

War on Paris

It is like the death of a loved one. The death of our city that we love despite its failings, misdeeds, and particular misbehavior that I have been chronicling over the past fifteen years. A city is more than its current events. And today the heart of our city is broken. We do not have the fibre of Israelis who live with miraculous vitality in a permanent state of war & peace, but Parisians are not entirely devoid of courage and sharp instincts in the face of utmost danger. Anecdotes and eyewitness testimony are slowly emerging. The hard facts are at a minimum.

A soft spoken young man in an elegant overcoat describes the scene at the café on Rue de Charonne. He was present, he saw people picked off like sitting ducks. "They didn't have a chance." And yet he himself cannot believe what he saw. The Public Prosecutor delivers official information in an appropriately neutral tone. A hundred shell casings are left at each of the cafés attacked. No one was spared. Those who are not dead are in desperate condition.

It was to be expected, but it is shocking, unreal. Friday night it seemed that the whole city was screaming with sirens. As you followed events on television you could hear the broadcast sirens echoing the wails that came from the streets and boulevards. Who doesn't have a friend who was in the Bataclan music hall or looking down from his apartment at dead bodies that only a short while before had been eating, drinking, laughing, enjoying life?

In the global village, grieving families just a few days ago witnessed the massacre in Beirut or sobbed with the bereaved of the Sharm el Sheik-St. Petersburg flight. And now it is on their doorstep and has ripped apart their lives forever. We don't have to tell Israelis how it feels. But Europeans must wake up to the kinship they so earnestly tried to ignore. Last

week a French jihadi was arrested before going into action. He had ordered an army knife and two face masks from a firm in China. I suppose, in his infinite intelligence, he thought an order from a Chinese company would be undetectable. Or maybe he was attracted by the discount price? Well, the cheap packaging fell apart in transit, or so we are told, and a postal employee informed the police of the delivery of the killer knife. The young man intended to slaughter sailors at the Toulon naval base. A smartass TV commentator, implying that the police had over-reacted, shrugged it off. He said it was *la guerre des boutons* which, freely translated, means kids playing cops and robbers. "Like what's happening in Israel right now," he added.

The knifings, firebombings, car rammings, and rock bashings... child's play to this snide observer. I honestly can't remember which anchor or expert it was, there are so many of the same stripe. Plentiful as the punk jihadis that poison our lives. The widespread consistent errors of appreciation on all that touches Israel and the Jews did not cause the November 14th Paris massacre; it was waiting to happen and nothing could have prevented it or another, similar one. But the massacre may well lead to the long awaited recognition that jihad strikes in Israel and in Europe with same genocidal hatred from the same source. The cold indifference to the wave of knife attacks in Israel this fall, the perverse reverse chronology that made Israeli forces guilty of gunning down Palestinians that (admitted in a whisper) had in fact tried or perhaps in some cases succeeded in stabbing...well, you know, a *colon*, or ultra-religious deserving victim... The tally of dead Palestinians was brandished with the righteous indignation that has been digging into our souls since the dawn of the 21st century. No gory details of the suffering inflicted on Jews in Israel were ever given in French media. Nothing that could make you taste the blood and feel the blade digging into your spine, your heart, your guts.

Now blood has been spilled in the streets of Paris. Except for the misfired explosive vests outside the soccer stadium, all the other attacks took place in the 10th and 11th arrondissements, on streets and boulevards that converge at Place de la République. Sébastien Selam was slaughtered and mutilated in the 10th arrdt, Ilan Halimi worked in a cell phone shop on boulevard Voltaire in the 11th arrdt. The first recorded public cries of *Death to the Jews* were heard in October 2000 at Place de la République in a pro-Palestinian demonstration focused on the “death” of Mohamed al Dura. Last week a small clutch of Salafists shimmied one of those huge parallel-to-the-ground Palestinian flags and chanted “Arms for Hamas, Arms for Jihad.” In the summer of 2014 pro-Hamas caliphators brandishing the black flag of jihad massed around the statue of Marianne in the Place de la République, screaming for Jewish blood and.

Marianne, the symbol of the French Republic, was defiled. The way Swedish women and forlorn British girls are defiled. Now, French people doing what French people do on a Friday night were mowed down. The way Jews in the Hyper Cacher were executed. Daesh has proudly signed the massacre of the “Crusaders,” and promised more of the same if France does not cease and desist from meddling in Iraq and Syria. Ha! Sounds familiar. Muslims would stop stabbing Jews to death in Israel if the Zionists ended the Occupation. Don’t bet on it. Cease and desist is the first in a long line of orders that will be barked at us in the coming months. Or years. Until we decide to go on the offensive.

The otherwise ineffectual President Hollande has promised a no holds barred fight against Daesh at home and abroad. French media, as far as I could see, have not dared to dissociate the massacre from the Islam that inspires it. The same media that were gushing over the refugees a few weeks ago are now reporting that one of the *shahids* who jumped the gun outside the Stade de France was carrying a Syrian passport stamped

with a passage through Leros in Greece on October 3rd. Exactly what we expected.

A walk through the Marais early Saturday afternoon. Most of the shops were closed. Shabat, for some, the bloody events for others. So few cars in the streets, so few people strolling where on a normal Saturday afternoon the sidewalks would be overflowing. We had taken to joking about it: looking down the rue des Francs Bourgeois at the never-ending crowd, we would say "the refugees are coming." It looked so much like the human chain snaking through Slovenian fields. No soldiers, no police in the Marais this Saturday. So strange. Is it ominous? Does it mean there's no one left to protect the Jews now that the "Crusaders" are targeted?

Sunday morning shopping in an open market is almost a religion in France. This morning, heartbroken television cameras panned the dark empty alleys of the *Marché Richard Lenoir* where the ordinary cheerful bustle always impresses me as a model of peaceful coexistence. People of all origins and classes mingle and brush up against each other in the narrow aisles, all with the same goal of filling baskets and carts with good things to eat. Whether selling their own produce or stock that comes from the giant wholesale market at Rungis, salt-of-the-earth vendors, up since the break of dawn, exposed to the elements, lugging crates and arranging the merchandise with loving care, sell at a fast clip without a pause and never a complaint. The Richard Lenoir market is located in what we could call the massacre neighborhood, not far from the *Charlie Hebdo* offices, now vacated, and the modest restaurants targeted Friday night.

Eagles of death Metal, the American band that was playing at the Bataclan, has performed in Israel. The Bataclan was owned by Jews who sold it only two months ago. But let us take the mass murderers at their word: this time they were aiming at the Crusaders, the Christians. Most of the victims will turn out to be young people. Quite a few journalists enjoying a

night out found themselves in “civilian garb” at the center of the action. It will change their world view and their discourse.

Though many French journalists (or is it coming directly from the infamous *Agence France Presse*?) have taken out of mothballs their al Aqsa Intifada misnomer, *kamikazes*, they are fostering no illusions about the legitimate aspirations of the *shahids* who have wreaked havoc in Paris. What a pity that it has taken so much bloodshed to ignite the spark that could bring together the decent citizens of the free world. Prime Minister Manuel Valls promises to annihilate, here and abroad, the forces that are attacking us. Public gatherings are prohibited at the moment, because of the security risk, but people come to city squares to light candles, shed tears, leave bouquets and messages of grief and defiance. Handmade signs declare *Même pas peur* (not even afraid), adding “We are Paris” to the “*Je suis Charlie*” stickers pasted to the base of the Marianne in January. “Pray for Paris” signs with the same funereal *Je suis Charlie* graphics are posted on the gates of churches.

The facts, as I said, are still at a minimum. The media have finally pronounced the name of the French *shahid* identified at the Bataclan by his severed finger: Ismael Omar Mostefai. A petty criminal convicted eight times but never sent to prison. Flagged but obviously not followed by security services. He went to Turkey in 2014 and, presumably, from there to Syria. Three alleged accomplices have been arrested in Molenbek (near Brussels), headquarters of some of our famous Islamic killers, platform of the weapons trade, cornucopia of Kalachnikovs. The thwarted Thalys train shahid set out on his mission with a suitcase full of weapons from his sister’s apartment in Molenbek.

Flagged radicals, networks, cells, Daesh nomads, hate preachers, and manifestos of jihad conquest...it’s all out there, all so familiar, so hotly active, toying with the soft

underbelly of our democracies. Barbarians. And why are they getting away with it? We are not a decadent empire that deserves to be destroyed. They are not a daunting invulnerable gigantic monster gobbling us up like peanuts. Much is made today, by experts and commentators, of the military prowess of the three teams that shot up Paris Friday night. They're not bumbling amateurs like the Thalys jerk whose Kalachnikov jammed (but he managed to do quite a bit of damage with his handgun and box cutter). They're not clumsy fumblers like Glam who shot himself in the leg and only managed to kill one young woman but never made it to shoot up the Crusaders in the church at Villejuif. These guys were organized! It took planning. Nerves of steel to mow down people having a drink at a sidewalk café and pick off one by one almost a hundred in a concert hall. And the courage to blow themselves up for an encore.

I submit that there is hardly any difference between the bungling fools, the successful mass killers of Friday night in Paris, the Daesh savages spreading their caliphate like an oil spill in the Middle East, and the hordes that followed the enraged medieval prophet of Islam. When this light dawns on Europe the spirit of *la résistance* will speak its mind. Instead of labeling products from the "colonies" like a snippety schoolteacher giving zeroes, Europe could begin to mobilize its resources and face the challenge intelligently. An enlightened Europe, battered by bitter experience, could draw the United States back into the concert of free nations where its indispensable military resources would finally weigh in the balance.

No, this is not the Third World War. This is the ongoing jihad conquest. And every magnificent European square is the gates of Vienna.