

The Dangerous Babblings Of a French Neocon

by William Jones

Savage Century: Back to Barbarism

by Thérèse Delpech

Washington, D.C.: Carnegie

Endowment for International Peace, April 2007

232 pages, hardcover, \$27.95

While few Americans are acquainted with the name of Thérèse Delpech, she is considered a leading light among the French neoconservatives, and a “fellow traveler” of sorts to our own neoconservative gurus like Richard Perle and Michael Ledeen, especially on the Iran nuclear issue. The purpose of this book, her second to be translated into English (*Iran and the Bomb: The Abdication of International Responsibility* was published in November 2007), is to rally the troops for the new fascist world order.

Of course, Delpech has credentials. She is the director of strategic affairs at the French Atomic Energy Commission, a member of RAND’s European advisory board, a member of the Council of the British International Institute of Strategic Studies, and served as an advisor to former French Prime Minister Alain Juppé.

Now, the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace has published a translation of *Savage Century* in order to introduce her to a broader non-French-speaking public.

The Real World of 1905

Delpech proposes to compare 2005, the year of publication of the French edition (*L’Ensaucagement, essai sur le retour de la mondialisation*), with 1905, and to compare the past century’s development with what will unfold beginning 2005. Delpech gives a somewhat quirky rendition of the importance of that year. While it was the year of the defeat of Russia in the

Russo-Japanese War, there were some hopeful signs on the horizon, Delpech argues, pointing to the publication of Einstein’s “Theory of Relativity,” Freud’s “Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality,” and the initiation of the Modernist movement in painting, with the 1905 Salon d’automne in Paris—an odd combination, to say the least.

But, all in all, things were going south quickly, she concludes. Russia’s defeat led to the Revolution of 1905, the prelude to the great 1917 Revolution which finally destroyed the Tsarist Empire, established Bolshevik Russia, and changed the destiny of Europe. Thence, there flows inexorably, the First World War, the Second World War, all the way down to Rwanda and Darfur today.

Delpech’s argument is that the world was then unable to see the portents on the horizon and act accordingly, and, perhaps, now, at the beginning of a new century, the world is in a similar situation, and will suffer even more barbarism, lest it take heed of her prescriptions.

While lining up a succession of these disparate events in that fateful year, she fails to communicate any real sense of causality. Rather like a Kafka novel, or a Sartre play, the events unfold in a totally arbitrary, and therefore terrifying, manner. In order to present a plausible rationale for her arguments against the “bogeymen” of today, in particular, Russia and China, she has had to obfuscate the real historical record of 1905. Nowhere in Delpech’s depiction of events is a British hand anywhere to be seen!

There are a number of strategically important events of 1905 that Delpech chooses to ignore. First, the near completion of the Trans-Siberian Railroad. The Eurasian continent would henceforth be linked, like the United States, coast-to-coast, by rail, effectively eliminating the monopoly of the sea trade controlled by Great Britain. Second, this would provide the basis for an extension of trade and development to all the

nations of Eurasia which the new rail lines touched.

The publication by Halford Mackinder in 1904 of *The Geographical Pivot of History*, was a clear presentiment by the British of the danger represented by this new development. The key now was to foment war among the continental powers. By 1900, the great Russian finance minister, Sergei Witte, had achieved a remarkable series of treaties among Russia, France, and Germany, the most likely belligerents in any potential war. Similar treaties with China and Japan, which nations would also benefit from the new railroad, seemed to bode well for the continent.

Sensing the danger to their Empire, the British began immediately to unravel the web of relationships that Witte had carefully built up. Japan was being cultivated by the British to become, like them, an enforcer island-kingdom, capable of intervening into Asian continental affairs. The British were instrumental in promoting the first Sino-Japanese War in 1884, and, through a series of Anglo-Japanese treaties, provided Japan with the backing it needed to launch an attack on Russia in Manchuria in 1904.

At the highest level, the British gameplan was choreographed by the Prince of Wales, later King Edward VII. Since the monarchs of Europe were all related, it was easy for Edward “the Caresser” (so nicknamed for his bisexual escapades) to manipulate the psychological profiles of all the parties in order to foment conflict.

Targeting Russia and China

While Delpech rambles through the rubble of the century’s horrors, one gets the impression that the problems facing the world today seem well-nigh insoluble, short of total submission to the will of some supranational entity. Indeed, her real target seems to be the nation-state itself, but Russia and China are the particular objects of her wrath.

Her greatest vitriol is reserved for Russia. She berates the European Union for not coming more strongly to the assistance of Ukraine during the heady days of the Orange Revolution. “The Ukrainian episode was a reality check for Russia,” she writes. “Without Ukraine, it would be impossible for Moscow to resume domination over the states that emancipated themselves in 1990. Without it, Russia cannot dream of restoring the empire.”

She attributes Russia’s attempt to revive its national strength from the economic devastation of the “free market” insanity of the 1990s, to a latent Stalinist demiurge. “The return of Stalinist imagery in Russia today can hardly be interpreted as a simple desire to return to the past,” she writes. “The spirit of revenge abroad in the land is symptomatic of a traumatized country in the process of extreme regression.” Delpech’s solution: “to demand more accountability from the EU’s authoritarian, repressive, and, above all, enormously corrupt neighbor.” For Delpech, a European Union, strengthened by the elimination of its constituent sovereign nations, might adopt a more belligerent approach to Russia.

Delpech also blames Russia for contributing to the military modernization of China, her other main target. Indeed, Communist China, Delpech demands, must repent for its sins before becoming an acceptable partner. “Europe could encourage acknowledgment of the crimes the Communist authorities have committed against the Chinese people since 1949,” Delpech writes.

On the sensitive Taiwan issue, Delpech has a simple solution. The West should simply recognize its independence from China, and be done with it! “Recognition of Taipei would be the equivalent of a declaration of independence for the island,” Delpech writes, “but it would prevent hostilities. Out of it would come a diplomatic crisis with Beijing that could not develop into an armed conflict [!]... This path, revolutionary in form but peaceful in substance, deserves consideration.”

The one-worldist Delpech also sheds crocodile tears over the “disintegration of Africa,” aggravated, she laments, by the intense interest shown in Africa by China, which is in fact investing millions in the continent’s infrastructure. Delpech’s solution to the problem: redrawing the map of Africa in order “to reflect the ambitions of some and weaknesses of others,” deployment of more UN peacekeepers, and, if need be, “targeted investments” but “subject to oversight.”

Indeed, the most striking feature of Delpech’s survey of *la condition humaine* is the total lack of any consideration of economics, either as the cause of, or the solution to, the problems facing humanity. “In all of human history there has been no period when the dangers of politics and the limits of the economy have been made so brutally manifest as in the past century,” she laments.

Götterdämmerung?

Her purpose is not to solve anything, but to raise the specter of a world gone mad, a world which needs the firm hand of a global enforcer, led by the “unity of the Western camp”: “Europe should understand better than any other part of the planet what is at stake in this twilight, for we are familiar with the signs of decline and have an age-old experience of catastrophe.”

For Delpech, even reason is no longer sufficient for dealing with this world of the absurd. “Reason has been disqualified in the twentieth century of allowing everything to be justified, including the unjustifiable, under every sky. Ideologies were products of the overdevelopment of rational activity—the first aberrations appearing in the eighteenth century in Europe—and it was rational activity that gave birth to the monsters announced a century later by visionaries like Nietzsche,” Delpech says.

The 21st Century would indeed become a “savage” one, were our political leaders to adopt the nostrums of Thérèse Delpech. Let us rather leave them to the ravings of the inmates of the present-day equivalent of the Marquis de Sade’s Charenton, and devote our activity to defeating the real fascist threat that faces us today.