

The country's six to eight million Muslims, mostly of North African descent, include a significant underclass, as well as an unknown number of radicalized young people. The French themselves speak of *la banladenisation des banlieues*, a reference to the outer suburbs where many poor Muslims live.

Yet the French political class has resolutely averted its gaze—Chirac going so far as to say there are “no anti-Semites in France”—and treated anti-Jewish violence as the work of juvenile delinquents.

One reason for this reluctance to face facts, according to Caldwell, is that it would mean facing the truth that the French themselves (especially the French Left) are “in danger of embracing” what French academic Pierre-André Taffiuff calls “the new Judeophobia.” Its twin pillars are Holocaust-denial and radical anti-Zionism—not just opposition to Jewish statehood, says Caldwell, but “‘mythic anti-Zionism,’ which treats Zionism as *absolute evil*, against which only absolute warfare can be raised.”

This Manichean view has broad appeal in France, with its long romance with

Third World revolution, and especially among antiglobalization activists. Indifferent to Muslim struggles in Chechnya and elsewhere, they are obsessive about the Middle East. Why? Because the Palestinians confront in “evil” Israel what the antiglobalists see as “the ‘capitalist’ world of the West,” Caldwell writes. José Bové, who became a national hero and leader of the antiglobalist cause after vandalizing a McDonald's in France, has gone so far as to charge that the Israelis sponsored the attacks on French synagogues “in order to distract attention from what they are doing” in the West Bank. Yet Bové is also a leading critic of Le Pen.

There lies the ultimate irony and danger, according to Caldwell: “The most dangerous thing about Jean-Marie Le Pen, who loathes the global economy, distrusts the Jews, and practices gesture politics, is . . . that he'll serve as the hate object who unites anti-Western Islamists and anti-Western antiglobalists, who march against him night after night over ideological differences that grow harder and harder to discern.”

Bulgaria's Special Path

“Bulgaria's Royal Elections” by Zoltan Barany, in *Journal of Democracy* (Apr. 2002), 1101 15th St., N.W., Ste. 800, Washington, D.C. 20005.

Although Bulgaria remained a hardline communist state almost until the end, its ready embrace of parliamentary democracy and its relative tranquility since make it unique among the postcommunist Balkan states. It also stands out for a less admirable reason: its long resistance to fundamental economic reforms.

“Bulgaria's basic difficulty over the last decade,” writes Barany, a political scientist at the University of Texas at Austin, “has been a problem not of *too little* democracy but of *ineffective* democracy: One freely elected government after another has let the economy slide because ministers feared the political consequences of pushing through necessary but exceedingly unpopular economic policies.”

“The first false start came in 1990,” after the communist regime fell, with an assist from Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev, in “a sort of polite palace coup.” The Communists changed nominally into socialists, proclaimed

their devotion to pluralism and the rule of law, and won a landslide victory in free elections that June. But the Bulgarian Socialist Party government failed to deliver on its promise of a gradual transition to a market economy.

In late 1991, the center-right Union of Democratic Forces (UDF) won a narrow plurality in the National Assembly. As the ex-Communists “worked busily at turning political clout into economic power,” writes Barany, corruption became rampant. The UDF, however, was chiefly concerned with “wreaking retribution on the communists.” Two more changes of government brought economic reform no nearer. By late 1996, with triple-digit inflation and major banks going bust, “the economy was falling apart.”

Yet Bulgaria's young democratic political system held. A big victory in the 1997 elections by the UDF and its coalition partners resulted in a government that “turned the

economy around and placed Bulgaria firmly on the road to Euro-Atlantic integration.” By early 2000, it had privatized 70 percent of state assets and inflation was down to 6 percent. However, unemployment was still above 18 percent, 40 percent of Bulgarians were in poverty, and corruption remained pervasive.

A disillusioned electorate turned last year to Bulgaria’s ex-king, Simeon II, who had been exiled in 1946 by the Communists. Prime Minister Simeon has promised further economic reform, but his “most daunting task” will be fighting corruption. Barany believes he is ready to do just that.

Beijing Is Watching

“Academic Freedom in China” by Qinglian He, in *Academe* (May–June 2002), American Assn. of Univ. Professors, Ste. 500, 1012 14th St., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20005.

Have the market-oriented reforms and greater openness to the West of the last two decades brought academic freedom to China’s scholars and intellectuals? Not really, writes He, a prominent economist and writer who fled China last year.

Scholars are better off than in the Mao era (1949–76), when critics of the regime could be sentenced to prison or death. However, especially since the Tiananmen Square massacre of 1989, the regime has developed “more sophisticated means of ideological control.”

Chinese academics are permitted to read the Western social science literature and employ its techniques, for example, so long as they refrain from direct criticism of the regime. Cooperative academics get salary raises and perquisites. The study of democracy is not allowed; research on the history of the Chinese Communist Party is restricted; and Beijing’s recent reform policies must be shown in a positive light. “Anyone who goes a little beyond the limits set by the departments may face penalties.”

Chiefly because of pressure from international human rights organizations, today’s penalties are hidden. No longer do the authorities formally announce that a scholar has been fired or had his or her books banned—but that is still what happens. Some offenders are put under police surveillance. (He’s own books were officially banned by the government in December 2000, and she left China to become a visiting scholar at the University of Chicago “after months of being followed by security agents who had broken into her home, tapped her phone, and seized documents and personal items,” noted the *University of Chicago Magazine* last year.)

The communist regime also monitors Western scholars who study China. Those who publicly criticize the regime may see “their visa applications rejected without explanation,” losing access that can be vital to a scholarly career. Beijing’s intimidation has been “quite successful,” according to He, “in influencing images of China’s current situation in western scholarship.”

Lessons from Sierra Leone

“Sierra Leone: The State That Came Back from the Dead” by Michael Chege, in *The Washington Quarterly* (Summer 2002), Center for Strategic and International Studies, 1800 K St., N.W., Ste. 400, Washington, D.C. 20006.

Thanks to British and UN peacekeepers, Sierra Leone finally seems to have left civil war and anarchy behind. The country’s long ordeal offers two important lessons for would-be rescuers of failed states, argues Chege, director of the Center for African Studies at the University of Florida at Gainesville.

The first lesson is not to throw money at corrupt dictatorships that repeatedly break their promises to reform. The International Monetary Fund and other aid organizations increased their development assistance to Sierra Leone from \$18 million in 1975 to \$100 million in 1989, “effectively rewarding the making of a disaster,” says Chege.