

France's Police State: The Gravediggers of the French Republic

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"It is the terrorism that threatens our freedom today. It is not the state of emergency. I repeat: the state of emergency does not mean the abandonment of the rule of law. We are fighting terrorism, and we will defeat it, with the arms of the Republic, of democracy, with the strength of our values, our principles and our republican principles of law." So said the smooth-talking French Interior Minister Bernard Cazeneuve (image left) on December 2, 2015 before announcing the results of the "exceptional measures" permitted by the state of emergency, taking care not to specify, for the some 10% of searches that would have led to seizures, detainment and/or legal actions, how many of them were actually related to terrorism.

It was revealed since that almost all seizures and indictments concerned offenses and crimes very far from planning acts of terror and/or "radical Islam" – such as drug trafficking, banditry, etc., and to date, despite the thousands of wrecked homes, the places of worship desecrated and above all the countless innocent lives left traumatized or even ruined, no "terrorist" has been arrested, no "cell" has been dismantled. A resounding failure in all, at least if one considers that this is indeed, first and foremost, about fight against terrorism, which all the same requires a strong dose of credulity.

In 1990, in his novel *Le Bouclage (The Sealing Off)*, Vladimir Volkoff [\[1\]](#) had already described such methods: impose on a whole "sensitive" neighbourhood a state of siege, intern and file its people and search their homes from top to bottom, on the pretext of an imminent terrorist attack, which will be "heroically" foiled by the elimination of a criminal organization that was under longstanding close surveillance, but which the location and neutralization of will retroactively constitute the official pretext for the entire operation. It will allow the imprisonment of some offenders previously elusive through legal channels, and above all to summon the entire population to the due veneration towards the Nation, Order and Security. A dastardly plot of which the author, a visceral anticommunist and Islamophobe and flatterer of American imperialism, seemingly a supporter of torture, openly monarchist, was a proselyte, but our current government has clearly seen the wider picture and extended its Gestapo measures to the whole territory, in addition to having established them for an absolutely senseless term – and one that is indefinitely renewable.

The fight against the terrorism of Daesh, which our country [France] [openly allied itself to in Syria](#) and before that in Libya, is clearly a pretext to restrict the freedoms and force terror on the population, to silence any "dissident" voices, any political or social protest.

And of course, Muslims and descendants of immigrants as a whole are a primary target, either to destroy what remains of their "foreign" culture or to woo voters of the far-right

National Front. Especially as in order to create a “Sacred Union”, a common enemy can act as a political project, and the more spectacular the acts and measures, the harder it will be for the masses to reflect and consider.

All these measures are obviously another attempt of the most discredited government in the history of the French Republic to improve its image, legitimately and irreparably tarnished, but through which we can perceive – and this is the only thing that can reassure us – the convulsive spasms of an agony foreseen to be devastating.



“The Al Nosra Front is doing a good job in Syria.” (Laurent Fabius, French Foreign Minister)

“...It’s doing a good job in France too!” (Al-Baghdadi)

The supposed fight against terrorism is clearly a terrible deception, eminently absurd moreover, both in terms of its postulates and principles – who can believe that all these measures can discourage or hinder in the slightest the action of seasoned terrorists, determined to die at gunpoint – and in terms of its results. But even if it had any efficacy and contributed occasionally to protect the lives of citizens (in a purely quantitative sense, since it is difficult to conceive of a healthy life after the unprecedented violence of a police search, or while living in the fear of it, especially since it targets innocent Muslim families, political and trade union activists, etc. ; let us remind that Winston Churchill said that *“Democracy means that if the doorbell rings in the early hours, it is likely to be the milkman...”*), it would be the duty of any person attached to republican values to denounce its arbitrariness and fight it.

Terrible though it may be, the prospect of a terrorist attack remains that of a criminal act perpetrated by individuals, madmen, fanatics, who destroy human lives in an atrocious way, but it constitutes a violence that retains the status of *accident* within a society – as opposed to a *systemic* or *structural* deterioration. Terror acts are not committed by State officials, by law enforcement, and as such are comparable to acts of banditry, with their share of innocent victims, albeit collateral, which does not fundamentally change things. Terrorism and banditry are committed by individuals who place themselves beyond the law and may threaten the life of any citizen, but in no way threaten society as a whole or in its foundations: while criminals flout, defy and trample it, the law stands still for all other citizens and the whole of society. But when the State apparatus, which, according to the famous definition of Max Weber, holds the [“monopoly on legitimate violence”](#), itself abolishes the rule of law and is guilty of such abuses of persons, regardless of the reason or rather the pretext, giving to arbitrary and illegitimate violence the force of law, it is the very foundations of democratic society that are undermined. The State, which has been constituted so as to ensure the freedom, the safety and the welfare of citizens (and in the

Western philosophical tradition, freedom is its supreme goal), becomes the very body that tramples the basic rights of all citizens, without any possible resistance, without any resort or appeal, which should be considered far more serious, far more dangerous than November 13th, January 7th or even September 11th. Despite what Mr Cazeneuve says, while terrorism may actually threaten our lives, only the State can be a real threat to our freedoms.

The maxim that guides the French government's action, and which is seemingly, tacitly or explicitly, approved by all of the political class, the media, and much of the French population, is this: the most valuable asset of man is not freedom, but security, and it would be quite natural and sane to sacrifice some freedoms for more security. An idea which constitutes a death certificate for republican values, and could even cause us to wonder, disregarding the extremely marginal nature of the French Resistance, if it was worth the fight against the Nazi occupation. In the words of Benjamin Franklin, one of the founding fathers of the United States,

“Those who would give up essential Liberty, to purchase a little temporary Safety, deserve neither Liberty nor Safety [and end up losing both].”

And as we have seen, if the violations of the freedoms allowed by the state of emergency are gross and vile, bordering on totalitarianism, temporary security gains made are minute at best, and at worst and in full likelihood, are negative, because the targeting of a whole category of citizens can only feed tensions, further divide society and give more credit to extremist discourse and actions, and thus promote the recruitment of Daesh and other violent organizations. Even the Judiciary Union had denounced the state of emergency in an unusually vehement [statement](#).

The security escalation, denial of rights and the emergency measures that affect all citizens cannot reduce violence and extremism : on the contrary, such measures are inflammatory and, while pretending to be their cure, enter them insidiously into our lives. These are elementary truths, although stifled by the surrounding political and media hype. Goebbels himself theorised, “If you tell a lie big enough and keep repeating it, people will eventually come to believe it.” And he added:

“The lie can be maintained only for such time as the State can shield the people from the political, economic and/or military consequences of the lie. It thus becomes vitally important for the State to use all of its powers to repress dissent, for the truth is the mortal enemy of the lie, and thus by extension, the truth is the greatest enemy of the State.”

Our government seems to have understood this, as it is considering measures that would make France [a police state that dictatorships have nothing to envy](#), by muzzling freedom of expression and information, by attacking privacy, and inscribing the state of emergency into the Constitution, in order to sustainably and totally control the whole population – not to mention the deprivation of nationality for dual citizens, which violates the very idea of equal rights and justice. George Orwell, here we are.

Faced with this relentless state violence, what can we do, if not make use of the freedoms we still have? Reject it in principle, and, in deed, denounce it as much as possible. Show our solidarity to all the victims of these unacceptable and outrageous measures, which is a civic

and humanitarian duty. Never (again) to compromise by voting for individuals or groups who backed these totalitarian measures, so that at least they cannot claim to act in our name.

Ultimately, let us remind the words of Henry David Thoreau, theorist of civil disobedience: *"Under a government which imprisons any unjustly, the true place for a just man is also a prison."*



"To the raiders: the key is under the doormat!!!

#RaidMe"

Note

[1] Vladimir Volkoff, French novelist of Russian origin whose parents were exiled after the 1917 Revolution, French intelligence officer in Algeria, won the French Academy prize in 1982 following an anti-Soviet spy novel, had in particular these words: "Why should we care about the outcry? Let us do like the Israelis in Palestine, Thatcher in the Falklands and Reagan in Granada!... The real enemy of the police officer is not the villain nor the villains' lawyer but the judge... This country loves right-wing politics with a left-wing label." *Le Bouclage*, Fallois Press, L'Age d'Homme, Lausanne, 1990, pp.117, 199, 584. And let's also mention this: "The French are runaways, they mostly ran in 1940, many of their intellectuals licked the boots of the Communists for forty years, and the more masochistic continue with Islam." *The Berkeley at five*, Fallois Editions and L'Age d'Homme, Paris and Lausanne, 1994, p. 7. He is above all the author of an excellent series of books for youths, *Langelot*.

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