

Up All Night (Mare)

According to the calendar established by the Nuit Debout [*standing up all night*] movement, today would be the 78th of May; the world began on the 31st of March when protestors against a lukewarm labor reform bill set up shop at Place de la République to formulate a new world. Labor reform is a sure fire spark for mobilizing the masses here in France where Marxist economics is as solid as the paving stones that are thrown at the police. According to the latter day French Marxists, the common people have been crushed under the heel of unbridled capitalism ever since... the end of WW2... or maybe since the 19th century. The last straw, they claim, is this attempt by a nominally Socialist government to deliver the working class (which now includes almost everyone) into the jaws of finance, management, and globalization. Did the Hollande government hope the bill would be swallowed by naming it after the recently appointed Labor Minister, Myriam el Khomri? It didn't work.

Initially, free market capitalists had a favorable opinion of the proposed reform that would have introduced a bit of flexibility in labor relations. But the idea that small companies would more readily hire if they could more easily lay off workers when business was bad is poison to the Marxist-Leninists. It would reduce the already beleaguered employees to servitude, they declare. And they won't allow it.

As is its wont, the government diluted the bill, losing support from the right while energizing opposition at the far left of its shaky majority. Debate in the Assembly was axed by the "49.3" option that gives deputies the choice of accepting the bill or bringing down the government. The opposition's no-confidence motion didn't pass. The rebellious faction of the majority was only two votes short of submitting its own no confidence motion. One more instance of getting nowhere fast.

The real action was in the streets, where the el Khomri bill served as a handy pretext for the burgeoning convergence of revolts. Branded as a refreshing ex nihilo creation of youthful idealists, Nuit Debout attracted abundant media attention. Our own little Place Tahrir! Journalists love to fraternize with these populist manifestations...unless and until they turn on the media, punch them in the face, smash their cameras and mikes. Enthusiastic uncritical coverage is their best option for maintaining safe access. Nothing is better than youth for branding a movement. Witness the image of Aylan drowned on a Turkish beach that opened Western nations to a battering ram of physically fit young men of combat age that pushed their way up from Greece to Germany in the summer of 2015 [see the *Humanitarian Jihad* chapter in *Black Flag*].

The media concocted a flattering trendy image of Nuit Debout by a combination of clever camera angles and judicious choices of unofficial spokespersons, relayed by commentators and public opinion all the way from the president to the average citizen. Most of whom had not set foot in the occupied square. Days and nights went by without producing a single quotable Great Idea, but the aura of a touching search for higher truth, greater social justice, a more perfect democracy was maintained. The proof was in the numbers: night after night, Nuit Debout enthusiastically filled the Square. Who cared if “up all night” was a giant nuisance for people living around the Place de la République, bashed by high decibel techno concerts from dusk to dawn?

When thuggish violence hitched on to the bandwagon it was dismissed as opportunistic mischief, on the margins of the real thing: folkloric booths, sloppy graffiti, grimy tents, and the pretentious General Assemblies. Emerging at midnight from the entrails of Nuit Debout, “smashers” attacked the police for hours on end with iron bars, rocks, glass bottles, firebombs... Self-proclaimed as an open to the winds movement with no leaders, no vertical structure, Nuit Debout, the

ultimate in “participative democracy,” was excused of responsibility for the “marginal” elements that attack the police and destroy public & private property, particularly banks. Disclaimed by some but not all of the moderates, the masked men of the armed branch slip in and out of the conglomerate, expressing with blunt objects the verbal hostility of Nuit Debout rhetoric. Hundreds of policemen have been injured, some critically. When asked if they condemn the violence, unofficial spokespersons give Mohamed Abbas type answers: I condemn all violence, the violence of unemployment, the violence of globalization, discrimination, income inequality, the violence of police brutality, disproportionate force... Nothing is their fault. When a homeless man stabbed a fellow-in-misery “on the margins” of a Nuit Debout General Assembly in Bordeaux, they said “He’s not us. The homeless come because there’s a free meal.” There are commissions on housing, legal aid, what have you, but a real creepy homeless thug doesn’t belong.

Opposition to the el Khomri labor law was the spark; revolution becomes the goal. There is nothing the current government could do to satisfy the hunger of these *jusqu’au boutistes* sitting cross-legged on the cold paving of Place de la République a few meters from the makeshift memorial to the victims of jihad murders. Nuit Debout by the light of day is not a pretty sight. Around the pedestal of Marianne, the symbol of the French Republic, flowers and candles have been replaced by heavy handed slogans, posters, declarations, and threats from the bitter-enders. Clusters of layabouts, neither young nor idealistic nor visibly dreaming of a beautiful new world, sprawl at the feet of the Republic, drinking and scowling. Up close and real, the occupation is a sad spectacle of vintage revolt, a convergence of lost causes driven by an occult leadership of middle aged losers that can’t get 1% of the vote in free and fair democratic elections, and a rising bunch of ambitious new firebrands manipulating a small core of earnest seekers of truth and a bright future. Pauperized

college graduates and young professionals, under-skilled lower middle class job seekers floundering in a depressed economy, adolescents embarking on life's adventure, bobos thirsty for social justice, non-starters haunted by the specter of unemployment are drawn into a farcical replay of outworn platitudes.

It's political pedophilia, this convergence of every retrograde movement – communists, anarchists, apartment squatters, and a long list of antis: globalization, private property, war, weapons, capitalism, -rubbing up the misguided energies of young justice-seekers. Branded as fresh, new, and hopeful Nuit Debout is a rehash of all that has failed.

April 16: To my knowledge, the only person who was aggressively kicked off the Nuit Debout occupied premises, is Alain Finkielkraut, philosopher, writer, member of the Academy, and Jewish. I had made a tour of Place de la République earlier that day. The first thing I saw was BDS Queen Olivia Zemor and her little princes decked out in green Boycott Israel t-shirts with sparkling clean keffieh around their necks milling around the shiny green BDS truck decorated with Israeli atrocity photos. To the extent that any factual statement can be made about Nuit Debout, they have apparently welcomed BDS into the fold of convergent causes. By the light of day the heart of this brave new world is a sorry sight. Stupid graffiti all over: on the paving, the newly installed massive wood benches, the street lamps, the fancy metro entrance, and the Marianne itself. Sloppy makeshift booths in the style of the Calais "jungle" with less imaginative graphics. The place reeks of piss, marijuana, and imposture. Shop windows around the square and down the adjoining streets are tagged, cracked and/or boarded up. The terrace of the 4-star Crowne Plaza Holiday Inn is deserted, a glass partition is smashed. Every morning, municipal workers come and clean up the mess.

On January 11, 2015, millions of Parisian people stood up (=

debout) against jihad. In November, 130 people were murdered in the vicinity of Place de la République; the spontaneous standing up was not possible, because the president declared a state of emergency. People came anyway, left candles, flowers, and scrawled messages. The nation was dumbstruck, the government appeared to be resolute. What has become of the popular resolve and President Hollande's solemn promise to defend the nation? Though much has been done, often out of the public eye, to dismantle the jihadist cells, political squabbling weakened the sense of resolve. Under pressure from the far left of the fragile Socialist majority, the promised measures were diluted and went down the tubes. Then, protests against the labor reform bill took center stage. Literally, at Place de la République. Effectively turning its back on resistance against jihad violence.

Squatting the memorial square, the pretentious movement that is supposedly imagining a better world, deliberately ignores the immediate and present danger of Islamic conquest. Daesh isn't the enemy. It doesn't even exist in their world view. The enemy is the capitalist, the financier, and representative democracy. They are against the state of emergency like the labor reform bill; it's only purpose, they claim, is to repress us. The amorphous conglomerate of movements describes itself as pacifist while stimulating and generating violence that mobilizes and attacks law enforcement. Despite the nightly pitched battles with the police, the Occupation is authorized by an indulgent government.

This retrograde social protest serves as a vector for the mistreatment and humiliation of the police that we must rely on to protect us from the next jihad attack. Hundreds of thugs bash, burn, and pound; a handful of are arrested every night. Most, we can assume, will escape with light or no punishment. TV broadcasts show these battles, police on the run for hours on end, unable to stop the destruction, holding up their shields against rocks and paving stones. Hooded masked (often

with keffieh) thugs running wild, triumphant, fearless. And many “legitimate demonstrators” staying on the scene, walking in and among these fights, making no attempt to stop the thugs.

In a nation of over 66 million, with free elections, free press, and all the liberties that go with it, a shapeless conglomerate, a miniscule minority claiming to express the will of the people, arrogant young men and women sit in a public square and demand immediate compliance. Offered a microphone, one after the other, they parrot the same tweet-format declaration: we demand the immediate withdrawal of the bill. No modifications, no negotiations.

And, what a coincidence, to find BDS among the sour notes. On the 15th of May, its popularity flagging, Nuit Debout picked up steam with a world-wide celebration of the 5-year anniversary of Podemos, an outgrowth of los Indignados of the Puerta del Sol in Madrid. The French version, les Indignés, was inspired by a thin bestselling treatise by the late Stéphane Hessel whose major target of indignation was the State of Israel. Olivier Besancenot, another recycled agitator dug up by the media to praise Nuit Debout, is the former presidential candidate of the toothless New Anti-capitalist Party that provided cover for the pro-jihad anti-Jewish stampedes in the summer of 2014, when the black flag of jihad was flown on the Marianne. Student leaders in these protest movements often work their way up in the leftist ranks. Julien Bayou of the Green Party, deputy mayor of Paris, active in the Jeudi Noir apartment squatters commando, was on board the Gaza flotilla a few years ago.

Today, May 18th, police unions demonstrated all over France. Since Nuit Debout converged with the trade unions on May Day, strikes, demonstrations, and violence have spread and intensified. As could be expected, the smashers also turn against the trade union security details. More than 300

policemen have been injured, some critically. In Nantes, 5 or 6 thugs jumped on an isolated policeman as he stepped out of his patrol car. They knocked him down, tore off his helmet, and smashed him in the face and head with iron bars. One 18 year-old has been charged with attempted murder in that case.

After six weeks of constant humiliation of law enforcement, the Police Chief is determined to show the appropriate severity. He announced that 40 individuals have been banned from certain arrondissements where labor unions will be demonstrating this week. Isn't this pathetic? Isn't it pathetic when the men and women who are supposedly standing ready to counter the next jihadist onslaught are reduced to congregating right there, at Place de la République, to beg for a bit of consideration?

The collective "Urgence: notre police assassine" requested authorization for a counter demonstration under the nose of the police unions. The request was turned down. So they came anyway. Several hundred. Turned away from Place de la République they gathered nearby in front of the Bourse de Travail, where they scuffled with police before marching toward the Quai de Valmy on the St. Martin canal. A patrol car returning from a mission that had nothing to do with today's demonstration, innocently driving along the Quai, triggered the rage of the collective against police brutality. A woman who witnessed the scene said, "They were angry, they saw the police car, it was like a red rag in front of a bull."

They started hammering the car with iron bars, smashed open the windows, tried but failed to grab the cops out of the car, smashed the rear window, and threw a firebomb into the car. The policeman and woman managed to escape without getting their heads smashed. They were armed, explained the Police Chief, but they did not use their weapons because they did not want to kill anyone.

Daesh distributes its atrocity videos, and our newscasts

display the humiliation of law enforcement. Won't our aspiring local jihadists relish these scenes broadcast daily on French television? Aren't they drooling at the sight of that flaming car, those smashed windows, those bashed ATMs, those hefty paving stones and murderous iron bars? Can you hear their sneering laughter at the sight of the earnest young and not so young, sitting on the pavement as if it were desert sands, repeating outworn slogans and lost in magical thinking? Sitting ducks!

PS: One of the Nuit Debout non-leaders (nothing is vertical in their ideal world), François Ruffin, a journalist from Amiens (we say "the provinces"), editor & chief bottle washer of a magazine called *Fakir* (pronounced Fa-Keer in French), inspired by Michael Moore, made a "direct action" (in the words of another non-leader, Frédéric Lordon of *Le Monde Diplomatique*) film, *Merci Patron*, showing how he tricked Bernard Arnault, CEO of LVMH, into giving €45,000 to a couple of workers that had been ruined when LVMH delocalized the production of Kenzo suits from France to Poland, then to Bulgaria and soon to Greece. Ruffin, who says the suits cost €30 to make and sell for €900, made a profit of €500,000 on the film. In a recent issue of *Fakir*, Ruffin quotes at great length his comrade Iglesias of Podemos who, in turn, praises to the heavens his role model: Lenin. It all adds up!

First published in