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Source: *French Politics and Society*, Vol. 13, No. 4 (Fall 1995), pp. 12-32
Published by: Berghahn Books
Stable URL: http://www.jstor.org/stable/42844505
Accessed: 04-10-2017 17:00 UTC

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The Dynamics of the Anti-Front National Countermovement*

Nonna Mayer
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On May 1, 1995, 15,000 supporters of the Front National marched through the streets of Paris to celebrate Saint Joan of Arc. As they gathered on the place de l'Opéra to listen to Jean-Marie Le Pen's closing speech, a huge yellow streamer one hundred meters square fell from the top of the Palais Garnier, with the words, "No to racism. No to fascism!" and a signature, "Ras l'Front," which can be translated approximately as "Fed up with the Front." Ras l'Front is one of many movements that have appeared in the last twelve years, fighting against the influence of the extreme Right and its ideas. The electoral breakthough of Jean-Marie Le Pen's party in 1983-1984 has triggered an anti-Front National mobilization that I propose to consider as a reactive social movement or countermovement. After reviewing the available literature on the subject, I will analyze the dynamics of the anti-FN movement and its nature.[1]

SOCIAL MOVEMENTS, NEW SOCIAL MOVEMENTS, COUNTER-MOVEMENTS

Definitions and Hypotheses

The dominant paradigm in social movement studies today is the resource mobilization approach initiated by MacCarthy and Zald (1977) and reformulated by authors such as Tilly (1978), Lipsky (1968), MacAdam (1982), or Tarrow (1994), giving more attention to the political processes involved. Rejecting psychological interpretations of collective action such as relative deprivation theories, they stress, in an Olsonien perspective, the rationality of actors engaged in the process of mobilization, even when their action is disruptive, and the decisive part played by social movement organizations, drawing resources from their social and political environment. In that light, a social movement can be defined as "collective challenges by people with common purposes and solidarity in sustained interaction with elites, opponents, and authorities" (Tarrow, 1994: 3-4). To understand its emergence and evolution, one must take into account the organizations that structure it, the social networks and common values and "ideological frames" they build on (Snow et al., 1986), the repertoire of action (Tilly, 1978) available to them, their relation with other organizations and the system of alliance and

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conflict they develop in the "multiorganizational field" (Curtis and Zurcher, 1973), the political opportunities open to them (state structure and party system, electoral shifts, governmental policies, international events (Kitschelt, 1986). Using these tools, I will examine whether the anti-FN mobilization can be analyzed as a social movement.

Much has been written about the rise of *new social movements* (Dalton and Kuechler, 1990) challenging western democracies since the student protests of the 1960s on issues such as feminism, the sexual revolution, defense of the environment, peace, antinuclear protest, minority rights, etc. Compared to the working-class movement, their claims appear more ethical or cultural than economic, more identity-oriented than instrumental. They have the privileged support of the educated and affluent "new middle classes" born with the transformations of postindustrial society. And they develop a new style of political action, emancipated from the traditional parties and unions. This is a second line of hypothesis I will explore with regard to the anti-NF movement.

Though many authors mention *countermovements* as a specific type of social movement, few have studied them as such. One can nevertheless find in Turner and Killian (1957), Tilly (1975), Mottl (1980), Lo (1982), Zald and Useem (1989), and Klandermans (1990), elements for a definition and hypotheses on their specificity, linked to their interplay with the movement they counter. The definition of "reactive" movements given by Tilly (1975: 303-307) is very broad, as a group's defensive mobilization against elites or another group. So is Mottl's definition of countermovements as a "conscious, collective, organized attempt to resist or to reverse social change" (Mottl, 1980: 620). I will adopt the more restrictive approach of Turner and Killian, adopted by Lo, for whom "a countermovement may be defined as a movement mobilized against another social movement" (Lo, 1982: 118). And I will consider right-wing and left-wing countermovements (Stop-ERA, antibusing, right-to-life, religious movements, etc.)

Leaving aside the biases induced by too exclusive a focus on right-wing countermovements, the above-mentioned studies,[2] in spite of their diversity, suggest common potential features of countermovements, mainly polarization, dependency, manicheism, and imitation. By *polarization* is meant that most CM activities will be directed against the target movement and vice versa, aimed at "neutralizing, confronting or discrediting its corresponding countermovement" (Zald and Useem, 1989: 148) by all means. This polar-

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ization can entail a mutual *dependency*, mobilization, and success on one side needing to be triggered by success and mobilization on the other side, each movement thriving paradoxically on the good health of its opponent). It can also lead to purely defensive attitudes from the CM, "more preoccupied with opposing than with promoting a particular program" (Turner and Killian, 1957: 384), just reacting to the moves of the opponent. By *manicheism* I refer to the process clearly stated by Klandermans:

> Within conflict systems, an "us-them" dynamic tends to develop. Mansbridge (1986) describes this process, frequently discussed in the literature on intergroup relations, for the proponents and opponents of the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) in the United States: "building an organization on belief in a principle, when the world refuses to go along with that principle, produces a deep sense of us against them; when two movements are pitted against each other reality will provide plenty of temptations to see the opposition as evil incarnate." (Klandermans, 1990: 127)

Imitation is the tendency to adopt elements of the other side's program:

> The countermovement begins to adopt popular elements of the initial movement's ideology as its own, attempting thereby to satisfy some of the discontent and also to get the opposed movement identified with only the most extreme portion of its whole program. (Turner and Killian, 1957: 383)

Interaction between movement and countermovement can also "produce convergence not only in value and goals but also in movement tactics" (Lo, 1982: 119) or if not convergence, at least reciprocal tactical adjustments, as described by MacAdam (1983).

Is the Front National A Social Movement?

Before seeing if the anti-Front National mobilization, in that sense, is a countermovement, there is a prerequisite: "In a movement/countermovement pair, both must fit the definition of a social movement" (Lo, 1982: 119). First, one must make sure that the Front National is a social movement. It started as a political party, created in 1972 by activists of the group Ordre Nouveau, who wished to reintegrate the French extreme Right in the parliamentary arena, as the Movimento Sociale Italiano did for the Italian extreme Right. Its aim was electoral recognition and, starting with the par-

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liamentary elections of 1993, it has presented candidates in every election. For ten years, it drew less than 1 percent of the valid votes but, in September 1983, the controversial electoral alliance between the Front National and the moderate Right, formed for the occasion of local by-elections in the town of Dreux, marked the electoral rebirth of the French extreme Right. A year later, in the 1984 European elections, the list led by Jean-Marie Le Pen drew 11 percent of the valid votes (Mayer and Perrineau, 1989). Since then, whatever the election, the scores of FN candidates have remained above 9 percent, with a peak of 14.4 percent in the first round of the 1988 presidential election and 15 percent in that of 1995.

At the same time, the initial small gang has turned into a structured political organization, with some 50,000 members formed in party schools and summer universities. And, beyond party members and voters, a social movement is in formation, a small counter-society sharing common values and symbols with grass roots in all segments of the population (Birenbaum, 1992: 220-286). A diversified press (*National Hebdo*, *Présent*, *Le Choc du Mois*, *Minute*) and a network of clubs extend the party's influence. The oldest is its youth group, the Front National de la Jeunesse (1974), which claims 15,000 members, active in high schools and certain universities. Other clubs recruit among women (Cercle national des femmes d'Europe), veterans (Cercle national des combattants), businessmen and professionals (Entreprise Moderne et Libertés), farmers (Cercle national des agriculteurs), etc. Intellectuals are solicited by the party's Scientific Council and the journal *Identity*. Catholic fundamentalist networks, among which the pro-life groups (SOS Tout Petits, Laissez les Vivre) are also very active, connected with the FN by the intermediary of one of its leaders, Bernard Antony, who founded the Centres Charlier and the Comités Chrétienté-Solidarité (Golias, 1991; Camus and Monzat, 1992). The pro-Saddam positions taken by Jean-Marie Le Pen during the Gulf War have drawn in more radical groups of the extreme Right such as l'Oeuvre Française or Troisième Voie, while the club Renaissance serves as a bridge to the moderate Right. As a result, the Front National's ideas reach beyond its electoral constituency. Today 26 percent of the French of voting age express agreement with "the ideas advocated by Jean-Marie Le Pen," namely his ideas about immigration (26 percent), law and order (36 percent), and the defense of traditional values (41 percent).[3] And to defend these ideas, Front National supporters are ready to challenge the state as well as the countermovement that I will now analyze.[4]

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THE ANTI-FRONT NATIONAL MOVEMENT

The Anti-Front National Protest Cycle

In the past twelve years, around 200 anti-Le Pen or anti-Front National public demonstrations have been reported in the national press.[5] A first wave was triggered by the local by-elections in Dreux, after a municipal campaign centered on the immigration issue and good scores of the Lepenist party in towns like Roubaix, Marseille, or Paris (20th district). In the first round the FN's list, led by the secretary-general of the party, Jean-Pierre Stirbois, drew 16.7 percent of the valid votes. In the second round, the victory of a joint UDF-RPR-FN list opened the doors of the town hall to the extreme Right. The Left was unanimous in denouncing the return of fascism with petitions and meetings. On September 9, it organized a "Rally for Democracy" with the elected representatives of the town and the region, members of the Socialist government, party and union leaders, artists and personalities. Five thousand participants, holding red roses and signs reading "No to the fascist danger!" listened to the actor Daniel Gélin read a text from Claude Mauriac warning against "the reappearance of a racist extreme Right (. . .) aggravated by the betrayal of a traditional Right, not fascist, which, in order to win, agreed against all intellectual and moral honesty, to count its voices with the extreme Right and accept, in the event of victory, to share with it the administration of the town." In the second round, an angry crowd of 1,500 people gathered to wait for the results, screaming, "Fascists out of Dreux!" In December of the same year, the "March of the Beurs,"[6] inspired by the American civil rights movement and calling "for equality and against racism," gathered 100,000 marchers from Lyon to Paris. Triggered by racist crimes in the suburbs of Lyon, it was also directed against Le Pen and his ideas, as were the marches of 1984 (Convergence 1984 for Equality) and 1985 (De Wenden, 1988: 340-349). During the 1984 European election campaign, Front National meetings were systematically and often violently disrupted. Among the fifteen large anti-FN demonstrations reported by *Le Monde*, only two took place peacefully.

A second wave of mobilization started after the desecration of the Jewish cemetery of Carpentras, discovered on May 10, 1990. The news aroused considerable emotion. The Front National was immediately thought to be, if not directly, at least indirectly responsible.[7] In the following week there were fifty demonstrations, local racist or antisemitic incidents calling forth new protests. The largest demonstration took place in Paris where, on May

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14, 200,000 people, joined by the President of the Republic in person, silently marched against racism, antisemitism, and the Front National. Compared to the 1983-1984 period, these demonstrations were larger and more peaceful. All over the country members and sympathizers of the extreme Right were boycotted, the FN's meetings were forbidden, their publications banned.

A third wave of protest followed the presentation to the press of the Front National's "Fifty Concrete Measures Against Immigration" in November 1991. These included cancelling of naturalizations granted after 1974, repealing antiracist laws, fixing quotas of immigrants in schools, etc. On January 25, 1992, a large antiracist demonstration in Paris rallied 100,000 participants. During the following campaign for regional elections, there were fifty anti-FN demonstrations, half of them degenerating into violent incidents between young demonstrators and the police (twenty-two out of fifty).

The last wave began in 1995 with several crimes and acts of violence seen as involving the Front National in some way. On February 21, Ibrahim Ali, a seventeen-year-old Franco-Comoran boy going home after a concert, was shot by Front National activists posting bills in Marseille. On May 1, Brahim Bouarram, Franco-Moroccan, was thrown into the Seine by a group of skinheads who had been marching with the FN's supporters in their annual celebration of the feast of Joan of Arc. On May 7, the body of a young Franco-Tunisian was found drowned in the port of Le Havre and skinheads were also suspected of his murder. Each of these crimes, perceived as "racist,"[8] was followed by anti-FN demonstrations, the largest of which took place in Paris on May 3 for Brahim Bouarram. It gathered some 20,000 participants and the President of the Republic himself put a bouquet of lilies of the valley on the spot where the victim was pushed. The mobilization was sustained by the high electoral scores of the FN in the presidential and municipal elections, especially in the three towns that elected a Front National mayor, Orange, Marignane, and Toulon.

In each protest wave, demonstrations were but the most visible action taken against the Front National, accompanied by all the means of protest available, such as anti-FN concerts, marches, floral arrangements, posters, cartoons, picnics, *mechouis*, and special anti-Le Pen vintages, as well as by more conventional actions (meetings, debates, political pressure). A few times, in their wake, violent action was taken against Front National members or their belongings.[9]

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Anti-Front National Opinions

In order to develop, a social movement needs the support of public opinion. At first this was not the case with the anti-FN movement. In 1983, those who agreed that "the Front National and Jean-Marie Le Pen represent a danger for democracy in France" were a minority, and one French citizen in five had no opinion on the subject. Gradually opinions formed, and a drop in the proportion of "no response" results surfaced (19 percent in 1983, 13 percent in 1984, 8 percent in October 1987, and 4 percent today). On the eve of the 1984 European elections, the number of those who found the Front National dangerous equalled the number of those who did not. The former became the majority after the high scores of the party in these election and in the 1985 local elections. Then, in September 1987, the leader of the FN, as a guest on a very popular radio program ("Grand Jury," RTL/*Le Monde*), when questioned about the Holocaust, said that the gas chambers were but "a minor detail in the Second World War." This comment, banalizing the extermination of six million Jews, aroused unanimous indignation. By October, the proportion of those who considered his party a danger to democracy gained ten points. It has never decreased.

Simultaneously, an electoral and political boycott of the Lepenist party developed. Since "the detail," at least two-thirds of French voters cite the FN as "a party for which they would under no circumstances vote." The supporters of an electoral alliance of the UDF and the RPR with the FN have become a minority even among those RPR sympathizers who were very much in favor of such an agreement (Mayer and Perrineau, 1993: 74). A growing majority of voters appears to be against the exercise of any presidential or governmental responsibility by the party and its leader. Their rejection is unequally distributed in different segments of the electorate. It is more frequent among young people, women, the educated and politically sophisticated, and among leftist sympathizers and voters. But in all age groups, in all occupational categories, among men as well as women, and from communists to RPR voters, since 1987 there has been a clear majority unwilling to vote for FN candidates, disapproving of any form of alliance between the FN and the UDF-RPR, and hostile to the exercise of presidential or ministerial responsibility by Front National leaders (Mayer and Perrineau, 1993).[10]

Yet there are limits to anti-FN sentiment. Even after the shock of Carpentras, 54 percent of the population was still in favor of inviting Jean-Marie Le Pen on television, since "he represents parts of the electorate." During

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the 1992 anti-Le Pen campaign, only 30 percent thought that counterdemonstrations were "a good thing" (compared to 48 percent who saw them as "a bad thing"), while 73 percent were opposed to banning FN meetings.[11] Even though the FN is today the most disliked party in France, the public considers that it should benefit from basic political freedoms and liberties, thus circumscribing the boundaries of the anti-Front National movement.

Anti-Front National Organizations

This mobilization was from the start structured by specific organizations that denounced the timorousness of the traditional left-wing parties and unions and their failure to stop the progress of the extreme Right. The most radical and the first to appear were the Sections Carrément anti-Le Pen (SCALP), born in Toulouse in June 1984, in reaction to an electoral meeting held by Le Pen. Calling for "digging up the hatchet," they launched newspapers called *Tomahawk*, *Let's Scalp Them*, and *Apaches*; they held "Geronimo" rock concerts against fascism, and they scuffled with police and extreme-right activists at the end of anti-FN demonstrations. Since 1986 the SCALP are associated with other groups such as Réflex (Réseau d'études de formation et de liaison contre le fascisme et la xénophobie), editor of *Réflexes* and *No Pasaran*, in a larger antifascist coordinating group, the CLAF.

In the fall of the same year, SOS-Racisme was launched by a group of friends, Julien Dray (now Socialist deputy of the Essonne), Didier François, and Harlem Désir, who became the leader of the movement. SOS-Racisme became famous for its badge—a little yellow hand with the slogan "Hands off my buddy!" written on it—and for its concerts. The first one in the place de la Concorde in July 1985 drew almost half a million participants. There were also initiatives of a less spectacular nature, such as Celsius or Article 31, which proposed adding an article to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights reading: "The right of each person to rise up against those who do not respect its [the declaration's] terms, by means in conformity with the spirit of the declaration." Its first issue came out in September 1984.

A second generation of movements appeared after the Carpentras episode. "L'Appel des 250," signed by more than 20,000 people, and "Ras l'Front," the name for both a network of anti-FN groups and their newspaper, were launched in May 1990 by a group of intellectuals, including Gilles Perrault, Maurice Rajsfus, and the journalist Anne Tristan,[12] close to the Ligue Communiste Révolutionnaire. The former Socialist deputy Jean-Christophe

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Cambadélis initiated "Le Manifeste contre le FN" in September, a petition signed by 100,000 people, and set up local groups in every department.

Each of these movements coordinates a loose network of local antiracist and/or antifascist groups. Reviewing the press of SCALP/Réflex and Ras l'Front up to 1994, Contamin and Weil (1995) counted thirty-three SCALP and 112 Ras l'Front "collectifs" or local groups. There are many more, often short-lived, organized in reaction to visits by Le Pen, high scores of his party, or racist events in a given town. For instance, in Toulon a dozen associations appeared in the weeks following the election of a Front National mayor, Jean-Marie Le Chevallier: "Coordination for the Defense of Republican Values" led by Gérard Paquet, director of the Danse and Animation Festival of Chateauvallon; "Toulon debout"; "Toulon c'est nous aussi"; "Faire face"; "Rassemblement des Citoyens pour la Démocratie"; "Carrefour" (a grouping of forty associations); "Observatory of Democracy" and "Observatory of Liberties"; "Mediterranean College of Liberties"; local "Vigilance committees" in each quarter to insure the mayor's actions were in accordance with the law, etc.

Alliances, Ideologies, and Political Opportunities

The anti-FN movement's system of alliances includes the whole spectrum of the Left.[13] The organizations calling for anti-FN demonstrations are always the same: parties ranging from the extreme Left (Fédération Anarchiste, Alternative Libertaire, Confédération Nationale du Travail, Ligue Communiste Révolutionnaire, Lutte Ouvrière, etc.) to the Communist and Socialist parties and the Greens, left-wing unions (CGT, CFDT, FO, the two UNEF, etc.), freemason organizations, antiracist associations (Ligue des Droits de l'Homme, MRAP, LICRA), associations defending immigrants (FASTI, GISTI, CAIF), charitable associations (CIMADE, CLAP, CCFD), "new social movements" (e.g., feminists, ecologists, homosexuals, and anti-AIDS activists), movements representing minorities (Union des Etudiants Juifs de France, "Beurs" associations, etc.) . . . .[14]

The support of the Left is not surprising, as most of the anti-FN movements' leaders came from the above-mentioned organizations and developed with the support of their preexisting networks. Thus, SCALP/Réflex sprang from the libertarian and anarchist Left (Camard and Jardin, 1995). Ras l'Front was founded by members or sympathizers of the Trotskyist LCR and helped by the networks of Politis and Témoignage chrétien. SOS-Racisme was cre-

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ated by a small group of friends who also belonged to the LCR but rallied to the Socialist party in 1981, and it was helped by UNEF-ID and the MNEF (Malik, 1990). The Manifesto against the FN was created by an ex-Trotskyist of the PCI, ex-president of the students' union UNEF-ID, and rallied to the Socialist party, who benefited from the networks of UNEF-ID, MJS (Mouvement des Jeunes Socialistes) and the PS (Lindgaard and Martin, 1995). The political profile of their activists tells the same story: more than half of RLF and Le Manifeste members belong (or belonged) to a political party, mainly LCR or PCF for the former, PS for the latter. Respectively, 76 percent and 87 peıcent belong or belonged to a union, CGT or CFDT mainly for the former, UNEF-ID for the latter. More than half of the Manifesto members and three-quarters of RLF members belong to at least one other association (feminist, ecologist, antiracist, etc.).

The ideology that unites the anti-FN movement is the culture of antifascism, as it developed in the 1930s under the impetus of the Communist party (Furet, 1995: 310-363). The CVIA (Comité de Vigilance des Intellectuels Antifascistes) was created after the confrontation of February 6, 1934. In association with the working-class movement, it mobilized intellectuals and artists against the fascist danger represented by Germany, Italy, and their allies in French society (Racine-Furlaud, 1977). The founding committee included well-known scientists, the communist Paul Langevin, the socialist Paul Rivet, and the radical thinker Alain. It organized meetings, rallies, petitions, and launched a newspaper named *Vigilance*. Antifascism has profoundly marked the French Left and revives every time the extreme Right reappears, as it did during the Algerian war. Today, most of the anti-FN movement sees the FN as a resurgence of fascism and nazism, and "vigilance," as in the 1930s, is the key word. Only the Manifeste contre le FN has clearly opposed this analysis as an anachronism, preferring to see in the Front National a specific phenomenon, "national populism," in the line of Pierre-André Taguieff's work (Taguieff, 1995).

Political Opportunities

The structure of the French system has been described as not providing many openings to new social movements, because it combines a strong centralized state, a weak parliament, few direct democratic procedures, and a bipolarization of political life, which together make it difficult for new social movements to emerge. Thus,

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> the party system of the Fifth Republic exhibits centripetal tendencies. Increasingly, this has meant that two blocs, organized along the fundamental socioeconomic cleavages of French society, vie for political power. Thus, the two main competitors in the party system have had difficulties in accommodating the demands generated by the cross-cutting cleavages of the "new politics." (Kitschelt, 1986: 65)

Yet authors like Duyvendak, analyzing new social movements in France, have shown that the "antiracist" movement in general has succeeded more than others have (Duyvendak, 1994: 230-239). This is the case with the anti-FN movement, for several reasons.

The first one is political change. The victory of the Socialists in 1981 supplied useful resources. For instance, the Manifeste drew part of its resources from the election of Jean-Christophe Cambadélis in the 1988 parliamentary elections. As a deputy he could supply the movement with an office, parliamentary assistants, mail and telephone facilities, etc. (Lindgaard and Martin, 1995). SOS-Racisme's case is even more striking. It was directly helped by the Presidency, which found the idea of such a movement interesting and politically welcome at a time of disillusionment with the Socialist government. The secretary-general of the Elysée, Jean-Louis Bianco, admits his intervention in getting funds from different ministries and putting the organization in contact with political marketing experts like Jacques Pilhan, François Mitterrand's communications adviser. Jack Lang, the minister of culture, helped finance SOS-Racisme's concert at the place de la Concorde (June 1985). Businessmen close to the President, such as Pierre Bergé (PDG of Yves Saint-Laurent) or the editors of *Globe* (Georges-Marc Bénamou and Bernard-Henri Lévy) gave financial support. Relations were good until the Gulf War, when Harlem Désir lost their support because of his pacifist position (Faux, Legrand, and Perez, 1994: 29-31; Rieffel, 1992: 203-204).

On several occasions, the Socialist government took anti-FN measures. The fight against racism and antisemitism was one of the priorities of the Rocard government (Round Table on racism including all the leaders of the opposition except Jean-Marie Le Pen, reinforcement of the attributions of the Commission Nationale Consultative des Droits de l'Homme, new structures to deal with immigration and integration, etc.). Proposed by a Communist deputy, the Gayssot bill was passed in July 1990, reinforcing the repression of racist, antisemitic, and xenophobic acts, creating a new category of of-

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fense, the "denial of crimes against humanity," and giving the courts the power to deprive persons found guilty of such acts of their civil rights for five years. After the events of Carpentras, some fifteen neo-nazi or revisionist publications were censored, and academic authorities were urged to impose sanctions on Bernard Notin, a professor who authored a revisionist article. On two occasions (at Villeurbanne and Saint-Franc), prefects were instructed to prevent the Front National from holding its meetings; this happened again in 1992.

The highest authorities of the state showed their support by the anti-NF movement on several occasions. When the desecration of the Jewish cemetery in Carpentras was discovered, the Minister of the Interior, Pierre Joxe, immediately on the spot, was the first to suggest the responsibility of the Front National in the desecration, declaring before there had been any investigation, "I denounce racism, antisemitism, and intolerance. Everyone in France will feel, like us, sorrow and pity." "Sorrow and pity" is the title of Marcel Ophuls's famous film about French collaboration with the German Occupation, thus linking the events to Vichy and its responsibility in the Holocaust. François Mitterrand, the Prime Minister, and practically all the members of the government joined the antiracist Paris demonstration that followed and, after the death of Brahim Bouarram, the President placed flowers on the site of the crime.

But the fact that the Socialist party was in office for most of the period studied here did not have only advantages for the anti-NF movement. When Socialist governments took measures restricting the rights of immigrants, such as the Marchand amendment that created transit zones for illegal immigrants, or the "double penalty" disposition that added expulsion to the normal penalty fixed by the law, or refused to give immigrants the right to vote in local elections, they deeply divided the countermovement. The division appeared clearly the day of the large antiracist demonstration that took place in Paris on January 25, 1992. The slogans were as often directed against the Socialists as against the Front National, such as: "Tell me, pretty Socialist party, why do you bare such big teeth against the immigrants?" or "Tonton [a nickname for Mitterrand] to the asylum, let's defend the right of asylum," or "Giscard, Chirac, Mitterrand: same policies." And the Socialists that were present were not allowed to demonstrate. One positive thing for the countermovement that will come out of the Right's return to office will be

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the simplification of the system of alliances, reunifying the Left, and setting it once more against its natural enemy, the Right.

Yet the picture is not that simple. From time to time the NF countermovement breaks through the Left/Right cleavage and turns into a larger "republican front" of all the democrats against the extreme Right, precisely because the latter is associated with fascism, nazism, and Vichy. It happened at the time of Carpentras. All political parties, from the RPR to the extreme Left, marched together against the Front National. Left-wing and right-wing mayors both banned FN meetings in their towns in 1990 and in 1992. And in the 1995 municipal elections, there were several electoral "republican front" attempts, as in Mulhouse, where such a front succeeded in defeating the FN candidate, Gérard Freulet. Nevertheless, such alliances are exceptional.

The third factor helping the anti-FN movement is, paradoxically enough, the political crisis brought about by the incapacity of Left and Right governments to curb unemployment, by the rapid succession of affairs and scandals discrediting the political class, by the collapse of the main ideologies that used to structure political life (liberalism, communism), and by the obsolescence of traditional party structures. Fighting against the extreme Right provides a just and moral cause of engagement for those whom the Left disappointed. It functions as a substitute ideology. In addition, the decentralized structures of the anti-FN movements and their concrete plans of action attract the young in search of a new kind of political involvement.

Finally, the peculiarities of the French electoral system, with its many levels of elections at different times giving rise to quasi-permanent electoral agitation, must be taken into account. With the exceptions of 1987 and 1990, every year since the the FN emerged has been an election year, mobilizing the Front National and thus its countermovement.

THE NATURE OF THE ANTI-FRONT NATIONAL MOVEMENT

Social Movement, New Social Movement, Countermovement?

The anti-Front National movement has all the characteristics of a social movement. It has developed in four distinct waves of protest, supported by a large constituency, structured by ad hoc organizations, unified by a common set of values and goals. In many features it evokes the so-called "new" social movements (NSM). Contamin and Weil (1995), in their study of the

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development of SCALP and Ras l'Front local groups, show that they preferentially appeared in those departments with the highest proportions of young people, students, inhabitants of large cities, and salaried middle classes, all groups potentially receptive to NSM. They were also linked, especially in the case of Ras l'Front, to the local force of the "new" Left, represented by Green candidate Antoine Waechter and by the communist dissident Pierre Juquin, in the 1988 presidential election. And interviews with Ras l'Front local group members (Hamelin et al., 1995) show that what they appreciated in that movement was a "new" style of political action, giving them more autonomy and more efficiency than in traditional left-wing parties and organizations.

To what extent can it be considered a countermovement? It is almost tautological to say it is polarized by the Front National. All the organizations mentioned above have one goal, "barring the way" to the Lepenist party. The Appel des 250 proposed to "stop the Front National at all costs, by all means, at all levels, permanently," and the Manifesto was an "appeal to the Left. Everything that makes the FN and its positions, which are evil for France, retreat, is legitimate. Le Pen and the Front National must not break through!" Most of their activity consists in opposing everything the FN says or does. When its leaders are invited on television, when they hold a meeting, when they come out with antisemitic statements, when they demonstrate, at the slightest racist incident, the countermovement reacts. When party activists sell their press in the marketplace, the CM is there to sell *Ras l'Front* or the *Letter of the Manifesto*. When the pro-life commandos chain themselves to the doors of clinics, the countermovement confronts them. Yet the FN is not their only target; so are its allies. For the most radical movements like SCALP and, to a lesser degree, RLF, the state, the police, the army, the courts, right-wing government policies such as the "Pasqua laws," and also Socialist government policies like the "Marchand amendment" are responsible for the rise of the FN.

As far as dependency is concerned, there is an obvious reactive dimension in the anti-FN movement. Contamin and Weil's study (1995) shows that the presence of SCALP and RLF local groups is correlated with the frequency of racist and antisemitic actions and threats and with the electoral strength of the FN, that is to say, with the local importance of the problems they are fighting against. The largest demonstrations occurred when there was a conjunction between racist and antisemitic actions and an electoral upsurge of

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the Front National, as there was at the time of Carpentras or in May 1995. Yet most of these organizations soon realized the limits of a purely reactive strategy against the FN. RLF made alliances with organizations fighting against what they see as the causes of the FN's rise: unemployment (AC! Chômage) or social exclusion (DAL or Droit au Logement), and promoting the rights of immigrants. The SCALP abandoned a strictly antifascist perspective to take into consideration the claims of regionalists, anticolonialists, pacifist and antimilitarist movements and, more recently, the youth revolt against the Balladur government's reforms[15] in the fall of 1994. The Manifeste contre le FN has turned to the more general problem of nationalism in Europe. All movements have become aware of the necessity of finding a political solution, mainly reconstructing the Left, in order to stop the FN.

There is the manicheist approach of the extreme Right in all the anti-FN organizations. They all play on the demonization of their opponents, assimilating them to the essence of evil that was Hitlerism and more generally racism and colonialism (Taguieff, 1995: 427-465). A large part of their activity is devoted to revealing the past of the FN's members, the side they stood for in the last war or during the Algerian conflict, their links with neonazi organizations today or with violent radical groups, their agreement with the revisionist theories which claim that the gas chambers never existed. These organizations are leading a moral crusade not only against the FN but against any form of compromise with the extreme Right, denouncing altogether local representatives who give their signatures to Le Pen to allow him to run in the presidential race, parties that make electoral alliances with FN candidates, intellectuals who publish in extreme-right journals or agree to debate with extreme-right thinkers,[16] hotel or restaurant owners who receive or rent a meeting place to FN members, in what Annie Kriegel has called "an unfortunate repetition of the McCarthyite witch-hunt" (*Le Figaro*, May 9, 1990).

To support the imitation hypothesis, I have found no convergence of values between anti-Front National and Front National activists, nothing comparable to the recent rallying of American pro-choice supporters to the pro-life cause. But there is a constant reciprocal tactical adjustment. To the NF-sponsored BBR (Bleu, Blanc, Rouge) event, Ras l'Front reacted with its "Black Blanc Beurs" fair and to the "national preference" slogan of Jean-Marie Le Pen, Jean-Christophe Cambadélis responded: "social preference."

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Meetings were countered by meetings, cartoons by cartoons, violent acts by violent acts. Even more so on the side of the Front National is there a definite mimetic strategy, trying to turn to its advantage the arguments and acts of its opponents. In 1984, with the creation of l'AGRIF (Association Générale contre le Racisme et pour le Respect de l'Identité Française et Chrétienne), the FN started a campaign against "anti-French" and "anti-christian racism" (Taguieff, 1995: 318-323). They have systematically filed suit against their opponents on these grounds and have sometimes won their cases. In the same way, they used the verbal and, sometimes, physical attacks against their members, the banning of their meetings and demonstrations, the censorship of their press, to present themselves as victims. Carpentras is the best example of this strategy. In an open letter to the President of the Republic, Jean-Marie Le Pen demanded "public reparation" for what he described as "an actual state defamation" and an "outrageous offensive" launched through the political media by the Socialist government to discredit his movement (*Libération*, May 11-12, 1991). And the little town of Saint-Franc, where the prefect forbade him to hold his meeting, has become a place of pilgrimage for FN supporters, the symbol of its "persecution" and of his "resistance to Mitterrand's tyranny" (*Libération*, May 27, 1991).

Thus, the anti-FN movement can be analyzed as a countermovement, different from other social movements because of its privileged relationship with its opponent in the antagonistic couple they form, with perhaps two caveats. First, one should keep in mind that the relative position of M/CM can change and that there is no countermovement in essence and for eternity. In fact, the FN itself can be considered to be a countermovement, part of a more general "counterrevolution" against the liberal and "postmaterialist" values of the sixties, accounting for the rise of extreme Right parties in Europe (Ignazi, 1992). Secondly, the M/CM couple is not alone in the field of social movements; its interplay cannot be understood unless the entire system of alliance and conflict with other organizations, other social movements and the authorities is taken into account. With these two strictures, the anti-FN movement shows the features specific to countermovements.

Questioning Antiracism

In conclusion, what about its efficiency as a countermovement? There is a very passionate debate in France today over the errors of the "antiracist movement" at large, especially its symbol, SOS-Racisme. Fashionable, Parisian, elitist, Machiavellian, instrumental, intolerant, counterproductive, un-

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aware of the new "differentialist" racism developing in France, and obsolete, are but some of the charges gathered by Taguieff in his latest book, *Les fins de l'antiracisme* (1995). Other authors go so far as to accuse the antiracists of having completely imagined the racism and antisemitism of the Front National and of being responsible for its success (Yonnet, 1993). If one examines the anti-FN movement closely, as part of the "antiracist" sector, even so most of the movements studied here refuse to be characterized as such, the reality appears more complex.

Anti-FN movements did not stop the progress of the Front National. They might even have produced unwanted effects, which may be specific to the interplay of movements and countermovements. Their mobilization brought the FN to the attention of the public and media. The fuss made over every racist or antisemitic comment of its leaders in some ways benefited the party. As its general delegate Bruno Mégret said after the scandal that arose from his presentation to the press of the FN's "Fifty Concrete Measures Against Immigration," "We progress by successive outcries." The "democratic harassment" Jean-Christophe Cambadélis recommended in 1992 remobilized FN supporters around their leader, especially when they felt unfairly attacked, as in the Carpentras affair. "Carpentras" is now the rallying cry at Le Pen's meetings. And at the time there were letters from readers, in the Front National press, explaining how such injustices converted them into Front National supporters. The anti-FN demonstrations, especially when they turned violent, and the banning of its meetings, made the Front National appear more than once to be the victim in the eyes of the public. The demonization of the movement and, by extension, of its supporters, can act as a self-fulfilling prophecy: "Here reversing the stigmata is child's play: if to be what we are, wonder the people 'from below,' i.e., poor French citizens in wretched suburbs, if that is to be '*franchouillard*,'[17] therefore racist, then let's assume our destiny, let's be 'racist' or let's claim to be lepenists (which is but a euphemized mode of the latter)" (Taguieff, 1995: 546).

But the anti-FN movement in its diversity has also hit its target. It contributed to the political isolation of the Front National by the moral reprobation attached to its words and actions. It prevented the banalization of the Lepenist party, making it impossible for people to consider it a party similar to other parties. And, indirectly, it produced political results that in the long run may indirectly affect the Front National. At a time when political parties

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have no great project or "new deal" to propose, anti-FN organizations offer a legitimate cause to defend. While most parties and unions display declining numbers of members and voters, the anti-FN groups recruit. Since the spectacular action of Ras l'Front on the place de l'Opéra on May 1, 1995, 150 members have joined the group in Paris alone. They rediscover the virtues of militancy—canvassing, leafleting, posting bills, and selling newspapers—at the local level, close to the people with their concrete problems, whom the other parties have abandoned to the *Front National*. Those who joined SCALP or Ras l'Front, SOS or Le Manifeste contre le FN, because they were disgusted by politics, rediscover its necessity, turning from a revolt against the Front National to a global reflection on society and change. These micromobilizations can serve to stimulate and renovate French political parties, which are the only forces capable of opposing the Front National.

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*This paper was originally prepared for presentation at the Annual Meeting of APSA, Chicago 1995, at a panel on "Movements and Countermovements: Origins, Interactions and Policies," chaired by David S. Meyer.

[1]This study is based on interviews with leaders of Ras l'Front, Le Manifeste contre le FN, SCALP/Réflex and SOS-Racisme, on a survey by self-administered questionnaire among members of Ras l'Front and Le Manifeste contre le FN groups (N=140) in 1993-1994, and on research conducted on the anti-National Front mobilization with Olivier Fillieule and our students in two seminars at CEVIPOF in 1993 and 1994.

[2]As if all countermovements, by nature, were aiming "to preserve the status quo" (Mottl, 1982: 629), "related to social divisions resulting from socioeconomic decline" (idem: 621), "oriented against challenges from below" (idem) and were "supported by elites and the established order" with "extensive financial resources at their disposal" (Klandermans, 1990:128).

[3]SOFRES/Local press group survey, June 30-July 1, 1995, sample representative of the French population age 18 and over (N=1000).

[4]For instance, after the election of Front National mayors in the cities of Toulon, Marignane, and Orange, Jean-Marie Le Pen declared they would have to apply the "national preference" principle as far as education, employment, and welfare are concerned, even if this contradicted the laws of the French Republic.

[5]Review of *Le Monde*, *L'Express*, *Le Nouvel Observateur* (September 1983-August 1995) plus *Libération* and *Le Figaro* (May 1990-August 1995). "Demonstrations" were considered to be any occupancy of public space in the defense of collective claims or interests (Mayer, 1993). Our figures underestimate the actual number of demonstrations, leaving aside the many micromobilizations that only the local press takes into consideration. But the figures give an idea of the most important demonstrations that had a national impact.

[6]"Beur" is slang for "Arab," referring to the second generation born in France of North African parents.

[7]Some thirty tombs were damaged, a coffin was opened, and the body of an eighty-year-old man who had died two weeks earlier was exhumed. The corpse was discovered lying on a nearby grave and bore the traces of an attempted impalement (Mayer, 1992). According to an opinion poll conducted by SOFRES for *Le Nouvel Observateur* and Europe 1 (May 14-15, 1990, national sample of 800 people representative of the population aged 18 or more), 65 percent classed the Front National among "the institutions or parties that have a deep share of responsibility for what happened in Carpentras," the media being seen as responsible by 54 percent, the government by 45 percent, and the UDF and RPR by 30 percent.

[8]To date, only the second crime has been proven to be racist.

[9]After the Carpentras events, for instance, an FN journalist was beaten up, shots were fired at the house of one of its elected representatives, there were threats against Le Pen's life, etc.

[10]For the evolution of French public opinion toward the *Front National* between 1983 and 1992, see Mayer and Perrineau, 1993. The survey conducted by SOFRES for a local press group (June 30-July 1, 1995, N=1000) shows that 71 percent of the sample, if there were elections, do not "wish RPR and UDF to make an electoral alliance with the *Front National*" in the second round (69 percent among UDF-RPR sympathizers). A previous SOFRES/local press group survey (June 5-8, 1994, N=1000) showed that 84 percent of the sample did not wish Jean-Marie Le Pen to become a minister. And a SOFRES/*Libération* survey (February 23-25, 1993, N=1000) showed

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that 73 percent of the sample cites the Front National as a party for which they would vote under no circumstances, way ahead of the Communist party (50 percent).
[11]SOFRES/Europe 1/*Le Nouvel Observateur* survey (May 14-15, 1990, N=800), SOFRES survey (March 6-7, 1992, N=800) and Louis Harris/*Profession politique* survey (March 5-6, 1992, N=1005).
[12]Anne Tristan joined a local section of the Front National in Marseille and for six months shared the life of its members. After she left, she wrote a book describing the party from the inside, *Au Front* (1987).
[13]An opinion poll conducted for us by Louis Harris France among participants in the antiracist demonstration that occurred in Paris on February 5, 1994 (N=236) confirms that 56 percent belonged to the following organizations that called for the demonstration, the most frequently cited being CGT (17 percent), PCF (13 percent), LCR and SOS-Racisme (10 percent each), JCR and UNEF-ID (7 percent each), SNES and Mouvement Humaniste (5 percent each), MRAP, PS, LO (4 percent each), and CNT (3 percent).
[14]For a presentation of the voluntary associations sector in France, see Barthélémy, 1994.
[15]Revolt agains the "CIP," occupational insertion program, allowing employers to hire youth at low cost.
[16]See, for instance, the "Appeal to Vigilance," launched in *Le Monde*, July 13, 1993, by a group of intellectuals and the attacks against Pierre-André Taguieff,accused of sympathy for the New Right and Alain de Benoist (Adler, 1993-1994).
[17]There is no translation for this word, which evokes a mix of chauvinism, authoritarianism, and stupidity.

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