

# THE FRENCH STATE OF EMERGENCY

THREE TEXTS ON THE NOVEMBER 13TH ATTACKS IN PARIS



**CrimethInc.**

THE NEW NORMAL



# THE BORDERS WON'T PROTECT YOU BUT THEY MIGHT GET YOU KILLED

In Paris, on November 13, 129 people were killed in coordinated bombings and shootings for which the Islamic State claimed responsibility. Although this is only the latest in a series of such attacks, it has drawn a different sort of attention than the massacres in Suruç and Ankara that killed 135 people. The lives of young activists who support the Kurdish struggle against ISIS—so far the only on-the-ground effort that has blocked the expansion of the Islamic State—are weighed differently than the lives of Western Europeans.

The same goes for the lives of millions who have been killed or forced to flee their homes in Syria. European nationalists lost no time seeking to tie the attacks in Paris to the so-called migrant crisis. British headlines proclaimed “Jihadis sneaked into Europe as fake Syrian refugees,” alleging that a passport found with one of the assailants belonged to a refugee who passed through Greece. These opportunists hope to use the blood still wet on the streets to anoint their project of locking down Fortress Europe.

Ironically, many of the people attempting to enter Europe from the Middle East are fleeing similar attacks orchestrated by ISIS. This is why they have been willing to risk death, crossing border after border to reach an unwelcoming Europe. Cutting off their escape route would trap them in territory controlled by ISIS, arguably increasing the resources of the Islamic State and indisputably exacerbating the frustrations that drive people to cast their lot with Islamic fundamentalism.

Surely this was clear to the people who planned the attacks. It may even have been among their objectives.

There is a chilling symmetry between the agendas of the nationalists of Europe and the fundamentalists of the Islamic State. The nationalists wish to see the world divided into gated communities in which citizenship serves as a sort of caste system; European history shows that in a world thus divided, the ultimate solution to every problem is war. The fundamentalists, for their part, hope to assert Islamic identity as the basis of a global jihad.

In this regard, the only real difference between ISIS and the European nationalists is over whether the criteria for inclusion in the new world order should be citizenship or religion. Both ISIS and the nationalists want to see the conflicts of the 21st century play out between clearly defined peoples governed

by rival powers, not between the rulers and the ruled as a whole. Both want to force the refugees to take a side in the war between Western governments and the Islamic State rather than participating in the sort of grassroots social change once promised by the Arab Spring.

Of course, the tightening of Fortress Europe and the next wave of airstrikes will be promoted as a way to keep Europeans safe from foreign barbarians, not a means of escalating global conflict. But can borders protect against attacks like the ones in Paris? Has the War on Terror made the world a safer place?

Let's go back to September 11, 2001, when al-Qaeda carried out attacks in Manhattan and Washington, DC. In response, then-President George W. Bush committed the United States to military invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq intended to "make the world safe for democracy," rhetoric taken from another President who sought to justify a war to end all wars while demonizing immigrants. One of Bush's justifications was that by occupying these rogue states, the US military could disable the staging areas from which acts of terrorism were coordinated. The Bush administration was proposing to protect US citizens by means of the same indiscriminate violence that had produced so much resentment against them in the first place.

Anarchists didn't buy it. In response to the September 11 attacks and the military operations that followed, we blanketed walls across the United States with posters proclaiming *Your leaders can't protect you, but they can get you killed.*

As we predicted, the occupations of Iraq and Afghanistan only destabilized the Middle East, fostering new generations of embittered Islamic fighters. Just as Al-Qaeda was originally funded and trained by the CIA, today ISIS is armed with the very military equipment sent to Iraq to impose US control of the region. As we wrote in 2006 in *Rolling Thunder #3*, the Bush administration could hardly have been more effective at generating Islamic resistance if that had been its explicit goal:

*Mere world domination is no use to a repressive regime. As soon as there are no barbarians at the gates to point to as the greater of two evils, the subjects start getting restless—witness the decade following the fall of the Berlin Wall, when internal resistance grew and grew in the vacuum left by the Communist menace. War—without end may make people restless, too, but it also keeps them busy reacting to it, if not dying in it, instead of cutting to the root of the matter.*

*Militant Islam, once a backyard startup company, is finally a global threat, poised to replace the Communist Bloc. Western-style capitalism has extended its influence*



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tional tactics would necessarily convey a more radical critique.

Eventually, of course, the Bush administration burned up all of its political capital and the liberal backlash began. Leftist democrats appropriated the critiques we had formulated and the symbols we had invested with meaning, draining them of our values. We had made this easy for them by toning down our politics and focusing on establishing a common front—not realizing that sooner or later, the tide was bound to turn, and we would be better positioned if we continued to assert our own agendas and priorities, even *contra mundum*. Obama took office utilizing a watered-down version of the rhetoric about hope and change that had first arisen from our networks—and once again this paralyzed radicals, who didn't know how to take a stand against the first black President when he seemed to be bringing such a difficult era to a close. In fact, he carried on practically all the policies Bush had initiated.

Despite all our errors, the escalation to war overseas and anti-terror policies at home ultimately did not pay off for the Bush administration or its successors. The hegemony that the patriotic pro-government position seemed to enjoy in 2002 was squandered entirely by 2008, and by 2011 a new anti-capitalist movement with fewer illusions had picked up momentum. During Occupy Wall Street, it was typical to see veterans of the Iraq war facing off against police lines, screaming belligerently at the officers opposite them. By any metric, the stability of the US government has eroded since 2001. Every time the authorities escalate the conflicts they expose us to and the control they hope to subject us to, they are taking a big risk.

Looking at the COP 21 and the ignominious cop-out of all the official organizations that cancelled their protests on orders from the state, we can see that it is becoming more and more difficult to straddle the middle ground between docility and opposition. Even the tamest environmentalists should be able to work out that the choice between being killed by terrorists and being killed by climate change is no choice at all. The more the authorities grasp for total control, the more every attempt to adjust some small aspect of life will inevitably become a confrontation with the forces of control in their entirety. As the stakes get higher, we may find huge numbers of people unexpectedly pushed into our camp.

To our comrades in France, we wish you the courage to stick to your convictions, the confidence to choose your battles on your own terms, and the good fortune to find others alongside whom to fight. *Bon chance.*

*and control so far that external opposition must now come from previously peripheral corners of the world, such as Afghanistan; a few fanatics from that periphery were enough to inaugurate the new era of Terror-us.-Democracy back in 2001, but it will take a lot more fanatics to maintain it, and the current US foreign policy will produce them.*

Intensifying security and border controls will only exacerbate the tensions that propel people into the ranks of ISIS from France and Britain as well as in Iraq and Syria. Clamping down the borders around Europe means clamping down on every aspect of life inside them. Special forces have been deployed to back British police; the New York City police commissioner hopes to increase surveillance of communications devices; former French President Sarkozy wants to force everyone suspected of radicalism to wear an electronic tag. This is not just a question of how refugees are treated, but of what life will be like for all of us in an era of ever-increasing state control.

The attacks in Paris are convenient for those who have been struggling to subdue social unrest. When Hillary Clinton says “We are not at war with Islam, we are at war with violent extremism,” the implication is that everyone who stands up for himself against the clampdown will be treated as a violent extremist. In the United States, the National Guard have been deployed three times over the last two years to suppress protests against police murders—it's not just ISIS killing people. In Europe, where there have been such powerful protests against austerity, 68 anarchists have been arrested on terrorism charges over the past three years—in retaliation for social movement activity, not attacks on civilians.

From Washington, DC and Paris to Raqqa and Mosul, those who hold power have no real solutions for the economic, ecological, and social crises of our time; they are more focused on suppressing the social movements that threaten them. But wherever such movements are crushed, discontent will be channeled into organizations like ISIS that seek to solve their problems through sectarian war rather than collective revolutionary change.

So the clampdown can only make things worse. Tighter border controls won't protect us from attacks like the one in Paris, though they will go on causing migrant deaths. Airstrikes won't stop suicide bombers, but they will produce new generations that nurse a grudge against the West. Government surveillance won't catch every bomb plot, but it will target the social movements that offer an alternative to nationalism and war.

If the proponents of Fortress Europe succeed in suppressing and segregating us, we will surely end up fighting each other: divide and rule. Our only hope

is to establish common cause against our rulers, building bridges across the boundaries of citizenship and religion before the whole world is carved up on the butcher's block of war.

In this context, we can draw inspiration from everyone who has defied the borders over the past few months, demonstrating that these artificial divisions can be overcome. In August, hundreds of people broke across the border from Greece into Macedonia. In September, when trains supposedly bearing migrants through Hungary to the Austrian border arrived instead at an internment camp surrounded by fences and riot police, the migrants locked themselves inside the train, refused food and water, and ultimately broke through the fence, escaping across the fields to the highway. In October, over a hundred people stormed the Eurotunnel between France and London. Just a few weeks ago, thousands of people repeatedly broke through the police cordon separating Slovenia and Austria. In each of these cases, we see people working together to find the vulnerabilities in the walls that partition up humanity. If it weren't for their efforts, we can be sure that European governments would have done even less to support refugees.

By breaking open the borders and supporting others who break through them, we can show those fleeing Syria—and Mexico, and all the other war-zones of the world—that they have comrades on the other side of the fences. This is our best hope to discourage them from giving up on the possibility of joint solidarity and joining groups like ISIS. Likewise, the more we disrupt the security apparatus and the war machine, the less ISIS will be able to appeal to potential converts by pointing to the harm Western governments are inflicting on Muslims around the world. Every time we do this, we seize the initiative to define the essential struggle of our age: not Terrorists vs. Governments, not Islam vs. the West, but all humanity against the structures and ideologies that pit us against each other.

diately. Ironically, our best hope would have been to intensify our organizing, making connections with the other populations that were being targeted and challenging the public discourse of anti-terrorism before it took root. Even today, we are still struggling to build ties of solidarity with immigrants, Muslim communities, and others on the receiving end of state repression who should be our natural allies in taking on the state.

In some cases, we didn't trust the general population enough to imagine that others might also reject these impositions on their freedoms. This was another role the media played, representing the views of "average US citizens"; we should not have taken those representations at face value. As a consequence, when ordinary people stood up against additional gratuitous security measures for air passengers—what some dubbed "the war on moisture"—it caught us flat-footed.

In the long run, the greatest challenge was to keep the new security measures from becoming normalized as an inevitable part of life. You can refuse to go through the X-ray machine, forcing the security personnel to search you in full view of the rest of the people waiting in line, but eventually such sights become so familiar that they produce resignation rather than outrage.

The other mistake we made was to fall back into rearguard, reactionary struggles, letting the authorities and their liberal critics define the terms of the conflicts of our time. In the days leading up to September 11, anarchists across the country were preparing for the protests at the International Monetary Fund meeting scheduled to take place in Washington, DC at the end of September. When the attacks occurred and that meeting was cancelled, some people went forward with what became the first anti-war protests—but as with the COP 21 protests, they were smaller and less fierce than they would have been otherwise. Liberal organizers took advantage of the opportunity to make an argument against confrontational tactics, and for the most part anarchists complied, fearing the police would have a free hand to employ violence.

The anti-capitalist movement, which had assertively set its own agenda and discourse since at least 1999, quickly gave way to a single-issue anti-war movement dominated by authoritarian socialist and liberal groups. This was the reaction on the level of social movements, paralleling the reaction carried out by the authorities. For years, anarchists had to struggle yet again against resurgent doctrinaire pacifism (for isn't the opposite of war—peace?) and to regain the territory ceded in the discourse of opposition. Even the most militant anarchists ended up adopting a role as the risk-tolerant front lines of a movement that was fundamentally reformist, in hopes that more confronta-

were conducted within the first two weeks) had no direct link with the Paris attacks, and they also concerned other forms of criminality (drugs and guns). And finally, they ended up targeting political activists or people considered as such: 24 people were put under house arrest during the COP 21, while many more were subjected to police raids and searches. The justification of these operations is really vague—for example, “having relationships with the violent anarchist movement” or “being willing to go to Paris for the COP 21 demonstrations.” Political demonstrations are forbidden all over the country on the pretext that demonstrators could be targeted by terrorists and that they require too much police mobilization—while all Christmas events and other sports events are allowed. The only COP 21 demonstrations that were tolerated were on the condition of having no slogans or banners. Last Sunday, 5000 people gathered in Paris to defy the state of emergency. At that occasion again, the attacks of the 13th were used to discredit demonstrators who were accused of having soiled the memory of the victims. (Some candles that were on the Place de la République ended up being thrown at the police.)

**2001 was a peak in the anti-globalization movement. It was right after Seattle and in July there was Genoa. How did 9/11 affect the movement in the US in terms of police measures, as well as call for national unity, war, the memory of the victims, and so on?**

Immediately after the attacks of September 11, social movements of all kinds froze up around the United States. Radicals were afraid that the authorities would take advantage of the opportunity to mop them up. Participants in the so-called anti-globalization movement, accustomed to seeing themselves portrayed on television as the primary opponents of the status quo, weren't prepared to be pushed out of the headlines by a bigger, badder enemy. Momentum gave way to demoralization and malaise.

This turned out to be a mistake. At the time, for all their absolutist rhetoric, the authorities were still disorganized and unsure how broadly they could apply the category of terrorism without turning the population against them. The real danger came later, after all those movements had splintered and died down and the authorities could target the former participants individually. The full force of military technology wasn't deployed against demonstrators until the Miami Free Trade Area of the Americas ministerial in November 2003; the eco-terror and entrapment cases now known as the Green Scare didn't begin until the end of 2005; the SSSS classification limiting the flying privileges of certain individuals without recourse didn't become widespread until later than that. All the things we had feared came to pass, but not imme-

# LETTER FROM PARIS

*We received the following report from the group that produced the French version of To Change Everything, Pour Tout Changer. They describe the situation in Paris before and after the attacks of November 13: the intensification of xenophobic discourse, the repression of homeless refugees, the declaration of a “state of emergency” as a way to clamp down on dissent, the preparations for the COP 21 summit at which demonstrations are now banned, and what people are doing to counter all this. It offers an eyewitness account from the front lines of the struggle against the opportunists who hope to use the tragedy of November 13 to advance their agenda of racism and autocracy. With demonstrations forbidden and the COP 21 summit around the corner, what happens in Paris will set an important precedent for whether governments can use the specter of terrorism to suppress efforts to change the disastrous course on which they are steering us.*

## ESCALATING XENOPHOBIA

The attacks that took place in Paris several days ago, tragic as they are, are unfortunately not an isolated event. The capital city of France was simply another target in a string of bombings in Suruç, Ankara, and Beirut; it represents the continuation and expansion of the strategy ISIS initiated in the Middle East.

In France, these attacks exacerbate a political context that was already fraught. Following the attacks of September 11, 2001 and the participation of the far-right party *Front National* in the second round of the 2002 presidential election, the political discourse has taken an increasingly conservative tone. For example, Nicolas Sarkozy, as *Ministre de l'Intérieur* from 2002 to 2007 and President from 2007 to 2012, openly adopted some arguments, topics, and symbols that were previously only used by the *Front National*. These discourses of “identity” and “security” have especially stigmatized Arabic and Muslim communities. In 2010, for example, a law was passed stipulating that it was forbidden to cover your face in public places in France. While not explicitly directed at those wearing a niqab or hijab, it resulted in more controls targeting Muslim women.

During this same time period, law enforcement groups were given new equipment such as Flash-balls (supposedly non-lethal anti-riot weapons) and Taser guns. The national DNA file, used since 1998 to collect the DNA of sexual offenders and abusers, has been extended to every person convicted of

an offense. The “Plan Vigipirate,” a governmental anti-terrorism security plan established in 1995 after several bombing attacks in France, was also updated three times between 2002 and 2006, and more recently in 2014 under current President François Hollande.

## BEFORE THE ATTACKS

For years, refugees have been fleeing their countries to escape death, military conflicts, and constant political instability. Until last summer, the French government and its European counterparts didn't care about the refugee issue—witness the countless tragic deaths of people trying to cross the Mediterranean sea. In Paris, several groups of refugees have been living on the streets in precarious conditions for months.

Nevertheless, due to accelerating waves of immigration, the French government started to change its policy, taking part in the European political initiative “Welcome Refugees.” This was more of a political move than an expression of solidarity. During this period, refugees and migrants, left alone by authorities, began to create their own camps in several locations in Paris. They received some assistance from NGOs, collectives, activists, and others concerned about their difficult situation.

However, refugees faced aggressive state repression, as they still do. They are regularly harassed by police who intimidate, beat, evict, and arrest them or destroy their camps. In June 2015, the fascist group *Génération Identitaire* (Identity Generation) attacked a refugee camp in Austerlitz with stones and bottles. The Austerlitz camps were removed by the authorities in September.

At the end of July, another group of refugees and migrants decided to squat an old and abandoned high school in the 19th district of Paris: the *Lycée Jean Quarré*. Collectives and activists came to offer help; together, they began organizing demonstrations to defend refugees' rights. On the morning of October 23, police evicted the squat. Some of the migrants who occupied it have been relocated to centers or shelters in the suburbs or even further outside Paris. Others remained without a place to sleep, so they camped in front of the *Hotel de Ville*, the City Hall of Paris.

The day after the eviction, demonstrations were planned at the same time in England and in France under the slogan of “Freedom for the three migrants imprisoned in England—Papers and housing for all—Freedom of movement, no borders.” At the end of the demonstration, some refugees were determined to block the streets until the Mayor found a solution to relocate everyone. They occupied a major intersection for approximately 45 minutes. Then, as usual, police showed up in riot gear. After discussing the possible

The narrative of anti-terrorism certainly helped to speed the introduction of military technology into US police forces. Today, the ongoing militarization of the police is justified with a discourse of security, often without reference to terrorism. Even small town police forces often have at least one tank in their arsenal. What begins as an exception continues as the new normal.

We have also seen changes in the ways that police and FBI pursue cases. Rather than simply going after radicals who play an important role in organizing or direct action, they seek easy results by entrapping inexperienced individuals who had no prior intention to break the law—especially peripheral targets who don't know how to protect themselves from agents provocateurs. Muslims have by far gotten the worst of this treatment.

Another sign of the changes in policing is the sheer numbers of officers deployed at demonstrations. When the famous summit of the World Trade Organization took place in Seattle in 1999, only 400 policemen were charged with maintaining control of at least 40,000 protesters—a ratio of 1:100. By contrast, when the G20 met in Pittsburgh in 2009, at least 4000 police augmented by National Guardsmen converged from around the country in response to a couple thousand protesters—a ratio of 2:1 at best. A year later, at the 2010 G20 summit in Toronto, protesters faced off against more than 19,000 security officials with a budget of nearly a billion dollars. As Canada has not witnessed anything on the scale of the September 11 or November 13 attacks, this underscores that these changes are systemic rather than incidental, even if the anti-terror narrative has smoothed the way for them.

Today, the most significant protests in the United States are not occurring at mass mobilizations or as a part of activist campaigns. Rather, they are spontaneous responses to the police violence that kills over a thousand people every year. The same National Guardsmen that were deployed in Iraq have been sent to Ferguson and Baltimore to quell these uprisings. Here we see the security promised by the state in its ultimate form: the police shoot you, then the National Guard occupies your city. The authorities end by doing to their own citizens what the terrorists first did to them, only with the full protection of the law.

**We know this old tune: the exceptional laws against “extremists” (terrorists, pedophiles, hooligans) always end up being applied to the whole population. An example often put forward in France is the use of DNA files. At first, this was promoted as only targeting pedophiles, then all sexual crimes, then criminals... and now, if you even steal a piece of chewing gum, they will take your DNA and keep it for 20 years.**

**We said it earlier: the administrative raids and searches (more than 2500**

the French government deploying the military in conflict zones to pursue economic objectives. The same counter-insurgency strategies that are already in use in Mali, CAR, Chad, Libya, and elsewhere could cause any one of them to metastasize into another Syria, justifying further anti-terror measures within France proper.

It's been said before, but it's worth saying again: the greater the imbalances that are imposed on a society, the more control it takes to preserve them.

**This state of emergency (which allows raids, searches, and house arrests without the permission of a judge) could be extended for six months and added to the constitution (which will make it impossible to contest juridically). Furthermore, some measures could be sustained—house arrests, for instance. Finally, new antiterrorist laws might be voted soon. The government talks about allowing police raids and night searches without even the oversight of a prosecutor, and the creation of a new felony: obstruction of a police search. They discuss gathering and making accessible all types of files (including social security files), extending video surveillance. All rented cars would have GPS, police custody would be extended to eight days in terrorist cases, and so on.**

**All these are temporary measures that will probably become permanent—the full power of the police (and not only in terrorist cases) inscribed in law. We can't help but think about the Patriot Act, the military order, and the creation of the Department of Homeland Security. Here, after two weeks, a few left-wing politicians began to worry about what they call a “permanent state of emergency.” It's the least they could do, after having criticized the Patriot Act for more than ten years. How were all those measures instituted in the US? Was there a general assent? Indifference? Were they contested?**

**What changed in the work of the police? And in the general assent of the population to surveillance that was later known (cf. Snowden) to be more and more total? How is it that once the state of emergency is declared, its suspension is no longer possible, and there is no turning back?**

From this vantage point, it's difficult to distinguish which of the changes in policing that have taken place in the US over the past fifteen years should be attributed to the aftermath of the September 11 attacks, and which would have taken place anyway. I'm inclined to believe that they would have occurred regardless, as it would be impossible to maintain the inequalities in this society without ever-increasing police violence and control. But the discourse of anti-terrorism was instrumental in legitimizing these changes and consolidating support for them.

consequences, the participants shifted to occupying a nearby theater. As they were forcing the doors, the police charged in a surprisingly disorganized and chaotic manner. Some demonstrators continued to confront the police as they were pushed back to a main street.

A few hours after the demo, some refugees and migrants, still without a place to sleep for the night, occupied the *Place de la République*, one of the major squares in downtown Paris. Since that day, they have been evicted several times and their camps and personal belongings have been destroyed and seized by the police. Several gatherings took place to help refugees and defend the square against eviction. The tension was always high during those actions and police forces were numerous. A few weeks ago, at one such gathering, an Afghan refugee explained to us that he and some of his friends have finally received housing for at least six months. Nevertheless, he also told us that newer refugees who had just arrived from Germany would sleep outside in the camp that night. On Friday, November 13, the police evicted the camp again just a few hours before the ISIS attacks took place in the same district.

At the same time, the authorities have been directing increasing surveillance towards anarchists and their spaces. Several anarchists have recently been arrested in the Paris area, demonstrating the European common political agenda of increasing repression against anarchists—as we have seen recently, on a larger scale, in Greece, Spain, and even Czech Republic. Members of La Discordia, a new anarchist library in the 19th district of Paris that opened in spring 2015, published an article in October showing that the police were monitoring and recording their activities. A device was found hidden in a room at the school facing the library, as its director had agreed to assist the police in their surveillance.

Meanwhile, the COP 21 was coming up. From November 28 to December 12, politicians from around the world will gather in Paris to pretend to discuss environmental issues; several demonstrations and events were planned by worldwide organizations to oppose this international masquerade. An appeal to participate to the anti-COP 21 in Paris has appeared in several languages and Paris is expecting an international mobilization.

The French government took steps to control and contain popular opposition even before the November 13 attacks. First, they decided to close the borders: contrary to ordinary Schengen practice, France will enforce border controls and refuse some people entry. The government has also refused visas to foreign activists and members of organizations. Furthermore, the police administration sent a message to all their employees at a national level asking them not to take vacations during the COP 21 in case they need to mobilize

everyone against activists and “black blocks” (French media and politicians still misunderstand black blocs to be a distinct organization, not a reproducible tactic). In other words, the authorities fear that this international meeting will occasion fierce resistance.

## AFTER THE ATTACKS

As soon as the attacks took place, and especially when people were taken hostage at the Bataclan, a major venue, Paris became an “urban warfare” zone: police forces were on alert everywhere along with special forces and tactical groups, while soldiers, emergency personnel, and firemen blocked all the streets around the sites of the attacks. Everyone in these areas was searched, had their IDs checked, and told to leave the streets and go home. Those who were at bars were forced to stay inside for hours before police ordered them to leave, some with their hands on their heads. In the moment, the violence of the images and events let us speechless, confused, and scared—not only about the attacks but even more so about what would come next.

Shortly afterwards, President François Hollande made an official statement on television saying that France was now at war against the terrorists, against ISIS. Hollande used the same rhetoric and vocabulary George W. Bush did in his speech after September 11, 2001. Hollande also explained that France was now increasing its emergency alert level to just below the ultimate level of war within the French territory. In the name of the “state of emergency” and in order to reinforce and maintain national “security,” Hollande asked to deploy about 10,000 soldiers to help police officers carry out surveillance and control.

The “state of emergency” is a peculiar law passed on April 3, 1955 that provides civil authorities of a specific geographical area with exceptional police powers to regulate people’s movement and residence, close public places, and requisition weapons. It enables the authorities to take all the decisions they want and to drastically reduce liberties and freedom. This law was created and used primarily during the war against Algeria. Between 1955 and 1961, the “state of emergency” was imposed several times on the Franco-Algerian territory. Later, it was used in New Caledonia in 1984-1985. Finally, and for the first time in the French metropolis, the state of emergency was imposed in 2005 after the uprisings that took place in our suburbs.

Once applied, this state of emergency can take several forms. The President and prefects can use it to impose curfews on their population. Car traffic can be forbidden in certain districts or zones at specific hours. Prefects can determine where people are permitted to go, establishing restricted areas and safety

In the United States, despite all the efforts to preserve the amnesia upon which this nation is founded, it was not long before it came out that the attacks of September 11 were the result of the previous round of counter-insurgency, during which the CIA funded the same mujahideen that became enemy number one. Whether you call it counter-insurgency or anti-terrorism, relentlessly interfering with a target population tends to produce iatrogenic effects—though this is not necessarily a disadvantage for those in the security business. In 2001, even as critics charged that the War on Terror would only produce more terrorists, no one could imagine that fourteen years later a vast swath of land previously governed by essentially secular Ba’athist regimes with no ties to al-Qaeda would be controlled by Islamic fundamentalists determined to bring about the Apocalypse.

Opponents of this protection racket would do well to unearth the backstory of the attacks, seeking the sources of the social tensions that produced them. Not for the sake of changing state policy (a hopeless endeavor) nor simply to discredit it (as we are not simply in a PR contest), but rather to figure out who might make good allies in the struggle against the state, if only there were an option other than complete submission or fundamentalist jihad.

Think of the refugees fleeing ISIS right now, who le Pen wants to trap in Syria. (Imagine French politicians sending refugees back to Hitler in the 1930s!) Caught between fundamentalists to the East and nationalists to the West, they have reason to find common cause with anyone who opposes both sides of this dichotomy. Here, once more, the politicians and their ostensible opponents concur that the refugees should be forced to choose between them rather than forming a third side against them both.

And Syria is only the most obvious case among many. In addition to the examples you cite, a state of emergency was also declared in 1984 in French territory in New Caledonia, where Louise Michel was exiled after the Paris Commune. That forgotten theater of contemporary colonialism completes the triangle with Algeria (the former colony) and the banlieues (the internal colony). If you pan back from these three examples of ongoing French economic and military intervention, it is not so hard to understand why some people might be angry enough to join ISIS.

Like the United States, France is not a discrete people occupying a specific body of land, but a worldwide colonial project drawing in resources at great human expense. French corporations backed by French troops are still extracting resources in nations like Mali and the Central African Republic; you can’t compare the parties responsible for the November 13 attacks in Paris and the November 20 attacks in Bamako, but both events are the result of

that the security of the state thrives in these conditions. This is another sense in which the ambitions of the United States and France coincide with the goals of al-Qaeda and the Islamic State. The control that all of these parties seek can be expressed by killing, but it can also be expressed by making us live in a certain way (and no other). The underdogs are more likely to rely on butchery, while the dominant powers can present themselves as the guardians of life—in the same way that a weak army will destroy resources it knows it cannot hold, while a powerful army will preserve them intact for its own use. In both cases, our lives are reduced to playing pieces in conflicts that have nothing to do with our safety.

Pundits will celebrate the victims as martyrs who were killed for being ordinary: in the media narrative, they become *the martyrs of daily life*. But the authorities intend to invade daily life, too, no less than the attackers did—an invasion paralleling the interventions they propose to carry out overseas. And all this invasive action, from bombings in Syria to racist raids and regulations in Paris, will only generate more resentment, leaving more frustrated young people ready to martyr themselves and others for revenge.

To summarize this a single phrase: *state security endangers*.

**Let's go back to what the rhetoric of war on terrorism allows. After the Parisian dandy, on that same TV show on November 14, a right-wing Franco-Israeli lawyer offered "a message of optimism": "France has defeated many enemies within the last 1500 years. That's why we must be optimistic, and galvanize ourselves... We must choose in which state we are, at war, then we must act like it. It was done before in the 1960s and '70's, in England with the IRA, the European Court for Human rights had validated it. A direct and imminent threat to national security was needed, and we are in such a situation right now... All the people on file as dangerous Islamists must be put in retention centers just like De Gaulle did with the FLN [Algerian Liberation Front] and OAS [Secret Armed Organization, a right-wing underground movement that fought in Algeria and France against the independence of Algeria]. If we are at war, we act as if we actually are, or else we are just not at war."**

**He is probably right on to speak of the struggle against FLN or IRA. The tradition of antiterrorism is identical with the lineage of counter-insurgency. The last time the state of emergency was declared in France was during the 2005 banlieues riots. And before that, it was during the Algerian war. Today, antiterrorism doesn't seem to be directed against a whole territory—it is more selective—nor against a precise enemy; rather, it is directed against the general population.**

zones and even forbidding someone from going to or living in a specific zone if that person is considered a threat. Indeed, every person considered "dangerous" can be forced to stay at home without any option of going out, or only allowed to go out within extremely precise conditions such as being monitored by an electronic bracelet. Movie theaters, venues, or any other place where people gather like bars and restaurants can be forced to close. Police officers can stop and check you without a specific reason—something they already do anyway—and any opposition can be considered a threat. Demonstrations, marches, and gatherings can be forbidden; searches and house raids can be made day and night without warrants; every single person who contests this situation can be punished with financial charges or prison according to stipulations built into the "state of emergency" legislation.

During the three days of national mourning imposed by François Hollande, the government made their first decisions responding to the attacks. First, they decided to increase their military strikes on ISIS positions in Syria; they are trying now to form a coalition with the US, Great Britain, Germany, and Russia to wage a total war against "terrorism." Then our *Assemblée Nationale*, the official building where our deputies discuss and make laws, voted almost unanimously (551 pros vs. 6 cons) to extend the "state of emergency." Now it will last three months, until February 26, 2016. Of course, it could be extended again after that.

Moreover, the government decided to keep the COP 21 in Paris—at least its official meeting and discussions—but forbade the demonstrations and activities organized by anti-COP activists. This can be seen as an attempt to muzzle the people taking part in the social movement to counter these meaningless meetings and political negotiations. It is also interesting to note, considering the three-month extension of the state of emergency, that in 2016, the construction of the new airport at *Notre Dame des Landes* is scheduled to resume—the airport that has thus far been blocked by the occupation known internationally as la ZAD. The authorities might try to control the opponents of the airport under this supposedly "exceptional" law.

During the past few days, the authorities have made some other major decisions: starting now, our police officers are allowed to keep their weapons with them even after working hours in the name of national safety. The government has also asserted a closer surveillance of online activity. In addition, President François Hollande is trying to add new elements to the law governing the state of emergency, including policies such as stripping French citizenship from people recognized as a threat to national security, or closing mosques preaching a conservative interpretation of Islam.

## DARK DAYS, UNWRITTEN FUTURES

In the aftermath of the Paris' attacks, we are sure to face even darker days than before between the increasing power of the government, the crushing of our liberties, and intensifying xenophobic and racist discourses among politicians and part of the population. Indeed, only a few hours had passed after the attacks before the first racist attacks took place in several towns around France. For example, on Saturday, November 14 in Pontivy, Brittany, while taking part in a demonstration, members of "Adsav," a fascist group defending Breton identity, beat an Arabic man. The weekend following the attacks in Paris, mosques were tagged with red Christian crosses and racist sentences; some Halal butcheries have also been targeted. In Marseilles, a Jewish professor and a woman wearing a headscarf were assaulted.

The attacks also reinforced French nationalism. The "Marseillaise," the French national anthem, has been sung during many gatherings since the attacks; the national flag has been ubiquitous, even on social media profile pictures. All this nationalist momentum produced a spike in applications to join the French military, as some recruiters explained to journalists. All these events offer a great opportunity for the *Front National* to increase its influence once more across the French political spectrum, and to gain more electors during the municipal elections in December.

It is alarming how readily the majority of the French population accepts the policies of the "state of emergency" and the restriction of their movement and liberties. For anarchists and activists, these emergency measures raise several questions: What will happen if we violate the state of emergency by demonstrating? How will the police forces react? Will the government end up using this "exceptional law" to repress anarchists and other radical activists and carry out mass arrests? One thing is certain: since the attacks of the past January in Paris, most of the police forces haven't been able to take vacations due to a lack of personnel. Some high-ranking members of the police explain that their troops are exhausted and on edge, which means that the tension during future actions including the COP 21 protests will be extremely high.

Nevertheless, it is important to remember that nothing is ever written in advance. As individuals, we have the capacity to make choices that could change the current inertia of the world.

On Sunday, November 22, several hundred people gathered in the *Place de la Bastille* to express solidarity with refugees and to contest the "state of emergency" declared by the government, despite the gathering having been prohibited following the attacks. When we arrived, police forces were present

doesn't look how one would imagine of a state of siege, with curfews, restrictions, and the like. On the contrary, it takes the form of a call to go out for drinks and to consume. ("Consume, it's the festive season, spend money, live!" declared Valls). The day after the attacks, in the "provinces" (all cities that aren't Paris), and even a week later in Paris, in the streets of the city centers, you couldn't "feel" the state of emergency, or at least the atmosphere that is supposed to go with it.

**The state of emergency actually seems to work in a really selective manner: this demonstration is banned, that neighborhood is under curfew, this person is put under house arrest or in jail, etc. Moreover, the state of emergency allows the police (freed from certain judicial constraints) to accelerate certain investigations: arrests in the organized crime milieus, in drug dealing cases, raids at activists' houses. Finally, these additional powers given to the police set loose a certain police violence, like we saw at a demonstration against the state of emergency last week in Paris. And that, even in operations that have nothing to do with the state of emergency.**

**Immediately after 9/11, Bush arrogated himself full powers. That took place within the very first days, that is, even before the Patriot Act was voted through. What did that change, concretely? In terms of "atmosphere," police operations, or the general behaviors of the police?**

Here is what you can expect in France, based on what we experienced in the United States after September 11. In the wake of the attacks, the authorities will stage *spectacles of preparedness*, clumsily showing off their security apparatus. At the same time, they will urge you to show your courage in the face of terror—by going out shopping. (For a clue to what caused this mess, take note that the best thing you can do to support the war effort is to carry on with what you were already doing.) The police, too, will intensify what they were already doing—all the profiling, surveillance, and repression directed at the general population—while partisans of civil liberties focus on symbolic outrages against "the innocent."

The first changes will be cosmetic: checkpoints on the train, security alerts on the news, highly publicized investigations of suspected terrorists. It will take months or years for the long-term effects to set in. By that time, there will be a phalanx of armored riot police at every demonstration, a host of new state organizations prying into every aspect of your life, and an array of new laws to deploy against anyone who is concerned about these things.

They will justify all this by saying that state security is in danger. In fact, if we understand state security as a methodology for maintaining control, we see

part of the population entailed the risk that the army would give way to “the people in arms.” From the Paris Commune to the global wave of uprisings starting in 1917, this repeatedly threatened the institutions of power.

In the post-industrial era, new technologies have rendered the majority of the population redundant on the factory floor and the battlefield proper. But contrary to the utopian promises of 19th century social reformers, this hasn't freed us of the need to work or the dangers of warfare; rather, it renders everything factory, everything battlefield. Thanks to capitalist globalization, all that was previously separated now interpermeates: populations, economies, conflicts. Today's world is not so much divided into rival nations as into concentrically circled gated communities; the increasingly precarious and volatile job market in the United States and France mirrors more dramatic instability in North Africa and the Middle East, which can no longer be quarantined outside the gates.

For a population to be militarized in this context, it is not a question of pressing a gun into every pair of palms and setting a helmet on every head. Rather, it is a matter of inducing the population to identify with a certain kind of order, the imposition of which takes place within the national borders as much as outside them. From the speech that Bush made on September 11, it was already clear that the same National Guardsmen that were to be sent to Iraq would sooner or later be deployed in the United States as well. Bush's task, on that day, was not to persuade his countrymen to enlist to fight overseas so much as it was to maximize the number of people who would acquiesce to the militarization of their daily lives.

This declaration of war served to obscure the possibility of *any other war*, any other stakes for which we might fight outside the framework of defending the state against its rivals. You could be for the state or against it, to paraphrase Bush, but it was the only struggle conceivable. Thus the authorities in the United States and France and their symmetrical adversaries in al-Qaeda and ISIS hope to assert their conflict as the only one in history, sidelining “the people in arms”—the demonstrators who shut down the Seattle WTO summit in 1999, the crowds who occupied Tahrir Square and Taksim Square, the protesters who oppose the COP 21.

**In the speech that I just quoted, the Prime Minister précises that “we will strike in France,” and that “exceptional measures” will be taken. On the very day of the attacks, President Holland declared the state of emergency. That means an imbalance within the power structures (a transfer of power from the judicial to the executive, or rather, the administrative). However, this state of emergency, declared everywhere in the country,**

but were standing back from the increasing group of activists. We took this opportunity and started walking in the middle of the road, determined to demonstrate no matter what. Police forces ran after us, faced us in a line, and tried to turn us away from our principal objective of taking a major boulevard to reach *Place de la République*. Their first attempt failed, as some activists got around the police line and kept walking on the boulevard, chanting “Solidarity with all refugees!” There followed a chase between police and activists. At one time, they succeeded splitting us in two groups, and clashes broke out as people tried to break through their lines of separation. They answered with tear gas and truncheon blows. Nevertheless, their attacks didn't stop us. In the end, we succeeded in breaking their lines, and once again we were demonstrating together, heading to our objective. Finally, after approximately 30 minutes marked by clashes with the police, we arrived at the *Place de la République*, which was full of people who had come on that Sunday afternoon to lay flowers and pay homage to the victims of the attacks.

The success of this spontaneous demonstration in defying the “state of emergency” shows that we can still act on our own strength, refusing to surrender to the general state of fear and to the new laws imposed in the name of national security. More than ever, we must help and take care of each other, we must keep organizing, we must stay focused and continue defying authority. This is what we should keep in mind as the COP 21 will start in few days in Paris. The struggle continues.



CONFRONTING THE “STATE OF EMERGENCY” ON NOVEMBER 22.

# THE FRENCH 9/11

*A dialogue with members of the French news source Lundimatin comparing the aftermath of September 11, 2001 with the situation in France today.*

Bonjour, France, and welcome to team War on Terror! For fourteen years, you've looked askance at us across the Atlantic, raising your eyebrows at US foreign policy. Now you get to have your own state of emergency, your own far-right party in power, your own warrantless wiretapping and waterboarding scandals and Department of Homeland Security. Where will you put your Guantanamo Bay? (Finally, French fries and Freedom fries will mean the same thing!) For maximum effect, consider starting a new war that has nothing to do with the cause of the attacks, so you can destabilize another region and draw additional populations into the conflict.

We Americans know all about this stuff. For decades now, the US has been the policeman of the world, while social democratic France has been its comfortable bourgeoisie. But in the 21st century, everyone has to take part in policing. To preserve France, the liberal alternative to the US, it is now necessary to copy the US model of anti-terrorism. Permit us to show you the ropes.

**Lundimatin: The day after the Paris attacks, Prime Minister Manuel Valls declared, "What I want to say to the French people is that we're at war." He would repeat the word "war" nine times within a nine-minute speech.**

*Because we are at war, we're taking exceptional measures. We will strike in France but also in Syria and Iraq and we will respond on the same level as those attacks with the determination and will to destroy.*

**Within a few days, France was bombing Syria. This war rhetoric is coming back again and again. However, and this is even more palpable two weeks later, this war (outside and inside the country) doesn't imply a general mobilization of the population. Or, on a minor level (no enlistment campaign, no war efforts): be watchful, tell on your neighbors, let us handle this, endorse our security measures. "Be cowardly," to sum it up. Of course, there's a slight rise in enlistment in the army, but in a general way, the "Bataclan Generation" is left powerless.**

**On a TV show, the day after the attacks, a dandy Parisian writer speaks: "It is no longer possible to be indifferent. I have absolutely no solutions.**

**So we have some sort of drive for violence that grows within oneself... Just like the Marquise de de Mertueil puts it: 'So it will be war.' So here it is, it is the war of our generation. I spoke about 9/11 but the second time is in my town. And I have no idea of what could be a solution. I feel powerless..."**

**Of course, it reminds us of Bush's speech on 9/11: "We're united to win the war against terrorism." What did it mean for American citizens then to engage in a war against terrorism?**

September 11, 2001 was the last great televised event of the twentieth century, the apogee of a half century of spectatorship. Everyone from staunch Republicans to inveterate anarchists huddled in front of the television awaiting updates with a sort of passive urgency. Every conversation in every city, state, and nation focused on New York. The fallen towers were the epicenter of reality, and the zones radiating outward from them were less and less real.

Much of the US population felt more stunned than bellicose. Yet certain politicians had prepared a flood of new legislation and military interventions in advance for precisely such an opportunity. This was the context in which Bush made his famous open-ended declaration of war.

Both the media coverage and Bush's declaration must be understood as complementary military operations on the field of public attention, preparing the ground for what came next. It was not just a question of spreading fear and vengefulness; it also caused the average viewer to feel insignificant, sidelined by the spectacle of world events. As the World Trade Center attacks monopolized public discourse, everything else receded from view: the chain of events leading up to the attacks, the lives of the Afghans and Iraqis threatened by reprisals, and the agency of the spectators.

This was the same intersection of war rhetoric from above and feelings of powerlessness from below that you are describing in France today. Participating in the War on Terror looks a lot different than what our grandparents did in the Second World War.

To understand this, we have to go back a bit and look at the changes that are taking place in society at large. The industrial era was characterized by the total mobilization of the populace in the processes of mass production and mass destruction. From the *Levée en masse* through the First World War, massive segments of the population were mustered into the military machine. Of course, this *total mobilization* was risky for the people at the helm: just as an economy that depended on the industrial proletariat could be paralyzed by the general strike, a form of warfare that involved arming a considerable