



# HOW NEOCONS RULE THE FRENCH MEDIA

*Posted on May 1, 2023 by Rodolphe Cart*



*For more than a year now, the majority of the mainstream media have chosen to support Ukraine and to denigrate Russia. Why do the salesmen of Atlanticism have such an open door in the French media?*

One thing is certain: treating a subject in a binary way is never a sign of good intellectual health. And Natacha Polony, in a [recent editorial](#) on the subject, is quite right to mock "a year of intellectual fraud" offered by the French media class. Also, in this article, one word catches our attention: "neoconservatism." The editor of *Marianne* does not hesitate to speak of a "free forum" granted to the "most hardened representatives" of this current. But who are these people who have their place in the media? And besides, what is neoconservatism?

## **Europe versus New Carthage**

In order to understand what neoconservatism is, we must go back to American history. If Westerners like to repeat that the United States is an extension of Europe, they often fail to mention that this country was also built and thought of as a negation of the land of their ancestors. Even if they left with a whole mass and part of the European culture, the United States has always had, and this since the beginning of its existence, the desire to split from the Old Continent. This is why Dominique Venner spoke of "an enriched and renegade bastard."

Considering that they were living in a promised land, it was the Pilgrim Fathers who cut their ties with Europe. In *Our Country*, a missionary by the name of Josiah Strong asserted that "the Anglo-Saxon race has been chosen by God to civilize the world." On December 2, 1823, President Monroe's declaration of the United States' desire to keep the European powers out of the New World was an admission of this coming divorce.

It was in August 1845 that the journalist O'Sullivan first used the term "manifest destiny" to legitimize the war that the United States was preparing against Mexico. He explained, "Our manifest destiny is to extend ourselves over the whole continent allotted to us by Providence, for the free development of our millions of inhabitants who are multiplying every year." Although the United States initially saw itself as the "city on the hill," the first decades of the 20th century symbolized a departure from this principle. Woodrow Wilson and F. D. Roosevelt were convinced of their role as "civilizers." D. Roosevelt embodied these imperialist figures of an America projecting itself on to the outside.

Although its downfall has been predicted since 1945, the United States is objectively an exceptional power that holds together, thanks to its capacity for technical innovation and its global economic hegemony. Its strength stems in part from these ambivalences: a continent-state and master of the Anglo-Saxon thalassocracy; a superstitious nation with a great deal of pragmatism; the leading military power and master of soft power; an island with the "gift" of ubiquity. This power has served it, for the last three centuries, to promote those myths and representations that give this people the feeling that it is an "exception." General de Gaulle said in 1956 to Raymond Tournoux: "America is Carthage... What changes everything is that America has no Rome in front of her."

### **Neocons versus Old School Conservatives**

Since 1970, neoconservatism has been a movement composed mainly of journalists, politicians and advisers. Originally from the Democratic camp, the "neocons" joined the Republicans during the election of Ronald Reagan. On the other hand, it is important to distinguish between neocons and conservatives, because while the former are in favor of an interventionist foreign policy, the latter are more inclined toward isolationism.

Everything starts from one observation: the international system is in a state of anarchic nature (Hobbes). This is why the United States, whose historical mission is to export democracy, must establish a planetary order of liberal inspiration. The two modern figures of this current, Robert Kagan and William Kristol, affirmed in a 1996 article that it takes political will to establish "a benevolent hegemony of the United States." Disciples of the philosopher Leo Strauss—although their reading of him is open to debate—neoconservatives are proponents of the use of force and disdain morality, which they denounce as a lying "superstructure."

Importantly, neoconservatism is the product of urban intellectuals in Washington, D.C., as opposed to the more entrenched men of the conservative party. The neocons despise conservatives who remain committed to America's "common sense" and see themselves as representatives of the "real country." While the neocons have shown themselves to be in favor of military spending and increased government control, conservatives are more hostile to capitalist centralism. During the last wars waged by the United States, it was liberals, more than right-wing voters, who endorsed the muscular foreign policy of these ideologues.

One of the paradoxes of this current is that it has its roots on the left. "The founding father of the

movement, Irving Kristol, wrote in 1983 that he was still proud to have joined the Fourth International in 1940 and to have contributed to the New International and Partisan Review," says John Laughland. This left-wing tropism is a marker of the neoconservative International. For example, in the United Kingdom, for a long time the two most hardline "hawks" of this movement (Melanie Philips and Stephen Pollard) came from it. In France, we find the same phenomenon with men like Daniel Cohn-Bendit, Raphaël Enthoven, Romain Goupil, Pascal Bruckner, father and son Glucksman and Bernard-Henri Lévy (BHL).

## **France's Slow Submission to the Anglosphere**

Winston Churchill told General de Gaulle: "Remember this, my General, between Europe and the open sea, we will always choose the open sea!" The Iraq campaign (2003) was a perfect example of this warning. In addition to having reopened the floodgates of Francophobia after the French veto at the UN, the sending of American, British and Australian troops symbolized this desire to create an "economic-political alliance that is essentially Anglophone, but with a global vocation" (Laughland).

This is not new. The idea of a "duty to interfere" is at the basis of American imperialism, which, since 1945, has been embodied in the concept of "state building." From post-war Europe to the intervention in Afghanistan, it was on the ruin of the old nations that America was betting to set up a "new world order." After the fall of the Soviet Union, a Pentagon document (the "Wolfowitz Report") announced that Washington must now "convince potential rivals that they need not aspire to a greater role, regional or global." Since then, there has been no stopping the United States, which, in defiance of the European states and their adversaries (Russia, China, Iran), has waged a war in Kosovo (1999), Iraq (2003), the Georgian conflict (2008) and the enlargement of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO).

"With me, it will be the end of a form of neoconservatism imported into France over the past ten years." This phrase, even if it seems surprising, was President Macron's in 2017. Wishing to return to the Gaullio-Mitterandian, or even Chiracian, legacy, Macron announced that he was committing France to a different path than that taken by his predecessors—notably that of Sarkozy in Libya and the Hollande-Fabius approach in Iran and then Syria.

However, for years France has accepted, with rare exceptions, the abandonment of its independence by following Anglo-Saxon interventions. If interventionism was also a French tradition (DRC, ex-Yugoslavia and Ivory Coast), a change has been noticed since Sarkozy and Hollande. Since its return to the Atlanticist fold, France has gradually lost its voice in the concert of nations. If Gaullism was

characterized by a search for equidistance between the United States and Russia, since the outbreak of the Russian-Ukrainian conflict, this attempt at equilibrium has been replaced by an alignment with Uncle Sam.

### **BHL and His Clique of War-Mongers**

If the nationalist side oscillates between Kiev and Moscow—see personalities like Thierry Mariani, the sovereignists or Pierre de Gaulle—the Left, for its part, has joined the Ukrainian side en masse, even if some members of the Communist party or individuals like Emmanuel Todd bring a different perspective. In general, the bulk of the troop of the extreme center (from EELV to LR) has draped itself in the blue-yellow banner. But it is mainly the liberal Left that forms the outpost of the French neocons with, for example, Benjamin Haddad, who, before becoming a Renaissance deputy, represented American interests in Europe for the Atlantic Council.

The leader of this coalition, BHL, is the embodiment of these war drummers. Promoters of all the latest American invasions, these "good souls" do not hesitate to call for new battles and destruction. All the hype around BHL's last film testified to the power of this clan in the media world, and beware of the seditious who questioned this mobilization in favor of Ukraine. Attacking in swarms on television sets (LCI, France 2), radio mornings (France Inter and RTL) and magazine editorials (ParisMatch, L'Express), these "intellectuals" go on warlike diatribes in the name of the "values of the West," the defense of Europe and the "free world." In an article for *Le Monde diplomatique*, Serge Halimi and Pierre Rimbert even speak of a "crusading mood" and an "absence of pluralism." Lacan liked to say that Kant never went without Sade; if the neocons are moral, it is because they surely take pleasure in it.

---

Rodolphe Cart is a writer who lives in Paris, France. This article appears through the kind courtesy of [\*Revue Éléments\*](#).

---

**Featured:** *Dido Building Carthage*, by J. M. W. Turner; painted in 1815.

