

A Terrorist Attack in Paris, a World of Horrors, and the NEED FOR ANOTHER WAY

On November 13, simultaneous attacks across Paris took the lives of at least 129 people. ISIS—the reactionary armed Islamist movement now dominating parts of Syria and Iraq—has apparently taken “credit” for these attacks. The victims were normal everyday people. They were eating in cafes, attending a soccer game, or walking down the street. They were people of all walks of life, from France and around the world. The gruesome and arbitrary nature of the killing—including the massacre of 89 people trapped in a concert hall where a rock band was playing—could only be intended to create an atmosphere of societal chaos and fear. And the attack was clearly undertaken with knowledge that it would be invoked by France and the U.S. to supposedly justify new rounds of repression and war. The cruel horror of the Paris attacks should be unequivocally denounced.

At the same time, the French president declared this an “act of war” and he would hit back with a “merciless” response. We should be clear. This threat from France—and the ways in which this attack has taken over the airwaves and political life in the U.S. since it was carried out—are very ominous. This almost certainly means one thing: more war and military attacks in the Middle East coming from France, the other European powers, and the U.S. itself, taking even more lives and creating all that many more refugees to add to the literally millions now desperately seeking to survive, who often lose their lives in the process.

And so the nightmarish dynamic which billions of people today find themselves locked in intensifies and escalates. The world cries out for another way. To get that other way, we have to understand first of all the root causes of the dynamic that IS going on.

A *WORLD* of Horrors

Again, we should be clear: The attack in Paris was aimed at advancing a reactionary agenda by spreading terror. It was cruel and unjust and horrific.

As was the U.S. bombing of a Doctors Without Borders hospital in Afghanistan on October 3—a conscious act of state-sponsored terrorism—that destroyed a desperately needed hospital, and murdered a dozen courageous doctors along with volunteers from around the world and Afghan patients. Since 2001, the U.S. invasion and occupation of Afghanistan has led to the death of tens of thousands of civilians. And the U.S. invasion and occupation of Iraq—which was the crucible in which ISIS formed and arose—directly killed many tens of thousands and “indirectly” caused the deaths of hundreds of thousands more.

As was the terrorist bombing, for which ISIS took credit, on a poor Shi’a neighborhood in Beirut, Lebanon, on November 12. It targeted a community where Islamic forces allied with the Syrian government, Iran, and Russia have a base of support—but the bombs were aimed at and killed dozens of civilians. The multisided war between contending reactionary powers and forces in Syria has resulted in 250,000 deaths, and over 12 million people have been driven from their homes into refugee camps or the dangerous trek to persecution and concentration camps in Europe.

As was the bombing of a wedding party in Yemen on October 8 by the U.S. armed and backed Saudi regime. This was the second time in a month that Saudi Arabian fighter jets rained death on a wedding party in Yemen—this time killing 30 people. In late September, Saudi rockets hit another wedding party

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What we see in contention here with Jihad on the one hand and McWorld/McCrusade on the other hand, are historically outmoded strata among colonized and oppressed humanity up against historically outmoded ruling strata of the imperialist system. These two reactionary poles reinforce each other, even while opposing each other. If you side with either of these “outmodeds,” you end up strengthening both.

While this is a very important formulation and is crucial to understanding much of the dynamics driving things in the world in this period, at the same time we do have to be clear about which of these “historically outmodeds” has done the greater damage and poses the greater threat to humanity: It is the historically outmoded ruling strata of the imperialist system, and in particular the U.S. imperialists.

Bob Avakian, Chairman of the Revolutionary Communist Party, USA, *BA*sics 1:28

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in Yemen, killing 130 people. The Saudi reign of terror is aimed at the civilian population in areas where anti-Saudi forces are in control. And the Saudis have waged war since the summer in Yemen, using U.S.-supplied cluster bombs—a weapon outlawed in most parts of the world—to slaughter several thousand civilians, *including hundreds of children*.

This whole nightmarish inhuman cycle must be stopped.

Two Reactionary Poles of Oppression

The rulers of the U.S. portray themselves as the global “good guys” in all this. They cover over the fact that their whole system can only function and proceed through the bitter, grinding exploitation of literally billions of people, through the plunder of all of nature, and through the oppression of whole peoples and of women, half of humanity. They insist that people forget the foundations of this empire in genocide and slavery, and endless wars for empire around the world.

The Islamic fundamentalists like ISIS portray themselves as the only opposition to this. Their opposition is one of small-time oppressors hungering to be big time ones. The society they enforce is one of brutal oppression of women and the violent enforcement of ignorance and superstition. Nobody who has an ounce of justice should have anything to do with this stuff and in fact should oppose it, strongly. Humanity is actually capable of something much greater: a new society, without exploitation or oppression.

As we say on our website and in our newspaper, all the time:

“It is this system that has got us in the situation we’re in today, and keeps us there. And it is through revolution to get rid of this system that we ourselves can bring a much better system into being. The ultimate goal of this revolution is communism: A world where people work and struggle together for the common good...Where everyone contributes whatever they can to society and gets back what they need to live a life worthy of human beings... Where there are no more divisions among people in which some rule over and oppress others, robbing them not only of the means to a decent life but also of knowledge and a means for really understanding, and acting to change, the world.

“This revolution is both necessary and possible.”

And, as we also say, “Because of Bob Avakian and the work he has done over several decades, summing up the positive and negative experience of the communist revolution so far, and drawing from a broad range of human experience, there is a new synthesis of communism that has been brought forward—there really is a viable vision and strategy for a radically new, and much better, society and world, and there is the crucial leadership that is needed to carry forward the struggle toward that goal.”

If you are reading this, if you found yourself agonizing over what happened in Paris—or what happened before that in Kunduz or Gaza last year or anywhere of dozens and hundreds of other places—you need to dig into this. This really IS a way out of the madness, and everyone owes it to themselves, to their fellow humans, and to the future to really engage this.

At the same time, right now, this cycle of terror and horror must be broken through. Attacks like the one in Paris are unconscionable and must be denounced. But we must *not* enlist in, but *resist* our rulers’ moves to take advantage of these attacks to justify even worse ones. We must resist when they move to implement more repression (which they claim will “keep us safe” but actually ratchets up the problem). We must resist when they try to escalate their invasions, drone attacks, and bombings. Resist when they whip up patriotism and prejudice, including ugly attacks on immigrants. To remain silent and complicit in all this is to *contribute to* the *whole cycle* and to strengthen *both sides* in the reactionary clash of the West vs. Jihad.

*In the absence of a positive, liberating alternative, and in the absence of determined and visible opposition in “the West,” the crimes of the U.S. drive people into the arms of reactionary Jihad. What is needed—and what is morally right—is visible, determined opposition to the crimes of “our government” on the part of those of us in the U.S., France, and other imperialist countries. Breaking through to another world, and breaking out of the current vicious cycle requires that people around the world see that the rulers do *not* speak for us. And that we stand with the interests of humanity. □*