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**France**

# **Your wars, our dead**

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## FRAGMENTS

Those who died last night are ours.

In a restaurant terrace, in a bar, in the street, in a concert hall.

Ours.

Dead because the murderers decided to strike in the middle of Paris and shoot into a crowd with the aim of creating as many victims as possible.

**11:30 a.m.** Sarkozy appears on TV to declare: "We are at war."

For once, I agree with him. They are at war.

You are at war, you Sarkozys, Hollandes, Valls, Camerons, Netanyahus, Obamas. You are at war, you and your political allies, you and the your friends who own the multinationals.

And you have dragged us in as well, without even asking for our opinion.

Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya, Mali, Syria...The number of us who have protested hasn't always been very large. We haven't succeeded in convincing enough people that these military expeditions only ever bring more instability, violence and tragedy.

Over there, and right here.

Because the war did not start last night. It did not begin in January with the killings at Charlie Hebdo and the Hyper Cacher kosher deli.

In January, I wrote the following:

*One of the causes for the shock hitting large sections of the population, including circles of left-wing activists, is the (re)discovery of this truth: Yes, France is at war. A war which does not always speak its name, a war which is not discussed in the governmental assemblies or in the media, and is generally not talked about in the public arena, a war against enemies who are not often identified, an asymmetric war—but a war all the same. The recent killings, in*

*the most brutal way, brought this to light for those who did not know, or those who refused to see, or those who had forgotten. France is at war, war creates casualties, and these casualties do not always only fall in your enemy's home.*

*With whom is France at war? According to various discourses and the media, it is at war against "international terrorism," against "jihadism," against "fundamentalist barbarism," etc. I won't discuss these imprecise labels and the abusive generalizations they imply, nor the paradoxes that underlie them (alliances based on an unstable geometry, support for regimes that support the development of "jihadist" currents, participation in military interventions that reinforce these currents, etc.). It is enough to underline that France has, in reality, followed the lead of George W. Bush and the United States after September 11, 2001, in the rhetoric and politics of the "clash of civilizations," even if not always saying so out loud.*

*France has been at war for almost 14 years without saying so. [1]*

I find no reason to change a single line of this extract. In doing so, I mean no disrespect to the victims or their relatives.

All the emotion, the indignation, the pain, these are all self-evidently legitimate. And the actions of the murderers who last night wrecked hundreds of lives, thousands of lives, are inexcusable.

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**Midday.** ISIS claims responsibility. Apparently, they are at war as well.

According to the Agence France-Presse, citing a witness in the Bataclan theater, one of the killers shouted, "It is Hollande's fault, it is your president's fault, he shouldn't have intervened in Syria."

One can always close one's eyes and shut one's ears. One can become lost in the smoke of the depoliticizing rhetoric of "blind terrorism" as an inexplicable force.

But the killers in Paris are not poor "fools" who bear no responsibility for their actions, nor are they manipulated by some I-don't-know-which-secret-service. We'll know more in the hours and days to come, but there is no doubt the killers will have a profile and a message roughly similar to that of Said and Cherif Kouachi and Amedy Coulibaly, who carried out the January attacks, about which I wrote the following last January:

*The killers themselves have a discourse (see their interviews and videos, in which they speak about Syria and Iraq, the offenses suffered by Muslims at the hands of France and in the world in general, etc.); they have their own theory (especially note the article published by Mediapart); they have their own organizational reference points (Islamic State, Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula)...*

*They believe, rationally, that they are at war with a certain France, and that they consider, rationally, themselves to be engaged in a legitimate defense. See this statement that Coulibaly gave in a posthumous video:*

*You attack the Caliphate, you attack the Islamic State, so we attack you. You can't attack and expect nothing in return.*

Yes, ISIS is engaged in politics. They are killers, but they are political.

And last night they struck powerfully, very powerfully.

Blindly? Yes and no.

Yes, because they targeted people who are not directly involved in this war, people whose only crime was to be in the wrong spot at the wrong time, people who might have been elsewhere and so would still be among us today.

No, because in striking in such a way, they are sending a message: "Your country is at war with us, and as long as this war continues, none among you will be safe."

This is politics. It is detestable, but it is political.

We live in a world at war. Russia, France and the United States are bombing Syria. Saudi Arabia is bombing Yemen. The French "operations" continue in Mali. Obama just announced that U.S. troops will not be leaving Afghanistan.

According to the UN High Commission on Refugees, there have never been more refugees and internally displaced persons than there are today and there is no reason to believe things will improve any time soon.

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THE TOTAL, as of this moment, is 128 dead. 128 is too many.

128 dead on November 13, 2015.

That's about the average number of people killed everyday in Syria since March 2011.

Yes, nearly the daily average: 250,000 dead since March 2011, about 4,500 deaths per month, nearly 150 dead every day.

This might explain some things to a compatriot who says he does not understand why Syrians have been fleeing to Europe for more than four and a half years. There is a November 13 every day in Syria. And it is Assad, your new ally, who bears primary responsibility for this, having brutally suppressed a peaceful uprising.

We live in a world at war. And this allows some people to conduct business.

Arms sales: 2015, a record year for France

France congratulates itself on selling war machines to Egypt. France congratulates itself on selling war machines to Saudi Arabia. France congratulates itself on selling war machines to the United Arab Emirates.

Yet France is surprised, indignant, protesting against becoming a target itself.

Hypocrisy. Cowardice. Lies.

They have released the hounds, foaming at the mouth.

Laurent Wauquiez, who served as Sarkozy's Minister of Higher Education, tweeted "I demand 4,000 people suspected of terrorism be placed in internment centers #AttaquesParis"

Lionel Luca, conservative member of the National Assembly, tweeted "Tonight Paris is Beirut. The logic of a count on the path to Lebanonization. We will pay dearly for our cowardice faced with communitarianism."

Philippe de Villiers, conservative French member of European Parliament, tweeted "Terrible drama in Paris, this is where laxity and the mosque-ification of France has led."

We must remember these statements.

Returning to what I wrote in January:

*Any repressive, stigmatizing or blind response to the economic, political and social realities of France in 2015 is not only doomed to failure but, more importantly, will be merely another step toward new killings tomorrow.*

So here we are. Tomorrow turned out to be last night.

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**1 P.M.** Jean-Christophe Cambadélis, the first secretary of Hollande's Socialist Party, announces that "France has just suffered an act of war."

They keep saying, keep repeating, that France is at war. But when they say this, they mean to emphasize that "we are at war." A "we" in which they want to implicate us.

No. Fourteen years of your war have only brought more violence, tragedy and new wars to the four corners of the globe.

If Iraq had not been razed, ISIS would not exist.

The great 19th century French poet Paul Valéry once wrote, "War: a massacre of people who don't know each other for the profit of people who know each other but don't massacre each other."

He was right.

It's always the same people who burn.

And if we want it to stop, then once the shock wears off, we must do everything to stop this headlong rush towards generalized barbarism.

## Your wars, our dead

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It's not too late. There is still time to do something different. Radically different.

We can refuse their injunction: "With us or with the terrorists."

We can refuse the calls for unity with the torturers and warmongers who are day by day building a more barbaric world.

We can refuse their world based on exploitation, robbery, violence, injustice, inequality and misery; instead, we will come together with those with whom we should unite.

Fight for another world, a world that is not only possible, but more necessary than ever.

Keep our heads and don't give in to emotional pressure and shock.

You may accuse me of being a dreamer. But my dreams never killed anyone in contrast to your "pragmatism."

More than ever, we must "resist the irresistible." That's the only way to move ahead.

So...No, Cambadélis. No, Sarkozy. No, Hollande. "We" are not at war.

It is not my war, it is not our war. It is your war.

And once more, they are our dead. Just like Madrid in 2004, London in 2005, Egypt two weeks ago, Beirut this week.

And everywhere else you sow your terror.

Your wars, our dead.

Your war, no more.

*First published at [Resisteralairdutemps.blogspot.fr](http://Resisteralairdutemps.blogspot.fr). Translation by Todd Chretien for [socialistworker.org](http://socialistworker.org).*

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[1] See [socialistworker.org](http://socialistworker.org) [What is responsible for Paris?](#).