

Flowers to Stifle the Screams

{Author's adaptation of the original French version}

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It may not be crafted by the media that encourage it, it's not the fault of the kind souls that pour out their hearts in flowers and candles at each mass murder, but together they compose a distressing symbolic discourse.

How many flowers would it take to stifle the screams of a child in his stroller targeted by a man at the wheel of a 19-ton truck? *"Même pas peur* [not even scared]," is the slogan of the improvised memorials but we saw terrified people running in all directions when the truck attacked on the Promenade des Anglais. They hid in restaurants and ducked under the waters of the sea. Unverified whispers say some of the victims were crushed in the stampede.

Backtracking on the promised termination of the state of emergency the president hastily vowed to extend it as mournful Parisians trekked back to Place de la République, to lay flowers and peace & love messages at the feet of the Marianne statue sullied with hateful graffiti after three months of occupation by the *Nuits Debout*.

This softly floral reaction is not engineered by the media but it is blessed to the exclusion of more sober more combative emotions. A motorcyclist tried to stop the massacre with his bare hands. It's not a rumor, it's a fact attested by authentic video footage of the man hanging on to the door of the murderous truck. Did anyone try to identify this hero killed in battle? Or still alive? Would they even want to contemplate his courage, congratulate him posthumously for his gesture? *[update July 21: the hero did go public with an*

account of his exploit]. At the other extremity and at the very bottom of the scale of human qualities crouches the recipient of a text message sent just before the attack: "Bring more weapons."

So which is it? Did Bouhlel have one or several accomplices, or was his plan to fool the police into thinking the truck atrocity was the first event in a multiple-stage massacre? A 13th of November for the sunny South.

In fact, suspected accomplices are currently detained. Newscasters dutifully convey the information... with words as gentle as a rose petal, as if the truth could startle a tender congregation immersed in tears and compassion. For once, authorities state the naked radical Islamic truth of the atrocity, but commentators prefer to focus on the killer's psychological problem, as if Daesh soldiers passed tough exams like cadets at St. Cyr Military Academy. They recite ad nauseam the rosary of signs of non-compliance, as if the fact that Bouhlel didn't go to the mosque could resuscitate the dead. Or acquit Islam. Pitiful ignorance! Don't they know that totalitarian movements always enlist thugs? Bouhlel was not a good Muslim, they repeat, citing pork, alcohol, sex, and salsa.

Sharia, dear colleagues, is at the top of the Islamic pyramid. Genocidal hatred is transmitted from those religious heights at cybersonic speed. All sorts of tools can be used to do the dirty work of jihad: a knife, a truck, a Kalashnikov. All kinds of candidates are fit for the job: the truly observant, the falsely miscreant, from idiots to college graduates. They don't have to study the Koran before going into action. Transmission by osmosis makes them tick.

How could authorities have nipped this Bouhlel in the bud, before he committed a massacre? It all happened so fast! So? What about the others, the most unambiguously flagged, the most closely observed, the most blatantly dangerous? Haven't

they already or will they not soon go into action? The truck, in this case, was an arm by destination. The one who drove it with monstrous cruelty, too.

Count the white floral bouquets placed all along the assassin's route but don't forget to count the number of Islamically bearded truck drivers and deliverymen going up and down the roads of our cities and countryside.

My writing fingers, pricked by the thorns of these grieving flowers, bleed for us. Because we are the target of a war of conquest that is called jihad. And we are portrayed as pathetic victims with nothing but blind love to respond to the violence aimed at us one by one and all together.