



HAL
open science

Behind the Globalized “New Anti-Racism”

Pierre-André Taguieff

► **To cite this version:**

Pierre-André Taguieff. Behind the Globalized “New Anti-Racism”: A Trivialized Anti-White Racism. *Telos*, 2020, 193, pp.36 - 44. 10.3817/1220193036 . hal-03207372

HAL Id: hal-03207372

<https://sciencespo.hal.science/hal-03207372>

Submitted on 24 Apr 2021

HAL is a multi-disciplinary open access archive for the deposit and dissemination of scientific research documents, whether they are published or not. The documents may come from teaching and research institutions in France or abroad, or from public or private research centers.

L’archive ouverte pluridisciplinaire **HAL**, est destinée au dépôt et à la diffusion de documents scientifiques de niveau recherche, publiés ou non, émanant des établissements d’enseignement et de recherche français ou étrangers, des laboratoires publics ou privés.

Behind the Globalized “New Anti-Racism”: A Trivialized Anti-White Racism

Pierre-André Taguieff

In the following interview, Pierre-André Taguieff, philosopher and historian of ideas, analyzes for *Valeurs Actuelles* what he calls the “ideological corruption of anti-racism” and its consequences. His new book on this topic, *L'imposture décoloniale: Science imaginaire et pseudo-anti-racisme* (Paris: Éditions de l'Observatoire/Humensis), was just published in October. An abridged version of this interview previously appeared in *Valeurs Actuelles* on July 7, 2020, under the title “Comment le ‘nouvel antiracisme’ a banalisé le racisme anti-blanc.”¹ The interview was conducted by Bastien Lejeune and is published here by permission of Pierre-André Taguieff.

In the wake of what happened in the United States, some people in France are defacing statues and calling for the removal of statesmen who made our history—notably Colbert. Has anti-racism become a totalitarianism?

The major phenomenon, whose development has been observed since the 1980s, is the ideological corruption of anti-racism, which gave rise to what I have long called “pseudo anti-racism,” of which the so-called “new anti-racism,” also known as “political anti-racism,” is only the latest figure.

* Translated by Pierre Schwarzer.

1. Pierre-André Taguieff, “Comment le ‘nouvel antiracisme’ a banalisé le racisme anti-blanc,” *Valeurs Actuelles*, July 7, 2020, <https://www.valeursactuelles.com/clubvaleurs/politique/comment-le-nouvel-antiracisme-banalise-le-racisme-anti-blanc-121416>.

This is an open access article under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NoDerivatives 4.0 International (CC BY-ND 4.0) license. To view a copy of this license, visit <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nd/4.0>. English translation © 2020 The Telos-Paul Piccone Institute, <http://www.telosinstitute.net>.

The "fight against racism" has been monopolized by minorities calling themselves "non-white," only to be imperceptibly transformed into anti-white racism.

By the fall of 1982, I had coined the term "anti-Jewish anti-racism," which proved to be predictive. Today, we are in the presence of "anti-white anti-racism," in other words, a new form of politically and culturally acceptable political and cultural racism, which its promoters refuse, of course, to recognize as such. This denial is based on a sophistic argument, consisting in a dogmatic and simplistic definition of racism that makes the existence of anti-white racism theoretically impossible.

This anti-racist definition of racism, fabricated by revolutionary African American activists in the late 1960s, is known under various names: "institutional racism," "structural racism," or "systemic racism." It is not a conceptualization of racism but a symbolic weapon that reduces racism to white racism that is supposed to be inherent in "white society" or "white domination," which is the only form of domination recognized and denounced by neo-anti-racists. Therefore, anti-white racism, "by definition," cannot exist. This is an article of faith included in a new anti-racist catechism.

This is a caricature of the holistic vision of social phenomena: whites are "systemically" guilty of racism because they are white. And blacks are "systemically" innocent victims of racism ("white" by definition) because they are black. It follows that the attitudes and behaviors of individuals are entirely determined by the "system" and are thus dis-empowered. Individual responsibility is evacuated: it is "the system" that directs everything, the thoughts, feelings, and actions of individuals being mere puppets.

This militant definition of racism, known as "structural" or "systemic," further implies a dogmatic definition of anti-racism as the fight against white racism, and nothing else. And if said racism is "systemic," then anti-racist action must aim at destroying the "system" that produces racism by its very functioning. Definitional sleight of hand has thus removed the very possibility of anti-white racism and conferred a revolutionary final telos on the anti-racist struggle. This is why Marxists of all persuasions welcome these anti-racist anti-white mobilizations, in which they see the Revolution on the march.

In its globalized form, this anti-racism has become an extraordinarily symbolic weapon used by ethno-religious groups presenting themselves as victims of "white hegemony." Anti-white anti-racism is racist anti-racism:

such is the oxymoron that sums up the extreme theoretical and rhetorical confusion which we are facing.

What is the objective pursued by these “pseudo anti-racists”?

These organized active minorities have no other project than destroying a supposedly “white” society, thought to be inherently structured by an un-reformable “systemic racism.” “Whiteness” is the name of the cursed new race, guilty of slavery, colonialism, imperialism, and racism. This neo-racism of pseudo anti-racists postulates that every white person is a dominant and every dominant is white. We are indeed in the presence of a new racist vision of the world, which has borrowed its language from anti-racism, not without distorting it to adapt it to the cultural war against the “white” world. A current made up of maniacs and vigilantes of difference finds its inner coherence in designating a single target: “whites” or “the white man.” Its objectives can be summed up in three words: to intimidate, to make people feel guilty, and to purify [*intimider, culpabiliser, épurer*]. The frenetic desire to eliminate, the old revolutionary dream of the clean slate, a dream of purifying violence, has found its latest translation in a historical and cultural “ousting,” added to the political “ousting” by far-left populists, a symbolic form of a desire to put political leaders to death.

In the behavior of contemporary pseudo anti-racist movements, there is a permanent oscillation between tribal or identity “pride,” a banal expression of spontaneous ethnocentrism (“we are the best”), and the posture of the victim, translated by a discourse of misery (“we are innocent victims of systemic discrimination” or “governmental anti-blackness”) fueling resentment and a desire for revenge, most often dressed in calls for “revolution” or the destruction of the “system.” This is enough to seduce the survivors of the communist catastrophe, who are in the process of fabricating a new ideological product of synthesis: racialized Marxism.

What should we think of the duty of memory or remembrance?

After the “right to be different,” it is now the turn of the “duty of remembrance” to be subjected to an ideological and rhetorical corruption that transforms it into an instrument of cultural conquest and disqualification of opponents. By engorging the memory of victims of a certain group and staging a competition of ethnic victim memories, the pseudo anti-racists’ duty to remember takes on the meaning of a duty to destroy the collective memory of the other, the dominant, the oppressor, and the exploiter,

in short, the "racist," "white" by nature (the color of skin) and culture ("whiteness" as a social construction). The memory of victims tends to be monopolized by "non-whites," but even further, anti-white "memoricide" is an item on today's agenda.

Collective identities are not treated in the same way. While black identity is celebrated in its victimized representation, French identity, for example, is denied or criminalized, reduced by postcolonial ideologues to a fantastical legacy of France's colonialist past and its implication in slavery. The pseudo anti-racist cultural purification can be seen as the unanticipated avatar of racist purification. The irony in this ideological tour de force is almost to be praised, given that it manages to pass off a movement based on the essentialization and criminalization of a "race," the Whites, and thus a racist movement, as an anti-racist movement. And this, to the applause of a large part of the media.

Can the import of racial issues from the United States succeed in France?

A politico-cultural import, however mimetic it may seem, always takes place in the form of a translation, which does not come without an adjustment to the new context, that is, an import never occurs without distortions or displacements. In the jargon in vogue since the 1990s, we speak of "hybridization." Unlike the United States, France is not a multi-communitarian society, and its secular republican tradition, which aims to establish equal opportunities and continues to produce citizens with equal rights, prevents imported racial conflicts from taking on a national dimension. But the desire for racial cleansing is easily exportable. By burning the historical-cultural past of the other, criminalized as "racist," pseudo anti-racists dream of a world without whites, except as minorities, marginalized, inferior. The dream of a great "de-whitening" of France reactivates the imaginary of the witch hunt, transformed into a hunt for white wizards and all the symbols of "whiteness." Through the cumulative effects of the Black Lives Matter movement, a new racial order is taking shape on the horizon, based on what could be called "non-white privilege," which is already reflected in the affirmative action measures demanded by decolonial activists, which are supposed to reverse a systemic discrimination. Whites are both under constant suspicion of "racism" and condemned to penitential conduct. They must atone for their ontological fault: being white. This disturbing prospect can only fuel the fears of citizens and thus give rise to a counter-movement

(anti-anti-racism), which would turn French society into a battlefield, on which a racialized civil war would take place. A dark horizon.

One must be attentive to certain highly significant crossroads of postures and claims that are part of anti-white racism and radical anti-Zionism, denying the right of existence to Israel, which is today's dominant form of the hateful rejection of Jews. During the month of June 2020, in France and Belgium, graffiti, slogans, and appeals launched during so-called "anti-racist" demonstrations testify to this: "Death to Whites," "Dirty Jews! Black is beautiful," "Black is beautiful," BDS posters (Boycott, Divest, and Sanction), more or less clear calls for the destruction of Israel ("From the river to the sea, Palestine will be free"), the chanting of the sloganized anti-Jewish song referring to the battle of Khaybar (600 to 900 Jews with their throats cut by the Prophet) and often sung by Islamists: "Khaybar Khaybar ya Yahoud, jaysh Muhammad sawfa ya'oud" (Khar, Khaybar oh Jews, the army of Muhammad is coming"), etc., etc. The "new anti-racism" is both anti-Jewish and anti-white. But this new veiled racism is also covered by the soothing (and sometimes lenient) justifications made by the "useful idiots" that are the intellectuals of the extreme left, always waiting for a victorious evening, wherever it comes from.

If one wanted to transform the meager troops of white supremacy into large battalions fighting against "white genocide," one would only have to favor the multiplication of violent pseudo anti-racist demonstrations with anti-white themes, which function as provocations, and therefore as incitements to violent reaction. What is likely to arise in the French population is, based on these spectacles of French subversion, the fear of black supremacism assaulting "white" societies. Showing civic responsibility means taking seriously the psychosocial phenomenon called a "self-fulfilling prophecy": the so-called "new anti-racism," by dint of provocations, could give birth to a true anti-black racism.

How would you describe the French society torn by the Traoré affair?

In France, extremism is everywhere, multiplying and creating conflicts on top of existing divisions, even though everything should be done, in the aftermath of the health crisis, to make national unity possible and prepare for the country's economic redeployment. While extremists are everywhere because they are visible in the media, they remain ultra-minorities. For the "radicals" of anti-white anti-racism, the atrocious filmed death of George Floyd was a providential event, capable of mobilizing mili-

tant masses worldwide by emotion and not by ideas. The exploitation of the Floyd affair took place in France to the benefit of the Traoré affair, set up from scratch by the family and "radical" militants, notably from leftist Islamic movements or "anti-anti-blackness" small groups hiding their leukophobia poorly. Hence this racialized Manichaeism takes the place of a new revolutionary ideology via the literal denunciation of "white power." But these unprecedented mobilizations remind us above all of the existence of something greatly forgotten: the force of passions. It is emotion that is the great fuel of the revolutionary struggle. The reaction of the distinguished revolutionary Angela Davis, not hiding her divine surprise in the *Guardian*, is highly significant in this respect: "We have never sustained demonstrations of such magnitude and diversity before.... This time may be the right one."

Moving beyond the struggle against "police violence" and "systemic racism," the British branch of the Black Lives Matter movement (BLMUK), which is very active on social networks, has defined an intersectional revolutionary project whose objective is "to dismantle imperialism, capitalism, white supremacy, patriarchy, and state structures that disproportionately harm blacks in Britain and the world." Extravagant as it is, this racialized revolutionary utopia has attracted more than 33,000 donors who, in two weeks, deposited more than £1 million via crowdfunding.

Consider the signs of the coming revolution. Groups of violent censors are debunking or defiling statues, while militant intellectuals, sectarian minds converted into the professionally outraged, intervene in public to legitimize the violence, not without denouncing, condemning and intimidating those who resist them. They call for censorship and launch witch hunts dressed in noble sentiments. "The" enemy is "Whiteness"! Uncultured fanatics launch into the ideological market, shamelessly producing, in anachronism, major polemical amalgams between French historical figures and anti-black racism: Colbert, Schoelcher, Faidherbe, Jules Ferry, etc. The retrospective criminalization is a mode of intellectualizing the passions, particularly resentment and a desire for revenge. The objective is to inculcate and trivialize the shame of being "white." Intimidation by active minorities operates in the media space without encountering resistance. In France, the "new anti-racism," a tool of intimidation and an instrument of media agendas (fabricating a muse in the figure of Assa Traoré), is also a matter of business and marketing.

The privatization of the censorship of all things “white” by groups of activists and the big brands follows the movement. For it is indeed a fashion, therefore a passing but powerful conformism. “Race,” skin color, and the “anti-racist” flag, waved at the top by Tartuffes and at the bottom by violent sectarians, are fashionable. The big brands are on the march, starting with Coca-Cola or L’Oréal, which has decided to remove the words “white,” “whitening,” and “clear” from the description of its cosmetic products designed to lighten the skin. As these actions of lexical cleansing show, the merchandising of anti-white anti-racism is on the march. It is a mixture of a grotesque, instinctual gregariousness and a mercantile spirit. What is striking is the alliance of fanaticism, hypermoralism, conformism, and advertising frenzy.

Those who shamelessly play on the—legitimate—indignation aroused by the murder of George Floyd exploit the emotion stirred on a global scale. They built themselves an ideology seeking to be immune from all the criticism masterfully orchestrated by active minorities. It follows that to challenge their magical “new anti-racism” is to expose oneself to the accusation of racism. These “anti-racist” activists are always right: intimidation has the last word. The activists of the Adama Traoré Committee can thus accuse the French police and justice system of being “racist” and behaving accordingly.

An advisor to Emmanuel Macron revealed to me that the president had read your books to better understand the danger weighing on the French universalist model, and that your writings had “nourished” it. Do you feel that the president is inspired by you in his management of this strange period? To put it another way, does he seem to have realized the extent of the danger?

I believe that, in recent months, President Macron has become aware of the danger represented by the progression and trivialization of decolonial ideology in France, which, under the guise of a ragingly vindictive pseudo anti-racism, has taken hold in a certain number of universities and in the world of culture before taking matters to the streets, on the occasion of the artificial twists and turns of the Traoré affair, to aggravate the conflictual fragmentation of civil society and criminalize the republican institutions that guarantee national unity. What is of great concern is that this criminalization extends to the entire history of France, to its great political figures and its great authors, to its monuments as well as to its artistic and literary works.

The obsession with skin color has become commonplace in extreme left-wing circles, as a result of decolonial indoctrination. In these circles, the racial decoding of political life is a reflex reaction. The LFI deputy Danielle Obono, close to the Indigènes de la République, reacted to the nomination of Jean Castex to the post of prime minister on July 3, 2020, with a tweet of inclusive writing beginning as follows: "Profile: white, male, right-wing technocrat, and big moonlighter."

When he declared, according to comments reported by *Le Monde* on June 11, 2020, that "the academic world...has encouraged the ethnicization of the social question," President Macron merely reacted with an observation that can hardly be criticized except for its globalizing character. It is obviously not all academics who have favored the use of ethno-racialist approaches in the analysis of social phenomena. Racialist indoctrination has only been carried out by teachers confusing their task with their political engagement in this or that indigenist, postcolonial, or decolonial movement. By allusively calling into question the responsibility of certain extreme left-wing academics, in particular a number of specialists in the social sciences—a sector that has professionalized the teaching of "radical ideas" of all kinds (notably in "gender theory")—the president has only appropriated the critical analyses formulated for several years on the postcolonial and decolonial aberrations of the university system that were until now neglected by the political authorities. By intervening in this field, President Macron has broken the silence and made a notable ideological-political turnaround. Those who felt targeted responded by raising their voices. But indignation, especially when feigned, is not an argument.

In this respect, as the results of the Ifop-Fiducial poll conducted on June 17–18, 2020, for CNews and Sud Radio¹, the positions taken by the president are in line with the majority opinion in France. It should be emphasized that a new cleavage is emerging in French public opinion: 47% of French people believe that anti-white racism is a reality (already in 2014: "a fairly widespread phenomenon in France"), while 30% of them claim that there is "state racism" and 32% that there is "white privilege." Moreover, 71% of French people believe that personalities accused of slavery or racism belong to our history and that we should neither withdraw their statutes nor remove their names from the streets bearing them, against only 8% who think that this would be justified. Moreover, 21% of respondents believe that this issue should be debated on a case-by-case basis.

The French are therefore far from rallying to the inflammatory sloganeering of decolonialists and indigenous people, who cannot bear to see the reality disturbing their big certainties about “white privilege,” namely, that public schools and universities promote social advancement, especially that of immigrant girls who thus reap the double benefit of emancipation from community constraints and social and professional integration. This is a reminder that the republican meritocracy excludes all racism as well as all separatism based on religious or ethno-racial grounds. But we must point out a paradox: the republican system also produces citizens who, like the educated Assa Traoré or Rokhaya Diallo, turn against the Republic, whom they accuse of “systemic racism.” Ideological blindness or bad faith? Certainly, a mixture of both.

Perhaps this is one of the figures of a more general democratic paradox, which can be formulated as follows: the more social integration progresses, the more the feeling of being discriminated against is aggravated.

Despite starting with a neoliberalism sprinkled with a mystical Europeanism, President Macron seems to have understood the urgency of reaffirming the principles of the republican tradition, inseparable from a universalist conception of citizenship and a well-understood national feeling, excluding xenophobia as much as multiculturalist (or more precisely multi-communitarian) utopia, and clearly rejecting the intimidating postures of censors, purifiers, and “debunkers” who have professionalized the hatred of France and everything French. We can only welcome this, without rallying to his policy. In particular, it remains for President Macron to rid himself of the confusion caused by his references both to national sovereignty, to be reinvented or regenerated, and to European sovereignty, which is simply a chimera.



TELOS PAUL PICCONE INSTITUTE

Critical Theory for Practical Problems

Civilizational States and Liberal Empire—Bound to Collide?

The 2021 Annual Telos-Paul Piccone Institute Conference
September 18–19, 2021 ♦ New York, NY

Keynote Speaker: Christopher Coker, London School of Economics

Civilization seems to be the new pivot of international relations. Brexit, Trump, and the resurgence of Russia and China have put culture and civilizational identity at the heart of both domestic politics and foreign policy. From the identity politics that is sweeping much of the West to the pushback against the supposed universalism of the West's liberal empire in much of the non-Western world, civilizational norms are as important as military might and economic prosperity. At a time of heightened tensions between great powers that view themselves as guarantors of civilizational identity, are civilizational states and the Western liberal empire bound to collide? This conference aims to bring greater conceptual clarity to current debates by examining some of the key terms, notably the relationship between “culture” and “civilization” and between “values” and “norms,” as well as by exploring practical ways for civilizations to enter into a meaningful dialogue with one another.

Visit www.telosinstitute.net/conference2021/ for more details about the conference.

About the Telos-Paul Piccone Institute

The Telos-Paul Piccone Institute develops new ideas for addressing the challenges of modernity worldwide through the resources of particular communities and traditions. Centered around a unique international group of scholars and practitioners, the Institute combines critical analyses of issues of modernity with a sense for alternative approaches in order to create innovative policy ideas. At the same time, the focus on communities and traditions grounds this vision in terms of local perspectives and decision-making.

Support Our Mission: Become a Member

Support our mission by becoming a member or by making a tax-deductible contribution to the Telos-Paul Piccone Institute. Conference participation is reserved for Institute members. Visit www.telosinstitute.net/memberships/ for more details.

www.telosinstitute.net