



FRANCE:

**The Miviludes and the
Scholars**

Affidavit of Régis Dericquebourg

I started studying minority religious groups in 1975. On that year, I started writing a PHD dissertation on the French Jehovah Witnesses under the direction of professor Jean Séguy. At the time, scholars studying sects and small religious groups didn't have any problem what so ever, they were merely considered as weird people. Around 1977, things started to change with the slaughter in Guyana which made recent anti sects movements well known. They were busy trying to get back young Moonists, Children of God or Krishna adepts who would go away from their parents. There were two anti sects groups: The centre against mental manipulation (CCMM) founded by Roger Ikor (rationalist and Freemason) and ADFI (Catholic). It is surprising to see how at the beginning these groups tried to convince researchers. My research director told me he had a phone call from Mme Genève (member of the CCMM) wishing to give a warning on the danger of sects. She wanted to convince him that some poor girls within the children of God would do flirt fishing against their will. These groups found little interest for Sociologists at the time. Later some researchers took interest in them because « cuits were fashionable » Almost ail of them have disappeared from this field of study and their works are not considered as serious. They were « climbing on the bandwagon » and ignored that this was an old subject on which many things had already been written. There was amongthem a modus vivendi about researchers who take the time to go on the field and collect information thoroughly on practices and doctrines; they are never quoted.

My problems started when I published my first book Religions de guérison. (Healing Religions) This book presented in an objective way three groups that practised spiritual healing. I didn't make any value judgement. Sect opponents disliked it because of the way I presented Scientology. They challenged my presenting it as a religion; when nowadays many researchers and governments recognise it as a religion. Sect opponents wrote to editor Le Cerf (Catholic) requesting not to distribute the book. Because of this, it sold well, but the editor was very surprised by the reaction of sect opponents. Anti sect movements are active minorities repeating always the same message to chosen individuals: journalists, mayors, members of parliament and of the National Education system. These groups were supported by the socialist government (Kerenski(1) trend) which realised that it could use them to fight religion and also to do away with political opponents by tagging them as sect members or crypto-sectarians (sectarians under cover). This government gave them funds and introduced them to the French secret services. Hence, they have become even more aggressive, as they felt supported and having been conferred a mission.

These people do black propaganda: they spread false rumours on religious minorities (they conveyed rumours of paedophilia on the Jehovah Witnesses) they spread rumours of belonging to a sect on scholars, which are used against them by their colleagues contingently in case of a career struggle.

My affidavit concerns several points:

1) When I requested to direct PHD dissertations at the Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes in the religious sciences section, madame Esther Benbassa and Madame Giordana Charuty said I was a Scientologist, which is completely false but could harm me. Luckily the section's chairman postponed the vote to another meeting. I told this people that their behaviour was disgusting and I was approved to direct dissertations by one vote at the next council.

2) I had two tax verifications which is higher than average for a normal citizen.

The first one was on an apartment where I had patients over for psychotherapy.

I had quit the psychotherapy centre where I took care of patients and the chief doctor advised me to continue as a private practitioner in order not to interrupt the treatment. I got back an apartment of mine to have the patients over. The tax administration blamed me for not having bought the premises as a professional office with different fees. Now, trained psychologists do not relate to professional bills neither to commercial professional premises. Later on I found out the secret services were behind this move. It was the senior of the controller (Mme Jabot-Courtachon) and a police informer (widower of a right wing secret service agent who had joined Charles Pasqua's party who was doing surveillance on sects in Lille). The latter had done a dissertation on sects and came to my courses at Lille University. This verification came after the suspicion on my being a Scientologist after the publication of my book on Healing religions. The main anti sect association considers me as a Scientologist or a cryptoscientologist. Recently, Mme Manuela Aquisto, tax controller tried again to sanction me for an error in my tax statement. It took an arbitrator for the mistake to be recognised and the penalty dropped. Being a pacifist I didn't search for a revenge as others would have done.

3) During my career at Lille University and particularly in the Psychology department, I was defamed as belonging to Scientology, particularly by a woman who directed the department for five years and belongs today to ADFI. During her mandate she was guilty of misappropriation of funds in the department. Another character who accused me of belonging to Scientology was professor Jean Pierre D. (who died young of alcoholism). Another professor of social psychology also refused my joining her research lab, accusing me slanderously of being a Scientologist. This Psychology department is peculiar since the psycho-analyst Mme Chasseguet-Smirgel who used to teach there was depicted as a "Jewish bourgeois" by opponents of psychoanalysis.

4) Recently a new professor in social psychology arrived in this department: madame Leherpeux, with her aid Loris Schiaratura, they refused to confer me any teaching charge, which is forbidden without giving a reason. I teach therefore clinical psychology with a more open academic team, less touchy about rumours.

Conclusion

I conduct my research work as a "simple man" in spite of these defamatory accusations and of discrimination. I feel a lot of contempt for people who spread these accusations without checking if they are true or out of competition. To me they belong to the type of Adorno's Authoritarian personality still called fascist personality. Their behaviour traits correspond to the F. Scales (fascism scales) which allows to spot them. I note that scholars and researchers of a very high level do not take into account these rumours of belonging to Scientology and we are in very good terms. It is more often than not, scholars and researchers who have no scientific recognition who pick up these rumours.

1 : Alexander Kerenski (1881-1970) served at the head of the Russian Provisional Government from July-October 1917; with the Bolshevik Revolution he was forced to flee, remaining in exile for the rest of his life. He died on June 1970 in New York

Toughening of the Monitoring Mission against Sectarian Abuses

Le Monde, 20 December 2005 by Xavier Ternisien

(Whole text)

Nathalie Luca quits the orientation council of the Inter-Ministerial Mission Against Sectarian Abuses (MIVILUDES). Sects' specialist, in charge of research on religion at the school of advanced studies in social sciences (EHESS) in Paris, she explains in her resignation letter dated of November 16th that she refuses to be involved in foreseeable toughening of the stand of the MIVILUDES.

Nathalie Luca had the support of Danièle Hervieu-Léger, president of the l'EHESS. The cooperation covenant between the Miviludes and the school has been suspended.

The policy of the new Chairman is under questioning. Former General Secretary of the National Defense Secrecy Commission, Jean Michel Roulet replaced Jean Langlais on October 1st. The latter had followed the transformation of the former Inter Ministerial Mission against sects (MILS), stress was to be put now on "sectarian abuses". This marked the will for an abrupt change with the logic of assessing sect lists which had prevailed in the 1995 parliamentary report.

In her letter to the Chairman of the MIVILUDES, Mme Luca observes that "Chairman Langlais had succeeded through his moderation, to restore the necessary dialogue and debate to a well balanced but efficient monitoring of these delicate questions which too often spark passion and excesses". He had also managed to have the French stand better understood abroad".

In fact, the handling of the sectarian phenomenon by the French Government is regularly criticised in international quarters as violating liberties. Now, the special *rapporteur* on religious freedom of the UN Human Rights Commission Asma Jahangir, in her visit to France in September had praised the "more balanced" approach undertaken by the MIVILUDES then. (*Le Monde*, September 30th)

Nathalie Luca was the only scholar specialist in new religious movements within the orientation council of the MIVILUDES; Her departure strengthens the weigh of other members of the council, in particular deputies Jean-Pierre Brard (affiliated to the communists), Georges Fenech (UMP), and the representatives of victims defence associations such as (Union of Associations of Defence of The Family and the Individual) and the Centre against Mental Manipulations.

Jean-Michel Roulet admits that the policy of the MIVILUDES has been reoriented. "The Miviludes is not a research lab, stresses he. There were abuses in the last six months. MPs complained and so did victims' associations. The Miviludes shall do its job again. It will fulfil the whole of the missions assigned to it in its creation decree.

Sébastien Fath **Researcher at the CNRS¹**

08.06.2006. Why I declined the MIVILUDES' offer. By Decree dated November 2002, the Prime Minister created the Miviludes (Inter-ministerial Mission Monitoring Sectarian Abuses). I do not belong to those who challenge its legitimacy. As a Citizen as well as a researcher at the CNRS, I am aware of the fact that sectarian abuses might exist, it seems then normal for the Republic to reconsider the issue in order to inform the public and protect civil liberties.

On the other hand what constitutes a problem to me, is the underemployment of religious scholars. With the MIVILUDES, it is unfortunately the case today. After a thaw in relations, things have worsened to the point where at the time being, if a researcher in social sciences of religion would accept a post at the orientation council of the MIVILUDES, it would be essentially an isolated case of standing bail for the mission.

This is why in spite of having been honoured by the proposition of a seat at the council of orientation of this structure; I have decided to refuse it. With others, I call for laying down flat the way it works. This concern for a public debate led me to put on the Internet the mail I addressed to the Chairman of the MIVILUDES, which you'll find below. You'll be able to judge from tangible evidence and participate to a democratic citizen's debate in which we are all concerned.

Sébastien Fath
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6th of June 2006
To Monsieur Jean-Michel Roulet
Chairman of the MIVILUDES
Mr. Chairman,

By an E-mail dated 31st of May 2006, prolonged by a phone call, you have honoured me by a proposition of a seat in the new orientation council of the MIVILUDES. At the end of the week of reflexion on which we had agreed, I have the honour to let you know, by the present mail, my answer to your proposition.

My deep attachment to secularity and my concern on the taking into account the religious factor in the understanding of society, lead me to appreciate all efforts conducted by the Republic to better understand the religious dimension including its abuses. This is why, in principle I am particularly favourable to the idea of having a structure, whether it is called MIVILUDES or otherwise, devoted to treating the issue of sectarian abuses.

As a researcher, trained in history and sociology, I can confirm that there are sectarian abuses here and there in the religious universes that my colleagues and I study. It seems normal to me that in a Republic, this issue at stake should be confronted seriously and avoiding both naivety and paranoia. These elements prompt me *prima facie* to accept your proposition, but other factors, weigh in my evaluation of things and have led me to decline your offer.

Two connected points bring me to a standstill. My first concern is the scant use of the works of

specialised researchers (CNRS or others). I am not saying that all researchers are excellent or objective or even well balanced, but in a Democracy, the least of things would be to wholly integrate the contribution of those supported by the tax payer to have a better knowledge of religions.

From that standpoint, my examination of the recent record of the MIVILUDES is not convincing. The second obstacle is that there is not currently any researcher in social sciences of religions among the members of the MIVILUDES itself (I do not speak of the orientation council). Only one wouldn't be enough, but none! My knowledge of other European contexts (e.g. Switzerland) reminds me that there are other ways to do things than this odd French manner of keeping at a distance those who are paid by the Republic to be specialists of religion.

That the MIVILUDES is not a laboratory is perfectly understandable and this shouldn't hinder it from doing good useful work for the citizens. It is not asked to produce purely scientific studies, for its ends are first political in the best sense of the word. But, it should at least respect and consider seriously the contribution of social sciences. In this approach, statements of intention are not enough and neither would be an isolated appointment. This respect should comprehend the integration a minimum of two or three researchers specialised in the religious contemporary field (having done a PHD dissertation and members of the CNRS or universities) as fully fledged members of the MIVILUDES (and not only of the orientation council).

As long as the MIVILUDES itself does not integrate in a substantial manner these researchers, inviting an isolated researcher to the orientation council would de facto be (even if it wasn't wanted so) to request him to stand bail within a system where social sciences of religion (history, anthropology and sociology) are at the most the fifth wheel.

I cannot accept this role under these circumstances.

As soon as the citizen interface with social sciences of religion are truly insured within the MIVILUDES (or the organism coming after it), I shall very willingly accept to participate in the orientation council. In the meantime, I would like as many of my colleagues, a debate to be undertaken with associations and researchers paid by the Republic, on the way in which we could politically treat the sectarian issue.

As long as things are not laid down fiat, the conditions to take into account the stand of recognised religious specialists in a balanced way won't be met. This is why, while feeling the greatest respect for the task the Republic has bestowed upon you, I feel more useful as an outer contributor (role I have already plaid twice, with the MILS and then in the first draft of the MIVILUDES).

The only thing left for me to do, is to wish you ail the best in your task and to pray you Mr Chairman to accept the expression of my respectful and dedicated feelings.

Sébastien Fath researcher at the CNRS

(Footnotes)

¹ National Centre of Scientific Research.

Source:

<http://blogdesebastienfath.hautetfort.com/archive/2006/06/08/pourquoi-j-ai-refuse-l-offre-de-la-miviludes.html>

Fight against sects: «The MIVILUDES a police of the mind»

Interview of: Olivier Bobineau

By Dominique Albertini Journalism student 08 06 2009 10H22

In its last report, issued on May 17th the MIVILUDES stresses the increase of sectarian movements. It targets particularly self-enhancement techniques (psychoanalysis, coaching, etc.), but for Olivier Bobineau, former member of the mission, its approach is inadequate.

According to this specialist of religions the consequences would be: The Inter-ministerial mission monitoring sectarian abuses overestimates the sectarian phenomenon in France.

Interview

- The Miviludes deems that sects increase and advocates a more repressive policy. What do you think of its action?

- It intends to lead a modern public policy, but it is the only one missing three fundamental ideas:

1. A definition of the object of its work: The Miviludes confuses sect, sectarian phenomenon and sectarian abuse, without giving any definition. These terms are like empty shells applied to no matter what which has as a major consequence to have the number of sects in France increase from 200 to 607. A multiplication by three stemming from the fact that the Miviludes plumped for psychoanalysis.

2. The outline of a methodology, i.e.: the existence of a public debate, the crossing of sources, a real reflexion on the subject, but the only logic of the Miviludes is a different inquisition logic looking for scapegoats. The discourse of the Miviludes is: "we don't have any evidence, thus they hide things, and therefore they are a real menace"

3. A real evaluation of its action: There is no tool for that, neither to have a discussion on the conclusions of the Miviludes: When the OSCE and the UN dare criticise its work, it responds that they have been infiltrated by sects.

- But the sectarian abuses denounced by the Miviludes are associated to offences such as embezzlement or manipulation.

- Of course, but there are two questions that should be asked:

First, is it necessary to have a specific organism to enforce civil and criminal law, which exists already to punish such offences? Even more so since sects are far from being a major problem in French society.

The second question is how to deal with fraud complaints: This should necessarily take into account what is and what is not good on a spiritual plane.

There should be real evidence, a real public service of information with scientific advisers doing real inquiries.

- What do you think of the layout of a list of reference aiming at defining what a real sectarian movement is?

- It's a real black list, a document pretending to define good and evil, which is hardly admissible in public policy. A real definition, should aim at the essence of what a sect is. The suggested list of reference will only mention general characteristics found in other social activities. We miss therefore in the understanding of the phenomenon what is gained in expansion.

The stigmatisation of certain groups might end up in abuses: After the publication by the Parliament in 1995, of a list of sects, several Jehova Witnesses Kingdom Halls were ablaze and some of the members bitten up.

- The report devotes a long passage to Satanism. Do you think the importance of Satanism is well evaluated?

- The Miviludes doesn't give any figures; it states an increase of Satanism in Europe without quoting any sources. There shouldn't be more than a hundred Satanists in France.

The evocation of a world of fancy linked to this belief doesn't necessarily make you a Satanist. If all black metal fans were Satanists, why not say that all of Bach fans are Lutheran?

- So, you think there is a stigmatisation of certain groups or movements?

- Yes, it stems from the French tradition of suspicion on anything spiritual, of the opposition between on one hand freedom of speech, politics and philosophy and on the other hand freedom of conscience.

The latter is suspected because it generated religious passions that France has not yet overcome: The extremely violent struggle between Catholics and Protestants, the opposition between the Church and the Republican state at the end of the XIX century and at the beginning of the XXth century.

Ever since, freedom of conscience has been suspected and considered irrational. In the name of freedom of conscience, there is the intention to control it. The Miviludes plays the part of an administrative police of the mind which looks for scapegoats and stigmatises groups.

You depict also this attitude as the result of inner tension at the MIVILUDES. Indeed, there are various hubs within the Miviludes and particularly a conservative catholic hub which designates evil according to its own criteria and a left wing atheist hub to which evil is freedom of conscience.

These two sides do not agree, to the exception of their common enemies which are the movements they depict as sectarian.

They also agree to defend their interests: There are also freemasons among the atheists of the Miviludes, who seek to avoid being labelled as sectarian.

And as for the Catholics, they are afraid that some movements within the Church might be stigmatised as it was recently the case with the *Communauté des Béatitudes* (Blessings Community). This seems to indicate a more favourable *rapport de forces* for the free thinkers' hub.

Source : <http://www.rue89.com/2009/06/08/lutte-contre-les-sectes-la-miviludes-police-des-esprits>

Annex 18 / Ethnography of a trainee course at the MIVILUDES (Inter-ministerial Monitoring Mission against Sectarian Abuses)

From the Sorbonne University PHD Dissertation in sociology By Nicolas Walzer: Satanist and pagan imaginaries, the case of heavy metal music a schizo-morphic will to power,
presented on the 25th of September 2007.

The MIVILUDES, named at first Inter-Ministerial Sect Fighting Mission (Mils), was created after the overwhelming media outburst generated by the Solar Temple affair, when victims of the hold of an apocalyptic sect were found burnt to death in the Vercors. In 2002, after the report of the 1995 Study Committee on sects that stigmatised many religious groups as cults, it took the more restrained name of MIVILUDES. It was then question of «sectarian abuses» and of ensuring freedom of belief, in spite of a real concern about the sectarian issue.

After having produced the documents rendering official our trainee course to Paris V University and to the secretary of the MIVILUDES Gilles Bottine (signatures of our research director and the president of the university), we met the latter for the first time in the mission's premises at the beginning of October 2005. Seeking scholars' support to have the mission go further in its action, he had recently appointed our colleague Olivier Bobineau sociologist of religions, as scientific advisor and he suggested resorting to two scholars to treat the "distressing" triptych heavy metal/gothic/ and Satanism. At the beginning of our trainee course which was supposed to last from October to January, the Mission had appointed as new Chairman, Jean-Michel Roulet (close to Prime Minister Dominique de Villepin and to Alain Juppé former secretary of the Defence Committee having prefect status. We didn't know yet that this appointment would correspond to a reorganisation of the mission supported by a complete turnover of its leaders.

After many discussions, it was agreed that the object of our course was to draft six rigorous scholarly notes on the links among metal-gothic and Satanism. When they were produced, they were outlaid as follows for a total of 80 pages¹ :

1. *Relations between music: metal, gothic and Satanism.*
2. *Satanism: Inventory of fixtures in France*
3. *Observations on « Religious Abuses » by Jacky Cordonnier.*
4. *Observations on "Satanism and vampirism". "The Black Book" by Paul Ariès.*
5. *Assiduous listening of heavy metal, gothic music and risks of suicide.*
6. *Heavy metal and gothic music in France.*

We did not have a fixed schedule to go to the MIVILUDES. In our personal case, we used to come at 16h and leave the premises of the 68 rue de Bellechasse at 22h. Also, the question of our fees was left pending from the beginning.

In spite of the Prime Minister's statement at the National Assembly to pay all trainees, in order to fight against abusive employers, we didn't get any compensation nor any transport allowance for the hundreds of

hours working within the organisation.

Ministerial organisms being unknown to us, we quickly started an ethnographic observation of both the place and the people in it. Through the many discussions we shared with the sociologist who had co-opted us, on the extreme care to observe in the premises and towards the personnel, we learned that among the appointed civil servants, some had obtained their posts as a *dead end job* after having had health problems. The archivist seemed "fragile" and as our colleague had confirmed she had just come back from sick leave. He suspected the Chairman's secretary of inspecting the offices once they were empty. When we came to the Mission, this same secretary was very surprised to meet us. Therefore, during the four months of our trainee course, we had to keep constant caution and communicate through coded words or whispers with the scientific advisor who was in charge of directing us.

From the second day of our presence, we inquired on the library of documents. It was thin: Some arrays of books in a little room held by the archivist. In our first meeting with the latter, she stated that she was in charge of sorting out all documents in the computer. It took us merely an hour to have them all thoroughly examined one by one. We were struck straightaway by the presence of activist's works. Jacky Cordonnier, Paul Ariès and some other committed works on Scientology were gathering dust on the shelves even if they were obviously new.

Concerning scholarly works, there was only one or two Sociology PHD dissertations of which one on the Jehovah Witnesses. There were one or two books by Frédéric Lenoir (once doing a PHD dissertation on Buddhism under the direction of Danièle Hervieu Léger among the two or three hundred documents. There were many folders, gathering documents typed by the mission, each on a specific subject. Scientology, the Jehovah Witnesses, the Crusaders of the New Babylon, Alternative medicine, Tabitha's Place, Arbre de Vie (Life Tree), Moon sect, etc. Three books directly linked to Satanism: *Satanism and vampirism: The Black Book* by Paul Ariès, a book by J. Cordonnier: *Religious abuses*, *Le Défi magique* (the Magic Challenge) by Massimo Introvigne, even if the author has been banished by the mission.

The files on specific subjects contained internal circulars mentioning the policy of the mission on great current sectarian issues. After careful examination, we found they contained meetings' reports but few activists' stands. Much less than the two documents labelled: *Renseignements Generaux* (French Intelligence Services), dedicated to heavy metal which we read with our colleague on the doctorate. They were private, internal to the Mission and reserved to its members. The vulgarity of notes on metal fans was surprising. Even in Ariès' book there weren't as many spelling errors, such an absence of syntax and above all value judgements. We found phrases like: "The great passion of hard metal fans is throwing TVs out of the window" or "heavy metal fans are short sighted little Nazis", this made us even more cautious in our conversations with the personnel.

An intelligence officer, friend of Jacky Cordonnier, was mentioned as well as the secretary Gilles Bottine (a magistrate). Several exchanges with him convinced us of the great subjectivity of the secret services regarding these phenomena. He affirmed in his own words not "giving a damn about the scientific approach" that we intended to bring to the handling of heavy metal, in order to cool down the debate. Satanism, heavy

metal and gothic phenomena were obviously one same thing according to him.

Some "files", (which we couldn't consult but which had been mentioned by the advisor) were dedicated to personalities. In fact, the Miviludes, has a thick file on Massimo Introvigne, and also on our research director Michel Maffesoli. Knowing that a morality inquiry would be undertaken on us and our friends and families, our enrolment under his thumb could have been a motive for concern, but nothing happened. Little after the end of our contract there was an article by a psychologist on the Website of the MIVILUDES, questioning some scholars who would "support" or condone sects (www.miviludes-gouv.fr). Cleverly and by fear of defamation, no names were quoted but there was instead the following mention: "a sociology professor of the Sorbonne" we identified it seems, Michel Maffesoli. There were also mentions to members of *l'Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes* (Practical school of Advanced Studies). We got news from the Mission regularly by the person in charge of the media. All articles treating Satanism and Heavy metal/gothic music were delivered on our desks.

Olivier Bobineau at the beginning of 2006 had been dismissed "following an unlucky initiative" (dixit Chairman Roulet). According to what he told us in the aftermath, he had undergone many pressures from members of parliament and the Orientation Council of the MIVILUDES who blamed him for the lukewarm stand of sociologists which triggered concern of victim's associations such as UNADFI. Following their negative experience with Mr Bobineau, the Chairman and the new General Secretary Mme Katz, decided to pass our notes and passage at the MIVILUDES under silence, until they mentioned them in the booklet "Satanism : *A risk of sectarian abuse*".²

After the departure of M. Bobineau, we decided to keep a certain distance with the MIVILUDES, while we drafted a scientific article for a group of researchers, after a convention on *underground music and politics*.

Shortly afterwards, in a conversation by phone, we learned through the Intelligence Officer, that the MIVILUDES had appointed somebody else to treat the issue of Satanism: Jacky Cordonnier. When for the first time we pointed out scientifically the lack of rigour of this person and his lack of knowledge on the subject in a note dedicated to this demonstration, communicated to the Mission's secretary, our works seem to have comforted them in taking an opposite stand. It's by having scholarly remarks, reporting on the field, on the problem of journalists and authors like Ariès and Cordonnier, that the MIVILUDES decided to confer to the latter more responsibility than he ever had before within the Mission. He was thus appointed as an expert and in charge of writing an internal booklet delivered to the whole of the French police on the issue of *Satanism, the extreme right and heavy metal and Gothie music*. Let's stress the point that precisely, the idea of the booklet was ours after consultation with the Intelligence Officer, who was very interested in having a reliable document assimilating each symbol, cross or pendent to ideal typical behaviour that could be sociologically observed.

To this idea which was stolen from us, is added the fact that we were not paid for our work and that our notes (stemming from several months of work, particularly on a first sociological definition of Satanism and the Satanist) were truncated and our conclusions warped by the mission. A few months later, we got two

letters, and the last one blamed us for publishing on the lab's website our sociological notes that the mission had withdrawn. We were blamed for rendering these notes available, but we had been careful to have the copyright and in the last day of our trainee course we got a handwritten document from the General Secretary stating that we were the authors of the notes. Within an inverted logic, the letter turned around our argument blaming us for our unscientific and defamatory methods for: 1. making these notes known and 2. Smear Messrs. Aries and Cordonnier. In fact, the MIVILUDES as a warning sent a copy of this letter to the President of the Sorbonne. We didn't have any news either from him neither from the mission since that day.

As a last episode, Jacky Cordonnier, - who pretends to be a "historian of religions" but who has no doctorate, in any case, he is not a scholar -, was promoted and appointed to replace Nathalie Luca, (the last scholar who worked for the MIVILUDES³ with Mr Bobineau at the orientation council of the Mission in which there are some members of parliament like Georges Fenech. The latter was the Chairman of a House Committee which worked with the MIVILUDES on the question of the vulnerability of minors facing sects. The committee issued its report in December 2006 mentioning Satanism via questioned people (one can read that psychologist Marcel Rufo treats many cases of adolescents falling into "Satanic rites").⁴

Most religion sociologists and many scholars are concerned about the subjective change of direction directly linked to victim's associations like UNADFI or the CCMM. We doubt strongly that the proposai of a bill by an elected official of the Front National in the South of France, aiming at banishing all speeches or writing against religions, would pass. We might wonder on the fact that a State organism, headed directly by the Prime Minister, could adopt policy contrary to the current situation in the field and to the works of scholars.

Can the establishment, call, and promote a person sentenced for defamation whose lack of rigour and whose biases have been proven. In fact, in 2002 Mr Cordonnier was found guilty of defamation and sentenced to pay one symbolic euro by a court in the South-east for having labelled the Jehova Witnesses as "swindlers" in an article published in the newspaper *La Provence*. (...) If Heavy metal fans and Goths didn't lack organisation, associations and official structures, we could expect M. Cordonnier to be taken before justice to answer for some of his statements. On this issue, in an article on *Le Parisien*, on October 1, 2005, after the suicide of two young girls he qualifies the groups Eths and Anorexia Nervosa as "Neo-Nazi Satanists".

Nevertheless, he has become suppler on the question since a few months and he speaks less and less about music, to concentrate on Satanism which by the way he never defines. He proceeds by vague statements without locating the Satanist groups he mentions. But we'll get back on his action logic in the following part.

On the whole, the attitude of the MIVILUDES of not retaining scholarly works is understandable, but to expect from scholars to prove the inadequacy of its "specialists" and reject then their works by pretending that they are defamatory, is not. Unless we consider that they are perhaps unable to question the anti sect policy that has been on for several years or even question a moral justification to exist. How to handle researchers who will point at subjective guidelines, grounded on the social reading of witnesses, displaying a disturbing social reality? Here we have the problem of the legitimacy of such an organism which, supported by anti-sect associations and some members of parliament, creates more problems than it solves. Rather than

cooling down the debate, it reinforces the concern of parents confronted with the sudden evenly black attire of their offspring. As a last analysis, sociologists find themselves isolated before this logic of value judgements opposite to the example of the English INFORM which has proven all its capabilities and competence.

(Footnotes)

¹ Notes are available now on the website of our lab: <http://www.ceaq-sorbonne.org/node.php?id=1046>. (...) We broadcasted them widely through various blogs and forums in order to propose alternative information to the MIVILUDES's.

² Published at the *Documentation Française* in October 2006, quotes hastily our works warping them and adding spelling mistakes. According to our assumptions, this allowed the new Chairman Roulet to strongly reaffirm the resolute action of the MIVILUDES on a strong questioning issue. The choice of the subject, reduced critiques to a minimum since public opinion in France (victim of movies clichés) may well easily consider Satanism as a sectarian risk. The article hasn't been commented elsewhere (except for well informed people and metal and gothic fans) It was warmly welcomed and created a media campaign on the subject.



<http://www.coordia.p.com>