of these studded boots? The protection of our rabbi Kaplan, an honorable man who had a lot of sympathy for the Crosses of Fire in the thirties. Kaplan said nothing, showed neither surprise nor indignation when the press inadvertently revealed the interesting relations of his guardian angel. And Durand did not complain when he was kicked out of the cop shop as a vulgar criminal. One wonders who profited most from these charming events, the surly characters, FANE, or Kaplan.

What can a skeletal organization, infiltrated and harassed by assassination attempts (possibly by the left?) and finally banned by government decree, do in this mess? It serves as a screen, a cover for the real terrorists, who will make it endorse their crimes. Two days after the Copernic Street incident, a clumsy phone caller whose job is to claim responsibility for attacks, was not afraid to claim the responsibility for a booby-trapped car by a jealous husband,

in the name of another impotent faction of the extreme right. If we want to understand something of this hodgepodge, we have to go back to Italy, where the contemporary style of new-look terrorism took hold beginning in 1969. And its most profound and penetrating analysis comes to us consequently also from Italy, under the implacable pen of Gianfranco Sanguinetti, *Du Terrorisme et de l'Etat, la théorie et la pratique du terrorisme divulguées pour la première fois*. (Of Terrorism and the State. Theory and Practice Divulged for the First Time.) It would be wise to distribute this work to all elementary schoolers. In fact, Sanguinetti says so.

In this peninsula birthplace of modern capitalism, Papal Seat, the center of Christianity and Euro-Stalinism, a privileged place for counter-revolutionary experimentation, and the counter-Reformation of current secret services and of Stalinists passing through fascism, whose vestiges of past greatness attract so many foreign visitors converges today the putrid decomposition waste of all that has marked this millennium. Everybody is plagued by the repulsive miasma of Christianity, capitalism and Stalinism, which, having reached the ultimate stage of infection, support each other for a moment still in the face of a menacing imminence of the most menacing of revolutions. They all meet here to put together the most relentless and the most desperate of all repressions, debating the most efficient system to condemn history, which has condemned them (p. 27).

Sanguinetti first explains that :

Defensive State terrorism is practiced by them **directly** or **indirectly**, with their own weapons or with those of others. If States have recourse to direct terrorism, it must be directed against the population as what happened, for example, with the massacre of piazza Fontana, of Italicus, and of Brescia. If, on the contrary, the States decide to have recourse to indirect terrorism, this one must apparently be directed against them as, for example, the Moro affair.

Assassination attempts carried out directly by independent units or their State parallel services, are usually not claimed by anybody, but are imputed and attributed to such and such convenient "guilty" party, such as Pinelli or Valpreda. Experience shows that this is the weakest point of such terrorism and the determining factor of its extreme fragility in political usage. Based on results of this experience, the strategists of parallel services of the State try henceforth to give their actions more credibility, or at least less unlikelihood, by having them claimed directly by such and such an acronym of a phantom group, or even by an existing clandestine group whose militants appear to be, and sometimes believe that they are not, involved in the designs of the State apparatus (pp. 69-70).

Sanguinetti exposes the profound reasons for this state of affairs:

From the Piazza Fontana to the Moro kidnapping, the only changes were the contingent objectives realized by defensive terrorism. But the goal can never change in the defensive mode. And the goal, on December 12, 1969 and on March 16, 1978, and still today, has in fact always remained the same. This goal is to make the people who no longer support the State or are struggling against it, have at least a common enemy with the State, and that the State defend them against it on the condition that it won't be reappraised by anybody. The people, who are in general hostile to terrorism,

and for good reason, have to admit that at least in this domain, they have a need for the State, to which they have to delegate the most widespread powers in order to be able to vigorously confront the arduous task of common defense against an obscure, mysterious, treacherous and merciless in a word, fanciful enemy. In the face of an ever present terrorism presented as the absolute evil, evil in itself and for itself, all other evil, however more real, is relegated to a second level, and must even be forgotten. For the struggle against terrorism coincides with the common interest. It is already the common good and the State that works for it generously, the good in itself and for itself. Without the viciousness of the devil, the infinite goodness of God could not be seen and appreciated as it should.

The State and its economy have been extremely weakened in the past ten years as a result of daily attacks by the proletariat, on the one hand, and on the other, by the incapacity of its managers. It can silence everybody by staging a spectacle of common sacrosanct defense against the terrorist monster. And in the name of this pious mission, it can demand from its subject an additional portion of their restricted freedom, which will reinforce police control over all the people (pp. 71-72).

Several similar quotations could serve as food for thought to a number of "antifascists":

When the "red track" of Piazza Fontana collapsed miserably, and even though they never protested against the fact that Valpreda was jailed for three years, the Stalinists pulled out of their bag the "black track." And now our extra parliamentarians made the "black track" theirs, and ran behind the Stalinists shouting too that "fascism won't pass." Naturally, I don't rule out that some fascists participated in one or another "red" or "black" terrorist act. But this has no importance whatsoever because we know that just as our State uses well known fascists as generals, prefects, judges, and police commissioners, it just as well uses them as secret agents, infiltrated elements and terrorist workers **and despite all this, the State and its terrorism are not defined as "fascist."** (p. 87)

How true this is of Germany (of the two Germanies, we should say), and of our beautiful country: How many former Pétain supporters are ministers or hold high administrative positions, like Marcellin? How many former militants of French Algeria, or of the OAS, are in the police or the army? And our eminence, Poniowski, who before occupying Beauveau Place, supplied information to the OAS? And Giscard, who in 1974, recruited his personnel from the extreme right?

In the unprecedented confusion which prevails today, the wreckage of leftist poverty does not shine here with any more lucidity than in Italy.

Due to their incurable inferiority complex vis-à-vis the capacity to lie of the PCI, effectively superior to theirs, the extra parliamentarians immediately accepted the version of the facts accredited by the PCI. According to this version, the bombs were of "fascist style" and hence, could not be the work of the secret services of this "democratic" State, so democratic that it never worries about what is said, and that the only ones to be considered "dangerous" in the show are underpaid but indispensable extras. This explanation of the facts agreed however perfectly with the true ideology of these small groups infatuated with Mao, Stalin and Lenin, as they are today with Guattari, Toni Negri and Scalzon, or with their miserable "private life" and their ridiculous "brothels." Since all these alleged "extremists" **did not want** to tell the

truth and did not know how to openly accuse this State of being terrorist, they did not know how to fight it with any tangible results: because saying that this bomb was "fascist" is as dishonest as saying that it was "anarchist" and all lies, no matter how contradictory they may seem, are always **united** in the sabotage of the truth. And only the truth is revolutionary, only the truth is **detrimental** to power, only the truth is capable of **infuriating Stalinists and bourgeois alike**. [ . . . ] Victims of their own false awareness always expressed in ideological terms, the extra-parliamentarians could no longer elude the questions raised by showy terrorism. In 1970, they started to consider terrorism in itself, ideologically, in a metaphysical manner, completely abstracted from reality. And when the truth about the massacre of Piazza Fontana finally came out, and all the lies about it collapsed one after another, neither the good souls of the progressive intellectual bourgeoisie, nor the scarecrow of "lotta continua" and their consorts were capable of raising the real question, namely, the scandal: that **the democratic Republic did not hesitate to conduct a massacre** when this seemed to be useful, because when all the laws of the State are in danger, "there exists for the State only one inviolable law: the survival of the State" (Marx). (pp. 91-93)

The massacre of the Piazza Fontana, in Milan, in 1969 was executed by the Italian services. This is well known today. *Le Monde* wrote an article about it the day after the explosion in Bologna, as though it was simple trivia, known by every reader, **while it had never written about it or explain it before**. Sanguinetti shows why:

That this State is in need of terrorism is something everyone of its representatives is henceforth perfectly convinced of, by experience if not by reasoning, since the happy immediate and miraculous outcome of the operation of Piazza Fontana. The proof is that if **there was no** "Dreyfus affair" about it, it doesn't certainly mean that it was less scandalous, but because of the fact that all parties, for different reasons, understood that this bomb saved the State, that each one defined in its own way; and that the **truth** about this bomb was capable by itself of destroying it completely. And if there was no "Dreyfus affair," it was also because of the fact that in our enslaved intelligentsia, no Emile Zola has ever demanded or required a truthful conclusion of the piazza Fontana (pp. 96-97).

*"The investigation may answer some subsidiary questions, but it will be difficult, policemen will not suffice. They must be assisted by sociologists."*  
André Frossard

## The Pedestrians of Copernic Street

Sanguinetti's analyses provoked a shock in 1975, when he published, under the name of Censor a *Reporto veridico sulle ultime opportunita di salvare il capitalismo in Italia*. He seemed so well informed that the press speculated that he may well be a member of the government. Sanguinetti ridiculed them as too smart: he had no special information and he simply used his understanding. Everyone can do the same thing, it's as plain as the nose on your face.

We notice that in Bologna, Munich or Paris, it seems that sophisticated explosives were used. Police experts are curiously discreet about this subject.

Yet, it's child's play to determine the nature of the explosives (and hence, in most cases, their origin) as well as that of the detonator. Nobody told us whether or not the bomb of Copernic Street was remote-controlled. All those elements that remain obscure allow us to better understand the motives, to see why the putative bomb carrier was blown up with it in Munich and why in Paris, it blew up *before* the religious service was over. Errors or supreme skills of the planners?

This rise in terrorism in Europe becomes clearer in the light of what it revealed about itself, especially in Italy, over the past ten years. The explosions in Bologna and Munich were not only predictable, they were predicted. Read Sanguinetti. For in order to validate its racket, this terrorism has to always outbid. Right after the Copernic Street incident, we could expect other bombs, aimed at other victims, to explode. The carnage, which by sheer luck did not occur a few days later at la Bourse, will take place somewhere else soon. So there is nothing surprising about the explosion of Copernic Street, but some of its special features should be pointed out.

It is an antisemitic attack, or at least it appears as such. In fact, antisemitism may be the means rather than the aim. Tracing back the sequence of events, we can recall that the attack was claimed by FANE. This was favorably received by the public. For three months, the press, the courts, the politicians, all in chorus attacked this small group which vegetated for many years without drawing anybody's attention to it. Neither the activities, nor the literature of FANE had changed in *nature*. But during the summer, actions of anti-Jewish character are anonymously claimed in the name of FANE, culminating, a week before the bomb, with nightly machine-gunning of Jewish businesses. The road leading to Copernic had been carefully prepared for several months. During this time, the FANE people were targeted by the justice system and the police. They were the object of several attacks, such as Fredriksen's apartment on May 4, when the cops discretely took the list of FANE members. The path was marked. FANE or no FANE, it's a Nazi attack.

It's a curious idea to resuscitate such an old corpse. Especially as the true Nazis got to power through democratic means. The Italians, who are more modern, have a double faced terrorism: "red" and "black." In France, despite some pathetic attempts by the "proletarian left" rednecks, so dear to Sartre's heart, the leftists were not up to it. They could not get their "willing machines" to work in the pyrotechnic craft of "jambisation" (54) of small chiefs. They finally preferred the salsa or returned to the synagogue. As for the independents, they lacked the hierarchical, clandestine structure necessary for efficient manipulation. Yet, no means were spared to trip them up. The "provocation" item in the police budget must have been high in 1979. Recall the demonstration of March 23rd in Paris where cops were deliberately sent to have their face bashed by steel workers, or those of the Opera or Jussieu, where provocateurs were so wild that even journalists were set to thinking. And this is a lot.

There was only a handful of toughs from the suburbs, well trained in the Maoist tradition to play at "direct action." Those miserable would-be bandits

could not survive very long. As much as they were infiltrated, they were so weak that the cops had to liquidate them *at the same time* as the opinion makers were inflating an ectoplasmic FANE. After all, it turns out that it is impossible to set up and manipulate a terrorism of the left that makes the required impression and is credible, so it has to be found on the right. There are no Red Brigades in France, but there are Nazis.

Also, they have to be able to have some credibility *before* and *after* the birth of modern terrorism. The ground was prepared by the newspapers, stupid jerks, the hallmark of the attack has to be above any suspicion. What proves that a Nazi is indubitably a Nazi? He kills Jews. *Quod demonstrandum erat.*

But since it is already known that it will be difficult to find a good Nazi who would make a presentable guilty party, other trails have been meticulously prepared to be used as circumstances dictate. An incredible false Cypriot, waving his passport and his dollars in everybody's face, blazed a trail that stands to get lost in the moving sands of Shatt el Arab. And how many other rings are in store to excite the sagacity of our faithful Ganimard?

Incidentally, this affair provides the key to a little, so far unresolved puzzle, the assassination of Henri Curiel in 1978 (55). It is well known (56) that the latter was a central figure in connections among many foreign clandestine organizations. His network "Solidarity," reasonably well infiltrated by the French Services, gave them an interesting observation post. Those who don't see that Curiel worked freely and voluntarily for the Russians, don't surely know for whom they themselves work. There was speculation that the assassination was ordered by the KGB but Curiel was never intractable or reticent.

Whatever we may think of Curiel, there is no doubt that his activities were the exact opposite of terrorism. Being at the crossroads of so many underground activities, Curiel surely had connections with groups or militants who had, at one time or another, practiced terrorism. But he had the means to oppose it and he in fact did. Therefore, it seems normal that any venture aimed at paving the way for the preliminary manipulations which are necessary to set up a terrorist structure will come up against the Curiel obstacle and the clandestine ramifications of his group. This would completely justify his elimination and the fact that his network had not been touched: a leaderless clandestine organization is the dream of manipulators. As luck would have it, it wasn't until June, 1980 that his false documents would come out (*Le Monde*, June 25, 1980). This was a pivotal moment when Direct Action was being corned and when FANE was suddenly propelled to center stage.

The only known positive evidence about the murder comes from the cops: the weapon that killed Curiel is the same one that killed the night guard at the Algerian Association in December 1977. The thing is unverifiable. Either they are lying to confuse the issue, or this shows that the organizers of state terrorism in France have no difficulty in finding a weapon or a shooter among the veterans of the OAS. Those who are nostalgic about racial attacks are obviously the best breeding ground for experienced men. Finally, with an

admirable desire for coherence, and in order to close the loop and connect the preliminary murder of May 1978 to the preparation for Copernic Street, they came during the summer of 1980 to lay a small bomb at Mme. Curiel's door, the same assassination place. All these miserable inventions have to hold.

## Aspects of Contemporary Idolatry

The perfection of the Copernic Street operation is due to the fact that its effects were perfectly calculable. First of all, there are massive and politically contrived demonstrations, and generalized bombardment by the press and by all political and religious persuasions. Secondly, a reaction appears deep down in the population, which is rather hostile to all this dramatization, this cleavage which tends to regard the Jews as sacred. Contrary to what is put out by so many silly billies, it is not antisemitism that leads to Copernic Street (otherwise, this would happen every week) but it is Copernic Street that triggers and resuscitates antisemitism. The inability to see that in the equation of State terrorism, local variables make French Jews equivalent to German beer drinkers or Italian train travelers, leads to the old tune of the irreducible Jewish specificity. It prevents the self-understanding of the Jews themselves in this *situation*. It reinforces the camouflage of the terrorists and disconnects the victims of all the suckers who did not know how to get chosen by God.

The demonstration following the Copernic street revealed the increasing fascism of a significant part of the French Jewish "community," especially among the Sephardic Jews repatriated from Algeria. Zionism provides the structural framework and the heroic romanticism. The slipper scraping sound of the old "Zion lovers" is succeeded by boot noise of the young Bétar henchmen. We have seen the typically Nazi behavior of the Jewish Defense Organization (OJD), with facies (of the right) hunting, physical assaults, death threats, attacks, etc. It recruits mainly in the Marais underworld, which has been terrorizing Jewish shopkeepers, who do not denounce them because they are their children. Our brave leftist humanists will not denounce this Jewish Fascism until they get their skulls broken and find themselves in the same hospital as Fredriksen.

These open acts of violence have, for some years, caused timid concern among consistories outside France. More so than the internal situation, this reflects the difficulties of Israeli politics led into a deadlock by the Begin government. In its refusal to seek a negotiated real peace, the government, under the former terrorist Begin, seeks to manipulate the Diaspora in order to put pressure on his allies (57). The amalgamation is clearly established. "*There is no distinction among anti-Israelism, anti-Zionism and antisemitism, which led all humanity to disaster and shame,*" declared Begin (*Le Monde*, October 7, 1980), quoted by Kaplan at the OJD.

On the question of terrorism, it is interesting to quote the implicit admissions of the Israeli prime minister:

The prime minister himself gave some clarification of his former declaration by telling other cabinet members that if the French

government policies could have encouraged antisemitism, it can't be blamed for having wanted this series of attacks. In support of this warning, Mr. Begin stated that likewise, the Israeli government can't be implicated in certain terrorist acts when there were "no Jewish victims." Mr. Begin alluded, for example, to the bomb attack carried out last June on the West Bank against the mayors of Ramallah and Nablous (*Le Monde*, October 7, 1980).

I know of no greater tribute to the solidarity of all state terrorisms.

What we certainly have to retain from the official Jewish argument, as it is taken up and amplified by the press, is the revival, but by inverting it, of the deepest theme of traditional antisemitism, that of the plot to dominate the world. We are presented today with a mysterious "Black International" having at its disposal fabulous financial means, occult relations at all levels of power, armed with a tenacity that defies all circumstances, which is the *exact replica* of the conspiracy described in the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*. And with as many proofs.

It's easily agreed that all these proto-Fascism, crypto-Fascism or para-Fascism, no matter what compost they plunge their radicalism in, do not add up to much, especially not to a real danger. I am one of those who thought that the OAS at the height of its power had absolutely no chance of achieving lasting success, and today, I don't see that we have to be alarmed by a hundred times lesser peril. All these movements are nothing but caricatures of the past, and one has to be numbed by the religions of the left in order to believe that the future will be so gentle as to want to present itself under the mash of the past. Sanguinetti insists on this point:

Pertini, the current president of the republic, a naive man is always and only afraid of fascism, for he is afraid of only what he knows. On the contrary, he should, from now on, be afraid of what he doesn't know, and learn fast what he has to be afraid of: no longer an open dictatorship, but a dreadful despotism hidden by the secret services, a despotism so strong that it uses its power to vigorously affirm that it doesn't exist (p. 132).

The emerging tyranny has benefited from the lessons of the past and has learned to preserve "a human face" and democratic forms. The great usefulness of bourgeois democracy is precisely its capacity to change the social content of political institutions. In the face of the crisis which is still commercial and financial, the power wants to protect itself against the eventuality of a swing towards a real economic and social crisis. In the halls of power, the scare of May 1968 has not been forgotten. The confidence that the power places in the Stalinist political-syndicalist apparatus may prove to be excessive. International competition and the formidable pressures of the global market may well push our old bourgeoisies up against the wall, without a margin of maneuvers against a proletariat which would have lost its desire to joke.

If we look for those responsible for terrorism, we have to track them among **partisans of the future state**. They are already close to power, if they are not there yet, with their "big ass" and their "long ears." Look for super-sleuths among those who absolutely have our happiness at heart. Those are really the worst. The search will be so much more difficult that state terrorism is still at its beginnings, that its creative spontaneity is not yet concentrated and centralized, that its program is still vague and that all its ramifications are not yet in place. They are presented as a rescue service for groups who occupy several positions in the State (and the opposition) apparatus, and potentially for all organized political forces, because they all participate in an identical world view where the only aim of politics is to reinforce the State and stabilize its powers. Terrorism will be the ultimate recourse for those who get tangled up in the illusion that political games could have any influence whatsoever on the social tectonics. They dance on volcanoes and believe that they can ward off the eruption by muffling the racket.

Contrary to classical terrorism, these bombs are not aimed at concrete people, but are used to provoke reactions. The only good reaction is therefore no reaction, to get down to the job of the "deconstruction of madness," following the example of the authors of "our kingdom is a prison" which was printed before the Copernic Street incident and sixty thousand copies of which were distributed after that incident. It was not outdated but rather justified by the event.

A two-sided one sheet pamphlet has obviously fewer details and explanations than a three hundred page volume. But it gave a headache to some good minds who were so tempted to find it somewhat accurate, that they had to turn to invectives. Then, the ideological pressure became so great that they were frightened to be seen for a moment outside of the anti-fascist herd. Henceforth, a new Copernican revolution serves to align the satellites of a strange constellation enlightened by the sun of "Jewish renewal."

In this sprawling fatal confusion, a call had to come from a representative of a breed thought to have been extinct the pro-situationists. He reminded us that we are in the "society of spectacle" and that "the critique of ideology has become the central question of the entirely spectacular society (i.e., entirely ideological)." Having reached this theoretical summit exhausted, he stops. We will never know whether the modern world he contemplates with his modern eye is the one we live in. He only gives us one example of the extraordinary acuteness of his analysis by affirming that Sanguinetti's work which is "effectively major" would not be pertinent with regard to the Copernic Street bomb because the head of state and the prime minister reacted with "obvious amazement bordering on pure stupidity" (58). This is in fact an obvious proof. But who borders more?

Just as sweet Manchette, lovely Baynac who signed, together with other "emergency" associates, a charming letter gently entitled "the gangrene" are forced to lie in saying that this pamphlet was written three days after Copernic Street, because they would not have found it scandalous before. It's not really the text that makes them indignant (irrespective of the extent of their

agreement or disagreement with it), it's rather the fact that it exists afterwards, and that its authors did not immediately rally to the official discourse. The radical change was not the content of the pamphlet, or even the situation, but the understanding of all these people who knew the content of this pamphlet and were discussing it for months. "In this era of decomposition of the revolutionary movement writes Baynac, himself decomposed by terror and as long as the movement is not reborn on other bases, we have to fear (!) that this pseudo theory of anti-fascism will ravage those demoralized by failure, and more seriously, those who know nothing" (59). It is not clear whether Baynac belongs to the first or the second category.

Like the devil of medieval times, Nazism has come out of the box today, in 1980. And like medieval times, we always find some embittered people who will accuse their neighbor of making a pact with the devil. The proof is that Baynac has "many a time commanded" the pamphlet authors "to distance themselves from the Nazis." It's as though there couldn't be any confusion anywhere except in the mind of a prosecutor. . . . If these people speak in the name of a "revolutionary movement" (which I certainly do not do), it seems to me that the said movement should immediately complete its decomposition. They will always have a little place at the LICRA or the MRAP.

Let's leave the antifascists to their meager processions. The only antidote to these subtle poisons is to carve out greater freedom, reject these bigotries, mental cowardice and unctuous oppressions that requires us to give up some of our freedoms for the sake of a common interest which is clearly not ours. The virtuous ignominy of Philippe Boucher's statement, "No freedom for the enemies of freedom" (60) must be denounced. Isn't it atrocious that this bureaucrat who fancies himself as another Saint-Just is already setting up the gallows? Freedom, for all of us, is to stand up to these criminal provocations, to refuse to take part in these kinds of violence, to criticize, to topple the idols, to transgress the mental and the fashionable taboos. Finally, the ultimate guarantee is complete and total freedom for all our enemies.

(October 18, 1980)

Another bomb of another kind would soon blow up. It was Chomsky's forward to *Mémoire en défense*, that Faurisson published for his trial. Infuriated by a flood of absurd remonstrances from Paris following his signing of an earlier petition circulating in the U.S. in support of Faurisson's civil rights, Chomsky sent a letter to set the record straight on the principles of defense of freedom. It was address to Vidal-Naquet who, behind the scene, set off a little pressure campaign by asking all of Chomsky's acquaintances in Paris to insist that he extricate and distance himself from this affair. I received a copy of it. The text seemed to me so clear and brief, that I asked Chomsky by telephone for an authorization to translate and publish it. I had done the same thing when he was despicably attacked by Claude Roy in *Le Nouvel Observateur*.

He told me that he was going to reread the text, to expurgate from it whatever was of personal character and send it to me to use in any way I saw fit. That was at the time when Faurisson's *Mémoire en défense* was being written. I mentioned the idea to

adjoin the text to it and Chomsky, who could not see from afar the cabal shaping up and who could care less about it, told me that, being on the scene, I was better situated to decide upon the use of the text. So it appears as the forward to Faurisson's book.

"The following remarks are so banal that it seems appropriate for me to apologize to reasonable people who would read them." This is how the text starts, quite rightly. The author explains why he signed the petition in support of Faurisson's rights (61), as he would have signed any other petition, in support of any other person, irrespective of his political ideas. And he says that it's precisely when these political ideas are themselves reprehensible that we must defend the right to express them. To do the opposite is to give in to the underground currents of totalitarianism. "It's very easy to defend the freedom of expression of those who don't need to be defended." He concludes by saying that the arguments put out by those who accuse Faurisson of being an antisemite don't seem convincing to him.

As soon as it came out, this text provoked a new avalanche of alarmist letters. People who saw in Chomsky the great modernizer in linguistics, or even simply revered him as a great man because they have a need for reverence but who couldn't care less about his political activities, pointed out to him that his association with dubious and crazy individuals is doing "objectively" the Nazis' work. This will ruin his political credit and undermine the basis of his struggle against American imperialism.

Somewhat disturbed by this hysteria and especially anxious to pursue his political struggle, which centers around current events, Chomsky wrote to ask me whether there was still time to withdraw the text. At the same time, he sent a warning to one of his Parisian correspondents, the culturally eccentric Jean- Pierre Faye. Upon receipt of this missive, I telephoned the U.S. to say that the text had already been published. Should it be withdrawn? "No, it's alright. *Forget about my letter.*" The next day, a melodramatic Jean-Pierre Faye slipped into the television program on Women of Anne Sinclair as "L'invité du jeudi" (the invited guest). He brandished Chomsky's telegram, stating that the latter withdrew his text, a lie soon taken up by all the press. He took the opportunity to demand the seizure of Faurisson's book. I sent a denial to *Le Monde*, which published it truncated (62).

Then came a swell of vociferations and protests. Ah, this Chomsky! the traitor! the grand-son of a rabbi who had no business to get mixed up in giving us lessons of morality with his "anti-French aggression." He dares to not admire the French intelligentsia, we will make him eat his linguistics. In the press, *the Chomsky affair* became the sudden revival of the Faurisson affair. Once more, Vidal-Naquet came to the rescue of la Vieille Taupe publishers. Sales sky-rocketed despite the refusals and hassles of bookstores. The foreign press got involved. There were articles in the *New York Times*, in Germany, the Scandinavian countries and Italy. Chomsky was not terribly distressed by slanders and deformations, of all kinds. He answered the false accusations, he gave interviews to *le Monde* and *Liberation*, which relaunched the anger of high ranking intellectuals. He published a long explanation in *The Nation*. The prize, as almost always, came back to *Le Nouvel Observateur*, in an article of Jean-Paul Enthoven: "And this instrumentalist language theory, this "generative grammar" which always refuses to think the unimaginable, in other words the "Holocaust," does it really need Faurisson's dodge as an acknowledgement of its rather poor legitimacy?" (no. 841, December 22, 1980).

Faced with this torrent, I decided to intervene. On January 3, 1981, I sent to *le Monde* the following article, after receiving by telephone an agreement in principle for its publication.

## SETTING THE RECORD STRAIGHT

Being attacked for the past six months in many publications and on several matters the Faurisson affair, Chomsky's positions, Cambodia I didn't deem it my duty to answer each and every one of my detractors. I was waiting for the debate to widen, to finally reach the shores of the rational, the basics. We are still far from there and I will limit myself to examine in depth and leisurely the diverse arguments, leaving aside the insults. But confusion has reached these days such proportion that setting the record straight is called for, with precise references, to really tackle it.

The sudden revival of what is called the Chomsky affair is symptomatic. The outcry triggered by some obvious basic facts stated by the American linguist shows how justified his criticism of the French intelligentsia is: tendencies to intolerance, authoritarianism, and to voluntary subservience to the ideological needs of the State.

The campaign against Chomsky started really two years ago. It is essentially the product of the old need of the left to invent idols in order to subsequently topple them and go noisily around in sackcloth and ashes. The Vietcong are dethroned and in order to convince themselves that the fetish is broken, they take it out on Chomsky by pretending to believe that he ranks among the idolaters. In order to depict him sometimes as a Stalinist, and sometimes as the Jew in the service of fascists, they have to greatly distort his views and to even invent positions and attribute them to him for the only reason to better castigate them. I dismantled this mechanism on several occasions and no one could saddle me with the title of "Chomsky's spokesman in France." Chomsky is an independent intellectual, and me, too. He belongs to the libertarian trend with anarchist tendencies, and me, too. This leads to political positions that do not have the good fortune to please everybody. There's no good going on and on about it. But to make believe that Chomsky considers himself to be "the conscience" (of the West, obviously) is purely ridiculous. When Paul Thibaud, who belongs to another current of thought, has some disagreement with Chomsky, the only explanation he can find is that Chomsky is paranoid. Or anti-French. I say bravo!

To talk about something else and repeat a famous phrase, if I say to Thibaud that the only hope for the Poles to be free is to hang Lech Walesa with the innards of Kania (the first communist prime minister of the period), I'm sure that he will not understand me. To which psychiatrist would he sent me?

Recently, a handful of Parisian intellectuals tried to make Chomsky go back on the expression of his principles, by organizing a little campaign of personal

letters. Jean-Pierre Faye ingeniously gives us their names on television (63). They tried later to maintain the confusion with fragments of personal correspondence. Yet, the situation is perfectly simple and clear. Chomsky's "opinion" appeared as a prologue to Faurisson's book and Chomsky stands by it as it is published. The operators got nothing for their pains.

Paul Thibaud (*Le Monde* of December 31) is unable to get rid of a falsehood I had already pointed out to him: the struggle against American intervention in Indochina does not necessarily imply support for the local communist resistance movements, at least for some, in a really internationalist spirit. Does he have to be reminded that it is the American government, and not Chomsky, who systematically destroyed any possibility of the emergence of a third political force? Does he have to be reminded that in the matter of totalitarianism, blind massacres, and economic destruction, the West's record in Indochina remains today by far the worst despite its emulation by all the Pol Pots? But wasn't it the same Paul Thibaud who told me, a few months ago, that unfortunately, under the current circumstances, we have to support Pol Pot against Vietnamese imperialism? (64)

Finally, to get to the Chomsky-Faurisson affair, the real scandal seems to me to be exactly the fact that some people want to make it an "affair." Since it turned out to be impossible to silence Faurisson, or to make him out to be crazy or a fascist, he had to be dismissed by talking about something else, by deflecting from the controversy. Chomsky could very well be used as a scapegoat for the anxieties and I understand them triggered by Professor Faurisson's findings.

In order to obscure the debate, they postpone and make it confusing. I notice that since the appearance of my book, which states the elements of the problem, there was only one attempt at an answer to Faurisson's arguments, that of Vidal-Naquet, behind which all the others hid. Yet, this response, too, hedges and fails to address the basic points. It's clear that Pierre Vidal-Naquet does not master the subject and that he does his best to fill the numerous gaps of the official version. Unlike Mme. Delbo (*Le Monde* Dec. 31, 1980) and for good reason, he couldn't use the fictionalized testimony of Filip Muller, such a "crude" document whose French publishers can't decide to warn the reader that it was written by a ghost writer.

If there was a serious debate in France, we may end up knowing whether Faurisson is right or wrong and where the truth is in what is absurdly called the Holocaust. I am very interested in this debate, since I have no set convictions except that the historian's work has not really started yet. I would like to know, and many other people would like to know too. But seeing the stirred up passions and militant faith, I admit that I have very little hope that the flickering light of reason may prevail.

After two weeks of equivocation, the editor of *Le Monde* decided, once more, that the affair was closed and that it was too late to publish my paper.

Having had the distinction of full page attacks, *Le Quotidien de Paris* agreed to publish my comments under pressure from the remarkable Faurisson attorney, Maitre Delcroix. I sharpened my scalpel in order to dissect two articles, typical samples of prevailing stupidity.

## The day these acrobats will remove the veil of silence (65)

Intellectuals must "take a stand." It's a particularly French syndrome. And to "take a stand" means to take sides, to decide what is true and what is false. And to maintain his status, the intellectual must do this all the time. Biafra, green Europe, new forms of energy, the Faurisson affair . . . the intellectual is called upon to pass a judgment, an immediate, definitive judgment. In his very understandable incapacity to assess everything, the French intellectual, rather than give up being peremptory, prefers to borrow the judgments passed by other intellectuals like himself, whom he usually trusts.

We thus have the spectacle put on by some Parisian intellectuals who furiously take it out on Chomsky. Their common thread is that, over the years, they underwent strong ideological drifts, while Chomsky's steadfast libertarian and anti-imperialist positions have become an obstacle to the game of their successive amnesias. I have already described (*Esprit*, September 1980) how Lacouture, Claude Roy, B.-H. Lévy, Attali, Glucksmann and others created piece by piece the phantasm of a Chomsky support for Pol Pot. In the same way, and with utter contempt for the facts, Chomsky is accused today of support for the neo-Nazis or of being the Trojan horse of Soviet hegemony. This is the aim of the venomous article by Francois Fejto in *Le Quotidien de Paris* of December 29.

I say venomous because of the tone: "You are obviously of such superior mind that examination of the conditions that led to the extermination of six million human beings does not interest you." It's not honorable to attack so lowly. Neither is it to constantly use this false deference and this term "maitre." It irresistibly brings to mind Sartre's response to de Gaulle, who, too, addressed him as "maitre" (in the letter where he refused to have the Russell court headquartered in Paris). He said that he wasn't used to being address as "maitre" except by cafe waiters.

The problem posed by Fejto and many others is simple: to them, attacking exclusively or mainly Western imperialism is equivalent to going to bed with the Soviets. These short-sighted people can't see that for people like Chomsky with an anarchist tradition, Bolshevism was already condemned even before the 1917 revolution. All that had taken place since then reinforced this condemnation. I would add that there are really in Chomsky's position more solid reasons to reject whatever is related to Leninism than those of the people who attack him today. But the worst shortsightedness is to not see that it is precisely Western imperialism that is going to bed with communism. Look at

Cuba, Indochina and Portuguese-speaking Africa. This is the near past. Look at the present in Africa, Latin America, Seoul and elsewhere.

If we don't put our own house in order before criticizing others, if we allow our governments to conduct politics of plundering, dictatorship and terror through the potentates that they install, how can we be surprised to see somebody reap the benefits? Some people complain about Khomeini while the Shah handed Iran to Tudeh (66) on a silver plate. . . . And in Chad, where for fifteen years the French army has been meticulously smashing niggers? And the Spanish Sahara that was passed under the table to Hassan II as a simple bakhshish? And Kolwezi, where was the French left? It applauded the Legion. All this leaves memories that have to be paid some day. And Mr. Fejto could denounce the red totalitarianism in power in Kinshasa, or in Honduras or in Patagonia more dispassionately than he will attribute the responsibility for such regimes to those who tried to oppose them twenty years earlier. I therefore reverse the question and pose it to Mr. Fejto: knowing that the main South- African liberation movement is the ANC and knowing that the ANC is largely manipulated by the very pro-Moscow South African CP, should apartheid be abolished before it is too late, or on the contrary, should it be reinforced, as France is trying to do? If I can judge by his incredible comment about the excesses of Weimar liberalism, I am afraid to learn his answer. Those who "psychologically prepare the return of humiliating servitude and monstrous massacres" are those who want to confine us to the alternative between the massacres "of the left" and the massacres "of the right.". They have no room for freedom.

Finally, I must tell Mr. Fejto that his information about Cambodia is too weak and that his attack against the "leftist anarchists" is too strong. Chomsky is right in saying that the Khmer CP leaders were trained by the French and I would add Vietnamese Stalinists. But, for them, the great turning point was the Chinese cultural revolution. Some of them went on long secret trips to China at that time. There is no doubt that the horrors in Cambodia, at least those that are not attributable to the consequence of the American war, are a product of Maoist stupidity. Parisian modes have nothing to do with it, and Mr. Fejto should find other pretexts to settle his accounts. But maybe this article of Mr. Fejto is only a bad joke. It takes a knack to hoax in order to write that in 1940 "France pretended to be pro-Pétain." Since then, as is known, it has been pretending to be de Gaulle, the pro-Giscard readers must "pretend" to be idiots in order to accept such outrageous statements.

The bitterness of Mr. Fejto is probably due to the harsh conditions of exile. Yet we have to admit that in some cases he did not lack courage. But it is surprising to see Mr. Pierre Daix enter the debate. This is a man who has discredited himself in the eyes of many. I was a kid when I read his account of his case against David Rousset concerning Soviet concentration camps. Mr. Daix was the cantor of Stalinists who denied the existence of such camps. A generation later, Mr. Daix left the party, which is irrelevant, let bygones be bygones. A minimum of decency should steer him to write rather about the life of butterflies or the frescoes of Pompeii. Mr. Daix has the audacity to talk about "the civic rights of victims' families," but I know some who would first

demand Mr. Daix's head because in the domain of crime against intelligence and integrity, there is no statute of limitation.

And yet, Mr. Daix sets about to "decrypt" the political thinking of Chomsky (*Le Quotidien de Paris*, December 29, 1980), which means to substitute for crystal clarity a collection of absurdities which will cause a dunce in a philosophy class to blush. I never understood why Chomsky would "need to clear himself of responsibility," or what logical link could be found between this statement and the quotation from Chomsky that follows it. Neither can I grasp how "the rational" is "the danger that the American crusade against communism puts the world in." I don't see how America could be "the absolute evil" in any other than the religious vocabulary. If saying that there are rightist Soviet dissidents amounts to supporting the KGB, it would seem to imply that all dissidents are ontologically leftists. All behind Pliouchtch? As far as I am concerned, I have no difficulty in recognizing that Solzhenitsyn belongs to the extreme right and that *we should read him and let others read him*. But if Mr. Daix and other "French intellectuals" found *Gulag Archipelago* a disturbing revelation, it wasn't the same thing for Chomsky and others like me. Before, in the thirties, the Rousset trial and witnesses from the left, for those whoever wants to know. Mr. Daix was for a long time a part of this mass of French intellectuals who had everything right before their eyes and who didn't want to know. He is in no position to take it out on those who value their political duties to learn the facts.

Finally, Mr. Daix's last sentence sends me into a sudden burst: "It is in fact dangerous, he says, that Faurisson's project and that of his leftist friends of La Vieille Taupe ends up by reinforcing taboos on the scientific examination of the facts in the concentration camps." This is too much. To accuse those who are trying to open a discussion about the facts (the fate of deported Jews), those who are in the midst of the worst difficulties, under a flood of insults, to accuse them of reinforcing the intellectual taboos that they are precisely trying to break, is the work of an acrobat specializing in ideological inversion. If the debate is so fierce, it is because, cohort after cohort, the Daix type intellectuals intervene to defend the taboos that protect them.

If Pierre Daix, number 59807 in Mauthausen, is interested in the "scientific examination of facts in the concentration camps," let him start with a critical rereading of *La dernière forteresse*, a testimony about the camps that he published just after the war; let him examine carefully how the communists took control inside the camps' administration; let him weigh up this collaboration between Nazis and communists at the expense of the other prisoners; let him record some confessions still quite timid in this respect of Jorge Semprun in *Quel beau Dimanche!* Let him read Rassinier. When Daix or others begin to lift the veil of silence and of some testimonies which are more or less dubious and which are rather pleas, in order to see what really happened, they will be surprised by the depth of their ignorance. But what good does it do to ask intellectuals to do a job which brings back more nagging doubts than honors and comfortable certainties?

The rightist press, which abhors Chomsky's political ideas, made some ironic remarks and came virtuously to his defense. It is remarkable that, in all this affair, the rightist press restricted itself to a prudent silence. The only journalist who said a few words in *Le Figaro magazine*, newspaper of the new right, was sharply scolded by *Le Nouvel Observateur*. He was almost fired when his boss Pauwels, literally terrorized by the clamors following the Copernic Street attack, thought it necessary to pledge allegiance and make concessions. As I got involved in this affair, which has become public, I thought that I had to act fast in order to avoid being preempted by the right and exploited beyond control. That was an over-estimate of the intelligence and courage of the right. Apart from some rare exceptions, its thinkers and writers have shown the same low cowardice as many leftist hacks. In private, they expressed an interest or were troubled, or perplexed, or willing to know more, but would never print a word about their state of mind for fear of running the risk of being pointed out by their "civilian" colleagues.

The Chomsky affair triggered off another new development. Copiously insulted by different commentators, Faurisson got to spend a few minutes with Ivan Levaï on *Europe No 1*, a mass audience morning program, on December 17, 1980. Faced with a hostile aggressive and worst of all mal informed journalist, Faurisson kept his calm and said that he was going to summarize the conclusion of his work in one sentence of sixty words. Here it is:

"The alleged Hitlerian gas chambers and the alleged genocide of Jews are one and the same historic lie which has allowed a gigantic political-financial fraud whose main beneficiaries are the state of Israel and international Zionism, and whose main victims are the German people, but not its leaders, and all the Palestinian people."

This phrase sparked off a cascade of stamped papers and a new big trial.

In order to be perfectly clear and before continuing this "chronicle of events," as the Russians say, I will give my own feelings about this sentence that was launched by Faurisson as a cannon ball at the fortifications of his adversaries.

The apparent simplicity of this sentence is deceptive because it pretends to evoke Nazi policy with regard to the Jews, the politics of Zionism and of Germany after the war and including even the Palestinian question. Such simplification is obviously extreme. It can only be a provocation in the literal sense of a gesture aimed at provoking some thinking. But in its abrupt formulation devoid of nuances, it backfired, provoking instead in readers and auditors an attitude of rejection rather than constructive thinking.

It's especially the choice of words which serves to block the reflection. It may be possible to talk about "alleged" gas chambers, because, using rational arguments, hence debatable and debated, Faurisson has been able to convince that, at least, there are questions about their existence. But to talk about "alleged genocide of Jews," without carefully explaining what is meant by this term, is exposing oneself to not being understood. The public concluded that this meant that large numbers of Jews did not perish as a result of Nazi policies. This is obviously wrong. In its erudite ignorance, public opinion in the West generally believes that six million Jews died in

gas chambers, which are usually confused with crematory furnaces, while orthodox historians believe that only a third or a quarter of those who disappeared perished in this manner. And they did not rush to correct this wide spread error. But Faurisson's sentence made the mistake of intimating that the dead have simply not been killed. In my opinion, that is absurd. The real question would be to know how many, why, how, etc. A lot of things are known, but often badly known. It would be useful to know better and we can't expect much from Wellers, Vidal-Naquet, Finkelkraut and their ilk, more interested in the ideological battle than the patient pursuit of the facts.

The use of the term "historic lie" seems to me equally misplaced. This presumes that people who knew the truth have knowingly distorted it. On the contrary, all that is known about the origins of this "Auschwitz rumor," shows that there circulated in Europe during the war noises, rumors, information and even myths, where the true and the false were inextricably mixed with variable proportions. If some circles used this information for political ends, this does not mean that it was deliberately distorted. The ideological machine has no need for sheer lying, it only has to select, adulterate, stress or omit some facts as they relate to each other. The only provable lies in this affair (Katyn and the Jewish soap factories) are credited to the Soviets, whose ideological apparatus was much more crude, and hence less believed. Those who falsify a little, on the sides, are generally acclaimed.

Also, the term "political-financial fraud" gives rise to confusion. In fact, there is no clear distinction between reparations given by Germany on a personal basis to individuals who personally suffered from persecutions, and reparations given to Israel, intended in principle to repair individual or community damage, but which go directly to the treasury of the State, which takes the place of individuals who, by definition, were not its subject at the time of the events. It's certainly normal and understandable that Japan pay reparations to countries it occupied during the war (I don't think it pays reparations to individuals) but a series of juridical fictions had to be instituted in order to justify German reparations to the Hebrew State. If there was fraud, it was certainly in the creation of a state that calls itself Jewish in the Middle East, at the expense of the Arab inhabitants of Palestine, a creation assured by the alliance of the great powers. All the rest follows from this decision, to which Germany was not a party.

This is contained in Faurisson's sentence. But it could be construed that the creation of the state of Israel is a political fraud precisely because of the nonexistence of the extermination. This could mean that if the genocide had not existed, then the creation of Israel could not be justified. But Zionism is much earlier than Hitler, it is the expression of increased nationalism in some areas of central Europe. Its conceit in creating a Jewish state in Arab territory was inadmissible from the beginning, since the first Zionist congress in Basle in 1897.

I therefore disagree with many points which are superficially stated in the sentence. It could have said the same thing in another manner which would have been more correct and less provocative. But it also led to reactions which, no matter how absurd, are nonetheless unavoidable and invariably violent. That's how the term "Zionist" is used. A permanent feature of Zionist propaganda is to assimilate "Jewish" and "Zionist," because from this angle, every Jew's calling is to go (they say "go up") to Israel or, if not, to help those who want to settle there or are there already. To

Zionists, every Jew is or will become Zionist. So it's through a natural reversal that the term "Zionist" means "Jewish" to them. Hence the constant repetition of the perfectly spurious affirmation that anti-Zionism is essentially identical to anti-Semitism. So Faurisson was blamed for saying "Zionist movement" where his adversaries wanted to see "all the Jews." And consequently, in accusing the Zionist movement of benefiting from a political-financial fraud, Faurisson will be accused of saying: the Jews are crooks, they steal money antisemitic themes trotted out since the Middle Ages. In order to hide, he said "Zionist" instead of "Jew." The key to the proof was presented during the trial by Madelaine Rebérioux, a historian of the labor movement, close to Vidal-Naquet and a longtime member of the FCP in charge of a small section of the Human Rights League, specializing in the surveillance of Faurisson and his acolytes (67). (Several anti-racist and deportee organizations have sporadically conducted police activities: tailing, mail tampering, threats, etc.) To prove that when Faurisson mentions the Zionist movement, he can't be talking about anything other than the Jews, this historian concludes her brief peroration on the history of antisemitism with the assertion that "international Zionism" does not exist and that it is "an empty concept, devoid of intuition, as Kant said." (68)

I admit that despite the reverence due the splendors of Justice, I could not help burst out laughing. The clucking and outraged looks Rebérioux flung were to no avail. The joke took us by surprise. How could one predict that bad faith can reach such heights?

## THE REPERCUSSIONS ABROAD

Before getting to the trials themselves, we should maybe conclude this overview with the extension of this affair in the U.S. and German press.

I happened to arrive in New York a few days after the June 10-16, 1981 issue of the *Village Voice* appeared on the news stands. It carried the headline, "Gas Chamber Games" and a subtitle "Crackpot History and the Right to Lie," with a very long article by Paul Berman, a member of the staff (69). It's obviously Chomsky's role in this affair which aroused the strongest excitement. The provincialism of the American press is such that no subject is worthy of its interest unless America or Americans are involved in it. And in this press, the *Voice* expressed doubtless at least at that time what was the most open, the most cosmopolitan presentation, directed mostly to what elsewhere would be called leftist intellectuals.

The article begins with a ferocious attack and ends with a long lamentation over all that Chomsky has contributed to leftist political thought in America, and his leading role in the movement against the war in Indochina. Chomsky had not only defended Faurisson's civil rights, but had added that it didn't seem to him that Faurisson was an anti-semite. Berman is very angry but he ends up by admitting that there might have been a problem of civil rights that he doesn't want to deal with. On the other hand, he wants to prove that Faurisson is an anti-Semite. In order to do that, he combines Faurisson with members of different American groups who maintain also that the genocide is an invention, but using different arguments or no arguments at all. There are among these people inveterate anti-Semites and it's obvious that many belong to the American racist extreme right, with fascist tendencies.

The mixture is facilitated by the fact that Faurisson has participated in a "revisionist convention" organized in California by these people. Like anybody else, Faurisson talks to whoever wants to listen to him and making no distinction between him and his auditors is as current a procedure as it is grotesque. Talk to God, and you're divine. Talk to the devil, and you'll surely suffer.

Berman's level of information on the basics of the problem is very low. Since I had been kept abreast by a friend in the United States about the developments of this affair, Berman had to only inquire instead of being content to paraphrase Vidal-Naquet, and on some points only.

The article becomes really amusing when it comes to La Vieille Taupe, or rather, to a few free individuals, each with a past of extreme-left politics, who get together, from time to time, under this name. "How is it possible?" wonders a visibly dumbfounded Berman, because he doesn't know that he understood nothing about all this. "What could have propelled these Parisian thinkers with great love of freedom, to the avenues of the paranoid extreme-right driven by the hatred of Jews?" A stupid question has no answer. But Berman is searching. Maybe the colonial wars made us a little crazy. Or could it be the ideological collapse of Marxism in France made us deny reality in order to better solve theoretical problems. And, it's well known, at a time of crisis, what comes out! Anti-semitism, of course. So, to dismiss Chomsky, there's nothing left for Berman other than to emphasize that he belongs to a "French" political tradition. I admire people like Berman, for whom everything is always simple. If I had such a mind to finally live quietly on a chaise lounge, in the shadow of rosy certainties. . . .

I immediately wrote a brief response, which was printed in the July 22-29th issue. Berman had previously refused to meet with me at the radio station WBAI, saying that he didn't debate people who thought that the earth was flat (70).

Following is the text that was written in English (71).

## RETHINKING POLITICAL MYTHS

It is not an easy task for Paul L. Berman ["Gas Chamber Games," *Voice*, June 10-16] and some others to understand why a bunch of libertarian socialists and anarchists, loosely linked into an informal Paris based group called *la Vieille Taupe* (Old Mole) have taken an interest into the Faurisson affair. They did more. They published his views, fought for the protection of his elementary rights of free expression, and finally pleaded his case before the courts.

It does not occur to Mr. Berman that a first reason could be there might be at least some grain of truth in what Faurisson says. This, however, has been recognized even by his most fierce opponents in France. If your adversary makes a point and utters a demonstrably true proposition, would you refuse to acknowledge it? Only a mind so biased as to be insensitive to facts and truth can do that.

But, of course, libertarian socialists have had a more political stake in all this, and Mr. Berman somewhat errs in speculating about it. They have been thinking all along that the Western political system, which dominates most of the world today, holds together mainly because of an ideological consensus prevailing inside of its societies. This applies in a slightly different manner to the Soviet bloc. For all practical purposes, this consensus is based on the concept of an alliance of the Freedom forces (including, originally, the Soviet Union) against the forces of Evil, crushed in 1945 with the collapse of Nazi Germany. The idea that Evil is on one side and Good on the other is an excellent device both for fairy tales and political myths.

It is then, for us, obvious that there shall be no understanding of our present period without a serious critique of its mythical or ideological roots which go deep into the World War II events. The basic requirement of such a critique is a careful sorting of the facts from their successive distorted representations. The French libertarian socialist Paul Rassinier has been a pioneer, though maybe no flawless, in this necessary work, and Faurisson, with his very materialistic approach, is continuing Rassinier. Old Mole people have been aware of this for the last 10 years. It is a fruitless effort to ascribe our political involvement to any circumstantial event, such as the grotesque adventures of Maoist tigers turned liberal sheep, or any "unresolved bitterness" about past colonial wars. What is unresolved is the problem of present-day colonial wars being waged today in El Salvador, Namibia, western Sahara, Lebanon, the Philippines, etc. Western planes and guns are terrorizing hundreds of millions of people across the continents right now. The very real atrocities of the Hitlerian regime pale into relative "normality" compared with the accumulated atrocities perpetrated since World War II by Western powers in their realm, even though this horrible record is largely matched by the Communist powers in their own sphere. Those who shout "nevermore" fall into a total self-delusion. The Nazis were just the precursors of our modernity. Anti-Nazism today is the flogging of a dead horse; the horse was crushed into pieces in 1945. It works as a screen, as a ritual religious celebration designed to mask and whitewash the deeply totalitarian trends of our so-called democracies.

All this is the framework of a number of activities of people more or less related to the Old Mole. The works of Faurisson intervened in this context as an attempt to confront myth and history. Whatever the final judgment passed on the value of Faurisson's work, he shall be credited with one particular merit: to have shown the necessity to concentrate on sheer facts. The whole official historiography, mainly based on pretrial evidences produced at Nuremberg, is being shaken. We have witnessed it before the French courts. The need of a really historical approach to those grim and unbearable realities will not be suppressed, on the contrary.

Mr. Berman and some others in America are kindly anxious to see the Old Mole escorted by strange allies from the American fascist groups. He does not seem to grasp the elementary fact that, because of totally different purposes, the similarities between these groups' ideas are purely superficial, fortuitous, and of no durable consequence. We have already expressed our total indifference to this kind of hazard. What we say has not the same *meaning* and

is not set in the same frame of action, and that is all. Rightist forces should be fought, and we take part in this fight. The really ambiguous position is the uncritical acceptance of the official version of what happened in Germany: side by side one finds Mr. Brezhnev, Mr. Reagan, Mr. Begin, Mr. Schmidt, Mr. Giscard, Mr. Mitterrand, a host of others, and also Mr. Berman. That does not seem to bother him. Does that mean he has an active solidarity with the above-mentioned politicians?

His great justification is the struggle against anti-Semitism, with his labeling of Faurisson as an anti-Semite. This is really a desperate argument. It might be proper for an Israeli official to amalgamate any anti-Zionist or simply critical view of Jewish or Israel politics as an act of anti-Semitism. But this kind of pervasive extension of the concept of anti-Semitism is harming any kind of political reflection and should not creep into a serious debate.

We have seen the same attempt to reduce the issue in France, both in the media and in the courts. But strangely enough, after some time, the argument is backfiring. The continual use of irrational and emotional arguments is gradually reinforcing Faurisson's image as a rationalist. I say this out of charity for Mr. Berman. The trials against Faurisson were widely accepted in 1979 but are now considered by many people in France as an embarrassment. Chomsky's clear-sighted defense of Faurisson's civil rights has now won a much wider audience there.

The mildest reproach which can be addressed to Mr. Berman is his total ignorance of the most basic facts I repeat, facts related to the actual Nazi policy of persecution of the European Jews (a policy which brought about the death of millions of them). It is a mild reproach because this ignorance is shared by most contemporaries, and most writers on the subject. His attack about the Kremer *Journal* is plain evidence of this. Mr. Berman's readers should be cautioned: they never had the chance to glimpse into Faurisson's actual arguments, nor into the general reasons for looking into this matter I exposed in a book published in Paris by la Vieille Taupe.

Mr. Berman had hammered the point home. The following week, the *Voice* raised the ante with a feature article entitled: "Anti-Semitism and the Crime of Silence." The title in itself is already incredible, but the content of the article is even more so. The writer, Jack Newfield ("*I am Jewish and I have a healthy amount of ethnic pride*") castigates himself and his colleagues because, really, there is not enough concern for the Jew and about anti-Semitism, which is on the rise in all countries. "The *Voice* has been a vigilant watchdog on abortion, civil liberties, and militarism, but the rights of the Jews have been a secondary concern. Jewish nationalism has been treated differently from every other nationalism." (72) He attacks one of his colleagues, Alexander Cockburn, whom he accuses of support for the PLO and contempt for Israel, then he empties his drawers of press clippings that he had accumulated, mixing more or less insignificant anecdotes and serious political problems ("Iran, Khomeini"), without forgetting the Timerman affair in Argentina and the book by Faurisson, whom he describes as "insane and antisemitic." Newfield is frightened to realize that a small part of the American left slowly became "indifferent on the subject of Israel's existence."

The two articles sparked off a lively polemic (July 1-7) joined by Alexander Cockburn, Noam Chomsky, Berman, Newfield, Richard Falk, W. Kunstler and a few others. But one had the strange impression of going in circles because, after all, the wall of American political taboos was not undermined. It is still impossible to write in the American press an article dealing with the real problem of the role of guilt in the attitude of the American left vis-à-vis Jewish nationalism and Israel; irrespective of whether this guilt is true, false, manufactured, or fostered. Newfield and his ilk can say anything, attack all those who don't follow Begin's heel, and these people will protest, defend and justify themselves instead of trying to burst this balloon that terrorizes them.

I found a symptomatic example of a New York radio station which, having taped a conversation with me, was not able to broadcast it without adding to it a whole bevy of comment as contradictory as possible with mine and after several attempts, it could not find anybody who would simply dare to come and contradict me. Even this was too much. A few weeks later, I saw one of the editorial staff members who came to Paris to find opponents to face me. I suggested Vidal-Naquet: "His English is not so good, but that's not the worst." What a time! What a pity!

We had the right too, to publish a long article in an excellent German magazine, *Transatlantik* (July 1981). A young, very pleasant German writer, had come to Paris to find documentation and meet with several protagonists. He wrote a very hostile article entitled: "The Auschwitz Launderers," to which I had to give the following response:

## THE LAUNDERER AND HIS SHADOWS

The text of Lothar Baier, "Die Weisswäscher von Auschwitz" calls for some comments, mainly because of its tone. He almost always uses cheap irony and mockery, which denotes, I think, an unease and an incapacity to go to the fundamental problems. I say this the more freely that I was generally well treated in his article, and that I am not personally the object of more or less malicious insinuations.

It is impossible to enter in a few pages into a complete discussion of all the points that were brought up in this article. For example, in order to really grasp the meaning of Rassinier's account on the life and organization of the concentration camps during the Nazi era, we would have to conduct a complete analysis of their internal functioning and compare it with what he says and what other writers say about it. What transpires in Baier's reactions in this domain is mainly the very superficial aspect of his knowledge on this subject. I have to say that after my first reading of Rassinier over ten years ago, I too was surprised and often incredulous. Nonetheless, instead of engaging in denial and cheap irony, I went to consult a good many former deportees among my friends.

They belonged to my parents' generation and had mostly been connected with the political organization in the camps, either as communists, who were the dominant power, or Christians or progressives, to whom the communists "extended a hand," according to the political expression at the time. These

conversations convinced me of the validity of Rassinier's affirmations. I would not say that he was right in all the details, but he had the courage and the merit to put his finger on a question which seems to me essential to understanding the phenomenon of concentration camps: the collusion of an organized political party the communists of the prisoners with the local representatives of the repressive apparatus of the State. This truth is beginning to come to light in the concentration camps literature (73). It is illustrated in an exemplary detailed book, *Die Männer mit dem rosa Winkel*, Merlin Verlag, 1972, by Heinz Heger, one of those who was subjected to the maximum oppression. Heger survived because he was *Kapo*; he explains this very well. Rassinier survived because he found a privileged situation. It is known because he tells it himself. Why does Baier pretend that Rassinier "visibly concealed" this fact?

The article contains many little inaccuracies, which are not very important unless they are used as underlying reasoning. Baier says that the president of the University of Lyon, where Faurisson teaches "would have guaranteed his security." The exact opposite happened. The president basically said that the university lacked the material means to guarantee his security. And every week, for months, a Zionist commando waited for Faurisson at the time of his lecture, which he gave, in fact, hiding in a cafe. The university did nothing to put an end to this situation; it even preferred to close its eyes to the fact that Faurisson was physically absent for six months.

I even wondered if Baier really knew how to read. He quotes p. 20, Faurisson which refers to p. 188 of my book, "propos de table de Hitler." Then Baier adds: "I don't know which clandestine version of *Propos de table* Faurisson had, but in meine (Seewald, Stuttgart, 1976), I read this (p. 456)." And he quotes Hitler's comments. If Baier knew how to read, he would have referred to footnote 44 of the French book which gives this sentence in German and indicates as source the not so clandestine edition of 1963, p. 471. This sentence is word for word the same, except that in the Baier version we read *Juden*, and in the Faurisson version *Drecksjuden* (shit Jews). Error in Baier's transcription? Censorship of his edition of 1976? I don't know, but imagine the blame that would have been inflicted upon Faurisson if he had toned down Hitler's comments... In any case, when Baier says "it's a weak performance for a professor of literature," he shows that he has a lot to do before he hopes to be able to qualify for such a title.

I wonder, too, how far can Baier's ability to reason go, carried as he is by the desire to denigrate. He wants to prove that Hitler gave the order to exterminate the Jews, which Faurisson contests. Historians agree that there does not exist a document to this effect, but Lothar Baier wants to solve the question with the help of private comments of Hitler. This may be a good method. He quotes two sentences which express the idea that Judaism must be exterminated. *Ausrotten* may also be translated into French by "extirper": eradicate. I will not play on words, with the memory that at the time of the wars of religion in France, those who wanted to *eradicate heresy* did not hesitate to have recourse to violence and massacres. In the third sentence, Hitler says that he gave the order to exterminate "all those who belong to the Polish speaking race" (p. 21).

If comments of this kind are a proof of the order to exterminate the Jews, they are a clearer and more overwhelming proof of the genocide of Poles, for he says that he has already given the order of extermination.

I am one of those who believe that Slavs, Poles, Russians, Balts and Yugoslavs paid a much heavier toll in hard figures than the Jews, to Nazi atrocities. But apart from Warsaw politicians, and maybe Mr. Baier, nobody believes that there was a project to liquidate the twenty or thirty million Poles. And yet, despite the countless atrocities and heavy losses in human life, they never talked about liquidation.

Baier's reasoning is therefore absolutely absurd and he sets it off against Faurisson only because his desire to contradict the latter is stronger than his means to do it. This is the case of many adversaries of Faurisson, and this is what renders reflection on this affair so difficult and so cluttered with minor quarrels resulting from bad faith.

I also wondered whether it is right for Mr. Baier to talk about what he does not know. Concerning the controversy about the meaning of the word *Vergasung* in a technical description, he thinks it smart "to recommend to Faurisson, the carburation specialist, to quickly patent the discovery of this cremation furnace which is fired up by a carburator and yet does not explode" (p. 21). This would earn him a certificate of ignorance. If he had inquired, he would have found out that a cremation furnace burns gas, that this gas came in these old devices of coal and gas chambers, that it has to be mixed with air so that it can do its job and burn the bodies and that this mixture is called carburation. I got this information from the head of one of those rare French firms that build crematoria. This expert saw no need for a room called *Vergasungskeller* on the map of the Auschwitz crematorium, for the gas was supplied through pipes. If I had already said that Faurisson's arguments are serious and that they have to be addressed, I have to admit that I see Lothar Baier's skillful evasions as no better than Nadine Fresco's jokes in *Les Temps Modernes* (74). And as he admits himself: "I did not bother to examine the details," concerning the analysis of the *Journal* of Anne Frank, Baier thinks that Faurisson copies others. . . . This is absolutely ridiculous because this analysis is precisely the part of Faurisson's work which is accepted by his most determined adversaries. And why doesn't Mr. Baier want to run the risk to say that Faurisson is right at least on some points? It even happens to the most cautious minds to admit as much,

I don't believe that Faurisson is right on everything. I believe that he is totally wrong in saying that there was no policy aimed at more or less exterminating the Jews. I believe that there is no doubt about the fact that several million Jews perished as a result of discrimination, deportation, concentration camps and cold-blooded massacres. I don't know if gassing was part of the means used to kill people and I don't know if this question could some day be worked out and definitively clarified. But never mind, what counts is the effort that has to be made in order to understand all the facts, no matter how complex and sometimes contradictory, about this savage period. We are its heirs, it leaves its mark on us and we understand it quite badly because of all the tall stories

circulated by people interested in justifying the more or less shady role they played in this period. When Lothar Baier came to see me, we realized in our discussion to what point all these questions on life during the period of 1930-40 have been obscured, especially in Germany. I traveled a lot in Germany during my adolescent years, and this absence of historical memory, this black and empty past of a German friend of my age, has often shocked me. It is absolutely unavoidable that a new generation of Germans would want to lift the taboos to recover this past. I don't know when and how this will come about, and maybe it's still too early. But I am not sure that the best thing intellectuals can do would be to stick to the taboos and oppose all critical curiosity and reassessment. As a group, I know very well that their social function is to sing the praises to the State, but as individuals, they can suppress the questioning only by methods as questionable as those of this article (75).

For example, what does Baier mean when he blames me for citing in a bibliography a booklet by Thies Christophersen? Would I lose credibility in cataloging the different works about the subject I am dealing with? I have never used Christophersen's booklet in my text or my reasoning because it has no information about what I am interested in. He says that in a small rural annex of Auschwitz, life was rather good. This may well be possible, but it has nothing to do with what happened in Birkenau. It is Baier who gives Christophersen a fictitious importance because he makes him "one of the basic pillars of the Faurisson construction." This is simply absurd. I am surprised by the use of such procedures.

I conclude with some more general consideration, and also a response to Baier's caricature of La Vieille Taupe and of people close to it. We are a few individuals who think that anti-fascism is a screen which serves to hide the very real atrocities that the Western democracies continue to inflict throughout the world on those who wish to escape their costly concern. A Nazi fascist danger in Europe? It died in 45. Frankly, this is not serious. This fierce struggle against ectoplasms we have to understand its aims: it serves to facilitate the setting up of systems of domination that are more subtle, more modern and efficient, and hence less bloody than the archaic Nazi methods. A painless, colorless, invisible and internalized domination. The dictatorship of the market, and no longer that of the bloody puppet.

Céline, who is undoubtedly well known to Mr. Baier, said in his *Hommage à Zola* in 1933:

"We have reached our goal of twenty centuries of high civilization, yet no regime would be able to withstand two months of truth. I mean Marxist society as well as our bourgeois and fascist societies. In fact, man can't persist in any of these totally brutal and masochistic social forms without the assault of a permanent lie, more and more massive, repeated, frenetic, 'totalitarian,' as it is called.

"Deprived of this constraint, our societies would collapse in the worst anarchy. Hitler is not the last word, we will see more epileptic still,

maybe here. Whether or not he wants it, naturalism becomes political. Destruction. Happy are those governed by the horse of Caligula" (76).

This text having reached *Transatlantik* several months after the publication of Baier's, the editors decided not to publish it. The press has always excellent reasons for not publishing responses to the attacks it launches, and these reasons are always different. So it has not lost its originality.

## THE LITIGANTS

The trials began the end of May 1981. They were preceded by an affair as ridiculous as it is demonstrative of the climate of intolerance surrounding this affair. When Faurisson was on *Europe No. 1* to answer the slanders heaped on him by Ivan Levaï, he said that one of his lawyers, Me. Yvon Chotard, was a member of MRAP, an anti-racist organization generally considered close to the PCF. But MRAP was part of the cartel that was suing Faurisson. It could not leave to its main rival, LICRA, an affair so rich in potential advertising. The revelation of this grotesque secret deeply shocked the MRAPists who in a highly intelligent gesture expelled Chotard, despite the opposition of his local group. This decision gave rise to many protests, soon anesthetized by multiple soporific justifications issued by the generally boring Albert Lévy.

The first trial was only a prologue, as in a good play. Léon Poliakov felt slandered by a note of *Mémoire en défense* (p. 119) which calls him "manipulator" and "text manufacturer" in connection with different versions of the famous or rather fuzzy Gerstein document (77). Poliakov's lawyers were precisely those who would appear in the succeeding trials. It was apparent that everything was coordinated and that their strategy consisted in quickly obtaining a condemnation of Faurisson for defamation so as to approach the big trial from a favorable position. This maneuver barely failed. Finally, there was little talk about the main plaintiff. Poliakov did not show much enthusiasm. He didn't remember very well this story of the document. He was satisfied with his conscience and his reputation. He was right because the court ruling said that Poliakov could have committed errors, even "faulty" errors, according to the wonderful understatement of his little friend, Vidal-Naquet, and even, at times, "infringed on scientific rigor." But all this did not prevent the court from sentencing Faurisson.

It would be too long and fastidious to relate all the speeches, those of witnesses (78), or those of dozens of lawyers who did their best to knock down the dragon. The incredible machine set in motion by this powerful group of lawyers tens of kilos of documents, missions to Warsaw and to Tel Aviv did not bring much grain to the millstone of justice. The most reliable effects were of rather sentimental order. The audience was rather stunned, having been crammed with members of the litigant associations, who came without really knowing what it was all about. The press was heavily present with a good number of foreign correspondents. Vidal-Naquet would catch them on their way to tell them "Faurisson is a rat, just a rat." It was grotesque, some were trying to refurbish the old theme of racial hatreds, others were amused, unable to take seriously all this farce. The outcome was known in advance. There was

no real debate. The judges had the heads of judges, the lawyers were good, they all played the little roles they assigned to themselves in the range of human passions. Unquestionably, the best was Me Badinter with his beautiful voice of bronze, a fine product of an old tradition of eloquence, very similar in its noble style to that of the Comédie Française.

Obviously, some might think that this must be his last plea, since having waged attacks against Faurisson for two years, he was appointed minister of justice during the period separating the court debates and the verdict. Of course, this had no effect on the court decision, but had something to do with the amnesty law traditionally voted on at the start of each seven year mandate, which specifically excluded the charges for which Faurisson was dragged to court. I later heard Badinter say on the radio that he never makes an important decision without prior discussion with rabbis. He did not want this meanness to spoil his own work.

I tried to summarize some lessons of these trials in an article, a shortened version of which was published by *Le Monde* (79). Here is it in its entirety:

## A REVEALING VERDICT

After the sentencing of Faurisson in a criminal court and before the decision of the civil court on what can only be characterized as *délit d'opinion* (expression of opinion contrary to that of the ruling party), it may be useful to pose some questions. The stakes were high for LICRA, the plaintiff and its associates. Me. Badinter said that it was a taboo, the last taboo that protects Jews against the return of practices that led to their extermination. That is undoubtedly the crux of the matter. It is important to understand the anxiety of those who believe that they can only be protected by a taboo whose magic effect is on the decline. The naked emperor is always afraid of the naive look, which simply ignores the taboo and sparks off the descent to reality.

I am one of those who have contributed to the introduction of Faurisson's arguments and proposed that they be submitted to debate and criticism. I am still surprised that LICRA has not dared to hound me. It's probable that for the debate to remain in the realm of justice, it has to be Manichean: on the one side, the enemies of antisemitism, on the other the miserable Faurisson and his provocative sentences. The game was playable, and even easy to play with the usual tools of the courtroom. But it is absolutely impossible to pretend that the people at La Vieille Taupe can be suspected of antisemitism. And if it becomes necessary to respond to what they have to say on this affair, Manichaeism can no longer be relied upon.

The verdict is very disturbing for those who have followed this affair from the beginning. I leave the question of freedom of opinion in this country to its habitual defenders, noting simply that a good part of them took the side of calls for repression. This is how liberalism usually works, when it is based on abstraction. The real question is to know what *effectively* protects the Jews, that is, if they can feel at all threatened in our society today. To the secular or religious proponents of regarding a taboo as sacred, to all those who have a tendency to successively lump Jewish individuals *volens nolens* with a

mysterious "Jewish community," then Jewish fate with Zionism, Zionism with Israel, and Israel with the politics of Mr. Begin, to all those I say that they are in bed with an antisemitism whose face we don't yet know because they practice exactly what the butchers of Jews have always needed: cut out the Jews, first mentally, from the rest of humankind, make them stand apart, as bearers of this or that, enjoying a kind of extra-historical privilege due to their real or past suffering. It could be considered whether or not the Holocaust (a religious term of very recent use) merits a reflection. But the use of the Holocaust by ideologues, political groups, states, partisan leagues and organizations that pretend to be anti-racist when they count among their ranks eulogists of apartheid, this may be questionable. Also questionable is the military assistance of Israel to South Africa. It's the good old politics with all its accessories of lies and corruption. It's well known that in politics, the dead are used to fatten the living. Otherwise, there wouldn't be monuments "to the dead." And in the use of the Holocaust for political ends, the main instrument is the lever of guilt.

So, if we are to believe Faurisson, the guilt will disappear, or at least diminish. But with or without Faurisson, it will evaporate anyway, for a thousand reasons which have to do with social functioning and the passage of time. Hence the attempt to firmly reimplant this guilt, just as well in the Jews, who lack the dubious merit of having been victims, as in the non-Jews, who are joyfully ranked in the assassins' camp. Alas! To defend a taboo is to admit that it has already disappeared. Ask anthropologists if a society which functions with a set of taboos can even conceive of defending them!

For us, the *only* answer to antisemitism is to treat Jews exactly like everybody else, to refuse to create a gap between them and others, to topple the barriers that racists of all kinds and Zionists want to confine them to. The history of the Jews and the tragedy that befell them have no meaning except when merged with the history and tragedy of all the people at that time. To protect the Jews as such, is to point them out. But to want to protect them against a professor and his ideas, is also to put them in an absurdly embarrassing situation. We know that some have protested.

From the start, this affair has to do with reasons of the state. We had a thousand witnesses for almost three years. But the most spectacular show was performed by the chief of the group of passionate lawyers against Faurisson, accumulating trial after trial, shedding his gown during a period of deliberation to pass from the bar to the Justice ministry. All in all, he moved from one seat to the other except the dock. . . . Time was running out, nevertheless he was able to change the prosecutor and see to it that the amnesty proposed by the government not apply to the very rare case of Faurisson. This is total humanism. I don't believe that the Giscard regime would have acted differently. This marvelous contiguity shows that the imaginary fate of the Jews has to do with state religion. This is what this trial has revealed, and this is what is most disturbing when we think of what modern states are capable of.

The real surprise came with the fines and publication costs of legal judgments in the press that the professor was sentenced to pay. Because the judgments were very long, and the time to read them on radio or television was charged at the advertising rate, the total sum came to three million francs, the salary of some thirty years, maybe. . . . Freedom of expression is very beautiful, but one has to be rich. An appeal was filed.

At a moment during the trial, suffocated by all these tricks, I scribbled these lines in the audience chamber:

Trial ritualization of the prevention of speech and of dialogue. The lawyers can say absolutely anything and they do.

The history of the gas chambers revolves entirely around the idea of a unique thing in history, of the Nazi specificity as a reflection of Jewish specificity. Badinter frankly admits that this is a taboo, and that the importance of this taboo comes from the fact that it is the lock, the barrier that would prevent the return, the repetition of the big massacre. This is obviously a hallucination. But we can go further. If we accept the gas chambers, accept all, accept even the most fabricated testimonies, even the questionable figures; in the end, there is no more mystery, no real specificity, there is no barrier between humanity and inhumanity. If, as Wellers says in his book, 80% of the convoys were gassed and in the camps, 80% of the prisoners perished, we see that the result is the same, that the fundamental point is that inhumanity is a part of humanity, and that the myth of Nazi specificity hides the fact that we are absolutely capable of doing the same thing. Look at Israel and the Arabs. I will no longer discuss the gas chambers because, after all, the discussion is no more interesting than that of knowing whether the Germans knew and used at that time and in those places, the machine gun or the grenade. This subparagraph of the history of deadly techniques has been inflated for ideological reasons, that we simply have to point out.

(July, 1981)

Sometimes one is suddenly possessed by the sensation of walking in a polar night, on a floe of frozen ideas, and all that remains are a few match sticks to see clearly and melt this sacred floe. On second thought, it may be better to sit back, try not to freeze to death and await the collapse.

(January, 1982)

## ENDNOTES

1. See the testimony of Bartolomé de Las Casas, *Très brève relation de la destruction des Indes*. In 1552, he estimates the number of those massacred in America at between 12 and 15 million.

2. *Le Monde*, November 3, 1979. For regular news, see *Timor Informations*, BP 59-7S921 Paris cedex 19 et *Tapol*, published in London.

3. See, for example, "De l'holocauste à *Holocauste* ou comment s'en débarrasser," *Les Temps Modernes*, June, 1979. He gives vent to his bitterness against the American television film, because he has been preparing for many years a film on the same subject. It's rather amusing to find this phrase on the subject of gas chambers: "None of those who entered them have come back to testify before us." This was obviously before he dug up the rare bird, the incredible Filip Muller, about whom we will talk later.

4. "Entretiens avec Benny Lévy," published in 1980 in *Le Nouvel Observateur*.

5. Cf. "L'Avenir du Sud-Ouest africain" April 1966, dedicated to what is called today Namibia; "Sur le Pourtour de l'Indonésie," October 1976.

6. "Despote à Vendre," Special issue, "Indochine: Guerre des socialismes, mort des peuples," No. 402, January 1980, pp. 1254-1268. See in the same issue "L'Ingratitude des crocodiles," pp. 1283-1323.

7. There exists an excellent study on this subject by the Australian researcher, Grant Evans: *The Yellow Rainmakers*, published in London in 1984.

8. I have to honestly say that I borrowed this proverb from Hubert Coppenrath and Paul Prévost. *Grammaire approfondie de la langue tahitienne (ancienne et moderne)*, p. 170.

9. For example, this little thing written in collaboration with the funny Baynac "Comment s'en débarrasser" (*Le Monde*, June 18, 1987), where he asks the serious question: "How come their ideas (the revisionists) are spreading rather well in French society?" Hackneyed reply: obviously anti-semitism. But, as I have always thought, this question works like a psychoanalytic operator. Fresco's subconscious writes: "When the dead Jews are in the millions, they sometimes become more troublesome than when they were alive." This troublesomeness makes the mourning job very difficult and provokes a symbolic hyper-investment, a real myth-building out of tragic events. See also "Parcours du ressentiment," which is literally and intellectually of the "Police Report" genre, in *Lignes*, no. 2, 1988, pp. 29-72.

10. *L'Homme*, no. 17, 2-3; no. 18, 1-2; no. 20, 4.

11. Lucien Bodard, *La Guerre d'Indochine*, five volumes, Gallimard, 1963-1967, reprinted in Folio.

12. P. Joffroy, *Kurt Gerstein, l'espion de Dieu*, p. 153. [We have to mention that there exists today an exhaustive work on the texts of Gerstein, who, too, was a "troubled head" ("agit  du bocal"). Recall the explosion of denunciations of Henri Roques on the occasion of his defense of his thesis on Gerstein's texts at Nantes University. It was revoked by Alain Devaquet, minister of Research at the time. He had me expelled *manu militari* on July 2, 1986 just before the press conference where this iniquitous decision was announced. Iniquitous and unique, because if the same legal rigor were applied to all the theses defended in France, a third to a half of them would be revoked for a technicality. The most revealing aspect was the concert of clamor at that time. No copy of Roques's thesis had yet circulated. Only La Vieille Taupe had some copies and it let it be known. Of all the French press, there was only one American journalists. The French press printed realms about it, *without ever reading a line* of this reputedly scandalous thesis. A so-called "jury" including even Harlem D sir, came out of nowhere to excommunicate. A few months later, the complete text was published by a rightist editor. See further the bibliography and "L'affaire de la th se de Nantes," *Annales d'histoire r visionniste*, no. 1, 1987, pp. 165-180; Henri Roques, "De l'affaire Gerstein a l'affaire Roques," *Annales d'histoire r visionniste*, no. 3, 1987, pp. 103-125.]

13. At the time of this writing, a brochure by Dionys Mascolo entitled *Autour d'un effort de m moire – Sur une lettre de Robert Antelme*, 1987, 95 pp. It is one of the finest, most profound reflections that was ever done on the transition from a concentration camp to life after the camp. Antelme's letter of June, 1945, and the "efforts" of Mascolo are the painful requirements of an incredible intellectual probity. Antelme's book, *L'Esp ce humaine*, is by far the best book on life in the camps. This is known and said, but the book is not read much because, in today's world, his central intuition that victims and victimizers belong to the same species, has progressively become inadmissible.

Careful and uncompromising, Mascolo tries to figure out what the return from hell to humanity produces in speech displacement. He is not at all suspected of a "reversionism" despicably sought by Antoine Spire on France-Culture (March 5, 1988). For a man who weighs his words, his use of some bad language is probably based on hearsay. Never mind. Everybody should read his little book, especially those who think that memory can be turned on like a machine.

Mascolo said this about testimony: "As far as I am concerned: significant events - namely, historical or capable of modifying a vision - that I lived in common with others, *I know absolutely of no testimony that does not include more or less seriously false testimony: this is the shared experience* [my underline] but does this ever cast enough suspicion on what we are told really happened? This is not even an error or a lie. Prompted by the logic of the narration about the miseries of *post hoc propter hoc*, the possible, the likely and the probable fill in the gaps of what was not seen, was not known or was forgotten") p. 28).

This is not a pebble, it is a rock in the garden of Vidal-Naquet and other merchants of memory.

14. *Le documensonge de la semaine. Quelques commentaires sur une récente ignominie du "Nouvel Observateur,"* 1980, 19 pp.
15. "Le Cambodge, la presse et ses bêtes noires," *Esprit*, September 1980, pp. 95-111.
16. I was able to sneak some articles here and there, for example, in *Le Monde* of September 16, and November 28, 1975, April 14, 1976, etc.
17. Became Health Minister in the Rocard cabinet in 1988.
18. "Petite hystérie" was the title of a brief article that pointed to Evin's article in the once leftist *Libération* of August 21, 1980: "It's safe to say that Serge Thion is making a serious mistake and that he is defending an unworthy cause. This does not give grounds for doubting his unselfishness or attributing to him opinions completely opposite to those he holds."
19. "Africa: War and Revolution," *Dissent*, New York, Spring 1979.
20. After all, we have to mention Raul Hilberg. Nobody in France considered publishing his huge tome, *The Destruction of the European Jews*, whose first edition goes back to 1961. It's obviously the Faurisson affair which provoked its publication in French in 1988. In an interview with *Le Nouvel Observateur* during the first big anti-revisionist colloquium in Paris, Hilberg admitted that the questions posed by revisionists were an incentive for research. It became clear later that either he did not do any research or he did not find good answers. Either in the new version of his book, or during his performance in the film *Shoah*, or still in the Toronto trial, his statements are shallow, vague and frivolous. In Toronto, he was so torn to pieces by Zundel's defense that he refused to appear in the appeals trial. His weakness is due to the fact that his historical documentation is limited to selections assembled for the Nuremberg trial and of which, in the beginning, he was a simple archivist.
21. Pierre Vidal-Naquet, "Un Eichmann de papier," reproduced with some changes in his book, *Les Juifs, la mémoire et le présent*, Maspero, 1981. Also translated and shortened in a New York magazine, *Democracy*, 1981.
22. G. Wellers, *Les Chambres à gaz ont existé*, Gallimard, 1981, 279 pp.
23. G. Wellers finally discredited himself by publishing in no. 107 of *Le Monde juif* in 1982 an article by Jean-Claude Pressac, a nostalgic for Hitler, who came to see Professor Faurisson before developing by himself the thesis called "gassing," which concedes that the official version of massive gassings does not withstand the test, but he catches himself up by saying that the Germans have done a little gassing in Auschwitz and elsewhere, all this at the price of skillful evasions to the discredit of the author and the magazine which published him. According to *The New York Times* of December 18, 1989, Pressac is connected to the Klarsfeld clan where Wellers counts for less than nothing. (See how Wellers shot Klarsfeld down in *Zero*, May 1987, pp. 72-73.) Pressac's book called *Auschwitz: Technique and Operation of the Gas Chambers*, 563 pp. was published by Klarsfeld (?) in New York. It seems to be an outgrowth of his article of *Le Monde juif* (no. 107, July-September, 1982, pp. 91-131). This book, that rumor built as a marvel of marvels, because it finally gave 37

proofs of the existence of gas chambers, does not seem to have been really distributed. Recall that R. Faurisson called Pressac's thesis "idiotic."

I would conclude by adding that M. Wellers is rude. He never thanked me for giving him aerial photos of Auschwitz, published by the CIA, that I had brought from Washington and that he published with inept commentary in *Le Monde juif*.

24. It even appears in the promotion campaign in 1989 of a new version of *Journaux* of Anne Frank. In his multiple appearances in the media, he fails to say that he had agreed with Faurisson that the *Journal* of Anne Frank was a text that was "tampered with." According to him, today's publication of the originals (???) would be the proof that Faurisson was wrong! Nauseating dishonesty! Vidal-Naquet won't stop at anything. To justify his presence in an affair in which he has no competence, he pleads his age. He was born the same year as Anne Frank. Irrefutable argument. . . . He is capable of anything, even signing petitions of support for the little Iranian Stalin, Massoud Radjavi (cf. *Le Monde*, July 10, 1985).

25. [Things have changed. The "pale power" has not changed hands yet but blood is shed, so the press talks about it. Blood drips from the pens of these hacks.]

26. See Christian Duverger, *La Fleur létale*, Le Seuil, 1979.

27. This is sorely needed in view of the fact that there are still some infected minds who dare to write things like this: "Today, as far as we know, cannibalism is still practiced in certain tribes of the Oubangui (Africa) with a connotation of gluttony, as well as in the islands of Salomon (Melanesia), Martinique (New Guinea), Fiji, in New Zealand, Sumatra, etc." This information dates back a good century, to a time when it was no longer happening, if it had ever happened. Not to talk about the Marquise Islands, a French territory, 6 or 7000 km from New Guinea. All this is so far. . . . But it is written by Henri Fesquet in *Le Monde* (June 21-22, 1980), and he adds: "In Cambodia and in Vietnam, if we are to believe Jacques Attali (in *L'ordre cannibale*), women are aborted in the seventh month of pregnancy so that the fetus is given to senior officers to eat."

Apparently, nobody was shocked by such outrageous things. Yet, when I was in Vietnam, I tried to find the fire behind Attali's little smoke. Traditional medicine attributes great value to a certain preparation of human placenta, recovered post partum, and there is a traffic of placenta in some big maternities of Hanoi and Saigon. Hence the assumption that it was reserved for senior officers and, worse yet, that abortion was induced in order to eat the fetus. This is a big jump in mythological invention taken lightly by the presidential advisor. We have to worry about the advice he gives our prince. . . . I would add to this gloomy history of placenta that traditional medicine may not have been completely wrong because today, the big pharmaceutical industry buys the placenta by the kilo to extract from it the precious immunoglobulins. Rhone-Poulenc had made some offers to Vietnam in this direction. But the project was postponed due to problems of uninterrupted refrigeration.

We see what books like that of Arens are up against: mountains of ignorance and stupid prejudice dating back to the colonial era. We see too that those books are

almost always subject to annoying attacks by Parisian ideologues a la Vidal-Naquet: the more they don't know, the more they talk.

28. Wellers, *op. cit.*, pp. 211-219. Cf. Vidal-Naquet, in *Esprit*, p. 28.

29. [See Monteil's reply to Vidal-Naquet in *Revue d'histoire révisionniste*, no. 3, 1990-91.]

30. S. Thion and B. Kiernan, *Khmers rouges! Matériaux pour une histoire du mouvement communiste au Cambodge*, Albin Michel, 1981, p. 35. To these considerations, I would like to add a note published by La Vieille Taupe at the time of the big trials: The word "Holocaust," referring to the fate of the Jews during WW II, dates from the 70's. The word itself and the representation it carries was imposed through the media by the film of the same name.

The word "genocide" seems to have been created in 1942 by the Zionist militant Rafael Lemkin, with the specific aim of semantically differentiating the fate of the Jews from the massacres of other peoples during the war. This word remained confined to limited but ideologically very productive circles. It emigrated slowly in the fifties and did not accede to the status of universally accepted representation until the 60's.

On both the level of "Nazi" intentions and the specificity of the process, these words impose an ideological content which by becoming generalized and encrusted in the social language, becomes unconscious of its origins and especially of the ideological character of the meaning it imposes.

The history of these representations clearly shows that first and foremost, they are the result of the ideological needs of those who produced them and that they are very loosely related to the experience and the memory of the deportees and that whenever it is based on documents, they are selected and interpreted with an apologetic and moralizing aim in sight. The overwhelming majority of witnesses and of surviving victims retreated into silence. "Memory" has been monopolized by a very small minority of chatterboxes who owe their large audience less to the quality or even the reality of their memory than to the social demand of their literary production.

The word "genocide" has a precise ideological content. To deny the "genocide" does not mean to deny the indisputable reality of the persecution of the Jews, of their mass deportation and the death of a large number of them under conditions that historical research can unveil now." (June 25, 1981)

[Concerning Cambodia, I took up the question in a conference given in the context of a "Symposium Rafael Lemkin" at Yale University in February 1992. This communication entitled "Genocide as a Political Commodity" was published in the U.S. in *Genocide and Democracy in Cambodia: The Khmer Rouge, the UN and the International Community*, Yale University, Chapter 4.]

31. [Such a statement today would bring him a possible charge of "contesting crimes condemned at Nuremberg."]

32. Dan Sperber, *Le Symbolisme en général*, Hermann, 1974.

33. Cf. his article in *Esprit*, p. 28.

34. See Wellers, *op. cit.*, pp. 205-8.

35. [Since this writing in 1982, the rational and material proof that massive gassings in Auschwitz morgues could not have taken place has been given in the Toronto trial by an American specialist in the construction of gas chambers. This important text was published in French in *Annales d'histoire révisionniste*, no. 5, 1988: Fred Leuchter, "Rapport technique sur les présumées chambres à gaz homicides," pp. 51-102. To me, the crucial point of Leuchter's analysis is to have conducted his analysis on samples on the spot. His method is repeatable and opens the field to all counter expert analyses.]

36. "Evidence in Human History," *Psyche Annual*, 1933, appeared as Chapter 1 in *Kings and Councillors*.

37. *Times Literary Supplement*, January 25, 1980.

38. *Op. cit.*, pp. 101-2.

39. [Note of 1993: For me, and if I understand well the noises coming from Arolsen and Yad Vashem in Israel, I would not be surprised to learn one day, that if serious studies are conducted, the real figures will be around half the symbolic figures.]

40. See Michael Balfour, *Propaganda in War, 1939-1945*, 1975. It comes out that compared to the British, the Germans were children. Toward the end of the war, all of Germany listened to the B.B.C.

41. On the subject of hopes raised in certain Zionist circles by the advent of dictatorships between the two wars, and the ensuing ambiguities, see the very rich file of Lenni Brenner, *Zionism in the Age of Dictators*.

42. Arthur R. Butz, *The Hoax of the Twentieth Century, the Case Against the Presumed Extermination of European Jewry*, First edition, 1976. Walter Laqueur, *The Terrible Secret*, 1980.

43. [The fact of transforming Auschwitz into a "museum" seems to many people infinitely more shocking than the discrete move of some Carmelite nuns into a disused building. Yet it is unquestionable that the process of "museumification" has led to many changes and transformations of the site. The construction work lasted several years and was never clearly justified. It now serves as an international reference point.

The Vietnamese "experts" who converted, in 1979, the old Cambodian school which became, under Pol Pot, a center of interrogation, torture and executions, known by the name Tuol Sleng, had been trained in Poland. Tuol Sleng underwent several modifications after 1979. A museum is a representation and hence must evolve with

time according to the needs that the representation must satisfy. A museum is underway in Treblinka, others, too, maybe in Poland.

We learned, towards the beginning of 1993, that following German reunification, the authorities proceeded to "renovate" the camp of Buchenwald, which was in the East. The new presentation insists on the fact that the Soviets have reused the camp since 1945. We would wish that such concern for historical objectivity extend to the camps that were reopened by the Americans.]

44. *Les Techniciens de la mort*, Second Edition, 1979, pp. 184-89.

45. Reuben Ainsztein, in his bibliography of *The Warsaw Ghetto Revolt*, New York, Holocaust Library, 1979, calls this edition "edited and inadequate version." He refers the reader to *Ksavim fun Geto*, Warsaw 1962-3. But things become complicated. Vidal-Naquet says that Faurisson approves of a certain historian at a certain moment and disapproves of him at another (nothing surprising in this, but then . . . .) This historian is Michel Borwicz who denounces, in a passage approved by Faurisson and also by Vidal-Naquet, the manufacturing of fake children's diaries by the Jewish Historical Institute in Warsaw. It is precisely this institute which published the Ringelblum notes. Here Vidal-Naquet showers with praise Polish historians, among whom, we presume, are those of the above mentioned institute.

The series of contradictions of our scourge of revisionism seems to be endless. The way to get out of it would be to study the texts and the documents one by one seriously and completely. But such a method would have a Faurissonian whiff about it. Vidal-Naquet has neither the time nor the means to do such work. He prefers to operate with confidence accepting a document here (Hoess, for example) and rejecting another there (Broad, for example) without any precise reason, just like that, for his convenience. And then, he gives lessons on method.

46. On Hoess' confessions, see Robert Faurisson "Comment les Britanniques ont obtenu les aveux de Rudolf Hoess. Commandant d'Auschwitz," *Annales d'histoire révisionniste*, no. 1, 1987.

47. Klett Verlag, Stuttgart, 1967, p. 969.

48. See the book of the general's labor lawyer, Sir Reginald Paget, *Manstein, his campaigns and his trial*.

49. *Les Hommes au triangle rose*, 1981.

50. I am not making this up. See his article in *Esprit*, p. 31.

51. *Esprit*, p. 33.

52. Reprinted in a small extreme left magazine, *Antimythe*, no. 25.

53. See the excellent statement of the group "La Guerre sociale," *De l'Exploitation dans les camps a l'exploitation des camps (suite et fin)*, May 1981, p. 103. The brochure contains a good criticism of Vidal-Naquet - to which he has not responded -

as well as criticism of Faurisson and of my book, which seemed to me fairly acceptable.

54. Italian speciality, which consists of breaking the legs with a pistol.

55. We know that those who are moderately hysterical consider the murder of Curiel and Goldman as antisemitic acts. Goldman's fault seems to have been his getting involved with *Basque* terrorism, for Spanish services operate in France as they do in Spain.

56. See our *Du bon usage des momies en politique*, samizdat, February 1980.

57. [He indulged in detailing his exploits in a book written about 1950 (see bibliography).]

58. *Charlie Hebdo*, "Alerte aux gaz!" October 1980, signed J.-P. Manchette.

59. *Libération*, October 25-26, 1980.

60. *Le Monde*, October 5-6, 1980.

61. Some had thought and written that I was behind this petition or that I had asked Chomsky to sign it. This is not true. I learned later that it was initiated by Mark Weber, a young American revisionist. It circulated only in the United States, following reports in the American press that Faurisson had been suspended and barred from teaching.

62. The whole article can be found in *Droit et histoire*, by P. Guillaume, pp. 158-59.

63. Faye has mentioned Pierre Vidal-Naquet, Mitsou Ronat, Jacqueline Gueron and Dan Sperber.

64. [In October 1991, at a small socialist-academic conference on "Democracy in Cambodia," I said that nothing can be done in that country before the Khmer Rouge are militarily defeated. Pierre Thibaud, who was sitting behind me, approved vigorously. I reminded him that he had hoped for their victory. "Oh yes," he said. "You may be right. I forgot." This is how those intellectuals who give you lessons function.

65. I had given the title, "Les nouveaux acrobates" (The New Acrobats).

66. Iranian Communist Party.

67. [She has since then become its president.]

68. *Libération* of June 26, 1981 and *Le Monde* of June 30, 1981, which misquoted it.

69. June 10-16, 1987.

70. This shows contempt that I find scandalous for a large part of humanity which thought and still thinks that the earth is flat. After all, believing that the earth is flat is a more sensible experience and had more lived truth than believing that six million Jews had been pushed alive into the fire of furnaces.

Attacks against Chomsky return as regularly as the swallows. Consult first his *Réponses inédites à mes détracteurs parisiens*, 1984, 93 p. Details can be found in Pierre Guillaume, *Droit et histoire*, p. 152-72. For a favorable piece on Chomsky, see Christopher Hitchens' article, "The Chorus and Cassandra – What Everyone Knows about Noam Chomsky," in the New York magazine, *Grand Street*, which could not avoid some factual errors. The controversy bounced back in several other places, in the *Village Voice* with an attack by Paul Berman and replies by Ch. Hitchens, N. Chomsky and P. Guillaume. See issues of February 10, March 18 and May 6, 1986. There is a concentration of the usual slanders in a brochure by Werner Cohn, *The Hidden Alliance of Noam Chomsky*, published around 1988 by an organization, which may not be purely philanthropic, called "Americans for a Safe Israel."

71. *The Village Voice*, July 22-29, 1987.

72. [French translation of quote.]

73. This is the exact situation that Solzhenytsin often describes in Soviet camps. See also memories of German camps by the former Spanish communist Jorge Semprun, *Quel beau Dimanche!* Grasset, 1980.

74. I sent the said Baier to Nadine Fresco. They ended up getting so thick with each other that the perpetual muse wrote a preface to a book Baier wrote in French about France. She confesses in it the anti-German racism of her childhood. Her discovery that the Germans are, after all, humans, too, is a masterpiece worthy of appearing in an anthology of contemporary naiveté. Lothar Baier, *Un Allemand né de la dernière guerre* and *L'entreprise France*, Calmann-Lévy.

75. [Since this writing, many things have taken place in Germany. Many historians have opened the files and proposed reflections beyond the orthodox humdrum on the history of the twentieth century. They were quickly called "revisionists," even though none of them has so far questioned the current views on the extermination. A good part of the debate was made available in French in *Devant l'histoire. Les documents de la controverse sur la singularité de l'extermination de Juifs par le régime nazi*, Cerf, 1988, 353 p., with a deft preface by Luc Ferry. So the critical comeback that Rassinier called for in 1950, started in 1986. In Germany, it is called *Historikerstreit*, the historians' quarrel. See as a complement Ernst Nolte, *Das Vergehen der Vergangenheit. Antwort an meine Kritiker im sogenannten Historikerstreit*, 223 p. The title refers to that of one of the first articles that started the controversy on "the past which doesn't pass." Following that, Nolte had his car burned down. These discussions are much more interesting than what is taking place in France on the same subject. Baier has obviously not participated.

76. In *Louis Ferdinand Céline*, Cahier de l'Herne, reprinted 1972, p. 23.

77. The plaintiff had the Swedish baron Von Otter brought to Paris twice to testify. Gerstein is said to have confided in this diplomat, on a train, in 1942. It was believed for a long time that the diplomat had written a report on this exceptional meeting with some SS member who said that he had witnessed executions in gas chambers. He had confirmed this to Pierre Joffroy (*L'Espion de Dieu*, p. 17), but the text could not be found. It wasn't until Laqueur, the first to have access to the Swedish minister's archives, that the mystery around this report was cleared up. "What emerges from all this is that there was only an oral report by Von Otter in 1942 which did not result in a written memorandum or note" (Laqueur, *op. cit.*, p. 50). So, no written trace. This shows that, at the time, Von Otter did not take Gerstein seriously, and also how the reconstructive memory works, the baron believing that he had written a report. Von Otter and Joffroy were both present at the trial, but the justice machine was so busy with its formalities that it did not allow them to confront each other on this point, not even to let the baron say what he had really understood of this confusion at that time. Dare I insinuate that the historic "shmilblic" can never be advanced by legal debates. This is the problem of Nuremberg.

78. The most interesting thoughts, in my opinion, are those of Claude Karnoouh, because they are at the same time very encompassing and very personal. He expounded them in a text entitled, "De l'Intolérance et quelques considérations subjectives sur le nationalisme. Mémoire adressé à mes amis sur les raisons de mon témoignage lors du procès du professeur Faurisson," published in *Intolérable intolérance*, Paris, Ed. de la Différence, 1981, p. 43-135. This book contains considerations on the trial by Me. Delcroix, Vincent Monteil, Jean-Louis Tristani with the verdict of the high court of Paris, July 1, 1981.

79. "Un délit d'opinion," July 16, 1981.

# European History and the Arab World

## I

*The text below (1) was intended to be the forward to the Arabic edition of the book, "Historical Truth or Political Truth?", scheduled to appear at the end of 1982. That publication project, and the translation into Arabic, was undertaken by a group of Lebanese militants, without the knowledge of the authors, except at the last moment, as the translation was underway. This forward was proposed by Serge Thion, and was accepted. The book was to appear in Beirut, when the Israeli invasion of Lebanon took place. The printing equipment was destroyed and the translation was lost under conditions that we have not been able to reconstruct precisely, since the small group that undertook the publication initiative was scattered by the turmoil.*

A thousand times, it was repeated in the press, the courts and the radio that the Faurisson Affair was a machination against Israel and a roundabout way to promote the Palestinian cause. The president of LICRA, Mr. Pierre-Bloch, who sued Faurisson, said on the radio (*Europe No. 1*, Expliquez-vous! Program of Ivan Levi, 17 December 1980) that he had on his desk, copies of Faurisson's work in many languages, including Chinese, and that all of this was paid for with Kadhafi's gold. In the logic of Israel's unconditional defenders, any difficulties encountered by Israel or the Zionists emanate from a single source, devoted surely since the destruction of the Temple to the destruction of the Jewish "people."

The devilish aspect of this source changes with time. But it is always possible to name it. It was Hitler, during his time. But since Hitler's death, it has been necessary to depict as Hitler, those who succeeded him in the devil's image: Abdel Nasser, Kadhafi . (2)

Faurisson's attorney, Mr. Eric Delcroix, had mischievously requested through the courts that M. Pierre-Bloch produce the documents he pretended to possess. Silence was the liar's only refuge (3). We have to say things exactly as they are. The Faurisson Affair, which started being talked about after 1978, had almost no reverberations in the Arab World until the writing of this article, in January 1982 (4). The aim of this book is, hopefully, to make it known and thus provoke some reflection in Arab circles that are interested in the critique of contemporary ideologies, for reactions to this Affair illustrate several, rather important, ideological mechanisms.

I kept certain Arab friends informed of the developments in this Affair, just as I kept American, German, English, Japanese and other friends informed. I learned that my book was reviewed by some people at the Institute of Palestinian Studies, but nothing ever happened. A publisher in Beirut was interested and decided to publish the book. I am sorry to tell Mr. Pierre-Bloch that the transaction took place in a businesslike

manner and that we never saw the devil's claws. It could have been an interesting encounter.

There was, however, a grain of truth in the paranoia behind the attacks launched against Faurisson and all those, like myself, who have contributed to make public the discussion of his theses. This grain of truth is that there is a link between the tragic lot of many European Jews during the Second World War and the Middle East conflict between Israel and the Arab countries. Since this book bears my signature, I would like to take advantage of this opportunity to describe how I understand the relations between these two issues, and also to talk about the uses to which I would like this book to be put, in the Arab countries.

I may be better understood if I tell how I have tackled the Palestinian question. I was nineteen years old. I was not forced to reflect on these nagging problems by events at that time, but I was rather led by a certain disposition to learn from life's encounters and circumstances. I wrote this little personal story in 1973 for a book about the Palestinians, which, as it turned out, never saw the light of day. I have used notes and souvenirs from that time. Here is my story.

## A WEEK IN GAZA

Summer, 1961. Cairo lay flat under the scorching sun. War continued raging in Algeria and the French, like other tourists, were rare in Egypt. In Cairo, the air was full of a lingering odor of black fever. Agrarian reform, High Dam, Egyptian-Syrian Union were the subjects of Abdel Nasser's superb diatribes at the height of his glory. There were many beggars on the streets and they were roughed up by white uniformed cops. In the countryside, the stooped peasants went on repeating their millenarian gestures.

I had discussions with Dr. Adel Amer, the manager of a French language magazine, *Le Scribe*, put out by the Information Ministry. It reflected closely the official views, and I could read it in my own language. During a conversation where I expressed a rather superficial understanding of the Israeli problem, Dr. Amer offered to get me a visa for Gaza.

I shared then what I think was and still is in general the dominant view about Israel in France. European persecutions led the Jews to look for a land of refuge and a return to the promised land after nineteen centuries in the diaspora. With skillfulness and courage, the Jews knew how to foil British intrigues and Arab deceit. Driven by a spirit of solidarity, they built kibbutzim and made the desert bloom. The Jews, who suffered so much, deserve this, and Israel's enemies were antisemites, accomplices, Hitlerian butchers, whether they knew it or not. This is probably the core issue: one can only be pro-Israel, for anti-Zionism and antisemitism were one and the same thing. The proof was that the Jews themselves assert it. Weren't they, the victims, best qualified to designate the antisemites?

Certainly, some voices rose to say that Zionism was a colonial phenomenon, but basically, assimilation seemed abusive. Some elements, among others gleaned in Cairo, seemed to give comfort to my opinions. The speeches of Choukeiry, General Secretary of the Arab League, were clearly antisemitic. In secondhand bookstores near the Opera House, one could find anti-Jewish brochures, such as the "Protocols of the Elders of Zion" (reissued in Beirut in 1973) that everybody knows to be a crude invention of the Czarist police. I even met a bizarre German living in Cairo who looked like a former Nazi. I was also told of the massacre in Deir Yassin, a small Palestinian village, whose inhabitants were liquidated in cold blood in the course of an Israeli military operation. But don't people get killed in war? Finally, I was told of the Palestinian refugees, but I suspected that this was a new propaganda ruse. The best thing was to go and see for myself.

The train went through the rich landscape of the Delta, the enormous market town of Zagazig, and reached Ismaïlia around eleven o'clock, following the Canal for about twenty kilometers. Ships' masts unfolded behind a continuous wall of dunes, the accumulation of dredging residue. They seemed to move on sand, hauled by invisible arms. Then the train followed the coast. The fine sand of the desert to the right covered the travelers like a white powder. The train would stop every once in a while by a lonely palm tree to pick up some emaciated Bedouins, or women dressed in beautiful embroidered black and red dresses, decorated with silver coins, which I recognized as Napoleon III and the Ottoman seal.

As soon as we passed the last Egyptian city, El Arish, surrounded by a garrison, we entered Palestine and greenery slowly replaced the desert. I was surprised to see on the road a small white car with UNEF marking. Is this a French student delegation? (This was, at the time, the acronym of the French National Union of Students.) Then, there were two jeeps with the same UNEF marking, driven by big, bearded, armed and blue turbaned Sikhs. I would later learn that these were the famous blue berets and that UNEF means United Nations Emergency Force.

Gaza is a large oasis, a crummy town with a main street lined with rather dilapidated houses, sandy alleys and – the camps. Eight camps, each of which holds between twenty and fifty thousand refugees living in monstrous barracks, tents and shacks planted in the sand. The crowd was dense, especially in the afternoon, after the heat had subsided. Men clustered together in cafes to play jaquet and listen to Sawt el Arab, the powerful Egyptian radio station, where the slightest news item was portrayed as a Homeric tale. Despite the crowd, I quickly noticed that I was followed. During the eight days I spent in the Gaza strip (which refers to the shape of this territory, which is devoid of a definite political status), the cops followed on my heels. I had a clear impression that they belonged to different intelligence services.

Only once did I succeed in shaking them off, during an afternoon I spent walking in a camp on the beach. Luck had it that some suspicious youths asked to see my papers, which I categorically refused to show. Surrounded by a crowd that swelled by the minute and became increasingly more hostile, I

was taken to a police station where I could talk quietly to two young Egyptian officers. With a budding beard in addition to my unusual presence on the beach near the Israeli border, I was taken for an Israeli spy.

As for me, I found this episode rather funny, but as an apology, the Gaza police chief invited me for dinner. The man was worth seeing: an enormous barrel of fat with puffy eyes topped by a cap. The meal was for his size rather than mine. Some muttering and finger snapping brought a table loaded with a dish of rice covered with fried fish, amply sufficient to feed a dozen solid men. Despite my courageous attack, I could only make an insignificant hole in it, which brought upon me paternal but firm reprimands from my host. He seemed to expand further by gulping down the dish in rapid and precise heaps. The ordeal ended with hookahs that we smoked calmly, exchanging for the second time my few Arabic words and his few English words.

My contacts with the refugees were more meaningful. With the help of an interpreter provided by the local authorities, I soon developed frank and cordial relationships with some Palestinians. I forced myself to claim being French, which sparked off a lively discussion on the Algerian problem. Then they told me about their painful experience, how suddenly caught up by the military operations, they only had time to run away with some rags, and how they thought, in the beginning, that they would be able to go back to their homes in a few months. Some also spoke about demonstrations of refugees in the camps in 1949 and about bludgeonings by the Egyptian police.

They complained about the miserable life they had to lead ever since, the absence of elementary dignity while immersed in poverty and overcrowding. The Gaza region could obviously not meet their needs. This small fertile area fed about a hundred thousand people who did not flee. The influx of about two hundred thousand refugees required external intervention. This was in the form of an organization set up by the United Nations: UNRWA (United Nations Relief and Works Agency).

Quickly, UNRWA had to take charge of all the material needs of several hundred thousand people displaced in Gaza, Jordan, Syria and Lebanon. In 1960, the number of refugees was well over a million.... Over four hundred thousand of them lived in four states bordering Israel. They were completely dependent on UNRWA, which spent half of its resources on food rations consisting mainly of flour. Fifteen hundred calories per person per day, which is not much. All the camps I visited in Gaza and elsewhere testify to nutrition deficiencies. As a doctor said, the sun is here to protect against rickets, but the hospitals are crowded with patients typically weakened by malnutrition.

UNRWA took care of health, education and the administration of the camps. From the outset, the refugees showed an intense desire to see their children go to school – the only hope for a new generation that sought to make a living other than through agriculture, for the chance to recover their lands was almost nil. With great difficulty, UNRWA set up primary, secondary and technical schools for youth born in exile. This could not solve the problem completely, since local job opportunities were rare – local commerce and UNRWA

administration. One had to go into exile even farther, to Europe or the United States, to earn money to send to the family that remained in the camp. The vast majority of administrative and technical personnel in the Arab peninsula was made up of "temporarily" immigrant Palestinians.

But they could not all go. Those I met in Gaza were waiting, in the irritating climate of the camps, for a hypothetical chance to work or continue their studies on a scholarship in an Arab country. For adults, there was no way out. Farmers or nomads, they knew how to make a living only from the land. Palestine under British mandate was not a desert, as some propaganda had it. It had its fertile regions and its citrus cultivated land. The Lebanese of the South remember the time when they were considered poor by their Palestinian neighbors.

The economic situation of the Arab world was not exactly thriving in the early 1950s. The newly independent states had not yet sparked new economic currents. The Israelis, who never paid a penny to insure the survival of refugees, always accused the Arab countries of refusing the integration of Palestinians. But even a cursory study of the economic situation at that time would show that integration was impossible, assuming that the Arab states wanted it. With time and the relative development of Arab countries, two thirds of the Palestinians had found (prior to the Six Day War) some way of surviving outside the camps.

For the others, in particular those in Gaza and Jordan, where local economic resources were nonexistent, life consisted of forced idleness in the camps and a nagging desire to return to the native land. This was better grasped by walking with refugees along the demarcation line in Gaza. One of them, motioning to a group of houses in the distance, said: "This is the land of my family, the house where I was born. We planted tobacco until the Jews came and drove us out of our homes. When will we return? When will our children regain their home? We will retake Palestine because it belongs to us."

In one way or another, this was the basic view of all the refugees. A silent obsession, a violent burning desire, without concession. Sometimes, these statements came with a certain staging. When I arrived at the hospital waiting room in Bureij camp, I was greeted by a patient in pajamas, up on his bed, ranting about the miseries which burdened the Palestinian people. His vibrant speech was interrupted by applause and enthusiastic shouts. But beside this spectacle that was more flattering to its actors than to its lonely spectator, I met worried, confused, idle young people, going around in circles in their few square kilometers, worked up by the fervor of the return. They felt without a future, and the idea of dying for the homeland seemed to them more appealing than living like caged dogs.

Sometimes, a youth group would attack a Blue Beret patrol with knives, stealing their weapons. Some Swedes and Yugoslavs lost their lives. Armed with these weapons, the improvising Feda'yin would enter Israel and get caught – which meant they never came back.

The 1956 Israeli occupation traumatized Gaza residents almost as much as the 1948 exodus. While socialist Guy Mollet was sending his paratroopers to link up with the British over Port-Said, the Israelis were taking hold of the Sinai. Each had different and complex motives. The British were mostly interested in the Suez Canal that Abdel Nasser had just nationalized. The French believed that by hitting Egypt, they could sever the head of the Algerian uprising, which, Paris maintained, "was foreign inspired." As for the Israelis, they wanted to control Gaza, the already festering Palestinian sore on their side, and to secure strategic positions on the Canal and on the Red Sea straits of Tiran through which ships reach the port of Eilat. It is well known that frowning in Washington and in Moscow put an end to this pitiful Anglo-French escapade. But the Israelis did not want to let go of their piece. On November 5, 1956, the United Nations General Assembly adopted the principle of sending an urgent international force to insure and supervise the cessation of hostilities. The Blue Berets had to wait four months before the Israelis agreed to evacuate the Gaza strip.

The offensive and occupation resulted in hundreds of deaths among the population of the camps. They showed me photographs of mass graves uncovered after the departure of the Israeli army – hostages, I was told, gunned down by way of reprisals. Where is the truth? In any case, accounts given by young Palestinians led one to think that Israeli military occupation was neither better nor worse than other military occupation. Occupation breeds resistance which breeds reprisals.

In the train taking me back to Cairo, I reflected on my trip. It suddenly dawned on me that this fabulous dream, the creation of a Jewish state, which could be a sure asylum for victims of persecution, had cost dearly. It was far from the self proclaimed oasis of humanitarian idealism. On the ground, history smelled of gunpowder and blood. Innocents paid the price – not a handful of people, but hundreds of thousands of men, women and children. They were reduced to physical and mental misery in order to, we were told, give relief to the survivors of Hitler's persecutions. Obviously, European opinion had two measuring standards. Who cared about the fate of one million Arabs? What can be thought of the creation of a state based on the inviolable wrong done to its inhabitants? To accept the Zionist enterprise was to accept the dispossession of some by the force of others. This was to accept that might had precedence over right, an idea I had the weakness to oppose. History shows how far it can lead.

Even when wrapped up with incantations, the refugees' feelings were based on the experience of guns at their backs. Their fears were not without foundation, for since 1967, they had been living under the iron rule of the Israeli army. This time, the policy of collective punishment was clearly recognized by the occupation authorities.

What was the solution? For the refugees, there was only one: to fight. But everybody was opposed to it, the Blue Berets as well as the Egyptian army. At a mass meeting in Gaza, Algerian FLN leader Mohammed Harbi urged the Palestinians to follow the Algerians' example: count on themselves, take up

arms, and take control of their cause. Egyptian officials got upset and never invited the Algerians to Gaza again. Lacking organization, there was no alternative to individual initiatives. It was from this ferment of shame and despair that Palestinian organizations would take root some years later.

Kept in the dark for a long time, Western opinion was surprised. Upon my return to Paris, I tried to publish an article summarizing my impressions of Gaza. Under various pretexts, I was turned down everywhere. Hector de Galard said that *France Observateur* had published an article on Israeli women the preceding week. François Maspero said that the article was not exactly in the style of *Partisans* magazine, etc. (6)

It had to wait until the 1967 Six Day War. Feda'iyin's activities had noticeably increased. The material responsibility lay certainly with Arab governments, who provided the Palestinian militants with the means to fight. Arab governments' boasting increased. The Israeli government cried murder: the Arabs are about to annihilate Israel. This was absurd to anyone who knew even a little about the situation. The disproportionate balance of forces was too flagrant for Israel's existence to be in danger in case of a conflict.

Yet, the enormous Israeli propaganda lie, spread first by Zionist groups, then by the press, "took off" with prodigious speed. Public opinion in France (and elsewhere) was carried away by the Zionist tidal wave. To prevent threatening maneuvers by the Syrian army – which was later contested by Israeli officers – the Israeli army took the initiative, and in a few days of a lightning offensive, crushed all the Arab armies – thanks to its absolute mastery of air space. In Paris, while Israel was brilliantly demonstrating its superiority on the ground, the hysteria reached the roof. Marching together in demonstrations were retired generals, former OAS generals ready to enlist in Israel, extreme left militants, and petit bourgeois who had never demonstrated in their lives.

I was alarmed to see many of my Jewish and non-Jewish friends struck by this wild feeling of guilt: Israel must not be destroyed. The simple fact of questioning this idea would quickly expose one to accusations of antisemitism, Hitlerism, etc. I found these accusations rather amusing, but I could not view without sadness the wavering of good sense in a number of people that I had thus far taken to be reasonable. A chasm of irrationality opened at my feet. Had the war lasted a little longer, one would have seen, side by side, the veterans of Algeria eager for the opportunity to "break wog," and militants who worked for the FLN during the Algerian war. I will not name names....

The dazzling victory of Israel's armies changed almost nothing in this atmosphere. These perceptions continued to prevail in a small coterie that prevented the French, for example, from realizing that, technically speaking, there was no difference between Israel's occupation of Gaza and the West Bank, and German occupation of France during the Second World War. Rare were those who, like Pierre Vidal-Naquet, saw by means of self criticism that Israeli politics, like the politics of any other state, was based on force. How many still believe that Israel is not a "state like other states" and are ready to blindly justify whatever it does. We will not be a party to these craven ideas.

(1973)

I went back to the Middle East several times for stays too short to my liking. I had the opportunity to carry on discussions with many members of Palestinian organizations of various tendencies. I often gave the following talk:

You took up arms because the situation you are in has no solution. If it weren't for the Feda'yin of the 1950's, history would have forgotten you and left you to rot in the camps. You have taken your place among the movements that are struggling for national emancipation and liberation from the colonial yoke. You have learned the language of revolution; you were inspired by revolutionary struggles of other countries under other conditions. You have learned to organize, to mobilize the masses; to use weapons, to negotiate with powers – big and small – that have influence in your region.

Yet, from 1956 to the present, you have not advanced much. Despite your courage, despite the heroism of your combatants and of their families, hardened by mourning, return to Palestine has not come any closer. And many of your martyrs fell under Arab bullets.

I see an essential reason for this. Maybe I speak out of ignorance, but I have known many national liberation struggles. Some were defeated while others were not. There is more to learn from defeat than from success. To me, the essential reason seems to be the following. One has to be strong before taking up a gun. Guns alone decide almost nothing. In spite of the correctness of your cause, you were not the stronger and you have not won. You tell me it was impossible to take up arms inside Israel, even after 1967. It was necessary to take up arms outside and bring war to the enemy's bastion. But you have taken them up before being strong. A lot of political work should have been done inside Israel among both Arabs and Jews. This work of political persuasion had to be done quietly, without weapons, without warrior heroism, like ants, with an infinite patience, a patience even greater than the suffering born of occupation and exile. I know very well that you have undertaken some actions in this direction. But it is too little, for priority was given to violent confrontation, infiltration and commando operations, whose main outcome was to reinforce fear among the Israeli population. The stronger you have hit, the harder they have become, as reflected in their fanatic leaders, who dream of solving everything by increasingly greater violence. Maybe the conjuration of international interests will allow the formation of a state on some scrap of land, as it did in 1948 for the Jewish state. This would be a pathetic outcome for such a long and bitter struggle. It would solve neither the problem of Palestine, nor that of the Palestinians in other Arab countries. Your divisions are such that a good portion of you would be excluded from this state at the same time that the other portion takes power. A Pax Americana means that neither war nor peace would be favorable to you.

Believe me, I have no advice to give you, but I only repeat what I saw elsewhere: when a struggle gets underway, when the players take to the arena, the game is already over. No matter how long the battle, or how violent the blow, the winner is the one who was better prepared, the one who holds the

crushing weight of the conviction that he knew how to win, well before taking the first step.

I gave this talk even when it aroused only scepticism and irritation. And through the years, I noticed the serious development of militarization, an increased isolation of the organization from the Palestinian population, forced to survive under increasingly harsh conditions, a growing underground influence of old social formations: the notables and the grand families, village solidarity, the budding of a bourgeoisie nourished by money paid to the Resistance by friendly but rather interested states. All this, cemented by a morbid fascination with weapons and death, maybe inherited from old Bedouin traditions, leads to a profound depoliticization.

The intensity of political discussions must not hide this depoliticization, for these discussions are meant as short term balance of power tactics, rather than as long term perspectives toward the elaboration of a program. The larger the role of the Palestinian Resistance as a factor in the international diplomatic game, the smaller becomes its presence as a force capable of social change. In other words, there is room on the ground for revolution. Those who will occupy it, will not be able to make this revolution by remaining inside the Palestinian Resistance as it is, but rather by opposing what it represents, since its beginnings, which is the aspiration of the Palestinian bourgeoisie to run its own state.

Whether my reader likes it or not, it is clear that the seat of the revolution is empty. The small groups that are manipulating revolutionary rhetoric are much too busy posturing as future guides of an eventual phantom working class, to go into real action on the ground. To them, the concrete is in manuals. But those sterile inbred groups of theoreticians are disappearing everywhere in the world through simple exhaustion (7).

It is clear that I am neither in favor of a show of force and bloody confrontations, nor of false diplomatic solutions or dreams of a protector state. I rather feel a profound compassion for all those individuals, Arabs and Jews, of all languages and all religions, who for two or three generations have lived wars, exile, threats and repression on top of misery. Cosmopolitan and devoid of religious, national or cultural allegiance, I challenge parties, institutions and ideals, and I have no friends other than particular human beings scattered across this battlefield.

It is, therefore, with total personal independence that I approached the Faurisson Affair in 1979. It seems to me that it is undoubtedly related to Middle East affairs. It is not the subject of this book, but can be that of the following few lines.

All goes back to the Second World War. I mean the political, economic and financial infrastructure of the international order that prevails today. It was the object of consultations and decisions taken by the Allies sometime before the fall of Germany and Japan. The United Nations system and the special rights still held by the five victors of 1945 (the United States, Great Britain, the Soviet Union, France and China), the Bretton Woods agreements on the international monetary system that led to the supremacy of the dollar, the territorial divisions between East and West, the political systems imposed on one or another country, etc. All this was planned and decided on in 1944-45 mainly to avoid the fiasco of the Treaty of Versailles, that everybody felt had generated the Second World War.

Even though these agreements did not generate a new world war, they nonetheless created permanent worldwide tension and a multitude of severe local conflicts, due essentially to the refusal of some local political forces to fit the mould set up for them by Yalta (I use the term Yalta in the general sense of the implicit and explicit inter-Allied agreements of 1944-45). The Greek left, the workers of Berlin, and the Vietnamese nationalists, among others, did not understand the lessons of Yalta. They were taught at gun point, from 1947-48 onward. The death throes of the old order gave way to the Cold War as a logical outcome of the principle set at Yalta, which consists in preventing direct confrontation between the Allied victors.

This common victory was part of the winners' ideological capital. Everyone had to exploit it in order to avoid direct confrontation, which would have been the natural expression of their antagonistic interests. The greater the mutual hostility between the Soviets and Westerners, the more they had to take stock of their participation in Germany's defeat as a justification of their presence in Europe and as a political cover in the regions under their military control.

That is why, when Germany was bleeding from defeat and in economic ruin brought about by aerial bombardment, and as the territorial carving out hurtled onto the roads millions of "displaced persons" in total misery, expelled from the territories of the East – at this time, the Allies were conducting the trial of Germany and the Nazis. The latter had certainly behaved savagely towards populations under their control: hostage taking, massacres, deportations. It was a heavy toll. As they were giving Germans great lessons in diplomatic morality, the Allies reopened the concentration camps and filled them up with German civil servants, military personnel and Nazis (8).

As the German leaders of the Hitler era had embarked on an intense antisemitic propaganda campaign, and systematic persecution of Jewish communities under their control, the Allies had no trouble turning this propaganda against the defeated regime. It was easy to show that the Nazi regime behaved with extreme brutality, and that its racist doctrine manifested itself in massive disappearances. But a propaganda machine polished by years of war and encouraged by growing rivalry among yesterday's brothers in arms could not stop overnight and transform itself into an erudite institute of historic research. The more so that this anti-Nazi propaganda was taken over and amplified by a crowd of opportunists and bunglers of all sorts, who were yearning to finally bring their contribution to a victory won without them. The very real horrors of the Nazi regime snowballed and got transformed into an avalanche that submerged a public opinion already fed rumors and noises for years. During this time, the true victims, the survivors of the camps, resumed their lives with difficulty and, for the most part, remained silent, finding it too difficult to communicate the unspeakable horror they had experienced to people who did not care or who wanted to use them ... and who, anyway, knew much better than they did what had happened and what ought to be said about it. There was, of course, the usual lot of those who for partisan reasons transformed themselves into professional witnesses.

It was in this atmosphere of cheap hysteria that the State of Israel was created. There is barely a need to say that, to its real promoters, and as part of a more realistic analysis of things, it had to do with the necessity of change in the structures of domination in the Middle East following the somewhat forced departure of the French and the exhaustion of the British, and the rivalries between these two blocs.

Philanthropy was not a big part of it. There, too, a new era started and new elements appeared in the Western hegemony, henceforth mainly American, that would be perpetuated in the region. The creation of a Jewish state protected by America was part of these new elements, and these elements were of the same order as the changes intervening in Iran, Iraq, etc. The pressures of Arab nationalism, though geographically uneven, created some disorders in Western plans. Successively, Egyptian, Iraqi, Syrian, Sudanese, Yemeni, Libyan and Iranian regimes went through abrupt changes that were threatening to Western interests, if only by introducing a new giant partner.

All this means that the creation of the State of Israel had obviously nothing to do with what had happened between the Nazis and Jewish communities in Europe, and that considerations about the prewar legacy did not enter into the strategic calculations of the post-war era. But there was a fully functioning ideological construct at the disposition of the Allies, including the Soviet Union, namely, the culpability of Germany, charged with all wrongs. Because the Jews were persecuted, justice must be rendered them, and justice was to grant them the state they asked for, or rather, that the Zionists had been asking for on their behalf for the past fifty years.

In a certain way, Zionism was failing. The creation of the state of Israel was only the first step; it had to be made viable, populated and developed. Admittedly, after the war, a number of Jews uprooted by persecutions had come to settle in Palestine. But the movement soon dried out as the economic reconstruction of Europe got underway. The influx of Jews from Arab countries did not figure in the computations of Eurocentric Zionism that had superbly ignored them and was embarrassed by them. The creation of Israel and the victory of 1948 sparked almost no enthusiasm in a diaspora that no longer had reason to be attracted by adventure.

Zionism had its own ideological foundations and inflexible dogmatic articulations. Its nineteenth century style of nationalism was no longer profitable, it had lost its power of attraction as antisemitism became taboo. That is why it took some time, about a dozen years, to shift gears, and plunge into genocide ideology as a course of action in a diaspora unwilling to emigrate to a promised but hardly promising land. The Eichmann trial of 1960 was the "aggiornamento" of today's new style Zionism. It put in place a system of double guilt: First, the Jews are guilty of not paying the State of Israel a high enough price for their survival, then the non-Jews of the West are guilty of having been, willingly or not, accomplices of the Nazis.

It was the right moment because German guilt was the basic tenet. We have witnessed the development of what may be called the Holocaust religion brought about by allies eager to give themselves a good image and hide the atrocities they were to commit in defense of the good they are supposed to incarnate. If this religion did not attract immigrants, it was pushed by Zionists to attract capital, as well as political and military protection. It was naively accepted by a Western public ready to believe in its self guilt and its ability to commit such enormous crimes, as a cover for its deep seated racism, not recognized as such because it was cleansed from the absolute Nazi evil. This allows all the nonsense in declarations of all political parties of old Europe to parade as democratic, tolerant and acting essentially for the good of humanity.

Zionism is a harmful doctrine to Jews anywhere in the world and in Israel: those who feel integrated in their countries of residence and also those with deep religious convictions for whom return to the promised land is a symbol of moral life and eschatology. To them, Zionism is a travesty of the spirit of Judaism, a kind of absurd and sacrilegious pretension to prematurely realize the prophecies through human means.

There are people in Israel who oppose Zionism for various religious or political reasons. I will not list them here, but I mention that there is opposition to the official propaganda use of the Holocaust (9). "It is dangerous for Israel to bet on the genocide, because Israel's raison d'être is not there," I was recently told by a friend who is a practicing, honorable Talmudist.

One of the best critiques of using the dead of the 1940-45 period for propaganda purposes was published in Israel. Entitled "Holocaust, a Danger for the Jewish People," (10) this article by the well known and respected journalist, Boaz Evron, appeared in the May-June, 1980 issue of the Hebrew journal, *Yiton* 77. I quote the following passages from this rather long article, which deserves to be published in its entirety and discussed in detail.

"Two terrible things happened to the Jewish people during this century: The Holocaust and the lessons drawn from it. The non-historical and easily refutable commentaries on the Holocaust made either deliberately or through simple ignorance and their use for propaganda purposes among non-Jews or Jews both in Israel and the diaspora constitute a cancer for Jews and for the State of Israel [...]

"Antisemitism served as the catalyst, the core of the extermination system, but the essential part of this system, the constantly repeated "selection," was a central permanent institution of the Reich.

"Everybody agreed to blur the fact that the murder of European Jews was not only a proof that the Holocaust is characteristic of and specific to Jewish history, but that the murder of European Jews was a factor in the collapse of the whole European system. It was another historic example showing that the attempt to build a barrier between the Jewish people and the rest of humanity – supported from one side by the Nazis and from the other side by our nationalists – was in reality a manifestation of another principle: to separate a group from the rest of humanity by defining it as nonhuman prepares the ground for an attack against all humanity.

"The Jewish side, particularly the Zionist leaders, had an interest in presenting Jews as the only victims, as a testimony to the sin of all nations.

"It is a sort of deflected satisfaction, an aspect of the traditional Jewish concept of the "chosen people," which, in its modern, nationalist form, resembles antisemitism by cutting Jews out from the whole of humanity. (Many have shown the similarity between Zionist and antisemitic writings.) [...]

"On the other side, most people cooperated with the Zionist ahistorical representation of the facts. First, the Germans. They had an interest in containing the feelings of hate, vengeance, fear and suspicion that the world, and particularly, the Slavs, had towards them. By concealing the fact that others, too, were targeted for extermination and by reducing the memory of the Holocaust to Jews only, all this business could be presented like madness, not just of the German people, but of an Austrian dictator who governed them and who acquired his antisemitic ideas in the working class neighborhoods of Vienna [...]

"Westerners, too, had an interest in subscribing to the "final solution," the memory of the Nazi extermination policy. They wanted to bring Germany into the "family of nations" in the fastest possible manner so as to use it in order to create an economic and military Atlantic alliance to serve as a counterweight to Soviet power. And Germany was to play in it the central role [...]

"The 'Jewish monopoly' – if one can use this term – of the Nazi phenomenon, presenting Jews as almost the exclusive victims, is negative in many aspects. As I have already said, it excludes Jews from the human race, as though they were different, by their very nature. It therefore leads to paranoid reactions in some Jews who feel cut off from humanity and its laws. This disconnection may lead some Jews with power in their hands to treat non-Jews as subhuman, thus actually repeating racist Nazi attitudes [...]"

Then Evron examines the function of the Eichmann trial as a boost to Israeli politics founded on the maximum use of the genocide question:

"It can be assumed that one of the main goals (of the Eichmann trial) was to renew and reinforce the Germans' guilt feeling in their own eyes and in the eyes of the whole world. It was to thwart the then prevailing atmosphere, that having paid a financial compensation, Germany had settled its debt to the Jewish people. The main political consequences of this affair were the opening by the Federal Republic of Germany of diplomatic relations with Israel, a considerable increase in reparation payments and the abandonment of discussions on "the end of debt payment." And, it is precisely here that nothing works anymore [...]

"The Adenauer government avoided having open diplomatic relations with Israel for practical political reasons: it did not want to risk its relations with the Arab world. It considered reparation payments as a legal question that was not related to political affairs, but was compensation for past damages, and should not tie Germany's hands in its current relations with the world. The trial forced Germany to abandon the framework of its principles, to act against its own natural interests and to give Israel special preference, without its having to reciprocate in kind, as is usually the case among states [...]

"Relations with Germany have served as a model for relations with most Western Christian states, chiefly the United States. These relations are not based on an objective common interest between Israel and those states but on

a general guilt feeling among the leaders of the Christian world towards the Jewish people. Here are the results of these relations:

"1. The special treatment accorded Israel and expressed by unconditional economic and political support has created around Israel a kind of glass wall that, in a way, isolates it from international political and economic realities. Since its creation, Israel has never had to confront the world and adapt to it.

"2. Israel has developed economic and political systems that are cut off from international realities and that diverge from them further, because it is cut off from a reality in evolution, which means that the gap is widening. This causes a distortion in these systems in Israel itself, which gives them a pathological character and increases Israel's dependence on support from foreign countries, while separation from reality makes support from Israelis more difficult.

"3. It is from the Zionist point of view that the result is more paradoxical. The goal of Zionism was to normalize the condition of the Jewish people, to make it a political entity equal among independent nations, a political nation that acts within the framework of the international system. The political-economic glass wall erected around Israel through foreign support and the backing that Israel extracts from the guilt feelings of the outside world have prevented Israel from becoming a state like others. In fact, they have increased the symptoms of the diaspora [...]

"4. Another aspect of this moral blackmail is that the permanent relationship of the Holocaust, antisemitism and hatred of Jews throughout generations has created a strange moral blinding in the Israeli public and in its leaders, clearly manifest in double moral standards.

"While we base our appeals for justice on the world's duty towards "those who had been abandoned," we consider it our right to establish relations with the most oppressive regimes, to sell arms to the worse of nations and we do not refrain from oppressing non-Jews under our control.

"The Holocaust has served as a very powerful tool in the hands of Israeli leaders as well as Jewish leaders outside Israel, who are influenced by Israeli leaders to rally Jewish opinion in the diaspora, particularly in the United States. This is done by exploiting and cultivating two main elements:

"1. The guilt feeling of Jews in the United States for not having done more to prevent the Holocaust.

"2. The feeling of insecurity of some of them concerning the status of Jews in American society [...]

"Israel is presented in the same manner to the non-Jewish world in order to stifle critics of our policies, by always using the same argument: You, who did nothing to help us during the Holocaust, are not going to teach us now how to protect ourselves from another Holocaust [...]

"It is this identification of the Nazis with the Arabs in general, and with the Palestinians in particular through the continuous reminder of dangers of a Holocaust, which provokes a hysterical reaction in the average Israeli. This and the doctrine of "the Jewish diaspora as the only Israeli ally" leads to the following result: The Israeli political conscience becomes fossilized at a pre-state level to a point that it cannot relate to or understand real political forces. Israel's foreign relations are not determined by mutual interests, but on the basis of pressures exerted by American Jews, as though Israel were not a foreign country but an integral part of the American political system. This means that Israeli self-awareness is that of a sect rather than a nation in the political sense [...]

"These parallels have serious moral consequences. The choices offered to Israelis are not realistic: either "Holocaust" or victory. This frees them from any moral restriction, since any person in danger of extermination is free from any moral consideration to act in self defense.

"Thus, paradoxically, the consciousness of the Holocaust drilled by propaganda into Israelis' heads has become dangerous. The first condition for healing in Israeli society is a correct understanding of its own historical and political status." [11)

This is a remarkable though partial example of what the Old Mole had called the "deconstruction of ideological madness." What about the Arab World? During the war, Germany had inspired numerous sympathies in some nationalist circles engaged in a difficult struggle against British imperialism, for which the Middle East was a kind of preserve. Anwar Sadat, who became dear to the hearts of many Jews in the world after his trip to Jerusalem, had been jailed by the British because of his intelligence work for the enemy when Rommel's troops were close to Alexandria. This episode of his youth was omitted in the grand obituaries published in the Western press in 1981.

But Germany's defeat was obviously going to lead to a loss of influence for all those who had counted on its victory, like Hajj Amin Al Husseini, the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem, or Ahmed Choukeiry, the General Secretary of the Arab League at the time, whose racist and brutal declaration became the delight of Israeli propaganda (12). In general, the Western version of WW II prevailed in the Arab world, quite removed as it was from the main theater of events. The enduring element for Arab public opinion is the injustice done to Arabs, in that the Arabs had to pay the price given by the Allies to the Jews as compensation for crimes committed in Europe. It is this feeling of injustice, regularly revived by Israel's territorial encroachments, that blocks all possibilities of extending to the Arab world the guilt feeling towards Jews, that Zionism wants to make universal. On the ground, the Arab side was the victim of lasting and growing spoliation. Moreover, the limits of this spoliation have not been reached yet, as is shown by the recent annexation of the Syrian Golan.

As for the Arab world, in addition to accepting the Western-Zionist vision of history, it internalized it. In many respects, the Palestinian Resistance tried to compare itself to the Zionist movement. After all, there was an important Palestinian diaspora, the

project of return to the native land and the creation of a new state. Zionism, which seemed to reach its objectives, could serve as a model in a more or less conscious manner, including terrorist methods. In its turn, the Palestinian Resistance exhibited the bloody wounds of its history as a sufficient justification for its current actions. Deir Yassin became a kind of Arab Auschwitz with the same genre of symbolic charge.

This Zionist model, transposed for the first time by Palestinian militants, is going through a second reincarnation with the Armenians of Lebanon. The young militant generation has become aware of the potential contained in the connection, "genocide - reparations - reward in the form of a state." Having a sizable diaspora themselves, they are trying to mobilize it by reviving a somewhat waning memory of the 1915 tragic events, through terrorist attacks modeled on those of the Irgun. To construct an ideology that will lead to the creation of a state, they, too, must give a Manichaeic presentation of history, where the Turks, and only they, are the absolute evil. One has to look at several factors, which would make the situation at the time more complicated but more intelligible. They include the dismantling of the Ottoman regime by European imperialisms; the rival ascent of dominated Arab, Kurdish and Turkish nationalisms; the manner in which Europeans have manipulated the Armenian question since 1880 and tried to obtain for their new Christian protégés a political status that nobody else had in the empire. Since 1818, Russia has been in control of a large part of Armenia, including Etchmiadzin, its political and religious center, and would take advantage of the war and of Armenian nationalism to expand its control over more territory. This ambition resurfaced in 1945, when Stalin claimed the transfer, from then neutral Turkey, of Kars and Ardahan Vilayet (provinces). A global study of the prevailing situation at the time when the "Young Turk" government made the criminal decision to deport the Armenian people of Eastern Anatolia, would obviously lead to completely different conclusions from those of the nationalist Armenian movement, which deems it more expedient to copy the Zionist ideological model.

But whatever was successful for some may not be for others. It is not ideology that changes the world, it is the real movement of people, goods and capital (reified human activity). Ideology intervenes only as a veil designed to hide real mechanisms.

If there was a lesson to draw from the Faurisson Affair, and in particular in the Arab World, it is that the effectiveness of political action depends on understanding the real mechanisms of social development, and that to reach them, one must first tear up the veil of ideology that masks them. But the veil is solid and the task difficult. The more violent the reaction to this rift, the better the indication that one is on the right path. There are risks that intellectuals almost always loathe to take because their basic social function, and very generally the way they earn their living, is to be the weavers of this veil.

There is a lot to do in the West, and the corrosive agonizing questions stirred up by this minute Faurisson Affair will make their way. There are obviously others. Similarly, in the Judeo-Israeli-Zionist world, some unveiling and critique of the dominant ideology is taking place, an example of which was cited above.

But it is not sufficient for the Arab World to passively watch the deconstruction of its adversaries' dominant ideologies and remain silent about critiques of the Soviet universe. It must make the same move and return to the roots of its political systems and their supporting ideologies. I am not in a position to judge what has already been done in this domain, but I don't think I am getting far enough by saying in this Arab world, crossed by multiple currents and tensions, there remains an enormous amount of work to be done in order to dig through tunnels and layers of ideological sediment to reach the hard rock of theoretical and practical truth. It is the work of a mole this old mole, which knows so well how to dig underground and suddenly appear: revolution.

Beirut, January 11, 1982.

[End of the intended preface]

## II

### Under Israel, Palestine

#### ON THE QUESTION OF ORIGINS

I believe that it is possible here to dwell at length on the origins of Israel's sudden appearance and the Palestinian question created by the establishment of Israel. There exists a vast literature of varying quality about the subject, often marked by strong apologetic tendencies (13). I would only like to underline some points to focus the discussion.

The first is obviously that Zionism and its territorial claim ("a land without a people to a people without a land") had, at the outset, nothing to do with the Middle East, at the time of the Ottoman Empire. The latter was in crisis due to increasing pressure to carve it up and split it: the famous "Question d'Orient." From the moment the industrial revolution started, there was no reason for this vast multiethnic edifice, standing in the way between Europe and the East, not to be remodeled and put at the service of European interests. Mechanization provided the material means to dominate the Ottoman Empire. Since the Crusades, Europe had lacked those means, and it took close to a century of using them to attain its aims after the First World War.

The situation of Jews in the Muslim world was certainly not as rosy as some publications would like us to believe, when they try to highlight a sharp contrast between a tolerant East, and a West that was relentless in the persecution of Jews. There is exaggeration on both sides. A religious minority in a profoundly religious world, the Jews had a "protected" status with its high and low points according to the circumstances and moods of local authorities. Compared with other religious minorities, Christians, Pagans, Manicheans, schismatic (Ismaelites, Druzes, Babists) or Sectarian (Dervishes, etc.), Jews were relatively privileged in the land of Islam. Communications with Palestinian sources (where the Talmud and Targum were elaborated) remained open. Those expelled from Spain chose to settle everywhere in the Ottoman Empire, with no noticeable or particular attraction to Palestine. In 1800, there were 6000 Jews in Palestine, living mainly in the four "sacred cities" of Jerusalem, Hebron, Safad, and Tiberiad. It is mainly from Russia that waves of immigrants, animated by Messianic movements, arrived in the nineteenth century. Around 1822, as modern Zionism was being developed, the Jewish community in Palestine, called the Yishouv, had about 30,000 people.

The Ottoman Empire could not be shielded from the repercussions of European pressures. The "Nationalities Question" that shook Europe around the mid-19th century infiltrated into clearly non-national structures of the Empire: pulling away the

Greeks (a part of them), agitating the Balkans populations, igniting a national Armenian movement, with a lot of outside encouragement, throwing the Maronite mountains into some kind of alliance with Second Empire France, but leaving Jews alone. The arrivals in Palestine had nothing to do with the movements of other Jewish communities in the Empire, those from Syria, Iraq, Istanbul or Salonika, converted to French culture under the impulse of the Universal Israelite Alliance. Each minority was more or less clearly looking for a foreign protector. This encouraged rivalries among Powers. Practically until 1948, Oriental Jews did not stir, were almost completely ignorant about Zionism, and were seeking contact with modernity through assimilation in European cultures. For example, in Algeria, Jews chose to become French when the Crémieux decree offered them the opportunity (1870); or they acquired the most diverse nationalities in Egypt, when it fell under British rule in 1882.

Zionism is, therefore, a movement that agitated essentially Yiddish speaking Jews in central and eastern Europe, where those who dominated, possessed the German culture, the matrix of Jewish expansion toward the east. The term "Ashkenazi", refers in the Bible to the northwest of Babylon, which is the state of Ourartou on the Armenian plateau. In medieval Judaism, it became Germany par excellence (as "Sephardic" means Spain in the golden age of Andalusia). The end of the old regimes that recognized particular statuses to some categories of subject, whether or not in the ghettos, profoundly disturbed the functioning of traditional communities as they progressively entered the industrial world. As protection by the monarch was no longer assured either by statute or custom, the Jews had sometimes the feeling of losing on the deal. According to the French Revolution, they were to have full rights as individuals, nothing as a nation. This situation weakened community links and slowly liberated an increasing number of individuals who could free themselves harmlessly from the heavy constraints of communal life, with its rites and authority frozen into archaic pietism. Ancient statutes often relegated them to money manipulations, and naturally, with the development of banks, financial speculation would attract elements freed by the weakening of community constraints. An imitation of the Enlightenment shattered the eastern European communities in the 19th century, fragmenting them and triggering their dispersion through emigration. A nationalist movement borrowing its conceptual equipment from Germanic nationalism was established under the name of Zionism (14). It revealed the refusal of assimilation under the influence of the Enlightenment. And since religion was no longer capable of maintaining closed communities, it proposed the reconstitution of a universal ghetto in Palestine in order to save the "race" from the threat of dissolution by modernism and its trail of destructive germs. It quickly developed into a totalitarian ideology, whose ambition was to transform the Jews and to empty Palestine of any non-Jewish elements. Initially, there was a tremendous resistance to Zionism by Jewish intellectuals, both in eastern Europe and in the West. But the sarcasms of Karl Kraus and many others are forgotten today. However, the warnings were prophetic.

## TOTALITARIAN AIMS OF ZIONISM

"The goal of Arab attacks against Zionism is not theft or terror or a halt to Zionism's growth, but the total destruction of the Yishouv. These are not political adversaries, but students and even masters of Hitler, for whom there is only one way to solve the Jewish question: total annihilation."  
David Ben Gourion, Zurich, 1947

The above citation by the "founding father" of the Hebrew state, from a speech to the Zionist Action Committee, traces the logic of events: any act (or word) hostile to Israel will be regarded as the ultimate menace, the death of the Jews. Any other ideology based on such a paranoid vision of the world, on such a desire to crush the adversary under a moral weight before crushing him under the weight of arms, would have been ranked high among the totalitarian monstrosities of the 20th century, if it weren't for the self-censored media.

A more accurate biography (15) of Ben Gourion, the charismatic leader of a vague socialism, referred to him as Benito Gourion. A straight line connects his statement to that of Begin who, at the height of the offensive on Beirut in 1982, described the Arabs he was burning with phosphorous bombs as "two-legged animals thirsty for Jewish blood." This straight line transcends Israeli political cleavages and has basically one goal: the elimination of the Palestinians. Methods change only according to circumstances and the international environment. They are successively and concurrently: expulsion, land confiscation, murder, torture, massacre, deportation, exile – in a word, the "final solution" of the Palestinian problem. As illustrations, I could cite hundreds of confirmed facts mentioned in the Israeli press (much freer in this respect than the Western media).

I have been observing this situation for the past quarter of a century, since 1961, as I mentioned above. Books that would fill entire libraries have described it with tiresome monotony. I have often traveled to the Middle East and I have talked with the most diverse people, and yet, I have written very little. The main reason is precisely that there is on this subject abundant literature in French, and even more in English. The facts are solidly established. Anybody with the desire to find out can do so. Existing analyses may be subject to discussion, but it is not difficult to find excellent ones. There is certainly a vast hidden dimension of Israeli politics (armaments, nuclear, omnipresence of the Mossad and other intelligence services) but even in this domain, one can get a reasonably clear idea of the situation. For example, I wrote the following brief review of a book written by a former Israeli secret agent (16):

### A SULLEN MOSSAD AGENT

This book by a cynical Mossad agent, was dictated to an ignorant journalist, translated by incompetents, and arrived with a whiff of New York scandal (17). Books on secret services belong to a very profitable, hence very prolific literary genre. Countless memoirs have been written by former agents

of the CIA, MI 5, KGB, etc. or dictated by secret services to disinformation mercenaries such as Louise Sterling (Bulgarian Trail) or R. Seagrave (Yellow Rain) in the United States, Dominique Wolton (KGB), Kaufer and Faligot, and many others in France. All these publications, more or less inspired by these services' desire to have a good image, and especially to justify their existence, contain the good and the bad, a little that is true and a lot that is false, and it is not always possible to sort out truth from falsehood. "Veil," Bob Woodward's book on the CIA, is interesting. But the only completely authentic book with systematic in-depth description of a large secret service's operating procedures is Philip Agee's "Inside the Company: CIA Diary," Penguin, 1975.

Mossad has a somewhat particular status. It fosters, as a protective shell, the myth that it is "the best service in the world." Yet, side by side with its spectacular "successes," mainly political assassinations, it has committed considerable blunders. Its analysis capability of its Arab adversaries is not very impressive, and going by the judgment of a qualified user like Jacques Chirac, in his famous interview in the *Washington Times* of November, 1986, its services are "without any value," "all are infiltrated" and have no use except in "wartime." The originality of Mossad and other Israeli secret services is that they are of a small size (1500 to 2000 people) but that in each country, it can count on an extensive network of local collaborators provided blindly by chosen elements in Jewish communities, those the Mossad calls sayanim, "Jewish volunteers of the diaspora" (p. 321).

It is rather curious to realize that neither the press nor, it seems, the administration were ever interested in these networks of French citizens who volunteered in the service of a foreign power, determined to acquire, at any price, military and industrial secrets and to carry out attacks against people and property in the name of its war in the Middle East. The communists, who did not do as much, were stigmatized as "foreign agents." Only Vincent Monteil, in *Dossier secret sur Israel*, (Israel's Secret File) attempted to lift a corner of the veil from these secret networks that operate with complete impunity. As to the recruitment methods of Israeli agents in Arab countries, they are simple: money, a lot of money, enough money. That goes very well.

Ostrovsky talks about these "sayanim," but always vaguely. This officer in Israel's navy was trained for two or three years before he was commissioned as a "case officer" of the Mossad in 1985. He resigned from his post after five months because of internal conflict, of which he gives a hard to believe version. He gives an incoherent account of various stages in his training and then relates well known stories that are probably textbook cases, gone over during his training sessions. It is more than probable that these stories were arranged prior to being submitted to the sagacity of spy apprentices.

In September, 1990, the state of Israel asked a New York judge to ban Ostrovsky's book because it threatened the life of certain agents. A reading of the book belies this affirmation, since the author conforms strictly to the Israeli rule of not naming active agents. Others were widely covered in the Israeli and foreign press. There is no better way of authenticating a fabrication.

This book, launched with great noise, tells us nothing, absolutely nothing. Everything, and even more, has already been said, repeated, written and annotated in the press, especially the Israeli and American press. Several versions of these stories are known. They either differ in some detail or complement each other. For example, Ostrovsky tells us that the French technician killed in the bombing of the French reactor, Osirak, in Baghdad was paid by the Mossad to install a guidance signal for airplanes. But Ostrovsky does not give his name, Damien Chaussepied, given by Derogy, who tells us that the young man was "working overtime" (18). So, no revelation, even though the book is full of details, for the most part insignificant.

The picture the book gives of the Mossad is partial and banal. The author is surprised that secret agents like money and sex! Deep down, the real scope of the book is a sort of criticism. A close up image of the Mossad does not resemble that drawn up by gullible fools. The knights of heroic times have been replaced by cynical, corrupt manipulators, using dirty tricks to impose their own views on Israel's destiny and, through the best means, to insure its security. Poor Ostrovsky does not see, or pretends not to understand, that politics and secret services in Israel are in total symbiosis, and that a good part of the political establishment started their career in intelligence, and that the whole history of Israel's establishment, since the maneuvers to get the Balfour Declaration, is based on a very particular mixture of tricks, lies, dissimulation of real goals, absolute cynicism and deadly violence towards the Arabs. No power in the world is so racked by suspicion and deceit as a compulsory component of clandestine procedures, because those who exercise them were formed by them and govern through them. "Israeli democracy" is mostly a closed confrontation field of small clans, hell-bent on destroying each other but forced to compromise and coexist. But he does not push his analysis far enough to describe the unbelievable intertwining of the military-industrial complex, where former intelligence agents become representatives of weapons manufacturers, whose mission, in South America, Africa and elsewhere, is to manipulate local conflicts, sell "security" and weapons to all the protagonists, at the risk of losing in increasingly doubtful combinations, as in the case of the Sinhalese government and Tamil guerillas. Between arms shipments to Iran in the war against Iraq, and providing services (security, arms, training, mercenaries) to the Medellin Cartel – well documented in the press outside France – the line is less tortuous and the blunders well controlled. What is needed is another book on the Mossad, and this one should be added to the long list of the series, "Praise for the Mossad," or more precisely, praise for what should be the Mossad.

If you want to know more about the Mossad, read the more authentic novel, *The Little Drummer Girl*, by John Le Carré. If you want to understand the genesis of an ordinary Nazi chief, of a brutal and intelligent manipulator, read the *Memoirs* of General Sharon.

Through the years, I did not feel that I had so many new and original things to say, that would have justified speaking out. However, some writings testify to a deep feeling of horror, not so much of the expansionist politics by terror, as of its blissful

and passive acceptance by a West that cannot resolve to offer more than half-hearted criticism.

It can be said in this respect that if it is ridiculous to speak of a "Jewish conspiracy" in world affairs, as the prewar antisemites did, one can and must see that it is almost impossible, both in the press and in political circles, to measure Israel by the same yardstick as other countries (19). Everybody, with more or less hypocrisy, calls for sanctions against South Africa, but is careful not to do the same against Israel, which is closely tied to this same South Africa and pursues the same politics. This impunity is not due to an organized conspiracy. It is made of a generalized connivance with the Jewish establishment, which on this point, deploys all its political, financial and electoral resources in what Americans call a lobby, and the French a "pressure group" (20).

I shall come back to this, but in the meantime, I would like to share with readers the report on a visit to a Palestinian camp of Fatah in Jordan in 1968, prior to the large massacres of "Black September." I sent this article to Eric Rouleau, who dealt with these questions in *Le Monde*. He answered, saying that he had just commissioned an article on the same subject, which, I might add, was published a little later.

## CONVERSATION WITH AL FATAH

Amman, September, 1968. The city is poor, of striking poverty. This meager oasis, surrounded by dry hills, invokes immediately the British artifice that promoted it to the rank of an independent capital. The Bedouin emirate, that the 1948 war had transformed into a superficially modern kingdom, lost the West Bank that, thanks to the war in Palestine, it had annexed. Today, the country has practically no economic resources of its own. To subsidize the Bedouins, who form the rampart of the throne, the state allows a little trade, of which Amman is the miserable showcase. To travel its dirty streets, constantly crowded with idle men, Bedouins wearing jackets or young men dressed with questionable elegance, to see the pathetic stalls, one understands that the highest level of the Jordanian economy is the production of junk.

One also notices in the crowd women in loose traditional dresses, embroidered in vivid colors, and men in various military uniforms. Some in camouflage fatigues without insignia differed from the others by their busy pace: they are the Fatah commando members who patrol the city, doubling the rather relaxed Jordanian police.

This is a matter of great concern: the emergence of an organized force independent of royal authority. Since twenty years, the Palestinians are lumped together into a very active group which more than once forced the king to take measures he disliked. So far, pressure has been exerted through political means or, at worst, by street demonstrations, harshly repressed by the police. Now there is Fatah, a large, organized army, which enjoys the unconditional support of the vast majority of Palestinians, and which is ready to project its fighting spirit.

## Alert at 100%

At times, the king tried to react. At the beginning of the year, he had surrounded the Karameh refugee camp, where part of Fatah commandos were located, by his Bedouin troops – the old Glubb Pacha Arab Legion. The commandos were ordered to surrender and to give up their arms. They agreed to leave the camp, with their weapons, and asked the camp residents to show their solidarity by joining the combatants. The residents complied immediately. However, other alerted Al Fatah units took positions behind the Bedouins. The latter retreated, probably more convinced by this maneuver than by the political demonstration. The camp would be destroyed a few weeks later by an Israeli raid, which led to fierce fighting.

Having momentarily given up on a frontal attack, the palace did not seem to have dismissed the military option. There was no evening in Amman when gun shots were not heard. These were the troops of Sheriff Nasr, the King's maternal uncle, who would sometimes attack an isolated commando or a passer-by and put the responsibility on Al-Fatah. It is worth mentioning here that these men are paid 30 dinars a month by the central intelligence agency of a great Western power that has many connections. Some Fedayin were detained. Jordanian security has the sinister reputation of beating prisoners and giving them intravenous pepper injections. It is true that part of the population of Jordanian origin recriminates silently and takes the King's side. The conflict may remain unresolved for an indeterminate period (22).

The country lives at this moment under the threat of an Israeli aggression (Jordan is not in a position to attack its very powerful neighbor). Incidents multiply on the cease-fire line and military concentrations have been spotted west of the Jordan River. Arab armies are on alert, and Palestinian commandos, who know that they are targeted, are on 100% alert.

## "Youth" Camps

Having been unable to get to the training center near the border, they wanted to show me a "youth" training camp. It was near a refugee camp, a pile of overpopulated tents, surrounded by dubious greenery. Two silhouettes came out from behind the rocks and motioned for the car to stop. A kid with short hair and shiny eyes, dressed in washed out rags, clutched an old English, loaded submachine gun. No entry. He sent his friend, a little black boy bearing an enormous sword, to get information. The adults accompanying me approved by smiling and joking with him, but he watched us and remained tense (23).

When we arrived, two groups of children were sitting in camouflage fatigues in a circle around a monitor. They were eight to fourteen years old, and were attentively following explanations. One would have the impression of attending a boy scout meeting, were it not for the presence of an imposing Soviet machine gun in the center of the circle. Then, it was physical exercise punctuated by lineups and fictitious alerts triggered by a whistle. "We fear shelling. It can happen any moment. Yesterday, Israeli planes flew low over

the camp several times. They can do whatever they want. They use napalm and phosphorus bombs to attack women and children, as they did in Salt and Irbid (24). Nobody in the world criticizes them. They feel they have a free hand," said our interlocutor, with sadness.

Then the instructor gave a brief speech on the causes of the June, 1967 defeat (the Palestinians were not in the vanguard), on the autonomous and popular Palestinian Revolution, on the struggle, which will be long and will require a lot of courage, on love of the homeland, on the necessary sacrifices, and on the rejection of hate of Jews, as individuals. "It is very important," commented one of my escorts, "because the young often have ignorant parents, who tell them: the Jews took our homes and our lands. We must rid them of these ideas and explain things from a political viewpoint. Zionism is the enemy." It's all very good, but I don't believe in this kind of idealism. And several times when the interpreter translated "Israeli," I heard "Yahudi," Jew. I don't see why not.

### A Long Political Gestation

After the visit to the "Youth" camp, the conversation continued. I posed questions on the history of the organization.

"Like all revolutions, ours stems from the suffering, humiliation and hope of a people. Ours has been through many trials since 1948, both in Palestine and elsewhere. We slowly formed the idea that what was done by force can be undone by force. After the 1956 tripartite aggression, a vanguard got together and decided to put this notion into practice. The point was to form a purely Palestinian organization. Our action was to be a part of three "circles": the Palestinian circle, the Arab circle and the international circle (25). The organization must not have a class character because our Palestinian society has been crushed; classes no longer exist. There are bourgeois Palestinians in Beirut, Kuwait and elsewhere; there are Palestinian workers in Lebanon and in Syria; there are no longer any Palestinian peasants because the lands were taken. In the camps, there are no longer any classes (26). As for knowing whether this is a leftist or a rightist organization, it is sufficient to ask whether taking up arms to struggle against imperialism is a leftist or a rightist action. Our goal is not to fulfill UN recommendations on the 1947-48 partition, but to destroy the Israeli state. We have no animosity against people. On the contrary, we have stated, we state and we will always state that Jews who will accept to remain in a Palestinian Arab state will have exactly the same rights as all other Palestinian citizens, irrespective of their religion. We will be happy to accept them. Therefore, our struggle will accept no compromise short of the total liberation of our land (27).

"Conceived in 1956, this political work took place under very difficult conditions. Some Arab countries did not accept the existence of a purely Palestinian organization that was not pledged to any of the big Arab parties. Then we succeeded in launching our first military operation in occupied territory. The First of January, 1965, a commando of our military organization, Al Assifa (the storm), blew up a diversion channel of the Jordan River at Aylabun. The choice of the location had a symbolic meaning. This Christian

village had been the victim of a real butchery in 1948. Women and children who took refuge in the village church were massacred by the Israeli army. Since then, we have not ceased launching such operations, sometimes under very difficult conditions. Combatants are killed sometimes in enemy territory, sometimes on the border by Arab armies hostile to our actions."

Then we got to the Six Day War. I reminded him that one of the reasons given by Israel was the intensification of operations by commandos. Israelis call them terrorists:

"In fact, these operations had been going on for two years. The real cause was Israeli aggression. It is a state founded on aggression. There has not been a single year since 1948 that the Arab world did not suffer from its continual aggressions. If Israel struck in Gaza when the Arab countries refused to join the Baghdad Pact (28); if Israel struck in Khan Younis (Gaza) when Abdel Nasser took power in Cairo; if Israel struck in 1956 shortly after the nationalization of the Suez Canal; then Israel had to strike at the moment when the United Arab Republic (Egyptian-Syrian Union) launched its seven year plan to build heavy industry. It is for this type of reason that imperialism created Israel and maintains it in the middle of the Arab world.

"After the 1967 aggression, our people understood that it must take up arms. Other organizations were created at that time. It was for us a kind of tacit popular legitimization. Arab attitudes improved. Some countries started helping us.

"We stuck to our hit and run tactics, avoiding confrontation, until the attack on the Karameh camp on March 21 (1968). Commandos of Al Assifa were in this camp. The Israelis believed that our military command was there. They entered Jordan with their air force, two armored battalions and infantry – in all, 12,000 men. We had anticipated the attack and decided to resist. Fighting was very fierce and Israeli losses were substantial. They had to use helicopters to quickly recover the paratroopers dropped behind our lines that did not make their linkup. For us, the battle of Karameh was a political victory. We proved that national liberation fighters can resist a crushing superiority in numbers and equipment. The masses understood it; they came to join us in great numbers. We were virtually overwhelmed by this popular enthusiasm.

"We continued to concentrate our actions against the Israeli military system. The Israelis respond by terrorizing the civilian population and multiplying their bombing raids on Jordan. We warn that we, too, can attack Israeli cities. Then bombs exploded in Jerusalem and Tel-Aviv. We can escalate. It is up to the Israelis to choose."

I wanted to know more about operations carried out in the "interior." A man of about thirty was introduced to me. Like veterans of these operations, he spoke in a steady and confident manner. I don't know his exact military functions, but he knows what he is talking about.

"Operations are determined by the leadership according to a general plan. The political commissar prepares the unit for its mission. It must be remembered that they all have freely consented to the suicidal character of the mission. The attack takes place always in a very precise location, but the real problem is in the retreat because of the enemy's high mobility. We have no fixed fighting theory, so that the unit on the ground has complete freedom of assessment. We have introduced the principle of free discussion of the project before the operation, which led to some turmoil in the organization.

"Like all struggles of this kind, we avoid fighting during the day because of our reduced mobility, but the night is our domain. Along the Jordan, they have a system of fairly flexible dams, with fixed posts, projectors and ambushes that do not prevent us from passing through. But in the occupied territories, they do not patrol at night. When we attacked the Eilath oil installations on the Red Sea, we traveled back and forth 450 km in enemy territory. The border there is very near and very protected; we arrived from the back.... This also means that we have effective support from the interior. We have permanent military forces in residence in the interior. We send equipment and they participate in operations, or they conduct them alone. This was the case in operations against Shur in Galilee, the Chrysler plant in Nazareth, the cannery in Hodeira, the attacks in Jerusalem and Tel Aviv."

He said "Tel Abib," the Arabic pronunciation. It seems that some commandos are given Hebrew courses. We asked if they fight in uniforms. "More and more. We noticed that peasants are wary of armed civilians. But they spontaneously help us when we are in uniform. Furthermore, our perspective is to build a popular liberation army. At the moment, the response from the interior is massive. Our military development is extremely rapid – too rapid, maybe. It is possible for us to give the enemy a pounding, but we still lack support from a part of international opinion. We would like a parallel development of our actions in the three circles around our revolution."

Under these conditions, how does the political problem of the Israeli population get tackled?

"We want to make them understand the meaning of our actions. Many Israelis have no clear idea about the political significance of their presence in the Middle East. We use all available means, a ten minute radio broadcast in Hebrew every hour, newspapers, indirect contacts through international third parties. The Sofia Festival was positive in this regard. The problem is to win Israeli opinion to our cause. Many Jews are hostile to war against the Arabs. After June 5 (1967), we sent small groups to villages occupied in 1948. They went to see the Israelis who are living in their former homes in Jaffa, Acre, Tel Aviv and elsewhere. They were well received. We have studied the reports. The conclusion is that it is absolutely possible to gain the sympathy of a certain number of people. All our supporters know that the solution is not to slaughter the Jews, as some irresponsible people have said. When a comrade goes on a "civilian mission," that is, for an attack, we explain to him the gravity of his act; he knows that this is going to alienate the sympathy we were beginning to benefit from, and that the road will be long in restoring bridges

between Arabs and Jews. But it is very important that Israelis understand the true nature of the politics conducted by their government junta. The results are really still meager, even though voices are rising to denounce war, as a road that will lead to catastrophe. But we cannot wait until all have understood."

Are there Israelis who support your struggle and participate in it?

The question is annoying. After some quiet consultations:

"We cannot answer. But Moshe Dayan said that if he were Arab, he would do the same thing we are doing. There are wiser people than Moshe Dayan."

(September, 1968)

Twenty years later, I summarized Israel's existential situation as follows (29).

## TOWARDS A DISSOLUTION OF ISRAEL

When Claude Sarraute wrote (*Le Monde*, February 6, 1988) "Symbol people" referring to the "Jewish people," she did not think, in view of the current use of the term, that the former usage referred to a group of the faithful of a religion. Similarly, the "Christian people" did not come under any political identity. Still, these far away times were bathed in a sort of mystical union between faith and power. We are far from that. In our time, the word "people" applies to populations who live, voluntarily or not, within the framework of a state, or who claim the dubious privilege of having their own, for themselves. Under these conditions, one wonders what semantic contortions one has to go through in order to formulate a definition of the "Jewish people" that would not be immediately challenged by a large part of those it claims.

If, as can be seen, the phrase, "Jewish people," is not devoid of problems, that of "symbol people" is even more extravagant. To limit Jewish history to one dimension, that of suffering, dispossession and massacre is absurd reductionism. As history, it has its dark, tragic hours, as it has its moments of happiness and jubilation. Thousands of other peoples, a great part of whom have already disappeared, body and soul, throughout the centuries, have also lived this alternation of darkness and light. I am well aware that such comment may sometimes be considered sacrilegious: no one has the right to compare the fate of the Jews to that of any other human community. And if we don't accept that this right be refused to us in the name of some divine election that concerns only those who believe in it, they will refuse it to us in the name of Auschwitz, the symbol of barbarism in our time. Thus, a symbol is guaranteed by another, which is a peculiar logic but which is also a desperate effort not to face reality .

Confronting the symbol with reality is generally a painful operation. Images coming out of Israel are even twice as painful because they reverse the symbol – as an idol is brutally brought down – and because they show the savagery of bludgeoning, the desire to kill, the racist hatred of an occupation army that is intensely living the feverish fear of the colonized, who are awakening (as in

New Caledonia) and who are throwing stones at their oppressors. Far from symbols, this atmosphere is reminiscent of Algiers under the OAS, Rhodesia under Ian Smith or South Africa from Verwoerd to Botha. The same apartheid, the same brutal and bloody repression by a privileged minority of a native mass that rejects submission and shakes off its servitude.

Israel is founded on force and only on force. The theological-historical justifications (based on a crude travesty of history), the resolutions of the UN, which in 1948 assumed the right it did not have to dispose of the fate of Palestine, the "symbol" of suffering during the war in Europe – this composite mixture of "justifications" for the creation of Israel, good for consumption by European consciences, was never translated on the ground by anything else than the brutal force of guns, torture and generalized terror. Arabs did not consent to any of these justifications. Israel, the only modern state with neither a constitution nor legal boundaries, cannot, for a single moment, let go of its three instruments of founding terror: namely, guns and beatings for Arabs under its control, aerial bombardment of those around it and nuclear weapons to put pressure on great powers. The well known secret of Israel's nuclear arsenal testifies to the "perversity" of the symbolic, which is forced to always present Israel as weak and threatened.

In reality, the only weakness of Israel is precisely this force, or rather its exclusive confidence in force. Soviet or Arab missiles do not shake Israel. What shakes Israel are the naked chests of Palestinians, the small stones that recall the biblical story of David and Goliath. Founded on force, incapable after forty years of making itself welcome in a Middle East that it severely drenched in blood and fire, Israel is condemned to disappear. Westerners should be well inspired to vote a new Law of Return, giving Israeli citizens the possibility of emigrating to lands where their existence would no longer be based on the denial of that of others. Many are already doing that. Let us welcome with solicitude those who refuse to be accomplices to this new barbarism.

There has been a joke going around for some years now about a phantom project of an international conference which would miraculously settle the problem. This is but an elegant manner to gain time in order to reinforce Israel's arsenals and bail out its coffers. Militarily and financially, Israel is but the armed extension of American power. The difference between the Likud and the opposition is only a divergence in tactics over means and timing of annexation and domination. Unfortunately, the pacifists' voices remain inaudible. Besides, negotiate what? Even if the Arab dictatorships are made to ratify the status quo, even if a rump state is granted to a Palestinian bourgeoisie whose dreams are built on political chatter, what would be resolved? It is the whole system of Western domination over the Middle East, of which Israel is the advanced impregnable bastion, that is the source of all these convulsions. (30) To those who do not want to draw the appropriate lessons, the Iranian example shows that domination generates resistance which will fight to the end.

It is not only since December 1987 that this helmeted oppression rules and that the resistance manifests itself. Blood has been flowing for forty years. It is in this bloody quagmire that Israel is inexorably sinking. One day, there will be nothing left and future generations will no longer understand the why of this long ferocity. They will wonder how a symbol could have concealed its opposite for such a long time.

## ENDNOTES

1. The first part of this chapter was published in the *Annales d'histoire révisionniste*, No. 1, Spring 1987, pp. 109-135. Notes for this edition are between brackets.
2. [This thesis is still borne by the demonization of the Iraqi dictator, Saddam Hussein as Hitleroid. There are others.]
3. [This slander was picked up again by propagandists without scruples like Pierre Vidal-Naquet: "It is well known that Arab money, notably from Saudi Arabia, serves for the dissemination of revisionist theses," (*Le Nouvel Observateur*, 18-24 September, 1987.)]
4. During the summer of 1981, some articles in the Lebanese press and in the magazine, Doha, published in the Gulf, reported on the suit filed against Faurisson in Paris. It was also mentioned briefly in the influential weekly, *Al Hawades* (January 1, 1982), published in London, with the comment: "After this, one is not surprised by Claude Cheysson's declarations in Israel."
5. [Discovering the world, I looked for guides and teachers. So I spent time with Dr. Adel Amer, now deceased, the communist journalist Lutfi Al Khouly, and a young professor, Boutros Boutros-Ghali, who was in charge of the economic supplement of the newspaper, *Al Ahram*, now [1996] Secretary General of the United Nations. I am very grateful to them.]
6. This fairly short text, discussed with a group of friends and redrafted, was published under the title, "Introduction au problème palestinien, *Etudes anticolonialistes*, No. 1, November 1962. It was reprinted in June, 1967.
7. [Since writing these lines, this function of "promise for a better future" was picked up again by what the press calls "integrists," also called "islamists." They do not possess, anymore than their predecessors, disciples of a popular Marxist sclerosis, the keys to a true global reform of Muslim societies. In my opinion, their power is only transitory.]
8. [On certain French aspects of this question, see my review of a book by James Bacque, *Other Losses*, Toronto, 1989, reproduced in the present book as an annex, under the title: "Vae victis." It can be seen at:  
  
<<http://www.webcom.com/ezundel/english/04.faurisson/>>
9. There were direct reactions in Israel to the Faurisson Affair. But the answer came in June, 1981 in the form of a gigantic gathering of Nazi camp survivors whose mission was to testify in a definite manner for use by younger generations. For many weeks, the American network television channels dedicated an hour a day to reports

on this demonstration. The French committee that participated in this gathering was presided over by Simone Veil and led by a little known personality by the name of Georges Wellers, propelled by newspapers, radio and television for the distinguished part he played against Faurisson.

10. Evron mentions in his title, "the Jewish people," even though in his article, he seems to rather mean the "Jewish Israeli people." I put "people" in quotes in the first lines of the present text. The word leads to analysis problems with serious consequences in political understanding. It obviously has its origins in the political-religious concepts of antiquity. The contemporary ethnographer would rather speak of "tribe" to describe the Jewish people of antiquity, despite the fact that this term also covers very diverse sociopolitical formulas. The notion of a people in the diaspora context, refers rather to a religious notion. This ancient sense still holds, for example, for the Church, which can speak of a Christian "people." The modern notion of people, which originated from the revolutionary period, is completely inadequate and many Jews certainly do not feel that they belong to a Jewish "people" in the modern and Zionist sense of the term. On the contrary, one can speak of an Israeli people. To get into the details of this and many other important aspects of these questions, the reader is referred to the very rich and remarkable collection of articles by Maxime Rodinson, *Peuple juif ou problème juif?*, Maspero, 1981. Some of these articles have already appeared in Arabic. It is quite interesting that Rodinson put a question mark in his title and does not define what he means by "Jewish people." Such a term is too full of subjective considerations to be of any use in serious analyses.

11. Boaz Avron's full article was published in English in a small journal, now defunct, called "Israleft" and then in French in No. 2 of *Revue d'études palestiniennes*, Paris, Winter 1982, pp. 36-52. [Evron is a former member of the Stern gang. See clarifying commentary by Israel Shahak, in the same number, pp. 53-63, that gives of the evolution of the Goy (gentile) concept an historical analysis that I believe fundamental.]

12. [See, for example, the very bad book, *Le Croissant et la croix gammée*, by Faligot & Kauffer, a sample of this sub-literature written in the style of spy novels by "journalists" who are either hacks in the pay of the police or policemen making extra money in the literary world. Dominique Wolton is another beacon in this calculated distillation of police archives, a vast terrain open to all sorts of occult political maneuvers. Too bad the salt mines were closed.]

13. *The Birth of Israel. Myths and Realities*, by Simha Flapan (NY, Pantheon, 1987), is a useful book in this respect. Based on Israeli archival documents, he dismantles the main political myths, which are still current today, about the creation of the Jewish state.

14. It would be correct to consider that some Zionists, like Herzl and others, who were immersed in the racist ideas of the period, contributed to the formulation of this *völkisch* – i.e., "protofascist" – set of concepts where Nazism and the dominant currents of Zionism took root. See, for example, the reference to the manifesto of "Der jüdische Volkssozialismus," the Jewish National Socialist Party of Victor Arlosoroff, published in 1919, in the short but penetrating essay, "Chambre à gaz,

enfer sacré de Faust," (Gas Chamber, Faust's Sacred Hell) by Mondher Sfar, *Revue d'histoire révisionniste*, May-June-July, 1990, pp. 38-50. Visible at:

<<http://www.webcom.com/ezundel/english/04.faurisson/>>

15. For example, that of Michael Bar-Zohar, *Ben Gourion*, NY, Adama Books, 1977.

16. Appeared in *Maintenant le communisme*, Paris, No. 1, Spring 1991, pp. 34-36.

17. Victor Ostrovsky and Claire Hoy, *Mossad, un agent des services secrets israéliens parle*, 1990, 324 pp. (English original: *By Way of Deception. The Making and Unmaking of a Mossad Officer*, St. Martin's Press, 1990.)

18. Jacques Derogy and Hesi Carmel, *Israël ultra-secret*, Paris, Robert Laffont, 1989, p. 86.

19. Today, the best account remains that of Noam Chomsky in *The Fateful Triangle, The United States, Israel and the Palestinians*, Boston, South End Press, 1983.

20. See *The Zionist Connection*, a classic work by Alfred Lilienthal. There exists a second larger edition. The literature is considerable. See "American Jewish Organizations and Israel," an inventory by Lee O'Brien. On the penetration of the American political system, see *They Dare to Speak Out*, by Paul Findley, former congressman from Illinois, and the book already cited by Seymour Hersh. See also commentaries in the American press about the Pollard affair (spy for Israel).

21. I went back 15 years later. The West has spent a lot of money to modernize this bazar. But modern junk and the longevity of the crowned butcher in power did not convey more reality to this byproduct of colonial carvings.

22. In September, 1970, King Hussein ordered an attack with heavy weapons on the camps, resulting in eight to ten thousand dead.

23. This Palestinian universe was much better described by Jean Genet in his last book, *Un Captif amoureux*, Paris, Gallimard, 1986.

24. At the moment, I had not given full credit to this assertion, In fact, phosphorus use is forbidden by all international conventions in force. It had not been used since the massive Allied bombardments of big German cities. However, during the siege of Beirut in 1982, Israel's airforce made massive use of this prohibited weapon in full view of the international press. I don't remember any western government – so worried about a hypothetical Iraqi chemical attack – blink an eye about Israel's indisputable war crime.

25. This "theory" of three circles was outlined by Abdel Nasser in *Falsafat ath-thawra* (The Philosophy of the Revolution), a booklet widely circulated in the Arab world.

26. This assertion is a mental construct, as I found out during an investigation in the camps in Lebanon in 1973. Not only were social classes very tangible, but clan and

large family networks were also present. Traditional rivalries among large families were translated into allegiances to rival political organizations, whose clashes, sometimes bloody, expressed these power struggles, as much as rivalries between various Arab countries that financed them. Under nationalism and propelling it, there are always groups who intend to appropriate exclusively the eventual power of the state. But it is in their interest to keep as discrete an existence as possible. That is why I was not able to conduct this inquiry any further. I am one of those who totally support the Palestinian cause, without having the need to idealize those involved in it. On the contrary, the severe criticism that can be directed at them has been expressed for a long time in private in the camps and elsewhere. Development of the Intifada and of the so called fundamentalist movement, Hamas, are consequences of this critique. There are others.

27. There is a large proportion of Christians among the Palestinians. It is decreasing under Israeli pressure on Christians to emigrate. Note that the position expressed here by Fatah representatives has been abandoned by the PLO, which ended up accepting the principle of partition. Personally, I think that these enormous concessions will lead to nothing, that they are immoral and incorrect to convince the occupier. Those who applaud when the Palestinians give up defending themselves and accept the partition, should have applied such noble principles in 1940-44 and proposed to the Germans a partition of French territory.

28. Organization, similar to NATO, that the Americans set up in the Middle East during the cold war, in order to encircle the Soviet Union.

29. Appeared under this title in *Annales d'histoire révisionniste*, No. 4, Spring 1988, pp. 60-62.

30. My deep scepticism on what could come out of such an international conference since February 1991, as Basra was still smoking in ruin, was expressed in "L'idée d'une conférence internationale ou la grande mystification des peuples," *Gazette du Golfe et de banlieues*, No. 2, March 1991, pp. 16-22.