

## The Sole “Anti-Fascist” Thought

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Translated from the Spanish by Lucian Tudor

**Translator’s Note:** *The present article is a translation of “El pensamiento único ‘antifascista’” (originally published at [El Manifiesto](#), 9 February 2015). The Spanish version was a translation of an excerpt from the French “Les méthodes de la Nouvelle Inquisition” (“The Methods of the New Inquisition”), a speech delivered at a colloquium organized by GRECE in November, 1997. The French version was later republished as “Pensée unique, nouvelles censures” in Alain de Benoist’s book *Critiques – Théoriques* (Lausanne & Paris: L’Age d’Homme, 2003).*

*The term “pensée unique” in French or “pensamiento único” in Spanish, which is translated here as “sole thought” and “single thought,” is difficult to render in English without losing its original meaning. In French, Italian, and Spanish it refers to a form of thought which has been made obligatory or compulsory for everyone in society; so it is asserted to be the “sole thought” which is allowed.*

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Some time ago Jean-François Revel has spoken of “devotion” to qualify the opinion about an idea solely in terms of its conformity or its power of attraction in respect to a dominant ideology. We could add that devotion represents the zero degree of analysis and understanding. It is precisely because devotion dominates that today ideas which are denounced are not refuted, but rather that it suffices to declare them inconvenient or unbearable. Moral condemnation is exempt from an analysis of the hypotheses or of the principles under the prism of truth and falsehood. Now there are no just or false ideas, but rather appropriate ideas, in sync with the spirit of our time, and ideas which do not conform are denounced as intolerable.

This attitude appears even more reinforced by the strategic obsessions of the actors of the “right thought.” It matters little in this sphere whether an idea is just or false: what is important is to know which strategy it can serve, who draws upon it and with what purpose. A book can thus be denounced, even though its content corresponds with reality, with the only excuse that it runs the risk of converting ideas considered intolerable into “acceptable” ones or of favoring those which one wants to silence. It is the new version of the old slogan, “do not cause Billancourt to despair!” [Translator’s note: This is the exclamation with which Sartre hoped that he had camouflaged the truth, lest the workers of Renault of Billancourt would despair and falter in their revolutionary fervor]. Needless to say that with this approach, the place where we express ourselves is more relevant than that which we go to speak: There are admitted places and “unrecommended” places. All criticism presents itself, therefore, as an attempt for disqualification that is obtained by resorting to words that, in place of describing a reality, function like others as so many signs or operators for

maximum delegitimization. Our singular strategists thus betray their own mental system, which only attributes value to ideas to the extent that they can be manipulated.

In the past, this work of delegitimization was carried out to the detriment of the families of more diverse thought – we think, for example, about the grotesque campaigns in the times of McCarthyism. But currently it is being done, without doubt, in a single direction. It has to do with crossing out as illegitimate all thought, all theory, all intellectual construction that contradicts the philosophy of the Enlightenment which, with all the shades that one wants, constitutes the support on which current societies are legitimized. For that, politically correct thought essentially resorts to two impostures: anti-racism and anti-fascism. We will say a few words regarding these two.

Racism is an ideology which postulates the inequality between races or which attempts to explain the whole history of humanity based solely upon the racial factor. This ideology has practically no defense nowadays, but we pretend to think that it is omnipresent, assimilating to it xenophobia, attitudes of rejection or distrust in respect to the Other, and even to a simple preference for endogamy and homofiliation. “Racism” is presented as the emblematic category of residual irrationalism, rooted in superstition and prejudice, that which would impede the emergence of a society which is transparent before itself. This criticism of “racism” as fundamental irrationality simply and plainly recycles the liberal fairytale of a pre-rational world which is the source of all social evils, as was demonstrated now more than half a century ago by Adorno and Horkheimer in saying that it reflects the ineptitude of modernity to face the Other, that is, difference and uniqueness.

Denouncing “racism” as a pure irrationality, that is, as a non-negotiable category, the New Class betrays at the same time its distance in respect to reality, but also contributes to the neutralization and the depoliticization of social problems. In effect, if “racism” is essentially a “madness” or a “criminal opinion,” then the battle against racism has much to do with courts and psychiatrists, but, however, it now has nothing to do with politics. This allows the New Class to forget that racism itself is an ideology resulting from modernity by the threefold bias of social evolutionism, scientific positivism, and the theory of progress.

“Anti-fascism” is a completely obsolete category to the same extent as is “fascism,” to which it intends to oppose itself. The word is today a catchall term without any precise content. It is an elastic concept, applicable to anything, employed without the least descriptive rigor, which ends up being declined into “fascistic” and even into “fascistoid,” which allows itself to be adapted to all cases. Leo Strauss has already spoken of *Reductio ad Hitlerum* to qualify this purely polemical form of discrediting. The manner in which, nowadays, any non-conformist thought is crossed out as “fascist” on the part of censors who themselves could hardly define what they understand by that term, forms part of the same discursive strategy.

“There is a form of typically European *political correctness* which consists of seeing fascists everywhere,” observed Alain Finkielkraut on this point. “It has become a habitual procedure for a cohort of whistleblowing scribblers,” added Jean-François Revel, “to throw to Nazism and revisionism all individuals whose reputation they want to besmirch.” One can observe the consequences of that every day. The most trivial incident of French political life is judged today under the prism of “fascism” or the Occupation. Vichy “becomes an obsessive reference” and is converted into a phantasm which allows maintaining a permanent psychodrama, and given that they

prefer the “duty of memory” to the duty of truth, this memory is regularly appealed to for justifying the most dubious comparisons or the most grotesque understandings. “This everlasting incrimination of fascism,” wrote Jean-François Revel, “whose excess is so shocking, which ridicules its authors in place of discrediting its victims, reveals the hidden motive of political correctness. This perversion serves as a substitute for the censors, for those left orphaned by the loss of that incomparable instrument of spiritual tyranny which was the Marxist gospel.”

Revealing of these effects is the outbreak of hostilities provoked by the exploitation of the Kremlin archives, which began to cause the breakdown of some statues of legendary “heroes.” Equally revealing is the result of observing in what manner the simple verification that the Communist system had ended the lives of more people than any other system in history (a hundred million dead!) today raises the virtuous indignation in milieus that “do everything to conceal the magnitude of the catastrophe” – as if this verification is equivalent to the trivialization of Nazi crimes which are by definition incomparable with anything, as if the horror of the crimes of Communism could be attenuated by the supposed purity of its original intentions, as if the two great totalitarian systems whose rivalry and complementarity characterized the 20th Century would not be inscribed into a relationship out of which one or the other would become unintelligible, as if, in the end, some dead weigh more than others.

But we must also emphasize that contemporary “anti-fascism” – which, paraphrasing Joseph de Maistre, we could qualify not as the opposite of fascism but rather as fascism in the opposite sense – has totally changed in nature. In the 1930s, the theme of “anti-fascism,” exploited by Stalin on the margins of the authentic fight against true fascism, would serve the Communist parties for questioning capitalist bourgeois society, accused of serving as the breeding ground of totalitarianism. It was then about showing that the liberal democracies and the “social traitors” were objectively potential allies of Fascism. However, currently it is exactly the opposite. Today, “anti-fascism” serves before all as an alibi for those who have vigorously joined the single thought and the system. Having abandoned all critical attitude, having succumbed to the advantages of a society which would offer them sinecures and privileges, they want, embracing the “anti-fascist” rhetoric, to give the impression (or make the illusion) of having remained loyal to themselves. In other words, the “anti-fascist” posture permits the Penitent, the central figure of our time, to forget his retractions by employing a wildcard slogan which does not cease to be a commonplace one. Yesterday’s strategic tool with which mercantilist capitalism was attacked, “anti-fascism,” has been converted into a mere discourse in its service. Thus, while the forces of potential opposition are prioritarily mobilized against a phantasmagoric fascism, the New Class which exercises the reality of power can sleep soundly. Making reference to a value which it not only no longer supposes to be a threat for current society, but rather which, on the contrary, reinforces what it is, our modern “anti-fascisms” have been converted into its watchdogs.

It is so true that for politicians, the denunciation of “fascism” is today an excellent way to remake a reputation for oneself. The most corrupt use and abuse it to minimize the importance of their malfeasances. If “fascism” is the absolute evil, and they denounce it, that means that they are not entirely bad. False accounts, unfulfilled electoral promises, grafts and corruptions of all sorts become lamentable faults but, in short, secondary ones in relation to the worst. But not only the Left or politicians need a nonexistent “fascism” that embodies absolute evil. Also, all of modernity on

the decline needs a *bête noire* that allows it to make the social pathologies which it itself has engendered acceptable, under the pretext that however bad things go now, they would never have a point of comparison with those things that took place in the past.

Modernity is thus legitimized by means of a phantasm of which, paradoxically, we are told at the same time that it is “unique” and that it can return at any time. Confronted with its own emptiness, confronted with the tragic failure of its initial project of human liberation, confronted with the counter-productivity that it generates everywhere, confronted with the loss of references and with generalized senselessness, confronted with nihilism, confronted with the fact that man becomes increasingly more useless from the moment in which his abstract rights are proclaimed, modernity is left no other recourse than to divert attention, that is, to wield nonexistent dangers to impede the rising awareness of the truth. The recourse to the “absolute evil” functions then as a prodigious means of forcing the acceptance of the evils which our contemporaries are faced with in their daily lives, evils which, in comparison to this absolute evil, become contingent, relative, and, in the last instance, accessories. The exacerbated opposition to the totalitarianisms of yesterday, the unending tiresomeness about the past, prevents analyzing the evils of the present and the dangers of the future, at the same time that they make us enter into the 21st Century with a strong hindrance, with an eye fixed on the rearview mirror.

It would therefore be an error to believe that the current “anti-fascism” represents nothing. On the contrary, it poses a negative legitimization which is fundamental for a society that no longer has anything positive to include in its balance sheet. “Anti-fascism” creates the identity of a New Class that cannot exist without invoking the scarecrow of the worst thing so that it is not reduced to its own emptiness. In the same manner that some do not find their identity any more than in denouncing immigrants, the New Class only finds its own in the virtuous denunciation of an absolute evil, whose shadow hides its ideological vacuity, its absence of references, its intellectual indigence, in the last analysis, that it simply no longer has anything more to contribute, neither original analyses nor solutions to propose.

Therefore, it turns out to be vital for the central core of the “right-thinking” [*biempensante*] to prohibit all questioning of the fundamental principles which constitute their support of legitimacy. For if things were otherwise, it would be necessary that the dominant ideology accepts being questioned. But it would not consent to that, since it shares the conviction with the greater part of grand messianic ideologies that if things go badly, if the anticipated success is not attained, it is never because the principles were bad, but, on the contrary, because they had not been sufficiently applied. Yesterday they told us that if Communism had not attained paradise on earth, it was because it had not yet eliminated a sufficient number of its opponents. Today they tell us that if neoliberalism is in crisis, if the process of globalization entails social disorders, it is because there still exist too many obstacles which obstruct the proper functioning of the market.

To explain the failure of the project – or to reach the desired objective – a scapegoat is needed. There need to be nonconforming opponents, deviant or dissident elements: yesterday, the Jews, the Freemasons, the lepers, or the Jesuits; today, the supposed “fascists” or “racists.” These deviants are perceived as disturbing, bothersome elements which obstruct the advent of a rational society, so that it is necessary to purge the social body by means of an appropriate prophylactic action. If, for example, xenophobia exists in France today, it is not due to any case of a badly controlled

immigration policy, but rather to the existence of “racism” in the social body. In a society whose components are increasingly more heterogeneous, it is made essential to establish a kind of civil religion designating a scapegoat. The shared execration serves then as nexus which, while fighting an enemy, even if it be only a mirage, it allows the maintenance of a semblance of unity.

But there exists, in addition, another advantage to moral denunciation, and it is that against the “absolute evil” all means valid. Demonization, indeed, has not only had the consequence of the depoliticization of conflicts, but has also caused, likewise, the criminalization of the adversary. This becomes an absolute enemy which must be eradicated by all existing means. One then enters into a kind of total war – and it is so much so that it is claimed to be carried in the name of humanity. To fight in the name of humanity leads to placing one’s adversaries outside of humanity, that is, to practice the negation of humanity. From this perspective, the apology for murder and the call to lynching are also found to be justified.

Finally, what should be noted is that the disqualifying labels manipulated today in the name of political correctness are never claimed labels, but rather attributed labels. Contrary to what happened in the 1930s, when the Communists and Fascists openly claimed their respective denominations, today nobody reclaims the qualifications of “fascist” and “racist.” Their nomination thus has no objective, informative, or descriptive value, but rather a purely subjective, strategic, or polemical value. The problem that arises is to know what the legitimacy of their attribution is. As this legitimacy is always to be tested, it is deduced that the “test” is always derived from the very possibility of attribution.

The psychoanalyst Fethi Benslama wrote that “today fascism is no longer a bloc, an easily identifiable entity embodied in a system, in a discourse, in an organization which can be demarcated,” but that it “rather assumes fragmentary and diffuse forms inside the whole of society [...], a form such that no one is sheltered in a worldview, guarded from this disfiguration from the other which makes it arise as a boisterous, joyful body, secretly expanded body all over the place.” Such declarations are revealing: if fascism is “secretly expanded all over the place,” “anti-fascism” can evidently accuse anyone.

The problem is that the idea according to which evil is all over the place is the premise of all inquisition and, likewise, the premise upon which conspirationist paranoia is supported, as it had inspired in the past the witch-hunts and the justifications of the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*. Just as the anti-Semites saw Jews everywhere, the new inquisitors see “fascists” everywhere. And as the supreme cunning of the Devil is to make people believe that he does not exist, protests are never heard. Topping it off, a popular psychoanalyst is permitted to interpret the denial or the indignant rejection to put on the uniform that they try to offer us with such complacency, just like so many other supplementary confirmations: the refusal to confess is the best proof that one is guilty.

“A man is not what he hides, but rather what he does,” said André Malraux. Believing that “fascism” is all over the place, meaning nowhere, the new inquisition affirms on the contrary that men are before all what they hide – and that it aims to uncover it. It boasts of seeing beyond the appearances and of reading in between the lines, to better “confuse” and “unmask.” It is in this way that the presumption of guilt knows no limits. What is “unsaid” is decrypted, decoded, and detected. Speaking clearly, authors are denounced, no so much for what they had written, but for what they had not written and what it is assumed they had intended to write. The content of their books is not

boycotted, content which is never taken into consideration, but rather the intentions which are believed to have been divined. The police of ideas then becomes the police of ulterior motives.