

# The Paris terror attacks

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The terrorist atrocity carried out in Paris by the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS) has been seized upon by the United States, France and the other imperialist powers to intensify the policies of war and plunder that have destroyed entire societies in the Middle East. It is these policies that have created the conditions for the growth of reactionary forces such as those that killed 129 people and wounded hundreds more last Friday night.

Washington, France and regional allies such as Saudi Arabia and Turkey have funded and armed these forces. ISIS itself is a product of imperialist machinations in Libya, Syria and Iraq, just as Al Qaeda was the product of the earlier anti-Soviet intervention in Afghanistan. ISIS and other Al Qaeda-linked terror groups have been used as proxy armies to carry out regime-change in Libya and prosecute the war for regime-change in Syria.

The criminal assault on innocent civilians in Paris is the predictable outcome of US and European imperialism's relentless escalation of military operations.

Workers throughout the world feel deep sympathy for the victims of the mass killings in Paris. But the hypocritical statements of capitalist politicians and the media deserve only contempt. The death toll from the wars they have launched or supported over the past 14 years surpasses one million. Their real attitude can be seen in their indifference to the incineration of at least 30 people and the wounding of more than 30 others in the US bombing last month of a Doctors Without Borders hospital in Kunduz, Afghanistan.

Fourteen years of the so-called "war on terror" have only fueled the spread of terrorism and violence and turned millions of people into refugees fleeing hellish war zones in the Middle East, Central Asia and North Africa. Now that the consequences of neo-colonial barbarism have exploded within Europe itself, the

imperialist powers responsible for these crimes are preparing to carry out even greater crimes by reviving the fraudulent and discredited "war on terror."

After French President François Hollande called the Paris attacks an "act of war," the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* dubbed them "France's 9/11." It is worthwhile considering the statement posted in the immediate aftermath of the 2001 attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon by the *World Socialist Web Site*.

Warning of an eruption of US imperialist violence abroad and an assault on democratic rights at home, we wrote: "Far from dealing a powerful blow against imperialist militarism, terrorism plays into the hands of those elements within the US establishment who seize on such events to justify and legitimize the resort to war in pursuit of the geopolitical and economic interests of the ruling elite..."

"The unrelenting efforts of American imperialism to secure its domination over the oil resources of the region... has placed the United States in violent opposition to the legitimate and irrepressible democratic, national and social aspirations of the Arab masses..."

"US bombers and/or battleships have attacked Lebanon, Libya, Iraq, Iran, the Sudan and Afghanistan. Without actually declaring war, the United States has conducted military operations against Iraq for nearly 11 years... Given this bloody record, why should anyone be surprised that those who have been targeted by the United States have sought to strike back?"

As with the September 11 attacks, many questions are immediately raised as to who knew about the plans for the attacks in Paris and how they were carried out. Claims that, in this age of ubiquitous surveillance, none of the NATO countries' intelligence agencies were aware of preparations are not credible. At the very least, the ruling class sees such atrocities as an

opportunity to rapidly implement plans prepared long in advance.

Before the Paris attacks have been seriously investigated, the ruling elites in the United States and Europe are baying for war and insisting that the threat from ISIS can be met only by granting the state vast new police powers.

Hollande has vowed to extend the current 12-day state of emergency to three months, in a bill to be presented to parliament on Wednesday for a vote by the end of the week. If passed, it would all but transform France into a police state—suspending basic democratic rights, closing borders, banning protests, and giving police sweeping powers to search and detain individuals. Bavarian Finance Minister Markus Söder has called for closing German borders to Syrian refugees. The Paris attack, he declared ominously, “changes everything.”

Former NATO supreme commander US Admiral James Stavridis has penned a piece titled “NATO’s turn to attack,” calling for the NATO alliance to respond to the ISIS attack by going to war in Syria. But the intensified violence in Syria and Iraq is itself part of a broader geo-political agenda. The drive to oust Syrian President Bashar al-Assad is one component of Washington’s aggressive designs against Russia and China. These countries are seen by the US ruling elite as obstacles to American hegemony over the entire planet and have therefore been targeted for economic and, eventually, military destruction.

The escalation of imperialist war under the cover of the “war on terror” has been accompanied by a relentless assault on the social conditions and living standards of the working class, an attack that has been sharply escalated since the eruption of the world capitalist crisis in 2008. In every imperialist country, youth, and particularly immigrant youth, have been hit the hardest. They face mass unemployment, poverty and no prospects, under the existing system, for a decent future.

The consequences of militarism are intersecting fatally with the growing alienation of working class and immigrant youth. Given the absence, despite popular opposition to imperialist war, of an organized anti-war movement, this anger finds no progressive outlet, making sections of them vulnerable to the demoralized and demagogic preachments of outfits such as Al

Qaeda and ISIS.

The primary responsibility for the absence of a movement against war rests with the various organizations of middle class ex-left elements that once headed up protest movements—and channeled them behind parties and politicians of the ruling class—but have, over the past 15 years, shifted far to the right and directly into the camp of imperialism. Organizations such as France’s New Anti-capitalist Party, Germany’s Left Party, Spain’s Podemos, Greece’s Syriza and the International Socialist Organization in the US have thrown their support behind US-led wars for regime-change in Libya and Syria, and provided political cover for Washington’s war-mongering against Russia and China.

The Paris bombings and subsequent escalation of imperialist violence in Syria and Iraq underscore the urgent need for the building of an international anti-war movement. The social force that can disarm the imperialists and put an end to war is the working class. The new movement against imperialist war must be based on the working class, united and mobilized across all borders in a revolutionary struggle to end war by ending its source, capitalism.



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