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France threatens by a civil war ?
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Summary : In 2021, retired generals published a Tribune in a right-wing newspaper "Valeurs actuelles" underlining the risk of a civil war in France, due to the violence in the cities and villages, the growing communitarianism and the hatred of France and its history by some groups refusing republic values. However, social conflicts will become stronger if precariousness becomes the social norm of a market economy. If communitarianism becomes the only priority for each type of special interest, it is clear that this social momentum may lead to multiple forms of social conflict that will be individually insufficiently powerful to profoundly modify an increasingly plutocratic and unequal society.

En 2021, des généraux à la retraite ont publié une Tribune dans un journal de droite " Valeurs actuelles " soulignant le risque d'une guerre civile en France, en raison de la violence dans les villes et villages, de la montée du communautarisme et de la haine de la France et de son histoire par certains groupes refusant les valeurs républicaines. Or, les conflits sociaux se renforceront si la précarité devient la norme sociale de l'économie de marché. Si le communautarisme devient la seule priorité pour chaque type d'intérêt particulier, il est clair que cette dynamique sociale peut conduire à de multiples formes de conflits sociaux qui seront individuellement insuffisamment puissants pour modifier profondément une société de plus en plus ploutocratique et inégalitaire.

Guerre civile, France, communautarisme, inégalités sociales, ploutocratie

Civil war, France, communitarianism, social inequality, plutocracy

On 21 April, retired generals published a Tribune in a right-wing newspaper "Valeurs actuelles" (2021a), underlining the risk of a civil war that is coming (2021a). The first sentence is significant: "The hour is grave, France is in peril, several mortal dangers threaten it. The Tribune insists on the violence in the cities and villages, they underline the communitarianism that is taking over from assimilation, and the hatred of France and its history (especially colonial and slavery history) that is becoming the norm. The troublemakers are those who defend a certain anti-racism, the Islamists, the hordes of the suburbs whose only aim is to create unease, even hatred between communities on French soil. The unitary republican France is detached into "multiple parcels of the nation to transform them into territories subject to dogmas contrary to our Constitution". We are then witnessing the disintegration of France and the guilty silence of political leaders, particularly the government. (...). Faced with "growing chaos", the authorities are enjoined "to apply without weakness the laws that already exist". It is no longer time to procrastinate, otherwise tomorrow civil war will put an end to this growing chaos, and the deaths, for which you will be responsible, will be counted in thousands. "

Another tribune was published by other anonymous soldiers, who call themselves the "generation of fire" to underline their commitment to external operations (Fontanel, 2021b). The signatories, who claim to be apolitical in their assessment of the situation, want to defend their "elders". If they cannot express themselves according to the regulations, they also state that it is impossible for them to remain silent. They do not accept that generals and soldiers who had fought all the enemies of France everywhere should be treated as factious when their only fault is "to love their country and to mourn its visible decline". They regret that communitarianism is taking hold in the public arena, with many French people by birth but of foreign origin no longer accepting the principles of the republic, claiming to be alternatively of Islam and of a hatred of today's France. "Afghanistan, Mali, Central Africa or elsewhere, a certain number of us has experienced enemy fire. Some of us have lost comrades. They offered their skin to destroy the Islamism to which you are

making concessions on our soil. She asserted that their remarks were not intended to undermine the institutions of France, but to alert people to the gravity of the situation.

Operation Sentinelle (a French army operation deployed in the aftermath of the January 2015 attacks, to deal with the terrorist threat on the national territory and to protect the sensitive "points" of the territory) showed the abandoned suburbs, the accommodations with delinquency, the attempts to instrumentalize several religious communities for whom France means nothing but an object of sarcasm and hatred. She concluded by calling for firm action by the State against this anti-French sentiment, as it is a question of the survival of our country and its values.

These tribunes have been accused of wanting to organise a putsch in the long term, which the main signatories deny, pointing to the "lawless areas, burnt cars or attacks on police officers, today the main targets of criminals and people who hate France, while being French by their marital status. The threats to the country are said to be "Islamism, immigration, double nationality and the loss of reference points in youth". A form of anti-racism violently develops the ideas of racialism and decolonialism theories, but through these terms it is the racial war that these hateful and fanatical supporters want. Other documents refer to a "hybrid war against Europe and France" and the need to "forge the psychological, sociological, moral, educational, legal and penal weapons to conduct and win it".

Even if there is a certain "malaise" in the army, it cannot itself be the cause of a political takeover in France. There is no putsch, but the risk of a civil war in which the army will be obliged to engage. The signatories say that they are willing to support politicians who will take into consideration the safeguarding of the nation. It expresses a strong sentence that could be the subject of a conclusion: "when prudence is everywhere, courage is nowhere".

The Prime Minister denounced this initiative as being contrary to republican principles and accused the Rassemblement National, in this period of regional elections that will be followed in a year's time by a presidential election, of political recuperation in view of the positive positions taken by Marine Le Pen. The

Ministry of the Armed Forces is calling for sanctions and the Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces says he is "shocked by a call that in no way reflects the state of mind of the armed forces today". The current Army leaders then recalled the sacrosanct "obligation of reserve" of members of the armed forces and raised fears of a progressive division within the army itself. This is an unacceptable attempt to manipulate the army. In a letter on Tuesday, the Chief of Staff of the French armed forces invited the anonymous signatories of the second tribune of military personnel to leave the uniform and freely defend their opinions while respecting the neutrality of the army. More generally, traditional politicians have analysed these tribunes as calls for insurrection.

In the French political arena, some right-wing politicians recognised the value of the analysis, but did not accept that military personnel should not respect the duty of reserve imposed by the republic. The threat of a civil war in France is evoked, due to the breakdown of society and the laxity of justice. Islamism, but also anti-racism, is thus directly accused. Some French politicians point to a form of collusion between a fraction of the army and the extreme right, notably on the lack of national solidarity on the values of the Republic and the possible emergence, in the long term, of civil war. The support of left-wing forces for communitarianism partly explains this position, in an army that has always remained loyal to governments.

According to Le Monde, (30 April) 4 out of 10 soldiers vote for the extreme right. In this study conducted by Harris (28 April), the tribune of the French army denouncing the "disintegration" of the country is finally rather well received by the majority of French citizens, 58% of whom believe that France could soon experience a civil war. Indeed, more than 80% of those surveyed believe that "in certain towns and neighbourhoods, the laws of the Republic do not apply" (86%) and that "violence is increasing daily in France" (84%). Nearly three quarters of the respondents to this survey also believe that there is "a form of anti-racism that produces hatred between communities" (74%) and that "French society is falling apart" (73%).

Today, France is in a delicate situation, marked firstly by the Covid pandemic which increases frustration, and by a social

fracture, which in its impoverishing side affects more directly the families of one or two generations of migrants, those who, despite the ban on statistics based on the race or national origin of the inhabitants of France, seem to have the highest birth rate. France does not have a migrant selection system that is contrary to republican values. Given the importance of its social system, the attraction of its system for the inhabitants of countries plagued by misery and dictatorships is high. However, once in France, assistance cannot be an acceptable way of life and if it is not converted into active participation in economic life, it quickly becomes a source of frustration. In this context, the younger generations of these (themselves diverse) communities often engage in legally unacceptable operations, including drug trafficking. This is why many people think that legalising cannabis will reduce this gangrene. But we still need to find a solution to this endemic poverty, at a time when the social mix in France has lost much of its fluidity.

In this world where social networks have taken on considerable importance, frustrations are expressed in conspiracies, Islamism and the presidency of the very rich. In this context, the institutions that ensure the continuity of the republic, such as the police and the army, are under attack, the former reporting violence against Islam in operations abroad, the latter violence against demonstrators and men of colour (in line with what is happening in the US). Today, in some suburbs, groups who set up real ambushes deliberately attack all non-economic and social public services, such as the police, the fire brigade and the gendarmerie. These are young people, often minors, who show their "courage" by attacking the pillars of the republic.

The issue is all the more crucial as democracy presupposes elections and left-wing political parties, part of whose electorate belongs to these suffering communities, support associations whose relationship with values often opposed to those of the republic are expressed, directly or indirectly. However, the issue of "civil war" is not yet very well perceived by the French, despite the importance of messages on social networks that seem to consider it as potentially feasible.

Michel Houellebecq (in his book "Soumission") and the philosopher Michel Onfray (freethinker) agree that civil war is

already present, in weak intensity mode. In a common observation, they consider that France has been facing, for several years, a war of civilisation, one of the causes of which is immigration.

- For Houellebecq (2015), the tyranny of money in a liberal regime, the slouching of the baby boom generations, the commodification of careers and thoughts, the commercial snobbery of contemporary art, the end of France since the Maastricht Treaty, the trans humanist project or the collapse of the Judeo-Christian religion are all factors that pave the way for the process of collaboration of the elites with liberticidal ideologies, notably the franchised Islam. Islam is a religion of peace, tolerance and love and does not want to hear about an Islam of war, intolerance and hate. The Koran is a book whose principles justify both the first and the second Islam.

- For Michel Onfray (2021), contemporary totalitarianism is no longer the same as yesterday; it is neither helmeted nor booted. Expressions of violence no longer have a face. Information is increasingly concentrated in the hands of the richest and GAFAMs control (Fontanel, Sushcheva, 2019), if they wish, popular information, by putting forward the messages that seem most useful to their power. Communitarianism is exacerbated by information of particular interests (race, feminism, regionalism, religion, education, etc.) which are often legitimate, but which prevent the systems, as each person defends a particular interest, while the real struggle lies in ever-increasing social inequalities. Instead of finding a less unequal system, each group fights for a community concern for a national and international organisation that is less violent in its commercial expression and more beneficial for the quality of life of citizens. All these conflicts enrich people who have no sense of the collective interest, while taking advantage of a democratic system and freedom that reinforces their actions. Talking about a "civil war" produces effects of stupefaction in public opinion that may, in the long run, provoke social upheavals whose communitarian nature or not will lead to developments or a revolution.

- After having been the heart of the civilisation of humanity, the Mediterranean is sinking into wars, economic crises and uncontrolled migrations. It has lost its economic bearings in the process of economic globalisation that has taken hold since the collapse of the Soviet Union. The analysis of its political and religious heritage, the heterogeneity of the economic

development of its shores, the extent of the militarisation of this "hot" sea, the evolving strategies of the great powers, the appearance of new rarities and at the same time the discovery of new energy resources all raise questions about the stability of states in the face of new risks likely to create inter-state conflicts. New migrations are very likely, with considerable human problems likely to increase the imbalance of a French society weakened by communitarian demands (Fontanel, 2019).

These analyses are obviously contested. However, representative democracy is increasingly contested, in its overly cautious relationship with regard to what threatens freedoms. In the history of the world, it has been said that power corrupts. It can be added that it also takes financial corruption and corruption of minds to achieve power. However, since power is no longer linked to a dominant religion, popular outbursts can suddenly be exacerbated. Especially in France, a country where life is better than in most other countries in the world, but where the French often believe they are in Hell. This leads its citizens to never fear a riot, and if necessary a revolution. As to what the role of the army will be, no one can predict it! However, in the greatest situations of internal conflict in France, the Army has always remained on the side of the powers that be.

Social conflicts, already strong before the pandemic, will come back even stronger if precariousness becomes the social norm of a market economy still seeking profits confiscated by the ultra-rich (Saez, Zucman, 2020). However, if communitarianism becomes the only priority for each type of special interest, it is clear that this social momentum may lead to multiple forms of social conflict that are individually insufficiently powerful to profoundly modify an increasingly plutocratic, unequal society under the guise of representative democracy (Fontanel, 2020c). Bergson said that in the summer of 1914, war seemed to him to be certain, and at the same time impossible. In this case, the feelings of certainty and impossibility can be experienced together. It is difficult to anticipate a disaster, which is still virtual ; it is only really believed to be real once it has happened (Fontanel, 2020b).

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