

# افغانستان آزاد – آزاد افغانستان

AA-AA

چو کشور نیاشد تن من مباد بدین بوم ویر زنده یک تن مباد  
همه سر به سر تن به کشتن دهیم از آن به که کشور به دشمن دهیم

[www.afgazad.com](http://www.afgazad.com)

[afgazad@gmail.com](mailto:afgazad@gmail.com)

European Languages

زبان های اروپایی

<http://original.antiwar.com/justin/2015/01/13/the-sick-man-of-europe/print/>

## The Sick Man of Europe

By Justin Raimondo

January 13, 2015

The Paris terrorist attacks are an alarming symptom of sickness: a matrix of cultural, economic, and political diseases that, taken together, spell Europe's doom. Can we diagnose the illness, and, perhaps, prescribe a cure?

An examination of the European body politic is the first order of business: how healthy is this creature? For diseases don't break out in a vacuum: they erupt because the organism's immune system is somehow compromised. The air is filled with pathogens galore, but most have no effect because they are fought off by the body's natural defenses. Yet here the germs have overwhelmed these, and the result is that the body is at war with itself. A civil war, in other words, in which society turns on itself and tears itself apart.

The symptoms: in Germany, the "Patriotic Campaign to Stop the Islamization of Europe" (PEGIDA) has been holding mass rallies demanding the deportation of the tens of thousands of mostly Turkish immigrants who currently reside there. This movement, started last year by a former drug dealer with a long criminal history, has taken off since the Paris attacks: 40,000 rallied in Dresden with banners proclaiming "Pegida = Charlie." Known fascists have taken advantage of this new populist movement, with the neo-Nazi National Democratic Party rapidly recruiting on the fringes. This phenomenon is so alarming that German Chancellor Angela Merkel has made a personal appeal against Pegida, and state governments throughout the country have sponsored demonstrations against the group.

France exhibits symptoms even more alarming: the National Front (FN), which has made huge gains since its founding by exploiting anti-Muslim and anti-immigrant sentiment, is arguably rising to the status of the single biggest party in the fractured world of French politics. They came in first in the EU elections and control local councils and mayoralties throughout the country.

FN leader Marine Le Pen rushed to exploit the Paris massacre by declaring "The time for denial and hypocrisy has passed!" What is being denied? She wasn't very clear about that, except to reference "fundamental Islam." Her father, Jean-Marie, the party's founder – who tweeted "Keep calm and vote Le Pen" even as the Paris attack was unfolding – has always been clearer about the FN's goals: mass deportations, the destruction of mosques – in short, ethnic cleansing. He gleefully declared "We've been predicting this for a long time."

And while his daughter was careful to clean up her rhetoric, the old fascist, for his part, declared "I'm sorry, but I'm not Charlie," referring to the slogan under which a million and a half marched in Paris in the wake of the attack on the offices of *Charlie Hebdo*, in which twelve were killed. The magazine had frequently attacked him and his party, even starting a petition calling for banning the National Front.

Yet, as Phillip Gourevitch writes in the *New Yorker*:

*"Although Le Pen and the National Front were frequent targets of Charlie Hebdo's savage mockery, the two were at least as frequently aligned against shared political enemies. As the French say, 'the extremes touch,' and when it came to ridiculing the mainstream political parties – the center-left Socialists of President François Hollande and the center-right Gaullists of his predecessor, Nicolas Sarkozy – it was often difficult to distinguish the grotesque caricatures you might find in Charlie Hebdo from those in National Front rhetoric. So, too, when it came to the xenophobia and racism of their anti-immigration polemics, and their baiting of Islamophobic and anti-Semitic sentiment."*

This indictment is backed up by the furious reminiscence of Olivier Cyran, employed by *Charlie Hebdo* for a decade. In 2013 he unleashed a polemic in the form of a letter to his former comrades, and to read it is to weep – and wonder how it is possible to valorize this kind of opportunistic cuddling up to the worst elements in French society. Cyran writes:

*"Scarcely had I walked out, wearied by the dictatorial behaviour and corrupt promotion practices of the employer, than the Twin Towers fell and Caroline Fourest arrived in your editorial team. This double catastrophe set off a process of ideological reformatting which would drive off your former readers and attract new ones – a cleaner readership, more interested in a light-hearted version of the 'war on terror' than the soft anarchy of [cartoonist] Gédé."*

*"Little by little, the wholesale denunciation of 'beards,' veiled women and their imaginary accomplices became a central axis of your journalistic and satirical production. 'Investigations' began to appear which accepted the wildest rumors as fact, like the so-called infiltration of the League of Human Rights (LDH) or European Social Forum (FSE) by a horde of bloodthirsty Salafists. The new impulse underway required the magazine to renounce the unruly attitude"*

which had been its backbone up to then, and to form alliances with the most corrupt figures of the intellectual jet-set, such as Bernard-Henri Lévy or Antoine Sfeir, cosignatories in Charlie Hebdo of a grotesque 'Manifesto of the Twelve against the New Islamic Totalitarianism.' Whoever could not see themselves in a worldview which opposed the civilized (Europeans) to obscurantists (Muslims) saw themselves quickly slapped with the label of 'useful idiots' or 'Islamо-leftists.'"

Cyran cites chapter and verse of *Charlie Hebdo*'s neoconservative bigotry, expressed in pornographic attacks on Arabs and Muslims per se, and his piece makes for some revealing reading. It surely puts to rest efforts to sanitize the very real ugliness that is now being passed off as "satire" and that came to dominate the pages of *Charlie Hebdo*.

But so what? Don't the citizens of a free society have the right to their ugliness?

Surely they do, and yet France is neither a free society nor is it a healthy one. There are laws specifically directed at Muslims, such as those that forbid women to cover their hair in the traditional manner, in public, and these are enforced. There are "hate speech" laws that forbid all sorts of expression, although *Charlie Hebdo* managed to avoid them – while others, mostly Muslims (but also including Jean-Marie Le Pen) have been prosecuted to the full extent of the law.

The terrorists are keen to take advantage of this volatile context. Like the Weathermen of the 1960s in the US, who sought to "heighten the contradictions" and polarize American society in the name of their "revolution," al-Qaeda and its spawn, ISIS, seek to attack what they consider symbols of Muslim oppression, and *Charlie Hebdo* fit the bill: a publication that remorselessly attacked their religion – and their very existence in French society – in the crudest way possible. The Weathermen hoped their terroristic campaign would set off a wave of repression, which would, in turn, provoke an armed uprising. The Islamist terrorists, with rather more expectation of success, hope for the same: a backlash that is occurring even as I write – and a civil war pitting the ten percent of French citizens who are Muslims against the rest.

The neocons wanted a war on the Muslim world, a transformative struggle that would shake the Middle East and "drain the swamp" – and now they have it. But that war, as the Weathermen once put it, has come home.

Matt Welch, former "war-blogger" – "I for one," he once wrote, "advocate a Global War to abolish terrorism" – and now editor of *Reason* magazine, attacks Ron Paul for arguing that the attacks are simply "blowback," the consequence of a foreign policy that has seen the West invading country after country – all of them coincidentally Muslim. And yet all one has to do is listen to Amedy Coulibaly's recorded rant as he murdered those shoppers in cold blood to understand that Paul is right.

As the attack in a kosher supermarket unfolded, French radio station RTL called Coulibaly, who answered and then hung up – but the phone was still on the hook. In what is surely one of the more ghoulish scenes in memory, he actually tried to justify his actions to his victims – and if we are looking for the sources of this sickness, perhaps we should take his words seriously:

*"I was born in France. If they didn't attack other countries, I wouldn't be here," [he said].*

*"In RTL's recording, the man purported to be Coulibaly tells the hostages that they are accountable for France's actions against Muslim militants abroad, in part because the hostages pay taxes and elect the government's leaders. 'But I am telling you, it's almost over. Militants are going to come. There are going to be more and more. They (France) need to stop. They need to stop attacking ISIS. They need to stop asking our women to remove the hijab ...' You pay taxes, so that means you agree...' with France's actions in Mali and the Middle East, the apparent gunman says in the recording.*

*"'But we have to pay,' another voice says.*

*"The response from the apparent gunman appeared incredulous: 'What? We don't have to. I don't pay my taxes!'*

*"'When I pay my taxes, it's for the highways, schools,' an apparent hostage says. 'We pay our taxes but we don't harm anybody,' a person also says.*

*"The man purported to be Coulibaly says: 'Everyone could get together. If they could get together for Charlie Hebdo ... they could do the same thing for us and get together for us.'"*

Horrible, pathetic, and heartbreaking all at once: "They could do the same thing for us and get together for us."

Well, not quite, not yet, perhaps not ever.

Why did the Paris massacre take place? For the reason most massacres take place – war. Not only the war France and its Western allies have waged on the Muslim world since September 11, 2001, but also the cultural civil war raging within France and throughout Europe – in which *Charlie Hebdo* was a combatant.

So our diagnosis is confirmed: what is destroying Europe is a cultural sickness that eats away at the body politic, even among the most "enlightened," and makes civil society – or just plain civility – impossible. Politically, this raging illness mandates the rise of the National Front, Pegida, the Hungarian Jobbik, the Swedish "Democrats," and the Geert Wilders gang in the Netherlands, as well as their Islamist mirror images.

So what is the cure? Is there one?

I don't know if anything can soften let alone eliminate the particularism that has always been a feature of France's cultural ethos: after all, this is a society that prides itself on its separateness even to the extent of policing the language so as to preserve its "purity." And it is far too late to undo the consequences of French imperialism, which annexed Algeria into the Republic, and yet disdained to integrate the inhabitants into French society. The stubborn French statism, which ensures a society of status, resists all attempts to free up the economy and give the people at the bottom – France's Arab underclass – a chance to lift themselves up.

The rest of Europe is in the same sinking ship, weighed down by history and the hardened shell of the EU's bureaucratic socialism.

The only way out is a libertarian upsurge on a continental scale: the abolition of imperialism, the destruction of the European welfare states, the deconstruction of the European Union, and the freeing up of the continental economy. An unlikely scenario, as I pointed out here – but then again it is necessary to say what is, and to face the future squarely, without illusions.

For Americans, the only solution is to stay as far away from the contagion as possible: this means putting an end to our seemingly endless "war on terrorism," and abandoning the neoconservative project of "reforming" the Middle East at gunpoint. Our militarists will denounce this as a "retreat," but then again would they characterize politely backing away from an Ebola carrier as "appeasement"? I think not.