

Alain de Benoist Answers Tamir Bar-On

I accept with pleasure the invitation extended to me by Arthur Versluis to answer the article by Tamir Bar-On. I must nevertheless say that normally I would not have answered it. This text, the majority of which is simple chatter, in fact contributes nothing whatsoever to the intelligibility of the *nouvelle droite* (ND—New Right) and fulfills none of the requirements of academic or scientific research. As is often the case among Anglo-Saxon authors, it is a simple impressionistic compilation of disparate data, with no concern either for logical sequence or for conceptual coherence. The method, classical, to which the author has recourse, consists in referring to sources only to find confirmation of his presuppositions, systematically ruling out anything that might contradict them. This method is both that of lampooning (Bar-On does not write *on* the ND, but *against* the ND) and that of a modern form of sophistry reminiscent of the eristic dialectics of Schopenhauer, certainly not the argumentative pertinence that was defined by Chaim Perelman. Experience has shown me that answering such articles is in general a sheer waste of time. It is therefore only out of courtesy that I will make an exception.



But first of all, two comments. Here is the first. Bar-On has been interested in the ND since the year 2000, the date when he presented his Ph.D. dissertation at McGill University in Montreal.¹ He has since written two

books about it, of which the first has a ridiculous title.² Approximately 100 Ph.D. dissertations and books have been written to date on the ND.³ When one is working on an author or on a contemporary school of thought, it is common practice to contact the concerned parties, to question them directly, to have them explain their thinking, to see how they respond to objections. I myself often receive researchers who are working on the ND. I do not make it my business to know whether they are favorable or hostile to it. I endeavor only to answer their questions. Nothing of the kind with Bar-On, who has never made contact with me or with any other representative of the ND.

Concerning the sources that he has consulted, one is struck by their outstandingly selective character. I have published to date 90 books, 2,000 articles, and 400 interviews. Bar-On has clearly not made the effort to become acquainted with them. In the article to which I am here responding, out of 98 references and footnotes, he mentions the titles of only four of my books, a single article, and a single interview. He makes a direct quotation from only two of these books: *Mémoire vive*, which is a book of memoirs published in 2012, and *Vu de droite*, already more than 35 years old. That is rather meager to represent the views of the ND! All the other references are to secondary sources, commentaries picked up here and there, commentaries about commentaries, and so forth. If one now takes the book *Rethinking the French New Right*, one notices that there too the secondary sources are greatly favored to the detriment of primary sources. The bibliography mentions only 10 of my books (along with 21 articles), and the most important books (*Les idées à l'endroit*, *L'éclipse du sacré*, *L'empire intérieur*, *La ligne de mire*, *Communisme et nazisme*, *L'écume et les galets*, *Dernière année*, *Critiques—Théoriques*, *Le sfide della postmodernità*, *Nous et les autres*, *C'est-à-dire*, *Carl Schmitt actuel* [*Carl Schmitt Today* (London: Arktos, 2013)], *Cartouches*, *Des animaux et des hommes*, *Au bord du gouffre*, *Edouard Berth ou le socialisme héroïque*, etc.) are not even mentioned.

No less significantly, Bar-On also ignores all the works of other ND authors and intellectuals: Jean-Claude Valla, Michel Marmin, Anne Jobert, Yves Christen, Jacques Marlaud, Pierre Le Vigan, Charles Champetier, Michel d'Urance, Thibault Isabel, Jean-François Gautier, and so on. He does not mention their books and does not even cite their

names. He speaks of Marco Tarchi as the principal representative of the *Nuova Destra*, but does not cite any extracts from his many works on political science. Among the representatives of the Italian ND, he seems to know nothing about Giuseppe Giaccio, Maurizio Cabona, Stenio Solinas, Giuseppe Del Ninno, Alessandro Campi, Franco Cardini, and so on. On the other hand, he does not hesitate to present as “ND thinkers” characters that have not belonged to the ND for decades. This is the case, for instance, of Guillaume Faye, who left the ND more than 30 years ago because he no longer agreed with its orientations, who has since attacked it frequently, and who today is writing the exact opposite of what he wrote when he was part of it. The fact that he belonged to the ND in the past enables Bar-On to pretend to believe that he is still a representative of it and that his current writings involve the ND or can be attributed to it. This is intellectually indefensible. Nor is it especially honest.

The vast majority of the citations made by Bar-On, therefore, refer to secondary sources, often to authors who themselves have never read anything by the ND and who discuss it only by hearsay. This way of operating, which consists in referring to the opinion of others without ever taking the trouble to verify its pertinence or validity, characterizes writings of a polemical nature. In privileging the secondary sources, Bar-On is using and abusing the argument of authority (*argumentum ad verecundiam*), which consists in attributing value to an argument or an opinion because of the authority that is lent to its author, not the contents of this argument or the veracity of the opinion.

Second comment. Bar-On, from the beginning to the end of his article (and his books), treats the ND as a school of political thought. He makes a political analysis of it. He lends it political intentions and even a “desire to create a revolutionary new political order” (sic). He wonders where it should be categorized politically. He does not ask himself for a moment about the meaning of what the ND has called “metapolitics.” Now, it is well known that the ND is *not* a political party or movement, but a school of thought whose only work for nearly 50 years has consisted in producing tens of thousands of pages of books and periodicals, organizing seminars, colloquia, conferences or summer schools, while refraining from taking any political position, while refusing to give any guidance on voting. In relation to the current political scene, the ND has always adopted a

position of observer, never of actor. It produces analyses and thought; it offers a theoretical corpus; it accomplishes intellectual and cultural work. Nothing else.

Bar-On especially does not approach the ND in terms of philosophy. Now, any study of the ND that does not situate itself *first* on philosophical ground is thereby condemned not to understand anything about it. All the concepts used by the ND are indeed *first of all* philosophical concepts. The current of thought that the ND defines as its “principle enemy,” universalism (or individuouniversalism), is first a *philosophical* current. If one does not begin by asking how the ND situates itself in relation to the Presocratics and in relation to Aristotle, if one does not define its concept of human nature (and nature as a whole), one is doomed by that very act to be just talking to oneself. In the eyes of the ND, what are the philosophical roots of the axiomatics of interest? What does the nominalism of William of Ockham mean to it? What critique does the ND make of the thought of Descartes? What does it take (and what does it leave) of the works of Leibniz, Hegel, Wittgenstein, Russell, or Gadamer? How is its critique of totalitarianism similar to that of Hannah Arendt? What does the ND retain from Karl Marx’s critique of capitalism? What is the ND’s position concerning Platonism, Epicureanism, Stoicism, Gnosticism, historicism? Why is the ND interested in the theory of forms formulated by d’Arcy Thompson? What is its viewpoint in the field of historiography, and what role do authors like Vico, Herder, or Meinecke play in it? How does it understand the notion of paradigm put forward by Thomas Kuhn? Why does it attach importance to the philosophy of Clement Rosset, the theses of Michael Sandel, the sociology of Marcel Mauss, the psychology of Jean Piaget, the philosophy of law of Michel Villey? What is its point of view on Montaigne, on Hölderlin, on Ludwig von Bertalanffy, on Arthur Koestler, on Walter Benjamin? What does it retain from the writings on the imaginary of a Gaston Bachelard or a Gilbert Durand, from the philosophy of Henri Lefebvre or that of Merleau-Ponty? How does it situate itself in relation to Peter Sloterdijk? What is its conception of temporality? What, according to it, are the roots of the “disenchantment” (*Entzauberung*) of the world? What are the philosophical bases of its critique of the ideology of work? These are the kinds of questions that are right to ask *first* if one wants to discuss the ND seriously. No position of the ND can be

analyzed without taking into account the problematics of the political philosophy, moral theory, sociology, and epistemology to which it refers.

Interested only in politics, Bar-On disregards all the work accomplished by the ND in fields as important, and as diverse, as epistemology, theoretical physics, polemology, linguistics, economic science, history of religions. He totally ignores its many studies that have treated the philosophy of law, the theory of secularization, feminism, urban sociology, ecology, the history of art and contemporary art, literature, and the theory of cinematographic writing.⁴ I note additionally that he does not introduce any periodization that would allow situating a subject in its context, which is, however, a requirement when one intends to speak of a school of thought that has been in existence today for almost half a century.



Let us now come to the article by Bar-On. He himself sums up his approach with the following question: “How to situate the ND on the political map?” This is in actual fact the only thing that interests him. How to situate, classify, catalog the ND? What label to put on it? What the ND says interests Bar-On only to the extent that it may allow him to reach this objective of an exclusively topographic or cartographic order.

But why is this important? In the general opinion of everyone who has seriously looked into it, the ND has a certain number of characteristics of the Left and a certain number of characteristics of the Right. The ND has also entered into dialogue with many left-wing authors: Paul Piccone in the United States, Jacques Julliard or Jean-Marie Domenach in France, Danilo Zolo or Costanzo Preve in Italy, and so on. It is, therefore, an atypical school of thought. Some classify it to the right, others to the left, but what does this change in the overall understanding of the picture? Whether the ND is “to the right” or “to the left,” how does that alter what one should think about its orientations? What is one trying to demonstrate when one strives, as does Bar-On, to prove that “the right-wing positioning of the ND remains”? That this is enough to delegitimize it, because it would be less honorable or less interesting to be positioned to the right than to the left? This is distinctly the impression that one gets in reading Bar-On. To show that the ND remains a “right-wing” school of thought is a way for him to

discredit it, which says a lot about his presuppositions. If Bar-On wants to connect the ND with the Right, it is because he then hopes to be able to connect the Right with the extreme right, the extreme right with fascism, and so on. For this, he is prepared to take every shortcut, to make every simplification, and to disregard everything that contradicts his thesis. There one recognizes the fundamentally polemical character of his process.

The truth is that in the case of the ND as any other school of thought, or any author taken in isolation: the only question that is worth asking about it is to know what the *value of truth* of its proposals is. To this question, one can of course reply positively or negatively. If one replies negatively, then one must demonstrate how the positions of the ND are false or wrong. This implies first presenting the ideas of the ND in an objective and exhaustive manner (and not selective), then making a rigorous analysis of them, and finally resorting to a demonstration of the errors that one is attributing to it (demonstration that, itself, should provide the proof of its correctness). But all this is perfectly foreign to Bar-On, who demonstrates at no time that the positions of the ND are false or wrong. In a general way, Bar-On never asks himself about the *value of truth* of the thought or the works of the authors that he cites. He is interested only in the container, not in the contents. This is how his thesis is devoid of any scientific value. All that interests him, once again, is to know what label to put on the ND. What a derisory objective!

The very title of his article is problematic in itself: “The French New Right: Neither Right, nor Left?” In reading this title, the reader gets the impression that Bar-On will answer an assertion of the ND, namely the claim of being “neither left nor right.” Now, this claim was never formulated by the ND. I have myself constantly criticized the formula “neither right nor left,” not only because it refers to precedents in the history of ideas with which I do not identify, but also because it quite simply does not mean anything. Rather than “neither right nor left,” I have often written, it would be better to say “both right and left”: “both . . . and,” and not “neither . . . nor.”

The ND does not say that right and left do not mean anything. It by no means denies the historical existence of a right and a left, or rather of different rights and different lefts. It simply observes that this dyad has lost any operative value to analyze the field of ideological or political

discourse, because “right” and “left” have today become transversal tendencies that cut across almost all the political families. What the ND does say is that the new divides that have been emerging for the last few decades no longer coincide with the old left-right distinction. How to analyze in terms of right and left the proliferation of environmentalist claims, the rise of populism (does it represent an ideology or a style?), the shift of social democracy toward social liberalism, the debates about European construction, the emergence of bioethics, the opposition of the social and the “societal,” the contestation of development and growth, the evolution of China, the recent wars in the Near East? Is Islamism of the right or the left? And the single European currency? And productivity? Reductionism? Sovereignism? Communitarianism? Bar-On does not pose any of these questions. He recognizes only that certain “left-wing” authors also feel that the right-left divide has today become almost empty of meaning. He cites the opinion of Etienne Balibar and of Slavoj Žižek. He could have cited many others.

Remaining is the problem of definitions. When one speaks of right and left, one must give a meaning to these words, otherwise one is just talking to oneself. Now it happens that politologists have never managed to find a criterion that would allow distinguishing, on the one side all the rights, on the other all the lefts: no matter what framework of analysis is adopted, there are always exceptions. Bar-On, who does not cite any of their works, however numerous, does not stop at this difficulty.⁵ He takes shelter under the sole authority of Norberto Bobbio, whose opinion he thinks he can harness for the thesis that he wants to demonstrate. He does this without questioning the pertinence of this opinion, the limits of this authority, or the reception of the book by Bobbio and the critiques that have been addressed to it, principally in Italy (because in France the work has aroused very little interest).⁶ Nor does he take into account the fact that this book is for the most part a work of circumstances.⁷

Norberto Bobbio (1909–2004) is a specialist in the philosophy of law, of a rather sinuous previous political history.⁸ He was for a long time in contact with Carl Schmitt, with whom he exchanged a major correspondence—of which Bar-On is apparently ignorant. In the book that Bar-On discusses, which largely agrees with that of Marco Revelli, *Sinistra destra*, he makes the opposition between equality and inequality a

criterion for generally distinguishing between left and right.⁹ He also questions the relationship between the notion of equality and those of liberty, democracy, and authority, and makes a clear distinction between “extremism” and “radicalism.” It is precisely this method of binary thinking adopted by Bobbio to study the right-left dyad that has been contested, either in the name of other divisions (liberty-equality, progressive-conservative, puritanism-permissiveness, etc.), or by centering the analysis on the problems rather than on the positions. It has also been pointed out that Bobbio’s approach leads to saying nothing about the “center” which, in the European countries, has played a considerable political role in connection with the rise of the middle classes, and which is all the more difficult to classify as right or left as it is foreign to the “ideal types” in the sense of Max Weber.

Based on this idea that “right = inequality,” Bar-On writes: “ND thinkers are more on the right than left because they reject administrative and legal equality, the republican heritage of the 1789 French Revolution, and what they call the ‘religion of human rights.’” In reading this, one is astounded. The ND actually does *not* reject “administrative and legal equality”: it insists on the contrary on the necessary administrative, legal, and political equality of all citizens. *Nor* does it reject the republican heritage of the Revolution of 1789: this is even the most positive thing that it retains from it (while it criticizes Jacobinism and the influence of Enlightenment thought on the Revolution). Neither has the ND ever defended “the notion that individuals and cultures [sic] are not equal in terms of their ‘fitness to rule’”; (whatever can that mean?). As for the critique that the ND makes, not of the rights of man, but of the *ideology* of the rights of man, mentioning it makes strictly no sense if one does not say of what it consists and especially in the name of what it is formulated. Now, it is enough to refer to the texts of the ND—and first of all to my book *Au-delà des droits de l’homme. Pour défendre les libertés* [*Beyond Human Rights* (London: Arktos, 2011)]—to observe, not only that this critique is not a reactionary critique aiming, for example, to deny man the possibility of enjoying a certain number of basic freedoms, but that it is founded on the contrary on the idea that, considering its philosophical presuppositions, the ideology of the rights of man, which has indeed become today a sort of new civil religion, is a bad way to defend freedoms. What the ND says is that political freedoms must be defended politically,

and not by arguments of a moral and legal type exclusively borrowed from the Western tradition of the “universal abstract subject.” This critique is comparable, not to that of Joseph de Maistre or Bonald, but rather to that of Karl Marx.¹⁰

“Using Bobbio’s classification,” writes Bar-On, “the leader of the ND Alain de Benoist is on the right because he argued in *Vu de droite* that egalitarianism is *the* major ill of the modern world.” Here, Bar-On is evidently confusing equality and egalitarianism, which are, however, very different notions. I have at length insisted on the difference between equality and egalitarianism in my preface to the new edition of *Vu de droite* (2001). Bar-On, moreover, defines equality, among others, by “the idea that individuals are equal morally, spiritually or biologically.” May I be permitted to say to him, as a historian of ideas, that I know of *no* theoretician who has ever imagined that he could define equality in such an extensive manner (not even of course Plato, Rousseau, or Marx). It appears consequently very difficult to reproach the ND for not agreeing with such a wild idea, which evidently pertains to a mystical and timeless vision of equality.

But, to defend his point of view, Bar-On is not content to travesty the ideas of the ND. He also travesties those of Norberto Bobbio. When he writes, for example: “For Bobbio, equality simultaneously connotes legal or administrative equality, the liberal notion of equality of opportunity, the socialist meaning of equality of condition, and the moral, spiritual, and biological [sic] equality of humans beings in a universal spirit,” he is simply and plainly lying. Here is what Bobbio writes: “When one states that the left is egalitarian and the right is inegalitarian, this does not at all mean that, to be on the left, it is enough to proclaim the principle that all men must be equal in everything, independently of any discriminating criterion whatsoever; such an attitude would convey not only a utopian vision [. . .] but, even worse, would be a pure declaration of intentions to which it does not seem possible to give a rational meaning.”¹¹ Further on, Bobbio stresses that “natural inequalities exist, and if some of them can be corrected, most cannot be eliminated.” He adds that “it is correct to call egalitarians those who, while not being ignorant that men are at once equal and unequal, put the primary emphasis on that which brings them closer together for a good life in common.” Bobbio, in other words, does

not at all believe that political equality implies the biological, moral, spiritual, or natural equality of men. He also insists on the fact that equality is always a “social good,” contrary to freedom (that is why the concepts of freedom and equality are not symmetrical), and that it implies a relationship and a form of reciprocity.

Bobbio further distinguishes political equality from “equality as a value,” but also from the tendency to believe in the “equality of everyone in everything.” He specifies that equality must not be postulated on the basis of a value judgment that would imply seeking it for itself, for example, because it would in itself be preferable to inequality. The question, he says, must be approached in a “relative and not absolute” manner. What is desirable in the matter of equality must also be clearly distinguished from what is feasible, whether in respect of the distribution of tasks, employment, revenue or goods (material and cultural), or the criteria of this distribution (merit, competencies, rank, efforts, justice, etc.). Bobbio himself, finally, also condemns egalitarianism very clearly, in which he sees a “totalitarian inclination,” something that Bar-On is careful not to point out. The ND does not say anything else. In the exact sense that Bobbio gives the *political* notion of equality, it is thus obvious that the ND, contrary to what Bar-On states, is absolutely not inegalitarian.



Bar-On then wants to demonstrate that the ND’s concept of the world is an “ambiguous synthesis of the revolutionary right or Conservative Revolution (CR) and New Left (NL) ideals.” Whence his extraordinary statement according to which “the ND’s worldview could be summarized [sic] in the following formula: Conservative Revolution (CR) + New Left (NL) = ND.” Such a formula is simply ridiculous. Let us note first that the assimilation of the CR to the “revolutionary right” is intellectually and historically false. It can strictly apply only to the national-revolutionary current of the CR, in any case very much a minority current, not at all to the other currents, starting with the *Jungconservative* current, by far the most important. But that is only a detail there. To summarize the inspiration of the ND to the CR and “New Left ideals” demonstrates a quite exceptional shortsightedness. The ND has shown certain interest in

the German Conservative Revolution, but it has certainly not shown interest in all its representatives. It has on the contrary criticized many of them. Bar-On does not question himself about the manner in which the ND approaches the CR. He does not ask himself what are the *Leitbilder* of the CR that the ND retains, and those that it rejects. He says nothing about its analysis of the *bündisch* tendency or its critique of the *völkisch* tendency. All that visibly does not interest him.

The comparison between the ideas of the ND and “the ideals of the New Left” is no less problematic. Bar-On knows this very well since he laboriously attempts to show (at the cost of a good number of factual errors that I do not have the time to specify here) on what points the ideas of the ND and those of the NL coincide and on what points they do not coincide. The problem is that there are two basic differences between ND and NL that Bar-On does not talk about. The first is that the ND is a school of thought that still exists, while the NL today has died out. The second is that the ND is contained within a well-defined “perimeter”—the magazines *Éléments*, *Nouvelle Ecole*, and *Krisis*, as well as associations such as GRECE that come within the same cultural and intellectual circle of influence; while the label “New Left” is unusually fuzzy, since it refers to a vast configuration that, in the 1960s and 1970s, included both critical Communists and socialist-revolutionaries, Trotskyites, Maoists, anarchists, anarchosyndicalists, and so on.¹²

Bar-On finds nothing better to oppose the words of Paul Piccone, former editor of *Telos* journal, according to which “the ND is no longer right-wing and that they are akin to a ‘new New Left,’” than to recall the “right-wing origins of the main players associated with the ND.” Curiously, Bar-On otherwise recognizes without difficulties that “major Fascist thinkers from Benito Mussolini to Oswald Mosley had intellectual roots on the left,” but he considers that a representative of the ND who was a member of right-wing organizations in his youth could, by this fact alone, only “remain on the right” throughout his entire life. This is clearly an argument *ad hominem circumstantiae*, namely, a sophism. Karl Marx saw more accurately when he said that one cannot reduce a man to a single episode of his existence.

But especially, by limiting himself to highlighting the CR and the New Left, Bar-On is in fact concealing what the ND owes to other authors or currents of thought that, in the shaping of its worldview, have played a much more

important role. I am thinking first of the great founders of German sociology: Max Weber, Georg Simmel, Ferdinand Tönnies. I am then thinking of a certain number of epistemologists and scientific researchers (Henri Poincaré, Raymond Ruyer, Stéphane Lupasco, René Thom); the French school of sociology (Georges Bataille, Roger Caillois, Jules Monnerot, Louis Dumont, Julien Freund, Jean Baudrillard, Michel Maffesoli, André Gorz, Alain Caillé, etc.); various founding figures of political science (Machiavelli, James Harrington, Althusius, Boulainvilliers, Rousseau, etc.); the great school of French socialism (Pierre Joseph Proudhon, Georges Sorel, Benoît Malon, Pierre Leroux, Edouard Berth, Charles Péguy); the “nonconformists” of the 1930s (Georges Bernanos, Alexandre Marc, Daniel Halévy, Thierry Maulnier, Robert Aron, Denis de Rougemont, Emmanuel Mounier, etc.); the theoreticians of philosophical anthropology (Max Scheler, Helmut Plessner, Arnold Gehlen, Jakob von Uexküll, Konrad Lorenz); the disciples of Hannah Arendt, Karl Polanyi, or George Orwell (Christopher Lasch, Jean-Claude Michéa); the great theoreticians of contemporary environmentalism (Bernard Charbonneau, Nicolas Georgescu-Roegen, Edward Goldsmith); in short, a great many authors that have nothing to do either with the CR or with the New Left. There again, the approach adopted by Bar-On proves to be extraordinarily reductive.



Bar-On then paints a picture, as impressionistic as superficial, of the rise of the xenophobic populist parties in Europe since the last few years. From this he concludes that this rise has, directly or indirectly, been facilitated by the popularization of the theses of the ND, which would have furnished these parties with an argument and a legitimacy, and that conversely, in the near future, the development of these parties will not fail to facilitate the spread of the ideas of the ND by furnishing it with a new audience.

Bar-On writes that he wants to demonstrate “how Europe’s rising extreme right-wing tide from the 1990s onwards was in part due to the collapse of the Communist Union Soviet Union, a key edifice of the right-left political divide.” Such a sentence perfectly illustrates the incoherence of his analysis. To present the Soviet Union as “a key edifice of the right-left political divide” is simply meaningless: this distinction appears well

before the Russian Revolution of 1917, which has in no way contributed either to its formulation or to its spread. To say that the rise of the xenophobic parties in Europe “was due in part to the collapse” of the Soviet system is even more extraordinary. What is the relationship? Bar-On also seems to believe that identitary aspirations are necessarily of the Right, which shows that he does not know very much about the history of ideas.

The rise of the anti-immigration parties has in reality very different causes. It can be observed today in all the countries of Europe—including those where the ND does not include a single reader!—because the popular classes, who are the first victims, can no longer cope with being subjected to the social pathologies resulting from an immigration both too rapid and too massive that does not correspond to the traditional population of Europe. One can deplore these reactions. One can regret that they lead to xenophobic campaigns targeting “Islamization” in a hyperbolic and convulsive manner, thus feeding an absurd Islamophobia. One can condemn the way in which a certain number of political parties exploit these reactions to dubious ends, but there is no doubt at all that they are indeed the principle cause of this notable development in the political landscape. In France, according to the latest surveys, more than 75 percent of people find that “there are too many immigrants”—a proportion that one finds again in several other countries. We have reached the point where no French political party, of the right or left, risks taking sides in favor of more immigration. The parties differ among themselves only in the solutions that they suggest to facilitate the “integration” of the immigrants, and in the more or less restrictive methods that they advocate to regulate and control the inflows of migrants.

The second factor that explains the rise of the populist parties is the crisis of representation—and more broadly of representative democracy (by opposition to participative democracy)—that has characterized political life in Europe for the past few decades. The gap that separates the people from the leading elites has continued to widen in these last years, not only on the right, but also on the left. Added to the problem of immigration, this is what explains why so many former socialist or Communist electors vote from now on for the National Front. In most of

the elections, the major parties (known as “government parties”) get, altogether, only about one third of the votes, the other two thirds going to protesting or marginal formations. All this has already been the subject of many political analyses (see notably the works of Vincent Coussedière, Christopher Lasch, Jean-Claude Michéa, Annie Collovald, Guy Hermet, Pierre André Taguieff, Ernesto Laclau, etc.), but Bar-On apparently is unfamiliar with them.

Bar-On, who knows that the positions of the ND are clearly hostile to neoliberal capitalism, also takes care not to say that the xenophobic populist parties of Europe do not share these positions, since they are in the vast majority favorable to capitalism, to neoliberalism, as well as, furthermore, to a pro-American and pro-Israeli “Atlanticist” orientation in the area of international politics (while the ND is in favor of dissolving NATO). To say, under these conditions that, “like contemporary extreme right-wing parties, the ND was the beneficiary of a shifting anti-liberal [. . .] climate which [was] exacerbated by the rapid demise of Communist states and movements in Europe and worldwide,” amounts to stating a double absurdity, first because practically all the “contemporary right-wing parties” are also liberal parties, and even ultraliberal, then because the collapse of the Communist states and movements has not resulted in a general wave of antiliberalism but, quite the reverse, the imposition on the planetary scale of a worldwide ultraliberalism.

The ND, therefore, has nothing to do with these parties, not only because it does not take part itself in the political game, but also because the ND clearly disapproves of its orientations.

Bar-On writes further that the critique by the ND of liberal democracy (in the name, he forgets to say, of a more exacting concept of democracy) has been encouraged by phenomena as various as “the intensification of radical Islamism in the post-9/11 climate”; the “participation of European armies in Muslim states such as Iraq and Afghanistan”; the “increasing equation of Islam with radical otherness, terrorism, fanaticism, and a threat to Western secular values”; the “falling white European birthrate and the concomitant rise in nonwhite birthrates both within and outside Europe”; and “Western Europe’s relative economic decline in the global economy,” and so on. One obviously wonders what this somewhat surrealistic catalog can have to do with the critique of liberal democracy.

But it is revealing that, when he mentions the rise of the “negative perceptions of Islam,” Bar-On carefully refrains from saying that the ND has never stopped criticizing such perceptions, that it has denounced Islamophobia and xenophobia many times, that it has condemned the wars conducted in Iraq and Afghanistan, and that it refuses to subscribe to the theses of a Samuel Huntington on the “conflict of civilizations.” In the same way, he forgets that I myself have published in the daily newspaper *Le Monde* (27 October 1989) a text lending my support to young Muslim women who want to wear the Islamic veil, and that the editorial of issue no. 45 of *Elements* (spring 1983) was entitled: “With the immigrants, against the new slavery.” Bar-On, nevertheless, recognizes that “de Benoist declared an intellectual war against Jean-Marie Le Pen’s National Front for its excessive liberalism, moralism, integralism, and xenophobic racism.” But then, how could the extreme right-wing parties be indebted for part of their arguments to someone who has declared an “intellectual war” against them notably because of their “xenophobic racism”?

Further on, Bar-On maintains very seriously that “the right-wing turn of Europe in the 1990s and beyond was certainly assisted by the ND, which provided personnel and novel discourse formulations for extreme right-wing political parties such as ‘the right to difference’;” Now it happens that, unfortunately for him, none of these parties invoke “the right to difference”! This expression that, in the past, had sometimes been employed by the Left (and not by the Right), has moreover almost disappeared from public discourse today.¹³ The partisans of immigration instead talk about a “right to in-difference.” The ND is almost the only one to use it. Bar-On does not know, in addition to this, what the thematic of the right to difference owes, not only to Herder, but also to Franz Boas, Sélim Abou, Claude Lévi-Strauss, and Georges Devereux. He apparently is unfamiliar with the work of the neo-Marxist philosopher Henri Lefebvre, and his *Manifeste différentialiste* (1970), where the history of humanity is presented as a “titanic battle between the homogenizing powers and differential capacities.” He does not know, either, the works of the ethnologist Robert Jaulin on the eradicating universalism of the West, which agree with the works of Serge Latouche in the same protest against “universalist ethnocentrism” and “the disappearance of the plural in a single world.”

Especially, he refrains from saying that the “right to difference” has never been absolutized by the ND. In the *Manifeste de la Nouvelle Droite de l’an 2000* [*Manifesto for a European Renaissance*, Alain de Benoist and Charles Champetier (Arktos, 2012)], differentialism is indeed clearly opposed, not only to the universalist utopia, but also to any subjectivism pertaining to “tribalism.”¹⁴ It is presented as the expression of a nonethnocentric vision of human diversity. This was commented on by Pierre André Taguieff, according to whom this argumentation marks “a desire to distinguish itself from the racist nationalism of the Lepenist milieu.”¹⁵ The right to difference is not synonymous with a duty to maintain these differences in all circumstances at the cost of confining individuals to a group of origin or of belonging. Nor is it a sacralization of identities, in the perspective of a self-affirmation pertaining to pure subjectivism. As was excellently said by the theoretician of Occitan regionalism Robert Lafont in 1986, “Each subject has rights to its culture; no culture has rights on the subject.” The ND thus does not defend an ontological vision of diversity or of “difference,” but an ontic vision. Does Bar-On know the difference between an ontic perspective and an ontological perspective?

Bar-On also assures that “the ND calls for the end of liberal or socialist multiculturalism.” Where would it have done so? In what texts? On what occasions? A mystery. Bar-On, who obviously knows little about French politics, does not know that “multiculturalism” is not a thematic debated in France (contrary to “communitarianism”). Historically, multiculturalism finds its origin in the policy implemented at the beginning of the 1970s by the Canadian Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau. One of its theoreticians is the “communitarian” Charles Taylor, whose works the ND has frequently praised. In France, multiculturalism has constantly been interpreted as a policy opening the door to an ethnicization of the public sphere by means of “communitarianism.” Liberal multiculturalism as it is conceived, for example by Will Kymlicka, is not part of French problematics.

On multiculturalism, Bar-On, in addition, accumulates contradictory proposals. In his book *Rethinking the French New Right*, he lends the ND an “anti-multicultural model of democracy” (p. 147). In following, he writes that “liberal and left-wing communitarians such as Charles Taylor and Will Kymlicka endorsed a liberal multiculturalism that seemed to

echo (sic) de Benoist's ethnic differentialism" (p. 149). Finally, he writes: "It is rather stunning that the word 'multiculturalism' is omitted from the ND manifesto." Bar-On is out of luck: the term "multiculturalism" (*polymulticulturalisme*) certainly is cited in the *Manifesto*, and not in a hostile way: "Polyculturalism, which implies at least pluralism, is better than assimilationism" (p. 74).

Bar-On assures that for the ND, "elite, hierarchical rule is favored above representative democracies." A little further on, he repeats; "The ND's conception of politics is elitist and hierarchical." This is absolutely laughable when one knows that the ND has on the contrary spoken out for a basic democracy, that is to say, a democracy that begins at the base (in accordance with the principle of subsidiarity), in other words a democracy both participative and direct. To realize this, it is enough to refer to the chapter of the *Manifesto* entitled: "Against the New Class: For Autonomy from the Bottom Up," where it is stated that it is necessary "to return more autonomy to the basic structures that correspond to meaningful orders or worldviews (*nomoi*) experienced daily" and that "communities must be able to decide for themselves in all matters concerning them, and their members take part at every level of democratic deliberation and decision-making."

Nevertheless, in his article, Bar-On also writes that one of the common points between the ND and the New Left is to speak out "for 'the people,' broadly defined, against political or cultural 'elitism'"; and "for an economic system in the 'service of the people' rather than 'elites.'" That is something rather strange for a current of thought whose concept of politics one has just called "elitist and hierarchical." So then, is the ND "elitist" or "hostile to elites"? And furthermore, what meaning should we give the word elite? That of liberal meritocracy? That of Vilfredo Pareto and Roberto Michels (the "Iron Law of Oligarchy," referring to the inevitable tendency of all organizations to produce an oligarchic elite)? The notion of elite is in fact a neutral notion. There is also an elite of gangsters and an elite of prostitutes. One calls "elite" those who prove themselves best in a given area, but that tells us nothing about the value or interest of what they are best at. Caught in his own contradictions, Bar-On finishes by writing that "the ND certainly appeals to the 'people' against dominant political and cultural 'elites' in a populist mold yet

favors elitist, hierarchical societies.” Arrived at this point, the reader cannot understand anything anymore. That is because there is nothing to understand.

Bar-On goes as far as to pretend that the “discourse innovations” employed by the extreme right-wing parties to deny their racism “were borrowed from de Benoist and other ND thinkers.” Really? Any proof? None of course. This is merely one gratuitous statement among others. One will admire in passing a sentence such as this: “Echoing (sic) the ‘anti-racist’ discourse of ND leader Alain de Benoist, the extreme right-wing parties insist they are not racist.”¹⁶ This sentence is built on a syllogism of the classical type: (1) Alain de Benoist says that he is not racist. (2) The extreme right-wing parties say the same thing, although they are obviously xenophobic parties. (3) The denials of these parties not being credible, neither is Alain de Benoist. This is about as intelligent as saying: (1) Hitler liked dogs. (2) Tamir Bar-On likes them too (maybe!). (3) Therefore, Tamir Bar-On is a Nazi.

Such a comparison (on the denial of racism) is in fact just simply shameful. I have devoted an entire book (*Des animaux et des hommes*) to criticizing ideologies of the “biologistic” type. I have also published three books against racism. The ND, therefore, does not limit itself to “denying” that it is racist, in the same way done, for political reasons, by political parties whose xenophobia is their stock-in-trade. It gives a precise definition of racist ideology and shows how it is mistaken. It analyses its presuppositions and its formative themes, and refutes them: “Racism is a theory that postulates, either that qualitative inequalities exist among the races such that one can distinguish generally ‘superior’ and ‘inferior’ races, or that the value of an individual is defined entirely by his or her racial belonging, or again that race constitutes the central determining factor in human history. These three postulates may be held together or separately. All three of them are false” (*Manifesto*). It is difficult to be any clearer. A little further on, still in the *Manifesto*, the position of the ND is summarized in these terms: “Neither apartheid nor melting-pot: acceptance of the other as the Other in a dialogical perspective of mutual enrichment.” This position, directly inspired by Martin Buber, is at the antipodes of any attitude of “exclusion.” It implies a conciliation of heterophilia and antiexclusionism, that is to say, a critique of universalism

that does not imply the rejection of the universal, but a redefinition of the latter “not by negation, but as a deepening of our own singularity” (Hegel). This is again what the *Manifesto* maintains, in the chapter called: “Against Racism: For the Right to Difference,” when having stressed the falseness of the racist theories, it maintains that “the wealth of humanity is its irreducible plurality” and calls for “restoring a positive meaning to the universal, not by opposing difference, but by starting with it.” Bar-On knows this text, but he has chosen to act as if it did not exist. That is his method. It judges him.

The dishonesty of Bar-On appears clearly when he writes, for example, that “the ND argued that the ‘silent majority’ (white, European, and Christian) rejected Europe’s ‘genocidal’ immigration politics,” while this citation refers to a text by Guillaume Faye published in the year 2000, or nearly 30 years after he had left the ND. It also appears when he states that “the ND wants to make citizenship contingent on ethnic origins” (sic); when he declares that the political concept of the ND “implies the domination of ‘original’ European ethnic group in citizenship, welfare benefits, and jobs, in relation to non-Europeans and immigrants,” as well as “*homogeneous* political communities cleansed [sic] of nonnatives”; or again when he assures that the ND “longed for the erection of numerous ‘homogeneous communities’ in a regionalist and pan-European framework” and that it aspires to an “ethnocracy.” To base all these allegations, Bar-On advances no specific facts. He furnishes not a single citation: and for good reason, since there are none. Bar-On goes as far as to allude to the “culturally based (or racially based) agenda of the ND”—as if “culturally” and “racially” were synonymous! I of course challenge anyone to cite ND texts showing the existence in it of a “racially based agenda.”

Bar-On greatly insists on “homogeneity.” Thus when he writes that the regionalism professed by the ND “can be *interpreted* [my emphasis] as the desire to create more internally homogenous European nations,” while forgetting that an interpretation always reveals more about the intention of the interpreter than about the reality of the thing interpreted . . . It is true that homogenous societies are easier to govern than fragmented or divided societies. But in politics, the only thing that counts is *political* homogeneity and shared values. Contrary to what Bar-On boldly claims, there exists no text where the ND gives “homogeneity” an ethnic content.

For the ND, communities or collective identities are above all dialogical entities, and not ethnic entities.

Starting there, Bar-On has no other resource than to make things up. His statement that “the ND favored a primordialist [sic], organic, and biological belonging rooted to the notion of *jus sanguinis*,” for example, has come wholly from his imagination. The ND has never defined rooting or belonging in such a ridiculously reductionist manner. “As the French ND’s official manifesto made clear,” he writes further, “immigration was officially rejected and an organic conception of citizenship based on shared ethnic homogeneity supported.” Further on, he even assures that the ND rejects “minority rights.” There really is no lack of temerity here. One realizes it immediately in referring to the *Manifesto* in question, to which Bar-On alludes . . . without running the risk of course of citing the slightest word. In this text, immigration is criticized as a “forced uprooting” for which the responsibility does not lie with the immigrants, “but with the rationale of the capital that has reduced man to the level of merchandise that can be relocated anywhere” (p. 72). The *Manifesto* then takes the position for integrating immigrants according to “a communitarian model, allowing individuals who so choose not to cut themselves off from their roots, and not to have to pay for respecting the necessary common law at the price of abandoning their own culture” (p. 74). In other words, the ND explicitly proclaims the necessary respect of “minority rights.” Where is there anything about an “organic conception of citizenship based on shared ethnic homogeneity”? About a negation of “minority rights”? The answer is simple: nowhere.

In *Rethinking the French New Right*, Bar-On goes as far as to write that in the *Manifeste de la Nouvelle Droite* [*Manifesto for a European Renaissance*] “the ND is obsessed with the *ethnos*” (p. 153). Now, the very word *ethnos* does not appear a single time in the text of the *Manifesto*. It is in truth, Bar-On, who is literally obsessed by the notion of *ethnos*, as shown by a reading of his book, where he repeats that “for the ND, the *ethnos* is opposed to the most real, first-order community identity” (p. 145), that “for the ND, the *ethnos* is opposed to the *demos* (ibid.), that “the ND seeks the triumph of ethnic belonging” (ibid.), that “his primordial commitment to a political project [is] based on the centrality of a *homogeneous ethnos*” (p. 146), that there exists an “ND preference for

ethnos above *demos*” (p. 147). Elsewhere, he has the audacity to cite an author according to whom the ND “sought the active exclusion of the ‘other,’” to the extent that “it seems logical to suggest that the exclusivity of the ND vision of halted immigration atomized communities and would lead to cultural ignorance [sic] and racial persecution” (p. 148). As usual, none of these statements is supported by a citation of any kind.

The truth is that the ND not only does not support these kinds of theses, but supports exactly inverse positions. A “people” can certainly always be described at once as *demos*, as *ethnos*, or in terms of social stratification (the popular classes). But in politics, the only definition that counts is as *demos*. The definition of the people that the ND gives is thus very clearly a definition in terms of *demos*, and not *ethnos*. For the ND, a people is made up of the whole body of citizens, whatever may otherwise be their beliefs, their affiliations, or their origins. The ND explicitly rejects any politics founded on ethnicity, not that ethnicity is a myth, but because a strict separation of politics and ethnicity (comparable with the separation of Church and State) is a principle necessary for the functioning of the state. I have explained this at length in the book that I have written on the notion of identity.¹⁷ Bar-On does not even mention its existence.

Bar-On finishes by writing: “I also suggest that the Norwegian ‘lone wolf’ terrorist Anders Behring Breivik only differs from the ND in his violent tactics.” I am very sorry to have to use this term, but with this unforgiveable sentence, we are really on the verge of abjection. Everyone knows that all the “ideology” of the Islamophobic Christian criminal Anders Breivik, support of Israel and Judeo-Christian culture, is limited to the fantastical notion of Eurabia, which has always been denounced by the ND. No one can take seriously someone who falls to such a level that he comes to write such monstrosities.¹⁸

Let us sum up. In his article as in his books, Bar-On unceasingly attributes to the ND positions that do not belong to it, and are even sometimes diametrically opposed. It is obviously easier for him to attack positions that the ND does *not* support than those that it does support. Bar-On, in other words, attacks an ND that he has fabricated out of nothing to make it correspond to his presuppositions, thus giving an overview of the ND with which no representative of the ND can identify.

This appears in a patent manner when he claims to describe “the ND’s ideal society and state” by enumerating characteristics as fantastic as an “organic and hierarchical order”; an “Indo-European, pagan, roots-bases, mythical [sic], and homogeneous social order”; a “political order synthesizing modern, postmodern, and premodern philosophies” (sic); the “erection of ethnically homogeneous regions or nations”; a “capitalist market constrained by ethnically-conscious [sic] elites and ‘the people’ [. . .] in a collectivist, corporatist vision,” and so on. These are as many statements that correspond to nothing. Independently of the fact that for the ND, there does not exist any “ideal society and state” (this expression is clearly meaningless), not only does the ND want none of all this, but all this corresponds very precisely to what it does *not* want. It is enough to read it to realize this. What the ND wants is a federal Europe, founded on the principle of subsidiarity and participatory democracy at every level, where the political clearly predominates over the economic, where the financial markets do not rule everything, and where commercial and merchant values are put back in their proper place.

To arrive at his ends, Bar-On remains silent about everything that might be liable to contradict his thesis. He has recourse to a trial of intention, and sometimes to lies.¹⁹ His most common procedure nevertheless remains deformation. To write for example that, “while the ND is no fan [sic] of the excesses of capitalism, it does not attack economic exploitation within European societies” is just ludicrous when one is aware of the hundreds of pages that the ND has devoted to denouncing the exploitation of workers and of work living off the financial market, the logic of profit, and what I have called Form-Capital, that is to say, capitalism as the general form of society (which corresponds to *Gestell* in the terminology of Heidegger).



To finish, I will make a few comments on the reception, or rather the nonreception, of the ND in English-speaking countries, and more particularly in the United States. This nonreception appears to me to have five different causes. The first is the relative indifference that the Anglo-Saxons have always had toward ideologies, and more generally toward intellectuals. The latter are even frowned upon rather often in the United

States. British or American philosophy is in essence a philosophy of a positivist, rationalist, empiricist, or analytical tradition. The reception of what has been called in the United States the “French Theory” shows in itself that the Americans have not understood very much about Michel Foucault, Jean-François Lyotard, Jean Baudrillard, Gilles Deleuze, or Jacques Derrida. This is apparently also the case for the ND.²⁰

The second reason is that the French language is not practiced very much in the United States, and that a very small number of ND productions are at the present time (2013) available in the English language. While more than 35 of my books have been translated into Italian, only a few have appeared in England or in the United States—and the most important titles still remain unpublished. The reader who reads the works of Bar-On, therefore, does not have the possibility to check his allegations by referring to the sources. The secondary literature only partly fills this gap. The book by Tomislav Sunic is of some interest, but it originates from a Ph.D. dissertation obtained in 1988 at the University of California at Santa Barbara and thus discusses only the beginnings of the ND: none of the work accomplished for the last 25 years is mentioned there. The book by Michael O’Meara (Michael Torigian) is much more up-to-date, but the author lacks distance toward his subject.²¹ The only people who appear to me to understand the nature and meaning of the ideas of the ND are the organizers of the left-wing journal *Telos*, in particular its founder Paul Piccone, today unfortunately deceased. Despite its fragmentary character, the special issue of *Telos* on the ND remains under these conditions the best introduction to the ideas of the ND existing at the present time in the English language.²² I would be tempted to add here reading the works of Christopher Lasch, who has obviously never spoken about the ND, but who is the American author with which the ND feels most closely connected (something that Bar-On never mentions).

The other reasons are of a different order. There is first a problem of labeling. The expression *nouvelle droite*, invented by the media in 1979 (and therefore not originally a self-appellation), has the great disadvantage, when it is translated into English, not to be distinguishable from the “New Right” in the United States. Now, not only do the ND and the “New Right” have different sources of inspiration, but also it is not an

exaggeration to say that their positions are radically opposed. This is a source of considerable equivocation. Another source of equivocation resides in the vocabulary. The ND has frequently called liberalism its “main enemy.” Now, this word does not at all have the same meaning on both sides of the Atlantic. For the Americans, “liberalism” is a left-wing tendency that accepts strong state intervention in the affairs of citizens. For the Europeans, on the contrary, “liberalism” is the economic and political doctrine that defends free trade, the market economy, methodological individualism, the superiority of the private over the public, and so on. That is the reason why political leaders such as Ronald Reagan or Margaret Thatcher are considered in Europe as typical “liberals,” while in the United States they appear instead as “conservatives.” If one does not keep this fundamental distinction in mind, one can quite simply not understand anything about the critiques that the ND directs against “liberalism.”

The last reason, finally, is that the ND has constantly shown itself very critical toward the United States, whether concerning its institutional and political principles since the time of the Founding Fathers, its Constitution, its foreign policy, or the American way of life. I will not go into the details here of this critique, about which a great many books and articles have been written. But I am well aware that it is not likely to make the ideas of the ND accepted and understood in the United States!

—Translated by Christine Rhone

NOTES

1. Tamir Bar-On, “The Ambiguities of the Intellectual European New Right, 1968–1999” (Ph.D. diss., McGill University, 2000).
2. Tamir Bar-On, *Where Have All the Fascists Gone?* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007); Tamir Bar-On, *Rethinking the French New Right. Alternatives to Modernity* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2013). The article published here takes up the main points of chapter 2 in the latter book (“Neither Right nor Left?,” 33–62).
3. The most serious are the following: Eric Arckens, *De “Nouvelle Droite” als ideologie tegen de westerse consumptiemaatschappij. Een benadering*, Bachelor’s thesis (Leuven: Katholieke Universiteit te Leuven, 1989); Lorenzo Papini, “Dalla Vecchia destra

- rivoluzionaria alla Nuova Destra. Il pensiero politico di Alain de Benoist” (Ph.D. diss., Università degli studi di Pisà, 1989); Pierre-André Taguieff, *Sur la Nouvelle Droite. Jalons d’une analyse critique* (Paris: Descartes et Cie, 1994); Francesco Germinario, *La destra degli dei. Alain de Benoist e la cultura politica della Nouvelle Droite* (Torino: Bollati Boringhieri, 2002), 158; Valentina Pozzi, “L’antiamericanismo nella Nuova Destra. Origini, forme, prospettive” (Ph.D. diss., Università degli studi di Pisà, 2003); Michael Böhm, “Kontinuität und Wandel im Denken von Alain de Benoist—eine intellektuelle Biographie” (Ph.D. diss., Technische Universität Chemnitz, 2005); Costanzo Preve, *Il paradosso de Benoist. Un confronto politico e filosofico* (Roma: Il Settimo Sigillo, 2006); Adelheid Zinell, *Europa-Konzeptionen der Neuen Rechten, unter besonderer Berücksichtigung Frankreichs, Italiens und Belgiens* (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 2007); Stefano Sissa, “Le categorie della ‘destra’ nel pensiero politico di Alain de Benoist” (Ph.D. diss., Università di Modena e Reggio Emilia, 2008); Michael Böhm, *Alain de Benoist und die Nouvelle Droite in Frankreich. Ein Beitrag zur politischen Ideengeschichte des 20. Jahrhunderts* (Munster: LIT, 2008); Stefano Sissa, *Pensare la politica controcorrente. Alain de Benoist oltre l’opposizione destra/sinistra* (Diegaro di Cesena: Arianna, Bologna, et Gruppo editoriale Macro, 2009); Massimiliano Capra Casadio, “La Nuova Destra dalla Francia all’Italia 1974–2000” (Ph.D. diss., Università degli studi di Bologna, 2010); Rodrigo Agulló, *Disidencia perfecta. Una aproximación a la “Nueva Derecha” francesa* (Madrid: Altera, 2011); Massimiliano Capra Casadio, *Storia della Nuova Destra. La rivoluzione metapolitica dalla Francia all’Italia, 1974–2000* (Bologna: Cooperativa Libreria Universitaria Editrice Bologna [CLUEB], 2013).
4. To cite just this single example, an entire university research paper was produced on the works about cinema published by the ND: Michel-Benoit Fincoeur, “Nouvelle Droite et cinéma. Analyse critique du discours de la Nouvelle Droite métropolitique française de 1968 à 1995” (bachelor’s thesis, Université Libre de Bruxelles, 1996).
 5. Bar-On mentions only the typologies of the rights (in the plural) owed, on the one hand, to René Rémond and, on the other, to Roger Eatwell and Anthony Wright, but he does not question their validity. Their insufficiency is nevertheless demonstrated by the fact that a current as important in France as Gaullism cannot be included in any of the political families that are cited there (not even “Bonapartism” in the case of René Rémond, which is also supposed to include fascism). Concerning the right-left distinction, Bar-On also takes up the current idea according to which “right and left is a political division that dates back to the bloody birth pangs of the French Revolution.” He forgets to indicate that these two notions in reality only entered into political discourse at the very end of the XIXth century (it never occurred to Marx, Engels, or

- Bukharin to define themselves as men of “the left.”). He does not hesitate, finally, to cite the royalist Charles Maurras and the “traditionalist” Julius Evola among the representatives of the “revolutionary right,” which is an obvious falsehood.
6. Cf. for example Marcello Veneziani, *Sinistra e destra. Risposta a Norberto Bobbio* (Firenze: Vallecchi, 1995); Costanzo Preve, *Le contraddizioni di Norberto Bobbio. Per una critica del bobbianesimo cerimoniale* (Pistonio: CRT, 2004).
 7. Bobbio wrote it on the occasion of the Italian campaign for the first elections of a majority vote opposing two “poles” classified right and left (National Alliance, Lega Nord et Forza Italia on the one side, PDS on the other), but at the time, it was not obvious that they could be easily defined by the classic criteria of right and left.
 8. Under fascism, he was a member of the antifascist movement Giustizia et libertà. Arrested in 1937, then released, he wrote a letter to Mussolini to assure him of his fascist convictions. He then took part, in 1942, in founding the Partito d’Azione. After the war, he taught the philosophy of law, then political philosophy at the University of Turin. He joined the socialist party in 1966 and was named senator for life in 1984. In 1991, he approved the war against Iraq.
 9. Marco Revelli, *Sinistra Destra. L’identità smarrita* (Roma-Bari: Laterza, 2007). For a critique of Marco Revelli’s ideas about the ND, cf. “Un’altra critica da sinistra: Marco Revelli e la Nuova Destra,” in *Diorama letterario* (August–September 1997), 206.
 10. Bar-On says nothing, moreover, of the savage critique made by Karl Marx of the notion of equality such as it was maintained by Enlightenment philosophy or in utopian socialism. (Marx did not suggest moving from the reign of inequality to that of equality, but from the reign “of necessity to that of liberty”).
 11. Norberto Bobbio, *Destra e sinistra. Ragioni e significati di una distinzione politica* (Rome: Donzelli, 1994); English translation: *Left and Right. The Significance of a Political Distinction* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1996); French translation: *Droite et gauche. Essai sur une distinction politique* (Paris: Seuil, 1996).
 12. Let us note in passing that Bar-On’s description of the “geneology” of the New Left is stunningly superficial. By relying as usual on secondary sources (Michael Kenny, Douglas Kallner), Bar-On limits himself to mentioning the *New Left Review* founded in London in 1960, the creation in the same years of Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) in the United States and the existence of a “Western Marxism” including not only Antonio Gramsci and Karl Korsch, but also Ernst Bloch and the theoreticians of the School of Frankfurt. Such a description shows that the author is ignorant of everything concerning the evolution of the radical lefts in postwar Europe. From the

point of view of the history of ideas, putting Gramsci in the same category as Marcuse, Adorno, and Horkheimer is, in addition, rather dubious.

13. In 1981, François Mitterrand had declared: “We proclaim the right to difference.”
14. *Manifeste pour une renaissance européenne* (Paris: GRECE, 2000). There are three different and successive editions of the *Manifesto*: (1) “La Nouvelle Droite de l’an 2000. Manifeste,” published in the journal *Éléments* 94 (February 1999): 11–23. (2) *Manifeste pour une renaissance européenne* (Paris: GRECE, 2000). This is an expanded edition, published as a small book, which includes several appendices. (3) *Manifeste pour une renaissance européenne* (Paris: GRECE, 2000). This edition is quite similar to the second one, but is printed on better paper and includes some additional information. In the present answer to Bar-On, my source is the third edition.

The English version was made on the basis of the first French edition. It appeared first in the journal *Telos*, published in New York (“The French New Right in the Year 2000,” trans. Martin Bendelow and Francis J. Greene (Spring 1999): 117–44. This text was then printed (without permission) as a booklet under the title *Manifesto for a European Renaissance* (Smithville, TX: Runa-Raven Press, 2010), with a foreword by Stephen E. Flowers. Finally, the same text was printed (with permission) two years later: *Manifesto for a European Renaissance* (London: Arktos Media, 2012), with a foreword by John B. Morgan IV. This means that the second and third “definitive” and more complete French editions of the *Manifesto* have never been used for an English translation.

The German (1999), the Dutch (1999), and the Danish (2005) translations were also made on the basis of the first French edition; the Hungarian (2002) and the Serbo-Croatian (2009) translations were made on the basis of the second/third French editions. In Italy, there are three different translations, one of the first French edition (1999), the two others (2005) of the second/third French editions. In Spain, there are two translations, one from the first French edition (1999) and another of the second/third French editions (2000).

15. Pierre-André Taguieff, ed., *Dictionnaire historique et critique du racisme* (Paris: PUF, 2013).
16. Bar-On makes abundant use of the dubious theory of the “echo” (or the “mirror”). He thus writes that in Italy, the Alleanza nazionale has made a stand on immigration “in a manner echoing de Benoist,” or else that the Lega Nord “borrowed its pro-regionalist, autonomist theses from the ND.” He also says that in his novel *Le camp des saints*, the writer Jean Raspail (who would be very surprised to learn this) “echoed the ND’s position” and that “his positions mirrored de Benoist’s and other ND intellectuals.” Of

course, he does not cite any primary source that would support his proposal. With such procedures, one can demonstrate anything.

17. Alain de Benoist, *Nous et les autres. Problématique de l'identité* (Paris: Krisis, 2006).
18. In *Rethinking the French New Right*, Bar-On also compares me with the Kurdish leader Abdullah Öcalan (132–33), which shows that he really writes just anything.
19. Still in his last book (237), he thus reaffirms the accusation that I had tried to conceal the existence of a collective work on South Africa in which I had participated in my adolescence by neglecting to mention it in the bibliography of my book of memoirs, *Mémoire vive*. Now, there is no bibliography in this book. The work in question, on the other hand, is certainly cited in my bibliography (*Alain de Benoist—Bibliographie 1960–2010. Livres, articles, préfaces, contributions à des recueils collectifs, entretiens, littérature secondaire* (Paris: Association des Amis d'Alain de Benoist, 2009), where it has the shelf mark D3.
20. I have nothing particular to say about the article [in this issue] by Stéphane François, except that it too seems to me rather superficial. The ND is there qualified as “nebulous,” which allows the author to give this label such an extensive significance that it finishes, by contiguity or presumed association, by covering anything. Stéphane François thinks he detects a “Traditionalist tendency” within the ND, a tendency that would have been established in the course of the 1970s, then would have “gained in importance” in the 1980s. Since he does not cite any names, it is hard to imagine who could have been the representatives of this mysterious “tendency.” He reports only that it is impossible to consider me “as one of them” since my ideas are “often incompatible with a Traditionalist discourse.” He could have specified that the principal text that I have published on Julius Evola was not a favorable text, but a critical text. He unfortunately refrains from citing it. See Alain de Benoist, “Julius Evola, réactionnaire radical et métaphysicien engagé. Analyse critique de la pensée politique de Julius Evola,” in *Nouvelle Ecole* 53–54 (2003): 147–69.
21. Tomislav Sunic, *Against Democracy and Equality. The European New Right* (New York: Peter Lang, 1990). As I have pointed out in my preface to the most recent edition (London: Arktos, 2011), the title of the book is, in addition, particularly unfortunate, since the ND is not in the least hostile to democracy, quite the opposite, and neither does it erroneously confuse egalitarianism and equality. Michael O'Meara, *New Culture, New Right. Anti-Liberalism in Postmodern Europe* (Bloomington, IN: First Books, 2004). Michael Torigian, *New Culture, New Right. Anti-Liberalism in Postmodern Europe*, 2nd ed. (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2005).
22. Paul Piccone, ed., “The French New Right: New Right—New Left—New Paradigm?” Special issue, *Telos* 98–99 (Autumn/Winter 1993–1994).