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French President Macron launches Islamophobic campaign after Paris police office attack

French President Emmanuel Macron's October 7 speech at the Paris police headquarters, where an intelligence employee killed five people in a knife attack on October 3, marks a further milestone in his turn towards a neo-fascist policy. While covering over the deeper underlying causes of the attack, Macron issued a violent call to "eradicate" Islamism.

The alleged attacker, Mickaël Harpon, who was 45 and of Martiniquais origin, had worked as an IT employee of the Paris police for almost 20 years. At the time of the attack, he was employed by the intelligence division of the Paris police. Between 12 p.m. and 1 p.m. on October 3, Harpon, who had low-level deafness, reportedly stabbed multiple police officers inside the building, before descending into the courtyard of the Palais de Justice, where he was shot and killed by police.

According to investigations since the attack, Harpon reportedly adhered to a "radical vision of Islam" for approximately 10 years. Police now claim he became more radicalized over the past five years. He had reportedly limited his contact with women, defended the 2015 Islamic State terror attacks on Charlie Hebdo among his colleagues, and sent 33 text messages on religious issues on the day of the attack to his wife, who is now at the center of police investigations.

In his speech last Tuesday, Macron was silent about France's and NATO's promotion of Islamist terror networks to wage war in Syria, along with the additional workload on police as a result of the government's violent police repression of anti-inequality protests.

One year after his salute to Marshall Pétain as a “great soldier,” Macron called for the formation of a police state to wage war against Islamists.

“Your colleagues have fallen victim to a rogue and deadly Islam that it is our responsibility to eradicate,” Macron said. “The administration alone and all the services of the State cannot overcome the Islamist hydra ... A society of vigilance must be built.”

Macron said that to prevent such attacks required the fomenting of an atmosphere of anti-Islamic denunciations. The population must “know how to identify at school, at work, in places of worship, close to home, looseness, deviations, those small gestures that signal a distance from the laws and values of the Republic,” he said.

Thus, a person of Muslim faith practicing Ramadan or praying several times a day may be denounced as “far from the laws and values of the Republic.” They could be opened to prosecution, or even dismissed if they are employed by the national public transportation networks, which can dismiss their staff on the basis of investigations requested by the intelligence agencies into potential “radicalisation.”

Projecting an indefinite period for this campaign, Macron said that “defeating radical Islamism will take time. This is the challenge of a generation. It is a long-term task that is always too slow, but it is also a necessary task from which we will not give up anything. Quite the contrary.”

Macron’s lies make clear how political lies about imperialist wars abroad are used to reinforce the drive towards a police state at home. The emergence of the “Islamist hydra” is above all the product of imperialism, not of Islam or Muslims.

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That there are Islamist forces in French intelligence should come as no surprise. The French intelligence agencies worked closely with Islamist networks as part of France’s war to overthrow the Gaddafi regime in Libya and the Assad regime in Syria from 2011 onwards. French Presidents Nicolas Sarkozy (Republicans) and Francois Hollande (Socialist Party), as well as pseudo-left impostors like Olivier Besancenot of the New Anti-capitalist Party, all sang the praises of the Islamist “rebels” and called for their arming, while remaining silent on their Islamist and terrorist character.

Extensive propaganda has been carried out in the media to present these networks as democratic revolutionaries, because they were aligned with the imperialist powers’ goal of regime change and subjugating the resource-rich and geo-strategically critical region of

north Africa and the Middle East. It is impossible at this point to know what the impact was of this propaganda on Harpon.

His reported radicalisation coincides approximately with the launching of the wars in Libya and Syria. Paris later broke with some of the Islamist militias in Syria when it carried out attacks on Islamic State. At the same time, Washington, working to prop up its puppet regime in Baghdad that Islamic State fighters turned against in 2014, shifted to a war on its erstwhile allies. Far from abandoning all support for Islamist networks after the Paris terror attack at Charlie Hebdo in January 2015, France and the NATO powers have continued to cover up for these networks while expanding the powers of the police.

The expansion of police powers under the state of emergency imposed between 2015 and 2017 has created an even more tense atmosphere among the police forces. They have been tasked with repressing opposition to Macron and Hollande's labour law and university reform, the dismantling of the status of railway workers, and the suppression of the "yellow vests." This has created a permanent hysteria in the police force that has driven suicide rates up to one-third higher than those of the general population.

Macron's lies blaming Muslims for the terrorist attacks, rather than imperialism, has the most reactionary consequences. It subjects Muslims in the official press to permanent suspicion, fueling racist prejudices and strengthening far-right and fascist forces.

Marine Le Pen, the head of the neo-fascist National Rally, said she was "delighted" by Emmanuel Macron's speech, calling on his majority to "face" and not flee the subject of Islam. Le Pen explained: "Sarkozy did the same. We [Le Pen's party] were in a rut at the time, and it allowed us to bounce back. When a president makes thundering statements on immigration, but accompanies them with minor changes, it helps us."

The press has, as usual, conducted an anti-democratic campaign to intensify mistrust and hostility toward Muslims. "The terrorism expert" for BFMTV, Mohamed Sifaoui said: "I'm sorry if it upsets you. To see a person not of a Muslim background embrace the Islamic religion at 45 years of age must raise questions."

As for right-wing philosopher Alain Finkielkraut, who was also invited by the same news channel to speak out against Islam, he explained, "We have the right and duty to generalize. In a question of intellectual rigor ... Muslims are not just isolated individuals. In 1956, Malraux said that the West blinds itself, chooses not to see that there is a problem with Islam."

This propaganda from the media, reactionary intellectuals and the state is a warning to workers. By creating a climate of religious warfare, the ruling class is not only trampling on democratic rights, but also building a police state directed at the entire working class.

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