

France's Front National, Jean-Marie Le Pen and the West's Predicament

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We need a strong alliance between Europe with its technology and Russia with its resources. This is our duty of historic proportions. – Jean-Marie Le Pen, Komsomolskaia Pravda, Jan 15, 2015.[1]

The conspiracy theorist functions as both magnet and vessel. Conspiracy theorists, in the absence of appropriate evidence, substitute and improve upon. But the conspiracy theory is also a product of passion, anger and irrational temper. Unwanted feelings, concerns, and suspicions, tend to be channelled through the workings of sinister forces, problematic alliances and seeming compromises.

Then come political figures who are impossible to wrap and summarise along plain conspiratorial lines. They are unpleasantly problematic, precisely because they use the pragmatism of politics, with the intoxication of anxious polemics. Occasionally, they can even be lucid, identifying themes of the troubling *Zeitgeist*.

The hard-hitting, seemingly inflated being of France's Jean-Marie Le Pen, founder and president-for-life of the Front National Party, is such a figure. He is not easy to categorise, and dismissive slurs about his reactionary behaviour simply won't do. He fears Islam in France, something he has deemed a virus in need of policing and eventual eradication. He thinks, as he acted before, as a soldier, having himself done his bit for Francophile imperialism with stints in Algeria and Indochina.

He fears those, in fact, who would be anything other than French in that rigidly cut fashion he deems appropriate. It seems antiquated, but the fact that he, and the party his daughter currently leads, is proving to be a serious electoral chance in France, suggests anything but. He nurses the long held suspicion about other powers and forces he fears are undermining French sovereignty. He does not trust the American program, which he accuses of belligerence and global mischief making.

The recent, and rippling interview with *Komsomolskaia Pravda*, featured a colourful assortment of opinions.[2] There is the usual anti-immigration sentiment, a slur against France's millions of Muslims. "They [Charlie Hebdo] can organise a show with a powerful media attack and the slogan 'I am Charlie,' temporarily mobilizing the nation but they are incapable of protecting the country from the influx of immigrants from the south."

These immigrants refuse to work, though there is a sense that Le Pen would rather they did not. They are, for Le Pen, secondary agents of conquest. His preference, rather than for the "clowns" of Charlie Hebdo's project, is to be the historically lionised, and Moor-stopping Charles Martel. "Martel, this brilliant French warrior, stopped the Arab invasion at Poitiers in 732."

Combing through the rough and ready patches of Le Pen's reasoning, and a few strands of logic are detectable. He doesn't like Muslims nor cares much for Islam, but he was against the French meddling in Libya that resulted in the overthrow of the Gaddafi regime. "Getting involved in a war with Libya was true insanity." Gaddafi's forces, readying to attack the fundamentalist Salafists in Benghazi, were strafed by French planes. The fall of the regime led to a proliferation of weapons through North Africa, an outcome he lays squarely at the feet of the previous President Nicola Sarkozy.

Then came the Ukrainian crisis, another excuse for meddling in a bid to expand NATO, and US, power up towards Russia's borders. "Our party's position is as follows: the conflict between the Russians and the Ukrainians is a family feud. After all, Russia was born in Kiev. Neither Europeans, nor Americans should get involved in this family drama."

The acute sense that France, and the rest of Europe, is in an existential struggle with Washington is made clear. There is a demographic problem – following a long historical trajectory, Russia's population numbers are in decline with its eastern territories in a spot of bother, and Germany "is a gold-plated coffin stuffed with dead bodies."

Dying nations, dying states, among the supposed roses of civilization, are losing out to the breeders and the movers, the immigrants of colour Le Pen hopes will disappear under the pressures of pandemics. ("Monsieur Ebola," he claimed in May 2014, "can solve the problem in three months." [3])

Then there is the economic weapon, furnished via the incapacitating Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership Agreement. If the EU signs it with the United States, "We will turn into America's economic colony." His sharp solution? "We need a united Europe – from the Atlantic to the Pacific, but this must be a Europe of sovereign nations".

The statement about US imperial power nosing about in the European provinces is a bit out of date – for decades various European states have offered bases, soldiers and material for the US project, a form of "empire by invitation," as the less critical scholars on the subject claim. But Le Pen, and here, the lucidity breaks through, is right to fear the encroachments on sovereignty through such corporation-friendly instruments as the TTIP.

The record of officialdom is also something to be doubted. Trusting a dyed-in-the-wool official of the tie and suit establishment is akin to believing a paid-up astrologer versed in reading entrails. Forget the fools in Brussels. Forget the new born moralists of the Hollande government who suddenly woke up to threats.

For that reason, Le Pen would rather not believe what exactly took place behind the Paris murders, though he stops short of the suggestions made by the site McLatchy and Thierry Meyssan that French and American operators were behind the attacks (*The Independent*, Jan 17). At least the official version, in which he smells something rank. "The *Charlie Hebdo* shooting has the modus operandi of the special ops, but we have no proof." When in doubt, official versions prove dismissive of terrorists, seeing them as incompetent, and nitwits. Sadly, the nitwit tendencies are not exclusive.

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- [1] <http://www.radixjournal.com/journal/2015/1/17/jean-marie-le-pen-from-paris-to-vladivostok>
- [2] <http://m.kp.ru/daily/26329.4/3212604/>
- [3] <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/france/10847344/Jean-Marie-Le-Pen--Ebola-epidemic-would-solve-immigration-problems.html>

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