

FRÉDÉRIC MARTEL
OCCIDENTS



Investigating Our Enemies



**Sources,
bibliography
and appendices**

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PLON

AUTHOR'S AND PUBLISHERS' NOTE

This document is a companion volume of sources for *OCCIDENTS*, published in French in April 2026 and in other languages. It is presented here in English.

OCCIDENTS draws on a vast range of materials. Over eight years of field research, the author conducted approximately 1,900 interviews in fifty-two countries, with the support of around twenty researchers. The book is complemented by a bibliography of nearly 1,500 references – books, articles, and notes.

Since the sources are too numerous to include in the printed volume, they have been compiled in this separate 250-page document, available free of charge online in PDF format. Additional materials and appendices can be found below, at the end of the document.

This document was written by F. Martel, with the assistance of Dilan Radjib. The worksheets and appendices were prepared by independent researchers. They were neither researched nor drafted by the author of this book, and the views, analyses, and conclusions they contain are solely those of their respective authors. Accordingly, they do not engage the responsibility of the author of this book.

*This document is a work in progress and will be updated and revised.
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Sources, Bibliography & References

NOTE: As a general rule, I have tried to follow the structure of the book, but in some cases the order was subsequently modified. Likewise, since certain sections were cut for reasons of space, the references mentioned here may no longer correspond to the book itself but to the appendices published at the end of this document.

*Prologue – **Leurs mondes d'idées***

*Prologue – **Their Worlds of Ideas***

The introductory quote from **Marcel Proust** is taken from : Marcel Proust, *A la recherche du temps perdu*, (T. 1, *Du côté de chez Swann*, « Combray », Gallimard, Bibliothèque de la Pléiade, 1987, p. 229).

The expression « **mondes d'idées** » (“worlds of ideas”) is borrowed from Arthur Rimbaud, in a letter dated May 15, 1871, to Paul Demeny, known as the “Lettre du Voyant”: see Arthur Rimbaud, *Œuvres complètes* (Gallimard, Bibliothèque de la Pléiade, 2009, p. 347).

The reference to **Nietzsche** on the “transvaluation” of values (the German term *Umwertung*) appears in *La Volonté de puissance*: “Nous devons entreprendre la transvaluation de toutes les valeur” and *L'Antéchrist*: “Ce qu'il faut, c'est une transvaluation radicale de toutes les valeurs dites morales”; it is also the subject of theoretical developments in *Ecce Homo* and *Par-delà le bien et le mal*.

The reference to « les ingénieurs du chaos » in the introduction and elsewhere in the book refers to the title of an essay by Giuliano da Empoli with the same title, *Les ingénieurs du chaos* (J.C. Lattès, 2019). The essay is highly engaging, although it is not an investigative work.

General considerations. Several authors served as constant points of reference for this book *Occidents*. First, Michelet and his *Histoire de la Révolution française* (Gallimard, 2019), the famous chapter “De la méthode et de l’esprit de ce livre,” which addresses popular beliefs and legends constructed independently of the history of facts—or how myths and oral tradition have, for the historian, as much value as reality. Next, the work of George Orwell, indispensable at every stage of my reflection: his novels, of course, but also his essays, reportage (notably *Hommage à la Catalogne*, Ivrea, 1982), his articles, and his *Diaries*, since Orwell is, in his own words, a “political writer.” On Orwell, I used the biography by Bernard Crick, *George Orwell, A Life* (Secker, 1980), as well as the short essay by Simon Leys, *Orwell ou l’horreur de la politique* (Hermann, 1984). Hannah Arendt is an essential philosopher for my subject as well: *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, (Harcourt Brace & Co, 1951; Vol. 1: “*Antisemitism*”; Vol. 2: “*Imperialism*”; Vol. 3: *Totalitarianism*), and also several of her articles, including “On violence”, (HBJ, 1969), in which she criticizes Marx, Mao, but also Sartre and Frantz Fanon—a text that remains a reference for any democrat. The entire body of work by Albert Camus, in particular *L’homme révolté* (Gallimard, 1951), is likewise indispensable for my subject: it is the great book of futile revolt, the kind that, through illusion, leads to both minor and major forms of totalitarianism. Finally, the last author of reference for my work is the historian François Furet and his essay *Le Passé d’une illusion, Essai sur l’idée communiste au XXe siècle* (Robert Laffont/Calmann-Lévy, 1995). As a friend and a disciple of Furet, I accompanied him in 1991 to the countries of Eastern Europe, and his analyses continually inform this book. One might even say that *Occidents* is a kind of sequel to *Le Passé d’une illusion*, since I am interested, like him, in the power of ideas over facts, the grip of ideologies on reality, and my book begins roughly where Furet’s ends (around the Khrushchev moment), even though my book is not a work of history, unlike his. I believe Furet would have been eager to continue this narrative, but death did not grant him that chance. Furet wrote, moreover, in the epilogue to his book: “Thus began, in the West, the burial of the communist idea, a

process that would last thirty years. It would be surrounded by immense crowds and accompanied by tears. Even the younger generations would join the procession, trying here and there to give it the appearance of a rebirth. I would have liked to follow it step by step, had this book not thereby taken on an unreasonable dimension.” Thus, as a journalist and sociologist, and without being a historian myself (I am writing a book about the present whereas he was writing about the past), I take up the torch, and the reader will have little difficulty recognizing, over the course of the pages of *Occidents*, Furet’s method, analyses, and even his style. My conclusion could have been, in fact, entitled: “The future of an illusion” (between Freud and Furet).

Four philosophers from Harvard and Princeton in the United States, who have taken positions in relation to John Rawls’s major work, *A Theory of Justice* (Harvard, 1999), also provided important ideas for this book: Amartya Sen, Michael Walzer, Michael Sandel, and Kwame Anthony Appiah. From the first, the Indian economist and philosopher, I recommend *L’idée de justice* (2009; trad: Flammarion, 2010) and, more accessible, *Identity and Violence* (conferences 2001; Penguin Books, 2006). *Spheres of Justice* by Michael Walzer (Basic Books, 1983) continually informs this book, and especially its conclusion. *Democracy’s Discontent* by Michael Sandel (Harvard University Press, 2022) addresses several of the themes of this book from a philosophical perspective. Finally, I recommend Appiah’s book *Repenser l’identité, Ces mensonges qui unissent* (Grasset, 2021), as well as his article “There is no such thing as western civilisation” (*The Guardian*, November 9, 2016). Three of these philosophers (Walzer, Sandel, and Appiah) are personal friends who agreed to discuss some of ideas of this book during several exchanges.

On the concept of the “West,” a rich bibliography exists. By defining “the West” in relation to “the rest of the world”, *The Clash of Civilizations* by Samuel Huntington (Simon & Schuster, 1996) remains essential reading, given the profound impact it

has had. One may disagree with the theses of the Harvard professor, as I do, while still acknowledging that this book is more serious than its critics often claim: the fact that it is now one of the bibles of anti-Western thinkers in China or the Middle East demonstrates its influence. *The West* by Naoíse Mac Sweeney (WH Allen, 2023) is a good introduction to the debate. For the Greek and Latin origins of Western “civilization,” I draw on the work of the historians Jean-Pierre Vernant, *Les origines de la pensée grecque* (1962; PUF, 1992), and Paul Veyne, *La Société romaine* (Éditions du Seuil, 1991). See also : Ian Buruma and Avishai Margalit, *Occidentalism. A Short history of Anti-Westernism* (Atlantic, 2004).

For a conservative perspective defending the West, being threatened by modernity and liberalism : see the substantial classical work – often cited though rarely read – by Oswald Spengler, *Le Déclin de l'Occident* (1918–1923; Gallimard, 1948). See also Giorgios Varouxakis, *The West, The History of an Idea*, (Princeton, 2025, chapter VI “From Decline of the West to Defence of the West”) and his interview with Philip Olterman, “Europe is the core – America joined as an offshoot’: the historian challenging what ‘the west’ means”, (*The Guardian*, September 3, 2025). The short essay by Philippe Nemo, *Qu'est-ce que l'Occident ?* (PUF, 2004), is a good introduction as well to the ultra-conservative thesis of Catholic traditionalists.

On the defense of the West in U.S. foreign policy, see Michael Kimmage, *The Abandonment of the West: The History of an Idea in American Foreign Policy* (Basic Books, 2020).

On “Western” thought, the bibliography is naturally vast. On the « spirit of the Enlightenment », see the insightful book by Tzvetan Todorov, *L'Esprit des Lumières* (Robert Laffont, 2006; paperback edition, Le Livre de Poche, 2007). On Rousseau, in addition to the *Œuvres complètes* in the Pléiade, I rely on the remarkable essay on

Rousseau by the same Tzvetan Todorov, *Frêle bonheur* (Hachette, 1985 ; rééd. Folio, 2026), which explains the “system” of Rousseau—one of the most powerful systems in the history of Western philosophy—and from which I borrow several formulations (p. 18, pp. 30–33, p. 75).

[For further analysis, see Annex 1 on Rousseau’s ideas in China.](#)

On the reception of Rousseau in China, see: Xiaoling Wang, *Jean-Jacques Rousseau en Chine de 1871 à nos jours* (Société internationale des amis de Jean-Jacques Rousseau, 2010); Dandan Jiang, “Individu et Communauté: repenser quelques paradigmes des Lumières, à partir de la réception de Rousseau dans la Chine moderne” (*Rue Descartes*, 2015/1, no. 84, pp. 36–51); Wang Yao, *Jean-Jacques Rousseau et le monde intellectuel en Chine* (doctoral thesis, École Normale Supérieure de Cachan, 2014; this thesis covers the period 1882–1911); Christophe Martin, ed., “La réception de Jean-Jacques Rousseau en Chine dans les années 1920–1930” (this thesis does not appear to have been defended); Yaling Wu, “La métamorphose de la pensée rousseauiste en Chine” (thesis, Sorbonne Nouvelle). According to these studies, Rousseau was first known in China through Japanese translations, initially with *Le Contrat social* (in 1882). He was not translated into Chinese until 1899 (again *Le Contrat social*), and it was not until 1916 that a first translation directly from French appeared. The first major supporter of Rousseau in China was the intellectual Liang Qichao (around 1900).

[For further analysis, see Annex 1 on Rousseau’s ideas in China.](#)

On “Western” thought (cont.), see Josephine Quinn’s book, *How the World Made the West, A 4,000 Year History*, (Random House, 2024) is a good synthesis of the major authors. Naoise Mac Sweeney, *The West: A New History of an Old Idea* (WH Allen, 2023; a book based on fourteen “Western” figures). See also: Rémi Brague,

Europe, la voie romaine (Criterion, 1990). For Brague, the principle of Europe is Romanity, that is, to accept an external culture and assimilate it, as the Romans did with Greek culture (accept the Greek heritage and build Greco-Roman culture). In short, it is “the appropriation of what is foreign to it”; its source lies outside itself. For him, Europe is essentially Roman and therefore distinct from the United States. An ultra-Catholic vision; he rejects the U.S., a Reformed world. For a viewpoint opposed to Brague, see: Immanuel Wallerstein, *L’Universalisme européen, De la colonisation au droit d’ingérence* (Demopolis, 2008).

On Max Weber, see: Max Weber, “Le métier et la vocation de savant” (1919), reissued in *Le Savant et le politique* (10/18, Plon, 1959/1963). See also Max Weber, preface, *Confucianisme et taoïsme* (pp. VI and IX), and the foreword to *Sociologies des religions* (Gallimard, 1996). See also Pierre Bouretz, *Les promesses du monde : philosophie de Max Weber*, (Gallimard, 1996).

On the West genealogy see: Giorgios Varouxakis, *The West, The History of an Idea*, (Princeton, 2025), which is an intellectual genealogy of the term “the West.” Varouxakis argues that the notion is neither ancient nor originally imperial: neither Plato, Cicero, Locke, nor Mill described themselves as “Westerners.” The category emerged gradually in the 1820s and was systematized in the 1840s, notably by Auguste Comte, to avoid the ambiguities of the word “Europe.” “The West” thus functioned both to include the Americas and to exclude certain Europeans — a constructed geopolitical category rather than an inherited civilization. (Absent in Plato, omnipresent in Voltaire, the notion of the “West” appeared with the “Western Roman Empire” in opposition to the “Eastern Roman Empire,” or “Byzantine Empire.” In its modern sense, historians have shown that the very idea of the “West” truly emerged in Europe only during the first half of the 19th century, before spreading widely in the 1880s–1890s. In the United States, Americans only began to identify with this category much later, from the Second

World War onwards. The notion then acquired a new significance and was especially asserted during the Cold War, replacing the word “Europe” to distinguish the countries of Eastern Europe from so-called “Western” Europe, says Varouxakis.)

Reading Raymond Aron remains invaluable, see in particular: *L’Opium des intellectuels* (Calmann-Lévy, 1955); *Paix et guerre entre les nations* (Calmann-Lévy, 1962); *Plaidoyer pour l’Europe décadente* (Robert Laffont, 1977); *Démocratie et totalitarisme* (Gallimard, 1965); *Le Spectateur engagé* (Julliard, 1981).

On political liberalism, I have read and draw on certain concepts from Cass R. Sunstein’s book, *On Liberalism, In Defense of Freedom* (MIT Press, 2025). On “illiberalism,” I recommend: András Sajó, Renáta Uitz, and Stephen Holmes, eds., *The Routledge Handbook of Illiberalism* (Routledge, 2022), and Stephen Holmes, *The Anatomy of Antiliberalism* (Harvard University Press, 1993). See also Henela Rosenblatt, *The Lost History of Liberalism, From Ancient Rome to the Twenty-First Century* (Princeton University Press, 2018). See also this article about why liberals struggle to defend liberalism by Adam Gopnik, “Say the word”, (*The New Yorker*, May 27, 2024)

On the West and the market economy: The idea that the West is defined in particular by the market economy— “one of the essential characteristics of Western societies”—lies at the heart of Fernand Braudel’s reflections in his three lectures at Johns Hopkins University in 1976; they were reissued in French in *La dynamique du capitalisme* (Arthaud, 1985; Champs/Flammarion, 2008, see pp. 39, 43, 66–67, 74). One can also argue that the critique of capitalism is itself a Western idea (both before and after Marx).

For a defense of the West, see: Henri Massis, *Défense de l'occident* (Plon, 1929): this book, imbued with Catholicism, considers that the European and Western idea reached its apex with the war of 1914; the author is strongly influenced by Paul Valéry's *La crise de l'esprit*, (NRF, 1919) and is at times prescient: "The awakening of the peoples of Asia and Africa, roused by Bolshevism against Western civilization." He offers a severe critique of Russian Orthodoxy and of the new philosophy of history in Marxist-Leninism. It is also a response to Oswald Spengler, *The Decline of the West* (C. H. Beck, 1918–1922). See also Giorgios Varouxakis, *The West, The History of an Idea*, (Princeton, 2025, chapter 6 "From Decline of the West to Defence of the West"). For the quote on defense of the West, see: Paul Valéry: "Everywhere the names of Caesar, Gaius, Trajan, and Virgil, everywhere the names of Moses and Saint Paul, everywhere the names of Aristotle, Plato, and Euclid have had simultaneous significance and authority, there lies Europe" (*L'Esprit européen*). The sentences have been said in the context of the lecture entitled "Note (or L'Européen)," given in 1924 at the University of Zurich, and later included in *Variété I, Essais quasi politiques*, (Folio Essais, 1998) section "La crise de l'esprit."

Donald Trump's thought: On the critique of Western democracy by neo-reactionary thinkers close to some of the ideas of Donald Trump, see the reference book I draw on in this chapter and throughout my work: *Les Lumières sombres, Comprendre la pensée néoréactionnaire* by Arnaud Miranda (Gallimard/Le Grand Continent, 2026).

On the spirit of the "Enlightenment," see: Monique and Bernard Cottret, *L'Europe des Lumières, 1680–1820* (Perrin, 2023).

On Shakespeare, I use French translations, and when necessary, I systematically favor the most accurate and poetic ones by Yves Bonnefoy (and avoid as much as possible those by François-Victor Hugo, André Gide, or Jean-Michel Deprats).

See also Bonnefoy's illuminating preface to *Hamlet* (Folio, 2016).

On Steve Bannon, I rely primarily on my interviews with him and his collaborators, as well as Jennifer Senior's article "American Rasputin" (*The Atlantic*, 6 June 2022). I have also read the stimulating essay by Benjamin R. Teitelbaum, *War for Eternity* (Penguin Books, 2020), the agile work of the artist Jonas Staal, *Steve Bannon, A Propaganda Retrospective* (artist's catalogue for the exhibition of the same name at Het Nieuwe Instituut in Rotterdam and then at the Taipei Biennale, 2018), as well as Giuliano da Empoli's investigation, although it is largely second-hand, *Les Ingénieurs du chaos* (JC Lattès, 2019). See also Gideon Rachman, *The Age of the Strongman* (Bodley Head, 2022) and Ivan Krastev and Stephen Holmes, *The Light that Failed, Why the West is Losing the Fight for Democracy* (Pegasus, 2019). On Steve Bannon, see also the mediocre and at times mistaken book by Fiammetta Venner, *Steve Bannon, L'homme qui voulait le chaos* (Grasset, 2020). See also Steve Bannon's film: *Occupy Unmasked*, 2012 (dir. Stephen K. Bannon). I also use, as a mirror to Bannon, Ava Kofman's article, "Autocracy Now!" (*The New Yorker*, June 9, 2025; a fascinating article on Curtis Yarvin and David Marchese, "The Interview. Curtis Yarvin Says Democracy Is Done. Powerful Conservatives Are Listening", *The New York Times*, Jan. 18, 2025).

See also Eric Kohn, "Stephen K. Bannon's Indie Film Career Contradicts His Alt-Right Vision," *IndieWire*, November 21, 2016; and Nate Hochman, "What Comes After the Religious Right," *New York Times*, June 5, 2022; Benjamin Wallace-Wells, "No More Rules," *The New Yorker*, June 5, 2023. And finally: Tyler Pager and Maggie Haberman, "The Populist vs. the Billionaire: Bannon, Musk and the Battle Within MAGA", (*The New York Times*, March 9, 2025).

On Steve Bannon and Donald Trump, I have read: Michael Wolff, *Fire and Fury, Inside the Trump White House* (Little, Brown Book Group, 2018 ; his main source is Steve Bannon at least according to Donald Trump, who tweeted on January 6,

2018: “He [Michael Wolff] used Sloppy Steve Bannon, who cried when he got fired and begged for his job.” See also: Matt Taibbi, *Insane Clown President, Dispatches from the 2016 Circus* (Spiegel & Grau, 2018) and Joshua Green, *Devil’s Bargain: Steve Bannon, Donald Trump, and the Nationalist Uprising* (Penguin, 2017), which is invaluable. Finally, see: Christopher Caldwell, “What Does Steve Bannon Want?” (*The New York Times*, February 28, 2017).

On the relations between Steve Bannon and the Rassemblement National of Marine Le Pen, documents revealed in the “Epstein files” in January 2026 suggest that Bannon intervened with the billionaire pedophile Jeffrey Epstein to facilitate a zero-interest loan for the benefit of Marine Le Pen and Jordan Bardella on behalf of the French far-right party. It is not known whether the proposed loan of \$4.7 million, mentioned in Epstein’s emails, was ever disbursed. For further details, see the article by Florent Le Du and Simon Guichard, “Une « proposition » de prêt de 4,7 millions de dollars ? Quand Jeffrey Epstein s’intéressait au financement du RN” (*L’Humanité*, February 2, 2026). See also: « Que racontent les documents de l’affaire Epstein des rapports entre le RN et Steve Bannon ? » (*Libération*, « CheckNews », Feb 3, 2026).

On Trump’s strategy in Europe, see: Gabriel Grésillon and Renaud Honoré, “Maga goes global’ : comment Trump tisse sa toile radicale en Europe”, (*Les Echos*, June 27, 2025).

On Breitbart, see Andrew Breitbart, *Righteous Indignation, Excuse Me While I Save the World* (Grand Central, 2020).

On libertarianism and anarchism, see Matt Zwolinski and John Tomasi, *The Individualists: Radicals, Reactionaries and the Struggle for the Soul of Libertarianism* (Princeton University Press, 2023). The authors show the original link and strong

filiation between libertarianism and anarchism (see also their pages on Friedrich Hayek and Robert Nozick as inspirators for both movements). On the same subject : Jérôme Perrier, *Le détournement populiste du courant libertarien, Des Origines de l'anarcho-capitalisme au populisme de droite* (Note de la Fondation pour l'innovation politique, 2025); Curtis Yarvin, *Gray Mirror, Fascicle I: Distrubance* (Passage Publishing, 2024); Curtis Yarvin, “Un manifeste formaliste,” in Giuliano da Empoli, *L'Empire de l'ombre, Guerre et terre au temps de l'IA* (Gallimard, 2025).

On populism, see Giuliano da Empoli, *Les Ingénieurs du chaos*, (Lattès, 2019) and Pippa Norris, *Cultural Backlash: Trump, Brexit, and authoritarian populism*, (Cambridge University Press, 2019).

On all issues related to art in this book, I generally rely on the reference work by Hal Foster, Rosalind Krauss, Yve-Alain Bois, Benjamin H. D. Buchloh, and David Joselit, *Art since 1900, Modernism, Antimodernism, Postmodernism* (Thames & Hudson, 2004; 3rd ed., 2022; in particular on “socialist realism,” on Surrealism, Breton and Aragon, etc., and the pivotal moment of Clément Greenberg’s “farewell to Marxism” and the *Partisan Review* in 1942, see pp. 348 et seq.).

Chapitre I – Deux spectres hantent l'Europe (sur la Russie)
Chapter I – Two Specters Haunt Europe (on Russia)

On the history of Russia, I mainly use: Georges Sokoloff, *La Puissance pauvre, Une histoire de la Russie de 1815 à nos jours* (Fayard, 1993).

On the end of communism, post-communist society, and the mistakes of the West, I have read with interest the important book by Svetlana Alexievich, *La fin de l'homme rouge* (Actes Sud, 2013); the fascinating work on the former GDR by Katja Hoyer, *Beyond the Wall, East-Germany 1949-1990* (Penguin, 2023); and Alexei Yurchak, *Everything Was Forever, Until It Was No More* (Princeton University Press, 2005). See also *Free: Coming of Age at the End of History* by Lea Ypi (Allen Lane, 2021).

On Mikhail Gorbachev, “*Europe is our common home*”, see his book *Perestroïka: vues neuves sur notre pays et le monde* (J'ai lu, 1988). Also consult Michel Niqueux, *L'Occident vu de Russie, Anthologie de la pensée russe de Karamzine à Poutine* (Institut d'études slaves, 2016, pp. 683-686).

On Boris Yeltsin, I have read with interest, and partly with astonishment, the biography by Leon Aron, *Yeltsin, A Revolutionary Life* (St. Martin's Press, 2000).

On communism and the Soviet Union, the bibliography is vast and has represented years of reading for me. I will limit myself here to the works I have used: Robert Service, *Lenin: A Biography* (Macmillan, 2000) ; Robert Service, *Stalin: A Biography* (Macmillan, 2004) ; Robert Service, *Trotsky: A Biography* (Macmillan, 2009). Thierry Wolton, *Communisme, Une histoire mondiale, I. Les bourreaux ; II. Les Victimes ; III. Les Complices* (3 vol. ; Grasset, 2015 ; rééd. Perrin, 2021).

On communist crimes, the reference work remains Stéphane Courtois, et al., *Le Livre noir du communisme, Crimes, terreur et répression* (Robert Laffont, 1997, reissued in Pocket; see the first and second parts, devoted to the USSR). See also Nicolas Werth, on the Great Terror of 1937–1938, *L'Ivrogne et la marchande de fleurs : Autopsie d'un meurtre de masse 1937–1938* (Seuil, « Points », 2011).

On Stalin's and the Bolshevik Revolution's antisemitism, see Paul Hanebrink, *A Specter Haunting Europe: The Myth of Judeo-Bolshevism* (Harvard University Press, 2018). On Stalin's antisemitism, see Laurent Rucker, *Staline, les Juifs et Israël* (PUF, 2001) as well as Joshua Rubenstein, *Les Derniers Jours de Staline* (Perrin, 2023). Rubenstein's book notably mentions the project to deport 2,5 millions Russian Jews to Siberia (a project that was indeed conceived and planned—with trains for deportation—but ultimately did not take place on this scale).

On the critique of communism, besides Furet's book, already cited and which I systematically follow here, I have read with interest the famous text by Hannah Arendt, *On Violence* (Harcourt, Brace & World, 1970), as well as several works by Claude Lefort, including the collection *Le temps présent : écrits de 1945 à 2005*, (Belin, 2007) and Cornelius Castoriadis, including *La Société bureaucratique*, (Bourgeois, 1990), as well as numerous articles from the journal *Socialisme ou barbarie* (which is now easily accessible online at <https://archivesautonomies.org/>).

Originally, the group “Socialisme ou Barbarie” was created within the French section of the Fourth International in 1946—thus within French Trotskyism—and the journal of the same name three years later. See: Dominique Frager, *Socialisme ou barbarie, L'aventure d'un groupe, 1946–1969* (Syllepse, 2021). On Lefort's break with Trotskyism, see: “La contradiction de Trotsky et le problème révolutionnaire,” (*Les Temps modernes* No. 39, January 1949).

On the evolution of ideas under communism, see: Karl Popper, *The Open Society and Its Enemies* (Routledge, 1945) and the classic book by Samuel Huntington, *The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century* (University of Oklahoma Press, 1993).

On the Marxist critique of human rights, see Claude Lefort's definitive response, "Droits de l'homme et politique" (May 1979), published in *Libre*, no. 7 (Payot, 1980); the article was reissued in Claude Lefort, *L'invention démocratique* (Fayard, 1981; reissued 1994). I also have a particular affection for the book—unfortunately now forgotten—by Claude Roy, *Les chercheurs de dieux, croyance et politique* (Gallimard, 1981); a former communist who, like Furet, attempts to understand the reasons for his own blindness.

On the fall of communism, I will limit myself here to a few major titles that I have used for this book. First, the important account by Tony Judt, *Postwar* (Penguin, 2005), which serves as my guide to European history since 1945. Timothy Garton Ash's collection of texts, *La Chaudière* (Gallimard, 1990), traces well the slow end of communism in Central Europe, while *Bloodlands*, by Timothy Snyder recounts the history of Eastern European countries "between Hitler and Stalin" (2010; Gallimard, 2012). The four volumes of François Fejtö's history of the people's democracies are useful, notably *La fin des démocraties populaires* (Seuil, 1992). Pierre Hassner, with whom I participated in founding the Vukovar-Sarajevo Committee at *Esprit*, has had a lasting influence on me, particularly through his articles collected in *La Violence et la paix* (Esprit, 1995) and *La Terreur et l'empire* (Seuil, 2003). (Pierre Hassner long wondered whether communist totalitarianism was defeated by the universal appeal of democratic ideas or, on the contrary, by the resistance of cultures or national identities. The future of Eastern Europe may well depend on the answer to this question.)

The books of three major writers from Eastern Europe were useful for my project: the Pole Czeslaw Milosz, *La Pensée captive* (Gallimard, 1953); the Czech Vaclav Havel, *Le Cauchemar du monde post-communiste* (Anatolia, 1994); and the Franco-Czech Milan Kundera, *Un Occident kidnappé* (1983; Gallimard, 2021; see also his essays and his narrative *La Lenteur*, 1995). See also Adam Michnik, “Jirinovski, mon amour” (*Le Monde*, January 15, 1994).

For further analysis, [see Annex 4 on Communism and Nationalism](#)

On my years in Romania and the “Yugoslav” countries, and more broadly my life between 1989 and 1994 in the eastern of Europe countries, I use the journal I kept from that period, entitled *Impressions roumaines* (99 chronicles, 1990–1992, *unpublished*). I also draw on *Le journal de Paltinis* by Gabriel Liiceanu (La Découverte, 1999) and *Histoire et utopie* by E. M. Cioran (Gallimard, 1960; see in particular “Lettre à un ami lointain”). See also: Nicolae Manolescu, *Sujets français* (Institut culturel roumain, 2006). Finally, I use a phrase from Emil Constantinescu’s perspective: “La Roumanie sur la bonne voie” (*Le Monde*, February 22, 1997).

On the reintegration of former communists into the capitalist economy, see the pivotal article by Georges Mink and Jean-Charles Szurek, “L'ancienne élite communiste en Europe centrale : stratégies, ressources et reconstructions identitaires” (*Revue française de science politique*, 1998, no. 48-1, pp. 3–41). See also: Galia Ackerman and Stéphane Courtois, *Le Livre Noir de Vladimir Poutine* (Perrin/Robert Laffont, 2022).

On Solzhenitsyn, it is important to begin with his own books, so essential to understanding communism and its downfall: *Une journée d'Ivan Denissovitch*, (Robert Lafon, 2015), *Le Pavillon des cancéreux*, (Julliard, 1968), *L'Archipel du Goulag*, (Points, 2014) ; one can read his memoirs as well, notably *Le Chêne et le veau* (Seuil, 1975).

See also the biography by Georges Nivat, *Soljénitsyne* (Seuil, 1980; reissued under the title *Le phénomène Soljénitsyne*, Fayard, 2009): a remarkable biography that I rely on extensively here. I have also read the important book by Claude Lefort, *Un homme en trop* (Seuil, 1976). For a more christian oriented biography of Solzhenitsyn, see: Joseph Pearce: *A Soul in Exile* (Ignatius Press, 2011). For a more critical point of view: Michael Scammel, *Solzhenitsyn: a Biography* (WW Norton & Co, 1986).

For the Harvard Address (1978), I use the original, unrevised English version, with a rich dossier: *Solzhenitsyn at Harvard* (Ethics & Public Policy Center, 1980). For a French text, see the recent and retranslated version from Russian: Soljénitsyne, *Le déclin du courage* (Les Belles Lettres, 2023). See also Alain Besançon, “Soljénitsyne à Harvard,” (*Commentaire*, no. 4, 1978). See also: Arthur Schlesinger Jr., “The Solzhenitsyn We Refuse to See,” in Ronald Berman, ed., *Solzhenitsyn at Harvard* (Ethics and Public Policy Center, 1980, p. 65).

Finally, I recommend two articles that complement the famous Harvard address: “Solzhenitsyn on Communism” (*Time Magazine*, February 1980) and “Misconceptions About Russia Are a Threat to America” (*Foreign Affairs*, Spring 1980); these two texts were republished under the title: *L’Erreur de l’Occident* (Grasset, 1980).

On Solzhenitsyn’s antisemitism, see Georges Nivat, *Soljénitsyne* (Seuil, 1980, pp. 167–170).

On Solzhenitsyn and Vladimir Putin. After the writer’s death, Natalia Solzhenitsyn, his wife, moved closer to Vladimir Putin. In November 2025, Vladimir Putin awarded Natalia Solzhenitsyn the Order of Merit for the Fatherland, Third Class. The award ceremony took place at the Kremlin on the occasion of National Unity Day.

[See also Worksheet No. 1 on relations between Putin and Solzhenitsyn.](#)

On Slavophilism. On the important 19th-century debate between the “Slavophiles” and the “Westernizers,” I primarily use the good anthology by Michel Niqueux, *L’Occident vu de Russie, Anthologie de la pensée russe de Karamzine à Poutine* (Institut d’études slaves, 2016; see in particular Georges Nivat’s preface, which I have drawn on extensively, as well as Michel Niqueux’s introduction to the texts). Constantine Pobedonostsev, *Reflections of a Russian Statesman* (1896). On Dostoevsky and Solzhenitsyn, see William H. McNeill, “The Decline of the West,” in Ronald Berman, ed., *Solzhenitsyn at Harvard* (Ethics and Public Policy Center, 1980, pp. 123–129). On Dostoevsky’s European perspective in relation to Russia, see his *Journal of a Writer* (1881; trad : Gallimard, 1972); see also Michel Niqueux, *L’Occident vu de Russie, Anthologie de la pensée russe de Karamzine à Poutine* (Institut d’études slaves, 2016, pp. 430 et seq., texts [5.39] to [5.44]).

On the “Slavophiles” and Solzhenitsyn’s proximity to this doctrine, see Jack Fruchtman, “A Voice From Russia’s Past at Harvard,” in Ronald Berman, ed., *Solzhenitsyn at Harvard* (Ethics and Public Policy Center, 1980, pp. 43–47). See also: Ian Buruma and Avishai Margalit, *Occidentalism. A Short history of Anti-Westernism* (Atlantic, 2004).

The quotation “L’Occident est moribond ! Nous devons sauver l’âme de l’Europe” is taken from V. Odoïevski, 1834: cited by Michel Niqueux, *L’Occident vu de Russie, Anthologie de la pensée russe de Karamzine à Poutine* (Institut d’études slaves, 2016, p. 24).

The famous phrase, “The Russians like to call everything Russian ‘Slav’ so that later they can call everything Slav ‘Russian’,” is by the Czech writer Karel Havlicek. Kundera liked to quote it.

For further analysis, [see Annex 9 on Slavophilia.](#)

On Trotsky, I use the best, most accurate, and up-to-date biography by the great British historian from Oxford, Robert Service—the only one of this ambition written by a non-Trotskyist, which is rare: Robert Service, *Trotsky: A Life* (Harvard University Press, 2009; Perrin, 2015). Although dated and somewhat favorable, I also recommend reading the monumental, laudatory biography by Isaac Deutscher, *The Prophet: The Life of Leon Trotsky* (1954; Verso, 2004). Pierre Broué’s biography is pure Trotskyist propaganda (*Trotsky*, (Fayard, 1988)), as are the two volumes by Victor Serge, *Vie et mort de Léon Trotsky* (1951; Maspero, 1973, co-written with Natalia Sedova, Trotsky’s second wife); see also his memoirs: Victor Serge, *Mémoires d’un révolutionnaire* (1951; reissued Bouquins, 2001)—Deutscher, Broué, and Serge, all part of the Trotskyist current, thus remain in the most orthodox eulogy. The French author Michel Renouard published an accessible introduction, *Trotsky* (Gallimard, 2017). Trotsky’s autobiography, *My Life* (1930; Gallimard, 1953), is pure propaganda and allows one to follow a totalitarian thought moving backwards. The most fascinating book on Trotsky, in my view, remains a novel: *The Man Who Loved Dogs* by Leonardo Padura (2009; Métailié, 2011). Finally, most of Trotsky’s texts are available online at marxists.org.

For further analysis, [see Annex 5 on Trotsky](#).

On the specific question of the Kronstadt massacre, see Trotsky’s own self-defense, “Beaucoup de tapage autour de Cronstadt” (January 15, 1938). For a historical account, see: Jean-Jacques Marie, *Cronstadt. 1921: chronique d’une révolte des soviets* (Tallandier, 2005); see also Thierry Wolton, *Communisme, Une histoire mondiale* (vol. II “Les victimes,” Grasset, 2015).

On Henri Weber, I have drawn on notes I kept from several interviews, conferences, and discussions with him. Some phrases cited in his portrait come from the film *Henri Weber, Le Rouge et la Rose* (Cineteve, 2021). The phrase “Kautsky

was right against 'Trotsky!'” is taken from Henri Weber, *Lettre recommandée au facteur* (Seuil, 2004).

On Ed Miliband, see: F. Martel, “Qui est Ed Miliband, futur possible Premier ministre britannique?” (*Slate*, February 22, 2015), as well as the biography by Mehdi Hasan and James MacIntyre, *Ed, The Milibands and the Making of a Labour Leader* (2012).

For further analysis, [see Annex 2 on Ed Miliband](#) and [Annex 3 on the Socialist International](#)

On Antonio Gramsci, beyond the work of the Italian Marxist himself, and notably his *Cahiers de Prisons* (published in five volumes by Gallimard between 1978 and 1996, and in a practical, accessible anthology in *Folio*, 2021), I have used Perry Anderson’s *Considerations on Western Marxism: From Lukács to Gramsci, from Sartre to Althusser, from Marcuse to Della Volpe* (Maspero, 1977). I also draw on several analyses by Michael Walzer in *The Company of Critics* (Basic Books, 2002; see the chapter on Gramsci) and by George Hoare and Nathan Sperber in *Introduction à Antonio Gramsci* (La Découverte, 2019). For Gramsci’s biography, I use Romain Descendre and Jean-Claude Zancarini, *L’œuvre-vie d’Antonio Gramsci* (La Découverte, 2023), alongside Giuseppe Fiori, *La vie de Antonio Gramsci* (Fayard, 1970). I also draw on several ideas from Hugues Portelli’s article “Gramsci” in the *Dictionnaire des œuvres politiques*, edited by François Châtelet, Olivier Duhamel, and Evelyne Pisier (Presses Universitaires de France, coll. « Quadrige », 2001).

See also: Antonio Gramsci, *Guerre de mouvement et guerre de position, Textes choisis* (La Fabrique, 2011); Maria-Antonietta Macciocchi, *Pour Gramsci* (Seuil, 1974); David Forgacs, ed., *The Antonio Gramsci Reader, Selected Writings 1916–1935* (New York University Press, 2000). And the poetry collection by Pasolini entitled *Les cendres de*

Gramsci—original Italian title: *Le ceneri di Gramsci* (Garzanti, 1957; French translation: Gallimard, 2017).

On intellectuals who moved from communism to conservatism, or “U-Turn”, a well-known topic, see: Daniel Oppenheimer, *Exit Right: The People Who Left the Left and Reshaped the American Century* (Simon and Schuster, 2016); Richard Crossman, ed., *The God That Failed* (essays on Louis Fischer, André Gide, Arthur Koestler, Ignazio Silone, Stephen Spender, and Richard Wright; Hamish Hamilton, 1950); Sam Tanenhaus, *Whittaker Chambers: A Biography* (Modern Library/Random House, 1997). See also, for analysis and synthesis: George Packer, “Turned Around” (*The New Yorker*, February 22, 2016).

On Vox, see: Fernández-Vázquez, Guillermo, and Lerín Ibarra, David, “Hispanismo étnico e iberosfera: la peculiar mirada de Vox hacia la región latinoamericana” (*Revista CIDOB d’Afers Internacionals*, no. 132, December 2022, pp. 49–71).

On Francesco Giubilei (Italy): I draw on the exchanges that I have had in his office in Roma, which I partially recount in the book. For further reading, see Allan Kaval, “Francesco Giubilei, maillon italien de l’internationale contre-révolutionnaire” (*Le Monde*, October 20, 2025).

On Viktor Orbán and Hungary, see Amélie Poinssot, *Dans la tête de Viktor Orbán* (Actes Sud, 2019).

On George Soros, see Jon Henley, “George Soros: financier, philanthropist – and hate figure for the far right” (*The Guardian*, February 8, 2018); see also Connie Bruck, “The world according to George Soros” (*The New Yorker*, January 15, 1995); see also Paul Sugy, “Georges Soros ou l’itinéraire paradoxal d’un rescapé de la

Shoah accusé de financer l'antisémitisme” (a serie of several articles in *Le Figaro*, August 15, 2025, see also below). The name Soros functions as a code, a “dog whistle” used to incite antisemitism, a globalist caricature as explained in Matt Peterson’s article, “Taking Soros Seriously” (*The Atlantic*, December 3, 2018). See also Daniel Bessner, “The George Soros philosophy – and its fatal flaw” (*The Guardian*, July 16, 2018).

On George Soros’s activities in Europe, see Paul Sugy, “L’Europe, docile eldorado du vieux rêve mondialiste de George Soros” (*Le Figaro*, August 21, 2025).

On Soros, open society, and Karl Popper, see Paul Sugy, “George Soros a-t-il trahi la « société ouverte » de Karl Popper ?” (*Le Figaro*, August 12, 2025).

On Soros and his fortune, see Paul Sugy, “Comment George Soros a perdu un milliard de dollars à cause de Donald Trump” (*Le Figaro*, August 10, 2025).

On the judicial accusations against George Soros’s foundation, see Devlin Barrett, “Justice Dept. Official Pushes Prosecutors to Investigate George Soros’s Foundation” (*The New York Times*, September 25, 2025).

On José Saramago, *A jangada de pedra* (novel, 1986; published in French as *Le Radeau de pierre*, Le Seuil, 1990); and *Viagem a Portugal* (travelogue, 1981; published in French as *Pérégrinations portugaises*, Le Seuil, 2003). See also the biography by Joaquim Vieira, *José Saramago, Rota de Vida, Uma Biografia* (Horizonte, 2018). See also Saramago’s article, “Europa Sim, Europa Não” (*Jornal de Letras, Artes e Ideias*, no. 10, January 1989, p. 32).

On Tito, I used the journal *Socialisme ou Barbarie*, which early on criticized the bureaucratic and totalitarian tendencies of “Titoism” (see *Socialisme ou Barbarie*, no. 4). Later, Tito attempted to introduce a degree of self-management in the workforce, which earned him renewed support, notably from the French PSU.

However, the experience of agricultural cooperatives was a resounding failure, both there and elsewhere.

For further analysis, [see Annex 7 on Tito](#)

On intellectual anti-Americanism, Philippe Roger's *L'Ennemi américain, Généalogie de l'antiaméricanisme français* (Seuil, 2002) remains a solid reference for France. On the American side, see Louis Menand, *The Free World: Art and Thought in the Cold War* (Harper Collins, 2021). For a more critical perspective, see Tony Judt's short essay, *Ill Fares the Land* (Penguin, 2010).

On Kasparov, see *Winter is Coming: stopper Vladimir Poutine et les ennemis du monde libre* (2015, French translation: Michel Lafon, 2016) and Frédéric Martel, "Depuis New York, Garry Kasparov veut faire échec et mat à Poutine", (*Slate*, May 29, 2016).

In December 2007, Garry Kasparov gave up on running in the presidential election: they did not even manage to have his candidacy officially registered. Since January 2025, Garry Kasparov has been part of the new Russian platform of democratic forces within the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe.

On Russian television channels, RT, and digital media, I mainly use : Sergeï Guriev and Daniel Treisman, *Spin Dictators: Le nouveau visage de la tyrannie au XXI^e siècle* (Princeton University Press, 2023) ; Timothy Snyder, *The Road to Unfreedom: Russia, Europe, America* (Vintage, 2018; this important and authoritative book places the RT network back within the broader analysis of Russian influence ; see especially chapter four) ; Yochai Benkler, Robert Faris, Hal Roberts, *Network Propaganda: Manipulation, Disinformation, and Radicalization in American Politics* (Oxford University Press, 2018) ; Hellman, M., "The News Media Organizations RT and Sputnik and Their Audiences", in: *Security, Disinformation and Harmful Narratives: RT*

and Sputnik News Coverage about Sweden (Palgrave Macmillan, 2024) ; see also the academic thesis by Maxime Audinet, *Un média d'influence d'État, Enquête sur la chaîne russe RT* (INA, 2021, reissued 2024) [I draw in my book on certain analyses from this academic thesis by the « junior » researcher Audinet, though with caution, as he at times lacks rigor, particularly in polemical op-eds that are insufficiently scholarly.]

For digital media see: Andrei Soldatov and Irina Borogan, *The Red Web* (Public Affairs, 2015; an excellent but unfortunately somewhat dated book). I also use the article by Maxime Audinet and Colin Gérard, “Sous les radars : Crise, recomposition et clandestinisation du dispositif d'influence informationnelle de la Russie après l'invasion de l'Ukraine” (*Réseaux*, no. 245/2024, pp. 113 et seq.; I draw on this academic article on the issue of RT's « alternative », « counter-hegemonic », and « countercultural shift »; I also borrow its phrases « Freedom over censorship » and « truth over narrative » and the term « reinformer » in the Russian context) and the article by Keir Giles and Valeriy Akimenko, “Russia's Cyber and Information Warfare” (*National Bureau of Asian Research*, vol. 15, no. 2, April 2020, pp. 67–75).

The book by Clint Watts, *Messing with the Enemy: Surviving in a Social Media World of Hackers, Terrorists, Russians, and Fake News* (Harper, 2018), is also very insightful. It seeks to show how malicious actors manipulate minds rather than hack machines, notably through social media. (Drawing on his experience dealing with terrorism and foreign interference – including Russia in 2016 –, he explains how personal data, fears, and preferences are exploited to influence behavior and decision-making. To reach an even broader audience, including ultranationalist audiences in the West, they have even gone so far as to translate their publications into English, as Dmitry Medvedev, former president of the Russian Federation, has done, in order to reach and influence far-right circles in Europe and the United States.)

On the audience of propaganda programs: over the past two years, viewership for propaganda shows has been declining. In 2024, Mediascope published an

analysis of television programs. It shows that, for the first time since the beginning of the war, propaganda shows have fallen in the rankings. For example, Vladimir Solovyov's program did not even make the Top 50, and the channel Perviy Kanal experienced an even more pronounced decline. Their propaganda show *Vremia pokazhet* ("Time Will Tell") also posted low ratings: in the first half of the year it ranked around 80th place, but in the second half it barely appeared in the top 100 programs nationwide. Its audience share declined from a peak of 1,8 % in January 2025 to 1,4% by the end of the year.

On Konstantin Ernst: As CEO of Perviy Kanal, he oversees programming schedules. After reviewing the channel's online listings, it appears that at night it broadcasts intellectual documentaries, series, popular Western films, and even auteur cinema. By contrast, during prime time, the channel offers nothing but propaganda.

On Putin's personal ties with oligarchs and organized crime, see for example: Galia Ackerman and Stéphane Courtois, *Le Livre Noir de Vladimir Poutine* (Perrin/Robert Laffont, 2022). On Putin's mafia-like language, see also: Yves Hamant, "Le recours de Poutine à l'argot mafieux indique une sorte d'appartenance au monde des malfrats," (*Le Monde*, March 21, 2022) and Yves Hamant, "L'argot chez Poutine: marqueur d'un code de vie," in Galia Ackerman and Stéphane Courtois, *Le Livre Noir de Vladimir Poutine* (Perrin/Robert Laffont, 2022, pp. 107 et seq.).

For an overview of Putin's ideas and ideologues (Dugin, Surkov, Prilepine, Yuriev, Limonov, Prokhanov...), see the reference work by the former head of the *Financial Times* Moscow bureau: Charles Clover, *Black Wind, White Snow: Russia's New Nationalism* (Yale University Press, 2016).

On Alexander Dugin, his *Fondamentaux de géopolitiques* (Ars Magna, 1997; a genuine geopolitical textbook written with the help of two military officers). See in particular the first part of the book, devoted to the founders of Russian geopolitics (Ratzel, Kjellen, Mackinder, Mahan, Vidal de la Blache, Speakman, Haushofer, and Carl Schmitt); *L'Appel de l'Eurasie* (Heartland, 2013; a book of interviews with Alain de Benoist); *The Theory of a Multipolar World* (Arktos, 2021); *La Révolution conservatrice* (1994, untranslated). Also see his dialogue with Olavo de Carvalho, *The USA and the New World Order* (The Inter-American Institut for Philosophy, Government and Social Thought, 2012).

For Dugin, “the West is in agony, and we must save the world from this agony and perhaps also save the West from itself.” This is a point of disagreement that exists between Dugin and Alain de Benoist, one of the intellectual figures of the French far right. “Friends since 1990,” they wrote a book together, and Dugin launched his journal *Èlementy* as a tribute to *Éléments*, the Frenchman’s magazine. During an interview at his Paris home, Alain de Benoist confirms his ideological proximity to Dugin but insists on their main disagreement: the Russian in fact rejects Europe and campaigns for Russia to distance itself from it, whereas Benoist, on the contrary, proposes a return to Europe’s idealized roots. He wants to re-Westernize the West—hence his concept of a “Boreal Europe,” centered on the white race and taken up by Marine Le Pen—while Dugin seeks to “de-Westernize” Russia. By contrast, they share the same hatred of the United States, Benoist tells me. The latter, a figure of the New Right, has for years sought to distance Europe from America and envisions a “de-Americanized West,” that is, without the United States. Disagreements amid many convergences. “Alain de Benoist is my friend,” Dugin, for his part, confirms.

Dugin also notes that he has read René Guenon, *Orient et Occident*, (Vega, 2006). See also Girgios Varouxakis, *The West, The History of an Idea*, (Princeton, 2025, chapter 6 “From Decline of the West to Defence of the West”).

On Dugin and Soral: The antisemitic polemicist Alain Soral gave several lectures with Dugin in Moscow, in Brazil, and in Paris (See: Abel Mestre, « Alexandre Douguine, inspiration idéologique de l'extrême droite française prorusse », *Le Monde*, August 25, 2022).

On Dugin's youth and ideas, the book by the former Moscow bureau chief of the *Financial Times* is well documented: Charles Clover, *Black Wind, White Snow, Russia's New Nationalism* (Yale University Press, 2016). See also: Alexander Etkind, *Russia Against Modernity* (Polity, 2023).

[See also Worksheet No. 2 on Dugin's activities during the 80s](#)

On Alexander Dugin and Edward Limonov. In October 1993, Dugin and Eduard Limonov created the National Bolshevik Party, with Limonov as the charismatic figure and Dugin as the ideologue. The aim was to promote a “red-brown” alliance, bringing together the reds (communists) and the browns (fascists) against the capitalist system, as Jean-Edern Hallier was then attempting to do in France with *L'Idiot international*. Links were established with the rock/pop counterculture movement, and the party launched a bimonthly publication called *Limonka*.

On Alexander Dugin and Vladimir Putin. Although there is no evidence of a close personal relationship between Dugin and Putin, it is known that Dugin served as an advisor to the Chairman of the Duma—first to the communist Gennady Seleznyov in 1998, and later to Sergey Naryshkin of the pro-presidential party United Russia. He also advised Vladimir Zhirinovskiy, the leader of the “Liberal Democratic” (ultra-nationalist) party, as well as the Chairman of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Russian Federation, Gennady Zyuganov, starting in 2000. See Michel Niqueux, *L'Occident vu de Russie, Anthologie de*

la pensée russe de Karamzine à Poutine (Institut d'études slaves, 2016, p. 705). See also Alexander Dugin, "Putin's Eurasianism" (2011), quoted by Michel Niqueux, *L'Occident vu de Russie, Anthologie de la pensée russe de Karamzine à Poutine* (Institut d'études slaves, 2016, pp. 709–710).

On Dugin and China, about ten years ago, Dugin advocated that part of China should become Russian, notably the autonomous region known as Inner Mongolia and regions of Manchuria. The Chinese seem to have forgiven his ukases.

For further analysis, [see Annex 8 on Putin and Solzhenitsyn](#)

On Vladimir Putin, I have drawn particularly on the books by Anna Politkovskaya, *La Russie selon Poutine* (The Harvill Press, 2004; Folio, 2022); Michel Eltchaninoff, *Dans la tête de Vladimir Poutine* (Actes Sud, 2015). See also Galia Ackerman and Stéphane Courtois, *Le Livre Noir de Vladimir Poutine* (Perrin/Robert Laffont, 2022) and Masha Gessen, *Poutine, L'homme sans visage* (Fayard, 2012). Also Nicolas Werth, *Poutine historien en chef* (Gallimard, Tracts, 2022). For a fictionalized view of Putin's inner workings, see Giuliano da Empoli, *Le Mage du Kremlin* (Gallimard, 2022), though the book has been sharply criticized for historical and factual inaccuracies, as the author was unfamiliar with Russia and did not speak Russian (see for example: Constant Méheut, "A Hit French Novel Tries to Explain Putin. Too Well, Some Critics Say," (*The New York Times*, January 21, 2023).

More broadly, one can consult on Putin on the investigations and videos produced by Alexei Navalny's teams (who died in prison in 2024), an indispensable resource on Putin's Russia: see the website of the Anti-Corruption Foundation (<https://acf.international/>).

On Putin's speeches and texts. Some important speeches by Putin are included in the book by Robert Badinter, Bruno Cotte, and Alain Pellet, *Vladimir Poutine : l'accusation* (Fayard, 2023). Some of Putin's texts have also been translated in Michel

Niqueux, *L'Occident vu de Russie, Anthologie de la pensée russe de Karamzine à Poutine* (Institut d'études slaves, 2016): see in particular the important text [9.26] “La Russie et la question des nationalités,” January 23, 2012 (Alexandre Douguine praised this text, see text [9.28] in the same book); as well as the text “Une nouvelle idée nationale,” September 19, 2013 [9.29].

See also: Françoise Thom, “La création de l’Homo post-sovieticus : l’ingénierie des âmes sous Poutine,” in Galia Ackerman and Stéphane Courtois, *Le Livre noir de Vladimir Poutine* (Perrin/Robert Laffont, 2022, pp. 93 et s.)

See Putin’s original quote in the *New York Times*: “Anyone who doesn't regret the passing of the Soviet Union has no heart. Anyone who wants it restored has no brains.” (*New York Times*, February 20, 2000). He expressed roughly the same idea in Berlin in 2005; see *Libération*, September 20, 2008 (an interview with Pierre Hassner).

On Russia under Putin, see: Anna Politkovskaïa, *Douloureuse Russie, Journal d'une femme en colère* (2006; Folio, 2008; in particular the first part: “La fin du parlementarisme russe,” pp. 7–162). Also Iegor Gran, *Z comme Zombie* (P.O.L, 2022) and Alexander Etkind, *Russia Against Modernity* (Polity Press, 2023)

On Putin’s turn toward dictatorship: this shift is said to have been marked by Putin’s speech at the Valdai Club on September 19, 2013: see Michel Eltchaninoff, *Dans la tête de Vladimir Poutine* (Actes Sud, 2015, pp. 70 et s.). Before that, the speech delivered at the Munich conference in February 2007 marked the beginning of this turn: Putin gave a very harsh speech, openly criticizing the unipolar world dominated by the United States. See also: Irina Borogan and Andreï Soldatov, *Our Dear Friends in Moscow*, (Public Affairs, 2025)

On corruption in the Putin system, the sources are numerous, but the main ones remain the books, articles, and the website of Aleksei Navalny: see Aleksei Navalny, *Patriot, a Memoir* (Knopf, 2024). Also see his website: <https://www.navalny.com/>

On the fortune of Vladimir Putin, see Martin Sixsmith, *Suing the Kremlin: The Battle for Putin's Billions* (Swift Press, 2026).

On Putin's diplomacy: Angela Stent, *Putin's World: Russia Against the West and With the Rest* (Twelve, 2019).

On Putin's values and his critique of Western values, see his interview with *Financial Times* (June 28, 2019) as well as his speech of February 21, 2023:

“[The Westerners] can also continue to steal from everyone under the guise of democracy and the defense of liberties, to impose neoliberal and essentially totalitarian values, to denounce entire countries and nations, to publicly insult their leaders, to repress dissent in their own countries, and to divert attention from corruption scandals by creating imaginary enemies (...) Look at what they do to their own people. It is the destruction of family, of cultural and national identity, perversion and abuse of children, including pedophilia, all of which are declared normal in their lives. They force priests to bless same-sex marriages.”

On the West as the Antichrist: see « *L'Occident est le royaume de l'Antéchrist* » (2006), cited by Michel Niqueux, *L'Occident vu de Russie, Anthologie de la pensée russe de Karamzine à Poutine* (Institut d'études slaves, 2016, p. 708).

Also, it is well known that Vladimir Putin appreciates Western luxury clothing brands such as Loro Piana, that he was close to Silvio Berlusconi and used to visit him. In 2021, Alexei Navalny published an investigation into Putin's palace, built in Gelendzhik, featuring luxurious and lavish interiors, including even an aqua disco.

On Putin's intellectual influences: in addition to Dugin, at least two other authors seem to have influenced Putin in his “neo-Eurasianism”: Lev Goumiliov (1912–1992) and Alexandre Panarine (1940–2003). See Michel Niqueux, *L'Occident vu de Russie, Anthologie de la pensée russe de Karamzine à Poutine* (Institut d'études slaves, 2016, pp. 696–697).

On Zakhar Prilepin writings, *Pathologies* (éd. des Syrtes, 2007); *Des chaussures pleines de vodka chaude* (2007; Actes Sud/Babel, 2011); *Ceux du Donbass, Chroniques d'une guerre en cours* (2016; éd. des Syrtes, 2018, with an ultra-nationalist and revisionist preface by the translator Monique Slodzian); *De gauche, jeune et méchant, Chroniques (2012-2014)* (éd. de la Différence, 2015). On this author, see the profile by Emmanuel Carrère, who knew him: « Le cas Prilepine » (*Le Nouvel Obs*, May 18, 2023).

On Vladislav Sourkov: see his well-known lecture, « *Russian Political Culture: the View from Utopia* » (Russian Academy of Sciences, 2007, available online on Scribd). Also his article: « *La solitude du sang mêlé* » (2018). See also David Remnick, « *The Civil Archipelago* », *The New Yorker*, 19 décembre 2011. For a better understanding of his role in Ukraine, see Alya Shandra and Robert Seely, “The Surkov Leaks: The Inner Workings of Russia's Hybrid War in Ukraine” (*Rusi*, July 16, 2019)

On Mikhaïl Yuriev, *Le Troisième Empire : La Russie telle qu'elle devrait être* (2006). See also Dina Khapaeva, “Putin is Just Following the Manual” », (*The Atlantic*, March 26, 2022).

On Edward Limonov, *Le Grand hospice occidental* (1993 ; Bartillat, 2016). See also the fascinating account by French writer's Emmanuel Carrère, *Limonov* (P.O.L, 2011). One can also watch the film *Limonov: The Ballad of Eddie*, a biopic directed by Kirill Serebrennikov in 2024, adapted from Carrère's eponymous novel.

On Vladimir Medinsky, currently an adviser to the President of the Russian Federation and formerly Minister of Culture. He is regarded as one of the authors of the Russian narrative currently promoted by Vladimir Putin’s authorities: Russia is under attack on all sides and must be defended at all costs—“the very existence of Russia is at stake” (a statement by Medinsky in March 2022, one month after the outbreak of the war in Ukraine).

In 2018, the Ministry of Culture withdrew the distribution license for the satirical film *The Death of Stalin* (a satire of Soviet history). Vladimir Medinsky explained this decision by arguing that the film could offend the feelings of part of the population and portray the Soviet past in an “inappropriate light.” He stressed in response that there is no direct censorship in Russia, but rather “moral limits” provided for by law.

[See also Worksheet No. 3 on Vladimir Medinsky](#)

On Alexander Prokhanov—an ultranationalist Russian figure, a fervent supporter of Vladimir Putin, and founder of the Izborsk Club, a think tank created in September 2012 with the aim of disseminating his ideas. Among its main members are Alexander Dugin and Vladimir Medinsky. Speaking about Putin in 2009, he stated: “There are in fact three Putins. The first is a creature of Yeltsin and existed until the end of the Second Chechen War. Then there is the second Putin, the one who decisively halted Russia’s collapse by crushing separatism in the Caucasus. That Putin changed Russia’s internal configuration by abolishing the concept of the nation-state dominated by the Russian nation—a concept that, moreover, was the reason for the collapse of the USSR. Putin once again transformed Russia into an empire or quasi-empire. Then the third Putin created a Russian national capital (in the sense of cultural capital). Before that, there existed only Caucasian, Azerbaijani, Jewish cultural capitals, and so on. Finally, this Putin removed the oligarchs from

power and placed the concept of the country's economic power behind the concept of state power” (taken from an interview on the radio Ekho Moskv). More recently, his latest book has drawn sharp criticism in the Russian media sphere: the book, a work of fiction, featured two characters largely inspired by Vladimir Putin and Yevgeny Prigozhin, set in a mystical atmosphere that did not please those in power.

[See also Worksheet No. 4 on Alexander Prokhanov and the Izborsk Club.](#)

On Ivan Ilyin (1883–1954), whom Putin recognizes as his favorite author: see his book *Nos missions* (collection of articles, 1954), as well as his texts “L’Occident n’a jamais connu la Russie et ne l’a jamais comprise” (1938) and “Il n’y a pas pour nous de salut dans l’occidentalisme” (1948), cited in Michel Niqueux, *L’Occident vu de Russie, Anthologie de la pensée russe de Karamzine à Poutine* (Institut d’études slaves, 2016, pp. 665–670). See also Michel Eltchaninoff, *Dans la tête de Vladimir Poutine* (Actes Sud, 2015, pp. 45–59).

On Olavo de Carvalho, see his debate book with Alexandre Dugin: *The USA and the New World Order* (The Inter-American Institut for Philosophy, Government and Social Thought, 2012). See also Gabriel Fernandez Rocha Guimarães, « Missionary populism against nativist populism: the debate between Olavo de Carvalho and Alexander Dugin” (*Journal of Political Ideologies*, August 1, 2022).

On Olavo de Carvalho’s other works, see: *Machiavelli or the Demonic Confusion* (Ashman, 2021); and *O Jardim das Aflições* (Vide Editorial, 1995)—the last one is not translated into English (academic translation was provided for me by prof. Rodrigo de Lemos). Finally, see the film *The Garden of Afflictions* by Josias Téofilo (2017; available for paid streaming on Olavo de Carvalho’s website).

On Olavo de Carvalho and Gramsci. See, by Carvalho: *A Nova Era e a Revolução Cultural: Fritjof Capra & Antonio Gramsci* (Instituto de Artes Liberais/Stella Caymmi Editora, 1994 ; no translation in English, prof. Rodrigo de Lemos provided a summarized translation for me). According to specialist Álvaro Bianchi, Carvalho has a poor knowledge of Gramsci's life and work, which he instrumentalizes by accumulating anachronisms and errors (see his article « *Ideologia do medo* », *Cult*, January 24, 2019 – in Portuguese). Carvalho and Marxist authors: He is all the more formidable as an anti-communist polemicist because he possesses a vast library, including the complete works of all communist thinkers, meticulously read and annotated, giving him unparalleled erudition on the subject. He presents and describes this library in the film *The Garden of Afflictions* by Josias Téofigo (2017).

Finally, Carvalho's influence on French authors: Jean-Luc Marion and Rémy Brague have read Carvalho. This is also the case for Richard Millet. He also favors Julius Evola's work, *La Rivolta contro il mondo moderno* (Edizioni Mediterranee, 1998).

[See also Worksheet No. 5 on Olavo de Carvalho](#)

On André Kozyrev, see his memoirs: *The Firebird: the Elusive Fate of Russian Democracy* (University of Pittsburgh Press, 2019; in this book, Kozyrev focuses mainly on his actions under Yeltsin and says little about Putin). See also a Russian-language interview that I used to prepare my conversation with Kozyrev: Andrey Sapozhnikov, "Odnim Slovom My Proigrali", (*Novaia Gazeta*, August 16, 2024). See also: Elaine Sciolino's profile, "The Two Kozyrevs: U.S. Plays to the Good Russian" (*New York Times*, January 20, 1995). It includes this striking and prescient remark: "Mr. Kozyrev is the same man who horrified a gathering of officials from 53 European nations in Stockholm two years ago when he proclaimed the dangers of NATO expansion and the right of Russia to intervene militarily in what he called the 'post-imperial space' around it, then said he had been kidding in an effort to underscore the danger if the Russian far right came to power."

On Patriarch Kirill (Vladimir Gudyaev) and the Orthodox Church: For Kirill, see in particular Antoine Arjakovsky, “La religion orthodoxe comme arme politique”, in Galia Ackerman and Stéphane Courtois, *Le Livre noir de Vladimir Poutine* (Perrin/Robert Laffont, 2022, p. 363 et s.). Some Russian texts by Kirill that are otherwise inaccessible are republished by Michel Niqueux in *L’Occident vu de Russie, Anthologie de la pensée russe de Karamzine à Poutine* (Institut d’études slaves, 2016; see notably pp. 714-717).

In 2024, Patriarch Kirill stated that the prayer of participants in the “special military operation” before combat is particularly powerful. Kirill gave the faithful the example of how participants in the operation pray, especially before going into battle. The soldiers’ prayer is a “cry of the soul” and “performs miracles,” the patriarch affirmed after a liturgy at the Church of Kazan in Losinoostrovsky. “Most often, in comfortable conditions, or relatively comfortable ones without particular stress, we lose the ability to address God in this way, with such strength and such boldness, when He surely hears us. Today, I often happen to communicate with our warriors over there, at the front: the way they pray, especially before setting out to attack, is not how you and I pray,” the patriarch declared.

[See also Worksheet No. 6 on Patriarch Kirill](#)

On Sergueï Lavrov (Putin’s Foreign Minister), documentation is limited in terms of books or studies. There are, however, numerous profiles, notably in the international press: see, for example, David M. Herszenhorn and Michael R. Gordon, « Veteran Diplomat Fond of Cigars, Whiskey and Outfoxing U.S. », *The New York Times*, September 16, 2013. To trace his evolution, one can compare his foundational article: S. Lavrov, « Another Russia: A Challenge or New

Opportunities for Partnerships » (in the economic daily *Kommersant*, 2004) with another key, more recent article: « Law, Permission, and rules » (*Kommersant*, June 28, 2021 ; both in russian).

[See also Worksheet No. 7 on Sergueï Lavrov](#)

On the Wagner militia and Yevgeny Prigozhin, see the field investigation by *Le Monde*: “Wagner poursuit son assaut sur l’Afrique ”, (January 29, 2023). See also revelations on its operations by hackers from the anonymous group *Dossier Center*, based on over a million internal documents: “La cyberarmée de Prigojine”, (study, March 2023).

On the Wagner militia and its reorganization in Africa after the death of Prigozhin, see: Tanguy Berthemet, “Wagner renaît en Afrique et vise désormais les intérêts occidentaux en Amérique latine” (*Le Figaro*, Feb. 20, 2026) ; « Soixante agents d’influence russes identifiés : le réseau de Prigojine repris en main par le Service des renseignements extérieurs » (*Forbidden Stories*, February 20, 2026) ; « Dans les secrets de la “Compagnie”, le réseau russe chargé d’étendre l’influence de Moscou sur trois continents » (*Forbidden Stories*, February 14, 2026 – three-part series).

On Doğu Perinçek: see his book *Pioneers of the Asian Age, Lenin, Atatürk and Mao in the 21st Century* (photocopy, undated, provided by Mr. Perinçek to the author). See also Doğu Perinçek, “*The rise and fall of the dollar reign*”, article of the *Vatan Partisi*, communicated by Mr. Perinçek to the author. In this text, he advocates for the end of the world economic order established by the Bretton Woods conference in 1946.

On the war in Ukraine : Timothy Snyder, *The Road to Unfreedom: Russia, Europe, America* (Vintage, 2018); Luke Harding, *Invasion: The Inside Story of Russia's Bloody War and Ukraine's Fight for Survival* (Vintage, 2023); Christopher Miller, *The War Came to us, Life and Death in Ukraine* (Bloomsbury, 2023); Owen Matthews, *Overreach: The Inside Story of Putin's War Against Ukraine* (Mudlark, 2023). One can also read *The Russo-Ukrainian war: The Return of History* (Norton, 2023), by the Ukrainian historian Serhii Plokhy; and Samuel Ramani's book *Putin's war on Ukraine: Russia's Campaign for Global Counter-Revolution* (Oxford University, 2023). I have also read and liked very much the reportage on the front by writer's Myroslav Laiuk, *Bakhmut* (Kyiv, in English, 2025). On the decolonization process of Ukraine, see: Tetyana Filevska, *Decolonising Art, Beyond the Obvious* (Kyiv, 2025).

Chapitre II – Débris d'empires (sur Bandung)
Chapter II – Debris of Empires (on Bandung)

For an overview of the history of colonization and decolonization, I would like to begin by citing these four books that I have drawn upon and read: Marc Ferro, *Histoire des colonisations, Des conquêtes aux indépendances, XIII-XXe siècle* (Seuil, 1994); Bernard Droz, *Histoire de la décolonisation au XXe siècle* (Seuil, 2006); Guillaume Blanc, *Décolonisations, Histoires situées d'Afrique et d'Asie, XIXe-XXe siècle* (Points-Seuil, 2022); Pankaj Mishra, *From the Ruins of Empire: The Revolt Against the West and the Remaking of Asia* (Penguin, 2012; the book provides a good historical perspective on the early anti-Western Asian intellectuals).

For the history of the Spanish conquest from the perspective of the indigenous peoples, see Nathan Wachtel, *La Vision des Vaincus, Les Indiens du Pérou devant la conquête espagnole, 1530-1570* (Gallimard, 1971).

For a French and British conservative perspectives, one can read the polemical work by Nigel Biggar, *Colonialism, A Moral Reckoning* (William Collins, 2023) and Raoul Girardet, *L'idée coloniale en France* (La Table Ronde, 1972). Both books triggered intense and often hostile scholarly backlash, the first being widely condemned as flawed and inaccurate.

On Algerian ambassador's Lakhdar Brahimi, besides my multiple interviews with him, which are a primary source for this chapter, see: "Rethinking the Third World," interview with Forrest D. Colburn (*World Policy Institute*, 2007). Several books and articles mention Brahimi's presence at the Bandung Conference: see Béchir Ben Yahmed, *J'assume, Les mémoires du fondateur de Jeune Afrique* (éd. du Rocher, 2021), p. 94, and Jean Ziegler, *La Haine de l'Occident* (Livres de Poche, 2008, p. 59). See also his interview with Forrest D. Colburn, "Rethinking the "Third

World”, ‘Talking with Lakhdar Brahimi’, (*World Policy Journal*, Vol 24, No 2, Summer 2007, pp. 81-84).

Regarding Burma’s support for the Algerian nationalist cause and the role played by Lakhdar Brahimi in this support, see Renaud Egreteau, “La Birmanie, la France et la « question algérienne »” (*Revue d’histoire*, Presses de Sciences Po, no. 142, 2019, pp. 47–59).

On Indonesia and islam, see Margaret Scott, “Indonesia, The Battle Over Islam”, (*The New York Review*, May 26, 2016)

On the pre-Bandung conferences: Other conferences paved the way for Bandung. First, the Colombo Conference (Sri Lanka) in April–May 1954, which brought together India, Ceylon (now Sri Lanka), Indonesia, Burma, and Pakistan. It was on this occasion that the idea of a conference in Bandung was approved, along with its date and location. Next, the preparatory Bandung conference took place in Bogor, Indonesia, on December 28–29, 1954, with the presence of Nehru, Sukarno, as well as the prime ministers of Pakistan, Burma, and Sri Lanka. At this meeting, the decision was made to officially invite Mao’s Communist China, rather than the Formosa/Taiwan government, to Bandung (despite reservations from Pakistan and Sri Lanka) – a choice imposed by Nehru in the name of the “values of Asia.” See: Pierre Queuille, *Histoire de l’Afro-asiatisme jusqu’à Bandung, La Naissance du tiers monde* (Payot, 1965, pp. 274–284).

The American scholar George McTurnan Kahin provides an overall panorama of the conference, including numerous documents, in *The Asian-African Conference* (Cornell University Press, 1956).

On the origins of Bandung, the Colombo Conference, and the Bogor meeting, see the biography of Nehru: Sarvepalli Gopal, *Jawaharlal Nehru, A Biography* (ed. Jonathan Cape, vol. 2).

On the Bandung Conference. The most engaging and radical account of Bandung is the report by the African-American writer present at the conference: Richard Wright, *The Color Curtain, A Report on the Bandung Conference* (1956, University Press of Mississippi, 1995). The essayist David Van Reybrouck has published a history of Indonesia, which allows him to provide a long portrait of Sukarno and discuss Bandung: *Revolusi, L'Indonésie et la naissance du monde moderne* (Actes Sud, 2022).

I have also read the academic volume by Luis Eslava, Michael Fakhri, and Vasuki Nesiah, *Bandung, Global History and International Law: Critical Past and Pending Futures* (Cambridge University Press, 2017; a collective work with 38 articles). In particular, see: Ibrahim K. Gassama, “*Bandung 1955: The Deceit and the Conceit*”; Boris N. Mamlyuk, “*Decolonization as a Cold-War Imperative: Bandung and the Soviets*”; Cyra Akila Choudhury, “*From Bandung 1955 to Bangladesh 1971: Postcolonial Self-Determination and Third World Failure in South Asia*”; Nahed Samour, “*Palestine at Bandung: The Longwinded Start of Reimagined International Law*”; and especially the interesting, though purely propagandistic, article by Chen Yifeng, “*Bandung, China and the Making of World Order in East Asia*,” which provides numerous Chinese sources, important insights on Zhou Enlai, and the perspective of the Chinese Communist Party Central Committee.

See also a book published in Bandung: Sulhan Syafii, *Behind the Scenes: Story of The Bandung Conference Committee* (Tatali, 2005). As well as an official publication, issued by the Bandung Conference Museum: Roeslan Abdulgani, *The Bandung Connection* (Museum of the Asian-African Conference, 1980; reprint 2020). Darwis Khudori, ed., *Bandung at 60: New Insights and Emerging Forces* (Bandung Spirit Book Series, 2015).

The text of the final communiqué is easily accessible, although it sometimes varies depending on the translation. In English: George McTurnan Kahin, *The*

Asian-African Conference (Cornell University Press, 1956). In French: *Annuaire Français de Droit International*, Year 1955, No. 1, pp. 723-728.

For further information on Bandung, one can read: Quỳnh N. Phạm and Robbie Shilliam, eds., *Meanings of Bandung: Postcolonial Orders and Decolonial Visions* (2016). Bandung is also discussed in detail in two books by decolonial activists: Béchir Ben Yahmed, *J'assume, Les mémoires du fondateur de Jeune Afrique* (éd. du Rocher, 2021) and Jean Ziegler, *La Haine de l'Occident* (Livre de poche, 2008).

Contrary to what has sometimes been said, Hồ Chí Minh did not represent North Vietnam at Bandung: he was represented by his head of government and loyal lieutenant, Phạm Văn Đồng.

On France at Bandung. Darwis Khudori, *La France de Bandung, Batailles diplomatiques entre la France, l'Afrique du Nord et l'Indochine en Indonésie, 1950-1955* (Les Indes Savantes, 2020). This book has the great merit of publishing the original diplomatic telegrams of the French officials present at Bandung, taken from declassified archives of the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs. This provides original and reliable sources, allowing a precise understanding of certain events and contemporary assessments. I have extensively used these declassified telegrams, as well as a key 38-page typed note from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (note from the Asia/Oceania Directorate, 25 July 1955).

On coverage of the Bandung Conference in the American. The coverage in the American press is fairly detailed: Tillman Durdin, "US Finds Support among Afro-Asians," (*New York Times*, April 24, 1955); Robert Alden, "Key Men at the Bandung Parley," (*New York Times*, April 24, 1955); see also the unsigned article, "Turnabout at Bandung," (*New York Times*, April 20, 1955).

On pro-Americans positions at Bandung: supporting the United States were Pakistan, the Philippines, Japan, Turkey, Thailand, Laos, Cambodia, Ethiopia,

Lebanon, Libya, Sudan, South Vietnam, Iraq, and Iran — then an autocratic and pro-American regime under Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi. (On this point, see an article from *Le Monde diplomatique*, hardly suspect of pro-American sympathies: Françoise Feugas, « De la conférence de Bandung au mouvement des non-alignés », (*Le Monde Diplomatique / Manuel d'histoire critique*, 2014). On Iraq's position, see the intervention of Dr. Fadhil al-Jamali, former Prime Minister of Iraq, who represented Iraq at Bandung, in the article "Turnabout at Bandung," *New York Times*, April 20, 1955.) On communism as a "new super-barbarism, new super-imperialism, new super-power," see an interesting testimony by the head of the Philippine delegation, then on a pro-American side: General Carlos P. Romulo, *The Meaning of Bandung* (University of Carolina Press, 1956).

On other positions at Bandung: see Seng Tan and Amitav Acharya, ed., *Bandung Revisited: The Legacy of the 1955 Asian-African Conference for International Order* (National University of Singapore Press, 2008; see notably the interesting essay by Chen Jian, "China and the Bandung Conference: Changing Perceptions and Representations").

Algeria at Bandung: The Algerian representatives were Hocine Ait Ahmed and M'Hamed Yazid, both on behalf of the FLN and the future GPRA. They came from Cairo, where the FLN's international relations were based. (The Kabyle Hocine Ait Ahmed was one of the founders of the FLN; he was later marginalized, then sentenced and imprisoned before escaping and taking refuge in Switzerland).

Tunisia at Bandung: Salah Ben Youssef, opposed to Bourguiba, represented Tunisia. He was assassinated in 1961, probably by Bourguiba's regime.

On Richard Wright: the biography by Hazel Rowley, *Richard Wright: The Life and Times* (Henry Holt, 2001) and the important text in which he urges Black people to accept "the nationalist implications of their lives": *Blueprint for Negro Writing* (New Challenge, Spring 1937). I also use Louis Menand's article, "Richard Wright: The Hammer and the Nail" (in Louis Menand, *American Studies*, Farrar, Straus and

Giroux, 2002). See also his text “I tried to be a communist”, (*The Atlantic*, August 1944).

On the funding of Richard Wright’s trip to Bandung by The Congress for Cultural Freedom (and indirectly by the CIA), see my book *De la Culture en Amérique* (Gallimard, 2006) as well as Frances Stonor Saunders, *Who Paid the Piper? The CIA and the Cultural Cold War* (Granta Books, 1999, p. 320) and Giles Scott-Smith, *The Politics of Apolitical Culture: The Congress for Cultural Freedom, the CIA and Post-War American Hegemony* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2002, pp. 137-139). See also for the general context: Giorgios Varouxakis, *The West, The History of an Idea*, (Princeton, 2025, chapter VIII: “The Cold War and Its West”).

On India at Bandung. For the Indian position, the memoirs of diplomat C. S. Jha, who accompanied Nehru, are insightful: *From Bandung to Tashkent, Glimpses of India’s Foreign Policy* (Sangam Books, 1983; the conference report is detailed in chapter IV).

On Zhou Enlai at Bandung. Since China’s role was somewhat downplayed at Bandung, for valuable information one can consult the biography of the Chinese representative, the skillful and shrewd Prime Minister Zhou Enlai, by Dick Wilson (*Viking*, 1984). One of his Chinese biographers, Yu Changgen, who worked with Zhou Enlai, concludes his book with the phrase: “Zhou served one of the most brutal tyrants of the 20th century, comparable to Hitler and Stalin”.

In this chapter, I also use the well-documented biography *Zhou Enlai: The Last Perfect Revolutionary* by Gao Wenqian, (translated into English by Peter Rand and Lawrence R. Sullivan, PublicAffairs, 2007) who had access to the archives of the Chinese Communist Party central committee, even if his book remains largely hagiographic. To put his profile into perspective, I also draw on confidential information provided to me in Beijing by a former Chinese government minister, who wishes to remain anonymous; he reveals Zhou’s nature as a “sexual harasser,”

“he was a hard womanizer,” he insists – as was also Mao, who was accused of numerous rapes and sexual assaults on dozens of women.) [Mr. Gao was a researcher at the Institute for Party History before leaving China and moving to the United States – under circumstances that remain opaque. This work, generally positive, is based on previously unpublished documents that he could consult before leaving the country, which makes it invaluable and of great interest.

According to Mr. Gao, Zhou Enlai was a positive figure who constantly tried to correct Mao’s mistakes, but this thesis is nonetheless revisionist – sparing Zhou to make him a great Chinese hero while condemning Mao – because it tends to shield Zhou from criticism, even though he was co-architect, with Mao, of a regime that contributed to the death of millions of Chinese. This rehabilitation of Zhou Enlai is interesting because it illustrates a recent evolution in Chinese historiography on Maoism, which seems to have begun under Deng Xiaoping: glorifying Zhou and attesting to his rectitude to better criticize Mao and thereby preserve the Party.]

See also: the biography on Zhou Enlai by Barbara Barnouin and Yu Changgen (Chinese University Press, 2006; this two-handed biography was co-written by Mr. Yu, who was an associate of Zhou in the 1960s and 1970s; but it strangely does not mention Zhou’s presence at Bandung).

Since 1998, on the occasion of the centenary of his birth, a real culture around Zhou Enlai has developed, instituted by the Party: in China, according to my researchers, more than 500 books and thousands of articles, all laudatory, have been published about him.

I also read Han Suyin’s biography, *Le Siècle de Zhou Enlai, Le Mandarin révolutionnaire* (Stock, 1993): a work of pure Maoist propaganda written by an unofficial adviser and spokesperson of Zhou who worked with him for twenty years and was reportedly his mistress.

On China at Bandung, I discovered a rare original document: *China and the Asian-African Conference Documents* (Foreign Language Press, Sept. 1955). It contains five

“original” documents: Zhou Enlai’s speech at the plenary session, 19 April 1955; Zhou Enlai’s speech at the final session, 24 April 1955; the official communication by Zhou Enlai made before the central committee of the Communist Party after his return, 13 May 1955; the official invitation letter from Indonesia to China for the Bandung Conference, 15 January 1955; in response, the letter of agreement for China’s participation in Bandung, addressed to the Prime Minister of Indonesia, 10 February 1955; and finally, the conference’s final communiqué. In this work, Zhou Enlai officially accuses the Taiwanese KMT party of Chiang Kai-shek of attempting to assassinate him by trying to blow up the plane carrying the Chinese delegation to Bandung.

In Mandarin, we consulted (together with my researchers) a number of original-language materials, notably: Zhang Yan, ed., *Bandung Spirit Shining the Ground: In Memory of the 50th Anniversary of the Asian-African Conference* (Beijing: World Affairs Press, 2005); Xia Zhongcheng, *The Spirit of Asia-Africa: A Solidary and Cooperative Asian-African Conference* (Beijing: World Affairs Press, 1998); Chen Dunde, *A New Era: Zhou Enlai to Bandung* (Beijing: China Youth Press, 2013).

On Zhou Enlai's speeches and acts in Bandung. They were well covered in : Ronald C. Keith, *The Diplomacy of Zhou Enlai* (St. Martin's Press, 1989, pp. 81-88); A. Doak Barnett, “Cabbage En-lai at Bandung: Chinese Communist diplomacy at the Asian-African Conference” (*American Universities Field Staff*, 1955, pp. 1-15) ; A. Doak Barnett, « Asia and Africa in session: Random notes on the Asian-African Conference » (*American Universities Field Staff*, 1955, pp. 16-36). See also: Thomas Meaney, “Rising in the East, The Secret History of Asian Nationalism” (*The New Yorker*, May 17, 2021).

On the strange posthumous career of Zhou Enlai. The name of Zhou Enlai does not even appear once in these reference works: Marc Ferro, *Histoire des colonisations, Des conquêtes aux indépendances, XIII-XXe siècle* (Seuil, 1994); Bernard

Droz, *Histoire de la décolonisation au XXe siècle* (Seuil, 2006); Guillaume Blanc, *Décolonisations, Histoires situées d'Afrique et d'Asie, XIXe-XXe siècle* (Points-Seuil, 2022); and nor did it appear in the controversial and conservative book by Nigel Biggar, *Colonialism, A Moral Reckoning* (William Collins, 2023).

By contrast, Zhou Enlai is featured in decolonization history books published in China, where he is often presented as the great inspirer and hero of decolonization (see, for example, the official high school curriculum textbook, *Histoire 1*, published by the Maison d'édition de l'éducation populaire, 2007; cited by *Le Monde Diplomatique*, 2014).

On the assassination attempt against Zhou Enlai prior to Bandung, see: Jay Taylor, *The Generalissimo, Chiang Kai-Shek and the Struggle for Modern China* (2009; Harvard University Press, 2011, pp. 482-483).

On Mao Zedong and Zhou Enlai. Between 1957 and 1960, the relationship between Mao and Zhou deteriorated, and the Premier fell into disgrace. Yet, skillful, he managed to survive and remained Premier for 27 years. Mao and Zhou both died in the same year, still in power. See on this point the account of Nehru's Indian translator, V. V. Paranipe, who attended all meetings between Nehru and Mao as well as Nehru and Zhou: V. V. Paranipe, "Zhou Enlai: The Man and His Work, Jawaharlal Nehru & Zhou Enlai: Contrasting Personalities", *World Affairs*, Vol. 2, No. 2, Apr–June 1998.

On the ideology of the Third World, one can read the book by Jean Lacouture and Jean Baumier, *Un milliard d'hommes : Le Poids du Tiers Monde* (Arthaud, 1962). On the origin of the terms "Third World" and "tiersmondisme," see Alfred Sauvy, "Trois mondes, une planète" (*L'Observateur*, August 14, 1952, p. 5). [In most of the conference videos I have reviewed and in the speeches I have read, the word does not appear. It is not excluded, however, that it may have been mentioned, but it

seems clear that it had not yet entered the common language of the leaders of the future so-called “Third World” countries.] See also: Guillaume Blanc, *Décolonisations, Histoires situées d’Afrique et d’Asie* (Seuil, 2022).

On the term “non-alignment”, it is said to have been coined by Indian Prime Minister Nehru during a speech in 1954 in Colombo. In this speech, Nehru described the five pillars to be used for Sino-Indian relations, which had first been put forward by Chinese Prime Minister Zhou Enlai in 1953 in Beijing, during talks with an Indian delegation. He reiterated them in Rangoon during a trip in June 1954 (on a visit during which he met U Nu). They were then reaffirmed at a Zhou–Nehru meeting in June 1954 in New Delhi. Known as Panchsheel (the “five principles”), these principles later served as the basis for the Non-Aligned Movement. (Wikipedia).

On the Non-Aligned Movement in Belgrade, particularly in September 1961, see the interesting film *Le mouvement des non-alignés, Le sommet de Belgrade* (Arte). It includes rare footage of Tito and Nehru, Tito and Nasser, Tito and Fidel Castro, as well as Tito and Sukarno.

On the life of Sukarno, I found the film by Hanung Bramantyo, *Soekarno* (2013, featuring actor Ario Bayu), worthwhile.

On the so-called “five principles” of Panchsheel (“Panchsheel” literally means “five principles”: *panch* for five, and *sheel* for virtues or principles, in Hindi and Sanskrit): these are very ancient Buddhist moral precepts, which were already invoked and reinterpreted by Nehru in 1954, in his discussions with Zhou, in an attempt to smooth Sino-Indian relations, particularly over Tibet. (Having become a true matrix of good practices and harmonious diplomatic relations in Asia, these principles are still invoked today by President Xi Jinping, who likes to recall that

they were formulated by Zhou Enlai in 1954...). It should also be noted that they were used in the dialogue between Nehru and Tito in December 1954.

On Gandhi's and Nehru's India, I have read the reference work by Michael Brecher, *Nehru: A Political Biography* (Oxford University Press, 1998), as well as his autobiography: Jawaharlal Nehru, *Autobiography* (1936; repr. 1989: on several occasions, Nehru put forward the idea of a federation between India and China, including Burma and Sri Lanka; see p. 488). Nehru's article "The Tragic Paradox of Our Age" (*New York Times*, September 7, 1958) is of interest insofar as it explains his choice, between 1947 and 1954, to distance himself from communism, even though he does not publicly condemn Stalin's USSR. See also the essay by the novelist Arundhati Roy, *The Doctor and the Saint* (Penguin, 2014; a short text partly devoted to Gandhi and the caste system in India).

On Gandhi, see *Hind Swaraj, L'émancipation à l'Indienne* (1909; repr. Fayard, 2014); *Autobiographie ou mes expériences de vérité* (1927; PUF, 2012); as well as the speech "East and West," delivered to the Peace and Arbitration Society of Hampstead (1909). I use also the reference biography by Joseph Lelyveld, *Great Soul, Mahatma Gandhi and His Struggle with India* (Knopf, 2011). For a critique of Gandhi, see the famous trilogy by V. S. Naipaul, *An Area of Darkness* (1964), *A Wounded Civilization* (1977), *A Million Mutinies Now* (1990) – the three books were republished together by Picador Classic in 2020. See also: George Orwell, "Reflections on Gandhi" (1949), reprinted in George Orwell, *Shooting an Elephant* (Penguin Books, 2009). Finally, the work by E. M. Forster, *A Passage to India* (1924), remains an essential reading on India and, more specifically, on British colonialism rightly denounced by Gandhi (see Forster's tribute to Gandhi, reprinted in *E. M. Forster: A Tribute*, 2002). See also Pankaj Mishra, "The Great protester", (*The New Yorker*, October 22, 2018).

On Nehru, I use the biography by Shashi Tharoor, *Nehru: The Invention of India* (Penguin Books, 2003). I have also consulted the three-volume reference biography: Sarvepalli Gopal, *Jawaharlal Nehru: A Biography* (Jonathan Cape, three volumes published between 1975 and 1984: Vol. 1: 1889–1947; Vol. 2: 1947–1956; Vol. 3: 1956–1964). Volume 2 shows that Nehru was in regular contact with Zhou Enlai from as early as 1950 and that he already maintained a substantial correspondence with him (vol. 2, see p. 104). Border issues, particularly concerning Tibet, generated tensions from the outset, but Zhou repeatedly reassured Nehru and blatantly misled him about China’s intentions (claiming, for instance, that the maps had simply not yet been reprinted; see vol. 2, pp. 228–229; see also his repeated misrepresentations on pp. 177–178).

I also consulted the letters Nehru wrote from prison to his daughter, which are well worth reading: *Glimpses of World History* (Penguin Books, 1934), as well as the famous *The Discovery of India* (1946; repr. Penguin Books, Modern Classics, 2004). See also the memoirs of the diplomat C. S. Jha, who was one of Nehru’s collaborators: *From Bandung to Tashkent, Glimpses of India’s Foreign Policy* (Sangam Books, 1983); Benjamin Zachariah, *Developing India: an intellectual and social history, 1930–1950* (Oxford University Press, 2012); and Phillips Talbot, *Understanding India* (Foreign Policy Association, 1973) and, by the same author, *An American Witness to India’s Partition* (2007).

On Nehru’s socialism and the Congress Party, a resolution was passed in January 1955 to build “a socialistic pattern” for Indian society (See: *Sarvepalli Gopal, Jawaharlal Nehru, A Biography* (ed. Jonathan Cape, vol. 2, p. 235). For a more nuanced view, the memoirs of John Kenneth Galbraith, who was the United States ambassador to India from 1960 to 1963, are interesting (*John Kenneth Galbraith, Ambassador’s journal: a Personal Account of the Kennedy Years*, Houghton Mifflin, 1969).

On Nehru's refusal to label the USSR as a neo-colonialism at Bandung (regarding its military interventions in Eastern Europe – a position he clearly defended against the pro-American countries at Bandung), see: *Sarvepalli Gopal, Jawaharlala Nehru, A Biography* (ed. Jonathan Cape, vol. 2, p. 239-240).

On Nehru and Zhou Enlai, *Minutes of the First Meeting between Premier Zhou Enlai and Nehru, October 1954, 7:00 pm to 11:30 pm at Xihua Hall, Zhongnanhai, Beijing.* (Wilson Center, Digital archive).

On the Nasser/Nehru relationship: Nehru invited Nasser to New Delhi a few days earlier the Bandung conference (from April 6 to 8, 1955), see: various testimonies, notably that of Anthony Nutting, the British Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, in his memoirs (*op. cit.*, pp. 100-101). [Contrary to popular belief, the relationship between the two men was never “smooth”: faced with the democrat Nehru and his intellectual superiority, Nasser always had an inferiority complex; he was not particularly pleased that Nehru lectured him on the need to democratize his regime. Yet their mutual interests (and notably their shared need for Soviet arms) coincided. Nasser and Nehru depended on Russia, and Zhou Enlai promised to intercede on their behalf so that Moscow would continue or increase its military support. Everything was therefore well discussed before the arrival of the delegations in Bandung.]

On Rwanda and Paul Kagamé, see Anian Sundaram, “He’s a Brutal Dictator, and One of the West’s Best Friend”, (*The New York Times*, April 11, 2023)

On two other post-Bandung conferences. A conference occurred in Cairo in 1957, as well as in Conakry in 1960, named the Conference of Solidarity of the Peoples of Asia and Africa (unlike Bandung, where governments met, they were conferences by political parties). The headquarters of this Conference of Solidarity

of the Peoples of Asia and Africa was in Cairo. China, India, and the USSR were part of it. The Sino-Soviet conflict appeared increasingly sharply during these conferences.

The Post-Bandung Era: A comprehensive overview of this period can be found in the memoir by Béchir Ben Yahmed, *J'assume, Les mémoires du fondateur de Jeune Afrique* (éd. du Rocher, 2021, p. 94) and, for another point of view: Jean Ziegler, *La Haine de l'Occident* (Livre de poche, 2008, p.59).

On Frantz Fanon, besides his four main essays and pamphlets, I mainly use the biography by David Macey, *Frantz Fanon, une vie* (2000; La Découverte, 2013) and the one by Adam Shatz, *The Rebel's Clinic, The Revolutionary Lives of Frantz Fanon* (Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2024). The English historian (Macey) and the US editor of the *London Review of Books* (Shatz) are generally favorable to Fanon and often lenient regarding his use of violence. The testimony of Alice Cherki, who worked with Fanon in Algeria, is also noteworthy: *Frantz Fanon: portrait* (Seuil, 2000). I have also read the collection of Fanon's main articles, *Pour la révolution africaine* (Maspero, 1961), an essential source for following his activist career and his militant, strictly polemical journalism.

Besides Sartre's famous preface to *Les Damnés de la terre* (Seuil, 1961), one can also read with interest the lesser-known preface by Francis Janson to *Peau noire, masques blancs* (Seuil, 1952) as well as Cornel West's preface to the American edition of *The Wretched of the Earth*. Finally, I use Kwame Anthony Appiah's important article "Liberation Psychology" (*New York Review of Books*, February 24, 2022) and, from the same author, see the entry « Frantz Fanon » in Kwame Anthony Appiah et Henry Louis Gates, Jr. ed. *Africana, The Encyclopedia of the African and African-American Experience* (Running Pres, 2003, pp. 270-271 ; the article has been written by Appiah).

On Fanon's psychiatric ideas: see the useful collection *Frantz Fanon, Alienation and Freedom*, edited by Jean Khalifa and Robert J. C. Young (Bloomsbury, 2018). See Evelyne Pisier's analysis of Fanon in François Châtelet, Olivier Duhamel, and Evelyne Pisier, *Dictionnaire des œuvres politiques* (PUF, 1986, pp. 277–281).

I quote and use some expressions from Jean Lacouture in his interesting review of the book *Les Damnés de la terre*, (*Le Monde*, February 23, 1962).

On Fanon and his links with the CIA in 1960–1961, see Thomas Meaney, “Frantz Fanon and the CIA Man,” (*The American Historical Review*, Volume 124, Issue 3, June 2019, pp. 983–995).

On Fanon's influence on the Black Panthers: Stokely Carmichael considered *Les Damnés de la terre* an essential book. See Pankaj Mishra, “The Initiative of History,” (*New Yorker*, December 6, 2021).

For the American philosopher Allan Bloom, Fanon's ideology is “terrorism”: which, in his view, disqualifies him as an intellectual due to his “murderous hatred of Europeans and adherence to terrorism.” The French *nouveaux philosophes*, such as André Glucksmann or Pascal Bruckner, severely criticized Fanon for the same reasons: see Pascal Bruckner, *Le Sanglot de l'homme blanc, Tiers-monde, culpabilité, haine de soi* (Seuil, 1983) and André Glucksmann, “Un terrorisme de troisième type,” *Libération*, May 30, 1982 (cited in David Macey, *Frantz Fanon, une vie*, La Découverte, 2013, p. 42). It is important, however, not to lose sight of the broader context – beyond Fanon's call to violence, however controversial it may be – and to acknowledge the violence and tortures conducted by the French army.

On the racism experienced by Frantz Fanon, see Irène Gendzier, *Frantz Fanon* (Le Seuil, 1973, pp. 234-261). In addition, some Algerians and Tunisians called him

a “nègre”: see, for example, David Macey, *Frantz Fanon, une vie* (La Découverte, 2013, p. 334).

Regarding the question of Fanon’s misogyny, it is clear that Fanon operated without difficulty within the misogynistic world of the FLN (see Pankaj Mishra, “The Initiative of History,” *The New Yorker*, December 6, 2021). Several accounts suggest that Fanon was authoritarian and violent toward women, even going so far as to beat his own wife (cited by Kwame Anthony Appiah in “Liberation Psychology,” *New York Review of Books*, February 24, 2022, Félix F. Germain, *Decolonizing the Republic: Africa and Caribbean Migrants in Postwar Paris, 1946-1974*, (Michigan State University Press, 2016). Appiah adds that the writer Maryse Condé also obtained this information from members of Fanon’s family.

On the factual accuracy of Fanon’s work: when re-reading Fanon’s articles today (notably those collected in *Pour la révolution africaine*, Maspero, 1961), it becomes clear that these are not journalistic pieces but polemical writings: they don’t rely on investigation nor interviews. Having a utilitarian conception of truth, Fanon never respects facts: he engages in propaganda. Neither the seriously authoritarian tendency of the FLN, nor internal dissent within the movement, nor the violence of the *moudjahidines*—who also used torture and committed mass crimes—appear in his texts. He even reproduces FLN propaganda regarding the “Melouza” massacre, deliberately lying about the facts (over three hundred Algerians were coldly murdered by the FLN due to internal factional struggles within the Algerian nationalist movement, but it was disguised to appear as a massacre by the French army). This instrumentalization of facts is, moreover, theorized by Fanon in *Les Damnés de la terre*: “The true is that which precipitates the dislocation of the colonial regime; it is that which favors the emergence of the nation. The true is that which protects the natives and destroys the foreigners. In the colonial context, there is no conduct of truth.”

Anticolonialism before Fanon : E. M. Forster (*A Passage to India*, 1924), André Gide (*Voyage au Congo*, 1927 and *Retour du Tchad*, 1928), or George Orwell (*Burmese Days*, 1934), among others. It is worth noting that Fanon sharply criticized these authors, as well as the anticolonial “left-wing Catholics,” and other advocates of “nonviolence”. Fanon and Sartre mocked these people from the “soft left”. For Fanon, these Westerners are fundamentally racists and illegitimate by principle, even when they oppose colonialism, simply because they are White and European. See on this debate : Aimé Césaire, *Discours sur le colonialisme*, (1950, Présence Africaine, 2000).

On the Algerian War, Algerian independence, and FLN-era Algeria, the bibliography is extensive. I rely on the *Dictionnaire de la guerre d’Algérie* by Tramor Quemeneur, Ouanassa Siari Tengour, and Sylvie Thénault (Bouquins, 2023). I have also read with interest the “new” Algerian historians, including Mohammed Harbi, *Le FLN : mirage et réalité* (ENAL/Alger, 1993).

On Africa, I primarily used the books by Vincent Hугеux, *Tyrans d’Afrique, les mystères du despotisme post-colonial* (Perrin, 2021) and Richard Dowden, *Africa, Altered States, Ordinary Miracles* (Public Affairs, 2009). See also Kelefa Sanneh, “Continental Dreams”, (*The New Yorker*, October 13, 2025)

Chapitre III – Une démocratie qui marche (sur la Chine)
Chapter III – A Democracy That Works (On China)

Sources. My sources on China mainly come from the *Global Times* (online English edition), which I have carefully consulted over the past several years, and from *Reading the China Dream*, an essential site whose mission is to “translate key texts from contemporary Chinese intellectual life, particularly the writings of Chinese establishment intellectuals.” The site *Interpret: China* is a good complement, providing access to primary sources as well, with a broader spectrum, especially in diplomatic and security matters (it is published by the Center for Strategic & International Studies, an American think tank).

On Joshua Wong, I primarily rely on my meetings and conversations with him in Hong Kong in 2014 and 2015, and since then by phone and email, up until his arrest in 2020 (supplemented by numerous meetings since 2022 with Nathan Law in London and Paris). On Joshua Wong profile, I also draw on my interviews with Lai Man Lok (aka Oscar), Prince Wong, Isabella Lo, Kacey Wong, and a long interview in 2023 with Alan Leong, president of the Civic Party. See also my two reports, from which I borrow several sequences: Frédéric Martel, “Une semaine dans la vie des étudiants hongkongais qui font la ‘révolution des parapluies’” and “Hong Kong, une révolution artistique et numérique” (*Slate*, December 1 and 7, 1994). One can also read Joshua Wong’s op-ed “Taking Back Hong Kong’s Future” (*New York Times*, October 29, 2014), as well as Nathan Law’s memoir *Freedom, How We Lose It and How We Fight Back* (The Experiment, 2021).

On the Umbrella Movement, in general, see: *Umtopia, Days and Nights of the Umbrella Movement in Hong Kong* (Spicy Fish Cultural Production, 2015, photo book);

and the exhibition catalog by Kacey Wong, *Art of Protest, Resisting Against Absurdity* (AJC Gallery-Hong Kong, 2015).

On Hong Kong in general, the memoirs of the last British governor, Chris Patten, *East and West* (Pan Books, 1998) were prescient; see also his journal *The Hong Kong Diaries* (Allen Lane, 2022). I also read with interest Ho-fung Hung's book, *City on the Edge: Hong Kong under Chinese Rule* (Cambridge University Press, 2022).

Datas. To support my research, I rely on an article by artist's Justin Wong that I edited, as well as the database compiled by him, which gathers over 7,000 drawings or artworks created during the Umbrella Movement. The demands emerging from these materials, according to Justin Wong, are: "freedom, universal suffrage, open electoral candidacies, free elections, protection of Cantonese, press freedom": *Visual Protest: the Roles of Political Cartoons and Graphic Arts on Hong Kong's Anti-ELAB Movement* (ZCCE, Zurich University of the Arts, April 2025; article by Justin Wong, edited by me). Link: <https://creativeeconomies.com/visual-protest-the-roles-of-political-cartoons-and-graphic-arts-on-hong-kongs-anti-elab-movements/>

On the day-to-day history of the Umbrella Movement, I rely on information from the *South China Morning Post*, which was still, in 2014, reliable and relatively independent. It is no longer the case today.

On the political ideas of Joshua Wong: without being structurally part of it, Joshua Wong is close to the Hong Kong political current, a loose network called the "localists." Sometimes also called the "Natives" or "Hongkongers First," these "locals" seek to preserve Hong Kong's uniqueness and refuse to see it become an ordinary Chinese city. This "localism" is organized in opposition to Beijing's

“nationalism” and demands, if not independence, at least some form of autonomy or distinctiveness (Conversation with Joshua Wong).

On the forces behind the Umbrella Movement: several radical organizations were influential in Occupy Central and then in the Umbrella Movement, and they often joined sit-ins and occupations, such as the League of Social Democrats or the Civic Passion movement (whose leaders were also arrested multiple times). On the important pro-democracy union, the Hong Kong Federation of Trade Unions, it limited itself to supporting the movement behind the scenes. Finally, the official pro-democracy parties represented in the Hong Kong “parliament” – the Labour Party, the Democratic Party, and the Civic Party – discreetly supported the movement while ensuring its non-violence (Conversations with Claudio Mo, Edmund Cheng, and several other Occupy Central leaders).

According to Edmund Cheng, an Hong Kong academic, who conducted, with a team of researchers, a survey of 1,800 participants from the three encampments at Admiralty, Mong Kok, and Causeway Bay, the “Umbrella Movement” is a revolution that has no center and no political unity. The trigger was, and remains, the aspiration for democracy. It was because Beijing proposed a new electoral system at the end of August 2014, with a Communist Party veto on potential candidates for the head of the executive, in view of the 2017 elections, that Hongkongers took to the streets by the tens of thousands, carrying yellow umbrellas (more than 100,000 people on October 1, in a city of only 7.2 million inhabitants).

“The movement is composed mainly of young people with a university-level education for 56% of them,” Cheng explained to me. “This is not really surprising. However, two results surprised us more. First, between 15% and 20% of these young people had never participated in a demonstration in their lives, which is very surprising in a city where people are very accustomed to protesting. Second, 80% of these participants do not consider themselves Chinese, but Hongkongers.”

On the media in Hong Kong and their takeover by Beijing, I read the interesting book by Mark Clifford, *The Troublemaker, How Jimmy Lai Became a Billionaire, Hong Kong's Greatest Dissident, and China's Most Feared Critic* (Free Press, 2024). Ho-fung Hung's book, *City on the Edge*, has just demonstrated the extent of this mafia-like system currently spreading in Hong Kong.

For further analysis, [see Annex 10 on "Occupy"](#)

On Taiwan, see: Jean-Pierre Cabestan, *Demain la Chine : guerre ou paix ?* (Gallimard, 2021) and Elisabeth Braw, "Gray-Zone Subjugation of Taiwan: A More Acute Risk Than Invasion?" in Kori Schake and Allison Schwartz, eds., *Defending Taiwan* (American Enterprise Institute, 2022).

On Chiang Kai-shek, a biography allows one to see his particular relationship to Asian values: Jay Taylor, *The Generalissimo, Chiang Kai-Shek and the Struggle for Modern China* (2009; Harvard University Press, 2011). See also: Jay Taylor, *The Generalissimo, Chiang Kai-Shek and the Struggle for Modern China* (2009; Harvard University Press, 2011, pp. 2, 13, 91, 108, 319, 599, and 605).

Regarding the American "betrayal" concerning Formosa – the former name of Taiwan, see also Jay Taylor, *The Generalissimo, Chiang Kai-Shek and the Struggle for Modern China* (*op. cit.*, p. 482 and pp. 567-587). It can be noted, however, that Chiang Kai-shek hardly cared about the "native" Taiwanese he colonized, which makes him an anti-colonial colonizer. For a critique of Soong Mei-ling, see Laura Tyson Li, *Madame Chiang Kai-shek* (Atlantic Monthly Press, 2006).

On propaganda in Taiwan and China's media acquisitions: See Huang Jaw-Nian, "The China factor in Taiwan's Media, Outsourcing Chinese Censorship Abroad," *China Perspectives*, 2017/3, 2017.

Xi Jinping's speeches. Xi Jinping's speeches are collected in a five volumes series intitled *The Governance of China* (published in English by Foreign Language Press, 2014–2025). To trace the political evolution of Xi Jinping, see Evan Osnos, "Born Red", (*The New Yorker*, April 6, 2015)

On Xi Jinping's kleptocracy. A decisive investigation was published by Michael Forsythe: "At China's nexus of power and cash", (*The New York Times*, April 29, 2015). The article focuses on Wang Jianlin, a billionaire at the head of the Wanda group. See also: "Billions in Hidden Riches for Family of Chinese Leader", (*The New York Times*, October 25, 2012). This investigation focuses on Prime Minister Wen Jiabao. See also "Xi Jinping Millionaire Relations Reveal Elite Chinese Fortunes", (*Bloomberg News*, June 29, 2012). See also the key investigation by the International Consortium of Investigative Journalists (ICIJ), which shed light on the wealth of the "red princes" linked to the party and to Xi Jinping (see also the article by Brice Pedroletti, "En Chine, les Panama papers sont ignorés", (*Le Monde*, April 5, 2016).

Jiang Zemin, Deng Xiaoping's sucesor, was also accused of favoring his two sons and placing them at the heart of financial interest networks, notably in mobile telephony: high-level family financial corruption that confirms that the relationship between state capitalism and the Communist Party is at the heart of the Chinese model.

On censorship in Xi Jinping's China, see the article by Perry Link, "China : The Anaconda in the Chandelier", (*New York Review of Books*, April 11, 2002): in this article, Perry Link develops the metaphor of an invisible anaconda lurking in a

chandelier to describe the subtle but pervasive way in which censorship operates in China; he argues that control is achieved not so much through explicit prohibitions as through the internalization of fear and self-censorship: intellectuals, artists, or religious figures often do not need to be directly warned to limit themselves; the article's central thesis is that the Chinese authoritarian system operates less through overt coercion than through a climate of diffuse pressure, where everyone guesses how far they can go—without ever being sure—and self-censors accordingly.

On the anti-feminist and anti-woke positions of Xi Jinping, see for example: Alexandra Stevenson, « “China’s Male Leaders Signal to Women That Their Place Is in the Home” (*The New York Times*, November 2, 2023).

On anti-corruption under Xi Jinping, see Gideon Rachman, *The Age of the Strongman, How the Cult of the Leader Threatens Democracy around the World* (Bodley Head, 2022, pp. 61-62). According to different estimates, 2.7 million people were reportedly placed under investigation and 1.5 million were sentenced to a penalty.

On dissidents in Xi Jinping’s China. I interviewed, during several days in Paris and Taiwan, the Chinese dissident Wan Yanhai; in Taiwan, I spoke with the Uyghur dissident and one of the former Tiananmen student leaders, Wu’er Kaixi; and in Hong Kong, with another former Tiananmen student, Chongguo Cai, as well as Zeng Jinyan, the wife of dissident Hu Jia, Sakharov Prize laureate, now under house arrest. I also spent several days with Hong Kong dissident Nathan Law in London and Paris.

On Chinese economy. See: Anne Stevenson-Yang, *Wild Ride : A Short History of the Opening and Closing of the Chinese Economy* (Bui Jones Limited, 2024); Oriana Skyler Mastro, *Upstart : How China became a great power* (Oxford University Press, 2024).

On Chinese capitalism: regarding "Chinese capitalism," see in particular: "Xi's Big bang", (*The Economist*, November 26, 2022). It should be noted that regulations there are sometimes severe, requiring listed companies to produce very complex files (but very different from "international standards"). See also Carl Walter and Fraser Howie, *Red Capitalism: The Fragile Financial Foundation of China's Extraordinary Rise* (Wiley, 2012) and Yasheng Huang, *Capitalism with Chinese Characteristics: Entrepreneurship and the State* (Cambridge University Press, 2010). See also: Nicholas Lardy, *Markets over Mao: The Rise of Private Business in China* (Peterson Institute for International Economics, 2014); Nathan Sperber, "Ni socialisme, ni libéralisme : le capitalisme d'État en Chine," in Anne Cheng (ed.), *Penser en Chine* (Gallimard/Folio, 2021, pp. 361–390). One can also consult the book by the Chinese millionaire Desmond Shum, who was himself the victim of an "anti-corruption purge," which he considers false, and who recounts the system from the inside: *Red Roulette, An Insider's Story of Wealth, Power, Corruption and Vengeance in Today's China* (Simon & Schuster, 2021).

On Xi Jinping, arts and culture: To get an idea of Xi Jinping's thinking on art and culture, one can read an early text (published in 1989) that he devoted to freedom of creation, shortly after Tian'anmen: "*On the Relationship between Literature and Art and Politics*." In this text, he notably writes: "We must oppose those who, under the guise of freedom of creation, use literature and art as a political tool to promote bourgeois liberalization, and repudiate the lines, directives, and policies of the Party and negate the leadership of the Party." It is worth noting that Xi Jinping builds his reasoning on Mao's speech at the Yan'an Forum on Literature and Art. See : <https://uscnpm.org/2022/10/07/translation-xi-jinping-on-literature-art-and-politics-in-1989/>

Xi Jinping explicitly states that "art for art's sake" distances the artist from the masses and from reality. Quoted by Alice Ekman, *Rouge vif, L'idéal communiste chinois* (Éd. de l'Observatoire, 2020, p. 99).

See also: Alexandra Stevenson, Amy Chang Chien and Cao Li, “China’s Celebrity Culture Is Raucous. The Authorities Want to Change That” (*New York Times*, 27 août 2021).

Xi Jinping’s intervention at a forum of artists and writers in Beijing, October 2014: see Austin Ramzy, “Xi Jinping Calls for Artists to Spread Chinese Values” (*New York Times*, October 16, 2014); Murong Xuecun, “The Art of Xi Jinping” (*New York Times*, November 22, 2014). See also: Xi Jinping, August 2018 (cited by Alice Ekman, *Rouge vif, L’idéal communiste chinois* (Éd. de l’Observatoire, 2020, p. 97)). See also “Public Communication in the New Era,” National Conference on Public Communication, August 21, 2018 (in Xi Jinping, *The Governance of China*, vol. III, op. cit., pp. 362–368).

Video games: See: Chris Buckley, “China Tightens Limits for Young Online Gamers and Bans School Night Play,” (*New York Times*, August 30, 2021).

Jazz in China: It would also be interesting to examine how thinking about jazz has evolved in China, a musical style that was entirely banned under Mao and sharply criticised by Adorno in his famous articles on jazz. See: Eugene Marlow, *Jazz in China: From Dance Hall Music to Individual Freedom of Expression* (University Press of Mississippi, 2018).

On Xi Jinping’s readings: During a trip to France, Mr Xi claimed to have read Montesquieu, Rousseau, Saint-Simon, Fourier, Montaigne, Diderot, Voltaire and Sartre; during a trip to Russia, he had read not only Tolstoy and Dostoevsky, but also Pushkin, Gogol, Turgenev and many other authors. And when visiting the United States, his communications team explained that Mr Xi had “obviously read” Walt Whitman, Mark Twain, Jack London, Hemingway, Thomas Paine and Henry David Thoreau! All of this is part of the regime’s propaganda. The aim is to show that the Paramount Leader is a superior intellectual and a reader who stands above the fray, even if he has never fully read any of these books. (Dissidents have published the list of all the books supposedly read by Xi Jinping, together with

excerpts from his speeches full of references to these authors, to show the absurdity and implausibility of this propaganda.)

On Maoism and the history of communist China before Xi: I read the Mao's biography by Philip Short, *Mao Tsé-toung* (Fayard, 2005). For an assessment of repression and the number of deaths under Mao, I refer to *Le Livre noir du communisme, Crimes, terreur, répression* by Stéphane Courtois, Nicolas Werth, Jean-Louis Panné, Karol Bartosek, Jean-Louis Margolin and Andrzej Paczkowski (Robert Laffont, 1997, reissued in Pocket; see the chapter "Chine: Une longue marche dans la nuit," pp. 641–772). See also Roderick MacFarquhar, *La Dernière révolution de Mao, Histoire de la Révolution culturelle 1966-1976*, (Gallimard, 2009)

On Mao's personality: One can read the book by one of his doctors, Li Zhisui, *The Private Life of Chairman Mao: The Memoirs of Mao's Personal Physician* (Random House, 1994), in which he reveals Mao's sexual obsessions and abuses, notably against under-age girls as young as fourteen.

On the Great Leap Forward. For an account of the major famines of the 1950s and 1960s, see Jasper Becker, *The Great Famine of Mao* (Dagorno, 1998; he mentions the figure of 30 to 40 million deaths for the *Great Leap Forward* alone).

On the Cultural Revolution. I have read Roderick MacFarquhar's *The Last Revolution of Mao: A History of the Cultural Revolution, 1966–1976* (Gallimard, 1979). See in particular his portrayals of Deng Xiaoping and Zhou Enlai during the Cultural Revolution. I have also consulted the fascinating work by Yang Jisheng, *Tombstone: The Tragedy of the Cultural Revolution, China, 1966–1976* (Seuil, 2020). See also: Jean Berthier, *Voyage tranquille au pays des horreurs*, (Le Cherche-Midi, 2026)

On Deng Xiaoping. I have read with great interest Deng's biography by Jean-Pierre Cabestan, *Deng Xiaoping: Révolutionnaire et modernisateur de la Chine* (Tallandier, 2024) and also Ezra F. Vogel, *Deng Xiaoping and the Transformation of China* (The Belknap Press, reed. 2013). For a different point of view, see the memoirs of Premier Zhao Ziyang, *Prisoner of the State: The Secret Journal of Premier Zhao Ziyang* (Simon & Schuster, 2010).

On Tian'anmen. I also the most reliable testimony: Premier Zhao Ziyang, *Prisoner of the State: The Secret Journal of Premier Zhao Ziyang* (*op. cit.*). By refusing to endorse the repression, Zhao Ziyang was removed from the Party and placed under house arrest. His memoirs, secretly recorded on thirty tapes, remain one of the most compelling accounts of life inside the Chinese Communist Party.

On the Uyghurs: In Xinjiang, a campaign of “re-education” and mass internment is ongoing (according to a United Nations report, one million Uyghurs are believed to have been detained in actual internment or “re-education” camps, representing about 10% of the population of this Muslim minority). The abuses, including sexual violence, forced sterilizations, and forced abortions, are considered by many NGOs to constitute a form of “genocide.” This term has been officially adopted by the British and Canadian parliaments. See: U.N. Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (August 2018). See also: Stephanie Nebehay, “U.N. says it has credible reports that China holds million Uighurs in secret camps,” (Reuters, August 10, 2018).

See also: the reports by the German activist Adrian Zenz and those of Amnesty International. And Darren Byler, *In the Camps: China's High-tech Penal Colony* (Columbia Global Reports, 2021) and, by the same author, *Terror Capitalism: Uyghur Dispossession and Masculinity in a Chinese City* (Duke University Press, 2021). See also: Tahir Hamut Izgil, *Waiting to Be Arrested at Night, A Uyghur Poet's Memoir of China's Genocide* (Penguin, 2023) and the articles by James Leibold and those by the

Uyghur intellectuals Ilham Tohti (Sakharov Prize laureate, imprisoned since 2014) and Rahile Dawut (imprisoned since 2018, sentence commuted to “life” in 2023).

On Alibaba and the arrest of Jack Ma: See David Barboza, “Alibaba buying South China Morning Post, Aiming to Influence Media,” (*New York Times*, December 11, 2015). See also Chris Buckley and Jane Perlez, “Alibaba helps China’s drive for better coverage,” (*New York Times*, December 13, 2015) [the acquisition was estimated at \$100 million]. Li Yuan, “Jack Ma, China’s Richest Man, Belongs to the Communist Party. Of Course,” (*New York Times*, November 27, 2018); Li Yuan, “Why China Turned Against Jack Ma,” (*New York Times*, (December 24, 2020); Chang Che and Mike Ives, “Ant Group Says Its Founder, Jack Ma, Will Relinquish Control,” (*New York Times*, (January 6, 2023).

On contemporary China: I recommend Evan Osnos, “*China’s Age of Malaise*” (*The New Yorker*, October 30, 2023). For a pro-China perspective from a German author, see Roland Boer, *Socialism with Chinese Characteristics* (Springer, 2021).

On the CCP: Richard McGregor, *The Party: The Secret World of China’s Communist Rulers* (Harper, 2010) and Andrew Nathan and Bruce Gilley, *China’s New Rulers: The Secret Files* (New York Review of Books, 2010)

On Wang Huning. I have read with interest his books *America Against America* (1991, original title: *Meiguo fandui meiguo*, publisher: Shekui Kexue Zhanxian, Shanghai, 1991) and *The Structure of China’s Changing Political Culture* (1988, translated by *Reading the China Dream*). See also several of his articles: *Reflections on the Cultural Revolution and the Reform of China’s Political System* (The World Economic Herald, May 1986, untranslated); *Cultural Expansion and Cultural Sovereignty: A Challenge to the Concept of Sovereignty* (1994, translated by *Reading the China Dream*); as well as his text

La culture comme puissance nationale: le soft power (Fudan Daxue Xuebao, March 1993, pp. 23–28, untranslated).

America Against America (1991): the exact nature of this text is unclear. The English version I read is dated 1991, which is two years after the trip and, apparently, about a year after the original Mandarin publication (dated April 1, 1989). Who translated it? Is it different from the original in English translation, especially considering that the fall of the Berlin Wall occurred between the two dates? The book is unpaginated and has no publisher. Is the English version a pirated edition? These are questions that remain difficult to answer. The edition I have comprises 361 pages; I have paginated it myself and cite references according to my pagination.

The first months of his stay in the United States in 1988–1989 were funded by the host American universities (University of Iowa, University of Michigan, and University of California, Berkeley). Having chosen to stay longer, Mr. Wang received funding from Chinese sources for the second part of his stay (Preface to the book).

See also an interesting intellectual and political portrait of Wang Huning by Haig Patapan and Yi Wang, *The Hidden Ruler: Wang Huning and the Making of Contemporary China* (Journal of Contemporary China, 2018), as well as a good article by Sacha Halter based on Wang Huning's original writings: "L'idéologue du régime" (*Esprit*, November 2022). Finally, see Chris Buckley, "The man who shaped China's Strongman Rule has a New Job: Winning Taiwan", (*New York Times*, October 26, 2024). Finally see also the two Matthew D. Johnson's articles published in *Reading the China Dream: Wang Huning*, "Culture Expansion and Cultural Sovereignty" and "The Structure of China's Changing Political Culture".

On the acceleration of Wang Huning's career: He is said to have been promoted by Jiang Zemin's "Shanghai Gang," notably two regional party leaders, Zeng Qinghong and Wu Bangguo (see: Haig Patapan and Yi Wang, "The Hidden

Ruler: Wang Huning and the Making of Contemporary China,” *Journal of Contemporary China*, 2018).

Wang Huning is also credited with collaborating on the redefinition of Jiang Zemin’s “Three Representations” as well as the “The Scientific Outlook on Development” (which aimed to reintroduce humanism into the Chinese model so as not to leave control solely to the elite and the wealthiest Chinese).

The title of his master’s thesis is: “*From Bodin to Maritain: on sovereignty theories developed by the Western bourgeoisie.*” (According to two scholars who studied his writings: Haig Patapan and Yi Wang, “The Hidden Ruler: Wang Huning and the Making of Contemporary China”, (*Journal of Contemporary China*, 2018).

His rise is due not only to his Shanghai connections, but through his first wife Zhou Qi, whose father Zhou Jirong is a senior researcher in the China Institute of Contemporary International Relations, which is linked to China's secret intelligence service: Zhou, *Wang Huning: cong qingnian xuezhe dao gaoceng zhibinang*, p. 32; Renyan Su, “Wang Huning kao shenme qingyun zhishang” [What's behind Wang Huning's meteoric rise'], (*Kaifang Zazhi [Open Magazine]*), 2013

Wang Huning’s ideas on Hong Kong and Taiwan: In Hong Kong (he accompanied Xi Jinping on his first visit to the island), Wang Huning reportedly has a say in interpreting the famous *Basic Law*, a sort of constitution for the island, which is constantly interpreted by Beijing. He is also known for reprimanding academics and journalists, forcing them to strictly follow the party line on Hong Kong and speak positively about the principles guiding the party in the handover of the “rebellious” island. Regarding Taiwan, he advocates an even stricter line, which does not rule out military intervention, which is especially worrying as he is reportedly in charge of the dossier (or part of it) for Xi Jinping, according to a diplomatic source. He is said to be keen on devising a new formula for Taiwan after the criticisms of “one country, two systems” applied to Hong Kong.

On Chinese “intellectuals,” several studies now exist. See Anne Cheng, ed., *Penser en Chine* (Gallimard/Folio, 2021, in particular the contributions of Sebastian Veg, Isabelle Thireau, Séverine Arsène, etc.). See also Sebastian Veg, *Minjian, The Rise of China’s Grassroots Intellectuals* (Columbia University Press, 2019) as well as his article: Sebastian Veg, “The Rise of China’s Statist Intellectuals: Law, Sovereignty and Repoliticization” (*The China Journal*, no. 82, April 2019).

[See also Worksheet No. 8 on Chinese “intellectuals”](#)

On Zhang Weiwei. See his two essays, read and promoted by Xi Jinping: Zhang Weiwei, *The China Wave, Rise of a Civilizational State* (2011; trans. World Century, 2012) and *The China Horizon, Glory and Dream of a Civilizational State* (2014; trans. World Century, 2016).

On Law professor Jiang Shigong, see the works of the official jurist Jiang Shigong: *China’s Hong Kong, A Political and Cultural Perspective* (China Academic Library, trans. Springer, 2017) and, by the same author, *Philosophy and History and Empire and World Order* (two texts from 2018 and 2019, translated by *Reading the China Dream*).

On law and the battle between the two law professors Jiang Shigong and Xu Zhangrun: See Chris Buckley, “Outspoken Chinese Professor Is Said to Be Released From Detention” (*New York Times*, July 12, 2020).

On Chinese intellectuals and Donald Trump’s thought: On the critique of Western democracy by neo-reactionary thinkers close to the ideas of Donald Trump, see the reference book I draw on in this chapter and throughout my work: *Les Lumières sombres, Comprendre la pensée néoréactionnaire* by Arnaud Miranda (Gallimard/Le Grand Continent, 2026).

Chinese intellectuals and “Dark Enlightenment”. Based on Chinese-language sources by my researchers – including academic databases and online intellectual platforms – Curtis Yarvin, Nick Land, and the idea of the “Dark Enlightenment” are already present in China in academic circles. Within Chinese academic philosophy and political theory, Nick Land appears regularly, typically through discussions of accelerationism, critiques of neoliberalism, or debates on anti-Enlightenment thought. Such references are generally analytical or critical, often framed within Marxist or social-theory perspectives, rather than expressions of endorsement. The “Dark Enlightenment” is treated primarily as an object of study, not as an established intellectual school. Curtis Yarvin is less visible than Nick Land in academic contexts, he appears as a political-ideological figure associated with NRx, critiques of democracy, and technocratic authoritarianism. They also have a non-academic presence in online intellectual cultures – such as Zhihu, Douban, blogs, and amateur translation forums – where introductions, partial translations, and debate circulate largely. Overall, these figures are well identified but niche, circulating in the academic rather than shaping mainstream Chinese culture or political thought. “Technocratic authoritarianism,” however, is quite influential, particularly among certain prominent public intellectuals.

On Document 9. Its exact title is: “Communiqué on the Current State of the Ideological Sphere.” It was secretly issued in 2013. It comes from the General Office of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party. It is impossible that such a document was not approved by Xi Jinping. It was initially published in Chinese by Mingjing Magazine and later translated into English by *ChinaFile* (November 8, 2013). For further analysis, see: Brice Pedroletti, « “Le Document N°9” ou le pense-bête d’un régime chinois assiégé par l’Occident », (*Le Monde*, November 22, 2015)

On Chinese critic on human rights: See, “Human Rights Record of the United States in 2016”, (*State Council Information Office of the People’s Republic of China, Xinhua Agency*, March 9, 2017). For a defense of human rights in China, I have read the wonderful collection of texts by the Nobel Peace Prize laureate, who died in detention, Liu Xiaobo, *La philosophie du porc* (Gallimard, 2011, preface by Václav Havel).

On “wolf warriors”: On this concept of “wolf warrior,” see the Chinese primary source: Xiang Lanxin, “*His Thoughts on Wolf Warrior Culture, His Calls for Civilized Communication*” (Canshan yeyu, April 30, 2020, available on the site *Reading the China Dream*).

Adorno in China: See: Zhu Guohuan Meng Xiangchun, “Chinese practice and T. W. Adorno’s theory of mass culture” (*Neohelicon*, n°41, 2014, pp. 489–502). The Frankfurt School in general, and the work of Adorno and Horkheimer in particular, have been widely published in China since the 1990s and have been the subject of numerous analyses. See: L. Ou & W. Zhang, *A study of the Frankfort School* (Chongqing Publishing House, 1990); D. Tao, “Critical theories and mass culture of China” (*The Frontiers of Academia*, n°3, 1997, pp. 292–299); Z. Yang, “Mass culture of contemporary China in transformation” (*Fudan University Journal*, n°3, 1991, pp. 51–54); G. Zhu, “The reproduction of Benjamin’s theory of mechanical reproduction of art in China” (*Neohelicon*, n°38, 2011, pp. 71–84).

On Xi Jinping’s China, the bibliography is considerable, I limit myself to the works I have read: Evan Osnos, *Age of Ambition, Chasing Fortune, Truth and Faith in the New China* (Farrar, Strauss and Giroux, 2014); Mark Leonard, *What Does China Think?* (Public Affairs, 2008); Richard McGregor, *The Party: The Secret World of China’s Communist Rulers* (Allen Lane, 2010); Alice Ekman, *Rouge vif, L’idéal communiste chinois* (Éd. de l’Observatoire, 2020) and François Bougon, *Dans la tête de Xi Jinping* (Actes Sud, 2017). For an American perspective, see the interesting book

by Joe Biden's China adviser: Julian Gewirtz, *Unlikely Partners: Chinese Reformers, Western Economists, and the Making of Global China* (Harvard University Press, 2017). Also see the portrait of Xi Jinping in *The Age of the Strongman, How the Cult of the Leader Threatens Democracy around the World* by Gideon Rachman (Bodley Head, 2022, see chapter three).

On the concept of a “working democracy,” see the official document from the State Council Information Office of the People's Republic of China, released by the official Xinhua Agency: “*China: Democracy That Works,*” (*white paper*, December 4, 2021). For a defense of this model by a Western intellectual living in Beijing, see Daniel Bell, *East Meets West* (Princeton University Press, 2000), *Beyond Liberal Democracy* (Princeton University Press, 2006), *China's New Confucianism* (Princeton University Press, rev. ed. 2010), and *The China Model, Political Meritocracy and the Limits of Democracy* (Princeton University Press, 2015).

See also: Keith Bradsher and Steven Lee Myers, “Ahead of Biden's Democracy Summit, China Says: We're Also a Democracy,” (*New York Times*, December 7, 2021); Frédéric Lemaître, “La Chine se pose en démocratie exemplaire face aux États-Unis”, (*Le Monde*, December 9, 2021); and Emilie Frenkiel, *Conditional Democracy, The Contemporary Debate on Political Reform in Chinese Universities*, (ECPR Press, 2015).

On Samuel Huntington's Clash of Civilization book: During a dinner with Bill Clinton and Jiang Zemin, attended by Wang Huning, Clinton raised the debate on Huntington and discovered that Mr Wang knew the author perfectly well. See: Haig Patapan and Yi Wang, “The Hidden Ruler: Wang Huning and the Making of Contemporary China” (*Journal of Contemporary China*, 2018). Wang Huning cites *American Politics: The Promise of Disharmony*, Huntington's 1981 book, in *America against America*, p. 45.

Xi Jinping has repeatedly used the expression “clash of civilizations” in his speeches of 27 March 2014 (see: Xi Jinping, *The Governance of China*, vol. I, p. 283) and 10 June 2018 (see: Xi Jinping, *The Governance of China*, vol. II, pp. 511–512). He never, however, mentions the name of Samuel Huntington. In doing so, Xi Jinping (or those who advise him, such as Wang Huning) set against each other the two great geopolitical books of the late twentieth century: *The End of History and the Last Man* by Francis Fukuyama and *The Clash of Civilizations* by Samuel Huntington. No, history does not end with the victory of liberal democracy and Western ideas after the fall of communism; yes, there is a war of civilizations, and China must win this battle against the West. Like Wang Huning, Xi Jinping takes up Huntington’s thesis against that of Fukuyama.

[See also Worksheet No. 9 on Huntington’s ideas in China](#)

On Western references in China: The Chinese try to legitimize their arguments by drawing on interviews with Western intellectuals or journalists. Thus, in the *Global Times*, I have identified dozens of “experts” who speak out against the West or Europe. They are often figures from the far right or the radical left, and sometimes outright conspiracy theorists. This is the case, for example, of the anti-imperialist American blogger Benjamin Norton (he lives in Nicaragua, defends Venezuela under Chávez/Maduro and contributes to media outlets funded by Hezbollah): he has been interviewed five times in the *Global Times*, where he is presented as an American journalist whose view of the United States is objective. In his interviews, in which only the negative side of the United States is put forward, he naturally concludes, citing biased studies and unidentified sources, that China is, when one looks at all the “objective measures,” a democracy, whereas the United States is nothing but a “plutocracy.” Norton then explains this situation by the racism of Westerners and their neo-colonialism.

On Gan Yang: The theorist who forged the link between communism and Confucianism is Gan Yang, himself a “Gong Zhi” – a “public intellectual.” This philosopher, born in 1952, taught for many years in Hong Kong after studying at the University of Chicago, where he worked extensively on the conservative and anti-liberal thought of Leo Strauss, Carl Schmitt, Ernst Cassirer and Allan Bloom. Long regarded as a liberal, favorable to the Western model, Gan made a spectacular turnaround, becoming both a radical critic of liberalism and a defender of the Chinese model. Was this the price to pay to return to China, after a long exile and nostalgia for the homeland, for having supported the Tiananmen students a little too openly – like so many others before him? Be that as it may, once back home he theorised a new concept that was to make him famous in China and around the world: “Confucian socialism.” In doing so, he imagined an articulation between “three traditions” that, in his view, form a single continuum: radical Marxism reinterpreted in an authoritarian way by Mao (with the social equality and justice it was supposed to offer); the economic opening under Deng Xiaoping; and finally Confucianism, which he rereads in a less religious than secular way. In contrast to Mao, all that remained for Xi Jinping was to appropriate this line of reasoning and make the thinker of “harmony” one of the “Founding Fathers” of his country.

Text taken from *Reading the Chinese Dream*: “Born in 1952, Gan Yang is one of China’s leading experts on Western philosophy and intellectual history, and a prominent educator and publisher in this field. Since the mid-1990s he has often been identified as a leading member of the New Left in China, although he himself disputes this. Gan was a voracious reader of Western philosophy during his youth in Hangzhou and as an “educated youth” sent to work at the oilfields near Daqing, Heilongjiang province, between 1970 to 1978. In a 2005 interview Gan credited his ability to recite from memory passages of *The Social Contract*, by Jean-Jacques Rousseau to a formative encounter with the work at age fourteen. In 1973 Gan was tasked with teaching philosophy to workers and peasants at Daqing, and recalls Georg Hegel and Immanuel Kant as being influential to his thinking during the

final years of the Cultural Revolution. In 1978 Gan entered the University of Heilongjiang, graduating with a general bachelor's degree in 1982. In 1985 he earned a masters in Western philosophy at Peking University, and soon thereafter attained national renown in the “culture craze” of the 1980s, as the lead editor of the influential book series, « Culture: China in the World ». The series was noted as being the first systematic project to translate Western thought in the China since 1949 and had grown to include more than one hundred titles after its first year alone. Forced to leave the country following the June 1989 Tiananmen events, Gan undertook further research at the University of Chicago, before moving to the University of Hong Kong in 1999. He wrote an important essay on “Liberalism: For the Aristocrats or for the People?”, published in the influential journal, *Reading* in the same year. A culmination of Gan’s engagement with liberal intellectual history — as the author self-consciously notes, his 1989 essays on Isaiah Berlin were the first to introduce key aspects of liberal theory to readers in China— it was highly influential in the polemics between the New Left and Liberals that began in the second half of the 1990s. In 2000 it was reprinted in *Intellectual Positions*, a book series covering these debates.”

During the Cultural Revolution, Gan Yang spent eight years working in the Beidahuang, the Great Northern Wilderness in northeast China. In 1982, he obtained a bachelor's degree from Heilongjiang University, and in 1985, he graduated from the Institute of Foreign Philosophy at Peking University with a master's degree in Western philosophy. Currently, he holds the position of the Yi Xian Chair Professor, Dean of the Institute for Advanced Studies in Humanities, Dean of the Boya College, and Director of General Education at Sun Yat-sen University. He is also a part-time professor at Tsinghua University.

In 2005, Gan Yang delivered a famous speech at Tsinghua University titled “The Three Traditions of the New Era”. He proposed that the traditions of Confucius, Mao Zedong, and Deng Xiaoping are a continuous historical and cultural tradition in China, and the direction of China's development is "Confucian

Socialism." This speech generated significant reactions both domestically and internationally, and Western scholars such as Daniel Bell named Gan Yang's concept of "Confucian Socialism" as "leftist Confucianism," attracting global attention. For a better understanding of these ideas, read the translation of his article by William Sima and Tang Xiabing, "Liberalism: For the Aristocrats or for the People?", (*Reading the China Dream*).

[See also Worksheet No. 10 on Gan Yang](#)

On the New Left, see: David Ownby, *L'essor de la Chine et les intellectuels publics chinois*, (Editions Collège de France, 2023. David Ownby is the founder of the website *Reading the China Dream*, which offers translations of political texts, speeches, and essays. In this book, he seeks to provide a comprehensive panorama of the major intellectual currents shaping contemporary China.

See also David Ownby, "How China's New Left Embraced the State", (*China Books Review*, May 16, 2024). In this essay, David Ownby how China's leftist intellectuals, once regim critics in the 1990s, have shifted from their socialist origins to support statism and the China model. An example of this phenomenon is Yan Yilong, a professor at Tsinghua University who published *The Great way of China: The Communist Party of China and Chinese socialism*, (Portico Publishing Company, 2018), a book that celebrate China's achievement of socialism, and how it successfully bent capital and capitalism to its own purpose. On this subject, see also David Ownby, "Yang Ping on the Beijing Cultural Review", (*Reading the China Dream*), a translation of an interview with Yang Ping, editor-in-chief of Beijing Cultural Review, one of the most important intellectual journal in China. The interview is entitled "Yang Ping, "Intellectuals are Facing a Huge Crisis in Terms of Cultural Reconstruction"".

On Wang Shaoguang. Mr Wang is Emeritus Professor in the Department of Government and Administration at The Chinese University of Hong Kong, and a Schwarzman Scholar at Tsinghua University in Beijing. We can read several of his articles in *Reading the China Dream*, especially this one : “Wang Shaoguang’s, Representative et Representational Democracy”.

On Zhou Xiaoping: See the article that tries to understand his success: Yang Hengjun, “In Defense of Zhou Xiaoping, China’s Patriotic Blogger” (*The Diplomat*, November 5, 2014).

[See also Worksheet No. 11 on Zhou Xiaoping](#)

On the concept of Soft Power: See: Joseph Nye, *Bound to Lead: The Changing Nature of American Power* (Basic Books, 1988) and, by the same author, *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics* (Public Affairs, 2004). See also, for its application in China: Ding Sheng, *The Dragon’s Hidden Wings: How China Rises with Its Soft Power* (Lexington Books, 2008); Meng Honghua (ed.), *China’s Soft Power Strategy* (Zhejiang Renmin Chubanshe, 2007); and the article I use extensively by Barthélemy Courmont, “Le Soft power : entre stratégie d’influence et affirmation de puissance” (*Revue d’études comparatives Est-Ouest*, 2012/1–2, n°43, pp. 287–309).

On Wang Huning and soft power: Nye’s book was translated in China as early as 1992 by the highly official publisher *China’s Military Translation Press*, and Wang Huning reported on it in an article that made a strong impression in PCC circles the following year (Wang Huning, “*Zuowei Guojia Shili de Wenhua: Ruan Quanli*” or “Culture as National Power: Soft Power,” in the journal of Fudan University, *Fudan Daxue Xuebao*, March 1993, pp. 23–28).

On Chinese Soft-Power, see the official document published by The State Council Information Office of the People's Republic of China in September 2023, "A Global Community of Shared Future: China's Proposals and Actions".

On Chinese's regional and foreign policy, see David Ownby, "Jiang Shigong, 'Empire and World Order'", (*Reading the China Dream*) a text translated of a piece with Jiang's earlier essay (Jiang Shigong is a Professor of Law in Beijing University and prominent apologist for state power in China) in that it suggests that a Chinese world empire is visible on the horizon. For him, it is China's turn to head that empire, given the current state of China and the world. He links it with the failure of Soviet Communism and American liberal democracy. The idea of the failure of the American liberal democracy and in general the failure of American Hegemony is largely covered by Chinese media, as David Ownby showed in the article "Beijing Cultural Review on the Decline of American Hegemony" (*Reading the China Dream*), which is a translation of five articles published between 2020 and 2023 in the *Beijing Cultural Review* and devoted to the theme of the decline of the American empire. These texts describe a turning point in world history, when post-war American hegemony collapses under its own weight.

The end of Soviet communism as seen by the Chinese. See: Xi Jinping's speech of January 5, 2013, to the Central Committee of the Communist Party. In this speech, in which Mr Xi clearly regrets the criticism directed at Lenin and Stalin, the remarks were reported but not made public. See: François Bougon, *Dans la tête de Xi Jinping* (Actes Sud, 2017, p. 47) and Gideon Rachman, *The Age of the Strongman, How the Cult of the Leader Threatens Democracy around the World* (Bodley Head, 2022, p. 63). Some pro-regime authors do not refrain, however, from criticising Mr Gorbachev: see for example Zhang Weiwei, *The China Wave, Rise of a Civilizational State* (2011; trans. World Century, 2012, p. 129). It should nevertheless be noted that in the five published volumes of Xi Jinping's official speeches, the names of

Stalin and Gorbachev do not appear, which confirms that these criticisms are intended for internal use.

On the wealth of Chinese leaders and the financial oligarchy represented by the Chinese Communist Party: See the landmark investigation by David Barboza, “Billions in Hidden Riches for Family of Chinese Leader,” (*New York Times*, October 25, 2012) [Barboza won the Pulitzer Prize for this investigation] ; as well as “Xi Jinping Millionaire Relations Reveal Elite Chinese Fortunes,” (*Bloomberg News*, June 29, 2012 ; an article co-signed by a team of reporters led by Michael Forsythe). See also, more specifically on Xi Jinping, the major and devastating investigation by the same Michael Forsythe: “At China’s nexus of power and cash,” (*New York Times*, April 29, 2015 ; the article focuses on Wang Jianlin, a billionaire at the head of the Wanda Group).

On the tensions between China, *Bloomberg* and the *New York Times* over these investigations, see the interesting article by Barbara Demick, “The Times, Bloomberg News and the Richest Man in China,” (*New York Times*, May 5, 2015).

For a critical view of Chinese expansionism: See: Ian Easton, *The Final Struggle, Inside China’s Global Strategy* (Project Institute 2049 / Eastbridge Books, 2022).

On Chinese influence operations abroad (Confucius Institutes, media, propaganda, new technologies, diaspora, diplomacy, education, etc.): See the report, focused on France, by Paul Charon and Jean-Baptiste Jeangène Vilmer, *Les opérations d’influence chinoises, un moment machiavélien* (IRSEM, 2021). I have drawn extensively on this report, all the more valuable and authoritative in that it is indirectly published under the auspices of the French Ministry of Defense. See also the investigation by Yudhijit Bhattacharjee, “The Daring Ruse That Exposed China’s Campaign to Steal American Secrets” (*New York Times*, March 7, 2023).

On the rehabilitation of Confucius: I used Evan Osnos's article, "Confucius Comes Home" (*The New Yorker*, January 13, 2014). See also: François Bougon, *Dans la tête de Xi Jinping* (Actes Sud, 2017, p. 147).

On the rehabilitation of Mao, see François Bourgon, "Les sept périls chinois", (*Le Monde*, October 10, 2013).

On diplomacy: Jean-Pierre Cabestan, *La Politique internationale de la Chine* (Presses de Sciences Po, 3e ed., 2022).

On dissent and freedom of the press in China: "The one who has not conducted investigations has no right to speak" (it appears in the opening lines of his article "Against Book Worship" (1930) and in the preface to *Rural Surveys* (1941)). References to the scientific necessity of investigation are numerous in Mao's works.

On culture in China: I read with great interest Bruce Dover's account of Rupert Murdoch's ambition and failure in China: Bruce Dover, *Rupert Murdoch's China Adventures* (Tuttle, 2008).

On the digital sphere: See Xi Jinping's speech, "Let a Healthy Internet Guide and Reflect Public Opinion," April 19, 2016 (reprinted in Xi Jinping, *The Governance of China*, vol. II, p. 363 ff.).

On the "New Silk Roads" ("One Belt, One Road" or "Belt and Road Initiative"): Frédéric Lasserre, Éric Mottet and Barthélémy Courmont (eds.), *Les nouvelles routes de la soie, Géopolitique d'un grand projet chinois* (Presses de l'Université du Québec,

2019); Peter Frankopan, *Les nouvelles routes de la soie, L'émergence d'un nouveau monde* (2018; Flammarion, 2020).

On Lee Kuan Yew's career: I rely in particular on these three profiles: Zoher Abdoolcarim and Neel Chowdhury, “The Founding Father of Singapore,” (*Time*, April 6, 2015); Seth Mydans, “Lee Kuan Yew, Founding Father and First Premier of Singapore, Dies at 91,” (*New York Times*, March 22, 2015); and “The Wise Man of the East,” (*The Economist*, May 28, 2015). See also: John Cassidy, “Can Authoritarian Capitalism Outlive Lee Kuan Yew?” (*The New Yorker*, March 24, 2015).

On “Asian values” and Lee Kuan Yew: I mainly rely on interviews and press articles. Henry Kissinger has referred to the figure of Lee Kuan Yew, whom he long defended, in several of his books (including here: Henry Kissinger, *Leadership, Six études de stratégie mondiale* (Fayard, 2022, see pp. 320–365, where he paints a glowing portrait of Lee Kuan Yew). See also the propaganda book, *Lee Kuan Yew, The Grand Master's Insights on China, the US and the World* (MIT Press, 2020, with a preface by Henry Kissinger). See also: Seth Mydans, “Lee Kuan Yew, Founding Father and First Premier of Singapore, Dies at 91” (*New York Times*, March 22, 2015).

On the origins of “Asian values”: I particularly recommend the academic article by Chang Yau Hoon of Singapore Management University, from which I draw some information and arguments: “Revisiting the Asian Values Argument used by Asian Political Leaders and its Validity” (*Indonesian Quarterly*, 32/2, 2004, pp. 154–174). For a general presentation of the debate and the bibliography, see the chapter of Venka Purushothaman's thesis devoted to this subject: *Designing Culture, Policies and Festivals: A Cultural History of the Singapore Arts Festival, 1959 to 2012* (University of Melbourne, 2017; not available online, transmitted to the author by Mr

Purushothaman). See also: Tim Harper, *Underground Asia* (Harvard University Press, 2020); and Thomas Meaney, “Asia’s Anti-Colonialist Journey After the Russian Revolution” (*The New Yorker*, May 10, 2021).

On Ho Chi Minh, I primarily rely on the biography by Pierre Brocheux, *Ho Chi Minh, Du révolutionnaire à l'icône* (Payot, 2003), which, although dithyrambic, is serious and well documented. I also read the old book of Jean Lacouture, *Hô Chi Minh*, (Seuil, 1967), still caught in the proletarian illusion and the fascination for the one who kicked the French out of Indochina. For a more critical perspective, one can look at Trần Đình’s book on Ho Chi Minh, which is far more critical and was written by a former collaborator of Ho Chi Minh, a Vietnamese author who later fell out with the regime; his biography was banned in Vietnam: Trần Đình, *Đen Ciu* (available online). See also Tim Harper, *Underground Asia* (Harvard University Press, 2020), Thomas Meaney’s article, “Asia’s Anti-Colonialist Journey After the Russian Revolution” (*The New Yorker*, May 10, 2021) and John Sidel, *Republicanism, Communism, Islam, Cosmopolitan Origins of Revolution in Southeast Asia* (Cornell University Press, 2021). For a more nuanced view of Ho Chi Minh, see also Duong Thu Huong, *Au Zénith*, (Sabine Wespieser, 2009).

On Nguyễn Thị Xuân Phuong, see her memories: *Ao Dai, My War, My Country, My Vietnam* (English ed : EMQUAD, 2004).

For further analysis, [see Annex 11 on Vietnam.](#)

Chapitre IV – Global Che (sur Cuba)

Chapter IV – Global Che (on Cuba)

On Che Guevara: I mainly rely on the definitive biography by Jon Lee Anderson: the book is extraordinarily detailed (816 pages), reliable, dense and generally rather favorable to “Che”; it draws on CIA and KGB archives and is simply entitled *Che*, and is now considered the reference biography (Grove Press, New York, 1997, updated in 2010, still not available in French).

Pierre Kalfon’s biography, *Che, Ernesto Guevara, une légende du siècle* (Points Seuil, 1997), is now somewhat dated and markedly indulgent; insufficiently critical in its sourcing, it tends to idealize Guevara and to privilege the construction of the legend over a rigorously documented historical reassessment. The one by the *New York Times* journalist Tad Szulc, *Fidel: A Critical Portrait* (Harper, 2000), is informed by his closeness to Fidel. The former Mexican foreign minister Jorge Castañeda published a more critical work: *Compañero, Vie et mort de Che Guevara* (Grasset, 1998). Finally, *Che Guevara, une braise qui brûle encore* (Fayard, 2007) co-written by the former far left leader’s Olivier Besancenot and the Trotskyist specialist Michael Löwy, is a small revisionist and ridiculous propaganda book that does not even respect the facts (with a postface by Daniel Bensaid, an organic intellectual of the Trotsky’s LCR party).

I have also used here three of my previous texts on Che Guevara, partly reproduced here: “Le Che Guevara des PTT,” published on nonfiction.fr (March 30, 2008); “L’hommage embarrassant de François Hollande à Che Guevara” (*Slate*, May 16, 2015); and “Faut-il faire l’éloge de Che Guevara ?” (*Slate*, January 2, 2018). Finally, I greatly enjoyed rereading the interesting book by Régis Debray, *Loués soient nos seigneurs, Une éducation politique* (Gallimard, 1996), in which he returns, as a memoirist and a moralist, to his Cuban and Bolivian young years.

Che Guevara “carefully” read Mao Tse-tung’s military writings in the Sierra Maestra (see Janette Habel, preface to Che Guevara, *La Guerre de guérilla*, Champs, re-ed. 2010, p. 10).

Che Guearra’s violence and cruelty are well documented, including when they targeted innocents: see for example the testimonies of people who knew him well: Axel Gyldén, “La Face cachée du Che,” *L’Express*, 27 septembre 2007. See also: the chaplain of La Cabaña prison, Father Javier Arzuaga, who delivered a chilling testimony on the assassinations carried out by Che Guevara: Javier Arzuaga, *Cuba 1959: La Galera de la Muerte* (Carta de Cuba [Miami], 2006).

It is well known that Che was not always well accepted by the Cubans, who reproached him for often misunderstanding the local mentality because he was not Cuban, and for being, “full of himself,” intolerant, and showing an “Argentine condescension” toward their jokes and their somewhat “messy” arrangements. On this point, see the testimony of Agustín Alles Sobreron, who was close to Che and Fidel in the Sierra Maestra in 1958 in Cuba (Axel Gyldén, “La Face cachée du Che,” *L’Express*, 27 septembre 2007).

On Che’s Marxism: Fidel Castro, Ignacio Ramonet, *Fidel Castro, My Life* (Scribner, 2006, p. 181). He describes Che as a Marxist and a Leninist, but not a Trotskyist. We know, however, that Guevara would evolve on this point: at the end of his life, he took Trotsky’s *History of the Russian Revolution* with him to Bolivia.

Archives on Che Guevara: I had access to the archives of the Feltrinelli Foundation in Milan, notably within the collection “Documenti della Rivoluzione nell’America Latina.” The correspondence between Giangiacomo Feltrinelli and Fidel Castro is available there, as well as numerous documents on “Che” and on Fidel, particularly from the 1950s and 1960s. I used some of them in the book.

On Che's departure from Cuba in 1965. A very critical speech by Che Guevara against the USSR in Algiers probably accelerated his departure. On his return to Havana, he was summoned by Fidel, and the discussion between them is said to have been particularly violent at Habana Airport.

On Che's books: I mainly use a collection of his main texts: Ernesto Che Guevara, *Combats d'un révolutionnaire* (Bouquins/Robert Laffont, 2010; the volume contains the following texts: *Voyage à motocyclette*, *Second voyage à travers l'Amérique latine*, *Souvenirs de la guerre révolutionnaire cubaine*, *Journal du Congo*, *Journal de Bolivie*, *Justice globale*). See also: *La guerre de guérilla* (1961; Champs, 2010).

On Che's legacy through images and slogans: See the interesting book by Michael Casey, *Che's Afterlife, The Legacy of an Image* (Vintage, 2009).

For an unapologetically militant defense of Che from the revolution's inception. See the contemporary report by Claude Julien, *La Révolution cubaine* (Julliard, 1961). And for a more theoretical defense, notably of the theory of the "foco," or rural insurrectionary nucleus, see Régis Debray, *Révolution dans la révolution, Lutte armée et lutte politique en Amérique latine* (Maspero, 1967).

On Fidel Castro: See two collections of his main speeches: Fidel Castro, *Fidel Castro Reader* (Ocean Press, 2010) and Fidel Castro, *Argumentos culturales de la Revolución Cubana* (Ocean Sur, 2019). I also use the famous interview book, although aligned with Castroist propaganda, published by Ignacio Ramonet, *Fidel Castro, Biografía a dos voces* (Debate, 2006); and, in a more unusual vein: Jean-Edern Hallier and Fidel Castro, *Conversation au clair de lune* (Messidor, 1990).

Two other interviews with Fidel were also important: Gianni Minà, *Habla Fidel* (Sudamericana, 1988; preface by Gabriel García Márquez) and Tomás Borge, *Un grain de maïs: Conversation entre Fidel Castro et Tomás Borge* (Le Temps des cerises,

1997). For a critical view, see: Juan Reinaldo Sánchez, *La Vie cachée de Fidel Castro, Les révélations explosives de son garde du corps personnel* (Michel Laffont, 2014). Finally, Régis Debray published an important article, “Le Castrisme, la Longue Marche de l’Amérique latine” (*Les Temps modernes*, January 1965), which is an interesting contemporary document and which influenced Fidel Castro himself.

See also: Fidel Castro and Janette Habel, *Proceso al sectarismo* (Jorge Álvarez Editor, 1965).

“When this war ends, another one, much longer and greater, will begin: the war I will launch against the United States. This will be my true destiny,” Fidel wrote, a quotation taken from a letter to Celia Sánchez, from the Sierra Maestra, June 1958.

On Fidel Castro and religion, Fidel Castro was influenced during the second part of his life by religion, the liberation theology, and in particular by the Dominican friar Frei Betto, with whom he co-authored a book of interviews, *Fidel Castro y Frei Betto, Fidel y la religión: Conversaciones con Frei Betto* (Oficina de Publicaciones del Consejo de Estado, 1985). See also the interesting book devoted to the visit of John Paul II to Cuba by the writer Manuel Vázquez Montalbán, *Y Dios Entró en La Habana* (Santillana, 1998).

For further analysis, [see Annex 12 on Leonardo Boff and Teología de la liberación](#)

On Raúl Castro: Many biographers have stressed that Raúl is said to be the son of a guard post commander from Birán, nicknamed “el Chino,” which is also one of Raúl’s sobriquets. See Brian Latell, *After Fidel, The Inside Story of Castro’s Regime and Cuba’s Next Leader* (Griffin, 2005; revised in 2007).

On the sociology of Fidel's troops: It was a “guerrilla universitaria,” as the writer Gabriel Zaid showed, on the basis of a study of El Salvador. Quoted by Enrique Krauze, *Redeemers, Ideas and Power in Latin America* (Harper, 2011, p. 324).

On the record of Castroism from the perspective of repression: Stéphane Courtois et al., *Le Livre noir du communisme, Crimes, terreur et répression* (Robert Laffont, 1997, reissued in Pocket; see the chapter “Cuba, L’Interminable totalitarisme tropical,” pp. 915–939). I also like Patricio Fernández’s book, *Cuba, Viaje al fin de la revolución* (Debate, 2018): it is a book of disillusion, based on travels in Cuba, written by a leading Chilean intellectual who later became an adviser to the left-wing president Gabriel Boric, and who laments the failure of the Cuban revolution in which he believed and which bitterly disappointed him.

See also: Brian Latell, *After Fidel, The Inside Story of Castro’s Regime and Cuba’s Next Leader* (Griffin, 2005; revised in 2007).

On the Padilla trial and his self-criticism: The video of this long self-criticism exists, and I was able to watch it. It is a confession extracted under duress and a moment of great violence imposed on this writer, who would not be released until 1980. He had criticized the regime in *Fuera del Juego*. See the “letter of the intellectuals to Mr Fidel Castro” (*Le Monde*, May 22, 1971). See also a CIA note on this affair: “Intelligence Memorandum – Padilla: Castro’s Solzhenitsyn?” (June 22, 1971, declassified CIA note).

On Western intellectuals blinded by Castroism: One can read the essay by the Cuban exile Jacobo Machover, *Cuba, l’accompagnement coupable, les compagnons de la barbarie* (Armand Colin, 2010), as well as the very well-documented book by Jeannine Verdès-Leroux, *La Lune et le Caudillo, Le rêve des intellectuels et le régime cubain, 1959–1971* (Gallimard, 1989). See also: Paulo Paranagua, “Le castrisme, folie française,” (*Le Monde*, December 27, 2014).

For a socialist defence of Cuba: See the book by Janette Habel, who knew Fidel: Janette Habel, *The Revolution in Peril* (La Brèche, 1989; trans. Verso, 1991); Noam Chomsky and Vijay Prashad, *On Cuba, Reflections on 70 Years of Revolution and Struggle* (The New Press, 2024, with a preface by Miguel Díaz-Canel, President of Cuba); Leo Huberman, *Cuba: Anatomy of a Revolution* (Monthly Review Press, 1960) and, by the same author, *Socialism in Cuba* (Monthly Review Press, 1970, with Paul Sweeney).

On the question of racism in Cuba: See Carlos Moore, “Le peuple noir a-t-il sa place dans la révolution cubaine ?” (*Présence Africaine*, 4e trimestre 1964, n°52, pp. 177–230) and the answer by the Haitian author René Depestre in the same journal: “Lettre de Cuba” (*Présence Africaine*, 4e trimestre 1965, n°56, pp. 105–142). See also: René Depestre, *Bonjour et adieu à la négritude: suivi de Travaux d’identité* (Seghers, 1989).

On René Depestre’s Cuban years: See his autobiography *Bonjour tendresse* (Odile Jacob, 2018) and the memoir *Cahier d’un art de vivre, Cuba 1964–1978* (Actes Sud, 2020). See also the controversy with Claude Roy, who wrote the preface to *Poète à Cuba* by Depestre (1976) and criticized the author for his Guevarism (Depestre replied in another preface, a strange and rare debate conducted through duelling prefaces).

On Fidel’s private life: One can read the novel by Evelyne Pisier, a former lover of Fidel, *La dernière fois* (Flammarion, 1992), in which she recounts, in a fictionalized form but with many details, her relationship with Fidel Castro. See also her posthumous testimony: Evelyne Pisier, *Et soudain, la liberté* (Les Escales, 2018, with Caroline Laurent; although there are allusions, she says little about her relationship with Fidel Castro). See also: “Le jour où les sœurs Pisier débarquent à Cuba et rencontrent Fidel Castro,” (*Marie Claire*, April 1, 2021).

On Fidel and drug trafficking: See in particular the book by the journalist Andrés Oppenheimer, *Castro's Final Hour* (Touchstone, 1993). Cuba became a drug-trafficking country at least from 1986 on. See also Enrique Krauze, *Redeemers, Ideas and Power in Latin America* (Harper, 2011, p. 359). There is also a detailed report by the US House of Representatives on this subject: “Drug Trafficking in the Caribbean: Do Traffickers Use Cuba and Puerto Rico as Major Transit Locations for United States-Bound Narcotics?”, Hearings before the Committee on Reform, House of Representatives, January 3–4, 2000.

On the CIA and Cuba: See Juanita Castro, *Fidel et Raúl, mes frères, l'histoire secrète* (Plon, 2011), in which she reveals her exchanges with the CIA between 1961 and 1964 while she was still living on the island (under the pseudonym of Donna).

On Fidel and arts & culture: There is an interesting collection of his speeches and articles: Fidel Castro, *Argumentos culturales de la Revolución Cubana* (Ocean Sur, 2019, see pp. 50–76). The reference to Mao is significant, and all the more so because the “Words to the Intellectuals” are strikingly similar to Mao’s “Talks at the Yan’an Forum on Literature and Art” (1942), which Fidel Castro mentions at the beginning of his speech in a statement that is puzzling: “I must confess that, in a sense, these questions took us a little by surprise. We did not have our Yenan conference with Cuban artists and writers during the revolution. In fact, this is a revolution that was born and took power at what one might call a ‘record’ time. Unlike other revolutions, it has not resolved all the major problems”. On this speech and beyond it, see Yvon Grenier, “Fidel Castro’s ‘Words to Intellectuals’ at 60: Nothing to Celebrate,” *Literal*, 2021; and Yvon Grenier, *Culture and the Cuban State, Participation, Recognition, and Dissonance under Communism* (Lexington, 2017).

On the UMAP camps, see Reinaldo Arenas, *Antes que anochezca* (Tusquets Editor, 1992; English translation: *Before Night Falls* (Penguin, 1993).

On health policy and datas in Cuba. See: Octavio Gómez-Dantés, “Cuba’s health system: hardly an example to follow” (*Health Policy and Planning*, Volume 33, Issue 6, July 2018, pp. 760–761); Gilbert Berdine, Vincent Geloso, Benjamin Powell, “Cuban infant mortality and longevity: health care or repression?” (*Health Policy and Planning*, Volume 33, Issue 6, July 2018, pp. 755–757); Katherine Hirschfeld, “Response to ‘Cuban infant mortality and longevity: health care or repression?’” (*Health Policy and Planning*, 33, 2018, pp. 762–763); Roberto M. Gonzalez, “Infant Mortality in Cuba: Myth and Reality” (*Cuban Studies*, No. 43, 2015, pp. 19–39). Vincent Geloso, “On Cuba’s Fake Stats” (blog post extending his article cited above).

For a view consistent with Fidel’s propaganda, see: Karl Vick, “Cuba on the Cusp,” *Time Magazine*, April 6, 2015. The Vice President of Colombia, Francia Márquez, defended the Cuban health system in February 2023, saying it was better than the Colombian system, forgetting that countless Cubans go to Colombia for treatment when they cannot emigrate to the United States.

On Cuban doctors sent abroad: See: European Union, EPP Group, “Resolution on the Critical Situation in Cuba” (proposal, 2023, adopted 2024). And see Ernesto Londoño, “Cuban Doctors Revolt: ‘You Get Tired of Being a Slave’” (*New York Times*, September 29, 2017).

On the Tricontinental Conference: I used an interesting account by François Fejtö, who attended it as a journalist for Agence France-Presse: “La Conférence des Trois continents” (*Esprit*, March 1966).

On today's Cuba: The books and blog articles of Yoani Sánchez are essential: see in particular Yoani Sánchez, *Havana Real, One Woman Fights to Tell the Truth about Cuba Today* (Melville, 2009). See also the book by the former CIA officer Brian Latell, *After Fidel, The Inside Story of Castro's Regime and Cuba's Next Leader* (Griffin, 2005; revised in 2007).

For further analysis, see [Annex 13 on Cuba](#) and [Annex 14 on Culture in Cuba](#)

On Latin America (more broadly): I mainly use the very insightful book by Alain Rouquié, *Amérique latine, Introduction à l'Extrême Occident* (Seuil, 1987), as well as Jorge G. Castañeda, *Utopia Unarmed, The Latin American Left After the Cold War* (Vintage, 1993). See also: Ernesto Ottone and Sergio Muñoz Riveros, *Après la révolution, Réver en gardant les pieds sur terre* (Atalante, 2008); Jorge G. Castañeda and Marco A. Morales, *Leftovers, Tales of the Latin America Left* (Taylor & Francis, 2008); Martín Caparrós, *Ñamérique, Un voyage dans le présent de l'Amérique hispanique* (2021; Gallimard, 2023); and Ugo Pipitone, *La Esperanza y el delirio* (Taurus, 2015). See also by the same Alain Rouquié, *À l'ombre des dictatures, La démocratie en Amérique latine* (Albin Michel, 2010).

On Chile, Pinochet and the coup against Salvador Allende: See: Salvador Allende, *La Vía Chilena al Socialismo* (Espartaco, 2014); and on Allende's downfall, the reference book by Mónica González, *La Conjura, los mil y un días del golpe* (ed. Catalonia, 2012). On the role of Fidel Castro, see: Jon Lee Anderson, "New Man, Can Chile's Young President Reimagine the Latin American Left?" (*The New Yorker*, June 13, 2022).

On the role of the CIA in the coup: After reviewing a considerable body of sources and consulting the CIA's internal documents, the historian Stephen Streeter concludes that the United States did not directly take part in the coup

against Salvador Allende. Washington nevertheless contributed, in his view, to creating a climate of polarisation that made military intervention possible. See: Stephen Streeter, *Uncool and Incorrect in Chile: The Nixon Administration and the Downfall of Salvador Allende* (McFarland, 2023). Mónica González has a different view in *La Conjura, los mil y un días del golpe* (ed. Catalonia, 2012) and describe the role of CIA.

On the role of the Christian Democracy party in Chile between 1970 and 1973: The question goes beyond the scope of my book. The former Christian Democrat President of the Senate in 1971, who became President of Chile after the democratic transition in 1990, Patricio Aylwin Azócar, presented the context, documents and debates in *La experiencia política de la Unidad Popular 1970–1973: La Democracia Cristiana durante el gobierno de Salvador Allende* (Debate, 2023). Fidel Castro financed the MIR (according to information from Marco Enríquez-Ominami, the son of Miguel Enríquez, the MIR leader assassinated by the dictatorship in 1974).

On the petition asking Fidel to accept a referendum like Pinochet: This was for example the subject of a petition launched in December 1988 by a hundred artists and intellectuals from around the world (*Le Monde*, 28 décembre 1988), including Mario Vargas Llosa, Octavio Paz, Elie Wiesel, Federico Fellini, Czesław Miłosz, etc. (See Enrique Krauze, *Redeemers, Ideas and Power in Latin America* (Harper, 2011, pp. 358–359).

On “the Chicago Boys”: See the biography of Milton Friedman: Jennifer Burns, *Milton Friedman, The Last Conservative* (Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 2023), and above all Sebastián Edwards, *The Chile Project: The Story of the Chicago Boys and the Downfall of Neoliberalism* (Princeton University Press, 2023). Appointed Chilean ambassador to the United States by Michelle Bachelet and reappointed by Gabriel Boric, Juan Gabriel Valdés also published an interesting book: *Pinochet’s Economists, The Chicago School of Economics in Chile* (Cambridge University Press, 2008). See also: Louis

Menand, “The Price Is Right: The Rise and Fall of Neoliberalism” (*The New Yorker*, July 24, 2023).

On Pablo Neruda: See Neruda’s autobiography, *J’avoue que j’ai vécu* (1974; Gallimard, 1975), as well as the biography by Mario Amorós, *Neruda, El Príncipe de los poetas* (B.S.A., 2015). I also use the preface by Cardona Peña to *Canto General* by Neruda (1950).

On Gabriel García Márquez: Beyond his novels and collections of articles (generally in Spanish), I mainly use three books: the definitive biography by Gerald Martin, *Gabriel García Márquez* (Bloomsbury, 2008); the chapter devoted to García Márquez in Enrique Krauze, *Redeemers, Ideas and Power in Latin America* (Harper, 2011, pp. 333–363); and the book by Xavi Ayén, *Aquellos Años del Boom* (Debate, 2018).

Among the many interviews and texts by García Márquez that I use, note in particular: “Cuba de cabo a rabo” (*Alternativa*, August/September 1975); “La Soledad de América Latina,” Nobel Prize acceptance speech, Stockholm, Sweden, 1982; “Plying the Word,” *NACLA*, August 2, 1990; and “The Fidel I Think I Know” (*Granma*, reprinted in *The Guardian*, August 12, 2006).

On his friendship with Fidel, see Angel Esteban, *Gabo y Fidel: El paisaje de una amistad* (Planeta, 2006). For a more complete collection of his articles and reportage between 1950 and 1984, I use *El escándalo del siglo* (Vintage, 2020). Finally, I used the following article: Jon Lee Anderson, “The Power of García Márquez” (*The New Yorker*, September 19, 1999).

I also make some use of this collection of articles by Gabriel García Márquez, *Le Scandale du siècle, écrits journalistiques*, (Bernard Grasset, 2022).

On Gabo and the CIA: García Márquez gave a famous interview with a CIA renegade, Philip Agee, who revealed the far-reaching activities of the CIA in Latin

America. See Gerald Martin, *Gabriel García Márquez* (Bloomsbury, 2008, p. 382). See also Enrique Krauze, *Redeemers, Ideas and Power in Latin America* (Harper, 2011, p. 339).

On Gabo's book on Fidel (never written): On this mythical book, see Nik Steinberg and Daniel Wilkinson, "The Heroes of Cuba," (*The New York Review of Books*, May 27, 2010). See also: Gerald Martin, *Gabriel García Márquez* (Bloomsbury, 2008, p. 408).

On "the Boom" in Barcelona. See Gerald Martin, *Gabriel García Márquez* (Bloomsbury, 2008, p. 289) and Enrique Krauze, *Redeemers, Ideas and Power in Latin America* (Harper, 2011, pp. 376–378). Earlier on, Mario Vargas Llosa met Fidel and even agreed to be associated with the Castroist journal *Casa de las Américas*.

On Julio Cortázar's position: It evolved, as he gradually returned to supporting Fidel, going so far as to write a long prose poem in his honor. See Christopher Domínguez Michael, *Octavio Paz en su siglo* (Aguilar, 2014; Gallimard, 2014, p. 277).

On Reinaldo Arenas's criticism of Gabo: Reinaldo Arenas, "Gabriel García Márquez. ¿Esbirro o es burro?", (*El Universal*, May 17, 1980; quoted by Gerald Martin, *Gabriel García Márquez, op. cit.*, p. 620).

On Gabo and Chávez: Gerald Martin, *Gabriel García Márquez* (Bloomsbury, 2008, pp. 506 and 534). García Márquez met Chávez in Cuba in 1999 and later travelled with him on the same plane from Cuba to Venezuela. In an article for *Cambio*, however, he was fairly critical of the new Venezuelan president, describing him as an "illusionist" who might well "go down in history as another despot" (Gerald Martin, *Gabriel García Márquez*, Bloomsbury, 2008, p. 534).

Gabo and the Non-Aligned Movement: In March 1983, García Márquez took part, as a member of the Cuban delegation, in a meeting of the Non-Aligned Movement in New Delhi, in the presence of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi and many heads of state and government from Third World countries. See: Gerald Martin, *Gabriel García Márquez* (Bloomsbury, 2008, p. 444).

On the Mexican left: I draw here on interviews conducted in Mexico. See my article: Frédéric Martel, “La nouvelle gauche latino-américaine de López Obrador” (*Slate*, December 1, 2018).

On Mario Vargas Llosa. See: Mario Vargas Llosa, *Sables y utopías* (Aguilar, 2009; a collection of texts in which he reflects on his initial fascination with the Cuban revolution and his rapid disillusionment); see also a collection of Vargas Llosa’s literary criticism: *La vérité par le mensonge* (Gallimard, 1992). Vargas Llosa’s autobiography is also invaluable, in two volumes: *Le Poisson dans l’eau* (Gallimard, 1993) and *L’appel de la tribu* (Gallimard, 2021). In this latter book, entitled *La llamada de la tribu* in Spanish, Vargas Llosa retraces his intellectual journey from the Marxism of his youth to liberalism; he presents seven major thinkers who shaped his liberal conversion: Adam Smith, José Ortega y Gasset, Friedrich Hayek, Karl Popper, Raymond Aron, Isaiah Berlin and Jean-François Revel. See also his Nobel Prize acceptance speech, published under the title *Éloge de la lecture et de la fiction* (2011).

An important article by Vargas Llosa marked a first break with Fidel, at the time of the latter’s support for the military intervention in Czechoslovakia: “The Socialism of the Tanks” (1968). See also Enrique Krauze, “Creative Parricide,” in *Redeemers, Ideas and Power in Latin America* (Harper, 2011, p. 365 ff.); Michael Greenberg, “The Passions of Vargas Llosa” (*The New York Review of Books*, May 26, 2016); and Thomas Mallon, “Restless Realism, Mario Vargas Llosa’s Imagined

Lives” (*The New Yorker*, March 15, 2015). Finally, see: Michael Ignatieff, “Memories of Mario” (*Liberties*, April 2025).

On Octavio Paz: I use the biography by the Mexican journalist Christopher Domínguez Michael, *Octavio Paz en su siglo* (Aguilar, 2014; Gallimard, 2014); see also Enrique Krauze’s detailed essay, “Octavio Paz, The Poet and the Revolution,” in *Redeemers, Ideas and Power in Latin America* (Harper, 2011, p. 119 ff.). Two works by Octavio Paz have also been essential to my research: *Le Labyrinthe de la solitude* (1950) and *Critique de la pyramide* (1972), reissued together by Gallimard (1990).

On literary and intellectual debates in Latin America: I mainly use two books: Enrique Krauze, *Redeemers, Ideas and Power in Latin America* (Harper, 2011; see the chapters on Che Guevara, Gabriel García Márquez, Mario Vargas Llosa, Octavio Paz, the sub-comandante Marcos and Hugo Chávez); and the important book by Carlos Granés, *Delirio Americano, Una historia cultural y política de América Latina* (Taurus, 2022).

On Cuba and its support for Chávez’s Venezuela: Cuba’s support for the “Movimiento Bolivariano Revolucionario 200” or “MBR-200,” Chávez’s movement in the years 1982–1992, is well documented. See for example: Hal Klepak, *Cuba’s Military 1990–2005: Revolutionary Soldiers During Counter-Revolutionary Times* (Palgrave-Macmillan, 2006).

On the narratives and storytelling by Fidel. See : Moisés Naím, *The Revenge of Power: How Autocrats Are Reinventing Politics for the 21st Century* (St. Martin’s Press, 2022) and Sergei Guriev and Daniel Treisman, *Spin Dictators: Le nouveau visage de la tyrannie au XXIe siècle* (Princeton University Press, 2023).

Chapitre V – Sécularisme (sur l’islamisme)
Chapter V – On Secularism (on Islamism)

On Nasser. To understand Nasser as a key figure, I began by reading his main speeches, including the decisive one of July 26, 1956 (as well as those against the Muslim Brotherhood, etc.). For his life, I mainly used the recent biography by Alex Rowell, *We Are Your Soldiers, How Egypt’s Gamal Abdel Nasser Remade the Arab World* (Simon & Schuster, 2023; this recent book offers a good panorama of Nasser’s life and his influence on the Arab world from a critical perspective).

I’ve also read the reference biography in English by Anthony Nutting, *Nasser* (Constable, 1972): the former British Deputy Foreign Secretary, an “orientalist” in the great tradition of Lawrence of Arabia (to whom he also devoted a biography), resigned at the time of the Suez “crisis” and produced this generally favourable biography of Nasser, nourished by personal interviews with the Rais (the book is unfortunately dated). I’ve also read the biographies by Jean Lacouture, *Gamal Abdel Nasser* (Bayard, 2005); Jean Ziegler, *Le socialisme arabe* (Le Bord de l’eau, 2019); and Dominique de Roux, *Gamal Abdel Nasser* (L’Âge d’homme, 2000) – all three are brief and of very mediocre quality, Ziegler’s being violently anti-American and de Roux’s often flirting with conspiracy theories and antisemitism.

I also use the communist-leaning history, written jointly in two volumes by Mahmoud Hussein (the shared pseudonym of Bahgat El Nadi and Adel Rifaat/Eddy Lévy), entitled *L’Égypte* (Maspero, 1975; the first volume, “Lutte des classes et libération nationale,” covers the period 1945–1967 and the second 1967–1973). For a critical essay on Nasser, see: Emmanuel Berl, *Nasser tel qu’on le loue* (Gallimard, 1968; a short pamphlet written after the Six-Day War denouncing Nasser’s antisemitism).

On Nasser's relations to the Muslim Brotherhood: See Anthony Nutting, *Nasser* (Constable, 1972, p. 297 ff.). The expression “islam nationalisant” is by the Marxist Islamologist Maxime Rodinson: see “La politique selon le Coran,” (*Le Monde*, December 7, 1978).

On Nasser's links with the far right: Nasser was a member of the fascist Young Egypt party from 1936 to 1938. He later brought the co-founder of Young Egypt into his government after 1954 (see Alex Rowell, *op. cit.*, p. 21).

On Nasser's violence and the establishment of forced labour camps: The question of internment camps in Egypt already sparked intense debate in the 1960s, to which Nasser responded, for example, in an interview with Éric Rouleau. See his book: Éric Rouleau, *Dans les coulisses du Proche-Orient, Mémoires d'un journaliste diplomate, 1962–2012* (Fayard, 2012, p. 39).

On the Abu Zaabal camp: see Alex Rowell, *We Are Your Soldiers* (Simon & Schuster, pp. 57–69). See also Ilham Sayf al-Nasr, *Fi Mu'taqal Abu Za'bal* (trans.: *In Abu Zaabal Camp*).

On Nasser's use of chemical weapons in Yemen: The English journalist Richard Beeston of the *Daily Telegraph* was the first, in 1963, to describe the use of these chemical weapons. I rely here extensively on: Alex Rowell, *We Are Your Soldiers* (Simon & Schuster, 2023, see pp. 267 ff.).

On Nasser's criticism of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC): See the speech by Nasser on February 22, 1966. I obtained this speech in Cairo. It is also available in full in English here:

<https://archive.org/details/AddressByPresidentGamalAbdelNasserAtTheGreatPopularRallyHeldByThe/page/n7/mode/1up?view=theater>

On Nasser and the recently revealed recordings concerning his relationship with Algeria, see “Al Arabiya TV channel sparks Algerian outrage by rebroadcasting Gamal Abdel Nasser recording” (*The Arab Weekly*, October 1, 2025), and Zineb Ibnouzahir, “Explosif : dans une archive audio inédite, Gamal Abdel Nasser lève le voile sur les trahisons et les mensonges de l’Algérie” (*le360*, October 4, 2025).

On Nasser and the recently revealed recordings of his conversation with Muammar Gaddafi about Israel and Palestine, see Alex Rowell, “Why a Candid Conversation From 55 Years Ago Has Scandalized the Arab World” (*New Lines Magazine*, April 29, 2025), and Mohamed Saad Khiralla, “A Political Earthquake in the Arab World: In a Newly Uncovered Recording, Gamal Abdel Nasser Ruthlessly Dismantles His Own Ideology in a Striking Encounter with Gaddafi” (*Israel Hayom*, April 5, 2025).

On Mohamed Fayek: See his memoirs: *Un parcours de libération: Mémoires de Mohamed Fayek* (published in Cairo, 2023; which I was able to obtain, through my Arab researcher, in an English transcription). One can also look at his own book on Nasser.

[See also Worksheet No. 12 on Mohamed Fayek](#)

On Mohamed Fayek’s publishing house, Dar Al-Mustaqbal Al-Arabi: founded in 1981 and owned by Mohamed Fayek. When he was released from prison for the second time, he had completed the establishment of Dar Al-Mustaqbal Al-Arabi Publishing and Distribution Company. The aim was to present the July 23 Revolution objectively and publish works that meet the Arab citizen's need for knowledge and awareness, as well as emphasizing national dimensions, the Palestinian cause, and others. He worked on documenting the writings of those

who participated in the July 23 Revolution of 1952, organizing seminars, establishing connections with French publishing houses, signing agreements with them, and publishing two magazines: Arab Papers and Africa. The publishing house focused on caricature art, publishing, economics, and produced an encyclopedia of the 20th century. The house particularly focuses on publishing books related to human rights, democracy, social issues, and Arab culture. The publishing house has a good reputation for publishing intellectual and literary works, and it is committed to addressing important political and social issues through the books it publishes. Among the authors published, one may cite Edward Said or Amin Maalouf.

[See also Worksheet No. 13 on Dar Al-Mustaqbal Al-Arabi](#)

On the Arab Spring, the revolution in Egypt, and women, see the excellent article by Wendell Steavenson, “Two Revolutions”, (*The New Yorker*, November 12, 2012).

On Mohamed Morsi and the Muslim Brotherhood government, see the two articles by Peter Hessler, “Arab Summer”, (*The New Yorker*, June 18, 2012) and “Big Brothers”, (*The New Yorker*, January 14, 2013).

On Al-Sissi’s presidency, see Peter Hessler, “The Shadow General”, (*The New Yorker*, January 2, 2017).

On Al-Sissi and the Muslim Brotherhood, see Joshua Hammer, “Egypt: The New Dictatorship”, (*The New York Review*, June 8, 2017)

On Maxime Rodinson: See: *Islam & Capitalisme* (Seuil, 1966), *Marxisme et monde musulman* (Seuil, 1972), as well as the interview book Maxime Rodinson and Gérard

Khoury, *Entre Islam et Occident* (Belles Lettres, 1998). See also his three articles on “Islamic fundamentalism” in the Arab countries, Iran and Turkey: “I. Où Dieu n’est pas mort,” “II. La politique selon le Coran,” “III. Entre archaïsme et modernisme,” (*Le Monde*, December 6, 7 and 8, 1978). Finally, I read with interest his early autobiography: Maxime Rodinson, *Souvenirs d’un marginal* (Fayard, 2005, preface by Pierre Vidal-Naquet). Rodinson appears as particularly anti-Zionist in the 1950s; in 1967, however, he published a more balanced article: “Israël, fait colonial ?” in *Les Temps modernes*. See also Marina Garrisi and Matthieu Renault, “La révolution soviétique, Lénine et l’islam”, (*Nouveaux cahiers du socialisme*, November 23, 2020)

On Islamism in general and its relationship with the West: I use three books by Olivier Roy: *L’échec de l’islam politique* (Seuil, 1992); *L’Islam mondialisé* (Seuil, 2002); *La Sainte Ignorance* (Seuil, 2008). I have also read the reference works by Bernard Lewis, *The Crisis of Islam* (Modern Library, 2003), *Islam and the West* (Oxford University Press, 1993) and *Islam* (Gallimard, 2005; a collection of his key essays); as well as Gilles Kepel, *Jihad, Expansion et déclin de l’islamisme* (Gallimard, 2000) and *Terreur et martyre* (Flammarion, 2008). See also Abdelwahab Meddeb, *La maladie de l’islam* (Seuil, 2002) and Gabriel Martinez-Gros and Lucette Valensi, *L’Islam, l’islamisme et l’Occident, Genèse d’un affrontement* (Seuil, 2004).

For a different perspective from the one of Samuel Huntington on relations between the West and the Muslim world, see the article by Pippa Norris and Ronald Inglehart, “The True Clash of Civilisation” (*Foreign Policy*, no. 135, March–April 2003, pp. 62–70).

On the relationship between Islam and democracy: See Bernard Lewis, “Islam et démocratie” (1993), reprinted in *Islam* (Gallimard, 2005). (The specialist Bernard Lewis shows in particular that Islam is inherently incompatible with democracy and that autocratic regimes can be explained, in part, by Islam.)

On the Muslim Brotherhood: I mainly use the book by Marie Vannetzel, *The Muslim Brothers in Society, Everyday Politics, Social Action and Islamism in Mubarak's Egypt* (The American University in Cairo Press, 2021; see in particular the chapter “The Politics of Goodness,” pp. 143–186). I have also occasionally used: Xavier Ternisien, *Les Frères musulmans* (2005; Pluriel, 2011).

On Erdoğan's Turkey and its relationship with Islamism: See Ece Temelkuran, *Comment conduire un pays à sa perte, Du populisme à la dictature* (Gallimard, 2020); Ardavan Amir-Aslani, *La Turquie, Nouveau Califat* (L'Archipel, 2023).

On Bosnian Islam: See Alija Izetbegović, *Islam between East and West* (American Trust, 1984).

On the writer Alaa Al Aswany: I have read his main fiction and non fiction books: *L'Immeuble Yacoubian* (Actes Sud, 2006) ; *Chicago* (Actes Sud, 2007) ; *Automobile Club d'Égypte* (Actes Sud, 2014) ; *J'ai couru vers le Nil* (Actes Sud, 2018); *Chroniques de la révolution égyptienne* (Actes Sud, 2011) ; *Le Syndrome de la dictature* (Actes Sud, 2021). See his profile by Wendell Steavenson, “Writing the Revolution” (*The New Yorker*, January 8, 2012).

On the state of Egypt after Mubarak: I wrote several articles in *Slate*, including this one: “Un 31 décembre sur la place Tahrir” (*Slate*, January 4, 2015).

On Al Jazeera: I mainly use: Hugh Miles, *Al-Jazeera, The Inside Story of the Arab News Channel That Is Challenging the West* (Grove Press, 2005). See also: Mohammed El-Nawawy and Adel Iskandar, *Al-Jazeera: How the Free Arab News Network Scooped the World and Changed the Middle East* (Westview Press, 2003) ; Marc Lynch, *Voices of the New Arab Public: Iraq, Al-Jazeera, and Middle East Politics Today* (Columbia

University Press, 2006) ; Philip Seib, *The Al Jazeera Effect: How the New Global Media Are Reshaping World Politics* (Potomac Books, 2008) ; David Patrikarakos, *War in 140 Characters: How Social Media Is Reshaping Conflict in the Twenty-First Century* (Basic Books, 2017).

On Al Jazeera's coverage of the war in Gaza: see Madjid Zerrouky, "La guerre à Gaza vue par la chaîne Al-Jazira" (*Le Monde*, November 18, 2023).

On relations between Saudi Arabia and Iran: See Kim Ghattas, *Black Wave, Saudi Arabia, Iran, and the Forty-Year Rivalry That Unraveled Culture, Religion, and Collective Memory in the Middle East* (Henry Holt, 2020).

On the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC): See the article by Bouachba Taoufik, "L'Organisation de la Conférence islamique" (*Annuaire français de droit international*, Vol. 28, 1982, pp. 265–291; unfortunately this article is highly biased, violently anti-Zionist, and contains many factual errors).

On the OIC and blasphemy: Here I draw on the analyses of Hamadi Redissi in his book *S'exprimer librement en islam* (Seuil, 2023) and of the Algerian writer Boualem Sansal, in an interview with *L'Express*, December 22, 2022. For a different view, and one that is rather hostile to "laïcité," see: Haoues Seniguer, *La République autoritaire* (Le Bord de l'eau, 2022).

On Iran and Khomeini: I use the biography by Baqer Moin, *Khomeini, Life of the Ayatollah* (I.B. Tauris, 1999; see pp. 166 and 189). He clearly describes Khomeini's double discourse, as he sought to seduce the West by assuring that a woman could be elected President of Iran; he presented himself as defending a progressive Islam, while perfectly concealing his project of establishing an Islamic state.

On Jalal Al-e Ahmad's book against "Occidentosis": See: Jalal Al-e Ahmad, *Gharbzadegi* ("Westoxication," or "The Plague of the West", published in 1962). See also: Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (Vintage, 1993, p. 36).

On Ali Chari'ati, see Ian Buruma and Avishai Margalit, *Occidentalism. A Short history of Anti-Westernism* (Atlantic, 2004).

On Iran and democracy: See Ladan Boroumand and Roya Boroumand, "Terror, Islam and Democracy" (*Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 13, no. 2, April 2002).

On the Iranian Revolution: The important book by Scott Anderson is well worth reading: Scott Anderson, *King of Kings: The Iranian Revolution: A Story of Hubris, Delusion and Catastrophic Miscalculation* (Doubleday, 2025). See also: Mark Bowden, "Is the Iranian Revolution Key to U.S. Missteps in the Middle East", (*The New York Times*, August 1, 2025). On the recent evolution of the power control exercised by Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, see: Stéphane A. Dudoignon, *Les Gardiens de la révolution islamique d'Iran* (CNRS Éditions, 2022).

On political elites in Iran before the 1979 revolution, see: James A. Bill, "Classes, Elite and Iranian Politics: An Exchange" (*Cambridge University Press, Iranian Studies*, vol. 8, no. 3, Summer 1975, pp. 134–149).

On Iranian diplomacy, see Pierre Ramond, "Chine, Russie, Iran, la guerre mondiale vue par le « Kissinger persan »", (*Le Grand Continent*, March 1st, 2024). See also : Benoît Vitkine and Madjid Zerrouky, "Russie – Iran, le front commun des parias", (*Le Monde*, April 2, 2023). On U.S. and Iranian relations under Obama administration, see: Thomas L. Friedman, "The Obama Doctrine and Iran", (*The New York Times*, April 6, 2015).

On reforms in Iran, see: Saïd Asgharzadeh, “Saïd Hajjarian, « cerveau de la réforme » en Iran”, (*Le Monde*, August 17, 2017).

On the networks of the mullahs in France: See Emmanuel Razavi and Jean-Marie Montali, *La Pièuvre de Téhéran* (Éditions du Cerf, 2025).

On Michel Foucault’s series of articles on Iran: They can be read in Michel Foucault, *Dits et écrits* (Gallimard, 2001); see also David Macey, *Michel Foucault* (Gallimard, 1994, pp. 416–421). It originally consisted of nine articles published in *Corriere della Sera*, following Foucault’s two trips to Iran from September 16 to 24, 1978, and from November 9 to 15, 1978. This was followed by article in *Le Nouvel Observateur* on October 16, 1978. In them, Foucault notably asserted that the Shiite clergy did not seek to play a political role; despite the ensuing controversies, Foucault never acknowledged his error. See also : Guillaume Perrault, “Ces intellectuels et journalistes français qui ont été aveugles face à Khomeyni et à la révolution islamique en 1978-1979” (*Le Figaro*, Feb. 17, 2026). For a different perspective, see Daniel Defert, “Michel Foucault, un philosophe à Téhéran” (*Le Nouvel Obs*, February 10, 2018.)

On the debates surrounding “sexual orientation” and the 2008 declaration at the United Nations: I was able to obtain fairly complete archives from the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, notably many diplomatic cables on the inter-regional negotiations, as well as the full set of reports (111 in total) on the state of gay rights drawn up by French ambassadors posted in as many countries (June 2008). Each report, ranging from 1 to 4 pages, offers a real-time snapshot of the state of the sexual orientation issue around the world and of these states’ positions on the UN declaration on sexual orientation. I have already analyzed this documentation in my book *Global Gay* (Flammarion, 2015).

In addition, others texts make it possible to gain an overall view: notably the “Joint Statements” before the United Nations Human Rights Council defended by Brazil (“Joint Statement” in 2003, which gathered 20 signatories), New Zealand (March 2005, 32 signatories), Norway (“Joint Statement,” December 2006, 54 signatories) and the Nordic countries (2007); see the Holy See Statement before the United Nations General Assembly in December 2009; see the OAS Resolution on Human Rights, Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity, AG/RES 2435 of June 2008 and AG/RES 2504 of June 2009; see the “Address by Ms. Navanetham Pillay, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on the theme of gender identity, sexual orientation and human rights,” 63rd Session of the United Nations General Assembly, December 2008; see also the preparatory and discussion documents on Durban I (2001) and Durban II (2009, in Geneva); see the conclusions known as the “Yogyakarta Principles” (Asia Pacific Forum of National Human Rights Institutions, May 2009).

It should also be noted that at the debate of November 16, 2010, the mention of “sexual orientation” was once again raised before the United Nations General Assembly on a resolution condemning extrajudicial executions (the vote was 79–70 against the mention). Finally, the work and documents of the World Congress on Human Rights, Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity, held on May 15, 2009 in Paris, deserve to be consulted.

On all these issues, see also my book *Global Gay* (Flammarion, 2015; or in English at MIT Press, 2019), which details this question and from which I draw the conclusions here.

On Lebanon: I use the book by David Hirst, *Une histoire du Liban, 1860–2009* (2010; trans. Perrin, 2011), as well as the beautiful text by Samir Kassir, *Considérations sur le malheur arabe* (Babel, 2004), which goes beyond the Lebanese question alone to embrace the Arab condition from Beirut (Kassir was assassinated in 2005). By the same author, see also: Samir Kassir, *Histoire de Beyrouth* (Fayard,

2003). I have also read the book by Marwan Chahine, *Beyrouth, 13 avril 1975, Autopsie d'une étincelle* (Belfond, 2024).

On Ghassan Ben Jeddou, his career and the media group Al Mayadeen: See Ghassan Ben Jeddou, *Al Mayadeen*, interview with Ms Lana, August 1, 2012 (available on YouTube). See also the expert report by André Lange, “Al Mayadeen TV, une chaîne de propagande islamiste et de soutien au terrorisme diffusée sans autorisation par deux satellites Eutelsat” (2023; this report contains numerous examples of antisemitic statements and Holocaust denial broadcast by this channel). Iran finances Al Mayadeen and *Al Akhbar*, two Lebanese media outlets. The channel Al Mayadeen has also reportedly received \$25 million in funding from Rami Makhlouf, cousin of President Bashar al-Assad. Yet Al Mayadeen remains accessible, despite broadcasting antisemitic and Holocaust-denial content and promoting terrorism, via certain European (Eutelsat) and American (Intelsat) satellite operators. The channel also operates around ten websites and some thirty social media accounts and YouTube channels, which likewise remain active. It has taken a pro-Russian stance on the war in Ukraine, is supportive of Chávez, and maintains links with Telesur.

[See also Worksheet No. 14 on Ghassan Ben Jeddou](#)

On the “You Stink!” movement in Lebanon: I draw on excerpts from my article “Au Liban, une nouvelle génération politique laïque vient de naître” (*Slate*, October 12, 2015). During five further trips to Beirut in 2017, 2018, 2021 and twice in 2025, I deepened my investigation and interviewed Assad Thebian and Abbas Saad several times.

For further analysis, see [Annex 15 on “You Stink” movement](#)

On Lokman Slim and his assassination: Beyond my interviews with him and with his family, see Marie Jo Sader, “Comment Lokman Slim a été assassiné” (*L’Orient-Le Jour*, February 3, 2022.) [The account of Lokman Slim and his assassination in this chapter draws on more than forty interviews conducted over the course of eight reporting trips to Lebanon. I spoke at length with members of his immediate family – his sister, his mother, and his wife, Monika. I also interviewed roughly ten investigative journalists, including reporters from the online outlet Mégaphone; several UNIFIL peace keepers’ soldiers who hosted me for a number of days at their base in Deir Kifa in southern Lebanon, not far from the site of Mr. Slim’s assassination; senior Lebanese government officials; and multiple leaders of the Lebanese Armed Forces, among them a Maronite general who was in office at the time of the assassination. These sources proved indispensable. By contrast, my interviews with Hezbollah leaders on the subject produced no substantive information.]

See also these two articles, published after his death: Ben Hubbard and Hwaida Saad, “Prominent Lebanese Critic of Hezbollah is Killed”, (*The New York Times*, February 4, 2021) and Martin Chulov, “Hezbollah critic Lokman Slim found dead in Lebanon”, (*The Guardian*, February 4, 2021)

On Hezbollah’s official media: See Olfa Lamloum, “L’histoire sociale du Hezbollah à travers ses médias”, (*Politix*, 2009/3, no. 87)

On Hassan Nasrallah: The *New York Times* obituary is a good summary: Neil MacFarquhar and Ben Hubbard, “Hassan Nasrallah, Who Led Hezbollah for Decades, Is Dead at 64” (*New York Times*, September 28, 2024).

On Hezbollah’s fundings: See Matthew Levitt, *Hezbollah: The Global Footprint of Lebanon’s Party of God* (Hurst, 2013). Several investigations also mention Hezbollah’s dirty money, linked in particular to drug trafficking. See Guillaume Perrier, “Les

milliards du Hezbollah”, (*Le Point*, April 18, 2024). See also: Ed Caesar, “Syria’s Empire of speed”, (*The New Yorker*, November 11, 2024).

On Hezbollah’s fundings from West Africa, see: Noé Hauchet-Bodin, Arnaud Deux and Cyril Bensimon, “L’Afrique de l’Ouest, au coeur des réseaux de financement du Hezbollah”, (*Le Monde*, October 8, 2024). On Israel attacks against Al-Qard Al-Hassan, see Hélène Sallon, “Au Liban, Israël s’attaque au système financier du Hezbollah”, (*Le Monde*, October 22, 2024)

On Palestinian Islamic Jihad: I read with interest the reference book by Wissam Alhaj, Nicolas Dot-Pouillard and Eugénie Rébillard, *De la théologie à la libération ? Histoire du Jihad islamique palestinien* (La Découverte, 2014; although written from a far-left perspective, the book provides important information on the shift from pan-Arab leftism to Islamism).

On economic development and Islam: Rodinson’s theses have been refined since then, notably by economists, in particular on “Islamic charity,” the prohibition of “usury” (*riba*, or interest-bearing loans), and *zakat* (the compulsory annual tax), the specific nature of “credit” in Islamic lands and everything related to “Islamic finance.” See, for example, the work of Benjamin Marx, professor at Boston University, on the role of the *waqf* in land assets, which can constitute an obstacle to development : Benjamin Marx, “L’incidence de la religion dans le contexte des pays en développement a été très peu étudiée”, (*Le Monde*, May 27, 2024). [It should be noted that Christianity is also hostile to usury, even if Protestantism was the first to lift the taboo.] And to Rodinson’s credit, it is nevertheless easy to show that Muslims are great traders, as can be seen everywhere: the Grand Bazaar of Tehran and its shopkeepers, the souks of Cairo and their merchants, or the markets of Syria; and the Tunisian revolution was sparked by a young man, a very small trader, whom the police prevented from pushing his makeshift cart. One can also mention the cult of enrichment in the Gulf petro-monarchies. Muslims use their “credit cards” like everyone else, and

they also buy their homes “on credit.” Rodinson also stressed in his biography of the Prophet Muhammad his initial qualities as a merchant and trader: for him, the problem is not enrichment but the necessity to “give,” which is what Islamic philanthropy has long done (an idea not so far removed from that of the first great American Protestant philanthropists, such as Carnegie or Rockefeller). Finally, it is also Rodinson’s visceral and prescient anti-colonialism that perhaps led him to overestimate economic factors (in his view, the colonisers slowed the development of Muslim countries and the exploitation of resources is at the origin of this economic “lag”).

On this overall subject, see the fundamental remarks by French historian Fernand Braudel in *La Dynamique du capitalisme*, according to which capitalism appeared very early in Islamic lands, even before it emerged in the West; yet Braudel shows that capitalism “is an essential characteristic of Western societies” (see pp. 60, 69 and 74–75).

See also: Chris Patten, “L’islam et l’Occident à la croisée des chemins” (*Confluences Méditerranée*, No 52, 2025, p. 203) and The 2002 Arab Human Development Report, prepared at the request of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and Timur Kuran, “Islam and Economic Performance: Historical and Contemporary Links, (*Journal of Economic Literature*, No 56, 2018, pp. 1292-1359)

On present-day Syria and Ahmed Al-Shara, see Ben Hubbard, “Jihadist, Rebel, Statesman: The Many Faces of Syria’s Leader”, (*The New York Times*, September 23, 2025).

Chapitre VI – De la rivière à la mer (Sur Israël et la Palestine)
Chapter VI – From the river to the sea (On Israël-Palestine)

On Omar Barghouti (BDS): Beyond my interviews with him, see: *BDS, Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions, The Global Struggle for Palestinian Rights* (Haymarket Books, 2011; French trans.: La Fabrique, 2010) as well as *The New Intifada: Resisting Israel's Apartheid* (Verso, 2001). See also: Eyal Sivan and Armelle Laborie, *Un Boycott légitime, Pour le BDS universitaire et culturel de l'État d'Israël* (La Fabrique, 2016). Sur le « génocide » de Gaza, Omar Barghouti cite fréquemment le point de vue radical de la militante israélienne Orly Noy, journaliste et présidente du conseil exécutif de B'Tselem, notamment cet article : « Israel is waging a holocaust in Gaza. Denazification is our only remedy » (*Magazine + 972*, September 18, 2025 ; Orly Noy even uses the term “holocaust” – which seems to me quite inappropriate).

On Barghouti and Said: Omar Barghouti published a tribute to Edward Said after his death in which he already mentioned some facts and ideas that he later evoked with me, notably his meeting with Said at Columbia. In the tribute he is quite friendly with the master, which he has not always been in conversation with me. See: Omar Barghouti, “Edward Said, a Corporeal Dream Not Yet Realized”, (*CounterPunch*, September 25, 2003)

On Edward Said: I mainly use his two books *Orientalism* (Routledge, 1978) and *Culture & Imperialism* (Vintage, 1994), as well as his other works (notably *Representations of the Intellectual*; *The Question of Palestine*; *Covering Islam: How the Media and the Experts Determine How We See the Rest of the World*, etc.), and several collections of essays, including *The Edward Said Reader* (Vintage, 2000) and *The End of the Peace Process: Oslo and After* (Pantheon, 2000).

I've also read with interest Said's memoir, *Out of Place* (Vintage, 1999), as well as the reference biography, unfortunately “authorized” (Brennan was his former

student), therefore dithyrambic and lacking critical distance, by Timothy Brennan, *Places of Mind, A Life of Edward Said* (Bloomsbury, 2021). Equally apologetic, Dominique Eddé, who was for a time Said's partner, also published an unconvincing essay on his life and work, in which she speaks mostly about their relationship, as if to make it exist: *Edward Said, Le roman de sa pensée* (La Fabrique, 2017).

Quotes from Said: interview with *Le Monde*, August 27, 1999. These quotes are confirmed in his autobiography *Out of Place*, published shortly afterwards. For a different point of view on Edward Said, see Dominique Eddé, *Edward Said, le roman de sa pensée*, (La Fabrique, 2017) and Elias Sanbar's books.

For further analysis, [see Annex 16 on Edward Said](#)

A critical investigation of Said and his biography: Justus Reid Weiner, “‘My Beautiful Old House’ and Other Fabrications by Edward Said”, (*Commentary*, September 1999).

On the Munich attack that Edward Said did not condemn: Black September was led by Abu Iyad, a close associate of Arafat (as later revealed by phone intercepts). Arafat placed several of his security service officials in these commandos and financed them ; see Barry Rubin and Judith Colp Rubin, *Yasir Arafat, A Political Biography* (Oxford University Press, 2003, pp. 60–64). See also: Judith Miller, “Yasir Arafat, Palestinian Leader and Mideast Provocateur, Is Dead at 75” (*New York Times*, November 12, 2004). See for example: Edward Said, “Reflections on Twenty Years of Palestinian History”, (*Journal of Palestine Studies*, Vol. 20, No. 4, Summer 1991).

On Edward Said's *Orientalism*: I mainly use the American edition (Routledge, 1978; French trans., Seuil, 1980). For a defense of Said, see Adam Shatz, *Writers and*

Missionaries, Essays on the Radical Imagination (Verso, 2023; see chapter 4, “Edward Said: Palestinianism,” pp. 80–107) as well as Zachary Lockman, *Contending Visions of the Middle East: The History and Politics of Orientalism* (Cambridge University Press, 2009; see chapter VI). For a fairly neutral view, see Pankaj Mishra, “Internal Exile, The Reorientations of Edward Said”, (*The New Yorker*, April 26, 2021).

For refutations and critiques of the book and of Edward Said, see the following works: Bernard Lewis, *Islam and the West* (Oxford University Press, 1993; see in particular the chapter in which he responds to Said, “The Question of Orientalism”, pp. 99–118 – an article reprinted from *The New York Review of Books*, June 24, 1982; see also by the same author: “Orientalism: An Exchange”, (*The New York Review of Books*, August 12, 1982); Daniel Martin Varisco, *Reading Orientalism: Said and the Unsaid* (University of Washington Press, 2007); Ibn Warraq, *Defending the West: A Critique of Edward Said’s Orientalism* (Prometheus Books, 2007; a meticulous critique of Said, written under a pseudonym); Aijaz Ahmad, *In Theory: Nations, Classes, Literatures* (Verso, 1994); and Robert Irwin, *For Lust of Knowing: The Orientalists and Their Enemies* (Penguin, 2006; see in particular pp. 277–309, where he argues that colonization had more complex objectives and also a positive side in terms of preserving cultures or translating the Qur’an).

Also note the articles by Joshua Muravchik, “Enough Said. The False Scholarship of Edward Said” (*World Affairs*, Vol. 175, No. 6, March–April 2013); Sameer Rahim, “Disorientated: The Confusions of Edward Said” (*Prospect*, May 4, 2021); Martin Kramer, “Ivory Towers on Sand, The Failure of Middle Eastern Studies in America” (Policy Papers, Washington Institute for Near East Policy, 2001); and the debate between Edward Said and the philosopher Michael Walzer: M. D. Walhout, “The Intifada of the Intellectuals: An Ecumenical Perspective on the Walzer–Said Exchange” (*Soundings: An Interdisciplinary Journal*, Vol. 74, No. 3/4, Autumn/Winter 1991, pp. 327–350). For a full-fledged critique of Said regarding Kipling: See Craig Raine, “Kipling: Controversial question”, (*Kipling Journal*,

September 2022). Ibn Warraq pointed out numerous factual errors in *Defending the West: A Critique of Edward Said's Orientalism* (Prometheus Books, 2007; see for example pp. 23, 38, 40–41, etc.). See also Pankaj Mishra, “Internal Exile, The Reorientations of Edward Said” (*The New Yorker*, April 26, 2021).

On Othello as a symbol of the Arab leader, see the article by Edward Said “Withholding, Avoidance, and Recognition” (1972) and Timothy Brennan, *Places of Mind, A Life of Edward Said* (Bloomsbury, 2021, p. 143).

On Said and Salman Rushdie: on this case, see Timothy Brennan, *Salman Rushdie and the Third World: Myths of the Nation* (Macmillan, 1989). Brennan’s theory is that Salman Rushdie is one of those writers whom Westerners have “chosen to interpret the Third World.” On Said/Rushdie, see p. 142 in the same book. See also: Timothy Brennan, “Rushdie, Iran and Postcolonial Criticism” (*Social Text*, no. 31/32, “Third World and Post-Colonial Issues,” 1992, pp. 271–276), and the response by Aamir Mufti, “*The Satanic Verses* and the Cultural Politics of Islam: A Response to Brennan” (*Social Text*, in the same issue, pp. 277–282).

On Edward Said’s vs V.S. Naipaul: Said attacks Naipaul several times in *Orientalism*, as well as in the preface to the same book reissued twenty-five years later – he has had a lasting revenge... See also: V. S. Naipaul, *Beyond Belief: Islamic Excursions among the Converted Peoples* (Little, Brown, 1998); Edward Said, *The Politics of Dispossession* (Pantheon Books, 1994); Rob Nixon, *London Calling: V. S. Naipaul, Postcolonial Mandarin* (Oxford University Press, 1992); Fawzia Afzal-Khan, *Cultural Imperialism and the Indo-English Novel* (Pennsylvania State University Press, 1993).

On Edward Said’s ideas in the context of postmodern thought, see Bénédicte Delorme-Montini, *Le Moment post-moderne* (Gallimard, 2024).

On postcolonialism: see Thomas Brisson, *La désoccidentalisation des savoirs* (La Découverte, 2025) and two concise overview books: Robert K. C. Young, *Postcolonialism, A Very short introduction* (Oxford University Press, 2020) ; Nicolas Bancel, *Le Postcolonialisme* (Que Sais-je, PUF, 2019).

Many authors have sought to understand the “backwardness” of Arab countries, sometimes without much empathy. On this theme, see Al-Afif al-Akhdar, *The Position on Religion* (Dar al-Tali’a, 1972, in Arabic), as well as Ibn Warraq (*op. cit.*). See also Homi Bhabha, *Nation and Narration* (Routledge, 2013) and *The Location of Culture* (Routledge, 2004)

On Yasser Arafat, Fatah and the PLO: I frequently use in my book the serious but very critical biography by Barry Rubin and Judith Colp Rubin, *Yasir Arafat, A Political Biography* (Oxford University Press, 2003). With a more favorable view on Arafat, I used the history of the PLO, unfortunately dated, by Abdallah Frangi, *The PLO and Palestine* (Zed Press, 1983; Mr Frangi was a member of Fatah and the PLO’s representative in West Germany in the 1970s). See also: Christophe Boltanski and Jihan El-Tahri, *Les Sept vies de Yasser Arafat* (Grasset, 1997); Jillian Becker, *The PLO, Rise and Fall of the Palestinian Liberation Organization* (AuthorHouse, 2014); Alain Hart, *Arafat: A Political Biography* (Indiana University Press, 1989); and Andrew Gowers and Tony Walker, *Arafat: The Biography* (Virgin Books, 2003; a serious biography by two leading *Financial Times* specialists). See also Judith Miller, “Yasir Arafat, Palestinian Leader and Mideast Provocateur, is Dead at 75”, (*The New York Times*, November 12, 2004)

On Arafat and terrorism: (Arafat always firmly denied any role in the terrorist operations of Fatah or the PLO, but much evidence exists of his personal involvement, notably among the documents seized by Israel in the al-Muqata

compound, Arafat's headquarters in Ramallah, in 2002): Barry Rubin and Judith Colp Rubin, *Yasir Arafat, A Political Biography* (Oxford University Press, 2003, p. 4).

On Arafat at the United Nations: Arafat's speech before the UN General Assembly on November 13, 1974 can be easily find online. It was introduced by the President of the General Assembly, who was, that year, none other than the Algerian Foreign Minister Abdelaziz Bouteflika.

On Arafat and Oslo: According to the journalist and diplomat Éric Rouleau, Yasser Arafat began to realize the necessity of recognizing the Hebrew state and making peace as early as 1973. He wrote in *Le Monde diplomatique*: "As early as 1973, [Arafat] came to the conclusion that armed struggle alone would not enable the Palestinian movement to prevail; the following year, in a resounding speech before the United Nations General Assembly, he symbolized his new approach by declaring that he was presenting himself holding an olive branch in one hand and, in the other, a rifle." (Reprinted in *Manières de voir*, n°157, February 2018).

On Arafat and knowledge of Israel: See Jonathan Marc Gribetz, *Reading Herzl in Beirut: The PLO Effort to Know the Enemy* (Princeton University Press, 2024).

On the PFLP, Georges Habash and Ghassan Kanafani: see Ghassan Kanafani, *On Zionist Literature* (Ebb, 2022) and *Selected Political Writings* (Pluto Press, 2024). See also: Ghassan Kanafani, notably his books *Men in the Sun* and *Return to Haifa*, as well as his political writings.

On Hamas: see the profile of Yahya Sinwar, former Hamas leader: David Remnick, "Notes from Underground" (*The New Yorker*, August 12, 2024).

On the history of Palestine: Rashid Khalidi, *Palestinian Identity, The Construction of Modern National Consciousness* (Columbia University Press, 1997), and Nur Masalha, *Palestine: A Four Thousand Year History* (Zed, 2019). (See also the previous chapter on the Arab countries.) See also: Helena Coban, *The Palestinian Liberation Organisation: People, Power and Politics*, (Cambridge University Press, 1984)

On the PLO: Yahya Hammouda was an interim president between Ahmad Shuqeiri and Arafat, who was elected in February 1969. See: Abdallah Frangi, *The PLO and Palestine* (Zed Press, 1983). On the links between Shuqeiri and Nasser, see the same book (pp. 99 ff.) and on Nasser's pressure on Shuqeiri to unite the destiny of Egypt and the Palestinians (see p. 96).

On Mahmoud Darwish: *La Palestine comme métaphore* (Actes Sud, 1997; a collection of interviews); *Anthologie* (Actes Sud, 2009; bilingual edition); *Palestine mon pays, L'affaire du poème* (Minuit, 1988).

On the antisemitism of Mahmoud Abbas. Abbas, head of the PLO and Palestine, has been criticized for his antisemitic and even some conspiratorial statements: he published an academic book, based on his thesis at the Patrice Lumumba University in Moscow, *"The Links between the Nazis and the Zionist Movement."* According to this text, the Zionist movement was a "partner of the Nazis in planning and carrying out the Holocaust," using the dubious vocabulary of "auto-genocide" borrowed from the American linguist Noam Chomsky, himself highly questionable on this subject. Abbas considers the six million Jews murdered in the Shoah to be a "fantastic lie" (reducing the number to "a few hundred thousand") and repeats the ideas of Robert Faurisson, another "négationniste" or Holocaust denier, according to whom the gas chambers never existed. These ideas were maintained in the published version of his thesis in 1984, *The Other Side*. (Once elected President of the Palestinian Authority, Mahmoud Abbas was strongly

criticized for these statements; he did not apologize for them but pleaded context: “When I wrote *The Other Side*, we were at war with Israel. Today, I would not make such remarks.”)

On slavery in the Muslim world, see Justin Marozzi, *Captives and Companions, A History of Slavery and the Slave Trade in the Islamic World*, (Allen Lane, 2024), and his interview by Thomas Mahler, “Justin Marozzi, « L’esclavage dans le monde musulman reste un tabou »”, (*L’Express*, November 13, 2025)

On the history of Israel: I mainly use the following books: Zeev Sternhell, *Aux origines d’Israël, Entre nationalisme et socialisme* (Fayard, 1996; Folio, 2005); Martin Gilbert, *Israel: A History* (Black Swan, 1998); Tom Segev, *A State at Any Cost, The Life of David Ben-Gurion* (Apollo, 2018); Tom Segev, *Les premiers Israéliens* (Calmann-Lévy, 1986); Élie Barnavi, *Une histoire moderne d’Israël* (Champs Flammarion, 1982; updated ed., Champs Flammarion, 2015); Micah Goodman, *Catch-67, The Left, the Right and the Legacy of the Six-Day War* (Yale University Press, 2018); Ari Shavit, *My Promised Land, The Triumph and Tragedy of Israel* (Spiegel, 2013); Tom Segev, *Elvis in Jerusalem, Post-Zionism and the Americanization of Israel* (Metropolitan Books, 2002); Denis Charbit, *Qu’est-ce que le sionisme* (Albin Michel, 2007); and Ilan Greilsammer, *La Nouvelle histoire d’Israël* (Gallimard, 1998). I also use the article by Tony Judt, “Israel: The Alternative”, (*The New York Review of Books*, October 23, 2003).

On the history of the kibbutzim: Daniel Gavron, *The Kibbutz, Awakening from Utopia* (Rowman, 2000); Bruno Bettelheim, *Les Enfants du rêve* (Robert Laffont, 1971); Clara Malraux, *Civilisation du kibboutz* (Gonthier, 1964).

On the daily newspaper *Haaretz*: see David Remnick, “The Dissenters, *Haaretz* prides itself on being the conscience of Israel. Does it have a future?” (*The New Yorker*, February 28, 2011).

On Naftali Benett, see David Remnick, “The Party Faithful”, (*The New Yorker*, January 21, 2013)

On Benjamin Netanyahu: see Joshua Cohen, *The Netanyahus* (Fitzcarraldo Editions, 2021); Benjamin Netanyahu, *Bibi, My Story* (Threshold Editions, 2022). Regarding his relations with the International Criminal Court, see David D. Kirkpatrick, “The Hague on trial”, (*The New Yorker*, October 13, 2025).

On the way Netanyahu prolonged the war in Gaza to stay in power: Patrick Kingsley, Ronen Bergman and Natan Odenheimer, “Netanyahu Prolonged the War in Gaza to Stay in Power” (*New York Times*, July 11, 2025).

On what Israel is becoming after the bombing of Iran in 2025, see David Remnick, “Zones of Denial”, (*The New Yorker*, August 4, 2025).

For a critical perspective on Israel: see Ilan Pappé, *Ten Myths About Israel* (Verso, 2017); Benny Morris, *Righteous Victims, A History of the Zionist–Arab Conflict, 1881–2001* (Vintage, 1999) and, by the same author, *One State, Two States* (Yale University Press, 2009); Gideon Levy, *Gaza, Articles pour Haaretz* (La Fabrique, 2009); Amira Hass, *Boire la mer à Gaza, Chroniques 1993–1996* (La Fabrique, 2001) and, by the same journalist, *Correspondante à Ramallah, 1997–2003* (La Fabrique, 2004); as well as the book by David Grossman, *Le vent jaune* (Seuil, 1988). For a different analysis of Israel’s evolution, see Béatrice Orès, *Antisionisme, une histoire juive*, (Syllepse, 2023)

In defense of Israeli democracy: See Natan Sharansky, *The Case for Democracy* (PublicAffairs, 2004; french trans., *Défense de la démocratie*, Balfour, 2007). This Jewish Russian dissident, who later became an important figure in Israel (he served

three times as a minister), argues that democracy is both a Russian and a Jewish value, contrary to President Putin's claims.

On Israel's dissident figures: See David Remnick, "The Dissenters" (*The New Yorker*, February 28, 2011).

Chapitre VII – Extrême Occident
Chapter VII – The Far West

On the term “Extreme Occident”: Alain Rouquié uses this term in *Amérique Latine. Introduction à l’Extrême Occident* (Seuil, 1997) to designate Latin America. François Furet, in *Le Passé d’une illusion* (Robert Laffont, 1995), associates the expression “*Extrême Occident*” as well in a Spanish context, which, in the midst of civil war and by internationalizing it, could “fix the fascist forces at the extreme West.” (p. 416).

Claude Julien’s *Monde diplomatique*. See, to begin with, the main books by the first real director of « Diplo»: *Puissance et faiblesses des syndicats américains* (Le Monde, 1955); *L’Amérique en révolution* (Bibliothèque de l’homme d’action, 1956); *Cuba ou la ferveur contagieuse* (Le Monde, 1960); *Le nouveau Nouveau Monde* (Julliard, 1960); *La Révolution cubaine* (Julliard, 1961); *L’Empire américain* (Grasset, 1968); *Le Suicide des démocraties* (Grasset, 1972); *Le Rêve et l’Histoire. Deux siècles d’Amérique* (Grasset, 1976).

See also his prefaces to Chapour Haghigat, *Iran, La révolution inachevée et l’ordre américain* (Anthropos, 1980) and Jean-Marie Chauvier, *L’URSS: une société en mouvement* (L’Aube, 1988). Shortly before the fall of communism, Julien wrote this ill-timed preface to *URSS : une société en mouvement* (1988), in which he offered the curious praise of the diplomacies of totalitarian countries, which, according to him, are always aligned with the deep objectives and values of their peoples. An idealized reading, which assumes that Soviet, Chinese, or Cuban diplomacy could express anything other than the will of the dictators in power (p. 9; note that the book was quickly updated and corrected, as early as 1990). In this preface it reads: “Indeed, only for very short periods, and in exceptional circumstances, can a government’s foreign policy find itself divorced from the fundamental orientations of the society

over which that government rules. A diplomacy only takes shape and gains a chance of lasting, which is the condition of its effectiveness, insofar as it projects onto the world stage the objectives and values that a people first sets for itself.”

On *Le Monde diplomatique*: There are a few monographs on the history of the newspaper, and I mainly rely here on my reading of a large number of issues in the archives available online. I also draw on several hours of interviews I conducted with Ignacio Ramonet (former director), Bernard Cassen (former director), Alain Gresh (former editor-in-chief), Dominique Vidal (former deputy editor-in-chief) and Anne-Cécile Robert (editor-in-chief), as well as many former and current journalists, contributors or interns. See also: Claude Gautier, *Du Diplomate au citoyen, Études sur la politisation du Monde diplomatique et de ses lecteurs, 1954–2008* (doctoral thesis, defended in 2009).

On Diplo’s ideology, see, for example : Martine Bulard and Jack Dion, *L’Occident malade de l’Occident* (Fayard, 2009; Ms Bulard was editor-in-chief of *Le Monde diplomatique* at the time of publication; with Dion, they sought “to define a new universalism”; Ms. Bulard, whom I interviewed, was later dismissed without valid cause for what she described as “political divergence”).

On Ignacio Ramonet: I hosted a radio program with Ignacio Ramonet about *Le Monde diplomatique*: “Le Monde diplomatique: passé, présent, futur” (*France Culture*, December 3, 2023). I use a few quotations from this show in this book. See also: Ignacio Ramonet, *L’Empire de la surveillance. Suivi de deux entretiens avec Julian Assange et Noam Chomsky* (Gallimard, reissued 2024).

On rumors that Ignacio Ramonet would be funded by Cuba and Venezuela: see his response in: Ignacio Ramonet, “Anticastroisme primaire” (*Le Monde diplomatique*, April 2002).

On Maurice Lemoine. He has been the editor in chief of *Le Monde diplomatique* (2006-2010) : see Maurice Lemoine, *Chavez Presidente !* (Flammarion, 2005). And also : *Cuba, 30 ans de Révolution* (Autrement, 1989) ; *Cinq Cubains à Miami - Le roman de la guerre secrète entre Cuba et les États-Unis* (Don Quichotte éditions, 2010) ; *Les enfants cachés du Général Pinochet. Précis de coups d'État modernes et autres tentatives de déstabilisation* (Don Quichotte éditions, 2015) ; *Venezuela. Chronique d'une déstabilisation* (Le Temps des cerises, 2019).

On the issue of translations in *Le Monde diplomatique* : they are sometimes taken from the *London Review of Books* or *The Nation*, occasionally without this being indicated; at times portions of the original article are shortened. See, for example, Edward Said's article on Jean-Paul Sartre (originally published as "Edward Said Diary: My Encounter with Sartre" – here the [web link](#)); the version published by *Le Monde diplomatique*, however, appears to tone down Said's more ambiguous remarks about Benny Lévy and those concerning Michel Foucault ("Ma rencontre avec Jean-Paul Sartre," by Edward W. Said, *Le Monde diplomatique*, September 2000).

On a passage cut from Corbyn's article regarding the issue of antisemitism, see [this link](#). In French, the article concludes with the following sentences:
« Les dissensions entre le Parti travailliste de M. Corbyn et les Juifs britanniques viennent de loin : elles reflètent un déclin progressif du soutien des Juifs au parti, dû à la fois aux transformations sociologiques d'un groupe de plus en plus sensible aux thèses économiques conservatrices et aux questions de politique étrangère. L'hostilité que suscite M. Corbyn résulte en partie d'un sentiment d'insécurité accru dans la communauté juive britannique, lequel date d'avant son mandat, et de l'impression que le Parti travailliste n'est plus un allié fiable en ces temps incertains. » Or, cette partie en anglais, expliquant et légitimant les éléments de l'inquiétude des juifs a disparu : « Such strong emotions are the result of justified anxiety. Attacks against Jews in recent years, from the appalling episodes of violence in France in 2015 to the Pittsburgh shooting last year have propelled anti-semitism to the forefront of the public consciousness. 2017 saw a 34% rise in violent assaults against Jewish people in Britain while France, home to Europe's largest diaspora, saw anti-Semitic attacks increase by 74% last year. Germany, meanwhile, has seen physical violence against Jewish people increase by 60%. It may only be Spring, but 2019 has already witnessed repeated vandalism at the grave of Karl Marx and attacks on Jewish cemeteries both sides of the Channel." / This change in political temperature, also reflected in the rise of the US alt-right, is often met with a tone-deaf response from people who might otherwise be progressive. A major reason why is that the primary expressions of British racism since 1945 have targeted groups other than Jews – South Asian and West Indian immigrants and more recently Muslims – leaving the left ill-prepared for understanding and addressing anti-semitism. Far from ready to engage Jewish people about collective identity at a time of political volatility, some of the left wishes to exclusively discuss Israel. At best that is insufficient. At worst, and coupled with often frenetic use of social media and thousands of newly politicised people joining Labour, it can appear like something far more sinister. / So what next? Even if the numbers indicate Labour is a force for good in combatting anti-semitism, appearances matter. It is inadequate for party members or representatives to continually repeat that the Jewish community is mistaken in their diagnosis. Labour must be clear that foreign policy is democratically determined but also grasp that Britain's Jews feel an increasing sense of distance to the country they love. It is incumbent on Labour to demonstrate they are part of the solution to an issue decades in the making – not the problem.»

On the links between *Le Monde* and *Le Monde diplomatique*: According to Ignacio Ramonet, Bernard Cassen and the newspaper's website, "*Le Monde*

diplomatique, then under the direction of Ignacio Ramonet, secured its editorial and financial independence in 1996 by becoming an autonomous company, a subsidiary of *Le Monde SA* (51%). The remaining 49% are held by the association *Les Amis du Monde diplomatique* and the association *Günter Holzmann*, which brings together all the staff.”

On *Le Monde diplomatique* and its coverage of the Israeli–Palestinian

conflict. A very well-documented book exists: Samuel Ghiles-Meilhac, *Le Monde diplomatique et Israël, 1954–2005, Histoire moderne de l’État juif à travers un journal français de référence* (Le Manuscrit, 2007).

On *Le Monde diplomatique* and its coverage favorable to Slobodan

Milošević’s Serbia, some articles were more moderate, notably those by Jean-Yves Potel, but the general tendency of the newspaper was rather favorable to Slobodan Milošević’s Yugoslavia. For an analysis of *Le Monde diplomatique*’s treatment of the war in the former Yugoslavia, I refer to my long article: F. Martel, “Pour servir à l’histoire de notre défaite” (*Le Messager européen*, no. 8, November 1994). See also: Ignacio Ramonet, “Social-conformisme” (*Le Monde diplomatique*, April 1999), and, by the same author, “Le gâchis” (May 1999). See also Noam Chomsky’s text “L’OTAN, maître du monde” (May 1999).

During the years of the war in the former Yugoslavia, *Le Monde diplomatique* took the side of Slobodan Milošević’s Serbian army, despite the massacres and genocide in Vukovar, Sarajevo, Srebrenica and then Kosovo; issue after issue, the newspaper sank into denial of Serbian ultra-nationalism (which clearly foreshadowed Putin’s ultra-nationalism), denouncing NATO strikes, including through a conspiratorial article by Noam Chomsky and many writers blinded by their anti-American ideology (notably articles by Paul-Marie de la Gorce, Jean-Arnault Derens or Catherine Samary).

On *Le Monde diplomatique* and its coverage favorable to Putin's Russia. To illustrate these ideologically pro-Putin Russia articles in *Le Monde diplomatique*, see: Pierre Rimbart, “Ne pas voir, ne rien dire” (March 2022); Serge Halimi and Pierre Rimbart, “Un voluptueux bourrage de crâne” (September 2022); Pierre Rimbart, “L’Ukraine et ses faux amis” (October 2022); Serge Halimi and Pierre Rimbart, “Ukraine, le béton médiatique se fissure” (October 2023); Benoît Bréville and Pierre Rimbart, “Un journal non aligné” (November 2023); Benoît Bréville, “Dislocation européenne” (December 2023); Jules Sergei Fediunin and Hélène Richard, “La Russie est-elle impérialiste ?” (January 2024). In the November 2022 issue, they even went so far as to publish an excerpt from Vladimir Putin’s speech, “Dollar et perversion.”

Former Diplo’s editor in chief Dominique Vidal has published several critiques of what he calls the “Russification” of *Le Monde diplomatique*, notably on his Facebook page. He writes in particular: “TROP, C’EST TROP : Les silences choquants du “Diplo” (September 17, 2022) :

“For several years now, *Le Monde diplomatique* has sometimes shown a certain complacency towards Vladimir Putin’s Russia, as if the monthly were slipping back into a kind of ‘campism’ typical of the 1950s. Except that the Cold War ended thirty years ago: today’s world is marked by the confrontation of several imperialisms – the American one, the most powerful, but also the Russian and the Chinese, not to mention regional powers such as Israel, Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Iran, India, etc. It would be absurd to take sides with one against the others... This is what is so shocking when reading the article by Serge Halimi and Pierre Rimbart, published on the last page of the September issue under the title ‘Voluptuous brainwashing’. It is a pamphlet against Ukrainian propaganda alone and its relay by Western, and in particular French, media. By contrast, the authors devote, in their own words, not a single line, not a single word of this incendiary text to Putin, to his decision to invade Ukraine, to the war crimes and crimes against humanity committed there by his army, nor to... his propaganda. In short, the criticism – obviously legitimate – of media bias stands in contrast with the silence – no less obviously illegitimate – about Moscow’s bellicose policy. My two colleagues ironically hook their text with the question: ‘Is President Volodymyr Zelensky also the editor-in-chief of Western media?’ By the end of their article, which my friends can read below, one is rather tempted, using the same humour, to ask: ‘Is President Vladimir Putin also the director of *Le Monde diplomatique*?’” Enough joking. This strange article prompts us to ask a fundamental question again: yes or no, must war crimes and crimes against humanity be denounced, whoever their perpetrators may be? Unless Serge Halimi and Pierre Rimbart believe that bombed civilians, tortured innocents, prisoners castrated with knives, and women raped by groups of drunken soldiers — horrors denounced by international organizations, including Amnesty, which they cite when it suits them — amount to propaganda? The adjective “voluptuous,” in any case, is inappropriate.”

On *Le Monde diplomatique* and Chávez: The newspaper adopted an overtly pro-Chávez line, becoming one of his principal international supporters – if not, at times, a vehicle of advocacy and propaganda for his regime – from 1999 until his death in 2013. Throughout that period, its editorial stance consistently defended

Chavismo, downplayed mounting evidence of authoritarian drift and institutional erosion, and offered little sustained scrutiny of the government's consolidation of power or the millions of Venezuelans driven into exile. This pro-Chávez stance gradually weakened under Maduro as the Venezuelan dictator's significant failures became apparent. See, for example: Loïc Ramirez, "In Venezuela, the Disarray of Chavista Activists" (*Le Monde diplomatique*, July 2016).

On Podemos and Latin America, see : Laura Chazel, "De l'Amérique latine à Madrid : Podemos et la construction d'un populisme de gauche" (*ARPoS/Pôle Sud*, 2019/1, n°50, pp. 121-138).

On Attac and the alter-globalization movement: See the launch article of Attac in *Le Monde diplomatique*: "Attac, c'est parti !" (*Le Monde diplomatique*, July 1998). To consult countless documents on the actions carried out, one can refer to the site archivesautonomies.org, which has preserved the memory of these struggles. On a more theoretical level, some thinkers helped to nourish or extend these alter-globalist ideas: for example Immanuel Wallerstein, *L'Après-libéralisme* (Éditions de l'Aube, 1999); Ernesto Laclau, *La Raison populiste* (FCE, 2005); and his wife Chantal Mouffe, *Pour un populisme de gauche* (Albin Michel, 2018). See also: Chantal Mouffe, *La Révolution démocratique verte* (Albin Michel, 2023).

On the scandals at Attac: See Guillemette Echalié, "Attac contre Attac: Nikonoff mis en échec" (*Libération*, August 25, 2006); Sylvia Zappi, "La direction d'Attac ne survit pas à la confirmation d'une fraude électorale" (*Le Monde*, August 26, 2006) and Sylvia Zappi, "A Attac, la démission de Jacques Nikonoff n'a pas mis fin à la crise", (*Le Monde*, August 30, 2006). On the judicial aftermath of the electoral fraud case and the dismissal (*non-lieu*) that was issued, see "Attac : non-lieu dans l'affaire de la fraude électorale de juin 2006", (*Le Nouvel Obs*, September 5, 2009)

For an account of the major waves of international protests directed at the WTO, the G8, the IMF, and the European Union from the 1990s through the 2010s: One can consult countless documents on these actions on the site archivesautonomies.org, which has preserved the memory of these struggles.

On Bernard Cassen: Bernard Cassen was Managing Director of *Le Monde diplomatique* from 1996 to 2008 and President of Attac from 1998 to 2002, a clear confusion of genre. See a very detailed interview on his career and ideas: Bernard Cassen, “Un homme-orchestre engagé dans le débat d’idées” (*Savoir/ Agir* – formerly *Raison d’Agir* –, 2020, no. 4/54, by Antony Burlaud).

On Toni Negri. See his main book: Michael Hardt, Antonio Negri, *Empire* (Harvard University Press, 2000). See also: Toni Negri, “The ‘Empire’, the Supreme Stage of Imperialism” (*Le Monde diplomatique*, January 2001).

On the critiques of the Indian economist Amartya Sen against anti-globalisation: See his point of view: “Dix vérités sur la mondialisation” (*Le Monde*, July 19, 2001).

On the debate between development economics and globalisation: I draw on an interview with Rémi Rioux in my programme “Sur le terrain avec l’Agence française de développement, la France et sa politique de développement” (*Soft Power*, France Culture, January 28, 2024). Mr Rioux has often repeated these figures and ideas; see his interview in *L’Opinion* (April 22, 2024), in *La Tribune* (May 11, 2024), or in *Politique Internationale* (Spring 2023).

According to *Financial Times* figures, the share of the world’s population living in extreme poverty fell from 59% in 1950 to 8.5% in 2024. See: Martin Wolf, “Doing More Harm Than Good” (*Financial Times*, May 8, 2002, p. 13); and Martin

Wolf, “A Stepping Stone from Poverty” (*Financial Times*, December 19, 2001, p. 21).

On Alain Gresh and his father Henri Curiel: Henri Curiel headed the “Curiel network” during the Algerian war. See: “Le réseau Curiel à la rescousse,” in Sylvain Pattieu, *Panthères et pirates, Des Afro-Américains entre lutte des classes et Black Power*.

Alain Gresh invited Tariq Ramadan to take part in the alter-globalisation forum in Saint-Denis organised by Attac in 2003: see “Tariq Ramadan, intellectuel contesté, en vedette d’un jour” (*Le Monde*, November 15, 2003).

On the the « U-Turn » or « horseshoe theory » at *Le Monde diplomatique*: To illustrate this thesis, one can refer to many articles in *Le Monde diplomatique*, for example: Evelyne Pieiller, “Du bon usage de l’ennemi” (June 2022).

On the Taliban: Adam Baczko, “Les Talibans et l’épreuve du pouvoir” (*Le Monde diplomatique*, June 2024).

On North Korea: Martin Hart-Landsberg, “Qui menace la péninsule coréenne ?” (*Le Monde diplomatique*, June 2024).

On KGB agents or « friends » who wrote for *Le Monde diplomatique*: Jacques Follorou, “Quand le KGB s’intéressait au Monde” (*Le Monde*, January 2, 2025). See also the investigation into Olesya Orlenko by Nicolas Quénel, “*Le Monde diplo, L’Huma* et la journaliste qui venait du froid” (*Le Point*, February 22, 2024). See also: Vincent Jauvert, *À la solde de Moscou* (Seuil, 2024).

Regarding the answer by Anne-Cécile Robert that I quote, it has been discussed with me. She said roughly the same thing in response to the *Le Point* article; see: Nicolas Quénel, “*Le Monde diplo, L’Huma* et la journaliste qui venait du froid” (*Le Point*, February 22, 2024).

On Occupy (Wall Street, Madrid, Hong Kong, Rothschild, etc.): See a good overall history of these movements: Nadav Eyal, *Revolt, The Worldwide Uprising against Globalization* (Picador, 2021); Todd Gitlin, *Occupy Nation, The Roots, the Spirit and the Promise of Occupy Wall Street* (ITBooks, 2012); Michael A. Gould-Wartofsky, *The Occupiers, The Making of the 99 Percent Movement* (Oxford University Press, 2015); and, for a more theoretical approach: Sandra Laugier and Albert Ogien, *Le Principe démocratique* (La Découverte, 2014).

On Hugo Chávez's and Nicolás Maduro's Venezuela: A meticulous account of Venezuela's collapse has been produced by Mirtha Rivero in a 1,380-page work, published in two volumes, *La Oscuridad no llegó sola, Crónica de una tragedia venezolana* (Alfa, in Spanish; not translated) – a sweeping fresco of a country's tragedy, corrupted by oil (see in particular Chapter 86, “Petroleros”). See also: Paula Vasquez Lezama, *Pays hors service, Venezuela: de l'utopie au chaos* (Libella, 2019). Ernesto Laclau was one of the supporters of Chavismo; see his book *La raison populiste* (Seuil, 2008). For a favorable view of the regime, see the book by Venezuela's Vice-President, Elías Jaua Milano, *Venezuela Siglo XXI: Transformación, conflicto y agenda para el porvenir* (Trinchera, 2021). See also: Jon Lee Anderson, “Slumlord. What has Hugo Chávez wrought in Venezuela?” (*The New Yorker*, January 28, 2013) as well as “Accelerating Revolution. Venezuela's Nicolás Maduro has outmaneuvered his opponents. Can he survive an economy in free fall?” (*The New Yorker*, December 11, 2017).

On Venezuela's economy: Data from the Encovi survey institute of the Institute of Economics and Social Research at the Andrés Bello Catholic University in Caracas: on these figures, see Isayen Herrera and Frances Robles, “Ferraris and Hungry Children: Venezuela's Socialist Vision in Shambles” (*New York Times*, March 21, 2023). See also: William Finnegan, “A Failing State” (*The New Yorker*, November 14, 2016).

On corruption in Venezuela: The Corruption Perceptions Index is among the worst in the world (only Somalia, South Sudan and Syria rank lower overall).

See: “Corruption Perceptions Index 2023: Global scores” (Transparency International, January 2024).

On the financing by Chávez and later Maduro of allied parties, media outlets and public figures abroad, see the first-hand information currently being released, gradually and across different media, by Hugo Carvajal, known as “El Pollo.” See for example: Daniel Lozano, “‘El Pollo’ Carvajal, the ‘black box’ holding all the secrets of chavismo,” (*El Mundo*, Dec., 8 2025; the issue of drug trafficking is addressed there.) See also the body of investigative work produced by the platforms [Corruptómetro] (<https://corruptometro.org/m>) and [Chavismo Inc.] (<https://chavismoinc.com/>), as well as numerous investigations published by *El País*.

On tortures in Venezuela. For the documented cases of torture in Venezuela under Hugo Chávez and Nicolás Maduro, see the testimony of congressman Rosmit Mantilla, who was imprisoned for two years at El Helicoide and recounted the psychological and physical abuses he endured; he has spoken about this in interviews with me and it is also discussed in Axel Gyldén, “Dans les ténèbres du régime de Maduro” (*L’Express*, January 15, 2026), an article that describes how El Helicoide was transformed into one of the most notorious detention and torture centers in Latin America under the current regime. See also, on the subject, his open letter to Jean-Luc Mélenchon: Rosmit Mantilla, “Venezuela : Monsieur Mélenchon, avez-vous une conscience ?” (*Le Point*, January 29, 2019).

On intellectuals and Chávez: See Ernesto Laclau, *La Raison populiste* (FCE, 2005) and Chantal Mouffe, *Pour un populisme de gauche* (Albin Michel, 2018).

On Chávez's ideas: See the influence of the Argentine thinker Norberto Ceresole. An odd figure, Ceresole was an authoritarian Peronist and a Holocaust denier, pro-Soviet and pro-Hezbollah, who proposed a strange ideological mixture combining the most radical left with fascism (he was criticized for his friendship with two French Holocaust deniers, Robert Faurisson and Roger Garaudy, and later denounced for his antisemitism and neo-Nazi sympathies). Hugo Chávez met him in Caracas when he was released from prison after his failed coup attempt; Ceresole offered his services and became, for several years, Chávez's informal adviser and his "Gran amigo," in Chávez's own words (he would eventually expel him from the country after being elected, following neo-Nazi remarks). Although Chávez's ideology cannot be reduced to that of Norberto Ceresole, it is striking that Ceresole's writings, which glorify Caesarism and the cult of the leader, deny the separation of powers, encourage bypassing elections in order to address the people directly, and spew contempt for liberal democracy, the United States, and democratic elections, closely resemble Chávez's ideas. One must also note Ceresole's visceral antisemitism, which can be found in the Bolivarian leader as well. Indeed, in 2006 Chávez indulged in a series of antisemitic remarks: "More than ever, we miss Christ... but it turns out that a minority, the descendants of those who crucified Christ, have taken over the world's wealth [...] and concentrated that wealth in a few hands." Instead of calming the debate or apologizing for these conspiratorial remarks, Chávez reaffirmed, on his program *Álo Presidente!*, his ties with Ceresole, describing him as "un intelectual de respeto" (a respectable intellectual).

On the Chávez–Fidel relationship: See Jon Lee Anderson, "Fidel's Heir. The influence of Hugo Chávez" (*The New Yorker*, June 16, 2008).

On Subcomandante Marcos: I mainly use the works by Subcomandante Marcos himself, *Nuestra Arma Es Nuestra Palabra: Escritos Selectos* (Siete Cuentos, 2000, preface by José Saramago), and the book of interviews by Ignacio Ramonet, *La dignité rebelle* (Galilée, 2001). See also: *¡Ya Basta!: les insurgés zapatistes racontent un an de révolte au Chiapas*, vol. 1, and *¡Ya Basta!: vers l'internationale zapatiste*, vol. 2 (texts annotated by Maurice Lemoine, Dagorno, 2 vols., 1994 and 1996). For a more nuanced perspective, see: “Subcomandante Marcos, The Rise and Fall of a Guerrillero,” in Enrique Krauze, *Redeemers, Ideas and Power in Latin America* (Harper, 2011). One can also read an interesting article by Marcos: “Le fascisme libéral” (*Le Monde diplomatique*, August 2000).

On Chiapas after Marcos: See Irma A. Velásquez Nimatuj, “Chiapas Fears Organized Crime, and Military Intervention” (*Americas Quarterly*, November 15, 2023).

On Marx and Simón Bolívar: See Marx’s article “Bolívar y Ponte” in *New American Cyclopaedia* (1858), reprinted in *Cahiers de marxologie* (vol. II, no. 12, December 1968, p. 2429). As a complement, see Marx’s letter to Engels dated February 14, 1858. On this much-debated subject, one can read José Aricó, *Marx y América Latina* (Fondo de Cultura Económica, 2009). Many studies are highly critical of Bolívar, who contributed to the ruin of Venezuela in his own time.

On AMLO’s Mexico and Claudia Sheinbaum: I notably draw on my investigation: Frédéric Martel, “La nouvelle gauche latino-américaine de López Obrador” (*Slate*, December 1, 2018).

On Rafael Correa’s Ecuador: I notably draw on my investigation: Frédéric Martel, “Adulé par l’extrême gauche, le modèle Correa est à bout de souffle” (*Slate*, August 29, 2015).

On Evo Morales's Bolivia: See Jon Lee Anderson, “Bolivia’s Evo Morales Wants To Stay in the Game” (*The New Yorker*, November 20, 2019).

For further analysis, [see Annex 17 on Evo Morales.](#)

On Telesur (Venezuela): See Christian Henkel, *Telesur, comunicación y chavismo: los límites de un proyecto de comunicación estatal latinoamericano* (Eudeba, 2021) ; Erico Sousa Matos, *Euronews y Telesur: Entre la integración regional y la propaganda internacional* (Thesis, 2017).

On Nicaragua: See Stephen Kinzer, *Blood of Brothers, Life and War in Nicaragua* (1991 ; Harvard University Press, 2007) ; Francis Pisani, *Muchachos, Nicaragua, Journal d'un témoin de la révolution sandiniste* (Encre, 1980). I also used Jon Lee Anderson, “The Playbook” (*The New Yorker*, September 3, 2018), and Alma Guillermoprieto, “The Revolution Eats Itself in Nicaragua” (*The New Yorker*, March 10, 2022).

On political prisoners in Nicaragua: 135 were released in September 2024 after an agreement with the United States. According to *Le Monde* (January 15, 2024), 203 religious figures were expelled, banned, or denied entry to Nicaragua between 2018 and 2024.

On early Sandinistas imprisoned: For example, Carlos Fernando Chamorro Barrios or Dora María Téllez. The soldier and poet Hugo Torres, known as Comandante Uno, saved Ortega’s life, and Ortega later had him murdered in prison in 2022. See: Stephen Kinzer, *Blood of Brothers, Life and War in Nicaragua* (1991 ; Harvard University Press, 2007) and Jon Lee Anderson, “The Playbook” (*The New Yorker*, September 3, 2018). See also Alma Guillermoprieto, “The Revolution Eats

Itself in Nicaragua” (*The New Yorker*, March 10, 2022), on how Daniel Ortega let the Sandinista leader Hugo Torres die in prison and had Dora María Téllez arrested and then expelled, two of the historic Sandinista leaders.

On the students who were massacred: Jon Lee Anderson, “The Playbook” (*The New Yorker*, September 3, 2018).

On the couple and their corruption: “A One-Family State” (*The Economist*, November 12, 2022). For the reference of Rosario Murillo’s speech: this speech was delivered on July 18, 2022 (I have the original transcript).

On Boric’s Chile: See Jon Lee Anderson, “New Man, Can Chile’s young President reimagine the Latin America left?” (*The New Yorker*, June 13, 2022).

On the critique of multinationals in Latin America: Eduardo Galeano, *Les veines ouvertes de l’Amérique latine* (Plon, “Terre Humaine”, 1981).

On ecology and “buen vivir”: Alberto Acosta, *Le Buen Vivir, Pour imaginer d’autres mondes* (éditions Utopia, 2014).

On Latin American guerrillas: I read with great interest the important novel by Juan Gabriel Vásquez, *Volver la vista atrás* (Alfaguara, 2021; french translation as *Une retrospective*, Seuil, 2022).

On liberation theology, see Gustavo Gutiérrez, *On the Side of the Poor, The Theology of Liberation* (with Cardinal G. L. Miller, Orbis Books, 2015). I had also two long meetings and interviews with Leonardo Boff in the Atlantic forest, Brazil, where he lives.

Chapitre VIII – Le chaos du monde (sur l'ONU)
Chapter VIII – The Chaos of the world (on UN agencies)

On the “Global South” concept: The term “Global South” is said to have been coined in 1969 by Carl Oglesby, a figure of the “New Left” and the author of an article in the Catholic magazine *Commonweal*, in which he denounced the “domination of the North over the Global South” as producing an “intolerable social order.” Anthony Appiah brought it back into vogue in a famous article, “There Is No Such Thing as Western Civilization” (*The Guardian*, November 9, 2016).

On BRICS: The acronym BRIC was invented in 2001 by Jim O’Neill, an economist at Goldman Sachs; it became BRICS with the inclusion of South Africa.

On the history of the major United Nations agencies and, in particular, the Western economic order stemming from the Bretton Woods Conference (IMF, World Bank, GATT, etc.): I have read the recent and rich book by the historian Martin Daunt, *The Economic Government of the World, 1933–2023* (Allen Lane, 2023; see in particular the chapter “The Bretton Woods Agreement,” pp. 189–212). See also: “The New Economic Order” (*The Economist*, May 11, 2024).

For further analysis, [see Annex 18 on WIPO](#)

On Dilma Rousseff: I use the political portrait by Nicholas Lemann, “The Anointed, Can a Former Political Radical Lead Brazil Through Its Economic Boom?” (*The New Yorker*, November 27, 2011).

On Elias Jabbour: Originally, Jabbour was a geographer of a hard, even dogmatic, Marxist persuasion. He is the author (with Alberto Gabriele) of the book *China: O*

socialismo do século XXI (Boitempo Editorial, 2021; in Portuguese, not translated).

His PhD dissertation at USP, supervised by Armen Mamigonian, a Brazilian geographer who studied at the Sorbonne in the 1960s, is available online:

https://www.teses.usp.br/teses/disponiveis/8/8136/tde-18012011-103155/publico/2010_EliasMarcoKhalilJabbour.pdf (2010).

On Modi's diplomacy: I have read two books by the Minister of External Affairs, S. Jaishankar, *The India Way* (HarperCollins, 2020) and, by the same author, *Why Bharat Matters* (Rupa, 2024). I have also used Sophie Landrin and Guillaume Delacroix, *Dans la tête de Narendra Modi* (Actes Sud, 2024). See also, on the liberalization of the economy in the early 1990s: Sanjaya Baru, *The Accidental Prime Minister: The Making and Unmaking of Manmohan Singh* (Penguin Books, 2014; the memoirs is by one of his advisers). On Arundhati Roy, beyond her novels, I have used her essay *The Doctor and the Saint* (Penguin, 2014).

On Erdoğan's diplomacy: See the texts by his famous foreign minister Ahmet Davutoğlu: his PhD thesis first of all: *Alternative Paradigms: The Impact of Islamic and Western Weltanschauungs on Political Theory* (University Press of America, 1993), as well as his books, notably *Civilizational Transformation and the Muslim World* (Quill, 1994), *La Profondeur stratégique* (not translated, Küre Yayınları, 2001), *La Crise mondiale* (not translated, Küre, 2002), *La Civilisation ottomane : politique, économie, art* (Klasik, 2005), and *Systemic Earthquake and the Struggle for World Order: Exclusive Populism versus Inclusive Democracy* (Cambridge University Press, 2020). I have also read Guillaume Perrier, *Dans la tête de Recep Tayyip Erdogan* (Actes Sud, 2018). See also: Olivier Bouquet, « Erdoğan a gagné sur le terrain du nationalisme plus que sur celui de l'islamiste » (*Le Monde*, May 24, 2023). I also draw on several notes and articles written for me by the journalist and researcher Nicolas Gastineau.

On Erdoğan's early years, I notably use Dexter Filkins, « The Deep State » (*The New Yorker*, March 12, 2012).

On diplomacy in Latin America: I use the books by Alain Rouquié, notably *Amérique latine, Introduction à l'Extrême-Occident* (Seuil, 1987) and *Le Mexique, Un État Nord-Américain* (Fayard, 2013). See also: Martín Caparrós, *Ñamérica* (Random House, 2021); Enrique Krauze, *Redeemers, Ideas and Power in Latin America* (Harper, 2011); and Carlos Granés, *Delirio Americano, Una historia cultural y política de América Latina* (Taurus, 2022). This last book by Granés greatly inspired the present work.

On the concept of “active non-alignment”: See Carlos Fortín, Jorge Heine and Carlos Ominami (eds.), *El no alineamiento activo y América Latina: una doctrina para el nuevo siglo* (Editorial Catalonia, 2021), and for a brief overview: Kevin Parthenay, “Le ‘non-alignement actif’ et l’Amérique latine dans l’ordre global” (*Le Grand Continent*, October 3, 2022). According to the authors, this concept applies specifically to Latin America, “which has always had a secondary place in international affairs,” or whose “voice has carried little weight on the international diplomatic stage.”

On the international institutions of Bretton Woods, see Martin Daunton, *The Economic Government of the World, 1933–2023* (Allen Lane, 2023), especially the chapter on “The Bretton Woods Agreement” (pp. 189–212).

On Jean Ziegler, see his book *La Haine de l’Occident* (Albin Michel, 2008). I have also read, by the same writer : *La Victoire des vaincus* (Seuil, 1988), *Destruction massive, Géopolitique de la faim* (Seuil, 2011), and his autobiography *Le bonheur d’être suisse* (Fayard, 1993).

On South Africa: I mainly draw on Thula Simpson’s *History of South Africa* (Penguin, 2021) and Richard Calland and Mabel Sithole’s *The Presidents, From Mandela to Ramaphosa, Leadership in the Age of Crisis* (Penguin, 2022). On the hopes

raised by the end of apartheid and the life of Nelson Mandela, see his famous autobiography *Long Walk to Freedom* (Little, Brown and Company, 1994). For a critical view of the ANC's project, see the economist Anthea Jeffery's book *Countdown to Socialism: The National Democratic Revolution in South Africa Since 1994* (South African Institute of Race Relations, 1994).

On the criminalization of homosexuality: See my book *Global Gay* (Flammarion, 1993), from which I draw this passage. Francophone countries, by contrast, have generally inherited the Napoleonic Code, which is silent on homosexuality. Thus, the linguistic boundary often marks in Africa the line between tolerance and prohibition: one can produce a genuine geopolitics of LGBT rights according to languages, which are also cultural borders. Several Francophone countries officially have no homophobic laws (Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Mali, Niger, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Chad, for example), and some of them are even, at times, defenders of gay rights, notably the Central African Republic and Gabon. But this rule is far from universal, since homosexuality is illegal in Senegal (where severe sentences were handed down after summary trials in 2009 and 2012), in Togo, and even more so in Cameroon and Mauritania (not to mention the Francophone Muslim countries of North Africa, such as Morocco and Tunisia, which inherited homophobia from the French mandate, and Algeria, which, as former French departments, experienced increased criminalization under the Vichy regime). Above all, one must not confuse the law with actual practices: many countries have lenient laws but strong political and social homophobia (as in South Africa and Egypt), while other African countries may formally ban homosexuality in law without actually prosecuting homosexuals (as in Mauritius or São Tomé and Príncipe). Finally, homosexuality is legal in several Lusophone countries (Mozambique, Cape Verde, Guinea-Bissau), and in the former Belgian colonies (Rwanda and the DRC, despite projects to re-criminalize it).

On Gandhi's homosexuality: See my book *Global Gay* (Champs/Flammarion, 2017, chapter 4, pp. 168–170). The book that sparked controversy in India is Joseph Lelyveld's *Great Soul* (Knopf, 2011).

On Rwanda: I draw primarily on the key book by François Soudan, *L'homme de fer, Conversations avec Paul Kagame, président du Rwanda* (éd. Nouveau Monde, 2015). See also: Anjan Sundaram, “He’s a Brutal Dictator, and One of the West’s Best Friends” (*The New York Times*, April 11, 2023). The Human Rights Watch report cited in the text is entitled: “‘Join Us or Die’ Rwanda’s Extraterritorial Repression” (*HRW*, October 10, 2023).

On the genocide of the Tutsis: I have read the volume edited by Stéphane Audoin-Rouzeau, Annette Becker, Samuel Kuhn and Jean-Philippe Schreiber, *Le choc. Rwanda 1994 : le génocide des Tutsis* (Gallimard, 2024); Jean Hatzfeld, *Une saison de machettes* (Seuil, 2003) and the deeply moving *Récits des marais rwandais* (Seuil, 2014). See also: Boubacar Boris Diop, *Murambi, le livre des ossements* (Zulma, 2020); Beata Umubyeyi Mairesse, *Le convoi* (Flammarion, 2024); Michaela Wrong, *Do Not Disturb, The Story of a Political Murder and an African Regime Gone Bad* (PublicAffairs, 2021); Stéphane Audoin-Rouzeau, *Une initiation, Rwanda (1994-2016)* (Seuil, 2017). One may also consult: Vincent Duclert (ed.), *La France, le Rwanda et le génocide des Tutsi (1990-1994) – Rapport de la Commission de recherche au président de la République* (Armand Colin, 2021), and Vincent Duclert, *La France face au génocide des Tutsi : Le grand scandale de la Ve République* (Tallandier, 2024).

On Pan-Africanism: One can listen again to the speeches of Thomas Sankara and Patrice Lumumba, available on YouTube. See also: Patrice Lumumba, *Africains, levons-nous !* (Seuil, 2010); Thomas Sankara, *Anthologie des discours de Thomas Sankara* (Kontre Kulture, 2013). I’ve also read, to decode this radical current, two influential

Pan-Africanist books: Kwame Nkrumah, *L'Afrique doit s'unir* (Présence Africaine, 2009); Cheikh-Anta Diop, *L'Afrique noire précoloniale* (Présence Africaine, 2000). See also: Howard W. French, *The Second Emancipation*, (Liveright Publishing Corporation, 2025), a book that revisits the rise and the fall of the “pan-Africanist ideal under Kwame Nkrumah.

On the assassination of Patrice Lumumba, see: Stuart Reid, *The Lumumba Plot: The Secret History of the CIA and a Cold War Assassination* (Knopf, 2023) and Nicolas Niarchos, “Did the CIA Kill Patrice Lumumba?” (*New York Times*, October 17, 2023).

On Kemi Seba: See his main books, self-published, including: *Supra-négritude* (Albouraq éd., 2019), *L'Afrique libre ou la mort* (Fiat Lux, 2018), *Black Nihilism* (Fiat Lux, 2019) and *Philosophie de la panafricanité fondamentale* (Fiat Lux, 2023).

On Russian and Wagner Group funding of Kemi Seba, see: “Projet Kemi : quand Evgueni Prigojine finançait Kemi Seba pour servir ses ambitions africaines” (*Jeune Afrique*, March 30, 2023). I also draw on a note by Thierry Vircoulon, Alain Antil and François Giovalucchi, “Thématiques, acteurs et fonctions du discours anti-français en Afrique francophone” (*Études de l'IFRI*, June 2023).

See also: Benjamin Roger, “ ‘Projet Kemi’ : quand Kemi Seba était financé par Evgueni Prigojine et Wagner” (*Jeune Afrique*, March 30, 2023); “Le militant panafricaniste Kémi Séba aurait reçu le soutien financier du patron de Wagner Prigojine” (*Le Figaro*, April 1, 2023); and the note by Thierry Vircoulon, Alain Antil and François Giovalucchi, “Thématiques, acteurs et fonctions du discours anti-français en Afrique francophone” (*Études de l'IFRI*, June 2023).

Several quotations from Kemi Seba and Nathalie Yamb are taken from the same note by Vircoulon, Antil and Giovalucchi (*Études de l'IFRI*, June 2023).

Regarding the debates on the CFA Francs – as there are in fact three distinct ones – I rely primarily on the studies published by the French Development Agency (AFD) and on the work of its chief economist, Thomas Melonio and on the interviews we had together. For a more critical point of view, see: Fanny Pigeaud, Ndongo Samba Sylla, *L'arme invisible de la Françafrique: Une histoire du franc CFA* (La Découverte, 2018).

On Foreign and Russian interferences, from RT to Wagner: see Joshua Yaffa, « To Build a Fire » (*The New Yorker*, February 9, 2026; the article investigates how Russian intelligence services, notably a G.R.U. unit known as 29155 and its offshoot Department of Special Tasks, recruit so-called “single-use agents” – often apolitical, financially vulnerable individuals – to carry out acts of sabotage across Europe while shielding higher levels of the Russian security apparatus through layers of intermediaries drawn from the diaspora or criminal networks; it also cites Polish legal scholar Irena Lipowicz on the typical profile of those targeted for such covert operations). See also: Maxime Audinet, *Un média d'influence d'État, Enquête sur la chaîne russe RT* (INA, 2024) [I draw in my book on certain analyses from the « junior » researcher Maxime Audinet, though with caution, as he at times lacks rigor, particularly in polemical op-eds that are insufficiently scholarly.] The “All Eyes On Wagner” project makes it possible to track the group’s activities using open sources. The documentary *Wagner, l'armée de l'ombre de Poutine* (France Télévisions/CAPA Presse, 2022) is rigorous, as are the investigations by Denis Korotkov, an investigative journalist at *Novaya Gazeta*.

On the number of deaths in Cameroon attributable to France: Karine Ramondy, who coordinated the report on France’s role in Cameroon between 1945 and 1971, speaks of “7,500 fighters killed,” to which must be added “civilians, those who died from their wounds, from their precarious living conditions in the bush, the disappeared, the fugitives who were shot...”. While she considers the toll

to be higher, she does not think it can be known with precision, but suggests that it could amount to “several tens of thousands of deaths.” We are far from the fanciful figures of 500,000 or one million deaths that sometimes circulate, even though this toll is already appalling and highly condemnable (see her interview in *Le Monde*, February 12, 2025).

On the deterioration of the statistical quality of U.S. agencies: See Guillaume de Calignon, “Aux États-Unis, la boîte noire des statistiques économiques sème le doute” (*Les Echos*, December 24, 2025).

On the statistics of international agencies: Studies that lift the veil on the reality of the data are rares. Although it does not deal specifically with statistics, an article by Hubert Escaith revisits macroeconomic data during the *período especial*, one of the worst periods in the country’s history since the war: “Cuba pendant la ‘période spéciale’ : ajustement ou transition ?” (*Cahiers des Amériques latines*, No. 31–32, 1999).

World Bank statistics have been the subject of a well-known critique by Luis R. Martinez, “How Much Should We Trust the Dictator’s GDP Growth Estimates?” (*Journal of Political Economy*, vol. 230, no. 10, October 2022). Luis Martinez uses satellite images of nighttime lights to challenge World Bank statistics. I interviewed, in Geneva, New York, and Paris (but also in New Delhi, Beijing, Algiers, Havana, Kigali, Caracas, Yaoundé, Kigali...), more than fifty leaders, officials, or country ambassadors from the following agencies: UNAIDS, World Bank, Global Fund, UNESCO, UNICEF, Human Rights Council, World Health Organization (WHO), International Labour Organization (ILO), World Trade Organization (WTO), United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), and the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO). My thanks go to the French ambassador Jérôme Bonnafont, Permanent Representative of

France to the United Nations Office at Geneva and to international organizations in Switzerland, for his assistance.

WTO data are provided mainly by UN Comtrade, another United Nations agency that collects them from customs authorities, by UNCTAD, and by the International Trade Centre. These data are often cross-checked with private data, notably those from Trade Data Monitor, and many other sources. The main technical problems—aside from manipulation—that affect the reliability of these statistics include: the informal economy; the fact that export data only very imperfectly reflect the domestic market; export durations and “re-exports,” which distort the figures; significant differences between volume statistics and price statistics (the latter changing frequently); misclassification by customs; the often flawed work of customs administrations (for whom statistics are not the primary task); and the problem of prices, which are global and combine transport costs, insurance, etc., thereby distorting the statistics. Finally, it is important to note that services entirely escape customs, where only goods and merchandise are counted, and therefore appear only in balance-of-payments data. (These points were explained to me by Hubert Escaith of the WTO; Bruno Lerner of the WHO; Dimiter Gantchev and Paolo Lanteri of WIPO; Ying Yan of the WTO; Hamadoun Touré, Secretary-General of the ITU or International Telecommunication Union; and Mondher Mimouni of the International Trade Centre.)

On Indian Statistics: See Modi’s remarks in Mujib Mashal, “The New India: Expanding Influence Abroad, Straining Democracy at Home” (*New York Times*, September 24, 2022). In India, information communicated to me by several researchers from the Agence Française de Développement confirms an “ostentatious manipulation of statistics” (they notably mention GDP figures, even though 70–75% of the economy is informal, life expectancy, and even the population count, whose objective was to “surpass that of China, for political reasons”).

On statistics in Cuba: For this chapter (and my other chapter on Cuba): Octavio Gómez-Dantés, “Cuba’s health system: hardly an example to follow” (*Health Policy and Planning*, Volume 33, Issue 6, July 2018, pp. 760–761); Gilbert Berdine, Vincent Geloso, Benjamin Powell, “Cuban infant mortality and longevity: health care or repression?” (*Health Policy and Planning*, Volume 33, Issue 6, July 2018, pp. 755–757); Katherine Hirschfeld, “Response to ‘Cuban infant mortality and longevity: health care or repression?’” (*Health Policy and Planning*, 33, 2018, pp. 762–763). See also: Roberto M. Gonzalez, “Infant Mortality in Cuba: Myth and Reality” (*Cuban Studies*, No. 43, 2015, pp. 19–39).

The Cuban writer Carlos Moore, initially far-left and pro-Castro, who worked at the Ministry of Communication and then Foreign Affairs under Fidel, expressed astonishment in 1964, in a striking article in the leading journal *Présence Africaine*, at Fidel Castro’s statistical “arrangements” and “outrageously falsified” figures. He was imprisoned for a long time in Cuba before being able to go into exile.) See: Carlos Moore, “Does the Black People Have a Place in the Cuban Revolution?” (*Présence Africaine*, 4th quarter 1964, no. 52, pp. 177–230).

On statistics in China: See Benjamin Mueller, “W.H.O. Accuses China of Hiding Data That May Link Covid’s Origins to Animals” (*New York Times*, March 17, 2023). See also Harold Thibault, “La Chine annonce un PIB en hausse de 5 % malgré les doutes de ses experts” (*Le Monde*, January 17, 2025).

For U.S. criticism of Chinese data, see: WTO, General Council, July 26–27, 2018: “Le modèle économique chinois et ses effets perturbateurs sur le commerce,” communication presented by the United States, 16 pages (dated July 11, 2018, published July 16, 2018, presented July 26–27, 2018).

On the concentration of inequality in China: See Thomas Piketty, Li Yang, and Gabriel Zucman, “Capital Accumulation, Private Property, and Rising Inequality in China, 1978–2015” (*American Economic Review*, 2019, 109(7): 2469–2496).

On UNESCO: In addition to Ernesto Ottone, I interviewed around a dozen ambassadors from the permanent delegations to UNESCO, including Vishal V. Sharma, Ambassador of India; Nasser Hamad Hinzab, Ambassador of Qatar; Mohamad Oemar, Ambassador of Indonesia; Elias Sanbar, Ambassador of Palestine; Mumtaz Zahra Baloch, Ambassador of Pakistan; and several other American, Brazilian, Iranian, and Chinese diplomats.

Another way of challenging UNESCO by China has taken shape through the creation of a counter-agency, aptly named the “Forum of Ancient Civilizations.” Initiated by China in 2017, this forum aims to defend the world’s cultural heritage and cultural diversity, exactly as UNESCO already does. More subtly, it seeks to demonstrate that countries such as Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Armenia, Peru, Bolivia, and of course China possessed a significant cultural heritage even before the existence of European countries and the United States. For the sake of credibility, Beijing associated Greece and Italy with this initiative, in the name of their ancient classical civilizations. This has not prevented China from engaging in a genuine rewriting of archaeological history in order to assert its cultural and intellectual superiority over the rest of the world. Numerous illustrations can be found in *China Daily* and *Global Times*, two official outlets of Chinese propaganda, which have insidiously reported on this initiative.

More pragmatically, the “Forum of Ancient Civilizations” calls for the “restitution to their countries of origin of cultural property illicitly acquired,” a demand that allows it to rally many countries of the “Global South” around this initiative.

On the presence of numerous undercover agents at UNESCO, see Etienne Girard, “L’Unesco, un nid d’espions en plein Paris : ‘C’est une couverture rêvée”

(*L'Express*, December 29, 2025), and the article by Jean-Michel Décugis and Robin Korda, “ ‘C’est une mafia’: en plein Paris, le discret business des ambassadeurs fantômes de l’UNESCO ” (*Le Parisien*, April 17, 2025), which revisits the case of Wafic Saïd, a Syrian billionaire officially serving as ambassador of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines to UNESCO.

On ESG (“Environment, Social and Governance”) statistics: All so-called ESG statistics are also marked by great “opacity,” according to many scientists and experts in environmental issues. Many reasons explain the very poor quality of ESG data: methodological limitations; failure to take indirect impacts into account; company self-reporting without oversight; lack of harmonization and standardization between rating agencies, governments, and companies; sectoral biases; “greenwashing” practices; and the absence of a binding global framework. See, for example, the report published by the MIT Sloan School of Management criticizing the ESG ratings of major agencies: F. Berg, J. F. Kölbl, and R. Rigobon, “Aggregate Confusion: The Divergence of ESG Ratings” (*Review of Finance*, 26/6, pp. 1315–1344, 2022). See also: Nicolas Théry and Michael Bloomberg, “COP27 : les données climatiques doivent être produites et utilisées comme un bien commun” (*Le Monde*, November 6, 2022).

On counterfeiting, piracy, and the ongoing struggle to secure fair copyright remuneration: Yudhijit Bhattacharjee, “The Daring Ruse That Exposed China’s Campaign to Steal American Secrets” (*New York Times*, March 7, 2023). The U.S. government regularly publishes a study on these counterfeit markets. See, for example: Office of the U.S. Trade Representative, “2021 Review of Notorious Markets for Counterfeiting and Piracy,” 2022.

Algeria has indeed created the Office national des droits d’auteurs et des droits voisins (ONDA), a national rights-management organization, but according to more than a dozen officials from rights-collecting societies in France and international organizations in Geneva, this state agency is “an empty shell.”

“Bureaucratic” and “inefficient,” it “collects very little in royalties” and “merely brings foreign currency to the Algerian government.” No one takes seriously “this regimented office that has never been at the service of Algerian artists.”

On « cultural rights » (or « droits culturels »), see: Patrice Meyer-Bisch, *Les droits culturels : projet de déclaration* (Éditions Unesco/Fribourg Universitaires, 1999); Vincent Gilbert, *La partition des cultures : droits culturels et droits de l'Homme* (Presses universitaires de Strasbourg, 2008). See also: Farida Shaheed, *Rapport de la Rapporteuse spéciale dans le domaine des droits culturels* (Conseil des droits de l'Homme, 23rd session, General Assembly, March 14, 2013).

On human rights, it can be noted that when faced with regimes that reject their universality, it is possible to diversify the sources of this universalism by referring to thinkers such as Ali Shariati, or to the Charter of Mandé, dating from the 13th century and developed in Mali. Inscribed on UNESCO's Intangible Cultural Heritage list in 2009, it is regarded as one of the oldest references to fundamental rights. See also Souleymane Bachir Diagne, *Universaliser*, (Albin Michel, 2024).

On the Algerian War and contemporary Algeria, the bibliography is considerable. I mainly used: Alistair Horne, *A Savage War of Peace, 1954–1962* (New York Review Book, 1977); Mohammed Harbi, *Aux origines du FLN. Le populisme révolutionnaire en Algérie* (Christian Bourgois, 1975); and Sylvie Thénault, *Histoire de la guerre d'indépendance algérienne* (Flammarion, 2005). See also: Benjamin Stora, *Histoire de la guerre d'Algérie*, vol. 1: 1830–1954; vol. 2: 1954–1962 (La Découverte, 1991 and 1993); Benjamin Stora, *Histoire de l'Algérie depuis l'indépendance*, vol. 1: 1962–1988 (La Découverte, 2001); Renaud de Rochebrune and Benjamin Stora, *La guerre d'Algérie vue par les Algériens*, volumes 1 and 2 (Denoël, 2017; reissued Gallimard/Folio, 2019).

See also Frédéric Bobin and Catherine Simon, “Mohammed Harbi, historien iconoclaste du nationalisme algérien, est mort à l’âge de 92 ans”, (*Le Monde*, January 2, 2026) and his interview : « En Algérie, la régression culturelle est un désastre » (*Le Monde*, 8 décembre 2019).

On the 1960s: Elaine Mokhtefi, *Alger, capitale de la révolution, De Fanon aux Black Panthers* (La Fabrique, 2018).

On the Hirak: Jean-Pierre Filiu, *Algérie, La nouvelle indépendance* (Points/Seuil, 2019).

On the contemporary period: Xavier Driencourt, *L’énigme algérienne, Chroniques d’un ambassadeur à Alger* (L’Observatoire, 2022). I also watched two key films, albeit pure propaganda: *Festival Panafricain d’Alger* by William Klein (1970); and *Alger, la Mecque des révolutionnaires 1962–1974* by Mohamed Ben Slama (2017). Ferhat Abbas, *Le Manifeste du peuple algérien, suivi du Rappel au peuple algérien* (Orientis Edition, 2013).

On the human rights situation in Algeria, the U.S. State Department report is all the more worrying given that the United States remains one of Algeria’s main supporters: U.S. Department of State, “2023 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Algeria” (*U.S. Department of State*, 2023, online).

On Algerian cultural policy, see Sid Ahmed Baghli, *Aspects de la politique culturelle de l’Algérie*.

On Algeria political « dead end »: The Lebanese intellectual Samir Kassir had already clearly identified the symbolic role of Algeria and its failure, a true emblem of the “Arab impasse”: Samir Kassir, *Considérations sur le malheur arabe* (Actes Sud, 2004, pp. 28–29). See also the lecture given by Maxime Rodinson in Algiers in April 1965, in which he warned Algerians about their problematic confusion between nationalism and Islam. Finally, in the film *Alger, la Mecque des révolutionnaires 1962–*

1974 by Mohamed Ben Slama (2017), one clearly sees that the socialist option is privileged, but that it must be “compatible with our Allah” (minute 15 of the film).

On immigration and emigration data, I mainly rely on the *Atlas des migrations* by Catherine Wihtol de Wenden (Autrement, 2025, 7th edition). One can also refer to the data published by the United Nations’ International Organization for Migration (IOM) as well as those of the UN Population Division. (All these figures, like all statistics, remain estimates, but they are particularly uncertain here given the massive flows of irregular migrants. The data I use come from the *Atlas des migrations*, as well as from the International Organization for Migration, or IOM, a United Nations agency, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, or UNHCR, and the World Values Survey, which I have used extensively in this book.)

On the artistic sphere and its autonomy, I rely mainly, from a theoretical standpoint, on Michael Walzer’s book *Spheres of Justice* (Basic Books, 1983). See also: Michael Walzer, *Pluralisme et démocratie* (Esprit, 1997) and “How to Dissent”, interview with Frédéric Martel (*La Vie des idées / Books & Ideas*, February 4, 2025). For a defense of the autonomy of the artistic sphere, see Jed Perl, *Authority and Freedom* (Knopf, 2022).

Épilogue – L’Occident compliqué
Épilogue – The Complicated West

Paul Valéry’s quotation: The line “*Man staggers between two abysses, for two dangers never cease to threaten the world: order and disorder*” appears in the text *La Crise de l’esprit*. It consists of two letters, written with a view to their translation into English, and published in April and May 1919 by *The Athenaeum* in London, then reprinted in *La Nouvelle Revue Française* and finally in his collected works: *Œuvres de Paul Valéry*, Vol. 4, 1934, reissued in: Paul Valéry, *La Crise de l’Esprit, et autres textes* (FV Éditions, undated).

On the values of the European Union today, I have read with interest several books from which I occasionally draw inspiration in addition of my main “guide”, already mentioned, Tony Judt, *Postwar* (Penguin, 2005) ; Jean-Marc Ferry, *Les Puissances de l’expérience. Essai sur l’identité démocratique de l’Europe* (Cerf, 1991) ; Jürgen Habermas, *La Constitution de l’Europe* (Gallimard, 2012) ; Étienne Balibar, *Europe, crise et fin ?* (Le Bord de l’eau, 2016) ; Luuk van Middelaar, *The Passage to Europe: How a Continent Became a Union* (Yale University Press, 2013) ; Timothy Garton Ash, *Free Speech: Ten Principles for a Connected World* (Yale University Press, 2016) and Sylvain Kahn, *L’Europe: Un Etat qui s’ignore* (CNRS Editions, 2026).

On “de-Westernization”, for a different perspective, see Didier Billion and Christophe Ventura, *Repenser l’Ordre du Monde* (Agone, 2023).

On “Illiberal Democracy”: Fareed Zakaria’s formula appears for the first time in an article in *Foreign Affairs* in November 1997 (vol. 76, no. 6), precisely entitled “The Rise of Illiberal Democracy.”

The book *Le fascisme – État totalitaire* (Éd. Rousseau, 1993) is by the former Bulgarian president Zhelyu Zhelev, in which he shows the dangerous convergence,

in the former communist countries of Europe, between the far right and communism.

The book by Oswald Spengler, *Le Déclin de l'Occident* (1918), set out the well-known eight cultural “organisms”: Egyptian, Babylonian, Chinese, Indian, Mexican (Maya and Aztec), Antique (or Classical, Greek and Roman), Arab, and Western or European (characterised moreover by a “Faustian” attitude), a prefiguration of Samuel Huntington’s ideas. (This two-volume work would go on to nourish anti-democratic thought, as well as critiques of international financial capitalism deemed harmful to national economies; it denounces partisan oligarchies and a press portrayed as subservient to “plutocracy”; it also anticipates the end of ideologies. See : *The Decline of the West, Volume I: Form and Actuality*, ed. C. H. Beck, 1918; *The Decline of the West, Volume II: Perspectives of World-History*, ed. C. H. Beck, 1922).

Donald Trump’s thought: On the critique of Western democracy by neo-reactionary thinkers close to the ideas of Donald Trump, see the reference book I draw on in this “épilogue” and throughout my work: *Les Lumières sombres, Comprendre la pensée néoréactionnaire* by Arnaud Miranda (Gallimard/Le Grand Continent, 2026).

The “Democracy Index” is published every year by *The Economist* group: see the 2024 edition, “*What’s Wrong with Representative Democracy?*” (The Economist Intelligence Unit, 2025).

Stability is the watchword of international relations. I borrow this phrase from Thérèse Delpech in her book *L’Ensaevagement* (Fayard, reed. Pluriel, 2007 ; p. 12).

On the role of intellectuals, I rely mainly on: Jacques Julliard and Michel Winock (eds.), *Dictionnaire des intellectuels français* (Seuil, 1996; in particular the methodological preface which I quote several times); Julien Benda, *La Trahison des clercs* (Grasset,

1927); Raymond Aron, *L'Opium des intellectuels* (Calmann-Lévy, 1955); Jean-Paul Sartre, “Plaidoyer pour les intellectuels” (*Situations VIII*, Gallimard, 1972); Régis Debray, *Le Pouvoir intellectuel en France* (Ramsay, 1979). On the “specific intellectual” advocated by Michel Foucault (as opposed to the “universal intellectual”): see Michel Foucault, “La fonction politique de l’intellectuel” (*Politique Hebdo*, November 29, 1976, reprinted in *Dits et écrits*, vol. III, Gallimard, p. 109, text n°184).

On universalism, to consider another perspective, see: Souleymane Bachir Diagne, *Universaliser* (Albin Michel, 2025). The author, a professor at Columbia University in New York, argues that « no region of the world can, on its own, decree what the universal is: we must forge it together, which requires turning to a philosophy of decentering ».

The quotation attributed to de Gaulle comes from *Mémoires de guerre*, « L’appel », (Bibliothèque de la Pléiade, Gallimard, 2000, p. 145).

On the genocide of the Tutsi in Rwanda, and intellectuals, see Jean Hatzfeld, *Une saison de machettes* (Seuil, 2003) and the deeply moving *Récits des marais rwandais* (Seuil, 2014). See: p. 174.

On the defense of democracy, including within the official Chinese apparatus, see the compelling memoirs of the former prime minister Zhao Ziyang, *Prisoner of the State: The Secret Journal of Premier Zhao Ziyang* (Simon & Schuster, 2010).

On Julius Evola, see: Julius Evola, *Revolt Against the Modern World* (1969; Inner Traditions, 1995). And for a critical commentary to this fascist Italian writer, see: Pierre-André Taguieff, “Julius Evola, penseur de la décadence” (*Politica Hermetica*, n°1, 1987).

On the theory of the “spheres of justice,” I rely mainly on Michael Walzer, *Spheres of Justice* (Basic Books, 1983). See also: Michael Walzer, *Pluralisme et démocratie* (Esprit, 1997) and “How to Dissent,” interview with Frédéric Martel (*La Vie des idées / Books & Ideas*, February 4, 2025). For a defense of the autonomy of the artistic sphere, see Jed Perl, *Authority and Freedom* (Knopf, 2022).

GENERAL AND CROSS-CUTTING SOURCES

In the course of *OCCIDENTS*, I have used a small number of excerpts from my previous books. In most cases, these short excerpts have been identified either in the book itself or in the notes and bibliography above. They consist mainly of: my PhD thesis and book *De la Culture en Amérique ; Mainstream*; a few quotations on Al Jazeera, on Amira Hass, Telesur, and a passage on censorship in China; *Global Gay*: a section on gay life in Havana and Moscow, and a short paragraph on Article 377 of the Indian Penal Code, as well as excerpts from several of my articles in *Slate*: on the “Umbrella Movement,” on Garry Kasparov, on Che Guevara, and on Gaza, among others; in *Le Nouvel Observateur* (including one of my interviews with Steve Bannon), as well as certain excerpts from interviews also broadcast on my program « Soft Power » on France Culture (interviews with Steve Bannon, Alexander Dugin, certain officials from Hamas and Hezbollah, etc.; however, the quotations published here differ generally from the excerpts aired on France Culture). Some publications from my university (ZHdK/ZCCE) have also contributed to my research. I would like to thank my directors for their constant support: Émelie de Jong and Florian Delorme at France Culture (Radio France), Christoph Weckerle at the Zurich University of the Arts (ZHdK), as well as Jean-Marie Colombani of Slate. I also extend my thanks to Eva Nguyen Binh and Jean-Philippe Rouse of the Institut français and to Rémy Rioux of the Agence Française de Développement for their support. It goes without saying that I worked in complete independence and that this book does not commit them in any way.

List of the fifty-two countries where this field investigation was conducted :

Algeria (two stays, including 2022), Argentina (five stays, including 2018, 2019), Australia and Tasmania (2019), Austria (2022, 2024), Belgium (multiple stays),

Bosnia and Herzegovina (2024, 2025), Brazil (nine stays, including 2018, 2019, 2022), Bulgaria (2023), Cameroon (two stays, including 2022), Chile (four stays, including 2019, 2022), China (five stays, including 2023, 2024, 2025, mainly in Beijing, Shanghai, Shenzhen, Guangzhou/Canton, Hangzhou, Macau, Nanjing), Colombia (seven stays, including 2018, 2019, 2022), Croatia (2019), Cuba (seven stays, including 2019, 2020), Czech Republic (two stays), Egypt (seven stays, including 2019, 2023, 2024), Estonia (2021), French Guiana (2022), Germany (multiple stays), Greece (2023), Hong Kong (six stays, including two in 2023), Hungary (2022), India (four stays, including 2025), Indonesia (two stays, including 2024), Israel (eight stays, including 2023, 2025), Italy (multiple stays), Japan (four stays, including 2025), Lebanon (eight stays, including 2018, 2021 and twice in 2025), Mexico (eight stays, including 2019), Morocco (2025), Netherlands (multiple stays), Nicaragua (2022), Poland (four stays, including 2018, 2019, 2025), Portugal (multiple stays), Romania (numerous stays, including 2023, 2025), Russia (three stays), Rwanda (2023), Saudi Arabia (two stays, including 2018), Singapore (two stays, including 2024), Slovakia (2024), South Africa (two stays, including 2023), Spain (multiple stays), Sweden (2023), Switzerland (multiple stays), Taiwan (two stays, including 2023), Tunisia (eight stays, including 2018, 2020, 2022, 2024), Turkey (two stays, including 2023), Ukraine (2025), United Arab Emirates (three stays, including 2022 in Dubai and Abu Dhabi), United Kingdom (multiple stays), United States (multiple stays, in more than one hundred cities and 35 states), Venezuela (two stays, including 2022), Vietnam (two stays, including 2025), West Bank (seven stays, including 2022, 2023, 2025).

I also traveled several times to Russia – before the war in Ukraine – twice to Gaza Strip – before October 7, 2023 – as well as to Iran, but I was unable to return to these countries during the course of this investigation; my interviews there are therefore earlier or were conducted abroad.

I had also traveled to about a dozen other countries – Bolivia, Canada, South Korea, Denmark, Ecuador, Finland, Jordan, Kenya, Peru, Qatar, Syria, Thailand,

and Uruguay – prior to the start of this investigation, and these experiences occasionally inform it as well.

Finally, for the chapter on the fall of communism, I revisited the notes from my stays in the “Eastern Bloc” countries between 1989 and 1994, when I was living there, particularly in Romania, but also in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Hungary, Moldova, the Czech Republic, Russia, Serbia, Slovenia, Slovakia, and Ukraine.

An International Network of “Researchers” : An investigation of this kind could never have been conducted alone. One of the key challenges for scholars working on international issues lies in their ability to operate across different fields and languages. Most conduct their research primarily in English – which limits certain works and their bibliographies. Because I wanted, in this book, to hear the arguments of those who do not think as we do, I assembled a team of “researchers” who assisted me in regions I knew less well and in languages I did not speak.

In total, around twenty researchers from the countries concerned – scholars, translators, fixers – helped, supported, translated for me, and enabled me to work, beyond French, English, and Spanish, in about a dozen other languages. My team included: Cherif Ayman, Abbas Saad, Wafic Hawari, and Hady el-Hady for the Arab countries; Denis Kataev, Dilan Radjib, and Roni Lekar for the Russian worlds; Cynthia Jiayi Hu, Mengyao Yang et Bram Wang for China (even if their analyses often diverge from my own); Faizal Khan in India; Puma Shen in Taiwan; Pham Tran Dinh, Sean Doan, and Anh Nguyen in Vietnam; Rodrigo de Lemos in Brazil; Benny and Irit Ziffer in Israel; Damla Kellecioglu in Turkey; Jospin Junior Mouchigam Mouchili in Cameroon and Francophone Africa; Erwin Cameron in South Africa; and finally Emmanuel Neisa, who accompanied me during my stays in Colombia and Cuba. (Four other researchers, whose names I cannot disclose here, also assisted me in Algeria, China, Venezuela, and Iran.)

Archives. Finally, I was able to consult several archival collections, notably the papers on Fidel Castro and Che Guevara at the Fondazione Giangiacomo Feltrinelli in Milan, certain records of the Ford Foundation in New York, and confidential documents archived in the presidential libraries of Lyndon B. Johnson (in Austin, Texas), Ronald Reagan (in Simi Valley, California), John F. Kennedy (in Boston), and Jimmy Carter (in Atlanta). I also benefited from the collections of Swiss university libraries, invaluable holdings from which I have drawn extensively.

Statistical Sources. Although the research method of this book is primarily “qualitative,” I have also relied on certain “quantitative” sources. The principal statistical source is the World Values Survey, a large-scale international survey documenting the evolution of beliefs, norms, and values worldwide through nationally representative samples. Its seventh wave, conducted between 2017 and 2022, covers approximately 65 countries and compiles more than 300 standardized indicators. These data provide valuable insight into the cultural, social, and political dynamics shaping the contemporary world. (My chapters on Russia, the Arab world, Israel, and Latin America, as well as the introduction and conclusion of this book – and its central theme – regularly draw on this seventh wave of the WVS.)

I also rely on numerous datasets produced by the United Nations and its specialized agencies (WHO, WTO, IMF, ITU, UNESCO, WIPO, World Bank, Human Rights Council, etc.), although, as I explain in Chapter 8, I question their relevance and offer a radical critique of them.

Media Sources. In writing *Occidents*, I regularly followed several anti-Western media outlets, as well as the websites that analyze and decode them – all primary sources for this book: Global Times, Guancha, Caixin Global, Xinhua, Interpret: China, Decoding Chinese Politics, and especially Reading the China Dream for China; South China Morning Post for Hong Kong; Rossiya 1, Channel One Russia,

and RT for Russia; Al Jazeera, Al Mayadeen, Al Akhbar, and Mada Masr for the Middle East; Echorouk and El Watan for Algeria; Africa Is a Country and Africa Media TV for Africa; Shargh for Iran; La Gaceta de la Iberosfera for the far right in Latin America and Telesur for the radical left; Generación Y for Cuba; and Haaretz for Israel. (Some of these outlets, not accessible in French, English, or Spanish, were monitored by my team.)

One of my researchers also analyzed Arabic-language interventions and social media posts by two pro-Hezbollah figures, Ghassan Ben Jeddou and Pierre Abi Saab. More than 600 of their posts were reviewed, translated, and analyzed. In Africa, my researcher Jospin Junior Mouchigam Mouchili conducted a monthly data collection on Francophobic and anti-Western sentiment, focusing on social media (I draw on his 450 pages of data).

Research was also carried out, under my academic supervision, by the Hong Kong artist and pro-democracy researcher Justin Wong on approximately 7,000 images from the 2019 “Anti-Extradition Law Amendment Bill” mobilizations in Hong Kong; I use the findings of this study.

Acknowledgments. The investigation conducted for *Occidents* was carried out in complete independence and received no funding other than that provided by the author and his publisher. The autonomy of both the scholar and the journalist seems to me a sine qua non condition. In a limited number of cases, and always on a voluntary basis, I was invited to participate in conferences or to give lectures related to my previous books, at the initiative of my foreign publishers, universities – including my own, Zurich University of the Arts – French embassy cultural services, the Institut français, the Agence Française de Développement, or in connection with France Culture. I would like here to thank Émelie de Jong, Florian Delorme, Christoph Weckerle, Eva Nguyen Binh, Jean-Philippe Rousse, and Rémy Rioux.

For their careful proofreading and indispensable fact-checking, I owe an immense debt to all those who generously gave their time: Roland Barbar, Paul Charon, Yves Hamant, Denis Kataev, David Lavaud, Barnabé Louche, Nathan Marcel-Millet, Emmanuel Neisa, David Pata, Jean-Marie Paugam, Dilan Radjib, and the ambassadors Jacques Pellet, Christian Lechervy, and especially Pierre Vimont.

This book is edited by Jean-Luc Barré, who followed its long gestation and publication with rare passion and immense kindness. Marie-Laure Defretin, Clément Drouin, and Benita Edzard encouraged me throughout this project, supporting it with enthusiasm.

For further information, see the website occidents.fr ; updates will also be published under the hashtag #occidents on Instagram @martelfrederic, on X @martelf, and on the author's LinkedIn page @martelfrederic.

“Researchers” contributions

Note: I rely on a team of around twenty “researchers” who supported this project in the field. Here are excerpts from some of their memo or analysis. As these texts were neither researched nor written by me, responsibility for their content rests with their respective authors and cannot be attributed to the author of this book.

Worksheet No. 1 on Solzhenitsyn and Putin by *Dilan Radjib*

Solzhenitsyn and Putin

I. Some Facts

On April 28, 2006, **Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn** gave an interview to *Moskovskije Novosti* (“Moscow News”). It was entitled: *The Preservation of the People: The Highest State Objective*. The first question asked him how he viewed the Putin era in comparison with the Yeltsin period. His response: “Under Putin, reverse efforts to save the bankrupt state began, though not immediately. It is true that some of these attempts were rather cosmetic at first, but they then began to manifest themselves more clearly. Foreign policy, which takes into account our situation and our capabilities, is being conducted in a reasonable and increasingly farsighted manner. But under the weight of the legacy left by his predecessors, much in Russia has not yet emerged from degradation. The general condition of life in our country remains difficult and disordered.”

On May 10, 2006, **Vladimir Putin** publicly referred to Solzhenitsyn during his address to the Federal Assembly (the Russian equivalent of the State of the Union). While discussing Russia’s demographic problems, he called on Russian officials to set aside their political ambitions and focus on, “as Solzhenitsyn so rightly emphasized, the preservation of the people.”

A year later, on June 12, 2007, he awarded Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn the State Prize of the Russian Federation for his achievements in the humanitarian field. Unable to attend for health reasons, Solzhenitsyn received the prize through his wife; Putin then went directly to Solzhenitsyn’s apartment to meet him personally.

- The official press release explained that Putin and Solzhenitsyn discussed the situation in Russia and its future. Putin declared: “You continue your work today, you never waver in your convictions, and you live in accordance with them.”
- The same communiqué specified that, according to Putin, Solzhenitsyn had asked him how much time the President devoted to domestic versus foreign policy and was surprised to hear that 70% of his time was devoted to domestic policy and 30% to foreign affairs.
- The statement also emphasized that Putin indicated that certain decisions taken today correspond to Solzhenitsyn’s writings.
- Solzhenitsyn was reportedly very satisfied that municipalities and local authorities now had more power than before, which he had always advocated.

On August 3, 2008, Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn died. Numerous political figures attended his funeral, including the then Prime Minister, Vladimir Putin. An article in *Kommersant* noted that he had a lengthy conversation with **Natalia Solzhenitsyn**, the writer’s widow, without disclosing the content of their discussion.

On December 11, 2018, the 100th anniversary of Solzhenitsyn’s birth, Vladimir Putin inaugurated a monument in his honor—a statue in Moscow. In his speech, he emphasized Solzhenitsyn’s

unconditional love for his homeland, even in exile, and his faithful attachment to his principles—a true patriot of Russia.

On December 23, 2021, during his annual press conference, Putin once again cited Solzhenitsyn—just as he had in 2006—on the issue of demographic problems.

On October 27, 2022, at the Valdai Discussion Club forum, Putin quoted Solzhenitsyn and his famous Harvard speech, in which, according to Putin, the writer stressed that “the West is characterized by a syndrome of superiority.” That was true in 1978, he said, and it remains true today.

On September 12, 2023, during a Q&A session at the Eastern Economic Forum, a question concerned a quotation from Solzhenitsyn claiming that Western scholars disdain Russia’s thousand-year history and its Eastern Christian past. Putin responded:

“I would like to say that my exchanges with Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn convinced me that he was a true patriot of Russia. He was to some extent a nationalist in the good sense of the word, in the civilized sense of the term. Therefore, the fact that he said such things does not surprise me.”

On August 2, 2024, Putin personally contacted Solzhenitsyn’s widow to wish her a happy birthday and to thank her for her work in preserving and disseminating her late husband’s cultural legacy.

II. Putin and Solzhenitsyn: What Relationship?

In the early 2000s, Russia was emerging from the Soviet straitjacket, and the crimes committed by the USSR were increasingly being denounced. Solzhenitsyn had returned in 1994, traveled across the country, received awards, and been appointed to the Academy of Sciences. As Russia entered a new era—that of democracy, in opposition to the Soviet period—society needed figures like him to embody this transition.

When Putin came to power in 2000, he did so with promises of democracy and liberalization. Whatever his personal convictions, he was initially obliged to remain consistent and to construct a Russian society in opposition to the Soviet one. For this reason, Putin consistently spoke highly of Solzhenitsyn, awarded him a prize, and even visited him personally at his apartment.

But this was also because the Solzhenitsyn of the 2000s appears ideologically much closer to Putin. In one of the rare interviews, he gave to *Moskovskije Novosti*, shortly before receiving the State Prize in 2007, he spoke of the decadence of the Western democratic system (though this was not new), of NATO’s aggressiveness (which he claimed was attempting to encircle Russia), and of the decline of Christian civilization.

These are precisely the ideas Putin has sought to cultivate and deploy. Weakened by age and then deceased in 2008, Solzhenitsyn left behind a substantial legacy of writings and speeches that can be instrumentalized in various ways. He denounced systems of mass repression in *The Gulag Archipelago* yet criticized the West in his 1978 Harvard speech. It is to this Solzhenitsyn that Putin chooses to pay tribute—the one to whom he erects monuments and offers posthumous praise.

From his Munich speech in 2007 onward, and especially after his return to the Kremlin in 2012, Putin significantly consolidated his power, relying on two instruments borrowed from Solzhenitsyn:

1. The security threat emanating from the West.
2. The remedy to that threat: the preservation of the people—a form of nationalism.

By asserting our own civilizational model, we are equipped to resist the model allegedly imposed upon us from outside.

Therefore, Putin’s esteem for Solzhenitsyn is not surprising: it is selective.

Dugin's activities in the 80s

Dugin, Yuri Mamleev, Yevgeny Golovin, and the “Black Order of the SS”

Yuri Mamleev (1931–2015) was a Russian writer and philosopher, a central figure of Moscow's mystical avant-garde, known for exploring extreme states of consciousness and supernatural realities in his works. After years of censorship in the USSR, he emigrated to the United States and later settled in Paris, while continuing to influence young Russian intellectuals, including **Alexander Dugin**. Mamleev also taught Indian philosophy and led an esoteric circle blending literature, magic, and spiritual traditions.

This circle, known as the “Yuzhinsky Club” (named after the street of Mamleev's Moscow apartment), was a Moscow-based literary and esoteric group without a fixed philosophical program, bringing together participants fascinated by mysticism, esotericism, and counterculture. Under Mamleev's direction—and later, after his exile, under Golovin and Dugin—it disseminated European doctrines, including ideas linked to fascism and esoteric neo-Nazism.

The young Dugin joined this club in the early 1980s. He reflects on his relationship with Mamleev in a long article devoted to him in the press of the Izborsk Club. For Dugin, Mamleev represents a unique metaphysical figure, capable of radically transforming the worldview of those who read him, like a shamanic initiation. He distinguishes between two “Mamleevs”: the first, legendary and émigré, whose works and narratives exert a shocking and almost toxic effect on the mind; the second, returned from exile, more accessible but less metaphysically penetrating. For Dugin, Mamleev embodies an experience of existential revelation and chaos, where literature becomes a vehicle of extreme metaphysics. He emphasizes the richness, depth, and paradox of Mamleev's work, which he considers timeless and fundamentally unclassifiable. Mamleev is perceived as a witness to the unimaginable, a spirit manifesting what should not exist yet nevertheless does.

For Dugin, Mamleev had a radical and foundational impact: he “metaphysically transformed” him, “turned him inside out,” profoundly altering his vision of the world, of being, and of culture. Reading his texts and engaging with the mythology surrounding him functioned as an initiation, confronting him with chaos, the absolute, and extreme realities, leaving a lasting imprint on his thought, philosophical approach, and political imagination. Mamleev thus became, for Dugin, the metaphysical source structuring his vision of Russia and the world.

Within the Yuzhinsky Circle, after Mamleev's exile in 1974, a parallel movement emerged, nicknamed the “Black Order of the SS,” centered around **Yevgeny Golovin**, a close associate of Mamleev, in which Dugin also participated. This group blended mysticism, esotericism, and an extreme racial vision, drawing inspiration from European occult doctrines—particularly those of **Julius Evola** and **René Guénon**, who advocated a spiritual hierarchy and an initiated elite.

The “Black Order” aimed to bring about, through ritual and symbolic practices, both a physical and metaphysical transformation of its members, where ideology and spiritual experience merged. References to Nazi symbols or salutes were partly acts of provocation and critiques of the Soviet order, but they also reflected a racialized and elitist imaginary inherited from fascist occultism. For Dugin, this group represented both a model of initiatory discipline and an intellectual matrix, combining spiritual radicalism with an extreme political vision.

It was also in this context that Dugin released his only musical album in 1986, *Blood Libel*—a symbolic reference to the ambient antisemitism and mysticism of these groups.

During this period, according to his biography on the Izborsk Club website, Dugin reportedly worked on translations of works by René Guénon and Julius Evola.

His view of the USSR changed drastically in 1991, at the time of its collapse. According to him, during the August 1991 putsch, he thought to himself:

“I understood that, for the first time since the existence of the Soviet Union, at that very moment when it was dying, I loved it.”

This helps explain his subsequent adherence to the party of **Eduard Limonov**, the National Bolshevik Party.

Vladimir Medinsky

- Graduated from MGIMO University in 1994, specializing in International Relations
- 1999, PhD thesis: “The Theoretical and Methodological Problems of Forming the Strategy of Russia’s Foreign Policy Activities in the Conditions of the Development of the Global Information Space”
- Taught at MGIMO from 1994 onward
- 1999/2000: worked for the party *Fatherland – All Russia*, the predecessor of United Russia, in charge of regional press and party publicity
- 2000–2002: parliamentary aide
- 2002–2004: worked for United Russia in Moscow
- 2004–2011: Deputy of the State Duma
- 2012–2020: Minister of Culture
- Since 2020: adviser to Vladimir Putin

“The very existence of Russia is at stake.” — Vladimir Medinsky, March 2022, one month after the outbreak of the war in Ukraine

The appointment of Vladimir Medinsky as Minister of Culture in 2012, the same year Vladimir Putin was re-elected, marked a new phase in the Russian regime. The relative détente of the Medvedev era was over; Russia returned to the international stage more assertively than ever. In 2013, it intervened in Ukraine and annexed Crimea in 2014, followed by the full-scale war in Ukraine in 2022.

The message conveyed by Medinsky in his theses, works, and writings is simple: Russia has a unique place in the world not because of its excellence (great culture, great nation, etc.) but simply by virtue of being Russian.

In his 2011 book *The War*, he clearly illustrates this worldview:

“Individuals [of the same nation] always protect one another — this is genetically ingrained.”

The dimension of collective solidarity with one’s own people—whether right or wrong—is central here. From this flows the primacy of Russia and Russian interests, whatever the cost.

Medinsky pursued this reasoning in his academic work, notably his 2011 dissertation entitled “Problems of Objectivity in the Coverage of Russian History of the Second Half of the 15th–17th Centuries.” The thesis sparked major controversy within the academic community, as did his books, leading to an open letter signed by several members of the Russian Academy of Sciences denouncing his work as unscientific.

A figure embodying a highly conservative vision of Russia, Medinsky was chosen by Putin as Minister of Culture in 2012. Reflecting Putin’s return to power and the authoritarian turn of that year, Medinsky was tasked with implementing this shift at the cultural level.

Main Actions as Minister of Culture

- From 2012 onward, he targeted Russian cinema (which depends heavily on state subsidies). He declared that the state should fund only what serves state interests. The state should no longer finance directors’ “spiritual torments” (*dukhovnye terzaniya*), but instead films glorifying Russia. He remarked that Russians wanted films about Borodino (the Napoleonic Wars), not introspective “spiritual quests.”
- Russian cinema consequently shifted toward films celebrating Russian exploits (e.g., Sochi Olympics).
- He created a commission within the Ministry to review the content of historical films (insisting this was NOT censorship).

- In 2014, Putin approved the Ministry of Culture’s plan titled “Foundations of State Cultural Policy.” According to the document, the goal was “the formation of a harmoniously developed personality and the strengthening of the unity of Russian society through cultural and human development.”
- The same year, numerous film festivals were banned without explanation.
- In 2016, the Ministry commissioned a study on “de-Russification and Russophobia.”

His actions reveal a clear objective: to instill patriotism and the glorification of Russia through culture, while censoring works that contradict the official narrative. It was in this context that the film *The Death of Stalin* was banned in Russia.

After completing his term as Minister, he was transferred to the Kremlin, serving directly under Vladimir Putin with an expanded portfolio. Frequently present in the media, he regularly positions himself as a defender of Russia—like Putin or Lavrov—always in opposition to the West.

Concrete Example (2021 School Lesson)

In 2021, at the start of the school year, Medinsky delivered a history lesson to Russian students. Excerpts illustrate his view of history, particularly regarding the West:

- On the European Day of Remembrance (August 23, marking the Molotov–Ribbentrop Pact), he argued that it equates Stalinism and Nazism, which he finds intolerable. He framed it as part of a broader Western attempt to revise WWII history by shifting the start date from September 1, 1939 (invasion of Poland) to August 23.
- He claimed that the West seeks to portray the Stalinist USSR as co-responsible for the war while omitting that much of Europe allegedly supported Hitler.
- He asserted that Russian historians are more critical of their own history than Western historians, who supposedly avoid difficult aspects of their past (e.g., Native Americans in U.S. historiography).

Medinsky does not hesitate to employ distortions serving his anti-Western narrative. Today, as a presidential adviser, his influence is even greater.

The latest example concerns 11th-grade students, whose history textbook was completely revised under his supervision. The revisions especially concerned the USSR and post-1991 Russia. A chapter on the “Special Military Operation” was added.

The portrayal of history is striking: a highly benevolent depiction of the Soviet period, emphasizing victory in the bloodiest war, martyrdom for the free world, and rapid recovery. The Cold War is presented as “initiated by the United States and its allies.” The manual simplifies the world: the USSR sought good but was obstructed by the West.

Regarding Ukraine, the narrative states that the West seeks to weaken and subjugate Russia, investing massively in Ukraine to create an “anti-Russia.” Russia had no choice but to launch the Special Military Operation, allegedly avoiding civilian targets—unlike Ukraine. The rhetoric increasingly resembles official Russian TV talk shows.

Excerpt:

“Facing our soldiers stands an army indoctrinated, equipped, and trained by NATO and reinforced by mercenaries and foreign instructors. Our soldiers, strictly ordered not to bomb civilian districts, have faced since the beginning of the Special Military Operation a tactic never before used by NATO. The Ukrainian Armed Forces do not defend their population by shifting the front away from urban areas; on the contrary, they take positions among civilian neighborhoods and refuse to evacuate civilians, using them as human shields.”

This textbook reflects Medinsky’s vision of history and international relations. Its nationwide dissemination across all Russian schools is deeply concerning.

Role in the Ukraine War

Since 2022, the war in Ukraine has been central to Medinsky’s role. He headed the Russian delegation during the first negotiations between Russia and Ukraine.

He argued that the West is pushing Russia toward the destruction of its political system and country. According to him, current events are the result of 15 years of “alternative brainwashing history” in Ukraine, in which “Russia has always been the enemy.”

Sending such a figure to lead negotiations signaled Putin’s disdain toward the talks, Ukraine, and the West. Even before negotiations began, Russian opposition media and Ukrainian outlets criticized the choice given Medinsky’s worldview.

Publications

Between 2008 and 2010, he published a 13-volume series titled *Myths About Russia*.

Summary of ideas: The books aim to deconstruct what he perceives as misunderstandings or lies about Russian history, often blaming Western bias. He presents Russia patriotically, rehabilitating controversial episodes and emphasizing its historical greatness. Medinsky argues that the West has demonized Russia out of fear or misunderstanding and seeks to revalorize Russian historical figures while framing Russia’s actions as matters of survival and defense.

Alexander Prokhanov

Speaking about **Vladimir Putin** in 2009, he stated:

“There are in fact three Putins. The first is a creature of Yeltsin and existed until the end of the Second Chechen War. Then there is the second Putin, the one who decisively halted Russia’s collapse by crushing separatism in the Caucasus. That Putin changed Russia’s internal configuration by abolishing the concept of the nation-state dominated by the Russian nation—a concept that, moreover, was the reason for the collapse of the USSR. Putin once again transformed Russia into an empire or quasi-empire. Then the third Putin created a Russian national capital (in the sense of cultural capital). Before that, there existed only Caucasian, Azerbaijani, Jewish cultural capitals, and so on. Finally, this Putin removed the oligarchs from power and placed the concept of the country’s economic power behind the concept of state power.”

These remarks, drawn from a conversation with **Alexei Venediktov** on **Ekho Moskvy**, capture Prokhanov’s view of Russia and Putinism well. Putin is portrayed as a providential figure, the man who managed to preserve Russia and consolidate it.

It should be noted that Prokhanov was not always a supporter of Putin. Already after the collapse of the USSR and **Boris Yeltsin**’s rise to power in 1993, he harshly criticized Yeltsin, accusing him of staging a coup. This led to the banning of his newspaper *Den’* (“Day”). The newsroom was violently raided, and journalists were beaten by the police. In 1996, he supported **Gennady Zyuganov** against Yeltsin, and in 2022 he published the novel *Mister Geksogen*, in which he claims that the series of bombings in 1999 was intended to install Putin in power. His view of Putin has therefore evolved over time and has become very indulgent today.

Alexander Prokhanov, the Journalist

In 1993, he founded the daily newspaper *Zavtra* (“Tomorrow”), the successor to *Den’*. Broadly speaking, the tone of both newspapers is similar and reflects the worldview of their founder, who serves as editor-in-chief. *Den’* defended the idea of Russian imperialism in the Eurasian space; *Zavtra* today remains on the same editorial line.

Example (front-page article): https://zavtra.ru/blogs/russkaya_vsemirnost

Summary: the article, written by Alexander Prokhanov, is entitled “Russian Universality.” From the first sentence, he argues that throughout history Russia has endured all the forces of darkness directed against it, only to transform them into light. Russia is portrayed as the soul of the world, assigned a particular role in building a harmonious world. He emphasizes Russia’s imperial nature, bringing together peoples of every kind and language. Russia “hears” all peoples and their suffering worldwide because it understands them better than anyone. Russia offers the world its resources—oil, gas, forests—and has offered its culture through its great writers. In short, Prokhanov delivers a genuine ode to Russia as a “haven of peace amid fires and explosions.”

View of the West

Prokhanov argues that Russia’s future does not lie in cooperation with the West; worse, it necessarily lies in confrontation with it: “you cannot surpass the West by being the West.” For him, the fundamental problem of present-day Russia is the presence of a liberal elite that corrodes the country and imposes values that are not its own. It is crucial, he argues, for Russia to create a new elite—a patriotic elite.

In 1991, he claims, the people “sold the Motherland” to the West, sold its values and its strength; the people must recover all lost wealth by creating a new ideology distinct from the liberal ideology promoted by the West. The regions of Donbas are, in his view, being sacrificed precisely for the

restoration of this empire; this is the result of a Western strategy that has sown discord between Ukraine and Russia, which are, de facto, the same people. In line with his imperial vision, he defends the idea of a “Russian World” extending across the entire space of the former USSR and sharply distinct from the Western world.

The Izborsk Club

A think tank founded by Prokhanov in September 2012, aligned with his ideological orientation. It is relatively popular in circles of power: it organizes meetings across Russia and counts among its participants governors and ministers, such as **Vladimir Medinsky**.

At its creation, the Izborsk Club announced a number of objectives, such as:

- producing and presenting analytical reports for the authorities and society, aimed at shaping a renewed and patriotic public policy across all spheres of national life;
- traveling to Russian regions and maintaining constant interaction with the country’s intellectual elite beyond the “capital’s experts,” by establishing branches in all federal districts of the Russian Federation;
- making itself heard in Russian media—occupying media space, deemed necessary in the context of an objective moral decline for which the “liberal” community is held responsible, and which allegedly controls the main Russian media;
- contributing to the formation of a politico-ideological coalition of patriots and statesmen, forming an “imperial front” against manipulation of Russian politics by foreign centers of influence and an internal “fifth column.”

The club’s members at its inception were mostly figures from the radical opposition to Yeltsin in the 1990s who later found in Putin new hope for a resurgence of “Russian-style” imperialism. Putin’s foreign-policy rhetoric today is strongly influenced by these ideas, expressed within the club from the early 2010s onward.

- Members such as **V. Shurygin** or **S. Sultanov** worked with Prokhanov from 1991 in his newspaper, writing polemical articles against Yeltsin.
- The historian **A. Fursov** wrote as early as the 1990s about the “betrayal” of Soviet elites at the end of the USSR.
- Others, such as **Nikolai Starikov**, became known later. Presenting himself as a historian, he develops theories about Western influence on Russia. In his view, the revolutions of the early 20th century in Russia had NOTHING to do with Russian society’s internal state, but were the result of Western conspiracies (proof, he claims: communism is an imported ideology). From this he concludes that Russia’s sworn enemies are the Anglo-Saxon countries (first the UK, then the US). All opposition figures in Russia are said to come from the intelligence services of these Anglo-Saxon countries.

Starikov’s discourse has, over time, become firmly embedded in the Russian political-media landscape: the over-victimization of Russia vis-à-vis the West and the constant use of the term “Anglo-Saxons,” which now appears repeatedly in Putin’s rhetoric.

In 2013, the Izborsk Club set out its vision of Russia and the world in a report titled *Strategy of the Great Leap*—a detailed assessment of the state of Russia and the world, and how the country should act in order to develop.

Excerpt:

“Russia must make use of the ongoing crises, the change of era, and the change of rules in the world. This field of possibilities [...] must enable the saving great leap. [...] De facto, the revolution must be carried out from above; otherwise, a new revolution from below will occur, which foreign powers would exploit—powers that have already destroyed Tsarist Russia and then Soviet Russia. [...] Paradoxically, the current global crisis gives Russia a unique chance not only for its survival, but for its victory and its transformation into what it has always been over the millennia: historical Russia.”

The report also contains the following sentence: “This mobilization project is necessary for Russia for the following reasons: the high probability of a major war in the next 7–10 years [...]”

Russian media generally do not cover the Izborsk Club’s activities as such, and its meetings do not appear to be public (the most recent one mentioned dates to 2023, accompanied by a press release). The Izborsk Club’s website serves as a platform for members to publish major articles and op-eds presenting their ideas. Those same members then appear on channels such as Russia 1, Channel One, and others, in the well-known talk shows.

Intellectual Figures Mentioned

Vladislav Surkov

If Prokhanov and the Izborsk Club’s approach to the West is rooted in confrontation, it stands at the opposite pole from Surkov’s. Since the onset of the Ukrainian crisis in 2013, the Club’s line has been consistent: Russia is waging an ideological battle against the West, centered on defending traditional values, worldviews, and criteria of success, with Ukraine as a battlefield in that confrontation.

By contrast, Surkov has long favored rapprochement: for him, Russia fully belongs to European civilization, and post-communist society would inevitably converge toward the Western model. This divergence triggered fierce attacks from Izborsk Club members. Dugin, for example, published pieces with unmistakable titles such as “Surkov — Absolute Evil” and “Surkov Betrays the Russian Spring.” Others went so far as to call him a threat: “Surkov Is More Dangerous than Berezovsky,” “Surkov and His Network of Agents.”

The most recent article illustrates this delegitimization strategy: under the guise of an intellectual comparison between Surkov (2007) and Kharichev (2025), it effectively portrays Surkov as the ideologue of a failed, Westernizing project doomed to collapse.

Key points in that article:

1. Binary opposition: the “Westernizer” versus the “guardian of values.”
2. Political and strategic critique: Surkov allegedly underestimated military threats and mocked warnings about the West.
3. Ridicule and personal discredit: Surkov cast as outdated and disconnected, contrasted with Kharichev’s alleged seriousness and conceptual richness.

Vladimir Medinsky

A long-standing friend of the Izborsk Club, appreciated by its members. Dugin’s recent article following this summer’s Istanbul negotiations between Russia and Ukraine—where Medinsky headed the Russian delegation—is revealing. The text rehabilitates Medinsky as a central and legitimate figure of the Russian patriotic camp. Instead of being portrayed as the man of a failed compromise after the 2022 Istanbul talks, he is presented as someone who has always maintained a firm, intransigent line, summed up in the idea that “the Motherland is not negotiable.”

Medinsky is elevated as an ideological embodiment of the war. The text explicitly compares him to a new version of “General Armageddon” (the nickname given to General Surovikin), transposed here into the intellectual register. His status as a historian is framed as an advantage: understanding and writing Russia’s history would allow him to guide the country to victory. This recasts him as an ideological strategist and symbol of national firmness.

In this narrative, his mission in negotiations is already complete: he reassured patriots, disappointed liberals hoping for compromise, and asserted a hard line leaving no ambiguity. He could, the text suggests, even step aside for future rounds, his symbolic role having been fully fulfilled.

This promotion of Medinsky fits into a broader rhetoric of war as inevitable: talks with Kyiv are deemed “useless,” Europe is described as preparing for direct confrontation with Russia, and Dugin calls for transforming the country into a true “war state.” Medinsky’s figure is used to legitimize further hardening: after him, the only possible next step would be Ukraine’s unconditional capitulation, potentially signed by Putin himself.

Zakhar Prilepin

A permanent member of the Izborsk Club, publishing numerous articles in which he comments on ongoing international events.

Vladimir Solovyov

The journalist himself does not appear to participate directly in the Izborsk Club; nevertheless, many of the club's members are regularly invited onto his Russian TV programs, including Dugin, Mikhail Leontiev, Zakhar Prilepin, Nikolai Starikov, Vladislav Shurygin, and others. All contribute in chorus to state-determined propaganda.

Eduard Limonov

Eduard Limonov is a figure widely appreciated by Izborsk Club members. His death in 2020 prompted many tributes, notably from Prokhanov and Dugin. Brief summary of Prokhanov's tribute:

Limonov appears as a figure inseparable from his multiple identities—writer, man, and political actor. These dimensions form a single whole, constantly recomposed, in which literary creativity dominates and continually seeks renewal. He is portrayed as an artist with overflowing creative power, rapidly exhausting each theme he takes up. Writing is not merely a means of expression but a vital necessity: he must constantly find new situations and settings through which to narrate himself and feed his inspiration.

Accordingly, he continually manufactured environments that allowed him to stage himself. Each period of his life can be read as a succession of “frames”: first exile and the confrontation with Russia observed from abroad; then immersion in politics and the creation of a party; then prison, which provided a new entourage and dramatic setting to fuel his work. Each time, he built a world—artificial or real—that became the mirror of his writing.

When politics became his stage, he placed himself in an “aquarium,” observing himself as activist and movement leader. But as this posture soon reached its limits, he sought to go further: from revolutionary rhetoric, he attempted to move to action by trying to stir up the Russian minority in Kazakhstan. The failure of this project, followed by imprisonment, paradoxically offered a powerful new frame—the political prisoner—which revived his inspiration.

Later, he tried to reinvent himself through the image of father and family man, but this “domestic staging” also ran out of steam. He then returned to the public arena, seeking to rekindle the revolutionary flame during the Moscow protests of 2011. Once again, his hopes were dashed: the protest movement escaped his control and was embodied by other figures such as Boris Nemtsov. For him, this was a profound wound, experienced as the theft of “his” revolution.

The subsequent, repetitive, and increasingly futile demonstrations at Triumfalnaya Square marked another exhaustion of this self-staging device. In the end, according to the author, Limonov could no longer invent a frame more intense, spectacular, or totalizing than his own death.

Ivan Ilyin

Numerous articles devoted to Ivan Ilyin were published by the Izborsk Club in connection with a petition in Russia opposing the creation of a school bearing his name at the Russian State University for the Humanities (RGGU), reportedly headed by Dugin, himself a club member. The petition primarily denounced the choice of naming the school after a figure deemed close to fascism. In response, several Izborsk Club articles argued that this was a maneuver orchestrated by the West, while seeking to demonstrate, each in its own way, that Ilyin could not be described as fascist.

Key points that recur in those pieces:

- The real target of the petition is not Ilyin or Dugin but Putin, because Putin frequently quotes Ilyin in his speeches.

- Ilyin and fascism: he is not a fascist under the main definitions (Nazism, capitalist fascism, xenophobia, anti-Christianity, Italian fascism). The accusations are framed as slander.
- Political and historical stance: occasional analytical errors (Germany 1933, the White movement), but always faithful to the defense of Russia and critical of Nazism.
- Philosophical and metaphysical legacy: strong state, use of force against evil, rejection of Western models, creation of a spiritual intelligentsia, the “complete man” (reason + faith), patriotic and nationalist Christianity, a culture centered on spirituality, opposition to separatism—values said to align with those defended by Russia today and fully endorsed by the Izborsk Club.
- Meaning of the campaign against him: hysteria driven by fear of a united, strong, sovereign Russia; Ilyin symbolizes, for his enemies, a solid ideological foundation that must be discredited.

Olavo de Carvalho

Olavo de Carvalho, *O Jardim das Aflições - De Epicuro à ressurreição de César: ensaio sobre o Materialismo e a Religião Civil*, Rio de Janeiro: Vide Editorial, 1995, 463 p.

Olavo de Carvalho's essay focuses on the transformations of the notion of Empire and its various incarnations in the Western world since the Roman Empire. This political entity, which deeply haunts Western societies, undergoes four long-term transformations that Carvalho calls *translatioes imperii*.

In its first form, rooted in its ancient origins, the Empire is founded on the political traditions of Rome, marked by the fusion of civil and religious rites. After the collapse of the Roman Empire, the first *translatio imperii* occurs in the 9th century; the imperial project moves from Rome to Frankish territory, that is, to the Empire of Charlemagne. However, it does not last long, swept away by an intrinsic contradiction: as a Catholic Empire, it is a structure in which spiritual and temporal power are divided (unlike in Rome), the former embodied in the Emperor and the latter in the Papacy.

With the dissolution of the Empire, an attempt is made to reconstitute it through the Holy Roman Empire (second *translatio imperii*, from the Franks to the Germanic peoples), but it never goes beyond the stage of a project, falling victim to the same duality between the sacerdotal and warrior castes, from its foundation until its abolition in 1806.

The third *translatio imperii* occurs at the end of the Middle Ages and during the Renaissance; it corresponds to the emergence of absolutist and colonial national kingdoms whose monarchs each aspire to be Emperor and often, following the model of Henry VIII of England, head of spiritual power (from Philip the Fair to Louis XIV).

Then, from the ashes of the absolutist and colonial national kingdoms, struck down by the French Revolution and by Napoleon, appears the fourth *translatio imperii*; it leads to the secular Empire, in which Caesar overcomes Christ: first in the Napoleonic imperial project, defeated due to the reappearance of old religious and aristocratic forms that condemn it to the same failure as the national kingdoms; at the same time, in the American Empire, fully modern, because irreligious, republican, democratic, and Masonic. Its strength and success come precisely from the fact that it conceals its true nature, presenting itself as republican and democratic, while all its political elites have, since its beginnings, been recruited from the upper ranks of Freemasonry, a true secret aristocracy, starting with its Presidents. Moreover, it would be possible to identify the same functioning in Brazil, where, since the imperial period in the 19th century, all high leaders have had strong ties to Masonic lodges, demonstrating the decisive role of secret societies in modern political life—a finding also made by major 19th-century authors, privileged witnesses of the dawn of the fourth *translatio imperii* (Goethe, in *Wilhelm Meister*; Stendhal, in *Le Rouge et le noir*; Balzac, in *Histoire des Treize*).

Hence the link with the minor “news item” that triggers the argument developed throughout the essay: a conference given in 1990 by José Américo da Mota Pessanha, Professor of Philosophy at the University of São Paulo and director of the influential and popular collection “Os Pensadores,” published by Abril, one of Brazil's main publishing houses.

This public intervention was part of a cycle of lectures with national and international specialists held at the São Paulo Museum of Art (MASP), organized by the City Hall (then governed by the left) and devoted to Ethics. According to the author, the choice of this topic was not politically innocent, as it would have formed part of a Gramscian strategy of the Workers' Party to prepare the country's intellectual climate after Lula's defeat in the 1989 elections against Fernando Collor

de Mello, with a view to launching an anti-corruption moralizing campaign that would, in the following years, strike Collor de Mello's own mandate, the first Brazilian head of state to be removed by impeachment, in 1992.

As for Mr. Pessanha's lecture, it focused on Epicurus, whose choice would likewise not be naïve, though from a much broader perspective than the immediate political objectives of the left. Carvalho undertakes a critical analysis of Epicurean cosmology and ethics in order to demonstrate their complete insignificance from a strictly philosophical standpoint, trapped in numerous logical contradictions. Why, then, Epicurus? For Carvalho, his pseudo-philosophy, profoundly nihilistic, would in reality constitute a technique for producing pleasant psychological states, disregarding theoretical intelligence oriented toward pure knowledge of the object, and in this respect indistinguishable from contemporary techniques of psychic manipulation, such as hypnosis, the New Age, and Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP), then in vogue.

In the final analysis, Epicureanism would differ little from Marxism; through the concept of praxis, the latter would annihilate the distinction between theory and practice, dull the sense of the objectivity of the world, and de facto give primacy to the transformation of the object at the expense of the disinterested contemplation characteristically advocated by the philosophical tradition since Plato. In this sense, Epicureanism and Marxism would appear as two faces of the same intellectual impulse to transform the world rather than interpret it (Feuerbach's thesis), the former from a strictly individual and psychological standpoint, the latter from a collective, socio-economic, and political one. In this regard, Carvalho evokes the figure of the yogi-commissar (terminology inherited from Koestler), conflating escapism and activism. This would explain why Marxist intellectuals, such as the group from the University of São Paulo, to which Mr. Pessanha belongs, would take an interest in a pseudo-philosophy apparently as foreign to Marx as Epicureanism; in a context of the exhaustion of communism in its Soviet form, the constitution of a so-called "materialist tradition" linking Epicurus and Marx would contribute to the triumph of praxis over philosophy and to the definitive defeat of religion in favor of the Promethean goal of establishing earthly happiness.

In fact, the roots of this immanentist promise would go back to the beginnings of the modern intellectual project, through the attribution of divine attributes—once proper to the Christian God—to material realities, first to the spatial dimension (hence the philosophy of Nicholas of Cusa, Cantor's mathematics, scientism, and the divinization of Nature by the sciences), then to the temporal dimension (hence historicism, in a tradition leading directly to Hegel and finally to Marx). This process of divinizing horizontality (space and time) to the detriment of verticality (the link between the individual soul and God) would be a sign of a certain decadence, exemplified by African animist cults and the fragmented societies of that continent, under the hypothesis that, in their current form, they are merely remnants of the dissolution of great immemorial religions and empires.

Meanwhile, the goal of establishing the kingdom of heaven on Earth at the expense of traditional religions is carried forward by the American Empire (*Caesar Redivivus*), whose proclaimed objectives of protecting individual, social, and minority rights serve only to increase the power of the state bureaucracy and to implement a vertical and total management of individual life and consciousness in the name of Enlightenment ideals, thereby constituting an exaggerated version of former politico-spiritual Caesarism. The only resource against this imperial process would lie in millennial religions—not in Islam, whose destiny is to bend to Caesarist politics (the proof being Islamic fundamentalism, a desperate attempt to resist it and therefore doomed to failure), but in American mass Christianity, whether Catholic or Protestant, a genuine obstacle to the long-term designs of the American Masonic aristocracy.

As for intellectuals in Western countries distant from the center of the Empire, such as Mr. Pessanha, despite their Marxist heritage, and even as they praise pseudo-philosophical doctrines such as Epicureanism disguised as "materialist philosophy," they play into the hands of the American Empire, ostensibly their sworn enemy, in fact the only undisputed and active center of

the World Revolution working against traditional spiritualities, reduced to public insignificance by the imposition of secularism.

Vladimir Gudyayev

A Gradual Rise Within a Soviet Church Under Control

- Entered the Leningrad seminary in 1965
- Then studied at the Leningrad Theological Academy
- Became a monk in 1969 (an important step in Orthodox practice, and a prerequisite for entering the hierarchy of the Russian Orthodox Church)
- 1971: first political role within the Russian Orthodox Church: representative of the Moscow Patriarchate to the Ecumenical Council in Geneva
- 1976: Bishop of Vyborg (Leningrad Oblast)
- 1976/1978: Vice-Exarch in Western Europe
- 1978: head of the Patriarchate's churches in Finland
- 2009: Patriarch of Moscow and All Rus'

Personality traits: very communication-oriented, paying close attention to the image he projects. His vision of the Russian Orthodox Church's role in Russia is that of an institution close to—almost acting in tandem with—the secular government. The political dimension of the Church's role in Russian society is crucial, insofar as it helps define and consolidate the Russian nation and establish and sustain a consensus of values, which in turn almost provides a compass for the government, operating within the framework of those values. In effect, the Church and the state should stand on an equal footing, which helps maintain a balance in the exercise of power and prevents excesses.

- In 2017, on the 100th anniversary of the 1917 Revolution, he explained that the reasons for that revolution lay in the rupture that had occurred in this balance between the state and the Russian Orthodox Church. Because the Russian state had subordinated the Church to its will, the Church lost its subjectivity. In practice, according to him, the tsar, in addition to embodying political authority, was also the religious leader, which subordinated the Church, leaving it unable to act as an independent institution. This inability to act rendered the Church powerless in the face of the revolution, which brought the communists to power—who then began mass repression against the clergy.
- Since the fall of the USSR, Kirill argues, we have observed a gradual return of the Church to society, but this has been difficult because of disoriented human values. People are more attracted to consumerism and social-Darwinist values.
- Since 2000, he has observed a strong return of the Russian Orthodox Church in the political sphere. The Russian Orthodox Church is the largest Orthodox Church in the world (the one with the most faithful worldwide), it is wealthy, and it has built a great many churches across Russia. In Moscow alone, between 2018 and 2023, 60 new Orthodox churches were built, and this trend can be observed across the country.
- The Russian Orthodox Church forms a fundamental foundation for transmitting and perpetuating so-called “traditional” values today, in the face of a West that has become decadent because it is convinced of the universality of its values. In his book, Kirill writes, in the chapter devoted to analyzing relations between Russia and the West: “the end of globalization is not far off; peoples will have to find support, for their future development, in their own traditions.” Here, he highlights an incompatibility between Russian and Western values, defending a view commonly found among pro-Russian thinkers of Russia's “unique path” in development. Russia must be able to find, by itself, without others' help, its own way to develop.

- He notes the weakening of religion—and especially Christianity—in the West due to the progress of liberal ideas. Christians in the West are increasingly becoming a minority; in that sense, dialogue between the Catholic Churches and the Russian Orthodox Church must not be cut off, despite differences. There is a duty of solidarity in the face of this crisis of Christianity.

In this fairly traditionalist discourse, Kirill remains in his role as head of the Church, defending its viewpoint. At times, however, he steps beyond that role and takes positions on broader issues, offering more developed analyses of the state of Western society. In an interview in January 2024 with **RIA Novosti**, he sets himself the goal of explaining what the West is doing with the Christian values that are the essence of its civilization over the past decades:

- European humanism draws on Christian values that Europe itself is in the process of destroying.
- European elites are dismantling the Christian heritage.

Sergei Lavrov

I. A Typical Career in Soviet Reality

- Graduate of MGIMO University, the university under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
- Member of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (until 1991)
- Attaché at the USSR Embassy in Sri Lanka between 1972 and 1976
- Various positions related to economic affairs at the Ministry in Moscow between 1976 and 1981
- Assigned to the USSR Mission to the UN between 1981 and 1988
- Returned to Moscow, held various economic affairs positions within the Ministry between 1988 and 1992
- Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs between 1992 and 1994
- Representative of Russia to the UN between 1994 and 2004: a fundamental stage in Lavrov's career, allowing him to build a certain reputation. Russia's Foreign Minister, Andrei Gromyko, nicknamed him "MISTER NYET" for the number of vetoes imposed.
- Minister of Foreign Affairs since 2004

Personality Traits

Journalists appreciated his informal side and his sharp wit in responses. However, a certain aggressiveness in those responses can be noted, an aggressiveness that has intensified over time.

Some examples:

- 2004: Dublin, press conference — an Irish journalist asks why Russian visas are so expensive. Lavrov responds by complaining that he had been fined for smoking in a restaurant.
- 2008: "who are you to fucking lecture me," allegedly addressed to his British counterpart during discussions concerning the Georgian conflict.
- 2015: Openly calls journalists "morons" during a press conference.

The importance of these episodes should not be overlooked. While they may appear anecdotal from abroad, in Russia they contribute to forming the image of a strong figure who "puts everyone in their place" and "makes Russia shine abroad," thus allowing Lavrov to be one of the most popular political figures among Russians (until 2022), alongside Vladimir Putin and Sergei Shoigu, the Minister of Defense.

Since 2004, his personality and his function have almost merged: his positions and his worldview have evolved in parallel with that of the Russian Federation's leadership and President Putin.

At the beginning of his ministerial mandate, he conveyed the image of a Russia open to dialogue and cooperation with the West.

On April 1, 2004, he published his first article as Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation in KOMMERSANT (<https://www.kommersant.ru/doc/462654>), "Another Russia: A Challenge or New Partnership Opportunities?"

Main ideas of this article, particularly regarding Russia/West relations:

- Russia may have appeared frightening in recent years (the 1990s) due to its instability, but over the past four years (Putin's rise to power), it has gained credibility thanks to a pragmatic policy balancing domestic interests and dialogue with the outside world.
- Russia and the United States are natural partners, particularly in the fight against terrorism.
- Security is the major issue, achievable only in an atmosphere of cooperation among the so-called "civilized" (Western) countries.
- In this context, Russia, the United States, and Europe share common interests; issues of the past must under no circumstances poison relations with Western countries.

- On Kosovo: criticism of US actions, but considers tactical divergences on this issue far less important than the shared strategic interests between Russia and the United States.
- Already appears to draw a red line regarding former USSR countries, which he considers a zone of Russia's vital interests and which must under no circumstances become arenas of struggle for spheres of influence.
- Nevertheless, he stresses that in building Russia's international relations—based on the idea of integrating the country into the international economy and pursuing a multivector policy—there is no place for “Imperskie Zamachki” (imperial ambitions).

The idea of dialogue and partnership with the West corresponded to Putin's official foreign policy line at that time; Lavrov conveyed these ideas quite precisely.

On June 28, 2021, he published in the same KOMMERSANT an article entitled “On Law, Permission and Rules.” (<https://www.kommersant.ru/doc/4877702>).

Main ideas of this article, particularly regarding Russia/West relations:

- The West seeks at all costs to impose its will on other countries (China, Russia).
- Rules of international law, invented by Western countries, are interpreted case by case according to interests, just like ideas of democracy, liberal values, and human rights.
- Economic sanctions are an imperialist instrument used against countries that disagree with the West, such as Russia and China, in a totalitarian and neo-colonialist impulse.
- The West seeks to impose its development model on other countries, creates rules within discussion platforms on issues favorable to them, then imposes them on the entire world (Lavrov cites calls for cybersecurity, respect for international humanitarian law, and support for freedom of information). In cases of non-compliance, sanctions follow.
- Western states wish to forget historical post-war decisions such as the UN's 1960 Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, initiated by our country (USSR). They seek to forget this tragic and criminal past, diverting historical responsibility through new techniques such as kneeling during sporting events.
- The right of peoples to self-determination is applied when convenient; otherwise, when it concerns French or British overseas territories or Kosovo, these rules are forgotten. However, regarding Crimea—
- Russia is portrayed as a victim of this oppression, attempting to overcome it by promoting equal partnerships with its neighbors (Central Asia, China), unlike the West with NATO and the EU, which allegedly uses partnerships with other regions of the world to oppress them (Lavrov cites EU/Central Asia partnerships).
- This arrogant character of the West places it on the wrong side of history.
- International relations should not be conducted through ultimatums but through dialogue (G20, BRICS...).

The complete change in discourse regarding the vision of the West reflects the evolution of Russian foreign policy. Despite numerous episodes in which Russia and the West attempted to renew dialogue (Medvedev presidency), the color revolutions in Georgia and Ukraine, followed by the Ukrainian conflict since 2014—which Russia considers Western interference in Russian spheres of influence—have radically changed Russia's official position in its view of the West. Lavrov, minister since 2004, aligns his personal position with that required by his function, broadly accusing the West of all conceivable evils.

Human Rights

Very formal and official positions, with few personal opinions on the matter. The rhetoric is based on the assertion that Russia fully respects human rights, unlike the West, which, for example in the case of Ukraine, prefers to ignore human rights violations because the country is compliant.

LGBT Issue

2013: Context — Law banning “propaganda of homosexuality” among minors.

Lavrov's comment: Despite EU criticism, the law does not contradict Moscow's international commitments. Russia indeed has historical moral, cultural, and religious values, and this is in no way a means of discrimination against a particular category of the population.

"We simply do not want discrimination to occur in the opposite direction, when a minority category aggressively imposes its position on the majority of society, especially by imposing it on children." He emphasizes that homosexuality is not prohibited, unlike in the USSR, but Russia is not obliged to authorize propaganda.

<https://www.golosameriki.com/a/russia-anti-gay-law-lavrov/1611260.html>

2017: Nothing proves that LGBT rights are not respected in Russia (context: rumors of killings in Chechnya).

https://aif.ru/politics/russia/lavrov_zayavil_ob_otsutstvii_dokazatelstv_narusheniya_v_rossii_p_rav_lgbt

2017: Context — briefing following a meeting with Jean-Yves Le Drian, response to a question concerning the BAEV v. Russia judgment of the European Court of Human Rights of June 20, 2017, on the anti-LGBT propaganda law.

<https://tass.ru/politika/4353529>

2022: Comment on non-binary toilets in Sweden — "it is not human."

He recounts an anecdote, humorously, about a summit in Sweden where he asked a staff member where the toilets were. After being shown, he asked whether they were male or female facilities. He was told they were common toilets. "I did not believe it, but that was truly the case! You do not realize how inhuman that is, literally inhuman," he later recounts, showing how traumatic the anecdote apparently was for him.

https://lenta.ru/news/2022/12/07/ne_po_ludski/

These examples of statements, whether in the context of political declarations—such as denying any repression or discrimination against LGBT individuals in Russia—or simple anecdotes (the above example is far from the only one), reflect both the official Russian discourse on the issue and his personal approach and opinion (nothing compels him to recount such an anecdote).

Far from lacking reasoning capacity, as a diplomat he knows the weight of every word spoken. This discourse resonates domestically in Russia and does not contradict the official position. Today, while his reputation abroad appears to have collapsed completely, and the succession of Russian diplomatic defeats may be detrimental in the eyes of Russian public opinion, he does not hesitate to adopt a certain form of populism, telling these small stories which, to the average Russian who knows the West only through official television, may appear as one of the reasons for the current confrontation with that same West.

The West is portrayed as the source of all Russia's ills; it has not lost its colonial (Ukraine...) and imperialist character, seeking to impose its will by force on other countries. Here, human rights (+LGBT) are seen by Lavrov as a pretext, a cynical tool enabling the West to destabilize the situation in his country.

Yet, he repeats, human rights are perfectly respected in Russia—only in the Russian way, not the Western way. Homosexuality is not repressed, which he presents as proof. However, Russia is not obliged, in the name of LGBT rights, to authorize "propaganda" among minors. He has thus positioned himself as a defender of Russian law, remains critical of Pussy Riot, and recognizes no violation of LGBT rights in Chechnya.

Lavrov: Inspirations

- Alexander Nevsky: managed to negotiate with the Mongols in difficult times, allowing Russia to preserve an autonomous foreign policy and gain time to lay the foundations of a Russian state.
- Andrei Gromyko: one of the authors of the UN Charter.
- Alexander Gorchakov: for having returned Crimea to Russia after the Russo-Turkish War.

- Yevgeny Primakov: for laying the foundations of the Russian Federation's foreign policy—its multivector aspect and multipolarity.

In the domestic politics of United Russia, the personality of Sergei Lavrov is used and instrumentalized for electoral purposes. During the 2021 legislative elections, Lavrov was formally a candidate under the so-called “locomotive” technique. He was the leading figure of the United Russia party, alongside other strong personalities (Shoigu, etc.), featured on all campaign materials, and formally, citizens voted for him. However, once elected, he renounced his mandate (at the request of the President of the Federation), leaving his seat to his substitute.

Zhang Weiwei 张维为

Zhang Weiwei, born in December 1957 in Shanghai, is originally from Nantong, Jiangsu Province. He is a distinguished professor and the dean of the China Institute at Fudan University, as well as a doctoral supervisor.¹

In his early years, Zhang Weiwei entered Shanghai Carving Factory through the recruitment examination and became a skilled worker.² In 1977, he was admitted to the Department of Foreign Languages at Fudan University.³ In 1981, he joined the United Nations Interpreter Training Program at Beijing Foreign Studies University. In 1983, he began working in the Translation Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, serving as an interpreter for senior national leaders such as Deng Xiaoping and Li Peng.⁴ In 1988, he served as an interpreter at the United Nations Office in Geneva. In 1994, he obtained a doctoral degree in International Relations from the University of Geneva and subsequently engaged in research at the Asia Research Center of the University of Geneva. In 2012, he became a distinguished professor at Fudan University, and in 2013, he became the director of the World China Studies Institute at the Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences. In 2015, he became the dean of the China Institute at Fudan University.

Zhang Weiwei's main research areas include the study of the Chinese path, the Chinese model, and Chinese discourse. He believes that China is the only existing "civilizational state" in the world today⁵, building on the ideas of British scholar Martin Jacques. He argues that the Communist Party of China, unlike the "political parties" in the Western context, is a "state party" that represents the overall interests of the country.⁶ He also suggests that Western democratic systems have encountered difficulties and proposes that the paradigm of "democracy versus authoritarianism" is outdated.⁷ Instead, he advocates discussing "good governance versus bad governance," with "good governance" referring to substantive democracy.⁸ He further argues that the world will tilt faster towards the East, towards China, and towards socialism.⁹

In terms of economic theory, Zhang Weiwei refers to traditional Chinese economics as "people-centered economics,"¹⁰ which emphasizes the connection between the economy and the well-being of the nation and its people, as well as the governance of the country. He believes that China's socialist market economy represents a mixed economic model that goes beyond the Washington Consensus.¹¹

On January 7, 2019, a thought-provoking political commentary program called "This is China," featuring Zhang Weiwei as the main speaker, premiered. "This is China" is a program jointly

¹ <https://cifw.fudan.edu.cn/a3/7b/c520a107387/page.htm> ;

² <https://world.haiwainet.cn/n/2015/0428/c345796-28681216.html> ;

³ https://baike.baidu.com/reference/2650478/533aYdO6cr3_z3kATPSPy_vyMi_BMIv_7bHVV-FzzqIP0XOpWIHpU5w748Rx7vJoBAfO_pttbZgWmKekC1RH7vYYbu09QbU9znf_UzLfy7k-tA2mNNa-84eBA ;

⁴ <https://china.huanqiu.com/article/9CaKrnJr3s6> ;

⁵ https://fuwu.12371.cn/2012/08/15/ARTI1345022442436584_10.shtml ;

⁶ https://baike.baidu.com/reference/2650478/533aYdO6cr3_z3kATKGOmv_zZi3ENdv_t-XTUOBzzqIP0XOpR57sVIE97pkv-h3GA6Fs5dvLtUb2eblCEtE6ugQdO09XeYjnXb8TjHGwLfk_NoyhIkA_tY ;

⁷ <https://www.haiwainet.cn/BIG5/n/2012/1101/c232574-17660646.html> ;

⁸ https://www.guancha.cn/politics/2020_06_07_553188.shtml ;

⁹ https://www.guancha.cn/ZhangWeiWei/2020_12_04_573448.shtml ;

¹⁰ https://fuwu.12371.cn/2012/08/15/ARTI1345022442436584_18.shtml ;

¹¹ <https://news.sohu.com/20150530/n414123007.shtml> ;

launched by Dragon (Dongfang) TV, Fudan University's China Institute, Observer Video Studio, and Observer Network. The program is hosted by He Jie. Professor Zhang Weiwei, the dean of Fudan University's China Institute, serves as the main speaker, interpreting the Chinese miracle with a fresh style and an international perspective, breaking the monopoly of Western discourse and using Chinese discourse to explain it.

Jiang Shigong 强世功

Jiang Shigong, born on November 11, 1967, in Yulin, Shaanxi Province, is a renowned Chinese expert in ethnic issues and jurist. His main research areas include jurisprudence, socio-legal studies, and constitutional law. He has authored several books, including "Legal System and Governance: Law in State Transformation," "The City-State of Jurists," "The Modern Theatre of Law: A Study of the Hart-Fuller Debate," "Beyond the Horizon of Jurisprudence," and "Legislator's Jurisprudence." He has also translated works such as "The Advanced Legal Background of the U.S. Constitution."

Currently, he serves as a member of the Party Committee and Vice President of the Central University for Nationalities, as well as the President of the Chinese Society of Ethnic Studies. He obtained his Bachelor's degree from the Law Department of Renmin University of China in 1990, his Master's degree from Peking University Law School in 1996, and his Ph.D. from Peking University Law School in 1999.¹²

From 2001 to 2002, he was a visiting scholar at Columbia Law School in the United States. From 2004 to 2007, he worked in the Research Department of the Liaison Office of the Central People's Government in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region. In November 2009, he was appointed Deputy Minister (on secondment) of the Department of Social Sciences at Peking University. In July 2011, he was appointed as a part-time professor at Chongqing University. In May 2021, he became the Minister of the Department of Social Sciences at Peking University. He has previously held positions such as Professor and Ph.D. Supervisor at Peking University Law School and Director of the Rule of Law Research Center at Peking University. In 2023, he was appointed as a member of the Party Committee and Vice President of the Central University for Nationalities.

This is a very representative paper of his, briefly concluding his main ideas: To understand the rule of law in China, it is necessary to consider the constitution and the Party Constitution together.¹³

Key abstract: Since the 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China (CPC), especially with the CPC's efforts in anti-corruption and the introduction of the "eight-point" regulations, there have been significant changes in Chinese society. From a legal perspective, we can observe that the country's laws have not been modified, the number of judges has not increased, and the judicial system has not undergone any major changes. However, there has been a fundamental change in China's legal order, social order, and even moral standards. Why has this situation occurred? I believe the most important factor is not just reflecting on the reality, but also reflecting on our theories and concepts of the rule of law.

When emphasizing the construction of the rule of law, we have consciously or unconsciously focused on national laws, with the center being the laws of the state and the judicial trials of the courts. This has led to neglecting the important role that other norms can play in building a socialist rule of law country. For example, customary law, party regulations, and various other laws. Therefore, when constructing a socialist rule of law country, we should adopt a diverse and holistic perspective, taking into account party rules and regulations, government policies, and even social customs and moral standards within our country.

¹² https://baike.baidu.com/item/%E5%BC%BA%E4%B8%96%E5%8A%9F/906292?fr=ge_alia;

¹³ https://www.guancha.cn/jiang-shi-gong/2014_10_24_279508.shtml;

First, how do we understand the rule of law and governing the country according to law from a legal standpoint? In Western history, we know that there is natural law, municipal law, canon law, customary law, and case law. Looking back at Chinese history, we had ritual law, clan law, family law, customary law, and now we have party rules and regulations. Thus, our views on "law" differ, which implies that our understanding of the rule of law also differs. If we understand "law" in a narrow sense, then our concept of the rule of law would only focus on the judiciary. However, when we talk about the rule of law, it undoubtedly emphasizes not only the laws of the state but also party rules and regulations, as well as customary laws that can regulate our social life. Therefore, from a legal standpoint, we must understand "law" from a broader perspective.

Second, we need to start from the reality of China. Without a doubt, we are a unique major country in the world with vast territory, diverse ethnicities, and varying economic disparities across different regions. This inevitably leads us to adopt a variety of rules for governance. At the same time, our country is under the leadership of the Communist Party of China, and party rules and regulations play a positive role not only in regulating the party organization but also in the construction of the rule of law in our country.

What do we understand by the term "constitution"? When we mention the constitution, we often think of the 1982 Constitution, which is undoubtedly the constitution of our country. However, the term "constitution," as you mentioned, in English is referred to "constitute" or "form." In other words, it consists of the fundamental rules that make up our country. In this sense, just as foreign scholars understand it, the Party Constitution of the Communist Party of China is undoubtedly also a "constitution." How can we understand this? At least from a legal standpoint, we can see clearly that the Communist Party of China is the ruling party, and the Party Constitution is its fundamental law, serving as a guiding principle for the governance of the party. The constitution is the fundamental law of our country, serving as a general charter for governing and safeguarding the state. The Party Constitution clearly states that the Communist Party of China must operate within the scope of the constitution and laws. Looking back at the constitution, its preamble explicitly states that the Communist Party of China should lead various undertakings of our country. In other words, the institutions and policies stipulated in the constitution are to be carried out under the leadership of the party. Therefore, to understand the rule of law in China and the constitution, we must consider the constitution and the Party Constitution together.

Zhang Yongle 章永乐

Zhang Yongle (章永乐) is Associate Professor at the Beijing University School of Law, and a rising member of China's New Left. He shares many of the views of Jiang Shigong 强世功, his better-known colleague at the same law school.¹⁴

In an article about Chinese's students abroad, Zhang, who earned his Ph.D. at UCLA, argues that studying abroad—which is practically *de rigueur* for any ambitious Chinese student or scholar—is not only over-rated but actually harmful. His arguments are a mixed-bag, some of which are offered perhaps in jest; for instance, Zhang observes that he did not visit bookstores frequently in the United States because books were too expensive, and that this bad habit persisted even after his return to China. His overall tone, however, is suggestive of the arrogance and impatience with the outside world that increasingly characterizes Chinese intellectual discourse in the wake of China's rise. Zhang argues, in a nutshell, that studying abroad is a lonely and useless baptism of fire in which rote learning takes pride of place and where foreign languages are a barrier to self-understanding and communication with others.¹⁵

¹⁴ <https://www.guancha.cn/ZhangYongLe>;

¹⁵ <https://www.readingthechinadream.com/zhang-yongle-the-harm-of-studying-abroad.html>;

'If you live abroad for a long time, you will miss many theoretically interesting things happening in China. Society in the West has been settled for hundreds of years, and not that much that is really new occurs. But China is entering a new era, full of potential.'

Xu Zhangrun 许章润

Xu Zhangrun was a professor of law at Tsinghua University and the author of a series of prominent essays critiquing the leadership of Xi Jinping. The websites about him in Chinese Internet has been deleted and erased (even the mirror webs), mostly. I found some pieces on him and some articles written by him.

Xu Zhangrun was, until 2020, a professor of jurisprudence at Beijing's Tsinghua University, one of China's most prestigious colleges. A celebrated lecturer and author of numerous works on the law, he was a noted essayist, and also the editor of a major series of books on legal reform.¹⁶

In July 2018, Xu published 'Imminent Fears, Immediate Hopes' a point-by-point critique of the policies of Xi Jinping's government. Since then, he has been subjected to relentless persecution—his life's work has been outlawed, his online presence deleted, and his career destroyed. Dismissed by Tsinghua in 2020, stripped of his pension, housing, and teaching credentials, Xu now lives in a book-filled apartment in the far western suburbs of Beijing, getting by on his savings. He is forbidden from leaving the city or accepting help from friends.

In February this year, Geng Xiaonan, a noted cultural activist and Xu's most outspoken supporter, was sentenced to three years' jail in a far-flung women's penitentiary. Tried on charges related to her publishing business, few observers doubt that the real reason for her punishment was her advocacy on behalf of Xu Zhangrun and other dissidents.

Even with numerous sound-sensitive CCTV cameras trained on his apartment, and regardless of continued abuse and interrogations, Xu persists in his writing. His latest book, *Ten Chapters from a Plague Year*, has just appeared through an independent Chinese publisher in New York.

In a scathing analysis of the Chinese government's failure to respond to the unfolding Wuhan coronavirus epidemic published in early February 2020, Xu Zhangrun, a professor of law at Tsinghua University, squarely laid the blame at the feet of Xi Jinping and the sycophantic bureaucracy his rule had fostered. The Chinese system itself, he wrote, 'turns every natural disaster into an even greater man-made catastrophe.'¹⁷

In the following months, as the epidemic in China turned into a global pandemic, Xu maintained his outspokenly critical stance. He had gained international fame in July 2018, when he published a fierce point-by-point appraisal of the Xi Jinping era and warned of the calamities that lay ahead. It was part of a series of critiques begun in early 2016 published in Chinese as *China's Ongoing Crisis: Six Chapters from the Wuxu Year of the Dog* in New York in late 2019.

In early July 2020, police in Beijing detained Xu purportedly for soliciting prostitutes during a trip with friends to Sichuan in late 2019. It was a spurious charge, one often used in China to silence political critics. During his time in custody, the Ministry of Education authorized Tsinghua University to send a delegation to see Xu at the police station where he was being held. They formally notified Xu that he had been fired from the job that he had held for two decades and informed him that the university was confiscating his pension and all accrued benefits; even his accreditation as an educator had been withdrawn on the order of the educational authorities. Tsinghua also demanded that he vacate his apartment on the university campus.

Zhao Tingyang 赵汀阳

Zhao Tingyang, born in 1961 in Shantou, Guangdong province, is a philosopher and a member of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences. He is a researcher at the Institute of Philosophy, Chinese

¹⁶ <https://www.chinafile.com/library/nyrb-china-archive/xis-china-handiwork-of-autocratic-roue;>

¹⁷ <https://www.chinafile.com/reporting-opinion/viewpoint/farewell-my-students;>

Academy of Social Sciences, and a professor and doctoral supervisor in the Department of Philosophy at the Graduate School of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences.¹⁸

Zhao Tingyang obtained his Bachelor's degree in Philosophy from Renmin University of China in 1982. In 1988, he earned his Master's degree in Philosophy from the Graduate School of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences and subsequently worked at the Institute of Philosophy, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences. In 2018, he was selected for the "Special Support Program for National High-Level Talents" in its third batch. In September, he was elected as a member of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences. In 2021, he was selected as an "Outstanding Professional and Technical Talent" in the sixth national selection.

Zhao Tingyang's research primarily focuses on metaphysics, political philosophy, and ethics.¹⁹ He has put forward original theories such as "Tianxia System Theory,"²⁰ "Theory of Co-Existence,"²¹ and "Vortex Theory."²²

Zhang Xiaobo 张小波

Zhang Xiaobo, President of Fonghong United Culture and Media Co., Ltd., Chairman of Chongqing Fonghong Decision Book Media Co., Ltd., and former Chairman of Beijing Republic United Book Co., Ltd., is one of the authors and planners of the book "China Can Say No: Political and Emotional Choices in the Post-Cold War Era."

This book, also known as "China Can Say No," marked the rise of Chinese nationalism in mainland China in the 1990s. The first edition sold 50,000 copies and was published in just over 20 days, attracting the attention and coverage of over 100 news media outlets worldwide. It became the most sensational Chinese book in the United States and the West in 1996 and was translated into 8 languages. It also drew high attention from the Chinese government and the public. The book sparked a great discussion on post-Cold War Sino-U.S. relations and nationalism, and received mixed reviews from various parties.²³

After completing "Inspecting Cadres" in 1991, he gave up poetry and writing and became a bookseller. "Before that, of course, I wanted to be a good and pure poet or novelist, but because of the circumstances of life, I had to rely on my own hands to make money, so for more than ten years, I stopped writing novels and poetry."²⁴

This is a short interview with him I found, conducted by Chengdu Business Daily's journalist ten years after the publication of this book. I find it helpful in understanding this figure.

Chengdu Business Daily: Why didn't you use your real name for "China Can Say No"?²⁵

Zhang Xiaobo: It doesn't have much meaning. I think this book and my poetry and novels are two different dimensions. In "China Can Say No," I was criticized as a narrow-minded nationalist, while in my novels, I gained recognition from many sinologists who thought I was a writer with a Western spirit.

Chengdu Business Daily: In "China Can Say No," you wrote, "China doesn't want to lead anyone, China only wants to lead itself." But on the cover of the book "The Great Return of Destiny: China

¹⁸ https://baike.baidu.com/item/%E8%B5%B5%E6%B1%80%E9%98%B3/228005?fr=ge_alas;

¹⁹ http://philosophy.cass.cn/yjxr/xbwy/202005/t20200505_5122704.html;

²⁰ whoever wins the hearts of the people of the world will gain control over the world. This is the fundamental principle of the Tianxia Theory. <https://zhuanlan.zhihu.com/p/663905524>;

²¹ It is a theory that combines elements of both Chinese and Western philosophies, particularly developing philosophical concepts from Confucianism and Daoism. It seeks to reexamine and reinterpret fundamental questions of existence, while providing a philosophical foundation for political philosophy and ethics.

https://xueshu.baidu.com/usercenter/paper/show?paperid=22f1873c8c1fb1c7e6837a573c6ef630&site=xueshu_se

²² http://philosophy.cssn.cn/kygz/xszm/zgzx/202111/t20211124_5376617.html;

²³ <https://upimg.baikē.so.com/doc/5858440-6071283.html> ;

²⁴ <https://upimg.baikē.so.com/doc/10037398-10551279.html> ;

²⁵ He used the pseudonym: Cangcang Zhang

as a Heroic Nation and World Leader," which you recently planned, it says, "China: To Become a Heroic Nation and World Leader." Does it have any connection with the book you wrote back then?

Zhang Xiaobo: We call for the emergence of a "heroic class" in China to replace the so-called "elite class." The so-called "heroic class" is a group of Chinese people with lofty ambitions and ideals who can enter the decision-making levels of various industries, including the national decision-making level. They should have great aspirations and shoulder the mission of guiding China on certain levels in the future. In present-day China, we should give China a clear vision. We should clearly know where we are heading, such as what kind of country China will become in twenty years, what kind of country it will become in fifty years, instead of passively responding to changes in the world. This book may also invite attacks from various quarters, but it also represents the patriotic sentiment of a part of the people who have not forgotten their concern for the country.

Liu Xiaofeng 刘晓峰

Liu Xiaofeng is a professor in the Department of History at Tsinghua University and a doctoral supervisor. After completing his master's degree in Classical Literature at the Chinese Department of Northeast Normal University in 1986, he taught at the Institute of Intellectual and Cultural Studies at Tsinghua University, serving as a teaching assistant and lecturer. In 1991, he went to Japan for further studies and obtained his master's degree in Japanese History from Toyama University in 1995. In 2000, he completed his doctoral studies in Japanese History at Kyoto University in Japan. He returned to China in 2000 and has been teaching in the Department of History at Tsinghua University, holding positions as lecturer, associate professor, professor, and doctoral supervisor. He currently serves as the Vice President of the Chinese Folklore Society, Vice President of the Sino-Japanese Philosophy Association, Executive Director of the Chinese Society for Japanese History, President of the Committee of Ancient Japanese History, and Vice President of the Beijing Association for the History of Sino-Japanese Relations. His teaching and research focus on Japanese history and culture, and he has made efforts to explore the research perspective of Chinese ancient civilization through the study of the cultural sphere of Chinese characters, which includes Japan, Korea, Ryukyu, Vietnam, and other regions. He has published numerous works in this field.²⁶

Wang Shaoguang 王绍光

Wang Shaoguang, born in Rongcheng, Shandong Province, is originally from Wuhan, Hubei Province. From 1972 to 1977, he taught at Dijiao Middle School in Wuhan before resuming the college entrance examination and being admitted to Peking University. He was a classmate of Li Keqiang.²⁷ He obtained a Bachelor of Laws from Peking University in 1982, a Master of Political Science from Cornell University in the United States in 1984, and a Ph.D. in Political Science from Cornell University in 1990.

From 1990 to 2000, he taught in the Political Science Department at Yale University in the United States. He served as the head of the Department of Politics and Public Administration and a professor in the Department of Politics and Public Administration at the Chinese University of Hong Kong. He currently serves as a professor in the Department of Politics and Public Administration at the Chinese University of Hong Kong, the Changjiang Chair Professor at the School of Public Management at Tsinghua University, and the editor-in-chief of the academic journal "The China Review."

²⁶ <https://www.lsx.tsinghua.edu.cn/info/1136/1342.htm>;

²⁷ <https://zh.wikipedia.org/zh-hans/%E7%8E%8B%E7%BB%8D%E5%85%89>;

Wang Shaoguang is considered a member of the "New Left"²⁸. However, he himself does not think much of the label "New Left," believing that this classification is not clear²⁹.

In 1993, Wang Shaoguang co-authored the "China National Capability Report" with Hu Angang. This report promoted the establishment and reform of the entire fiscal system in China and was referred to as the "Wang-Hu Report" by western media. The book advocated for strengthening the role of the central government in the transition to a market economy, as the central government can expedite the establishment of market mechanisms and legal frameworks, instill market economic concepts in the public, compensate certain social members who suffer loss of interests, stabilize the economy, and bear the costs required for economic reforms.³⁰

On July 27, 2009, Wang Shaoguang pointed out that civil society is a mixture of good and bad, and it does not necessarily equate to democracy. Civil society organizations mainly rely on commercial profits, government funding, or foreign donations, making it difficult to guarantee their claimed independence. Popular theories emphasize the external effects of civil society organizations being independent of the government, but in fact, the internal effects of civil society (such as democratic skill training) can better promote democracy. The emergence of civil society as a subject of study is a typical manifestation of people's lack of theoretical imagination in the past decade³¹.

On July 31, 2013, Wang Shaoguang stated that civil society is actually a crude myth fabricated by neoliberalism. It is conceptually vague, and its exaggerated claims may not necessarily hold true. What the Chinese people should truly pursue is the construction of a political community "People's Society" with the domestic laboring masses as the main body. The concept of People's Society is clear and unambiguous: externally, it proudly stands up and independently exists among the world's nations; internally, it is an organic whole that experiences ups and downs and shares joys and sorrows, making it a more achievable goal³².

On May 27, 2012, Wang Shaoguang gave a speech at Tsinghua University titled "Democracy: Unicycle or Four-Wheel Drive"³³. In an interview with China News Service in 2021, he stated that Xi Jinping's proposal of "people's democracy throughout the entire process" has undoubtedly enriched the forms of human political civilization³⁴.

Qin Hui秦晖

Qin Hui (秦晖; Qín Huī; born 1953) is a Chinese historian and public intellectual. He previously held the position of Professor of History, Institute of Humanities and Social Sciences, Tsinghua University, Beijing. He is now an Adjunct Professor in the Department of Government and Public Administration, at the Chinese University of Hong Kong.³⁵

Qin's primary field is economic history and peasant studies. His mentor was Zhao Lisheng (Chinese: 赵俐生), a Marxist historian in China. Since 1992 he has emerged as a prominent public intellectual, taking a stand on a range of issues, often in conflict with the official doctrines of the Chinese government. His general focus is China's agrarian history. Qin is a writer in the Sinosphere and the Chinese-speaking Internet, where collections of his works are commonly found. An important case in point is his doctrine of "issues versus isms"

In December 2015, Qin Hui's new book *Moving Away from the Imperial Regime*, a collection of articles examining how the "dream" of constitutional democracy fell apart in China in the early

²⁸ <https://www.aisixiang.com/data/78558.html>;

²⁹ <https://news.pku.edu.cn/ztrd/gxdyxycfl/3076-238748.htm>;

³⁰ <http://www.iccs.tsinghua.edu.cn/ProductsSt/308.html>;

³¹ <https://www.coolloud.org.tw/node/72517>;

³² <https://www.coolloud.org.tw/node/75170>;

³³ <http://wen.org.cn/modules/article/view.article.php?3342>;

³⁴ http://news.china.com.cn/2021-12/10/content_77923742.htm?f=pad&a=true;

³⁵ <http://www.gpa.cuhk.edu.hk/en-gb/programmes/postgraduate-programmes/mssc-in-gpgc/faculty>;

20th century after the country broke free from the Qing imperial order, was banned by the Chinese government. The book was a bestseller before the ban.³⁶ "It's like they want to kill someone and won't even let him complain about it," Qin commented; "I can't talk about this matter." An anonymous employee at the book's publisher said that the book had "quality problems". The ban was issued days before China celebrated its second annual Constitution Day.³⁷

In terms of political ideology, Qin Hui defends a left-liberal position. He favors privatization under strict conditions of democratic openness. However he opposes market fundamentalism in its Chinese forms, and seeks to introduce institutions of social democracy, including some aspects of the welfare state. He strongly defends liberty as a political value, and often allies with other Chinese intellectuals labeled "liberal".³⁸ He has engaged in polemics with the Chinese New Left, particularly its more populist and nationalist forms. He has for example signed petitions protesting chauvinistic responses to the September 11 attacks in New York City.

As a public intellectual, Qin has worked to initiate debates on social justice. Having himself been sent down to work as a peasant in a poor mountainous region of Southwest China in the Cultural Revolution, Qin has argued that China's peasantry suffers from a grave lack of social justice to the present day. At the same time, he has stated in his historical research that the peasantry has a strong tendency to enhance their citizen status whenever possible (whereas the urban working class has often tended to demand restitution of the dependent client status it enjoyed under the Maoist planned economy).

Qin has drawn on the work of Alexander Chayanov, Eric Wolf and other writers on agrarian society to attack cultural essentialism in studies of the Chinese peasantry, which often takes the form of portraying the peasantry as permanently imbued with Confucianism and the collectivist ethics of the feudal patriarchal lineage. Qin has been concerned to show that history rather than culture provides a solid explanatory framework for the empirical phenomena.

Contrary to the received Maoist view which emphasizes peasant wars as expressions of class struggle, in his research on agrarian history Qin concludes that the most significant fault-line in the countryside was not between peasant and landlord, but between peasant and official. This has obvious consequences for interpreting contemporary rural China.

Xue Yongjiu (Xue Rongjiu) 薛荣久

Xue Rongjiu, born in Qian'an City, Hebei Province, is a prominent figure in the field of World Trade Organization (WTO) research. He was born in June 1936 and graduated from the College of Foreign Trade in 1964, specializing in international trade. He is currently a professor, doctoral supervisor, and leading expert in the discipline of international trade at the University of International Business and Economics. He serves as the Vice President of the China WTO Research Society, advisor to the Beijing Municipal Government, member of the Expert Group of the State Council Tariff Commission, former legal advisor to the Ministry of Foreign Trade and Economic Cooperation on WTO issues, and invited advisor to the China Council for the Promotion of International Trade. He also holds positions as a professor at Nankai University, Sun Yat-sen University, and other universities, and serves as an executive council member of the International Relations Society and the American Economic Association. He enjoys a special government allowance from the State Council. He has studied, researched, and participated in academic conferences in the United States, Japan, Belgium, Australia, South Korea, Hong Kong,

³⁶ <https://www.nytimes.com/2015/12/05/world/asia/china-constitution-qin-hui-book.html?hp&action=click&pgtype=Homepage&clickmodule=mini-moth®ion=top-stories-below&WT.nav=top-stories-below&r=1>;

³⁷ <https://www.ft.com/content/30cb1942-996e-11e5-9228-87e603d47bdc#axzz3tpuKx1Dx>;

³⁸ <https://web.archive.org/web/20221124205839/https://m.aisixiang.com/data/63752.html>;

and Taiwan. In November-December 2006, he conducted research at the Center for International Relations Studies at National Chengchi University in Taiwan.³⁹

On December 17, 2022, Xue Rongjiu passed away in Beijing at the age of 86. He was a respected figure in the field of WTO research, and his contributions to academic research and education are highly regarded. In the late 1980s and 1990s, the textbook "International Trade," which he edited, was widely adopted by universities in China.⁴⁰

In 1986, when the Chinese government applied for the restoration of its contracting party status to the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), Xue Rongjiu became a member of the Chinese team for reopening trade relations. In 1991, he established the GATT Research Society at the University of International Business and Economics. With the progress of China's reopening and WTO accession negotiations, the GATT Research Society evolved into the WTO Research Center, with Xue Rongjiu serving as its president and director.⁴¹

³⁹ <https://baijiahao.baidu.com/s?id=1752619697641226856&wfr=spider&for=pc> ;

⁴⁰ <http://site.uibe.edu.cn/aspxNews/ViewNews.aspx?NewsID=14773>;

⁴¹

https://mp.weixin.qq.com/s?_biz=MzAxOTA0NTc5OQ==&mid=2658861320&idx=1&sn=30d2ee512784f4eda33582c00ebf4b09&chksm=8042adc0b73524d61276f1f424f96e52fbda691c5e17d4082820cde49cbe963ef407f518780&scene=27 ;

Huntington Report

After the proposal of the "Clash of Civilizations" theory, Chinese scholars' discussions mainly focused on the international background of the theory, interpretations of the theory itself, and its resulting impacts. Early efforts were mainly found in the book "Civilization and International Politics: Chinese Scholars' Evaluation of Huntington's Clash of Civilizations," edited by Wang Jisi. Most of the authors in this book discuss the "Clash of Civilizations" theory from the perspective of international politics, while some scholars present their views on the historical development, characteristics, comparisons, and interrelationships of world civilizations and cultures.

After the 9/11 incident, the "Clash of Civilizations" theory once again became a focal point of domestic academic research. At this point, scholars shifted their focus not only on the balance of international relations but also on analyzing how to address the increasingly complex international social situation through the lens of the theory, in order to guide China's peaceful and stable development. Since the inception of the theory, scholars' evaluations have been mixed, with the vast majority of domestic scholars holding a negative or partially negative attitude towards it, with few expressing approval.

Definition and Division

1) Xu Guoqi (Ph.D. in History from Harvard University, currently a professor in the History Department at the University of Hong Kong) 1994:

Huntington's Clash of Civilizations theory, besides being accused of being old wine in a new bottle, also has significant problems with the definition of the key term "civilization." Huntington believes that "civilization is a cultural entity" and "is the highest cultural grouping of people and the broadest level of cultural identity." There are two shortcomings in Huntington's definition. First, he renders civilizations static, as if they remain unchanged even after being frozen for many years, ignoring the dynamic nature of civilizations, which inevitably change with the times. Second, Huntington's definition overly emphasizes the cultural aspect. In reality, civilization seems to include various meanings such as agricultural civilization, industrial civilization, information civilization, and even modern civilization.

(From "American Cultural Mentality and the Clash of Civilizations Theory," "Chinese Social Science Quarterly" Spring 1994 Volume)

Huntington's "Clash of Civilizations" theory overlooks a very important fact, that "civilization" is not just a regional concept; in other words, civilization does not only refer to the eight major civilizations mentioned by Huntington. The meaning of civilization should include modern civilization, industrial civilization, technological civilization, and so on. Regarding the geographical meaning of "civilization," in fact, since the 15th century, Western civilization has already clashed with other civilizations, contrary to Huntington's assertion that it is only beginning now. The geographical significance of civilization is at best just a concept, and including Huntington, probably no one can clearly delineate the geographical boundaries of "Western civilization." Therefore, the author believes that discussing civilization solely from a geographical perspective is unscientific; it should include the modern meaning of civilization, namely, industrial civilization, technological civilization, modernization, and so on, as an integral part of the definition of civilization. From the perspective of modern civilization, there is fundamentally no serious conflict

between civilizations. Because the pursuit of modernization and industrialization has become the goal of all countries, Huntington's so-called eight major civilizations, in this sense, converge.

(From "Samuel P. Huntington and his 'Clash of Civilizations' Theory," "American Studies" 1994 Issue 1)

2) Zhang Rulun (Distinguished Professor at Fudan University, Director of the Chinese Philosophy Teaching and Research Office at the School of Philosophy) 1994:

Looking at the connotation and historical development of the concept of "culture," we can at least summarize the following conclusions:

(1) Culture mainly refers to human values, morality, and other spiritual aspects, rather than primarily to human material activities and achievements.

(2) This definition and the background of its emergence demonstrate that "culture" from the beginning contained reflections and criticisms on the problems of modernity that humanity faced. Although Tang Yinyin's concept of "civilization" also includes the general meaning of "culture," it emphasizes more on representing a social community that embodies a culture. Therefore, he sometimes explains "civilization" and "society" interchangeably. Huntington goes further; his notion of "civilization" is more synonymous with a political entity. He describes civilization conflict as a conflict between the West and the non-West, and the examples he uses to illustrate this conflict confirm this point. The strategies he proposes for the West, such as restraining the expansion of adversaries, maintaining military superiority, creating differences and conflicts, are far from the meaning of "civilization" or "culture." In short, Huntington effectively replaces the concept of "civilization" or "culture."

(From "Conflict of Cultures or Cultural Dilemma," "Modern and Traditional" 1994 Issue 3)

****The Future of Civilization****

3) Dai Shiping (currently Director of the Theory Department of the Propaganda Department of Yunnan Provincial Committee) 1998:

What viewpoints should we use to replace the "Clash of Civilizations" theory, and what kind of thinking should we use to integrate this complex world? This is the most open and tolerant idea in Chinese civilization, "harmony is most precious." ... If this idea of "harmony is most precious" can be promoted, if all countries and nations in the world pursue "harmony is most precious," instead of "civilization conflict," that is, living in peace, understanding each other, respecting each other, treating each other equally, developing together, and prospering together, it will promote the civilization and progress of humanity. Therefore, as long as we use this idea of "harmony is most precious" to influence all humanity, it is a very important contribution to the progress and development of humanity.

("Biased and Untrue Predictions of the 'Clash of Civilizations' Theory," "Academic Exploration" 1998 Issue 6)

4) Wang Tianshi (formerly Deputy Secretary of the Yunnan Provincial Committee of the Communist Party of China, Minister of the Propaganda Department, and Chief Editor of "Seeking Truth" magazine) 2003:

What appears before us is not a world centered around the clash of civilizations but a multipolar world centered around peace and development. For the new era, the fundamental way to handle international relations is not through "civilizational conflict" but through a multipolar world and the emphasis on harmony. Diversity of civilizations is a blessing for humanity. In this diverse world, the "Clash of Civilizations" theory will only mislead people into the path of evil war, while the spirit

of "harmony is most precious" will guide people to carefully protect the harmony of nature, strive to achieve harmony between humans and nature, continually promote harmony among different ethnic groups, different countries, and different civilizations, and jointly create a beautiful world of "harmony among all nations."

("A Multipolar World Emphasizing Harmony—A Comprehensive Review of Huntington's 'Clash of Civilizations' Theory," "Seeking Truth" 2003 Issue 7)

5) Li Shi'an (Professor, Department of History, Renmin University of China):

In other parts of the world, especially in East Asia, due to the recognition of the spirit of China's "Harmony" culture by various countries, emphasizing the unity of culture, cultural conflicts are rare. In China, Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhism are integrated. In other East Asian countries, there is also inclusiveness, where various cultures and religions have their own space for survival.

"Harmony" culture advocates collective security of the entire society and emphasizes "moderation." However, "harmony" culture does not mean absence of opposition and struggle. "Harmony" culture first acknowledges "harmony in diversity," and then, based on this, it promotes "harmony as precious" and "harmonious coexistence," with various cultures depending on, complementing, and promoting each other. This principle of "unity in diversity" is the characteristic and advantage of Chinese culture and East Asian culture. In international relations, "harmony" culture advocates complementarity, promotes multilateralism, multilateral complementarity, and interaction, and follows the principles of "restraint and propriety" and "do not do unto others what you would not want done unto yourself." Therefore, emphasizing the spirit of "harmony" culture will bring peace to international relations.

In the 21st century, we should promote the spirit of "harmony" culture in handling international relations, so that although countries of different cultures are "harmonious in diversity," they can still prioritize "harmony as precious," "harmonious coexistence," and through "moderation," jointly achieve development, transforming "civilizational conflict" into "harmony culture," promoting the civilized development of international relations, and eliminating war and hegemonic politics.

("'Harmony' Culture and 'Clash of Civilizations'—Culture in East Asian International Relations," "Historical Theory Research," 2006, Issue 3)

6) Li Geqin (Associate Professor, Department of Political Science, Zhongnan University of Economics and Law):

Since the future of civilization is unlikely to achieve the imagined great convergence, and "universal civilization" is also difficult to achieve, will civilization inevitably move towards conflict as Huntington predicted? The answer is also negative. The author believes that Huntington has put forward some profound insights and also some shortcomings regarding the future direction of civilization. Huntington's judgment is somewhat too pessimistic; he underestimates people's tolerance of cultural differences in modern society. The preservation and expansion of the values and behaviors of one's own civilization can be carried out in a peaceful environment of mutual understanding. Governments and people of various countries in the globalized society are increasingly aware of the importance of communication and cultural exchanges. Even if diverse civilizations cannot converge, they can and should peacefully coexist, respect each other, and promote each other. The prediction of "civilizational conflict" can be completely avoided through the vigilance and efforts of various civilizations themselves.

("New Interpretation of 'Clash of Civilizations' Paradigm in International Politics—Rereading Huntington's 'Clash of Civilizations'," "World Ethnicities," 2008, Issue 1)

On 9.11

7) Xiao Junming (Researcher, Documentation and Information Center, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences):

The collapse of a symbol seems to portend the decline of a civilization. The collapse of the World Trade Center seems to foreshadow the collapse of Western civilization, which precisely verifies Huntington's concerns from years ago. Therefore, when terrorism is identified as the enemy of all humanity, some people in the Western world are looking for the roots of terrorism in clashes of civilizations, or they simply attribute the 9/11 attacks to clashes of civilizations. It is undeniable that, speaking solely of the 9/11 attacks, there is a clear causal link between terrorists and religious extremists, or they correspond to each other. However, if one seeks an inevitable correspondence between terrorist acts and cultural or religious roots from a theoretical perspective, it will inevitably fall into the traps of reductionism and determinism. In fact, whether one agrees or disagrees with the clash of civilizations theory, the problem often lies in following a reductionist approach in theory to find some inevitable causal connection. Thus, all conflicts in the world are reduced to clashes between civilizations or cultures, and the focus of debate often revolves around whether conflicts between civilizations can be avoided or are inevitable. All debates seem to revolve around the topics envisioned by Huntington, and the world seems to evolve according to Huntington's vision.

("Perplexity of Civilization—Reflections on the Clash of Civilizations Theory," "Foreign Social Sciences," 2002, Issue 3)

8) Sun Xiangdong (Ph.D. Candidate, Institute of International Strategy, Central Party School of the Communist Party of China):

From the essence and policy suggestions of the clash of civilizations theory, some people call Huntington's clash of civilizations theory "realism dressed in civilizational clothes," which is not surprising. At the same time, it should be noted that although the clash of civilizations theory is the ideological source of many people, due to fears of political taboos in American and Western political cultures, people are still reluctant to explicitly use this term, especially after the 9/11 attacks, when the American decision-makers deliberately avoided creating this impression. However, the roots of the 9/11 attacks, the rise of conservative trends in American and Western popular culture, and the growth of anti-American and anti-Western sentiments in other civilizations all indicate that effectively managing conflicts between civilizations and cultures has become an urgent issue in international politics.

("Misunderstandings about the 'Clash of Civilizations' and the '9/11' Attacks," "International Observer," 2002, Issue 6)

9) Guo Kai (Ph.D. in Economics, Harvard University; currently employed at the Research Institute of the People's Bank of China):

Huntington's anxieties found resonance among the neo-conservatives in the United States (such as Vice President Dick Cheney). After the 9/11 attacks, Huntington's "clash of civilizations" discourse was revered as a beacon of the times, and some even wrote that those fundamentalist terrorists

from the Middle East had also read Huntington's book with "approval." However, both the neo-conservatives and those hostile to the West misunderstood Huntington. Huntington's "clash of civilizations" theory does not encourage conflicts between civilizations; he was simply trying to explain the fact of conflicts between civilizations. His warning to the West was not to try to transform non-Western civilizations with Western civilization. What he advocated was dialogue, understanding, and cooperation between civilizations, a world order built on diverse civilizations rather than a single civilization.

("The Demise of the 'Clash of Civilizations' Theorist—Huntington and the Changing Society He Saw," "21st Century Economic Report," January 1, 2009, 2nd Edition)

10) Zhang Jiadong (Currently employed at the Center for American Studies, Fudan University):

The focus of the clash of civilizations theory was originally on conflicts between states or groups of states, and non-state actors were not its focus. However, amidst a barrage of debate, the 9/11 attacks occurred. The 9/11 attacks had two results: on the one hand, many opponents ceased their attacks on the clash of civilizations theory, believing that this event could partly prove the validity of the clash of civilizations theory. However, surprisingly, shortly after the 9/11 attacks, Huntington himself declared that the root cause of the 9/11 attacks was not clashes between civilizations. However, regardless, the 9/11 attacks made the clash of civilizations theory one angle for examining contemporary terrorism issues.

("The Clash of Civilizations and Terrorism: Imagination or Reality?" "Social Sciences," 2009, Issue 4)

Three, Religion

11) Liu Jinghua (Professor, School of Political Science and International Relations, Beijing Normal University):

There is indeed a confrontation between Muslim fundamentalism and the United States and the West, such as the confrontation between Iran and the United States. However, one cannot conclude from this that the entire Islamic religion is in conflict with the United States, nor can one simply explain it using Huntington's "clash of civilizations" paradigm, which suggests that Islamic civilization is in full confrontation with Western civilization. In fact, the confrontation between Iran and the United States is precisely caused by economic interests and the imbalance of power.

Professor Huntington is undoubtedly a supporter of the "Islamic threat theory". However, the more sophisticated aspect compared to others is that he uses the "clash of civilizations" to encompass the arguments of the "Islamic threat theory", which not only appears more civilized but also seems reasonable to explain the "Islamic threat theory" with the "clash of civilizations", thus avoiding unexpected consequences. Nevertheless, Professor Huntington still holds on to Cold War thinking, and his theory is antagonistic.

("The 'Islamic Threat Theory' and the Issue of American Interests—An Evaluation of Samuel Huntington's 'Clash of Civilizations'", "West Asia and Africa", 1994, Issue 2)

12) Li Shi'an:

Among the various elements of culture, religion is often used to incite conflict. Throughout history, religious conflicts have been continuous, but the causes of conflicts are not caused by religious issues themselves, but by other reasons such as politics, economics, and military. Due to the

different civilizations having different religions, rulers with aggressive expansionist tendencies from different civilizations often use religious differences to launch wars to achieve their expansionist goals. The United States' use of the "clash of civilizations" theory to provoke hatred towards Islamic countries among people worldwide can only have a temporary effect. While people are opposing Islamic extremism and terrorism, they will inevitably ask: Why does Islamic extremism and terrorism arise? The vast majority of Muslims love peace. Islamic extremism and terrorism do not represent Islamic countries and people who love peace. Due to the aggression of the United States and the West, the resistance of the people of Islamic countries is just. However, in the resistance of the Islamic people, extremism and terrorism have emerged, which is not surprising. While eliminating Islamic extremism and terrorism, their root causes must also be eliminated, and the acts of aggression and expansion under the pretext of "counter-terrorism" must be eradicated. The fact is, Western hegemonic culture, exclusionary culture, and absolutist culture can only bring turmoil and war to international relations.

("Harmony" Culture and 'Clash of Civilizations'—Culture in East Asian International Relations", "Historical Theory Research", 2006, Issue 3)

13) Zhang Jiadong:

In fact, starting from the perspective of religion, which is considered the core element of civilization conflicts, there is no fundamental conflict between Islam and Christianity or even Judaism. These three major religions are all monotheistic, all acknowledging common prophets, to the extent that they are called the Abrahamic religions. If one must say that there is conflict between civilizations, it will not exist between Islam and Christianity, but may exist between monotheism and polytheism. Eastern polytheism fundamentally differs from those civilizations that do not tolerate other beliefs and insist that they alone possess the truth and facts. Due to religious exclusivism and self-centeredness, in politics and other fields, some countries (especially the United States) also regard their own national form as the only correct one in the world, and any other people and countries must follow this model and obey their guidance, otherwise they can legitimately use various coercive means. In this sense, the theory of clash of civilizations indeed contains the mentality of Western civilization conquering other civilizations again.

("The Clash of Civilizations and Terrorism: Imagination or Reality?", "Social Sciences", 2009, Issue 4)

Confucian Culture

14) Gao Yu (Professor, School of Humanities, Zhejiang Normal University):

Huntington has many analyses on Chinese civilization as an entity. Overall, he believes that China is becoming increasingly powerful economically and is posing more and more of a threat to the West. Asian small countries, especially Confucian countries, are increasingly inclined to rely on China, or at least not offend China. He gave a small example: when Lee Kuan Yew visited China for the first time in the 1970s, he insisted on speaking English with Chinese leaders instead of Chinese, but 20 years later, he did not do so. This is both a recognition of civilization and a demonstration of pro-China development. He believes that an alliance between China, Pakistan, and Iran (i.e., the "Confucian-Islamic Alliance") may bring terrible prospects.

("Revisiting Huntington's 'Clash of Civilizations' Theory", "Journal of Hunan City University", 2003, Issue 4)

15) Tang Yijie (Professor, Department of Philosophy, Peking University; Director, Institute of Chinese Philosophy and Culture):

Confucius' principle of "harmony is precious" and the principle of "harmony without uniformity" should be a basic principle for handling relations between different cultures. In other words, the principle of "harmony is precious" based on Confucianism and the principle of "harmony without uniformity" should be a basic principle for handling relations between different cultures. Handling relations between different cultural traditions of nations and ethnic groups with the principle of "harmony without uniformity" not only has a positive significance for eliminating conflicts, confrontations, and even wars but also promotes the healthy development of cultures of various countries and ethnic groups. Therefore, as Russell said, "The exchange between different cultures has been proved to be a milestone in the development of human civilization."

("Global Ethics' and 'Clash of Civilizations'", "Journal of Beijing Administrative College", 2003, Issue 1)

16) Gao Jian (Associate Professor, School of English Studies, Shanghai International Studies University):

There is no doubt that Huntington has also made errors based on empiricism and naturalism in understanding the future direction of Chinese civilization. "He completely abstracts modern China from the internal spirit and external history of the entire Chinese civilization, uproots modern China from its traditional cultural foundation and real basis, which is something we cannot accept in any case." Here, Chinese civilization, as a kind of individual civilization without personality, as a complete appendage to modern capitalist culture, has been ruthlessly sacrificed to the "identity tyranny" of capitalist civilization's inherent nature. As for many aspects of Chinese culture mentioned by Huntington, regardless of whether they are legitimate and profound in terms of their objective significance, they are superficial and external in terms of their theoretical nature. "When Huntington tries to talk about history, those extremely one-sided, arbitrarily selected historical fragments are completely serving his conflict theory that he has matured in his heart; when he truly presents his identified clash of civilizations theory, Huntington completely disregards that living history." In this regard, the definitive conclusions about the contemporary essence of Chinese culture based on the theory of clash of civilizations are completely absurd and untenable.

("The Philosophical Foundation and Critique of Huntington's 'Clash of Civilizations' Theory", Doctoral Dissertation, Fudan University, 2010)

Globalization

17) Tang Yijie:

In the discussion of seeking "global ethics," scholars have proposed that attention should be paid to seeking "minimum ethics" or "universal ethics" among different civilizations. They believe that seeking "minimum ethics" is conducive to forming a "new moral consensus" among different civilizations and ethnic groups and maintaining "global moral stability." The "minimum ethics" or "universal ethics" include common human rights, common human welfare, common human dignity, common human responsibilities, etc., and do not include various cultural values, ideological beliefs, and specific life practices. Of course, this view is not completely correct. To achieve the fundamental goal of "global ethics" or "global moral stability," "harmony without uniformity" should be pursued in dealing with the relationship between different civilizations and different cultures. "Harmony without uniformity" emphasizes that in the formation of "global ethics" or "global moral stability," full respect should be given to the unique cultural traditions, moral customs, and moral norms of different civilizations and ethnic groups, so as to fully respect the differences and diversity of different civilizations and ethnic groups.

("Global Ethics' and 'Clash of Civilizations'", "Journal of Beijing Administrative College", 2003, Issue 1)

18) Cui Da (Associate Professor, Department of Political Science and Administration, Shandong University of Technology):

The theory of conflict and coexistence of civilizations provides a new analytical model for understanding world politics from the perspective of the framework and paradigm of human civilization in the global context, which enlightens us that we must have a sufficient understanding and emphasis on historical and civilizational factors. At the same time, we should recognize that the intense process of globalization has triggered "asynchronous synchrony" among countries worldwide, leading to the diversity and variability of factors influencing international politics. A changing world full of diverse challenges inevitably requires us to have a theory of change and diversity. It is erroneous and even dangerous to oversimplify and fixate the theory of conflict and coexistence of civilizations. Instead, we should comprehensively understand, analyze, and interpret the complex international relations under today's globalization from a broader perspective, and formulate our scientific international strategies to address opportunities and challenges.

("Conflict and Coexistence of Civilizations in the Perspective of Globalization," "Eastern Forum," 2003, Issue 1)

the Iraq War

19) Li Shi'an:

In order to obtain the oil resources of the Middle East and occupy advantageous strategic positions, the United States launched a war of aggression against Iraq. Besides fabricating allegations such as Iraq possessing "weapons of mass destruction," President George W. Bush ominously referred to the invasion of Iraq as a new "Crusade." In this way, Bush attributed the aggressive war launched by the United States to the "clash of civilizations" as described by Huntington. Bush also used the pretext of "counter-terrorism" to incite global hatred towards Muslims, attempting to increase global fear of Islamic civilization and artificially provoke a "clash of civilizations."

("'Harmony' Culture and 'Clash of Civilizations'—Culture in East Asian International Relations," "Historical Theory Research," 2006, Issue 3)

20) Yu Weidong (Deputy Researcher, Institute of Eurasian Studies, Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences):

The war between the United States and Iraq does not exhibit the characteristics of a clash of civilizations (Iraq does not represent Islam nor possess the power to threaten the United States and the United Kingdom); it is purely a war launched by the United States and the United Kingdom out of their own interests and considerations of Middle Eastern strategy. It has been pointed out that the purposes of the United States and the United Kingdom are multiple: firstly, to overthrow Saddam's regime and establish a government subject to them; secondly, to redistribute Iraq's interests; thirdly, to establish another bridgehead in the Middle East to directly contain Syria and Iran, which support anti-American forces, and to deter Islamic fundamentalist organizations in Saudi Arabia and Egypt; fourthly, through the war against Iraq, to pave the way for the comprehensive control of Middle Eastern resources and the establishment of a new order in the Middle East, thereby weakening the economic and strategic interests of Europe, Russia, and China in the region.

("The Essence of the 'Clash of Civilizations Theory' Discussed from the Perspective of the Iraq War," "Arab World," 2003, Issue 6)

21) Ma Zhongfa (Professor, Law School, Fudan University; Invited Researcher, Shanghai Institute of Intellectual Property):

Civilizations do not clash; what clashes are the interests behind nations represented by states. "Civilization" is merely a symbol useful to certain groups. The war against Iraq launched by the United States and the United Kingdom is not a so-called clash of civilizations but their concern that the hard-line Saddam regime, which possesses abundant oil resources, may threaten their strategic interests in the Middle East and globally. They disregarded the will of the United Nations, the Iraqi people, and the peoples of other countries and took the risk of launching the war. At this moment, the so-called "clash of civilizations" is not even a weak pretense. In the foreseeable future, human society will still develop along its existing trajectory in accordance with historical laws, and conflicts of interest will remain the main theme of various conflicts worldwide. However, in today's era of rapid technological development, with the relative shrinking of human living space and the gradual depletion of non-renewable resources, what is needed more is cooperation, especially among the leading civilizations, to seek common interests, survival, and prosperity, while respecting cultural, religious, and ethnic differences, to jointly build this beautiful home in peace rather than conflict. Finally, let me conclude with a quote from Franklin D. Roosevelt, the only U.S. president to be elected four times: "We know that we cannot live in peace alone. Our peace always depends on the peace of other countries."

("Conflict of Civilizations or Conflict of Interests?—Revisiting Huntington's Clash of Civilizations Theory from the Iraq War," "Jianghuai Forum," 2004, Issue 2)

Countermeasures

21) He Guanghu (Researcher, Institute of Buddhist and Religious Studies, Renmin University of China; Professor, School of Philosophy):

First, cooperation and communication between cultures will play a significant and increasingly significant role in preventing or suppressing clashes of civilizations. Second, the essential nature and spiritual compatibility of cultures can be discovered and recognized through arduous efforts. Third, representatives of various cultures and ordinary people living in different traditions can sit down together and reach consensus on major principles concerning common interests. Just as existing commercial competition relations require "rules," future cultural cooperative relations also need "covenants." Therefore, faced with unstoppable globalization, what we should do is not to spit at the speeding train because it is not heading in the direction we think is correct, but to transform from passive and pessimistic passengers into active and rational conductors, to correct its direction together. Because there is no sole driver responsible for this train, and there is no immutable track ahead for this train!

("'Clash of Civilizations' or 'Cultural Covenant'?" "Open Times," 2002, Issue 4)

Gan Yang

Profile

- Born in 1952 in Shenyang, Liaoning Province, he is a native of Hangzhou, Zhejiang Province. During the Cultural Revolution, he spent eight years working in the *Beidahuang*, the Great Northern Wilderness in northeast China. In 1982, he obtained a bachelor's degree from Heilongjiang University, and in 1985, he graduated from the Institute of Foreign Philosophy at Peking University with a master's degree in Western philosophy.
- Currently, he holds the position of the Yi Xian Chair Professor, Dean of the Institute for Advanced Studies in Humanities, Dean of the Boya College, and Director of General Education at Sun Yat-sen University. He is also a part-time professor at Tsinghua University.

Achievements

- Gan Yang is one of the most influential figures in the field of Chinese intellectual and academic circles since the **beginning of the reform and opening-up era**⁴². The editorial board he established in the 1980s for *Culture: China and the World*⁴³ is widely regarded as a symbol of the rise of the new generation of Chinese academics at that time. The series of books *Modern Western Academic Library* and *Culture: World and China*⁴⁴ were among the most influential book series of that era. They not only laid the foundation for contemporary Chinese research on Western studies but also provided a theoretical basis for the rise of the wave of "**rethinking modernity**" in contemporary China⁴⁵.
- Since 1989 he has been studied at University of Chicago, under supervision of Edward Shils, Allan Bloom and Francois Furet. After returning from the United States, Gan Yang once again became a prominent figure in the Chinese intellectual and academic circles. His work *Political Philosopher Strauss* is recognized as one of the most theoretically profound studies in contemporary China and has directly sparked a turn towards political philosophy in the Chinese academic community in recent years.
- Gan Yang is also one of the most controversial figures in contemporary Chinese intellectual circles. His work *The Idea of Freedom* published in the late 1980s is recognized as the pioneering work of Chinese liberalism, but his work *Liberalism: For the Aristocrats or the Common People?* published in the mid-1990s is considered a representative work of the Chinese New Left. His book *Political Philosopher Strauss* in 2002 is regarded as laying the foundation for Chinese conservatism.

'Re-examine West' and 'Re-understand China' --- Main Proposition

- He believes that **Chinese people's understanding of China today often carries with it a set of views about the West, which are often not a true understanding of the West but rather partial or even contradictory imaginations.** In response to this problem, he puts forward an important idea that to understand China today, one must reexamine the West. **Reexamining the West** means that **instead of treating the West as a pharmacy and seeking remedies from the West to cure China's problems, one must first understand that Western thought has always sought to address Western issues.** Therefore, it is necessary to delve into the history and intellectual context of the West and understand what

⁴² Here is his column. It's in Chinese though: <http://www.wywxwk.com/author/c3/250.html>

⁴³ Many renowned figures in the field of Chinese intellectual and academic circles, such as Liu Xiaofeng, Chen Lai, Yan Buke, Chen Pingyuan, Chen Jiaying, and Li Yinhe, emerged from this editorial board.

⁴⁴ Gan Yang edited these in the 1980s. Published by Sanlian Bookstore(三联书店);

⁴⁵ see Gan Yang's edited work "Cultural Consciousness in the 1980s" and Gan Yang's book "The Contest between Ancient and Modern China and the West"

issues the West itself is discussing.⁴⁶ In light of this situation, he has guided a group of dynamic young scholars in China to devote themselves to reexamining the West. They have edited/translated/written a lot of publications.⁴⁷

- At the same time, Gan Yang proposes that people should also **delve into the historical context of Chinese civilization in order to re-understand China, rather than understanding it based on Western concepts.** He believes that China has its own unique cultural and historical background, and it is important to approach the understanding of China from within its own context rather than imposing Western perspectives.
- Since Gan Yang returned to the University of Hong Kong in 1999, almost every article, interview, and speech he has given has sparked new discussions in the Chinese intellectual circles. His interviews in the "Annual Special Issues" of the "21st Century Economic Report" in 2003, 2004, and 2005 were featured as headline articles and had a significant impact in the intellectual community. These interviews were titled *From 'Ethnicity-Nation' to 'Civilization-Nation', The Integration of Three Traditions and the Revival of Chinese Civilization* and *On China's Soft Power.*
- In 2005, Gan Yang delivered a famous speech at Tsinghua University titled *The Three Traditions of the New Era.*⁴⁸ He proposed that the traditions of Confucius, Mao Zedong, and Deng Xiaoping are a continuous historical and cultural tradition in China, and the direction of China's development is "**Confucian Socialism.**" This speech generated significant reactions both domestically and internationally, and Western scholars such as Daniel Bell named Gan Yang's concept of "Confucian Socialism" as "leftist Confucianism," attracting global attention.
- In early 2007, Gan Yang presented a paper at an international academic conference in South Korea, introducing the concept of the "**Sixty Years of China's Path.**" He emphasized that **the first thirty years of New China should not negate the following thirty years, and the subsequent thirty years of reform should not negate the previous thirty years.** This paper was later published in the June 2007 issue of *Dushu*(Reading) magazine under the title *China's Path: Thirty Years and Sixty Years.*⁴⁹ **The idea of "two consecutive thirty-year periods" has become one of the most significant topics in the intellectual community.**
- In December 2008, Gan Yang was invited to be a guest on Phoenix TV's "Century Lecture Hall" and delivered a talk titled *Intellectual Liberation in Contemporary China.* He proposed the concept of the "**Second Intellectual Liberation,**" which means liberating oneself from blind worship of the West and the United States. The video of his lecture received a tremendous response. In April 2009, Gan Yang appeared again on Phoenix TV's "Century Lecture Hall" and gave a talk titled *Prosperity and Elegance.* He argued that **the true goal of China's development is not only prosperity but also "elegance," which refers to the revival of Chinese culture.**⁵⁰

Pursue for General Education

- The concept of "General Education,"⁵¹ vigorously advocated by Gan Yang since 2004, has strongly promoted Chinese universities to embark on the path of general education,

⁴⁶ For example, he points out that the United States is not solely characterized by liberalism but also has a strong conservative tradition. In the past thirty years, the biggest change in the United States has been the replacement of liberalism by conservatism as the mainstream ideology. However, the Chinese academic community lacks an understanding of this complexity.

⁴⁷ The series of books he has edited, such as the "New Series on 'Culture: World and China'" (Sanlian Bookstore), as well as the "Origins of Western Learning" (Sanlian Bookstore), the series on "Political Philosophy" (Huaxia Publishing House), and the series on "Classics and Interpretation" (Huaxia Publishing House), have become the most influential works in the Chinese academic community today.

⁴⁸ https://www.guancha.cn/GanYang/2023_09_09_707902_1.shtml;

⁴⁹ <http://www.wywxwk.com/Article/sichao/2009/09/14607.html>;

⁵⁰ <https://www.aisixiang.com/data/23729.html>;

⁵¹ 通识教育 in Chinese;

transforming it from a state of basic unawareness to vigorous development in a very short period of time.⁵²

- Quote: "A true Chinese elite must first have cultural self-confidence, which fundamentally comes from full confidence in Chinese civilization. To build 'Chinese elites' means to cultivate cultured Chinese people who have full cultural awareness of Chinese civilization and possess a high degree of self-confidence as Chinese."⁵³
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⁵² <http://wen.org.cn/modules/article/view.article.php/article=1372> ;

⁵³ <https://www.aisixiang.com/data/7505.html>;

Zhou Xiaoping Report

1. Brief Bio

- "My greatest goal is for everyone to believe in their own country, believe in their own ethnicity, believe in their family and friends, believe in their own hands, and bravely and confidently face the world, psychologically preparing themselves to become strong citizens of the new century." ——Zhou Xiaoping
- Zhou Xiaoping, whose real name is Zhou Ping, according to him, his father was an employee in the petroleum industry. Zhou Xiaoping was born in Zunyi, Guizhou in 1981, and later the whole family settled in Zigong, Sichuan.
- Zhou Xiaoping was weak and sickly in his youth. When Zhou Xiaoping was in high school, his father was laid off, and knowing that his family couldn't afford his college tuition, Zhou Xiaoping chose to enlist. He became a tank maintenance soldier in Tibet, which transformed him from a teenager to a young man, from an ordinary person to a soldier, and determined his future life and hobbies.
- During his military service, he served as a tank maintenance soldier. Reading and learning have always been Zhou Xiaoping's hobbies. His former favorites were "Science Fiction World" and "King of Fairy Tales".
- At that time, the Internet was on the rise, and Zhou Xiaoping keenly realized that the Internet might be the future emerging market. Although the army did not allow internet access, he read many related books. Zhou Xiaoping said, "I studied very hard, afraid of being out of touch with the times in the future."
- In 2000, after Zhou Xiaoping was discharged from the army, he worked in a cultural bureau in a county, but he couldn't stand the overly leisurely job and wanted to help relieve the burden on his family, so he resigned and went to Beijing with 800 yuan, becoming a "Beijing drifter". Soon, he found a job writing promotional materials, but it wasn't until 2003 that he settled in a large portal website company.
- During his time in Beijing, he experienced all the difficulties that all Beijing drifters encounter. He lived in basements and sometimes only ate instant noodles for several days. When he finally stabilized his job, he wrote an e-book called "Never Unemployed," which talks about how to never be unemployed and embodies his aspirations.
- As the attention to his work increased, in 2007, Zhou Xiaoping was invited by Phoenix Satellite TV to participate in a program discussing housing prices with celebrities such as Pan Shiyi. Since then, he has become more aware of the importance of knowledge: "I spent nine months reading 'Comprehensive Mirror for Aid in Government', and then I spent two years cramming 'A Brief History of Europe', 'A Brief History of Asia Wars', and 'A Brief History of European Wars', and a series of other books..." Zhou believes that this period was a time of great transformation in his thinking.
- Bestselling work sold out within two weeks of 20,000 copies. In June 2013, Zhou Xiaoping published a long blog post titled "Please Don't Disappoint This Era" on his blog named "Comrade Zhou Xiaoping," which was quickly spread by netizens and has been reposted and viewed more than 30 million times to date. The article refutes irresponsible remarks and baseless rumors online with numerous examples, brimming with patriotism and national sentiment, reflecting the responsibility and commitment of young people. Due to the widespread attention from netizens, Zhou Xiaoping decided to compile some of the articles from his blog and more than ten articles published for

the first time into a book, resulting in the new book "Please Don't Disappoint This Era." Reporters learned that the book was officially released on August 15th, and within just two weeks, the initial print run of 20,000 copies was sold out.

Source: Mainland China Medias

2. Lu Wei and Zhou's rise

- In 2013, Lu Wei became the director of the Cyberspace Administration of China, taking control of China's internet. Upon assuming office, Lu Wei initiated a series of crackdowns on the internet and launched the "round-up of big Vs" campaign. Under his authority, social media platforms like Weibo were filled with fear, with many prominent users either remaining silent or fleeing. Incarcerations, appearances on national television, and censorship became commonplace.
- On August 10, 2013, Lu Wei held a discussion with over a dozen internet celebrities. During the meeting, Lu Wei put forward "six hopes" and reached a consensus with the big Vs to "adhere to seven bottom lines." The "six hopes" included an expectation for internet celebrities to consciously uphold national interests, promote socialist advanced culture, advocate Chinese national virtues, abide by laws and moral standards, actively promote social integrity, and safeguard the legitimate rights and interests of citizens.
- The "seven bottom lines" consisted of legal regulations, socialist system, national interests, legitimate rights and interests of citizens, social public order, moral standards, and the authenticity of information. This marked Lu Wei's first public warning to the 'big Vs'. In fact, among the attendees, some individuals' fate had already been predetermined by Lu Wei.
- A few days later, Xue Manzi, who had millions of followers on Weibo, was detained by the Beijing police for soliciting prostitution. Not only was this incident officially announced, but it was also reported on CCTV News, lasting about 3 minutes. Xue Manzi became the first big V to fall under Lu Wei's control.
- Zhou Xiaoping, who attended the discussion with Xue Manzi, subsequently rose to fame. Born in 1981 in Zigong, Sichuan, Zhou Xiaoping was previously unknown and often made factual errors in his online posts. However, under Lu Wei's patronage and promotion, he quickly became a role model for positive energy.
- Zhou Xiaoping not only participated in the Central Symposium on Literary and Art Work as an internet writer but also posted photos with leaders in the background on the internet, a move that was undoubtedly orchestrated by Lu Wei, also known as the "makeup artist." Afterward, Zhou Xiaoping became a member of the National Youth Federation and chairman of the Sichuan Network Writers Association, accumulating various official titles and frequently being invited to lectures by government departments.
- Doubts about Zhou Xiaoping's knowledge and logic have never ceased, but with Lu Wei as a powerful "umbrella," he remained untouchable.
- Fang Zhouzi, who had been active on the internet for many years, faced numerous enemies due to his academic debunking activities, yet he remained unscathed. In 2010, after Fang Zhouzi was attacked for questioning Xiao Chuanguo, an article titled "When There's No Fang Zhouzi in the World, the World Will Be Harmonious" was published by Zhou Xiaoping, who was then relatively unknown. In October 2014, Fang Zhouzi saw this article and subsequently published a rebuttal titled "Dreams Shattered in America." Fang Zhouzi used data to refute the inaccuracies in Zhou Xiaoping's article about the minimum wage, property taxes, highway tolls, and iPhone prices in the United States, mocking Zhou Xiaoping for "dreaming about America and then ranting about its evils."
- What followed stunned everyone: Fang Zhouzi was quickly banned across the entire

internet. Not only were his Weibo and other self-media accounts shut down, but his blog, where he had been writing for over a decade, was also not spared.

- Only the Cyberspace Administration had such power. After Lu Wei's fall, Zhou Xiaoping resigned as chairman of the Sichuan Network Writers Association in March of this year, perhaps signaling the beginning of his de- officialization.

3. CPPCC connection with Wang Huning and Taiwan Proposal

- The primary task of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC) is "united front work," and Wang Huning has been appointed as the chairman of the CPPCC, ranking fourth in the Standing Committee of the CCP Political Bureau.
- The emergence of Zhou Xiaoping benefited from the former director of the Cyberspace Administration, Lu Wei. (Lu Wei was put in jail for corruption in 2017)
- This year, after Wang Huning assumed the position of chairman of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC), he brought Zhou Xiaoping into the CPPCC. Therefore, today we see scenes of Zhou Xiaoping's revolutionary wife singing praises to the Russian invaders in the ruins of Donetsk Mariupol in Ukraine. They even glorify Russia's invasion of Ukraine as the Great Patriotic War fought by the Soviet Union against the fascist forces.
- In January this year, Katsuji Nakazawa, a senior commentator for Nikkei Asia, wrote that according to internal sources within the CCP, Wang Huning, the incumbent member of the Political Bureau Standing Committee, will be responsible for Taiwan-related united front work. Xi Jinping hopes he will propose a theoretical framework to replace the bankrupt "one country, two systems" model. The sources said Wang Huning's task is to work towards the reunification of Taiwan.
- Zhou Xiaoping, proposed during the CPPCC meeting to issue a "blacklist of individuals promoting Taiwan separatist forces" and advocate for punitive measures. He suggested that when China invades Taiwan, those who arrest or eliminate individuals on the blacklist should be rewarded. This proposal has been accepted by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) authorities and forwarded to relevant departments for further study. Zhou Xiaoping announced on Weibo on the 4th that his proposal had been accepted.
- Yaita Akio, the former Beijing correspondent for Japan's Nikkei Shimbun and current chief of the Taipei branch, commented on Facebook that Zhou Xiaoping's proposal could be considered as terrorism. Although he is just a CPPCC member without decision-making power, the fact that his proposal can reach official media outlets indicates that there are significant similarities in thinking between Zhou Xiaoping and a considerable portion of the top CCP leadership. Moreover, the CCP's definition of "Taiwan independence" is very broad. If this proposal were to be approved, it would mean that incidents similar to the 228 Massacre in Taiwan could happen at any time.

- <https://www.epochtimes.com/gb/23/3/11/n13947833.htm>
 - <https://twitter.com/cskun1989>
 - <https://www.bbc.com/zhongwen/simp/chinese-news-45002459>
-

Muhammad Fayek

Muhammad Fayek was born in Mansoura in the 1930s, while Egypt was still occupied by Britain, and as a teenager he became fascinated by communist and socialist ideas (p. 35).

Before the start of the tripartite aggression, Egyptian intelligence was coordinating with the men of President Makarios III in Greece to determine the preparations of the British forces at their bases in Malta and Cyprus (p. 78).

To confront British propaganda in Port Said during the tripartite aggression in 1956, the “popular media” was formed, which benefited from all political movements, the most important of which was the communist organization Hadto (p. 84).

The tripartite aggression ended after the warning of the Soviet Union and pressure from the United States, after which African liberation movements began heading to Egypt to contact it and obtain its support (p. 87).

Abdel Nasser did not mind making peace with Israel, but on two conditions. (M Fayek: Nasser and Haile Selassie p.104).

After the tripartite aggression, Egypt moved to support the liberation movements, through radio broadcasts in local languages, and meeting with African leaders going on Hajj through Egypt. As numbers increased, Muhammad Fayek established an office (the African Association) to receive the liberation movements, and through the office, military training was facilitated, radio stations were opened, and Legal experts and informing embassies of their cases (p. 107 - 110).

Fayek met Che Guevara twice, in 1959 and 1965. He was interested in African liberation movements and Egypt’s role in them. He visited Cuba by official invitation in 1959, and Abdel Nasser asked him to know details about the Cuban Revolution, and at the end of the visit he met Fidel Castro (p. 127).

The first and last conference of African, Asian and Latin American peoples was held in Cuba in 1965. Latin American countries protested against Egypt’s participation in it due to the presence of organizations and associations hostile to their governments, and he met with Castro at the end of his visit (p. 128).

Egypt participated strongly in the Algerian revolution, including sending weapons and ammunition, and the success of the Algerian revolution was one of the reasons for the independence of the French colonies in 1960 (p. 129 - 132).

Battles took place in Nigeria for the secession of the oil-rich Biafra region after the defeat of Egypt in 1967, but Egypt participated in helping the Nigerian government in confronting the separatists, so that the independent countries would not be torn apart and “puppet governments” would be formed (p. 135 - 138).

In September 1960, he was appointed to the United Nations as a representative of the United Arab Republic (the period of unification between Egypt and Syria). He was in the Fourth Committee (the Trusteeship Committee), known as the Decolonization Committee. Muhammad Fayek attended the United Nations General Assembly every year in the company of most of the heads of the liberation movements (p.145).

Muhammad Fayek assumed responsibility for Asian affairs alongside African affairs by a decision from Abdel Nasser. (Muhammad Fayek did not specify its exact date, but according to his talk about his Asian roles in the book, this was in 1965). This was preceded by Muhammad Fayek’s work in the Asian-African Solidarity Movement emerging from Bandung Conference 1955 (p.148). Chinese Prime Minister Chun Enlai visited Egypt in 1965, and stayed there for 11 days, accompanying Abdel Nasser, who accompanied Muhammad Fayek on that long trip. It was Enlai who facilitated the Czech arms deal for Abdel Nasser in 1955, and Egypt was the first Arab country. Africa recognized the People's Republic of China in 1956, and discussions took place between

them about China's role in Vietnam to weaken America and Abdel Nasser's criticism of the role of the army commander in Egypt (p. 149-150).

Muhammad Fayek assumed the Ministry of National Guidance (Ministry of Media) in 1966.

Zakaria Mohieddin resigned from all his positions in 1968, and one of the most prominent reasons for the dispute between him and Abdel Nasser was economic trends. Mohieddin tended towards a liberal policy in the economy, unlike Abdel Nasser. (M Fayek discuss: Nasser and Zakaria Mohieddin relation p. 198 - 199)

Dar Al-Mustaqbal Al-Arabi Publishing House

Dar Al-Mustaqbal Al-Arabi is an Egyptian publishing house founded in 1981, owned by Mohamed Fayek, a well-known political and legal activist. Mohamed Fayek has played a prominent role in the field of human rights in Egypt and the Arab world.

When he was released from prison for the second time, he had completed the establishment of Dar Al-Mustaqbal Al-Arabi Publishing and Distribution Company. The aim was to present the July 23 Revolution objectively and publish works that meet the Arab citizen's need for knowledge and awareness, as well as emphasizing national dimensions, the Palestinian cause, and others. He worked on documenting the writings of those who participated in the July 23 Revolution of 1952, organizing seminars, establishing connections with French publishing houses, signing agreements with them, and publishing two magazines: *Arab Papers* and *Africa*. The publishing house focused on caricature art, publishing, economics, and produced an encyclopedia of the 20th century.

The house particularly focuses on publishing books related to human rights, democracy, social issues, and Arab culture.

The publishing house has a good reputation for publishing intellectual and literary works, and it is committed to addressing important political and social issues through the books it publishes. Have you had any experiences with Dar Al-Mustaqbal Al-Arabi or been interested in any of its publications?

Notable Authors

Dar Al-Mustaqbal Al-Arabi has published many distinguished books across various fields, and some of the notable authors whose works have been published by the house include:

1. Mohamed Fayek: As the owner of the publishing house, Mohamed Fayek himself has published many works related to human rights, politics, and civil rights.
2. Edward Said: One of the most prominent Arab intellectuals whose works have been published by Dar Al-Mustaqbal Al-Arabi. For instance, his famous book *Orientalism* is one of the most significant works published by the house.
3. Farag Fouda: The late Egyptian thinker who made significant contributions to contemporary Arab thought. His famous work *The Road to Paradise* critically discusses religious ideologies in politics.
4. Nawal El Saadawi: The renowned writer and feminist activist, who has written extensively on issues of women and Arab society. Dar Al-Mustaqbal Al-Arabi has published some of her distinguished works such as *Woman and Sex* and *Memoirs of a Doctor*.
5. Hassan Hanafi: The philosopher and intellectual known for his significant contributions to contemporary Islamic and Arab philosophy. He has many books published by Dar Al-Mustaqbal Al-Arabi, such as *Contemporary Islamic Thought*.
6. Abdel Wahab El Messiri: The Egyptian intellectual and researcher who wrote many books on issues of identity and globalization, with cooperation from Dar Al-Mustaqbal Al-Arabi.

Notable Books Published by Dar Al-Mustaqbal Al-Arabi

Dar Al-Mustaqbal Al-Arabi has published many important books that have impacted modern Arab thought. Some of the most notable books published by the house include:

1. *Orientalism* by Edward Said
2. *The Road to Paradise* by Farag Fouda
3. *Woman and Sex* by Nawal El Saadawi
4. *Contemporary Islamic Thought* by Hassan Hanafi
5. *Encyclopedia of Jews, Judaism, and Zionism* by Abdel Wahab El Messiri
6. *Memoirs of a Doctor* by Nawal El Saadawi
7. *Critique of Religious Thought* by Mohamed Amara

8. *Thinking about Marxism* by Mahdi Amel
9. *Critique of Arab Reason* by George Jirdak
10. *The Palestinian Cause* by Michel Aflaq
11. *In Search of Identity* by Amin Maalouf
12. *Freedom and Democracy in the Arab World* by Taha Hussein
13. *Arab Mind in Facing Modernity* by Hassan Hanafi
14. *The Struggle for Identity* by Abdallah Laroui
15. *Authority and Society* by Abdallah Laroui
16. *Democracy: Theory and Practice* by Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd

These are some of the notable books published by Dar Al-Mustaqbal Al-Arabi.

Main Themes Focused on by the House

Dar Al-Mustaqbal Al-Arabi focuses on a range of major themes that reflect its intellectual and cultural interests in the Arab world. Some of these major themes include:

1. Human Rights Issues
2. Religion and Politics
3. Arab Identity and Culture
4. Palestinian-Israeli Conflict
5. Social and Economic Development
6. Arab Political Thought
7. Women and Gender Issues
8. Orientalism and Relations between the East and West
9. Philosophy and Critical Thought
10. Modern Arab Culture

These are some of the main themes that Dar Al-Mustaqbal Al-Arabi focuses on, combining social, cultural, political, and intellectual issues of significant importance in the Arab world.

Ghassan bin Jiddo

Ghassan Ben Jeddou is a Tunisian-Lebanese journalist. He was born on August 8, 1962. He worked for Al Jazeera, and headed the management of its office in Beirut from 2004 until he resigned from it on April 23, 2011 amid the momentum of the Arab Spring events. He then founded the Al-Mayadeen Media Network.

He was born in Al-Kousour in Kef Province, Tunisia, studied in Tunisia, then lived in Lebanon. He also holds Lebanese citizenship, as his mother is Lebanese Christian and his wife is a Shiite Muslim.

He was a political activist and an opponent of the Tunisian regime. The regime of deposed President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali offered him several leadership positions, but he refused because he was not convinced of Ben Ali's rule and because many of his friends were still in prison. Which caused his exile and forced absence from Tunisia and his distance from it for 21 years.

He entered the field of research, but his professional journalistic work began in 1990 with Al-Hayat newspaper as its correspondent in Algeria, which was at the height of the political crisis with the rise of the Salvation Front and all the situation and transformation in Algeria. Then, in 1992, he became a member of the Institute of International Studies in Washington and took over the editorship of the magazine. After a few months, he was assigned the position of editor-in-chief of the magazine. He then settled in Tehran as a correspondent for the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) in late 1995. In 1997, he moved to Al Jazeera and was promoted there. To become the director of its office in Beirut.

The International Court interrogated him in the Hariri assassination case, and he stated that he received an anonymous call and the spokesman told him that a group called Al-Nusra and Jihad in the Levant was responsible for the assassination.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ajbCUuq2KnM>

President Emile Lahoud awarded journalist Ghassan Ben Jeddou, director of Al Jazeera's Beirut office, the National Cedar Medal, rank of officer, in appreciation of his media role and the distinguished effort he made during covering the recent Israeli aggression against Lebanon, as well as his constant objective monitoring of Lebanese events.

While he was in Iran, he criticized freedoms in Iran and criticized the Supreme Leader of the Iranian Revolution, Mr. Khamenei, during the era of President Khatami. At that time, he was accused of working for the Mossad and America, and they criticized him severely there. The guide's response was that he asked President Khatami, "a friend of Ghassan," to phone Ghassan and asked him to tone down his speech, and Ghassan respected that from the Supreme Leader because he could have expelled him from the country.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rJS4cqA_Elk

ANNEXES

Additional excerpts from the book OCCIDENTS

Annex 1 on Rousseau's ideas in China

THE CRITIQUE OF THE WEST IS NOT NEW: it is as old as the West itself. It is, moreover, from its own authors that Xi Jinping's China still borrows its arguments. And among its obsessive references, yet another European: after Marx, here comes Jean-Jacques Rousseau. Allow me a digression here.

The author of the *Second Discourse* and of *The Social Contract* denounced inequalities among men, Western individualism, “civil society” (which fragments the “general will”), and the cult “of opinion”: Chinese intellectuals seize upon his ideas, after rigorously filtering and expurgating them, even at the cost of major distortions. During a trip to France, Xi Jinping stated that he had carefully read Rousseau, whom he indeed quotes in his speeches (a reference that says less about the reality of Xi's readings than about the necessity for a traditional Chinese leader, as Max Weber long ago analyzed in his text “The Literati,” to legitimize himself through books). The intellectual Wang Huning, Xi Jinping's chief ideologue, is also a great reader of Rousseau, whom he cites in his book *America against America*; the political philosopher Gan Yang (a “Confucian socialist” highly regarded by the regime) is one of China's specialists on Rousseau; as for Zhang Weiwei, he has spoken to me about Rousseau on several occasions and has read him, like most Chinese “Gong Zhi,” who are often “Rousseauist.”

– There is a genuine revival of Rousseau studies in China, and we can see it here on campus as well, confirms the renowned philosopher and professor at Fudan, Zhejun Yu. The explanation is quite simple: in search of legitimacy and intellectual lineage, the Party believes it has created a genuine “civil religion,” which here is called communism, and that, of course, is inspired by Rousseau. This is a relatively recent interpretation.

One could even say that there is a kind of Rousseauist fever in China today, as I have observed during my stays in the country, particularly in the inner circles of official think tanks and on university campuses. I even amused myself by offering works by Rousseau to several Chinese officials in order to observe their reactions. I was never disappointed by the effects of this little stratagem.

Let us dwell for a moment on this incongruity, so little Rousseauist, as it is revealing of the Chinese intellectual system: the self-interested appropriation of Rousseau by Chinese officials. And even if his reception in China—which could be an excellent doctoral topic—is a question that goes beyond the scope of this book, it is interesting to recount this intellectual swindle.

One understands why Chinese intellectuals may have been fascinated—they are not alone—by this philosophy whose themes resemble their own: a thought that seeks to articulate individual freedom and the interest of the community; that grounds law as the expression of the general will (“Obedience to the law one has prescribed for oneself is freedom”); that suggests that the education of children should be entrusted to representatives of the State, pupils having learned “never to will

anything except what society wills”; a thought that condemns the arts because they degrade the social state; that seeks to build the ideal city in order to overcome inequalities and a society of permanent surveillance of individuals in which everyone “watches one another” (“To ensure that all citizens constantly feel themselves under the eyes of the public”). An authoritarian and Jacobin spirit before its time, Rousseau went even further in denouncing factions and recommending the death penalty for those who do not respect the dogmas of the “social contract.” All this is true and compatible with a certain idea of Chinese communism.

Nevertheless, the author of *The Social Contract* cannot be reduced to these ideas. Contrary to this certainly troubling line of thought, Rousseau is also, at the same time, the philosopher of “civil liberty,” of individualism, or of human rights—and above all the thinker of democracy. Fundamentally, China conceives of its “citizen” through an intransigent, narrow, and in reality distorted Rousseauian lens. The Rousseau’s “system”, says the opposite of what Chinese ideologues make it say. If he was able to erect the “citizen” as a model, Rousseau soon moved away from it in order to prefer the “individual” with his ideal of freedom: he ultimately places the human being above the citizen, never renouncing universalist principles : *Émile*, (Flammarion, 2009), *Les Confessions*, (Folio, 2009), *Les Rêveries du promeneur solitaire* (Flammarion, 1997). And if one reads carefully “La profession de foi du vicaire savoyard,” from *Emile*, one realizes that Rousseau—who was successively Protestant and Catholic—defends there a “civil religion” in which God, too, is answerable to justice, which presupposes a separation of powers (whereas the God of the Chinese Communist Party answers only to himself, a symbol of autocracy). In China, an interested reading has therefore been made of the young Rousseau in order to rewrite the Enlightenment and adapt it to the regime’s propaganda. Paraphrase and misinterpretation—that is the bricolage. A tampered Rousseau. A false Rousseau. For what do we retain today of Rousseau if not the one who criticizes absolute power, arbitrariness, and all forms of subjugation; the one who denounces servility and absolutism; and the one who combats—though the term is anachronistic—totalitarianism, that is to say precisely the ideology of the Communist Party. At bottom, Chinese officials, as superficial readers, have read the thesis (the “Second” Discourse) and not the antithesis (*Émile*), and still less the synthesis (*Les Confessions*). In doing so, they forget the thinker of freedom, unbridled individualism, and social justice, who would today stand upright, like a Chinese dissident, against Xi Jinping’s thoughts. As Rousseau writes in the *Dialogues* (Flammarion, 2009): “Tout homme de parti, par cela ennemi de la vérité.” Finally, the Chinese have also uncoupled Rousseau from Voltaire, whereas they are inseparable and together form our modernity (as Michelet clearly saw in the famous chapter “De la méthode et de l’esprit de ce livre” of his *Histoire de la Révolution française*). Ultimately, this Sinicized “Rousseauism” is largely apocryphal and amounts to thinking against Rousseau.

(In my analyses here, I draw on certain ideas from an academic essay I published on Rousseau and from Tzvetan Todorov’s remarkable book *Fragile Happiness: An Essay on Rousseau*.)

Annex 2 on Ed Miliband

67 973. SINCE I BEGAN my research for this book several years ago, this post office box number in London has intrigued me. The only way to find out what it represents is to go there in person.

Here I am at the post office in the Clapham district, in South London. Tube: Clapham Common. In the past, the writers Graham Greene, J. K. Rowling, and a few Marxists fallen into obscurity lived in this working-class neighborhood, now thoroughly gentrified. Here we are. Postcode: SW4 4DU.

I enter the Royal Mail office and inquire about the mysterious PO Box No. 67 973. It does not belong to J. K. Rowling: she no longer lives in the neighborhood.

– A poste restante mailbox costs 252 pounds per year, VAT included, a very helpful clerk explains to me, ready to rent one to me on the spot. And she reveals that “PO Box 67 973” corresponds to the post office box of the Socialist International.

Karl Marx himself once used this expression about the First Socialist International, which he inspired in 1864 in London: “It must be a mailbox.” Since 1989, the mailbox has been there, with no one answering. Only the London address remains—poste restante.

As always in the history of socialism, marked by repeated dissensions, the “International”—which brings together political parties across the world rather than governments—has known splits, divisions, a genuine fragmentation, like a chronic illness. It is a snake that sheds its skin. Socialism has always been desquamation.

Communists, socialists, and social democrats were still united in the First “International.” The Second, also Marxist in orientation, sought to be pluralist until Lenin joined it. After a major rupture between communist and socialist lefts, the latter remained in control of the Second International, which was partly reconstituted in 1951 and continues under that name to this day (it is the one of the London mailbox). The communists, for their part, slammed the door after 1917 on this Second International to form the Third, called the “Communist International” or Comintern. It was created in Moscow by the Bolsheviks in March 1919 around Lenin, Trotsky, and Zinoviev, and would gradually evolve toward pure Stalinism (Stalin ultimately dissolved it in 1943). Finally, Trotsky, having broken with Stalinism, founded the Fourth International in 1938 (known as the “Trotskyist International”).

Even before the Second World War, there were already several “Internationals,” and all four erected the “West” as the principal enemy. That is the entry point of this book, and it is with it that I must begin: communism was the first ideological adversary of the “West.”

When I ask Ed Miliband about this story of the “Internationals,” I notice that he perfectly masters its codes, as if he had inherited them through a form of family atavism. “Well said, old mole,” Miliband seems to tell me, as if conversing with his deceased father, like Hamlet with his father’s ghost—Karl Marx coined the phrase of the “old mole.” Ed Miliband, who was leader of the British

Labour Party and served several times as a minister in the governments of Tony Blair, Gordon Brown, and Keir Starmer, is the heir to this history.

Ed recounts it to me in detail during many evenings, lunches, and dinners on the Harvard campus in Boston, where we were affiliated for several years with the same Center for European Studies. At that time, in the early 2000s, numerous intellectuals gravitated around this influential research center directed by the scholar and great specialist in international relations, Stanley Hoffmann. I met the political scientist Samuel Huntington there, author of the global bestseller *The Clash of Civilizations*—I remember having lunch with him at the Harvard Faculty Club, already elderly but still sharp in his ideas, firm in his pro-Western values, though regularly dozing off at the end of the meal. Around us, in this environment of abundant intelligence, Ed and I also frequented the philosopher Michael Sandel, the theorist of “soft power” Joseph Nye, the sociologist Robert Putnam who had so well analyzed the rise of individualism, the Black intellectual Antony Appiah, as well as the young MIT economists Thomas Piketty and Esther Duflo, who has since received the Nobel Prize. On another occasion, it was a dinner at Harvard with Ed and the co-founder of Médecins Sans Frontières, Bernard Kouchner—Ed and I were opposed to the Iraq War, while Kouchner, future Minister of Foreign Affairs under French President Nicolas Sarkozy, supported it. In those years, Harvard was a campus of singular intellectual effervescence, and Mark Zuckerberg was in the process of inventing Facebook there. And one evening when we were supposed to go clubbing in Boston with two other young Jews, Ron Miller and Sergey Lagodinsky (today one of the leaders of the German Green Party), Ed Miliband suddenly canceled the plans... to catch a flight to London, where his family was hosting Nelson Mandela for dinner at their home.

Edward Miliband, known as Ed, is the son of one of the greatest English-language Marxists, Ralph Miliband. This Ashkenazi Jew of Polish origin, who spoke better Yiddish than English upon his arrival in London, was originally named Adolfe Miliband but changed his first name after Hitler came to power. A Zionist and a socialist—an odd cocktail when one thinks about it—Ralph Miliband cultivated throughout his life this double commitment in a form of conflicted and atheist singularity. Caught between the Second, Third, and soon the Fourth International, Ralph Miliband always maintained his radical Marxism but was a member neither of the Communist Party nor of Labour, rejected Leninism and even more so Stalinism, without becoming a Trotskyist—and for that very reason he must have felt quite alone in post-war Anglo-Saxon Marxism. In fact, himself a Gramscian, he was a kind of British Gramsci, unaffiliated and un-imprisoned, yet like him a captive soul of original Marxism. It was only in the 1960s that Ralph Miliband’s ideas became fashionable, as his heterodox Marxism had by then become a kind of compass for the highly Americanized “New Left,” between the civil rights struggle and the Vietnam War. Add to this his support for Algeria during the war with France and a complicated but persistent defense of Palestine (Marion, Ralph’s wife and Ed’s mother, was a member of Jews for Justice for Palestinians).

Ralph never entered politics. He remained on the side of ideas and theory. His two sons hesitated, unlike their father, and I remember Ed’s torments: downbeat, torn between an academic career, journalism (he had interned at the left-wing New York magazine *The Nation*), and politics, unsure what to choose. From beyond the grave, he may have been listening to the advice of his father, his old mole.

During our evenings at Harvard, where I was preparing my dissertation and he was trying to imagine the new ideology of the British left, Ed was immersed in stacks of books borrowed to feed an insatiable appetite at Widener Library, one of the two richest libraries in the world (I recall that he often neglected the loan deadlines and was repeatedly fined for late returns). Redefining the left after 1989 and the “fall of communism,” rethinking progressive ideas and social justice so that they

would be compatible with democracy, pluralism, and the market economy: such was Ed Miliband's project. In contrast to his father's program, certain of his convictions and of a Marxist philosophy of history, Ed hesitated. He was searching for his path and, like Hamlet, was incapable of acting. His conversation sparkled with intelligence and British pride. Studious, diligent, insecure, not very creative, Ed was above all a workaholic—a true Labour man.

It is difficult today to imagine what the fall of the Berlin Wall meant for the entire left. However Western Marxist he was, Ralph Miliband had neither anticipated nor understood it (and he died shortly thereafter). As for Ed, he was twenty in 1989, and it was, as for our whole generation, the turning point of his political life. The shockwave of the fall of communism was still felt in our exchanges at Harvard, much later, and I believe it ultimately contributed to his decision: to leave the world of ideas for that of politics. The attacks of September 11, 2001, and George W. Bush's victory over John Kerry in 2004 (we followed the primaries and then the campaign avidly), as well as the rise of digital tools in political communication in the United States, may also have played a role. And in doing so, against the grain of family history, Ed Miliband reconnects with a form of Marxism: that of Marx's famous eleventh thesis (Theses on Feuerbach): "The philosophers have only interpreted the world in various ways; the point, however, is to change it."

When he left Harvard to return to London, he had made his decision: he would enter politics. He would build less a new worldview, as Ralph had done, than strive to translate ideas into reality. In public life, his ideas would no longer be those of his father—static and dogmatic—but his own, more fluid and pragmatic—and thus he killed the father. A page was turned: Ed would be an intellectual who had entered politics, less Blairite, certainly, than "Brownite," as supporters of the future Prime Minister Gordon Brown were called, whose minister he would become before wresting from his brother, David Miliband, the leadership of Labour ("Brothers at War," headlined an English newspaper). Thus, standing up to their father and his attachment to the "Socialist International," David and Ed—bound by unbreakable friendship, a secret pact (still secret to this day, and which Ed confided to me), and ultimately a solid fraternal rivalry—David became Tony Blair's Foreign Secretary, and Ed became Minister for the Environment under Gordon Brown and then Keir Starmer.

More recently, during a dinner in Paris at Café Le Fumoir, near the Louvre Museum—more than two hours and fifty minutes of one-on-one discussion—Ed Miliband told me that he no longer believed in his father's "political antiquities." The First, Second, Third, or Fourth International have been relegated to the footnotes of history and are no longer a compass for anyone. The Miliband brothers read Marx after the fall of the Wall and the toppling of his statues: by then, he had lost his flavor.

I even remember that Ed Miliband, deprived of his soviet, was obsessed with the failure of communism, the passage from theory to practice—"praxis," in the language of the time—these ideas crashing against reality, in short the "complication" of socialism in the real world. Along the way, beautiful ideas had become ineffective, toxic, and often deadly. Tens of millions of deaths bear witness to this, whether in Lenin, Trotsky, and Stalin's Soviet Union, Mao's China, Ho Chi Minh's Vietnam, Pol Pot's Cambodia, or Fidel and Raúl Castro's Cuba—and Che Guevara's.

Annex 3 on the Socialist International

TODAY, THE SOCIALIST INTERNATIONAL formally brings together well over a hundred socialist political parties around the world, but it has become an empty shell, a mere mailbox.

The former Belgian Prime Minister, Elio Di Rupo, former vice-president of the Socialist International, makes it clear to me during an interview in Mons—the city of which he is mayor—that there have been “diplomatic embarrassments.”

– It’s not going well at all, he concedes.

A silence falls. The parquet floor creaks. Di Rupo grants me an audience in the vastness of a majestic office, before an imposing fireplace, under the silent gaze of tapestries once offered, he tells me, by Louis XIV. He punctuates his sentences with “S’il vous plaît” to say “thank you”—in the Walloon manner. After a long hesitation, the former president of the Belgian Socialist Party adds, somewhat cryptically:

– It has happened that, how shall I put it, the mechanism jams, seizes up...

The blockage seems enduring: it was first necessary to exclude from the Socialist International the “comrades” who were too compromised or very cumbersome, in order to retreat to the sole “respectable” socialist parties. Some of them, such as Tony Blair’s New Labour, Gerhard Schröder’s SPD, or Matteo Renzi’s Democratic Party, evolved “dangerously” toward the center and were, in turn, criticized, marginalized, and sometimes suspended... The American Democratic Party, that of Clinton and Obama, for its part, never wished to join the International:

– They are held back by the word “socialist.” What they want is a Democratic international, Elio Di Rupo acknowledges, with understatement.

Not to mention the “socialist” parties that became even more unacceptable: the Serbian Socialist Party of Slobodan Milošević, which was a member of the Socialist International, was expelled during the war in former Yugoslavia, after the crimes against humanity perpetrated by its army. The Sandinista dictator of Nicaragua, Daniel Ortega, was also a member, before a belated exclusion.

– Mr. Ortega would have been more at home, like Fidel Castro, in the Comintern, if it still existed, since they were communists, Marcelo Ebrard tells me in diplomatic language during an interview in Mexico City. (Ebrard was mayor of Mexico City, Minister of Foreign Affairs, then Minister of the Economy; when I interviewed him, he was still vice-president of the Socialist International.)

An even more delicate problem was that of the South African ANC. Its president, Jacob Zuma, who was also president of the country, was swept away by a corruption scandal. Yet he was vice-president of the Socialist International: should he in turn be removed, when the fight against apartheid had been one of the rare common causes uniting all socialist parties worldwide? A dilemma. The ANC fortunately resolved it itself by doing the dirty work: Zuma was removed from Mandela’s party, thereby effectively relinquishing his post as vice-president of the Socialist International...

– Jacob Zuma was a genuine moral failure for South Africa, but also for the ANC and for the entire left, confides Judge Edwin Cameron, former member of the Supreme Court and figure of the ANC, during several dinners at his home in Johannesburg.

As for the Egyptian despot Hosni Mubarak and the Tunisian one, Ben Ali, two self-proclaimed socialist veterans, they were still members of the Socialist International at the moment they were toppled by the democratic aspirations of the “Arab Springs”! And what of those “brother” socialist parties in Bulgaria, Romania, Poland, or Slovakia, which ran counter to “socialist values” by criticizing democracy, Europe, or human rights, or by drawing dangerously close to Putin’s Russia, precipitating their exclusion? The Republika Srpska of Bosnia, and its leader Milorad Dodik, were the subject of recurring criticism from “brother” Bosnian and Croatian parties. Several local tyrants and African, Turkish, or Arab autocrats, also calling themselves “socialists” (for example the Ivorian Laurent Gbagbo, though prosecuted for crimes against humanity), likewise sat in this gathering from another age in the name of their party.

– We had to separate the wheat from the chaff, Elio Di Rupo cautiously concedes, referring to “socialist parties that had become allies of the far right and had to be excluded on the spot.”

Colette Avital is a major figure of the Israeli Labour Party, on whose behalf she long served as representative to the bureau of the Socialist International. When I meet her in Tel Aviv, the former MP and ambassador expresses her perplexity:

– The Socialist International is a Spanish inn. The Labour Party is still a member, but we no longer really know what any of this means. Shimon Peres represented us there for many years. Fatah, first under Yasser Arafat and now Mahmoud Abbas, is also a member. And it goes without saying that on the Israeli–Palestinian conflict, there is hardly any consensus left among the socialist parties belonging to the Socialist International.

The former French Prime Minister, Pierre Mauroy, who long presided over this Socialist International, was deeply attached to the organization to the point of refraining from exposing its dead ends. I remember discussing it with him several times at the Jean Jaurès Foundation in Paris, where he occupied François Mitterrand’s former office. With a certain wooden language, he would confine himself to repeating that the Socialist International was the heir to the workers’ movement and that it opposed all forms of totalitarianism. He also insisted on the dialogues it made possible, notably between Israelis and Palestinians or, at the time, between Bosnians and Serbs.

Elsewhere, particularly in Latin America, political formations veered into populist and anti-democratic far-left positions, plunging the Socialist International into endless factional battles and other “fractional activities,” as the phrase went at the time. Sometimes they had to be expelled, and interminable exclusion procedures would begin, to which the interested parties replied by denouncing Stalinist excommunications. What an era!

At other times, concerning Cuba or Nicaragua, of frankly communist allegiance, the organization would issue convoluted press releases to denounce “serious human rights violations” committed by comrades of non-brother parties. Then there were the quarrels: Palestinians refusing to sit with an Israeli woman, an attitude shared by the Lebanese; Algerians at odds with Moroccans and, depending on the year, with the French; Armenians, Turks, Greeks, and Cyprus; two competing parties in India; and what about Podemos in Spain or the Five Star Movement in Italy—did they still belong to the democratic left? As for Xi Jinping, should one believe in his “socialism with Chinese characteristics,” as the formula goes? In the name of “socialism,” everything was up for

debate. A real headache. Hard to emerge with one's head held high from the shame inflicted by history.

Thus the world congresses of the Socialist International became rarer. Several times there was talk of refounding the organization, but with no singing tomorrows. All that remained was the residual mail still arriving at this postal address: P.O. Box No. 67 973.

– Most people no longer know which saint to turn to! They often confuse the Second International, socialist, with the Third, communist, or even the Fourth, Trotskyist, explained to me in heated discussions the Frenchman Henri Weber, hero of May '68 and former Trotskyist leader. (Subsequently, Mr. Weber was in charge of relations between the French Socialist Party and the Socialist International.)

The mailbox of the Socialist International, in its own way, sums up the history of socialism in the twentieth century. From one "International" to another, and from disillusion to patchwork, from mending to makeshift repairs, it was a descent into hell until the great debacle of 1989. We are still there today. As a poet says: "All legends evolve!"

Annex 4 on Communism and Nationalism

THE CHILDREN OF SOLZHENITSYN—I have learned to recognize them. I have met them so often, during my travels in Russia and Eastern Europe, yesterday as today. Their discourse is anti-Western, both anti-European and anti-American. “Anti-Americanism is not the critique of the United States,” explains the scholar Philippe Roger, who traced in a book, *L’Ennemi américain*, the genealogy of this universal detestation. It is not an ideology: it is an irrational sentiment that spans centuries, a collection of clichés and received ideas, of analyses devoid of nuance, whose matrix would first be a hatred born of rivalry, perhaps of the love-hate variety, and almost always nourished by ignorance of America. Anti-Americanism transcends generations and countries; it stretches from the hard left to the extreme right. It is a modern passion that, like all irrational hatreds, feeds less on facts than on prejudices, and often on amalgams and conspiracy theories.

Their driving force is nationalism, a tradition that runs through the entire Russian intelligentsia and that of Eastern European countries. For communism, despite the internationalist writings of Lenin or Trotsky, was entirely compatible with nationalism, and Stalin accommodated it very well (with his famous “Socialism in One Country”). Likewise, it was nationalism that structured communist societies in Central and Eastern Europe, to the point of threatening the Warsaw Pact.

How? Because communism quickly became isolationist and self-contained—the opposite of the “open society” advocated by the philosopher Karl Popper and the philanthropist George Soros. One may even think that this nationalism is today the principal residue of communism, its true legacy, in Russia as in the former Eastern bloc countries. “Living anywhere other than Russia is impossible!” writes Solzhenitsyn in *The Oak and the Calf*, echoing the destiny of Tereza, the heroine of the novel by the Franco-Czech writer Milan Kundera, *The Unbearable Lightness of Being*: exiled and ill at ease in the West, she longs only to return to Soviet Czechoslovakia. This was also the central argument of Kundera’s famous article, “The West Kidnapped” (1983): his West had been “kidnapped” by American mainstream culture, entertainment, kitsch, and technology. Kundera was always skeptical of liberal Europe and overvalued Central European culture, “Mitteleuropa,” and its “maximum of diversity in minimum space” (Solzhenitsyn, as a Russian apostle, advocated instead a “minimum of diversity over maximum space”).

Ultimately, it seems to me that nationalism constitutes today the most enduring legacy of communism in Central and Eastern Europe, but also in “Western” Europe, where the Italian, Greek, Spanish, or French communist parties were particularly powerful. Everywhere, the communist ethos persists through nationalism.

I understood this, almost counter-intuitively, in Bucharest, Sofia, or Prague in the 1990s, but even more so in Belgrade, Zagreb, and Sarajevo during the war in former Yugoslavia, when nationalisms ran wild—particularly the Serbian national-socialism of Milošević, which is not without recalling that of Putin today against Ukraine. One sees it clearly: the life of ideas holds many surprises. And our journey has only just begun.

Annex 5 on Trotsky

TROTSKY IS A TEXTBOOK CASE, and Trotskyism is an essentially Western phenomenon. By putting into practice his viscerally anti-liberal ideas, this bloodthirsty dictator, allied with Lenin, became a criminal responsible for millions of victims. His sophisticated ideas were so far removed from empirical reality that they could only be imposed through force and mass violence. He was such a brutal figure that he might have stepped straight out of page 88 of Arthur Koestler's *Darkness at Noon* (the English title of this novel inspired by the Moscow Trials is more explicit). This is the horrific reality that Trotskyists around the world long denied at the cost of a genuine rewriting of history.

There is a Trotsky mystery: once pushed out of power by Stalin in the mid-1920s, this red executioner regained a kind of virginity that helped erase his crimes. Here he was again, an intellectual and internationalist, after having been a dictator and nationalist—and soon admired by part of Western youth in the very name of his anti-Western hatred. How can one explain that students believed his nonsense, his absurdities? His second life, the reverse of the first, allowed this dead star to continue radiating—and contaminating—the European left with its deadly light. Such are the mysteries of ideas in politics.

The broad outlines of Trotsky's biography are well known. But let us look at a few details, since the case is unique and foreshadows the Maoist or Castroist illusion. Born Lev Davidovich Bronstein in Ukraine (then in the Russian Empire), Trotsky came from a more-than-bourgeois family. Already, official historians rewrote this first point: at all costs, the ideologue of the Red Army had to be presented as coming from the people. What geniuses his biographers were! Long systematically drawn from the historic Trotskyist current, they carried out an intense work of patching and falsification. In his memoirs, Trotsky presents himself as a proletarian, poorly born, the product of a poor, vaguely peasant family. In fact, without being wealthy, he was well-off. His father was a successful farmer; their house was comfortable. He was sent abroad for higher education. At best, he was a bourgeois; at worst, a petty bourgeois. (The same biographical rewriting occurred for Lenin, portrayed as an ascetic autodidact when in fact he was the son of a high official ennobled by the Tsar, that is, an aristocrat.)

Trotsky's biography, now fairly well known, goes beyond the scope of this book. It suffices for our purposes to recall that Trotsky, who became an intellectual of communism and an "unarmed prophet," was initially an "armed prophet."

Solzhenitsyn, who could not be fooled, severely criticized this false seer at the very moment when so many young European bourgeois were amnestying him for his crimes and absolving him of the impending bankruptcy of communism. In the Harvard Address, he grants him a place of honor, alongside Lenin, at the head of the pack of the worst criminals in history. Trotsky was indeed one of the inspirers of the communist police apparatus and nothing less than the founder of the Red Army, an apparatus that contributed to the murder of millions. He was the ideologue of a system that could shoot innocent individuals by the hundreds of thousands without the slightest trial or proof. "All the Red Terror and the repression of millions of peasants were the work of Lenin and Trotsky. It was their instructions that Stalin later scrupulously applied," writes Solzhenitsyn. He adds: "The entire Stalinist era is nothing but the direct continuation of Leninism."

Solzhenitsyn was right. Two examples, among many, suffice to confirm this. First, what must indeed be called the genocide of the peasants. All were targeted—large farmers, "exploitative"

peasants, simple cultivators, plowmen, sharecroppers, or mere dirt farmers—all assimilated to “petty bourgeois,” thus “kulaks.” Upstream, their condemnation was based on a racist social analysis; downstream, on total economic incompetence. One can speak of racism, since small peasants, farmers, and all their families were assimilated to class enemies. Economically, the collectivization of land, carried out at a frenzied pace, led to planned harvests, the leveling of villages, confinement in kolkhozes, and soon purges, deportations, and ultimately extermination. The general famine resulting from this generic hatred claimed millions of Russian lives. What strikes one here, beyond the number of dead, is the total absence of pragmatism: these intellectuals who had pledged allegiance to “materialism” never paid the slightest attention to social and economic realities. A well-known vicious circle: ideological error produces economic error; the resulting failure calls for terror because reality must bend to ideas; terror aggravates the collapse; collapse demands a doubling of terror, and so on.

And then there is “Kronstadt,” my second example. This was a sort of Soviet “night of the long knives,” launched in 1921, and it remains Trotsky’s most emblematic mass crime. Sailors, soldiers, and workers in this Baltic Sea city demanded reforms and went on strike. They were communists, supporters of the October Revolution, and they revered Trotsky. Their mobilization was anarcho-syndicalist in nature: they demanded direct communal democracy, free election of workers’ representatives, freedom of the workers’ press, and an end to arbitrary killings—in short, a kind of self-management reminiscent of the Paris Commune. A message broadcast by the Kronstadt sailors summed up their revolt: “Long live the power of freely elected soviets!” Trotsky did not heed their appeal: he saw in these unionized soldiers only white mutiny, monarchism, and capitalist counter-revolution. He even accused Western governments of having fueled this reactionary conspiracy (according to formulas and techniques destined for a long future).

The Red Army, under Trotsky’s orders—he himself directing operations from his famous armored train—demanded their submission and soon decided on their extermination. Thousands of sailors were barbarously executed; those who surrendered were shot; the survivors were deported—with women and children—to camps in Siberia. Contemporary historians estimate that the massacre of the Kronstadt sailors marks the beginning of the Soviet Gulag and the totalitarian turning point of the Russian Revolution.

Trotsky’s case is hardly defensible—and indeed no serious left-wing activist defends it today. If Stalin radicalized Soviet terror, he did not create it: there is a continuum of violence from the 1917 Revolution to Stalin’s death in 1953, contrary to what Trotskyist revisionism claims. Beyond the dark record of the years 1917–1927, all hypotheses about what Trotsky might have done had he succeeded Lenin—as Lenin seemed to wish in his famous testament—are mere conjectures. Nothing suggests he would not have become another Stalin, created the same bureaucracy, or that the course of the Russian Revolution would have been moderated. I even have the deep intuition that, had this Dr. Strangelove lived, he would have had Solzhenitsyn, Sakharov, and even Doctor Zhivago shot! The most probable truth: Trotsky gave birth to a monster—the Soviet totalitarianism and the Gulag—that ultimately devoured him. His hatred of Western values—that is, democracy, pluralism, and human rights—was so pathological, so obsessive and enduring that nothing allows one to imagine a Trotskyist regime that would not have been totalitarian. And the fact that Trotsky criticized Stalin so violently is explained more by their interpersonal rupture than by ideological disagreements, less profound than has been said.

Trotsky never acknowledged his mistakes. He stood by the Red Army and signed off on Kronstadt, even at the end of his life. In his *Diary in Exile*, he writes: “If I had to begin again, I would of course try to avoid this or that mistake, but the general course of my life would remain unchanged.”

So why did Trotskyism exert such influence in the West? And how could its ideas endure, in Europe as in the United States, to the point of embodying a critique of Western values more durable than Leninism or Stalinism? To understand, I interviewed for this book dozens of European and American “Trotskyists,” even in Israel—both repentant and those who remained faithful to this ideal. I sought to understand their intellectual journey and their degree of “awareness of the vile terrors,” to borrow a phrase from Rimbaud’s *Premières communions*. The religious metaphor works quite well. One enters Trotskyism as one enters a religion. Leaving it is difficult and amounts to apostasy.

– My adherence to Trotskyism resembled, in a sense, a form of Talmudism: primacy of the text, meticulous exegesis of the writings, endless interpretation, with Lenin as a dialectical horizon. And today I remain faithful to it because it represents for me a certain fidelity to the revolutionary project. Trotsky is the one who did not get his hands dirty, explains Michel Warschawski, a well-known Israeli pacifist and Trotskyist, with whom I have lunch in a Jerusalem restaurant.

Trotsky, precisely, was Jewish. This is a factor not to be overlooked: the support he enjoyed in the West is also part of the post-Shoah context and the rejection of Stalin’s anti-Semitic policies (his patronymic Davidovich literally means “son of David”). For most Trotskyists, and for many Jews, Trotsky was the victim of a conspiracy because of his Jewishness—and what hatred indeed! Even when one detests Trotsky, as I do, one ends up feeling sympathy for this victim of an unimaginable international manhunt. Stalin methodically, and patiently, had Trotsky’s assistants murdered: three of his secretaries, eighty-three of his supporters still in Russia (on the same day), his bodyguards, his two sons, his first wife, his elder brother, his sister, his sister’s husband, her two sons, cousins, even the nanny of one of his grandsons—almost his entire family! Lev Davidovich Bronstein himself remained, stripped of his Soviet nationality and now stateless, hunted and marked for liquidation by Stalin. Despite the concrete walls surrounding his residence in Coyoacán, Mexico, where he had fled, the armored doors, guards with machine guns, and police surveillance, Stalin’s agent, a Spaniard named Ramón Mercader, friend of Frida Kahlo, managed to befriend Trotsky. Code name of the agent: “Raymond,” like “Ramón”; profession: “merchant,” in Spanish “mercader.” What a story! After several failed attempts (two commandos had been tasked with the dirty work), and eleven meetings to tame his target, he succeeded on August 20, 1940, in smashing Trotsky’s skull with an ice axe. A political assassination and an anti-Semitic crime.

The enemy of our enemy is our friend: this was the reasoning that long prevailed and nourished Western admiration for Trotsky, who became acceptable when Stalin no longer was. Yet they chose the wrong man and the wrong cause.

Trotsky was a totalitarian man who became the victim of the totalitarianism he himself had engendered. He was even more dogmatic, more red than Stalin. Terrorist terrorized, torturer tortured, executioner assassinated, it is fascinating to see how Trotsky, co-inventor of the Gulag, was in turn sent there, becoming himself the zek described by Solzhenitsyn.

THE INTELLECTUAL AND THE MAN OF IDEAS is the other face of Trotsky that explains his enduring popularity. When one questions Trotskyists of yesterday and today, it is the writer and his ideas that they retain and that rekindle the flame. For a long time, he lived by his pen. He was a man of letters. Among Lenin’s two right-hand men and putative successors, there was the man of ideas and the internationalist (Trotsky) and the former Georgian seminarian turned Great Russian nationalist, half-thug, half-puritan (Stalin). Trotskyist militants would have little hesitation in choosing—but therein lies their error: as if one had to choose between Hitler and Ribbentrop!

Trotsky was a workaholic—and an executioner to boot. He always had a pathological bulimia for reading, and this polyglot was also, according to one of his biographers, a “compulsive polygraph”—he signed, often under fanciful pseudonyms, several thousand articles in countless newspapers (his collected works would amount to about a hundred volumes). If his texts are no longer readable today (though I rather like his articles on Malraux or Céline and a pamphlet co-written with André Breton and Diego Rivera), the myth of the intellectual endures, as with Che Guevara.

What were his ideas? Trotsky’s doctrinal writings before 1917 were those of an insurrectionary ideologue who radicalized year by year. In power, from 1917 to 1927, he was a classic Marxist-Leninist, Lenin’s right-hand man, and a man of action with terrorist practices who had ceased to be an intellectual: he had no concern for human lives and, for him, the end always justified the means. He prioritized party unity, decreed Terror, and opted for the bureaucratization of the Soviet system, dispossessing workers of their means of production, contrary to Marx’s ideas. Finally, after his exile in 1928–1929, he became a publicist again but remained trapped in the schemas of October: while he reproached “the epigone” Stalin, he clung to the single party, rejected political pluralism and freedom of the press, hated democracy and justice, and felt no remorse about his actions or about Marxism-Leninism. He was even revisionist—this is the key point—because he opportunely drew a decisive break between Marxism-Leninism and Stalinism. Before him, the famous theorist Karl Kautsky had criticized Lenin for deviating from Marx; Trotsky did the same but shifted the cursor: the deviation did not date from Lenin in relation to Marx, but from Stalin in relation to Lenin. This clever and then original theory is another key to explaining the ideological longevity of Trotskyism in the West. It enabled millions of men and women to denounce Stalinism and totalitarianism while remaining faithful to the communist ideal. It also allowed Western youth to be inflamed by Mao’s China or the “barbudos” of Havana (Marxist indeed, even Leninist, but supposedly anti-Stalinist). By separating the wheat from the chaff, Trotsky deftly killed two birds with one stone: he saved the communist legacy and denounced Stalin, his worst enemy. Masterful.

And one last time, I try to understand: why did so many Western intellectuals and secretly card-carrying journalists—who were not all mediocre—identify with such a man and become his disciples? What were the secrets of his seduction?

Was it sectarianism, for Trotskyism was a sect—I would dare say a kind of Freemasonry, and we know how obsessed Trotsky was with the subject—where mutual assistance was constant and ideas flexible? Was it cynicism or “intellectual terrorism”—and we know that a technique dear to Trotsky, taken up by all his followers, was to denounce opponents systematically as petty bourgeois, counter-revolutionaries, or fascists in order to cut off any discussion? Was it opportunism, to show that one is always right, even against free elections? Or was it simply hatred of power, of all powers, because power is detestable, it corrupts, and must therefore be denounced and “cause chaos,” to use the famous phrase of a French Trotskyist? This new Trotskyism, degenerated and unnatural, then becomes a leftist vulgate or a sort of anarchism, a contemporary matrix of political chaos. Or perhaps, more folklorically, out of adolescent fidelity to the myth and its paraphernalia—small mustache and warm goatee carefully maintained? However much I try to understand, Trotskyists remain an enigma to me.

Henri Weber was one of them—and one of the most famous French Trotskyist militants. A Polish Jew born in a labor camp in the USSR, later exiled to Paris where his family fled Stalinist anti-Semitism. A student engaged against the Algerian War and then the Vietnam War, he adopted the revolutionary approach, read Trotsky, adhered to his ideas, and even identified with the man to excess—an identification in which his Jewishness, his Russian origins, and his anti-Stalinism all played a role. One of the leaders of the May 1968 student movement, Weber soon co-founded the

main French Trotskyist party and the ultra-left review *Rouge*. As he later told me, Trotskyism was for him a “true religion” or a kind of “secularized gospel.” When necessary, he used his fists against the far-right groupuscule “Occident.” The young idealist analyzed everything through the sole Trotskyist grid of interpretation and fashioned an ideology in which Western society became the enemy par excellence, “the incarnation of absolute evil.”

– For a long time, I believed in Trotsky. I was one of the founders of the Revolutionary Communist League [in France] and a convinced and persistent Trotskyist. Until the day I understood that we had been wrong. Trotsky’s ideas were not only ineffective but false. Trotskyism was false, theoretically and politically false. It was a variant of totalitarianism. In the early 1980s, I broke with Marxism, Leninism, and with Trotsky. I had to mourn that ideology, at the same time as I mourned my youth, Weber told me shortly before his death.

Annex 6 on Tito

Titoism, that great Yugoslav nationalism, the Budapest Uprising, the Prague Spring, Solidarity, and even Ceaușescu's sovereigntism bear witness to this. This nationalization of communism ensured its survival—before hastening its collapse—but its imprint remains. The critique of individualism, liberalism, or the West has often been made in the name of defending national traditions. The communists said no different before 1989, and many leaders in Eastern European countries today take up the same torch against the European Union.

Annex 7 on Putin and Solzhenitsyn

It is in reality unlikely that Putin seriously read Solzhenitsyn. By cross-checking Russian sources with my research, one gets rather the impression that Putin became acquainted with Solzhenitsyn's work through his adviser Surkov, who prepared briefing notes for him, thus layering his ignorance onto an already simplistic interpretation. He certainly did not read *The Gulag Archipelago* in depth, but he did read the Harvard Address carefully, as did his main advisers. One may even hypothesize that this caricatural text is the matrix of Putin's ideology regarding the West. The understanding between the writer and the dictator was therefore superficial, but the influence decisive.

But what a matrix! After repeatedly summarizing the great work, all that remains is a slogan: that of the "United Russia" party. Putin's ideology is Solzhenitsyn for dummies!

Take just one example: the recurrent Putinist criticism directed at the West for its lack of courage. Solzhenitsyn wrote it in his speech before Putin repeated it in an address: "The decline in courage may be the most striking feature an outside observer notices in the West today." Like Solzhenitsyn, Putin denounces the pusillanimity of elites, the apathy of overly pampered Westerners, rampant individualism, the "encirclement" of Russia by NATO, the air strikes in Serbia, and the irresolution of the UN in its actions (he forgets here that this is most often due to Russian or Chinese vetoes in the Security Council). They denounce the "appeasers" and all those no longer ready to die for a cause. "To defend oneself, one must be ready to die, and that exists only in small quantity within a society raised in the cult of earthly well-being," Solzhenitsyn rebuked, thinking of the United States (a country he did not take the trouble to know or understand and whose language he did not even learn).

But what courage is Putin speaking of? Bunkerized and paranoid, the Russian dictator is undoubtedly the least courageous man in Russia: he has sent hundreds of thousands of young soldiers to be killed in Ukraine, without even providing them with a plan or sufficient weapons.

Still, Solzhenitsyn was "recoverable" by Putin—and that is one of the flaws in his ideas. By so severely criticizing parliamentary democracy, political pluralism, and the media, Solzhenitsyn provided arguments that Putin, in any case, did not need in order to act. The discourse of other dissidents who called for multipartism and political pluralism, starting with Andrei Sakharov, could not be appropriated by Putin. They (Sakharov in particular) were "Westernizers," whereas Solzhenitsyn was a Slavophile.

Putin has also claimed Solzhenitsyn as an inspiration. They met on rare occasions, the first time in 2000, at Putin's request, when he was elected President of the Russian Federation: he traveled to Troitse-Lykovo, near Moscow, where the writer had taken up residence. A few meetings followed. At his death, in August 2009, Putin paid tribute to him and came to bow before his remains (whereas he did not do so at the death of Mikhail Gorbachev). On several themes, such as the reunification of the Russian Orthodox Churches, the Russian language and pride, and certainly a form of Russian patriotism, if not nationalism, the writer and the president shared views. Solzhenitsyn even allowed himself to be, if not appropriated, at least honored by the new power. He seemed pleased to understand Putin so well, who understood him so poorly. He was even flattered, understandably for a former zek, by the insistent attention the Kremlin paid him. Putin clearly tried to tame him. But he never became "Putinist": he always resisted power, with his anarchist streak, and was recoverable by no one. He denounced all the "Soviet" symbols

Putin attempted to rehabilitate, such as the Soviet anthem, and rejected the idea of a Russian “empire,” consistently condemning the very existence of the USSR and its Soviet expansion into Central and Eastern Europe: this colonialism was harmful to Russian culture, Solzhenitsyn insisted. He could not accept Putin’s statement that the dissolution of the Soviet Union was “the greatest tragedy of the twentieth century.” On Ukraine and Belarus, Solzhenitsyn’s position would certainly have been more ambiguous, insofar as he believed these two countries were part of historic Russia.

Annex 8 on Slavophilia

Yet this neo-Eurasianism, which explains its broad domestic appeal, is not disconnected from Russian history. To understand its logic and intrinsically anti-Western characteristics, one must take a brief detour through a fundamental nineteenth-century battle of ideas between the “Slavophiles” and the “Westernizers.” Let us rewind the debate.

Is Russia a European country? A Western country? Is it, on the contrary, an Asian country? Or is it something else entirely: a singular country whose exceptionalism and “national spirit” (*narodnost*, the key term) must be highlighted and whose Russian genius celebrated? These questions are old, and Russian intellectuals and writers—from Tolstoy to Solzhenitsyn, via Turgenev and, of course, Dostoevsky—have sought to answer them for centuries. The debate took a decisive turn around 1830–1840, when the controversy crystallized into a radical opposition between “Slavophiles” and “Westernizers.” One may attempt to understand “Putinism” through this interpretive grid.

At the origin of this debate stand two major figures: first, Tsar Peter the Great, though he had died a century earlier, credited by the “Westernizers” with Europeanizing Russia and constructing ex nihilo its new capital, Saint Petersburg, precisely at the country’s western edge. The “Slavophiles” hate him for the opposite reason: he betrayed the Russian spirit and nation, sacrificed the genius of the people. Napoleon is the second key figure: through the debacle of the “Russian campaign” and the defeat of his “Grande Armée” in 1812 (so well illustrated in Tolstoy’s *War and Peace*), Napoleon symbolizes both the arrogance and the fragility of Europe. He was defeated by the “national spirit” and the moral superiority of Russia. This is the birth certificate of Russian nationalism and Slavophilism.

From Peter the Great to Napoleon, the debate is set: should Russia imitate, catch up with, surpass, regenerate, or reject the “West,” that is, at that time essentially Europe? The “Slavophiles” draw on this nationalism and recent history to proclaim the moral, material, and spiritual superiority of Russia and to denounce “decadent” Europe. Opposite them, the “Westernizers” continue to believe that Russia, provincialized, lags considerably behind Europe economically and intellectually due to its distance from Western ideas. They fear Russian obscurantism, Orthodox ritual and popular piety, and its anti-religious fury, which the Slavophiles exalt. How can Russia modernize and catch up culturally, politically, or technologically with Europe? Here again, answers diverge between quasi-Slavophiles, such as Putin, and “Western” Russians.

To gain insight into this debate, it is illuminating to read, on the “Slavophile” side, Dostoevsky’s *Diary of a Writer*, perhaps the most profound text on the subject. Written between *Demons* and *The Brothers Karamazov*, Dostoevsky—who returned conservative and nationalist from penal servitude—exalts in his journal the Russian soul, its universal brotherhood, and the messianic destiny of his people, if not its capacity for resignation and suffering. “Eternal” Russia may well modernize, Dostoevsky thinks (though he worries about the tyranny of material civilization), but it must do so in its own way, with its own values, which are not those of Europe: national traditions, Orthodoxy, and even communal peasant structures (the institution of the *mir* or “peasant commune,” ancestor of the kolkhoz, opposed to Western-style individual farms). In *Anna Karenina*, Tolstoy, for his part, mocks the artificial life of Saint Petersburg’s elite and those courtiers who speak “only French.”

Once again, the relationship to religion is essential: Russian Orthodoxy sees itself as a “Third Rome” (after the Roman Empire and the so-called “Byzantine” Empire, as historians have come

to call the Eastern Roman Empire) and the sole legitimate “guardian of Christ’s truth.” For Dostoevsky, deeply anti-Catholic and whom one would today call a “sovereignist,” Europe is decadent, notably because it privileges individualism over community and turns away from spirituality. One must not “lose the habit of one’s homeland.”

Opposite this tradition, the “Westernizers,” represented at the time notably by Turgenev, instead champion the Europe of the Enlightenment, the idea of progress, modernity, enlightened monarchy, Roman law, and even capitalism... and accuse the former of “Russianness.” The latter retort by denouncing a “rival,” “decadent,” or “ill-intentioned” Europe. On one side, Russia is denounced as “backward”; on the other, one mocks a “perpetually legalistic West,” the “decadence of the West,” even a “rotting West” (a phrase that gained currency). On one side, one dreams of Europe, leisure, and the beauty of women—like Pushkin’s dandy Eugene Onegin, later taken up by Tchaikovsky and then Prokofiev—a Westernized dandy here ridiculed; on the other, one exalts peasant common sense and the vast, miserable, and generous Russian soil. General de Gaulle would later reappropriate this Westernist tradition when he evoked “Europe from the Atlantic to the Urals.” (As an echo, Putin would use the formula “From Lisbon to Vladivostok.”)

Anthologies of Russian literature or thought generally show that, on the Russian side, the battle was settled early, as most major authors align themselves with the exaltation of Russia and its exceptionalism (with variations, Pushkin, Chekhov, Tolstoy, Dostoevsky, and Solzhenitsyn belong to this constellation). “Of the two faces of Russia, that of the Westernizers and that of the Slavophiles, the greatest contributions have come from the latter,” acknowledges the specialist in Russian civilization Georges Nivat (in the preface to the anthology *The West Seen from Russia*).

By defending Russian otherness, the Slavophiles believe in a civilization “apart,” a fundamentally different country, and reject the supposedly universal European model and—already—“petty-bourgeois West.” A hatred that the Soviets would bring to its apex.

Annex 9 on “Occupy”

The spirit of Porto Alegre and the ideology of alter-globalization are reincarnated in the “Occupy” movements of the 2010s. More modern and more closely tied to local aspirations, these social protests would erupt almost everywhere: in Hong Kong with Occupy Central, in New York with Occupy Wall Street, in Israel with Occupy Rothschild, and soon in Madrid, Berlin, Istanbul, and some thirty major cities. Here again, countless intellectuals supported, occasionally or more broadly, the “Occupy” movements—from the American anthropologist and anarchist David Graeber (credited with inventing the slogan “We are the 99%,” taken up by many activists) to the philosopher Judith Butler, via the political scientist Susan George.

– A positive quote from Susan George here, honorary president of Attac.

And yet, while there is a common denominator to these protest movements (criticism of economic inequalities) and similar methods (occupation of emblematic public spaces and non-violence), it would be wrong to conflate all the “Occupy” movements. I was in Madrid at Puerta del Sol in 2011 during the “Indignados” movement, and in Hong Kong in 2014 during the “Umbrella Movement” (initiated by “Occupy Central”): I was able to see that these two movements were in fact radically opposed. The first was a far-left populist movement, with anarchist and anti-capitalist drivers (often led by the elite and the children of Madrid’s bourgeoisie); the second was an authentically democratic movement, whose unmistakably and massively popular character I was able to gauge on the ground. In Madrid, worldly activists denounced the United States and the European Union, whereas in Hong Kong they criticized Communist China (and wanted American and European support). On one side, a populist movement of alter-globalization essence; on the other, a movement favorable to the market economy and globalization. On one side, agitprop without the people; on the other, the people without democracy.

Between Hong Kong and Madrid, Occupy Rothschild offered its own version.

– I was part of the group that launched Occupy Rothschild and I was its spokesperson. At the time, I was a student in history and literature. I devoted three months of my life to this movement. We lived in tents on Rothschild Boulevard and, for eight weeks, every Saturday, nearly 500,000 people marched with us. We were not against the political system, nor against the market economy. Our objective was democracy, social justice, and we had very concrete demands, mainly focused on the high cost of rents. In that respect, we were not at all like Occupy Wall Street, which was anti-capitalist, Yonatan Levi explains to me in Tel Aviv.

Annex 10 on Vietnam

NGUYEN THI XUAN PHUONG welcomes me into her apartment. She is 97 years old. I take off my shoes and she invites me to have some fruit juice on a high floor of an anonymous tower in the vast Vietnamese metropolis. She tells me the story of her extraordinary life.

– I come from a family of colonial Indochina. My grandparents were ministers or ambassadors and my parents belonged to the very wealthy class. I knew nothing about armed struggle, and I was not really aware of, nor even a victim of, Western imperialism, which at that time was French, she tells me.

At sixteen, Xuân Phuong answered the call of Hồ Chí Minh, who urged Vietnamese youth to rise up to drive out the “imperialists” and “put an end to colonization.” She left her parents, against their will, to join the clandestine guerrilla in the maquis, the jungle, and the caves. There, she learned to make explosives, attended improvised evening classes in stilt barracks, trained in medicine, became a pediatrician, then an interpreter, a documentary filmmaker for revolutionary films, a war correspondent for the Viet Cong, and eventually married. Her resentment toward the French of the Indochina War and the Americans of the Vietnam War remains intact—but she welcomes me with open arms, exquisite courtesy, and impeccable French. It is true that fifty years have passed since the fall of Saigon.

– I must tell you that I was not a communist: I was driven only by nationalism and the concern for national independence against the French and later against the Americans. I spent a little over twenty years in the maquis. I had no youth, Frédéric. No one should live what I lived, in such harsh conditions. But it was my ideal, and I regret nothing.

Xuân Phuong likes to recount her memories, as she has often done in documentaries or in her memoirs, which she is currently finishing:

– Hồ Chí Minh used to visit us from time to time in the maquis. We had no rice, no salt. We ate cassava tubers with bamboo shoots. One day, I think it was in 1952, Uncle Hồ—as we called him—saw us eating our meager lunch. “Is that enough for you?” Hồ Chí Minh asked me. We were proud to fight for our independence, so we told him it was just fine, even though we could no longer stand cassava! Hồ Chí Minh then told me: “I promise you that when we have peace, you will eat your fill.” That lifted our spirits! But we still had to wait more than twenty years in the maquis before we had peace...

One after another, Xuân Phuong joined the Viet Minh in the North to fight the French and then the Viet Cong in the South to fight the Americans. She arrived in a tank and was among the first fighters to “take” Saigon in 1975.

– It was a war of national liberation against the Westerners. We were fighting for peace. And then there was a spiral, the French and then the Americans, war and then more war. Today, Vietnam is independent.

On a dresser, she shows me photographs in which she stands in the maquis beside Hồ Chí Minh. In other pictures taken during the Vietnam War, she poses with Joan Baez and Jane Fonda, the British writer Graham Greene, or the French journalist Jean Lacouture. Another era.

She tells me of the sacrifices she endured: food rationing; poverty; her parents, whom she left as a teenager and who went into exile in the United States without her (she saw them again only twenty-five years later); her children and grandchildren who “đi Tây,” a Vietnamese expression for those who fled to Western countries (literally, they “went West”). They all now live in Washington, Sydney, or Japan, far from her. And soon, misfortune struck the country.

– None of my children or grandchildren wanted to stay here, she laments.

After the “fall of Saigon,” which she prefers to call “the liberation of Hô Chi Minh City,” things did not unfold exactly as she had dreamed. The revolutionary horizon that was widening, expanding, again and again, until it seemed infinite... began to fold in on itself, to shrink little by little, until it was reduced to almost nothing. Communism, the real one, with its workers’ councils and its rush toward the abyss, plunging from vertigo to vertigo, was there.

Already, in “liberated” North Vietnam, Hô Chi Minh, trained in Moscow—one might even say an agent of Moscow—revered for his poems, had become an authoritarian leader; yet the circumstances of war, spreading to the South and taking on an American dimension, helped mask his true authoritarian design. He the Leninist, the Maoist, and already the Stalinist; he who described Western imperialism as a monstrous octopus, extending its tentacles to suffocate each people, and who saw in the alliance of the oppressed the only force capable of breaking that grip—Uncle Hô had become both the octopus and the oppressor. With the fall of Saigon, his successors (Hô Chi Minh had died five years earlier) imposed dictatorship south of the 17th parallel and then over the entire reunified country.

Opponents of communism, but also merchants, peasants, and the peoples of the South, had no option but to flee by sea—almost as if, in Korea, the North had defeated the South. For there was indeed a civil war in Vietnam, despite what American student youth proclaimed. Violence therefore intensified. Intellectuals and opponents were cruelly persecuted: many writers, poets, and journalists were arrested, their works censored, their publishing houses nationalized, some sent to camps. Designed as centers of “re-education” and indoctrination, these camps borrowed their logic from the Soviet Gulag or Chinese forced labor camps. Hundreds of thousands of South Vietnamese—officers, civil servants, clergy, intellectuals—were interned without trial, in deplorable sanitary conditions and often subjected to unspeakable physical torture. The property and financial assets of South Vietnamese were confiscated, colonial buildings requisitioned, banks nationalized. Soon, hundreds of thousands of Vietnamese—perhaps up to two million—fled the “liberated” country at the risk of their lives, inaugurating the tragedy of the “boat people.” Two hundred to four hundred thousand of them drowned or died of hunger at sea. In neighboring Cambodia, the bloody dictatorship established by the Khmer Rouge under Pol Pot likewise drove entire crowds onto the roads or into the sea. More “boat people.”

I sense Xuân Phuong’s disappointments. The capture of Saigon was a nightmare for the South Vietnamese, but she does not tell me so. I know she dreamed of a free Vietnam after the war, an independent press, less deplorable economic conditions, possible national reconciliation. But she refuses to criticize Hô Chi Minh and the communists. That would mean rejecting her youth and the choice she made at sixteen to leave her parents.

– I was a resistance fighter against Western imperialism. That was my life, Xuân Phuong tells me in a cigarette-roughened voice.

Night begins to fall over Hô Chi Minh City—which its inhabitants today prefer to call Saigon—and from the window of her modest apartment we watch the great city, its immensity, its Chinese-

style modernity, its millions of inhabitants stretching endlessly, its youth full of energy and projects. The West would do well to hold on. Vietnam is taking off, and a spectacular new phase of its history, of its development, has begun. It is now moving at full speed. It will take running very fast to catch up.

Annex 11 on Leonardo Boff.

LEONARDO BOFF IS A PRIEST. More precisely: a defrocked priest. When I visit him in his magnificent house in the Atlantic Forest, near Petrópolis, about an hour and a half from Rio de Janeiro, it is his wife Marcia who welcomes me.

A student and later a doctor of philosophy in Germany, joining the Franciscan order and ordained a priest in 1964 (verify all Adriano*), Boff is one of the most famous “liberation theologians,” that Marxist current within the Catholic Church which promotes the “preferential option for the poor.” For that very reason, he was subjected to questioning by Joseph Ratzinger (the future Pope Benedict XVI), compelled to observe “silence,” and eventually sanctioned by John Paul II. At that time, the Church of Rome preferred to associate with the dictator Pinochet rather than with priests engaged in Latin American guerrillas. A vigorous campaign of inquisition was launched against them by the Vatican and South American episcopal conferences. Boff was stripped of his priesthood and was then able to marry Marcia.

– I became aware of ecology when I was a priest in the Amazon and living among Indigenous communities. Their concern for the forest, their knowledge of biodiversity, their struggle against deforestation became mine, Mr. Boff tells me.

From liberation theology, a major current of Roman Catholicism in the 1970s, now somewhat dated, three contemporary developments can be identified. First, there is the “historic channel,” which remained faithful to its initial Marxism (these worker-priests were often communists, Guevarists, close to Latin American guerrillas, or sympathizers of Castroism), embodied by the Peruvian priest Gustavo Gutiérrez (who gave liberation theology its name) or the Brazilian Dominican Frei Betto, who has remained close to Lula and Fidel Castro. A second current evolved toward a feminist or queer reading of the Bible (the Dominican James Alison, who lives in Madrid, or the Jesuit xxx, who lives in Rio de Janeiro). Finally, some liberation theologians have evolved by taking into account environmental protection and the question of Indigenous identity. Leonardo Boff belongs to this third current, whose overall movement he summarizes for me:

– Liberation theology fights against oppression and in favor of social justice. Now the opposite of oppression is liberation. That is why we spoke of “liberation theology.” This liberation concerns the poor, Indigenous peoples, people of color, but also women and LGBT people. It was ultimately a natural evolution from economic and social questions toward those of race and gender.

In the 1980s, the still-theologian Boff (since that title cannot be taken from him, unlike that of priest) began to reflect, through the Bible, on the status of the Earth.

– Liberation theology was concerned with the poor and with social injustice, but we completely underestimated ecology. And then, little by little, I realized that the quintessence of poverty was our Earth. It is exploited, it is crucified. We must protect it as our “common home.” And that is indeed God’s message, asking us to protect His creation.

In their entirely wooden house in Petrópolis, Marcia brings us a cake with orange and dulce de leche. Leonardo Boff speaks to me about *Laudato Si’*, the famous encyclical of Pope Francis

which reshaped the Church's discourse on ecology and contributed to millions of Catholics recognizing the urgency of climate change. He shows me the countless faxes he exchanged with Francis on the subject, confirming that he was both an inspiration and one of the drafters of this decisive encyclical.

He has published several major books on the subject and is one of the principal sources, if not one of the drafters, of Pope Francis's environmental encyclical *Laudato Si'*. In this capacity, the man who received the Alternative Nobel Prize in 2001 is today one of the most important thinkers on ecology, his ideas now influencing millions of Catholics around the world.

Annex 12 on the cardinal of Cuba (Jaime Ortega) and Fidel being a womanizer.

WHEN I KNOCK ON THE DOOR of Jaime Ortega in Cuba, Alejandro, a charming young man, opens it. I explain that I would like to speak with the cardinal. Kind and friendly, trilingual, Alejandro devoutly asks me to wait a moment. He closes the door and leaves me alone on the landing. Two or three minutes pass and the door opens again. Suddenly, in front of me: Jaime Ortega y Alamino, the famous cardinal of Havana. He is there in person: an elderly man looks me up and down, casting an inquisitive glance full of doubt and caprice. He is a round man, whose giant cross resting on his protruding belly appears all the more enormous given his small stature.

He ushers me into his corner office and apologizes for not having responded to my previous requests.

– My usual assistant, Nelson, is currently in Spain. He is preparing a degree there. Everything has been a bit disorganized since his departure, Ortega apologizes.

We talk about the weather—and literally so, as a hurricane has just struck Martinique and is expected to reach Cuba within a few hours. The cardinal worries about my return to France if flights are grounded.

Without warning, Jaime Ortega begins addressing me informally, in the Cuban manner. And suddenly, without further formality, on the basis of a single impression lasting a few minutes, scrutinizing me, he says:

– If you like, we can have dinner together tomorrow evening.

In a previous book (*Sodoma*), I revealed the numerous sexual affairs surrounding the Catholic Church in Cuba, which did not spare Cardinal Jaime Ortega—now deceased. A well-known homosexual, he lived peacefully in a luxurious palacio in Habana Vieja among aloe vera plants, mango trees, and young men, while naturally the Castro brothers, who constantly kept him under surveillance, were perfectly aware of his lapses of faith. I would hypothesize that Castro tolerated Ortega's homosexuality all the more because it allowed him to control him, a form of perverse blackmail in which Fidel and Raúl were masters.

– Yes, Ortega is gay. The cocos [communists] hold that over him, a nuncio who had been posted in Cuba and frequented Cardinal Ortega for several years tells me. (About twenty priests, lay collaborators of the Cuban episcopate, journalists from the Catholic magazine *Palabra Nueva*, a Protestant pastor who has been friends with Ortega since their adolescence, and a Cuban bishop confirmed to me the information provided by the nuncio, the Pope's official ambassador to Cuba.)

Ortega's homosexuality would not be so serious if it did not reveal a culture of secrecy carefully maintained by Fidel, who knew how to blackmail the right people to conceal his own misdeeds. While investigating the Catholic Church in Cuba, I met about a dozen valuable witnesses (including Cardinal Ortega himself and, in Brazil, the Dominican Frei Betto, a confidant of Fidel) who shared with me, under the seal of anonymity, certain secrets. They deserve to be briefly mentioned here, as they reveal another face of Castroism and contrast sharply with Fidel's public discourse, particularly conservative on moral issues, and his private life.

Fidel Castro's supra-tropical sexuality, at times violent, was described to me by several witnesses in Havana; it is also documented in various books and accounts. It is known that El Comandante assiduously courted the young Frenchwoman Evelyne Pisier and her sister, the film actress Marie-France Pisier, as soon as they set foot in Havana. Fidel had a particular weakness for blonde Western women—and he lined them up like Mojitos. At times, when they were not very receptive to his bearded charm, this horizontal man knew how to impose his desire. He was, if not a sexual abuser, at least a womanizer.

The young Evelyne Pisier, a fiery blonde who was one of Fidel's French liaisons for four years, described a rather sensual and gentlemanly figure, albeit libertine. Their relationship unfolded in luxury hotels in Havana and on the privatized paradise beaches of Varadero, in the latest-model black sedans, or on Fidel's private yacht where they fished for lobsters before cooking them—photographs and testimonies attest to this.

– Fidel was certainly a man who loved women. He had hundreds of them... let's say he had many, photographer Una Liutkus tells me, correcting himself, having met Fidel in 1964 and in the years that followed. (He accompanied Evelyne Pisier when Fidel deployed great means to seduce her, as he recounts to me in detail during two lunches in Paris.)

Other European women who knew Fidel well speak of “a macho and paternalistic man of power,” who knew how to “impose his desire.” Some recall his “domination” and a “form of authoritarian imposition of his desire”; others remember more the dandy, “so much did he look at himself in the mirror” and need women “to prove to himself that he was seductive.”

The Venezuelan Elizabeth Burgos, who was the wife of the French writer Régis Debray and close to Fidel when she was a radical communist activist in the late 1960s, acknowledges his natural capacity for seduction. She insists on clarifying that she “was never his mistress,” but she describes the charm of the man during a meeting at her home in a village in the Yvelines, an hour by train from Paris:

– Fidel was above all a great, an enormous seducer, very aware of his charisma. Everyone fell under his charm. Everyone was seduced. And of course, he took advantage of that: he had an immediate intuition of what he could do with the person under his spell.

That Fidel was a womanizer is hardly in doubt: he was married several times, multiplied extramarital relationships, and, a follower of free fornication, several natural or illegitimate children are attributed to him. Though he was admired by some feminists in the West, Fidel Castro remained in Cuba an inveterate macho: for him, woman was “a humble creature who must bow if Caesar grants her a nod” (Shakespeare, *Julius Caesar*). In total, he is said to have had nine or ten children (one is said to have been taken from his mother at birth to avoid scandal).

His last official wife was Dalia Soto del Valle, whom he met in 1961 and married civilly in 1980, with whom he had five sons, all whose first names begin with the letter A—in homage to Alexander the Great. This family lived with him, in the greatest secrecy, on the ultra-luxurious private island of Cayo Piedras del Norte (Cubans only discovered the existence of this other family during the 2000s).

Fidel also resorted to prostitution, as several testimonies I collected in Havana and various books attest. This point is significant, given that Castro denounced the commodification of sex in the Cuba of dictator Batista, committing himself to ending it. (Frantz Fanon mocks in *The Wretched of the Earth*, without having been there, “the casinos of Havana,” “thirteen-year-old mixed-race girls,”

and the stigmas of the “depravity of the bourgeoisie” during Batista’s regime; as for the Black poet Langston Hughes, who visited three times, he too describes Cuba’s “brothels” in the 1930s in his autobiography *The Big Sea*.) Later, Fidel would even say, without realizing the enormity of the phrase: “Even our prostitutes have been to university.”

Today, prostitution is omnipresent in Cuba: I have seen Canadians, Americans, and Europeans travel there to find fourteen-year-old prostitutes, specialized bars, and an entire trade perfectly well tolerated by the regime since it brings foreign currency into the island. The hypocrisy of Castroism, which denounced Batista only to amplify the same excesses: from one brothel to another, the circle is complete.

Annex 13 on Cuba and Culture

CULTURAL POLICY, however, is not invincible. Yet it was one of the priorities emphasized by Castro and Guevara: to make the country a model of art and culture. The aim was to wipe the slate clean of a past in which art supposedly had no place, according to the revolutionary rewriting of history. (It suffices, here again, to read the fine two-volume autobiography of Langston Hughes, a communist hardly suspected of being pro-Yankee, who describes the vitality of 1930s Cuba, to correct this perception: *The Big Sea* and *I Wonder as I Wander*.)

It all begins with a long speech by Fidel in June 1961 (two and a half hours), one of the most important of the period, which defines the role of artists and intellectuals in the revolution: *Palabras a los intelectuales: la política cultural de la revolución cubana*. Through anaphora and slogans, quoting Jean-Paul Sartre and Mao Zedong, Fidel explains that literature must be “committed” and that the Cuban revolution is above all a “cultural revolution.” He praises the freedom of the artist and writer—provided they strive to promote the revolution. Gone is Russian socialist realism; here comes “guerrilla art”—its Caribbean version. Indeed, Fidel had just “censored” (the official euphemism is “archived”) a short documentary on Havana’s nocturnal bohemia because it did not reflect his precepts; in response to the uproar, he delivered his great cultural address. “Within the Revolution, everything; against the Revolution, nothing. There can be no exception in the law for artists and writers,” he declared in the most commented passage of this lengthy speech. Fidel further specified that the true artist is one who is ready to sacrifice even his own artistic vocation to serve the revolution. From this ideology, Fidel announced the forthcoming Castroist cultural policy: overall state control over freedom of expression and the media, and a vision of culture confined to a populist and nationalist spirit of propaganda. And it did work—for a time.

In the 1960s and 1970s, independent Cuban cinema enjoyed some critical success, at a time when there were still 140 movie theaters on the island. A film school, the *Escuela Internacional de Cine y Televisión*, was even launched in 1986 under the auspices of Gabriel García Márquez in San Antonio de los Baños, about an hour’s drive from Havana. The project aimed to be progressive, independent, and, of course, the antithesis of Hollywood. “Gabo,” García Márquez’s nickname, financed it generously with his own funds. Music festivals (the Varadero International Music Festival), literary and theater festivals were also launched in Cuba in the 1970s, already sustained by progressive Latin Americans and Europeans.

The writer Leonardo Padura, author of the famous novel *El hombre que amaba a los perros* (*The Man Who Loved Dogs*, a fictionalized biography of Trotsky and his assassination in Mexico), still resides in Cuba, where I visit him. He now has an international audience and seems tolerated by the regime, even though his books are absent from the few bookstores in Havana, as he confirms to me:

– There are no books here, in Cuba. There is no market for books. There are no publishers, no paper, no critics. Culture is in great difficulty because of the economic situation. We make do! I am a very realistic man. I never speculate. And politics does not interest me, Leonardo Padura tells me with a regretful expression, receiving me at his home, in orange shorts and T-shirt, in a suburb of Havana where he lives in a rather modest house with a large garden in which he grows mangoes, avocados, and bananas.

Music was also remarkably innovative: salsa, with Cuban roots, as well as various forms of rumba, mambo, guaracha, up to the global success of Buena Vista Social Club. This musical effervescence

may be linked to Cuba's isolation, where Anglo-Saxon music—and particularly the Beatles—was banned by the Castro brothers.

Still, this artistic dynamism of the early Revolution began to dry up in the 1980s. Today, one searches in vain for bookstores, cinemas, and melodies in Cuban streets. Cultural policy is at a standstill. The insignificant president Miguel Díaz-Canel, who succeeded the Castro brothers when one was half-dead and the other half-alive, now speaks only through communiqués. He has announced cuts to already infinitesimal cultural funding due to risks of subversion and has legalized censorship—already widespread—against any “deviationism.” The result: movie theaters lie in ruins, and the small handful that survive on the island occasionally screen Castroist propaganda films. The film school of Gabriel García Márquez is itself stalled, without means, without vision other than an obsolete anti-Western discourse and a defense of the mandatory enlistment of artists in the service of the Cuban Revolution, as I was able to observe on site in San Antonio de los Baños while interviewing students and professors. Moreover, the school has produced few films or telenovelas of critical—and even less commercial—success (the fine Cuban-Mexican film *Fresa y chocolate*, made by some professionals within the orbit of this “escuela de cine,” is an exception). A telling sign: even Gabo's son, Rodrigo, preferred to study at the American Film Institute in Los Angeles rather than at his father's school.

Even Cuban music, which nonetheless experienced its golden age (for example Silvio Rodríguez or the brilliant Pablo Milanés—who, long a troubadour of Castroism, ultimately chose exile in Madrid and cautiously criticized the regime), now fits into inauthentic tourist setups, where the same Buena Vista Social Club hits play on loop. One can still hear excellent *nueva trova* in Cuba and countless reggaeton groups, but one must go to unofficial venues, generally underground and constantly threatened with administrative closure (the Castro regime has denounced reggaeton, today the most popular music in Latin America, for its “vulgarity”). As for emerging venues where tourists flock, such as La Fábrica de Arte Cubano or the Las Vegas Cabaret, they are commercial enclaves run by the Castroist nomenklatura (which sells its drugs there) and whose purpose is less cultural than to bring in foreign currency. Some defenders of the regime suggest that the embargo decreed by the United States explains Cuba's cultural decline: an argument that would deserve to be taken seriously if art and culture were not precisely excluded from that embargo (Berman Amendment of 1988): Cuba can import without restriction books, newspapers and magazines, music, art, and the entirety of American “soft power”; if they are absent from the island, it is a choice of the Castro authorities.

Annex 14 on “You Stink” movement

SITTING ON THE TERRACE of a French café in the half-Christian, half-hipster district of Gemmayzeh, in Beirut, Assad Thebian fidgets with his smartphone while answering my questions. He is in the middle of organizing a protest scheduled for the day after we meet. And after updating his Facebook status and posting messages over and over, he has run out of credit. Revolution comes at a price!

– 350 dollars! I’ve far exceeded my plan. I’ll have to ask my friends to pay my phone bill. Because I’m not working, the young man tells me, while devouring a salmon pie.

Blue T-shirt and thick beard, Assad Thebian is 27 years old. The objective of the protest he is preparing is to denounce the corruption and incompetence of Lebanese politicians and the confessional trap that blocks the electoral system. Hostile to Hezbollah, Thebian is the co-founder of the collective “You Stink!”, “Tala’at Rihatkum” in Arabic or, literally, “You Stink!” in French.

– I’m not a Marxist, I’m secular. I believe in democracy, social justice and above all secularism, explains Abbas Saad, who co-organizes the protest with Thebian and heads the “Secular Club” at the American University of Beirut.

Assad Thebian remains discreet about his confession (he is Druze) and Abbas Saad hardly mentions his either (he is Shi’ite). Neither gives importance to religion, which, according to them, should remain a private matter. Their mobilization lies somewhere between the “Arab Springs” and the “Occupy”-type movements that developed from Wall Street to Hong Kong, passing through Madrid or Istanbul.

– We must change Lebanon. We are neither left nor right; we are citizens who want to fix the problems of garbage, power outages, constant water cuts. Look at the slowness of the Internet here: it’s outrageously expensive and it doesn’t even work! It’s another symptom of Lebanon’s complete dysfunction, laments Thebian, showing me his computer lagging.

The digital team of You Stink joins us: a group of young secular activists of various confessions. The only religion of these hipsters: the Internet. Together, they must launch a website that day: everything has to be ready before the next day’s protest. The small group of geeks gets to work modifying the site, still in “test” mode.

– We need to add a plug-in that automatically generates Facebook posts on the site, Thebian says.

One developer adds the plug-in. Another finalizes the graphics.

– You put a green logo there, says Abbas Saad, that’s impossible! It’s the color of Hezbollah’s logo!

I followed Abbas Saad for several days in Beirut. I watched him mobilize students at the American University of Beirut, known as AUB, a magnificent, multi-confessional campus in the city center, where countless “giants” of the Arab world have studied, including four Lebanese prime ministers and several pro-Palestinian terrorists. Born in a village in southern Lebanon dominated by Hezbollah, Abbas Saad knows the limits of the movement—its corruption, religiosity, sectarianism. But he also denounces the entire Lebanese political class, corrupt, aging, and completely communalized. Above all, he rejects the confessional system that allocates power to the three main

communities: Shiites systematically obtain the presidency of Parliament, Sunnis the post of Prime Minister, and Christians the presidency of the Republic—an artificial, rigid, and blocked system.

Night has now fallen over Beirut. The young Lebanese of “You Stink!” are still at work. Preparations for the next day’s protest are coming to an end and the website is ready to go live.

– I’m making a few final adjustments and we’ll be good to go, Joseph Salame tells me, an Internet specialist who has come to help develop the site.

All evening, the Druze Thebian, the Shiite Saad, the Maronite Salame have been joined by Sunnis, atheists, and all those who dream of a Lebanon where people no longer think through the outdated categories of the confessional system. All dream of another Lebanon: a Lebanon that would send religious leaders back to their mosques and churches. A youth that advocates gender equality, campaigns for ecology, and defends the rights of Palestinians, particularly denied in Lebanon. A youth that believes in mixed marriages and, above all, in “secularism”—a magic word for them. But one that finds no echo among their opponents, unanimous in rejecting it.

– Tomorrow will be the real show of force. We’re expecting hundreds of people? Thousands? Tens of thousands? We don’t know, jokes Leen Hashem, a young activist with curly hair, unveiled, who has also joined the group and fears weak mobilization. (The next day, the “show of force” will be a failure. I will see only a few hundred people.)

Everything now seems ready. At the last minute, Assad Thebian asks to add a contact address, then the countdown begins. The small group chants together: 10, 9, 8, 7... And suddenly, there it is: the site goes live. On the café terrace, everyone applauds. (Several years have passed since this episode in Lebanon’s history: among those present at the launch of the “You Stink!” site, several have gone into exile; Assad Thebian now runs a restaurant in Beirut and no longer wishes to speak about politics; Abbas Saad has joined an NGO, often works in Iraq, and regularly helped me by becoming the principal Arab researcher for this book.)

Annex 15 on Edward Said

Said has also been accused of lacking generosity toward authors who, for some, accumulated indispensable knowledge about the Orient. That they may have had prejudices, certainly—and that their texts from the late eighteenth or nineteenth century contain errors—was that not inevitable? But must they therefore be rejected wholesale? Napoleon was certainly violent but, accompanied on his expedition by a host of scholars, scientists, and artists, did he not give birth to the ten volumes of the collective encyclopedia *Description de l'Égypte*, published in 1809—an immense compendium that Arab intellectuals still use today and that Said denounces as “cultural appropriation” (a concept destined for a long future)? As for Champollion, he was certainly not free of prejudice, but he deciphered the hieroglyphs of the Egyptian pyramids, something no “native” had done before him. And why not acknowledge the curiosity shown, at such an early stage, by numerous researchers who sought to understand the Orient by going there themselves—for example a Louis Massignon or a Rudyard Kipling: a little more empathy toward his fellow scholars would have been salutary! As for indiscriminately denouncing, by homogenizing them, all Western intellectuals for having contributed to colonialism, this is a serious historical error: authors such as Montaigne, Voltaire, Diderot, Montesquieu, E. M. Forster, André Gide, George Orwell, Jean Genet, Albert Camus, among others, were early critics of colonialism (as was also, of course, the case for “concerned” authors such as Aimé Césaire, Frantz Fanon, or Léopold Sédar Senghor). Said never cites the examples or authors that might contradict his thesis. One could cite other examples that reveal the constant bias, the serious anachronisms—the historian’s cardinal sin—the factual errors and the Manichaeism of the author of *L'Occidentalisme*.

Annex 16 on Evo Morales

LESS SUCCESSFUL TRANSITION for Evo Morales in Bolivia and Rafael Correa in Ecuador, who both tried to imitate Fidel and Chávez in the media sphere and in their support for radical left movements, but both were ultimately defeated at the ballot box. The first by illegally attempting to remain in power despite the constitutional limit of two presidential terms (and later becoming one of Putin's Russia's supporters); the second by revealing himself to be a soft Chávez and, after a controversial third term, much corruption and several legal cases against him, going into exile with his fortune in Belgium. He too failed to change the electoral system in order to run indefinitely.

Nevertheless, in Ecuador as in Bolivia, these two charismatic leaders had the merit of attempting to implement a new political concept, the “buen vivir,” which has since had some influence on ecological thinking around the world. Borrowed from the experiences of Indigenous Amerindian peoples, it aims to promote a more harmonious relationship between nature and human beings. The Indigenous expression, omnipresent in Latin America for the past fifteen years, comes from the Quechua language of Bolivian Indians (*El Sumak Kamaña*) or, in a variant, from the Quichua of Ecuadorian Indians (*El Sumak Kawsay*). This skillful slogan, flexible enough to be highly adaptable, also allows them to criticize globalization and consumerism, to denounce progress and more broadly the Western development model, while relying on an Indigenous reference rooted in Latin American culture.

– Our development model is *buen vivir*, which is now enshrined in the Constitution. Ecuador is the first country in the world to have a Constitution that grants rights to nature, rejoices Ángel Valverde Gallardo, Deputy Minister for Climate Change (on the façade of this *ministerio del ambiente* in Quito, I read this slogan in giant letters: “Ecuador Ama la vida,” “Ecuador loves life”).

Now officially inscribed in the Constitutions of Ecuador and Bolivia, *buen vivir* has been the subject of numerous criticisms, as several journalists and intellectuals confirm to me in Quito and La Paz.

– *Buen vivir* is variable geometry: under the guise of integration and tolerance, it excludes women and LGBT people here! Correa mocked gays on television. He is very, very Catholic. Correa is a *caudillo*, he follows the Chávez model. And the concept of *buen vivir* is nothing but “PR.” It’s a fantasy. It’s a sham, scoffs blogger José Hernandez, salt-and-pepper hair, glasses and a Ralph Lauren polo shirt, during a long discussion in Cumbayá, a suburb of Quito.

Jeannette Sanchez, former Minister of the Economy under Correa, for her part nuances these criticisms:

– *Buen vivir* is a process, not an end in itself. It is the idea that we must live in a more communal, less individualistic society. That we must care about quality of life.

On paper, the idea was appealing in its generosity—until Ecuadorian President Rafael Correa launched his major oil exploitation project in a region of the Amazon rich in biodiversity, Yasuní National Park. Driven by intentions of economic development, the project nonetheless directly contradicted Correa’s commitments to the environment, biodiversity, and the defense of Indigenous peoples. Are oil exploitations to be criticized when they are carried out by North

American multinationals, but defensible when they are conducted by Ecuadorian state-owned companies?

– The Indians of the Amazon are excluded from Correa’s *buen vivir*! He claims to be progressive, but his project is not democratic. He does not accept pluralism or political disagreement, testifies Patricio Chávez, spokesperson for Yasunidos, whom I interview at the environmental movement’s headquarters (on the walls of magnificent bungalows in a garden in Quito’s La Gasca district where this NGO is based, I read numerous slogans: “Democracia en extinción,” “El Sumak Kawsay [Buen vivir] es sin petróleo,” “Amazonia por la vida,” “Stop COLONIALISM”).

The same drift occurred in Bolivia, where Evo Morales, after being the champion of *buen vivir* and militant ecology, authorized oil and gas exploration around the Río Madre de Dios, one of the most beautiful rivers in Peru and Bolivia, which runs along the Andes for 700 kilometers. When I was in La Paz, mobilization against the government was in full swing.

– We believed that with Evo’s election, the Indigenous question would be resolved and the ecological issue would be his priority. He constantly spoke of *Buen Vivir* and of *Madre Tierra* (Mother Earth). He denounced *cambio climático* in all his speeches. But that’s not what happened. He built roads and airports in southern Bolivia. He promotes deforestation everywhere, including in the Bolivian Amazon, to raise cattle and transgenic soybeans: at least 200,000 hectares are burned each year! Evo says those figures are false, but—alas—they are the real figures! He also encourages extraction in silver mines, oil, gas. He has only one word in his mouth: Extraction, Extraction, Extraction. Drill! Drill! Drill! He repeats that all the time, like American Republicans. And as for quinoa, which has become a major industry since eco-bobos in San Francisco began consuming it, it is here 90% transgenic, with Monsanto, Cargill and all that, and it contributes to deforestation or shrub clearing in the Altiplano. Evo pushes for profitability and chemicals, especially in the southern Altiplano or around Lake Titicaca, to increase quinoa exports. He may do it in the name of sovereignty over our resources, but he does not even respect his own government’s rules on nature protection. Evo’s double discourse is striking. He does not protect the environment at all: it is an anti-ecological left! says Raul Peñaranda in La Paz, who directs the daily newspaper *Página Siete*.

Another journalist, close to the regime, offers a more nuanced view. Javier Larrain directs *La Época*, a newspaper housed in an official vice-presidential building in La Paz.

– We are a poor country, without industry. Our natural resources were exploited by colonizers. It is true that the environmental question is in strong contradiction with development. It is true that we produce much more quinoa, for example, but we consume less because a large part of production is exported. The government heavily subsidizes quinoa cultivation. There are really two lefts here that came to power together with Evo: an Indigenist, anti-capitalist left close to the *campesinos* (peasants), guerrillas, and defending *los pueblos indígenas*; and a Marxist, communist, Guevarist or Trotskyist left that values industrialization and productivism. Evo comes from the first left, but he does not want to alienate the second. So he invites big industrialists to lunch instead of banning them. Evo is a democrat and a pragmatic man, even if in Latin America we do not conceive of democracy as you do: we do it here in our own way, different from Europe. For us, democracy does not mean alternation in power: we believe more in participation.

Another day, Iván Iporre, an adviser to Evo Morales, welcomes me into his large office beneath a portrait of “Che.” At the end of our discussion, he offers to take me somewhere. In his brand-new Nissan Patrol 4x4, we leave La Paz at speed toward the north: destination El Alto. As we climb onto the altiplano, it grows colder and people grow poorer. The wealthy live below in La Paz; the

poor higher up in El Alto—the reverse of many countries due to climate. After about ten kilometers climbing the road of the altiplano, we arrive at more than 4,000 meters above sea level. The view over La Paz and the Andes is spectacular. And suddenly, there it is. Before me: an immense steel statue of “Che.” In this district, called San Francisco, they sell Guevara T-shirts and all the usual merchandise bearing his image. I ask Iván Iporre about this imposing monument and the fascination that seems to me from another era.

– There is something like a pilgrimage here, with students, unions, activists who come to visit this statue and pay homage to “Che.” Do not forget that he died here, in Bolivia, and that Evo has, in a way, avenged him. For him, “Che” represents the struggle against American imperialism, the fight against the exploitation of our resources, the defense of Indigenous peoples. Evo quotes “Che” all the time. And when he received the Pope, he was even wearing a jacket featuring “Che”!

Annex 17 on WIPO

At the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), an agency that brings together 183 countries and deals with the harmonization and remuneration of copyright, the data appear even more “fluid.” First, a number of countries have refused to ratify the Berne Convention on copyright because they simply do not accept paying royalties abroad. Such is the case of Putin’s Russia, which has stopped negotiating with Western rights holders, thus returning to practices in force during the USSR: films, music, video games, and books now circulate continuously, illegally, on platforms such as VK Video, RuTube, or Telegram channels, to the great satisfaction of Russian youth.

Second, among the countries that officially respect copyright, many refuse certain rules or adapt them in their own way, such as India or Brazil. Others, such as Cuba, Algeria, Nigeria, Vietnam, or South Africa, are highly hostile to paying foreign authors but insist that their own artists be remunerated when distributed internationally. As for the vast majority of African or Asian countries, including allied countries such as Egypt, they formally accept the idea of copyright but allow—and sometimes encourage—systemic piracy of DVDs, CDs, and books.

For its part, China claims to respect copyright rules but unilaterally determines all remuneration, dispossessing millions of authors, film producers, musicians, and countless Western rights holders.

– China abolished all copyright laws under Mao, in 1949. It agreed to reopen discussions only starting in 1991 but did not truly take an interest until its own production of films and music began to achieve global resonance. Today, it is the leading country in terms of patent filings and registration of original works. It registers the slightest song or poem! It is a complete reversal of its strategy. Likewise, South Korea paid little attention to copyright until the success of K-Pop prompted it to better protect its works. The same is true of Mexico, Colombia, or Chile, which became interested in copyright once their telenovelas achieved international success. So we see that things are changing, sometimes for the better, sometimes for the worse. Still, as with other United Nations agencies, copyright data are always self-reported: it is therefore impossible for us to correct them, Paolo Lanteri, advisor to the Copyright Law Division at WIPO, sums up during an interview at the organization’s headquarters in Geneva.

In countless countries, creators’ rights are thus deliberately flouted. Counterfeiting is elevated to public policy, to the point that piracy appears as a genuine governmental choice that does not speak its name, even if its deeper drivers remain low purchasing power or the lack of affordable legal offerings. Through the battle over copyright, a more insidious critique of Western “imperialism” is also at play: the refusal of its demand for transparency, the rejection of its norms and values, and ultimately an underlying challenge to the multilateral system. This comes at the cost of serious manipulation and widespread falsehoods. In matters of statistics, error seems to have become the rule—and truth the exception.



Sources, bibliography and appendices

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