

*Dr. Jean-Yves Camus, Director of the Observatory for Political Radicalism,
Researcher at the Institute for International Strategic Studies (IRIS)*

FRANCE. XENOPHOBIA AND RADICALISM, 2017.

As a foreword, it should be reminded that a Presidential election took place on 23 April (first ballot) and 7 May (second ballot), followed by a legislative election in June and the swearing-in of a new Cabinet on 21 June. In the Presidential election Emmanuel Macron, a former Minister of the Economy under President François Hollande, defeated the candidate of the Extreme-Right party, Front national, by a 66-33% margin, with Marine Le Pen nevertheless polling a record 21, 3% on the first ballot and a record 33,9%, that is 10,6 million votes, on the second. As usual, the FN candidate campaigned on fear of immigration and the refugees, especially those with a Muslim origin, called for a policy of zero legal immigration and for the detention of those people who have not been convicted of any offense but have a file with the Intelligence Services because of their involvement, or suspected involvement, in legal or illegal Radical movements, most of them Muslim. Marine Le Pen's badly run campaign and her inability to efficiently challenge Macron on economic issues pushed analysts to believe that the future of the party is bleak. However, FN secured 8 seats in the National Assembly and should not be dismissed as irrelevant.

Legislation.

Having secured an absolute majority in Parliament the new Prime Minister, Edouard Philippe, relies on Macron's Centrist Party, *La République en marche*, and on the support of a minority of the Center-Right former members of *Les Républicains*, the main conservative party. In 2017, the new Cabinet took an important step in putting an end to the State of Emergency that was proclaimed by then-President François Hollande, the day following the massive terrorist attack of 13 November 2015. However, that does not mean the legislation on civil liberties has gone back to the pre-2015 era. On the very same day the State of Emergency came to an end, a new law on Antiterrorism came into effect, after being voted by Parliament¹. It includes much of the provisions of the former State of Emergency Act. Several provisions of the new legislation are aimed at achieving a more effective counter-terrorist policy, with Radical Islam being the number one target of intelligence and law enforcement agencies. As a consequence, and consistent with the administrative organization of the centralized French State, the new law embodies the *Préfet*, that is the

¹ Loi du n30 octobre 2017 renforçant la sécurité intérieure et la lutte contre le terrorisme. See : <https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/eli/loi/2017/10/30/INTX1716370L/jo/texte>

representative of the State in the *départements* (the main administrative unit here in France) with the power to close for up to 6 months, any house of worship that is suspected of inciting to, or abating terrorism. At the end of 2017, 11 mosques had been closed on that ground, but there is a wider debate as to whether it is advisable to ban all those mosques which are run by the Salafi fundamentalist movement². This move, which is supported by Le Pen and a number of prominent leaders of the Conservative Right, would be unconstitutional, as it clearly violates the religious rights of a segment of the Muslim community, and it is also controversial, because “Salafi” can refer both to the so-called “Quietists” who strictly abide with the Saudi Ulemas’ stand of not allowing their followers living in non-Muslim lands to do anything that goes against the civil law, and to the minority of Jihadis who use terror or spread pro-Jihad material on social media.

The debate on minorities in France is mostly focused on Muslims and Islam, because the threat of terror attacks remains high: according to the Minister of the Interior, Gérard Collomb, 20 such attacks were unfolded in 2017³. One of the most contentious issues in the political debate relates to the situation of the so-called “fichés S” that is, those nearly 20,000 individuals who have a file with the police because of their radical political activity, and those 4,000 who are considered to be the most dangerous⁴. While a few hundred people are on the watch-list of the police because they belong to the Anarchist “Black Blocs”, or to the most Radical faction of the Animal Rights movement, or to the outspokenly Fascist/Neo-Nazi Extreme-Right, the overwhelming majority of Radicals who are under police scrutiny are Muslims and, if any legislation would be passed, to the effect that Muslim Radicals could be detained on an administrative order, the rift between Muslims (who account for 4 to 6 million people out of 66 million, would certainly widen.

On the other hand, the Macron Presidency had pledged to present a new 2018-2020 plan for fighting Racism and Antisemitism. Prime Minister Edouard Philippe presented it on March 18, 2018 and has put the emphasis on fighting Cyber-Hate. A proposal for new legislation on this issue should be presented to Parliament later on. Meanwhile, the Délégation Interministérielle pour la lutte contre le racisme, l’antisémitisme et l’homophobie (DILCRAH) remains the administrative body in charge of fighting Racism, Antisemitism and Homophobia. The new head of this institution, Frédéric Potier, took the helm on 4 May 2017 and has been very active in pressuring internet providers as well as Twitter and Facebook, so that they close down the most offensive accounts of

² The intelligence agency in charge of national security (service central du renseignement territorial or SCRT) has an estimate of 124 Salafi-run mosques out of 2,450. Cf: https://oeilsurlefront.liberation.fr/les-intox/2016/11/18/philippe-de-villiers-le-complotisme-a-grande-audience_1527562

³ <http://www.europe1.fr/politique/vingt-attentats-dejoues-en-2017-annonce-gerard-collomb-3540677>

⁴ Those figures are given by terrorism expert Yves Trotignon, cf. <https://www.nouvelobs.com/societe/terrorisme/20180326.OBS4169/surveillance-des-fiches-s-nous-n-avons-pas-les-moyens-humains-de-tout-suivre.html>

Extreme-Right hatemongers. This is part of an attempt by the Government to have Parliament pass a much-debated law on the so-called “fake news”. Contrary to the situation in the United States and the UK, “fake news” in France, does not primarily refer to Russian debatable information but more often to fake stories invented and spread by the Extreme-Right, in order to equate immigration with civil unrest, violence and crime, or to spread the idea that Islam as a religion, promotes hatred of non-Muslims and terror against them.

The Law Enforcement Practice.

The practice of Law Enforcement had changed with the end of the State of Emergency, although many of the provisions of the State of Emergency remain in October 2017 law. To sum up the changes, the law has reduced the extraordinary powers of the “préfet” (the State representative), and the judiciary now has more control on the administrative decisions in cases of suspected terrorist activity, when compared to the previous Emergency situation. For example, the police can still conduct house searches, but it now needs the previous authorization of a judge, and the search has to be still gives a number of exceptional powers to the authorities, including the right to limit the conducted while the suspected individual, or his counsel, are present. The possibility of searching one’s house without the suspected person’s presence still exists in the new law, but requires the presence of two people who accept to testify in court that the search was properly conducted. The October 2017 law also allows the police and intelligence agencies to continue monitoring e-mails and mobile phone communications and provides that a suspect has to give his personal details, such as identifier and password, if requested. Wifi, GPS and Bluetooth data are not included in the field of police surveillance. The law also allows the police to order a suspect to wear an electronic tagging device. The provisions allowing the police to ban mass gatherings when an event is under an exceptional threat of being hit by a terror attack (such as an international summit or a sports event of an international standing), has been kept in the new law. The préfet can still establish zones where people can be searched at entry point and where traffic is restricted or even banned. It is on this ground that authorities in Paris have decided to build a bullet-proof glass shield around the Eiffel Tower, in addition to the search of visitors who want to access what is seen as a potential target for terrorists. There is a change in the provisions concerning house arrests: under the State of Emergency, a suspect who was put under house arrest had to stay at home. He/She can now move within the perimeter of the city where he/she leaves, thus giving him a chance to continue working, in many cases, or to meet with relatives. Whereas under the State of Emergency a person under house arrest had to report three times a day to his local police station, he now needs to report only once a day. House arrests cannot last for more than one year, whereas there was no limitation previously. There were only 39 people under house arrest

in 2017. The new legislation is harsher than the previous one when it comes to the closing of a prayer room: the administrative decision no longer needs to be validated by a judge. It also allows the préfet to close down a prayer room when “hate” and “discrimination” is propagated there, whereas the only ground for closure was previously that of inciting to terrorism. There are also new provisions in the law that deal with the fight against radicalization. For example, a civil servant who works in security or defense-related positions can be revoked, or at least given another assignment, if an inquiry has been opened on the suspicion he has radicalized. Finally the October 2017 law lifted the ban on demonstrations that was enforced during the State of Emergency and forbids the State from banning an association on the only ground that it is a threat to public order. This provision of the law on the State of Emergency had been used once, in order to ban an association running a Radical mosque in Lagny, near Paris. It is now again necessary, in order that an association can be banned, that it poses a pose a threat to the national interest, or engages in a paramilitary activity, or actively promotes ethnic or religious hatred⁵.

Another important change in 2017 is that, following the end of the State of Emergency, the Opération Sentinelle meant to deploy the Army on the streets in order to prevent terrorism, was downsized from 10,000 to 7,000 professional soldiers. In 2017, there were 4 attacks against soldiers on patrol by militant Islamic radicals. In 3 of those attacks, soldiers were injured and in one case, the attacker was killed by the soldiers.

When it comes to law enforcement that does not deal with the terrorist threat, one of the main issues is Racism within the State apparatus, especially within the police. On 4 February 2017, a Black youngster of African origin whose surname, Théo (Luhaka), became known overnight in the whole country, was allegedly raped with a baton by policemen after they arrested him on the street for a random identity check. According to the victim, he suffered racist abuse by the policemen, who denied any wrongdoing and claimed that Théo’s injuries were accidental, as he fell on the baton when controled. The case was so heavily reported in the media that then President François Hollande visited Théo at the hospital. The outcry against racism in the police force was huge, and there were two nights of riots in Aulnay during the following days, as well as heavy confrontation in Paris, on 15 February, between demonstrators who protested against racist violence and the police. Although an inquiry was opened and the 4 policeman involved were disciplined, the case has not been settled yet. The victim and watchdog anti-racist NGOs stick to the version that this was intentional rape, while the Inspector General of the Police considers that the

⁵ The ban on associations, before the State of Emergency, was possible in cases dealt with by a 2012 law that was mostly a rewriting of the January 1936 legislation voted at the time when the Fascist League had to be taken care of. See the 2012 legislation, now applicable again :
<https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/affichCode.do?idSectionTA=LEGISCTA000025508340&cidTexte=LEGITEXT00025503132>

wounds were unintentional. Another case of alleged racism in the police force came to light in June 2017, after 56 years-old Liu Shaoyo, a Chinese national, was killed by a police officer who had answered a call from neighbors who had reported seeing Liu going around with a knife⁶. When the police knocked on Liu's door, he allegedly tried to stab the officer with a pair of scissors and the officer retaliated with a fatal gunshot. The Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs then asked France to take the appropriate steps so that truth could emerge and a diplomatic crisis ensued, further fueled by the persistence of criminal attacks (mostly robberies) suffered by Chinese tourists and shopkeepers in Paris. It was finally established that the policeman had acted in self-defense. When compared to last year, the emergence, in an organized form, of a protest movement against alleged police violence and racism is a new development. Racism and discriminatory attitudes of the police towards immigrants and colored people have been addressed for decades by NGOs such as SOS-Racisme, LICRA, Ligue des Droits de l'Homme and MRAP (Mouvement contre le Racisme et pour l'Amitiés entre les peuples). However such NGOs are now faced with the competition of new associations with a younger membership, often living in the impoverished suburbs and with an ethnic background, such as Action antifasciste Paris-Banlieue and Comité Vérité et justice pour Adama, which are close to the Radical Left and pretend that Racism in the police is a legacy of France's colonial past. Such NGOs have a distinctly anti-Imperialist, anti-Authoritarian ideology and think that the State apparatus is, by its very own nature, discriminating minorities, including by the practice of random controls of peoples' identity on the streets. Such a political option has led Radical Left militants to attack the police as a kind of protest against the "oppressive" nature of the State. In October 2017, one attacker who had set fire to a police car in Paris, during a demonstration, was sentenced to a 5 years jail term, including a 3 years suspended term. 7 others were given suspended jail terms⁷. All of them belong to the Anarchist Left, which is now regaining visibility and momentum by taking part into the demonstrations against the economic and social policies of President Macron.

Special mention should be made of the controversies over the activities of such militant Muslim associations leaning towards the Radical Left, such as Collectif Contre l'Islamophobie en France (CCIF)⁸. Being accused by its arch-secularist foes of disseminating a pro-Muslim Brotherhood ideology, CCIF is the spearhead of a campaign which points at the alleged "Islamophobia" of the State apparatus, especially in matters dealing with the State's attempt to federate and control mosques, and by keeping the 2004 legislative ban on wearing the Muslim headscarf in public buildings and the civil service. This ban, which extends to the

⁶ <http://www.europe1.fr/societe/que-sait-on-sur-la-mort-dun-ressortissant-chinois-abattu-par-la-police-a-paris-3213983>

⁷ http://www.liberation.fr/france/2017/09/26/au-proces-du-quai-de-valmy-des-poings-qui-restant-flous_1599142

⁸ <http://www.islamophobie.net/contact/>

Jewish skullcap as well, is a consequence of the typically French notion of *laïcité*, which is often wrongly translated into “secularism”, but has a much stronger meaning of opposing the influence of religion in society. The controversy on the issue of whether *laïcité* should adapt to a more diverse and multicultural French society remained, in 2017, the most controversial issue when dealing with Racism and other issues related to discrimination.

Rhetoric

The notion of “minorities” does not legally exist in France and it is forbidden to ask one’s ethnic/religious affiliation in a census. It is estimated that there are between 400, 000 and half a million Jews and a 2016 Pew Research survey gave an estimate of Muslims representing 7,5% of a population of 66 million (that is, 4,7 million)⁹. In mainland France, that is, excluding the overseas territories in the Antilles, the Indian Ocean and the Pacific, there are also at least 250,000 Roma/Gypsy people, whose presence in the country often goes back to several centuries ago. Until a new law was promulgated on 27 January 2017, those Roma/Gypsies who lived as travelers (that is, as nomads) had to hold an “interior passport” in order to travel around the country. They also needed to register to the police station when they moved places. Those discriminatory practices were abolished. Discrimination stills exists however, because only 52% of French cities with more than 5,000 inhabitants comply with the 2000 legislation which make it mandatory for them to build an area where the travelers can park their mobile homes.

Given the non-recognition of minorities, the government has to use such words as “visible minorities” when speaking about non-Whites, or “people from a Muslim background” when speaking about people coming from the Maghreb who are often the second or third generation of French citizens with a Muslim culture. Since the terrorist attacks of 2015-2016, immigration and Islam have become central topics in the political discourse and as more deadly attacks were carried out in 2017 by Islamists linked to ISIS, this remains a “hot” issue¹⁰ and a the extreme-right often describes the Muslim community as some kind of a “fifth column” within French society¹¹. However the coming to power of Emmanuel Macron means that the arch-secularist values promoted by a minority on the Left, have been left over and the Government is much more open to diversity. Macron, a disciple of the French Protestant philosopher Paul Ricoeur, a former contributor to the Christian progressive magazine *Esprit*, acknowledges the positive role of

⁹ See survey : <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2016/07/19/5-facts-about-the-muslim-population-in-europe/>

¹⁰ The most deadly attacks include: on 20 April on the Champs-Élysées, the killing of a policeman (claimed by ISIS); 1 October in Marseille, two women are killed by an ISIS militant.

¹¹ In 2015, even the Conservative Mayor of Nice, Christian Estrosi, had used such words. See: https://www.huffingtonpost.fr/2015/04/26/cinquieme-colonne-christian-estrosi-fn_n_7145912.html

faith in society. In a meeting with the umbrella organization of French muslim associations at the end of the month of Ramadan 2017, he made a speech¹² praising the Conseil Représentatif du Culte Musulman (CFCM) for his moderate stand and its opposition to Radical Islam, and repeated that being a Muslim was totally compatible with being French. Still, Macron is well aware that the CFCM, now chaired by Turkish-born Ahmed Ogras, is not representative enough of the many diverse components of French Islam. Therefore, he has repeatedly said during his presidential campaign that he wants to get rid of foreign influence on French Islam and replace the existing CFCM with a broader Federation of Muslim associations. The Government is currently working on this topic¹³.

When it comes to the Jewish community, President Macron's first meeting with CRIF, the political umbrella organization of French Jewry, took place on 7 March 2018 at CRIF's annual dinner. While the relationship of CRIF with the State was particularly good under former Prime Minister Manuel Valls' tenure, because he did not mince his words when condemning the Boycott Israel campaign¹⁴ and Anti-Zionism as a contemporary form of Anti-Semitism¹⁵, it seems that Macron has a more balanced approach, despite the fact that CRIF had called the Jews to vote for him against Marine Le Pen¹⁶. Macron is outspoken in saying that Antisemitism is "the shame of France" and he has acknowledged the fact that there had been a denial of the rise of Antisemitism, right after the start of the Second Intifada. He has pledged to fight Cyber-Hate and has asked the French-Algerian writer Karim Amellal, together with Jewish communal leader Gil Taieb, to bring forth proposals on that matter. He has, however, refused to support CRIF's approval of the US Embassy in Israel moving to Jerusalem, and has also refused to take side in the controversy opposing CRIF to the publishing house, Gallimard, which planned to reprint the most vitriolic anti-Semitic writings of Louis-Ferdinand Céline (1894-1961) in an edited version and commentary by academic specialists of the infamous writer.

The public opinion towards minorities

¹² See: http://www.liberation.fr/france/2017/06/21/au-diner-du-cfcm-macron-expose-sa-feuille-de-route-sur-l-islam-en-france_1578414

¹³ For Macron's campaign references to Islam and the broader role of religion in French society see: <https://en-marche.fr/articles/actualites/quelle-organisation-pour-l-islam-dans-la-republique-francaise>

¹⁴ See his 15 December 2015 declaration here : <http://www.lcp.fr/la-politique-en-video/mouvement-bds-manuel-valls-condamne-toutes-les-campagnes-de-boycott-legend-des>

¹⁵ Report of his 8 March 2016 speech at CRIF annual venue : <http://www.lefigaro.fr/politique/2016/03/07/01002-20160307ARTFIG00395-diner-du-crif-pour-valls-l-antisionisme-est-synonyme-de-l-antisemitisme.php>

¹⁶ <http://www.leparisien.fr/flash-actualite-politique/appele-clair-du-crif-a-voter-macron-24-04-2017-6883302.php>

According to the annual report of the CNCDH¹⁷, one of the major changes in the attitude of the French people is the rise of fear: for the first time in recent history, unemployment is the second major concern of those surveyed (30% when compared to 37% in 2016), whereas 36% say that Terrorism is their major concern (32% in 2016). Only 9% say that religious fundamentalism is their major concern and 8% only point to the issue of immigration. Terrorism is quoted as the major threat by 45% of the youth; 45% of working-class people and 48% of Front national supporters.

The feeling of 53% of those surveyed is that they are not better off than before, and this fear of decline is particularly high among working-class, middle-class and less educated people, despite the fact that unemployment decreased by 0,5% when compared to 2016. The paradox is that the fear of terrorism and decline does not automatically imply more conservative attitudes within the population at large. When compared to the mid-70s and even to the 80s, only 38% want the return of the death penalty (45% in 2011); 38% think that the courts are not harsh enough with criminals (46% in 2011); only 15% say that women should stay at home and 84% think that being gay is admissible.

Tolerance is on the rise in France, with 64% of the French being tolerant of minorities, the highest level being 66% in 2008. 52% of the French say they are not racist (43% in 2014) and 33% (+8%) do not believe in the existence of races. Only 8% say that there are “superior races”. Negative stereotypes still exist, though. In the aftermath of the terrorist attacks, the report concludes that 34% of the French think that Islam is a problem and 50% think it is a threat to national security. The Roma have a negative image with 57% of them French, who say they are unwilling to assimilate, but there is an improvement when compared to 77% in 2014. Prejudices against the Jews remain: 20% think they have too much power in politics and 20% associate being a Jew with having money. With regard to immigration, 59% think there are too many immigrants but on the other hand, 79% say that they should be allowed to stay and feel like home, because they contribute positively to the French economy. As much puzzling is the fact that 60% think that the immigrants come with the intent of taking benefits from the Welfare State, but 68% say that their presence is positive because it brings cultural diversity.

Terrorism has become the main concern of 18% of the French, compared to 22% who think the major topic is unemployment. One consequence of this concern is that the French are ready to sacrifice some of their civil liberties in exchange for more security. For example, 88% of those surveyed agree with the proposal of the Conservative parties that the State should be able to detain any suspect of involvement in terrorist activity, even when there are no charges against him.

¹⁷ Access to the full 2017 report here :
http://www.cncdh.fr/sites/default/files/cncdh_rapport_2017_bat_basse_definition.pdf

There has been an ongoing debate in 2016 on the topic of changing the law, so that the 15,000 individuals who have an intelligence file for their suspected support of Radical Islam, could be detained in specific camps. The Left parties have consistently opposed this legislative move.

Radicals

Radical Parties that are registered and incite to hatred are very few, if only because the 1990 Loi Gayssot¹⁸ puts a ban on any kind of expression of, or incitement to hatred, including denying the Holocaust. Strictly speaking, the Front National, which in December 2015 took 28% of the national vote in the Regional elections¹⁹ and continued to be a potent force in 2016, does not incite to hatred. Its proposal is to ban further legal immigration from outside Europe and it wants to enact a « French First » policy which would give legal priority to the French citizens over foreigners when it comes to housing, social benefits, retirement schemes and health care²⁰. This policy of « National Priority » is contrary to the 1958 Constitution, but FN as a party, takes great care in using words in its official documents and manifestos, which are not seen as inciting to hatred. Fringe Extreme-Right movements with a combined membership of no more than a few thousands do exist, which openly use Racist rhetoric. They can be Skinhead Neo-Nazi movements such as the French branches of Hammerskin Nation²¹ or Blood and Honour²² ; racialist groups such as Terre et Peuple²³ and Parti Nationaliste Français²⁴, who stand against the rights of Jews and non-Whites and also want to ban Freemasonry ; one weekly magazine, *Rivarol*²⁵, which is sold at newstands since 1951 and local groups such as Picard Crew²⁶, White Wolves Klan (WWK)²⁷, Lemovice Crew²⁸ and a few others, which in 2016 have been under strong pressure from the police, with their top leaders either in prison and indicted (WWK) or obliged to stop their activities. One hotspot of violence is the city of Calais, where thousands of illegal immigrants are living in camps with the hope of crossing the Channel. On 6 February 2016, a demonstration of the

¹⁸ Text here :

<https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/affichTexte.do?cidTexte=JORFTEXT000000532990&dateTexte=&categorieLien=id>

¹⁹ Full results : https://www.interieur.gouv.fr/Elections/Les-resultats/Regionales/elecresult__regionales-2015/%28path%29/regionales-2015/FE.html

²⁰ See Le Pen's Presidential Project (2017) here : <http://www.frontnational.com/le-projet-de-marine-le-pen/>

²¹ Link to French branch on the internet : <http://www.hammerskins.net/fhs/>

²² Link : <https://28hexagone.wordpress.com/>

²³ <http://www.terreetpeuple.com/>

²⁴ <https://parti-nationaliste-francais.com/>

²⁵ Website : <https://www.rivarol.com/>

²⁶ Report of Picard Crew's first public gathering in April 2016: <http://www.thomasjoly.fr/2016/03/succes-de-la-1ere-journee-patriote-du-picard-crew-a-amiens.html>

²⁷ January 2017 report of WWK activities on the Antifascist website La Horde :

<http://lahorde.samizdat.net/2017/01/04/serge-ayoub-encore-dans-une-histoire-de-bourrage-de-crane-de-militants-nationalistes-en-picardie/>

²⁸ Link to the official Facebook page of Lemovice, which is the Roman name for the city of Limoges :

<https://www.facebook.com/lemovice.officiel/>

Extreme-Right against immigrants was banned²⁹. The French branch of the PEGIDA movement, which convened the demonstration, was only able to bring in around 200 people: it is absolutely irrelevant.

Islamist radicals who incite to hatred are mostly Sunni preachers and militants belonging to the Jihadi wing of the Salafi movement. In 2016 they were said to control around 180 mosques/prayer rooms³⁰, which can only be close by the administrative authorities if they are illegally built or occupied, or if the imam is believed to promote or condone Jihad or Racist/Antisemitic beliefs. In 2016, 17 foreigners who were suspected of being an imminent threat to national security because they promoted Jihad were deported to their native countries³¹. Such decisions can always be appealed by the person who is deported, including in the case that he has effectively been deported and wants to return legally. In the case of French citizens, it is not possible to deport the person, and it is only on very exceptional ground that he/she can be stripped of his citizenship. A proposal by then Prime Minister Manuel Valls to allow terrorists or those fighting alongside terrorist organizations being striped off their citizenship was presented to Parliament in February 2016³², with the assent of President Hollande, but with the majority of the Socialist Party and the rest of the Left opposing this legislation, because it could create Stateless people. In March 2016 President Hollande admitted this proposal had split the Left and had to be withdrawn³³. One of the peculiarities of France, when compared to some countries like the United Kingdom, is that the radical Muslims belonging to the salafi/jihadi movement are not organized into such high-profile groups as Hizb ut Tahrir or al Muhajiroun, the first of which only made a brief appearance in France in 1995 and 2009. The reason could be that those are movements which are rooted in the Middle-East and the Indian subcontinent, while the overwhelming majority of French Muslims originate from the Maghreb³⁴. The major legal groups representing Orthodox Sunni Islam here are in line with the Muslim Brotherhood' offshoots in the Maghreb. They are gathered under an umbrella organization, the Union des organisations islamiques de France (UOIF)³⁵, which enjoyed recognition by the State and sat on the State-sponsored Conseil français du culte musulman (CFCM) until it decided to go its own way. UOIF has been suspected by its opponents of

²⁹ See report : http://www.liberation.fr/france/2016/02/06/manifestation-de-pegida-a-calais-l-ex-commandant-de-la-legion-etrangere-arrete_1431565. It is to be noted that 6 February is the date of the 1934 aborted coup of the Extreme-Right against the Republic.

³⁰ A Muslim website with a full list of active French mosques put the figure at 179 in 2017. See: <https://muzulmania.wordpress.com/2015/01/04/mosquees-salafistes-en-france/>

³¹ <http://www.lefigaro.fr/actualite-france/2016/12/01/01016-20161201ARTFIG00362-la-france-expulse-les-islamistes-au-compte-gouttes.php>

³² The proposed legislation is here : <http://www.assemblee-nationale.fr/14/projets/pl3381.asp>

³³ http://www.lemonde.fr/attaques-a-paris/article/2016/03/30/francois-hollande-renonce-a-la-decheance-de-nationalite-et-au-congres_4892426_4809495.html

³⁴ The best database of information on immigration and the Muslim communities is the Trajectoires et Origines survey, by the Institut national d'études démographiques, a State Agency. Link: <http://teo.site.ined.fr/>

³⁵ Website : <http://www.uoif-online.com/>

promoting an agenda that goes against the French notion of Secularism, and some of the foreign guest it invited in the past were banned from entering because they were said to condone Jihad³⁶. UOIF held two controversial rallies in Lille (February 2016) and Le Bourget (May 2016). However no foreign guests were banned from entering France. In 2016 Hani Ramadan, a Swiss citizen and Geneva-based imam, was banned from entry and several of his conferences in Nîmes and Le Havre (fall 2016) were not allowed to take place, because of his ambiguous talk on Jihad and his opposition to gender equality³⁷.

Far-Left political parties do not call for hatred and are supportive of foreigners' rights, including that of refugees to settle permanently in France. The Communist Party, the Trotskyite Nouveau Parti Anticapitaliste and Jean-Luc Mélenchon's Parti de Gauche strongly support integration of immigrants, including those undocumented, whom they believe should be granted legal status³⁸. The only topic on which the Far-Left has been criticized is that of supporting the Boycott Israel campaign known as BDS. The boycott of Israel, but not the BDS movement itself, is illegal since a ruling of the French Higher Court in October 2015³⁹. There is a debate on whether something like "anti-French Racism" does exist. The latest case we have of a conviction on this count goes back to June 2015 and it is indeed possible to sentence someone on the ground that he/she overtly shot racist abuse such as "Dirty French, Dirty White" (that was the ground of the 2015 conviction). The debate is going on, as to whether "anti-French racism" is downplayed in State statistics and not sufficiently taken into account by anti-Racist NGOs. In a landmark case, on 29 March 2016, the anti-Racist NGO, Ligue internationale contre le racisme et l'antisémitisme" (LICRA) won its case against a Muslim man of Turkish origin who had insulted a French White national aboard a train near Lyon⁴⁰. Small Leftist groups such as the Parti des Indigènes de la République (PIR)⁴¹, are increasingly under the spotlight for their will to categorize all those with an immigrant, non-european background, as a separate category within the Nation-State. In March 2016

³⁶ See this article for a 2012 controversy : http://www.lepoint.fr/societe/quatre-predicateurs-musulmans-invites-par-l-uoif-interdits-d-entree-en-france-29-03-2012-1446293_23.php and this article in the Conservative daily Le Figaro, with regard to the 2016 meeting: figaro.fr/vox/societe/2016/05/13/31003-20160513ARTFIG00149-congres-de-l-uoif-sous-couvert-de-deradicalisation-l-appel-au-djihad-arme.php

³⁷ See : <http://www.midilibre.fr/2016/09/19/nimes-le-tribunal-confirme-l-interdiction-de-la-conference-d-hani-ramadan,1395443.php>

³⁸ Mélenchon reiterated his position during the 2017 Presidential campaign, see : <http://www.bfmtv.com/mediaplayer/video/jean-luc-melenchon-veut-la-regularisation-de-tous-les-travailleurs-sans-papiers-924887.html>

³⁹ See ruling here : www.legifrance.gouv.fr/affichJuriJudi.do?oldAction=rechJuriJudi&idTexte=JURITEXT000031374097&fastReqId=434382946&fastPos=1

⁴⁰ See : <http://www.lefigaro.fr/actualite-france/2016/04/01/01016-20160401ARTFIG00315-trois-mois-ferme-pour-du-racisme-anti-blanc.php>

⁴¹ On this group, one of the few academic articles is: Robine Jérémy, « Les « indigènes de la République » : nation et question postcoloniale. Territoires des enfants de l'immigration et rivalité de pouvoir », *Hérodote*, 2006/1 (n° 120), p. 118-148. DOI : 10.3917/her.120.0118. URL : <http://www.cairn.info/revue-herodote-2006-1-page-118.htm>

Houria Bouteldja, the iconic leader of PIR, published an essay, *Les Blancs, les Juifs et Nous* (La Fabrique éditions), in which she asked White people to renounce their whiteness, while she also asked the Jews to renounce Zionism and their link to Israël⁴². Her contention is that the descendants of the former colonized people have the right to organize themselves separately, including by staging events which are forbidden to “whites”.

The new President, Emmanuel Macron, is committed to fighting Populism, and especially Right-wing Populism, both at home and within the EU. He is trying to build a coalition of European governments who want further integration into the EU and want to stop the present wave of anti-immigrant, anti-refugees, anti-EU prejudice that is embodied into the electoral victories of the Extreme-Right, or the attitude of the Hungarian, Slovak or Polish governments with regard to asylum seekers and immigrants. He had very harsh words for the FN during his campaign, describing the party as “anti-French” and “obscene”⁴³. Those who are playing the FN’s game are the elected officials who, within the Conservative Right, contemplate an alliance with the FN in order to defeat the President’s party and the Social-Democrats. They are very few, and the most prominent of them is Thierry Mariani, a former Transportation Minister and MP who, in 2017, said his party, Les Républicains, should at least “open talks” with FN⁴⁴. The Left also accuses Laurent Wauquiez, who is Chairman of LR since 10 December 2017, to use the language of FN in order to win back those Conservatives voters who defected to FN. It is true that Wauquiez is a hardliner on such issues as Islam, immigration and the “Judeo-Christian” roots of European culture, but he nevertheless made it clear that he will not seek an agreement with FN⁴⁵. Even Nicolas Dupont-Aignan, who agreed to be Le Pen’s Prime Minister in case she would become President, seems to have understood that an alliance is not a good idea and will most probably head his own slate in the 2019 European election⁴⁶.

The popularity of Radical Parties in 2017 can be asserted by the results of the Presidential and General (Legislative) elections which will shape the political landscape until 2022. The FN (rebranded “Rassemblement national” since June 2018) polled 7,678 million votes nationwide, that is 21,3%, on the first ballot, with Marine Le Pen as its candidate. On the second ballot, she got 10,638 million (33,9%) and lost to Emmanuel Macron (66,1%). The gain between the two ballots

⁴² For a critic of the book from the point of view of the Social-Democrat-leaning daily Libération, see: http://www.liberation.fr/debats/2016/05/24/la-derive-identitaire-de-houria-bouteldja_1454884

⁴³ <http://www.europe1.fr/politique/macron-face-aux-injures-et-a-lobscenite-du-front-national-nous-allons-refonder-le-pays-3316964>

⁴⁴ <http://www.europe1.fr/politique/sil-est-trop-tot-pour-une-entente-avec-le-fn-thierry-mariani-lr-estime-quil-faut-des-discussions-3373526>

⁴⁵ https://www.challenges.fr/elections-legislatives-2017/marechal-le-pen-fn-on-aurait-des-choses-a-faire-ensemble-avec-wauquiez_473855

⁴⁶ https://abonnes.lemonde.fr/politique/article/2018/06/04/elections-europeennes-dupont-aignan-refuse-la-proposition-de-marine-le-pen-de-faire-liste-commune_5309137_823448.html

can be partly attributed to the fact that Nicolas Dupont-Aignan asked his 1,695 million voters to cast their ballot for Le Pen. According to an IPSOS-Steria poll⁴⁷ released after the second ballot, 30% of Dupont's voters, and 20% of those who has cast their ballot for François Fillon, the candidate of the mainstream Right "Les républicains", chose Le Pen against Macron. Contrary to the widespread belief that the Radical Left and the Radical Right share common ideas, the same survey tells that only 7% of those who had voted for Jean-Luc Mélenchon, the leader of the "France insoumise", voted for Le Pen on the second round.

The difference between those two parties is that La France insoumise (LFI), stands against the EU but is not nationalist: its goal is to build an alternative to the free-market, globalized economy from a Leftist point of view with its roots in Marxism and Socialism. As such, it differs from FN in that FN opposes the elites to the people not on the ground of class struggle, but of "globalists" versus "patriots". LFI also differs from FN because it supports immigration and totally refuses any kind of restriction to immigrants' rights. Their common Populist stand does not have the same roots, and their common will to establish tariffs on non-EU imported goods also differs, as FN grounds it on a "France First" policy while LFI stands against the whole process of a global free-market that can lead to social dumping. Jean-Luc Mélenchon, got 7,059 million votes, that is 19,58% on the first ballot, that is +8,5% when compared to 2012.

The election to the Assemblée nationale took place on 11 and 18 June, 2017. As it is usual in France under the Fifth Republic, at least since 2000 when it was decided that the general election would take place after the choice of the President, the party which won the presidency also had an absolute majority in the Lower House of Parliament. This explains that FN only got 2,990 million votes (11,03%) on the first ballot, while LFI got 2,497 million (13,2%). However, LFI won 17 seats against only 8 for FN. It is interesting to note that 66% of FN voters abstained on the second ballot when their party was not qualified (meaning that they are staying true to their party's slogan of "Neither Left, nor Right")⁴⁸. When they had the choice between FN and a candidate of LREM (Macron's party), 35% of Conservative voters voted for LREM, while 32% voted for FN and 33% did not vote. This lack of support for FN from the voters close to Les Républicains is seriously hampering the ability of FN to achieve a majority. Two important developments took place after the elections, which reshaped the Front national. The first one is that on 9 May, Marion Maréchal, niece of Marine Le Pen and Jean-Marie Le Pen's granddaughter, announced that she would not seek another term as an MP, and although she did not leave FN, decided to temporarily quit the political scene. The second change is that on 29 September 2017, the former number two man of FN, Florian Philippot, launched his own party, Les

⁴⁷ <https://www.publicsenat.fr/article/politique/reports-des-voix-age-revenus-la-sociologie-du-vote-au-second-tour-60214>

⁴⁸ <http://www.atlantico.fr/decryptage/reports-voix-aux-legislatives-droite-gauche-fn-lrem-qui-se-retrouve-en-qui-au-second-tour-opinionway-bruno-jeanbart-3082923.html>

Patriotes⁴⁹, on a hard-Frexit platform. The new party was joined by one FN member of the national Parliament and three members of the European Parliament, as well as 30 members of Regional Councils. The party will contest the 2019 election to the European Parliament but in early 2018, only polled around 2% in legislative by-elections, so its future is bleak.

A July 2017 survey shows that for 61% of the French, rolling back Radical Islam is the top priority⁵⁰, coming ahead of concerns on pensions, unemployment and spending power. Following the Presidential election, another survey gave a glimpse of how the Muslims voted: 37% cast their ballot for Mélenchon, 24% for Macron, 17% for the Socialist Party candidate Benoît Hamon and 10% for Conservative François Fillon⁵¹. Due to the French legislation that forbids ethnic statistics, we have very few means to adequately measure the support for ISIS/al Qaeda among Muslims in France. However an IFOP poll conducted in September 2016 for the Liberal think-tank Institut Montaigne, concluded that 26% of those surveyed said they have a “stringent” observance of Islam, while 25% said they were “conservative”. 20% of the men and 28% of the women were in favor of allowing the full-face veil. 29% said that sharia stands above the laws of the French Republic. 50% of those aged between 18 and 25 see their belief in Islam as a way of opposing French values⁵².

Hate Crime

On January 31, 2018 the Minister of the Interior, Gérard Collomb, gave the statistics on Hate crime in 2017⁵³. The general trend is a – 16% decrease in both racist and anti-Semitic incidents, but with a very serious concern over the fact that those fewer anti-Jewish attacks are more violent than they were in the past. Figures for 2017 are 950 incidents (1128 in 2016). Actions decreased from 608 in 2016 to 518 in 2017, (-14,8%) and this applies to anti-Muslim actions (185 in 2016 and 121 in 2017, that is -34,5%), as well as to anti-Semitic ones (335 in 2016 and 311 in 2017, that is -7,2%). When looked at in detail, those figures show that the number of threats significantly decreased by 58,5% (against Muslims) and 17,36% respectively. On the opposite, there were 72 violent anti-Muslim acts when compared to 68 in 2016, and 97 anti-Semitic acts, compared to 77 in 2016. The most important case of anti-Semitism in 2017 was the murder, on account of her religion, of 65 years-old retired teacher Sarah Halimi, an Orthodox

⁴⁹ Party website :

⁵⁰ <http://www.europe1.fr/societe/le-recul-de-lislam-radical-plus-prioritaire-que-lemploi-pour-les-francais-sondage-3377408><http://www.europe1.fr/politique/presidentielle-les-cathos-pratiquants-ont-mis-fillon-en-tete-les-musulmans-melenchon-les-protestants-macron-sondage-3310586>

⁵¹

⁵² Full study : <http://www.institutmontaigne.org/fr/publications/un-islam-francais-est-possible>

⁵³ <https://www.interieur.gouv.fr/Le-ministre/Communiqués/Bilan-2017-des-actes-racistes-antisemites-antimusulmans-et-antichretiens> <https://www.lejdd.fr/societe/pourquoi-les-actes-antisemites-augmentent-en-france-depuis-20-ans-3632996>

Jew, who was killed by an African-Muslim neighbor who had shouted « I have killed the shaïtan » after throwing the lady out from her balcony unto the street. This case drew much attention from the media, the elected officials and the Jewish community because, despite evidence that the killing was motivated by anti-Semitism, it is only in February 2018 that the prosecutor in charge admitted that it is a hate crime⁵⁴. It is now an admitted fact that the overwhelming majority of anti-Semitic actions are not perpetrated by the Extreme-Right but by people who, be they French or foreign nationals, are of a Muslim cultural background. Pollster Jérôme Fourquet, who has surveyed anti-semitism in France over the last two decades in his book *L'an prochain à Jérusalem ? Les juifs de France face à l'antisémitisme*⁵⁵, says that this trend began with the start of the Second Intifada in 2000, with the consequence that there were 82 such actions in 1999 (80% of them perpetrated by the Extreme-Right) and 743 in 2000⁵⁶. This change in the pattern of antisemitism is known as « New Antisemitism », a phenomenon which has first been exposed by philosopher Pierre-André Taguieff in 2002⁵⁷. It is often challenged by those who do not admit the idea that people who are victims of racism can also be racists. The figures emanating from CRIF, the umbrella organization of French Jewry, usually match with those of the authorities.

The problem with anti-Muslim incidents is that the statistics from the authorities are challenged by militant Muslim associations such as CCIF (Comité contre l'islamophobie en France), whose definition of islamophobia is much broader than that of the law and include almost every occurrence of a critic against Islam, even if a complaint is not filed with the police. In 2017, CCIF recorded 446 incidents and conceded that they decreased by 21,7%. The breakdown shows that the overwhelming majority of those incidents (349) are linked to discrimination (at work, in education, in housing, etc.), while there were only 31 incidents involving bodily harm; 58 cases of hate speech and 8 desecrations of Muslim cemeteries and worship places⁵⁸ when compared to 28 such cases against synagogues and Jewish cemeteries and 878 such actions (-7,5% compared to 2016) targeting Christian tombs and churches⁵⁹. This specific category of anti-Christian incidents has been neglected by scholars and is somehow difficult to understand, for it is unclear if we have to deal with perpetrators who harbor ideological bias against Christians (such as the belief in a Satanic cult, or people affiliated with the anti-Christian Black Metal/Gothic scene) or whose rampage is not ideologically motivated.

⁵⁴ https://www.lemonde.fr/police-justice/article/2018/02/27/meurtre-de-sarah-halimi-le-caractere-antisemite-retenue-par-la-juge-d-instruction_5263360_1653578.htm

⁵⁵ With Sylvain Manternach, éditions de l'Aube/Fondation Jean Jaurès, 2016

⁵⁶ <https://www.lejdd.fr/societe/pourquoi-les-actes-antisemites-augmentent-en-france-depuis-20-ans-3632996>

⁵⁷ See his book : *La nouvelle judéophobie*, Mille et une nuits, coll. « Essai », 2002

⁵⁸ <https://news.konbini.com/post/les-actes-islamophobes-en-recul-de-plus-de-20-en-2017>

⁵⁹ <https://www.interieur.gouv.fr/Le-ministre/Communiqués/Bilan-2017-des-actes-racistes-antisemites-antimusulma> https://www.sos-homophobie.org/sites/default/files/rapport_annuel_2018.pdfns-et-antichrétiens

The state of anti-LGBTQ prejudice is best monitored by the SOS Homophobie NGO, whose annual report recorded 1650 anti-LGBT incidents (+4,8%) including 139 cases of physical violence (121 in 2016), 72% targeting men⁶⁰. The association's report, by far the most complete and accurate, show that the peak in anti-LGBT attitudes peaked in 2013 (3517 incidents), when a coalition of Arch-Conservative, pro-Family and pro-Life associations, supported by a significant part of the mainstream Right and the Extreme-Right, demonstrated against the introduction of same-sex marriage. In September 2016, a survey was commissioned by the Association des familles homoparentales (ADFH or Association of Same-Sex Parents). This IFOP survey showed that 62% of the French do not want the repeal of the law on same-sex marriage⁶¹. According to the same source, 72% of the French now openly admit that they know homosexuals among their friends/close relations. With the consensus on same-sex marriage on the way, the debate has moved to the issues of Assisted Reproductive Technology (ART) and gestational surrogacy (GS). In 2017, 60% of the French were in favor of extending ART to lesbian couples (47% in 2013) and 44% were in favor of accepting GS for same-sex couples (41% in 2014)⁶².

Interethnic or religious clashes

There was no violent clash between ethnic groups as such, the last clash on the streets between Jewish militants and pro-Palestine demonstrators having taken place in Paris and Sarcelles in July 2014⁶³. However, despite high-profiled media initiatives aimed at gesturing goodwill between moderate Muslims and the Jewish community, the level of distrust between the two groups remain high⁶⁴. What remains a quite common occurrence in France are clashes between ethnic minorities apart from the Jews⁶⁵, and the Police, especially in the suburbs of the bigger cities. The reason is nearly always the death or serious injury of a youth of immigrant background during an identity check by the Police. Such was the case in July 2016 when 24 year-old Adama Traoré died in Beaumont sur Oise, north-west of Paris, in circumstances which, according to the police, were that natural death (the young man had a heart condition) but which in fact seem to have been

⁶⁰ https://www.sos-homophobie.org/sites/default/files/rapport_annuel_2018.pdf

⁶¹ <https://adf.net/portfolio-items/sondage-ifopadfh-la-presidentielle-2017-et-les-droits-des-homosexuel-le-s-et-des-familles-homoparentales/>

⁶² <http://www.europe1.fr/societe/cinq-ans-apres-le-mariage-pour-tous-en-chiffres-3631682>

⁶³ Report of the incidents in Sarcelles and Paris respectively :

http://www.lemonde.fr/societe/article/2014/07/22/sarcelles-sous-le-choc-des-violences-antisemites_4461039_3224.html and <http://www.leparisien.fr/paris-75/paris-des-manifestants-pro-palestiniens-tentent-de-s-en-prendre-a-deux-synagogues-13-07-2014-3998677.php>

⁶⁴ A survey by the Conservative-leaning Fondapol Think-tank especially focused on anti-Jewish prejudices among Orthodox Muslims, but also found a higher-than-average level of prejudice among supporters of FN. See: <http://www.fondapol.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/CONF2press-Antisemitisme-DOC-6-web11h51.pdf>

⁶⁵ However the Ligue de Défense Juive (LDJ), a small activist group following in the steps of the late American-Israeli rabbi Meir Kahana, is under police scrutiny because of its anti-Arab stand and the numerous clashes with pro-Palestine activists it is involved into. LDJ has around 100-150 hardcore members in the Paris area.

caused by asphyxia, as Traoré was subject to the unusual and unnecessary use of force by the police when he was interrogated⁶⁶. The controversy over this case still goes on and various demonstrations with up to 2,000 people regularly take place in his hometown and in Paris. Human Rights NGOs have pointed to the fact that immigrant youth are often subject to undue pressure by the police, only because of their skin color, including identity checks which border on harassment.

The area of France where the strife between communities is the worst is on the island of Corsica, where an Independentist movement (part legal, part underground and violent) is seeking a status of Autonomy or even Independence. Since January 2018, as a result of elections held in December 2017, the pro-independence, left-leaning parties hold a majority in the Regional Assembly. There were no new developments in 2017 with regard to the specific situation of Racism in Corsica, except than a surge of violence targeting colored players in the football field⁶⁷ but we have to remind that clashes took place in 2016 between natives and people of Moroccan descent in the city of Bastia and in smaller cities. The concern with the situation in Corsica is also that some locals among those who favor separation from France are prejudiced against people from the mainland, to the extent that the slogan *I francesi fora* (« Frenchmen out ! »)⁶⁸ is a common graffiti on the island

Sports-related Xenophobia

A number of hooligans in football are affiliated with the Extreme-Right. In Lyon, militants close to the Identity movement and neo-Nazi skinheads are part of the Lyon 1950 and Kop Virage nord supporter clubs⁶⁹. This also exist in Rennes with the Unvez Kelt (formerly Breizh Stourmer) club whose members sometimes belong to the independantist Britton party, Adsav or to GUD (Groupe Union Défense, a néo-Fascist movement)⁷⁰. On 4 December 2016, there were violent clashes between supporters of Bordeaux and militants of the Extreme-Right belonging to LOSC Army, a group of hooligans from Lille who include militants of the Identity movement, who received suspended jail terms in May 2018⁷¹. The case of the Bastia soccer team in Corsica is a little bit different because the numerous incidents targeting Black people (in January 2017, player Mario Balotelli from Nice was the victim of Bastia supporters who met him with ape's-

⁶⁶ The Traoré case is not closed. For the facts see: http://www.lexpress.fr/actualite/societe/fait-divers/violences-dans-le-val-d-oise-apres-la-mort-d-un-homme-arrete_1814471.html

⁶⁷ <https://www.lesinrocks.com/2018/05/24/actualite/comment-expliquer-les-incidents-racistes-en-corse-111085868>

⁶⁸ The slogan « Arabi fora » is also commonplace, see : http://www.lexpress.fr/actualite/societe/corse-arabi-fora-ne-peut-pas-etre-considere-comme-un-slogan-nationaliste_1749157.html

⁶⁹ <https://www.foot01.com/equipe/ol/ol-supporters-violents-le-club-s-avoue-limite,281063>

⁷⁰ <https://taranis.news/2017/02/rennes-saluts-nazis-et-baston-a-coup-de-tables-rue-de-la-soif-mais-que-fait-la-police/>

⁷¹ <http://lavdn.lavoixdunord.fr/373771/article/2018-05-10/douze-supporters-du-losc-juges-lille-pour-un-projet-de-baston>

like shouts⁷²), and the supporters from clubs in mainland France, are not perpetrated by Extreme-Right militants. It is rather a way for Corsican youth who sympathize with the Nationalists to show their contempt for “continentaux” (people from the mainland) in a way that has led the French Football League to fine the Bastia club and impose him several plays behind closed doors.

The cases of glorification of Nazism or Nazi collaborators

National-Socialists are part of the lunatic fringe of the Extreme-Right and no political party, elected official or Civil Service member is a known public supporter of this ideology. There are a number of NS websites such as www.combat18.wordpress.com; <http://franceblanche.tumblr.com>; www.suavelos.eu (by Holocaust-denier and Jew-baiter Daniel Conversano, who has now turned anti-Muslim) or www.jeune-nation.com. The most-widely read of the websites with an Antisemitic, Holocaust-denying content, bordering on Nazi ideology is Alain Soral’s www.egaliteetreconciliation.fr, which in 2016 ranked among the 30 most widely-read political websites, with a total of 8,1 million reads that year. For the first time Soral, who has received numerous suspended jail terms and fines for inciting to hatred, has been sentenced in March 2017 to a 1-year jail term without suspension⁷³. The Cameroonian comedian Dieudonné M’Bala M’Bala, a one-time associate of Soral whose stand-up shows have attracted thousands of people who did not object to their anti-Semitic content and trivialization of the Shoah, has received a 2-months term without suspension in Belgium⁷⁴ and later on (November 2017) in France. He was also obliged by court order to leave the premises of Théâtre de la Main d’Or in Paris, where he used to perform⁷⁵. He is now obliged to perform at private venues.

Holocaust-deniers are few. The first generation of them is growing old. Robert Faurisson turned 88 and was honored with a birthday party attended by French neo-Fascists such as Yvan Benedetti from Jeune nation and PNF⁷⁶. Pierre Guillaume, aged 77 is currently inactive. Left-Winger Serge Thion, a supporter of Faurisson, died on 15 October 2017 at age 75. The best known among the new generation is Vincent Reynouard (1969), who is currently on the run in the UK, following a 2015 conviction⁷⁷. Other noteworthy rabid anti-Semites are Hervé Ryssen (1967) who was sentenced to 11 months in jail without suspension (in

⁷² https://www.francetvinfo.fr/sports/foot/ligue-1/l-affaire-des-cris-racistes-contre-mario-balotelli-a-bastia-en-quatre-actes_2030749.html

⁷³ <http://www.lefigaro.fr/actualite-france/2017/03/14/01016-20170314ARTFIG00321-alain-soral-condamne-a-une-peine-de-prison-ferme.php>

⁷⁴ <http://www.lefigaro.fr/culture/2017/01/23/03004-20170123ARTFIG00108-dieudonne-condamne-a-deux-mois-de-prison-ferme.php>

⁷⁵ http://www.liberation.fr/france/2017/11/08/dieudonne-condamne-en-appel-a-quitter-la-main-d-or-et-a-deux-mois-de-sursis-pour-la-bete-immonde_1608720

⁷⁶ <https://www.jeune-nation.com/natio-france/88eme-anniversaire-du-professeur-robert-faurisson.html>

⁷⁷ <http://france3-regions.francetvinfo.fr/normandie/le-negationniste-vincent-reynouard-definitivement-condamne-1030731.html>. Reynouard, who presents himself as a Nazi, has a website: <http://sansconcession.org>.

October 2017)⁷⁸. Boris Le Lay, one of the most rabid anti-Semites in France, had his You Tube account and his website suspended. He allegedly lives in Japan⁷⁹. The French authorities, anti-Racist NGOs such as LICRA and the anti-discrimination authority, DILCRAH, have begun working hand in hand in order to have internet providers, as well as video-sharing platforms and Twitter, suspending or deleting Holocaust-denying, Racist and Antisemitism accounts. This new priority, which may prove more effective than fines the convicts never pay, and even than jail terms they never serve (it is very seldom that one is actually jailed for a non-crime related sentence that is less than 2 years), is part of a worldwide effort, including in the UK and the US, to contain hate speech on social media.

Conclusion.

The Extreme-Right in France mainly consists of the Front national, founded in 1972 (see above for election results). What does Le Pen and her party stand for? Her 2017 election Manifesto was made of 144 « commitments » that she says are the basic tenets of her ideology. On April 11, she selected 10 among those, which she promised would be enacted just after she were elected. Those include having a referendum on enforcing a new Constitution, so that *préférence nationale* (national priority), that is superior civil rights for French nationals, become legal; opting out of Schengen; compulsory repatriation of all foreigners who have a file with the Anti-Terrorist Department; having retirement age to 60 and lowering the income tax for the working and middle-class. Next, she said, she would open negotiations with the EU in order to get Brussels's approval for leaving the Union, followed by a referendum on Frexit, if the Commission does not give her a green light. Those 10 measures are only the most visible part of what the FN wants to do when it comes into power. The Presidential Manifesto, which, in the typical fashion of an authoritarian party, was never discussed by a Convention or AGM before the election⁸⁰, contained a set of measures that, if adopted and enforced, would have dramatically changed the very nature of the French Republic, leading to what would be, at best, illiberal democracy. The core values, for FN voters, are unemployment (18% of the voters chose the party because of that item), Law and Order (17%) and immigration (15%). It is therefore normal that Le Pen focuses her proposals on those topics. She advocates a return of the State in the economy, in order to regulate the financial markets, fight the closure of factory plants which are relocated out of the country, set a 35% tax on imported goods and and impose a similar tax on companies who hire foreigners instead of nationals. She wanted to restore protectionism. This platform was strongly opposed by Fillon, who is an old-style free-marketer, and for opposite

⁷⁸ See:

⁷⁹ ce3-regions.francetvinfo.fr/bretagne/finistere/brest/deux-ans-de-prison-ferme-pour-l-ultranationaliste-boris-le-lay-980896.html <http://www.conspiracywatch.info/qui-est-herve-ryssen.html>

⁸⁰ A national convention was finally held on 11 March 2018

reasons by Mélenchon, whose appeal among the working-class (18%) and the white-collar (20%) is strong. As a consequence of her « France comes first » and « France to the French » policies, Le Pen, sees a direct correlation between unemployment and immigration, but also between immigration and law and order, in a context of great anguish that another Radical Islamist attack might take place in the country. Despite the fact that Fillon Dupont-Aignan made very harsh statements on Islam and immigration (Fillon used the word *Islamofascism* and Dupont-Aignan said he believed in « some kind of population substitution » was taking place ; the two of them want to restrict legal immigration), Marine Le Pen had an edge on those issues, which were first raised by Jean-Marie Le Pen 35 years ago. She is the only one, for exemple, who wants to close « fundamentalist » mosques, the term « fundamentalist » being so vague that it satisfies those voters who are prejudiced against the Muslims, not just the Radicals. The Front national is also the only party which claims that it will deport all the undocumented immigrants and close the doors to legal immigration (except for 10,000 legal entries per year). The high level of distrust in the political elites (77% of the French think that the members of Parliament are corrupt, a little less has the same opinion of the Executive Branch) fueled support for Marine Le Pen. One repeated argument against FN during the Presidential campaign was that Le Pen and a number of party officials were put under scrutiny (or could be put under scrutiny) of both the European Parliament and the French judiciary, because of alleged financial misdemeanors and misuse of public funding⁸¹. This did not work however, because such allegations have been made before, even against Jean-Marie Le Pen, without hurting him. The « anti-system » dimension of the FN vote remains its main asset, as in 2015 74% of FN voters did so in order to sanction the Government and 29% said they voted against the whole « establishment » parties.

This being said about ideology, who are the prospective FN voters⁸² ? Le Pen retained the vote of 37% of the working-class, 26% of the unemployed and 21% of civil servants. She came first among those aged 35 to 59 y.o. She caught 30% of the vote among those without a university education, thus coming in the first place. She also came ahead among those whose household monthly revenue is under 2,000 euros.

- General recommendations for adjustments to the legal framework.

The European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (ECRML) a European treaty (CETS 148) adopted in 1992 under the auspices of the Council of Europe to protect and promote historical regional and minority languages in Europe, should be ratified by Parliament. However we understand that the major

⁸¹ <https://www.20minutes.fr/politique/2186303-20171212-assistants-eurodeputes-fn-front-national-mis-examen>

⁸² <https://www.publicsenat.fr/article/politique/presidentielle-la-sociologie-du-vote-59189>

political parties do not agree with this proposal, since they think it is in contradiction to the Article 1 of the 1958 Constitution, which provides that France is an indivisible and secular Republic which does not recognize communities.

- General recommendations for the executive bodies in the field of enforcement of law and human rights.

The decision to end the State of Emergency was widely seen as wise, as such a situation is, by nature, exceptional in a democracy. However, there is a need to enforce further legislation that would prevent the rise of Radical Islam and other forms of Extremism, especially on the internet and on social media. This is precisely what is being done by the Government with the legislation on “fake news” that has been introduced in early 2018⁸³, but some NGOs and, of course the Radical Left (LFI) and Radical Right (FN) parties stand against it because they claim it would restrain freedom of speech.

The major risk in 2017 and after is what will become of those people residing in France who have joined ISIS and who might return with the intent to take action on our soil. The present situation is that those who have been captured by the Iraqi forces and who have violated local law will be prosecuted in Iraq and appear before the local courts. Those who surrender to Allied forces, including the French, will be repatriated and stand trial here, unless the Iraqi also want to put them to court for offenses they may have committed⁸⁴. This problem means that the French Government will have to think both about the intelligence work it must set up so that those former fighters do not strike in France and about a more efficient scheme of reinsertion and desindoctrination for those same people. Another issue is that of 40 Islamic Radicals who will be freed from jail in 2018 and 2019. Minister of Justice Nicole Belloubet said they would remain under police surveillance⁸⁵.

- General recommendations to improve the situation.

It should finally be said that one of the major problems we face in France is the ban on ethnic and religious statistics. The debate on this topic has been going on for years, if not decades, both within Human Rights NGOs, elected officials and the academia. First of all, even those who are in favor of such statistics do not want to set up legal categories of ethnic and religious denominations. What is wanted is that people are authorized to state where their family comes from and what is their religion, when a general census of the population is made. All data

⁸³ http://www.lepoint.fr/medias/fake-news-la-proposition-de-loi-qui-fait-un-tolle-06-06-2018-2224643_260.php

⁸⁴ <http://www.europe1.fr/societe/les-djihadistes-francais-dirak-beneficient-de-laide-consulaire-3393071>

⁸⁵ https://www.lexpress.fr/actualite/societe/justice/detenus-radicalises-liberes-belloubet-veut-rassurer_2012949.html

would be collected on a voluntary basis. It is understandable that, in the French context of the Nation-State and Secularism, Civil Rights activists and NGOs such as SOS-Racisme oppose ethnic statistics. However, one can also argue that the absence of such statistics enables the Extreme-Right to play with fears by saying that the country is “swamped” by foreigners and refugees, or that Muslims are between 15 and 20 million when they are less than 5 million⁸⁶.

⁸⁶ (see: <http://resistancerepublicaine.eu/2016/08/12/il-y-a-en-france-environ-20-millions-de-musulmans-un-tiers-de-notre-population/>)