



## Paris, Terrorism, Religion, Justice

**William Eaton**

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**T**he recent documentary about the Black Panthers called attention, among other things, to that group's ten-point platform, which included such demands as "We Want Decent Housing Fit For The Shelter Of Human Beings" and "We Want Education That Teaches Us Our True History And Our Role In The Present-Day Society.. The Panthers were not a terrorist group; they engaged in demonstrations and political theater that at times included unconcealed weapons. They wanted revolution, but—like many Sixties leftwing groups in the US, Europe, Latin America, and elsewhere—the goal of revolution was economic justice and racial justice.

I have been reminded of this after yesterday's terrorist killing spree in Paris. I believe the terrorists and whoever their backers may be, want changes—be these within France, in the political make-up of the Middle East, or more globally. I do not understand what the proposed positive goals of such changes are. If the idea is to increase the power of adherents of a religion that believes in killing in the name of God and in killing to glorify God and advance His interests, . . . We've had more than enough of such religions over the past many centuries, and both at home and abroad. (*Cf.*, the European conquest of the "New World.")

*William Eaton is the Editor of [Zeteo](#). One might wish to see, too, [This is my letter to the future](#).*

Although this is a short post, I need to stress the certainty that my understanding of what is going on is limited and faulty. The chance that we're getting truth from the media—from all the journalists, police, TV experts, public intellectuals, and politicians—minimal at best. Self-interests are muddying the waters, as are national and commercial interests, and a human need to appear to know more than one does or can. And thus, and not just at the present moment, each of us is thrown back, we are continually thrown back, on our psyches, our world views, our capacities for deduction, analysis, and critical thinking, and on our imaginations. And the future will disconcert us, reminding us how the forces and factions that have been shaping our lives are rarely what or as they once seemed. And how many times have governments staged events and manipulated the media to get their citizens to go to war? (In the words of a French pop song from the 1960s: "Plus on apprend plus on ne sait rien." The more information we take in, the more complete our ignorance.)

**W**ith all this in mind, I still repeat: If an idea behind the Paris killings has been to increase the power of adherents of a religion that believes in killing in the name of God and to glorify God and advance His interests, . . . We've had more than enough of such religions over the past many centuries, and both at home and abroad.

Finally, I would note that in the lead ups to previous wars, the First World War in particular, Leftist leaders, representatives of working-class interests, have often opposed going to war. This because they rightly saw war as advancing the interests of capital and of businesses more than of working people. (And most all of us, including doctors, accountants, professors, etc., are working people.) Among other things, in war—as in Paris yesterday—working people end up being the targets of the shooting, bombing, and gas. Not a shot was fired in Paris's wealthiest suburbs and neighborhoods, in its fanciest stores and corporate headquarters.

These thoughts make me wonder about, or feel I should spend more time wondering about, the forces that are motivating young, disaffected men and women to take up killing. What are the real business and political interests that are advancing in the shadows of this Third World War?

But for the moment I would close with this. If this is now indeed a war, let it be a war that does not take people's minds off the problems of capitalism, the lack of economic justice, the voices within our souls and of the environment.

## References

*[The Black Panthers: Vanguard of the Revolution](#)*, directed by Stanley Nelson, Firelight Films, 2015.

*[The Ten-Point Program](#)* (Black Panthers).

Song: « On Nous Cache Tout, On Nous Dit Rien », lyrics by Jacques Lanzmann, music and singing by Jacques Dutronc. [Click for clip.](#)

Top image: AP Photo by Kamil Zihnioglu.