

Article

# *Je Suis Charlie* or the Fragility of the Republican Sacred: On January 11th, 2015 and Its Afterlives

S. Romi Mukherjee

Political Humanities, Sciences Po—Paris, Paris 75007, France; romi.mukherjee@sciencespo.fr

Received: 14 January 2019; Accepted: 5 March 2019; Published: 15 March 2019



**Abstract:** Following the *Charlie Hebdo* attacks, the demonstrations or “public mourning” of January 11th, 2015 were heralded by many as the return of the republican sacred, the re-crystallization of a long dormant *people*, and the resurrection of French fraternity *en vivo*. However, in the saturation of these political hagiographies, a series of trenchant critiques and observations quickly sought to deconstruct the meaning and putative symbolic power of January 11th. One was struck by the homogeneity of “the people” and the ostensible absence of Arabo-Muslim voices in the somber effervescence that typified the post-Charlie ambiance. Moments of silence were mocked in the *banlieue* and the homage rendered to the “blasphemers” was blasphemed itself. The imperative to “be Charlie” emerged less as a totemic index of republican solidarity than a Manichean strategy which exacerbated the generally perceived “*fracture française*”. The result was not only a calling into question of the legitimacy of January 11th, but also a series of counter-articulations which affirmed inter alia “Je ne suis pas Charlie” or worse “Je suis Coulibaly”. January 11th also divided the French left between those who read the event as the re-enchantment of the republican sacred and the people and “liberal” missives which deemed it a simulacra of solidarity, a racist demonstration comprised of “Catholic Zombies” and “Islamophobes”. This paper examines the cleavages engendered by January 11th and its afterlives which reveal not only the fragility of the Republic as a project, but also the fragility of the political sacred that has historically girded this project. At stake is not simply the question “who is Charlie”, but rather “who are the people” and what form they can or should take in a pluralist republic plunged in the perilous *entre-deux* between communitarianism and the possibility of a cosmopolitan republicanism. January 11th, far from being a simple demonstration, is a metaphor, a nodal point, and a seismograph of the force and frailness of the republican sacred and its capacity to enthral, convince, and console.

**Keywords:** *Charlie Hebdo*; *Je Suis Charlie*; January 11th 2015; French Republic; secularism; terrorism; fraternity

---

## 1. Introduction: Hagiography, Hysteria, and the Unconscious of the Event

The terrorist attacks that shook France between January 7 and January 9 were remarkable not least for their spectacular brutality and symbolic opacity, but also because they confirmed looming anxieties in the hexagon concerning the severity of the much touted “*fracture française*”. In the overload of meaning that followed the attacks, the events were perceived as indices of the failures of French paradigms of integration, of the latent Islamophobia embedded in contemporary recensions of *laïcité* and freedom of expression, and of “*banlieue blues*” of all sorts. However, the acknowledgement of the fracture was buttressed immediately by a ritualized attempt to suture it into the aura of the republican imaginary and simultaneously disavow it through the redeployments of the mystique of a trans-historical “people”, a new cult of Marianne, and long dormant forms of fraternity.

Whether described as a collective mourning ritual or a moment of collective hysteria, the “Republican Marches” of January 11th, 2015, the largest national gatherings since the Liberation, were exercises in the “Republican sacred”. They were exercises in civil religion—the politico–spiritual exercises of the people. Despite the a-religious neutrality of *laïcité*, the Republic has always strained to usurp the religious function. Evinced in pantheons, rites, secular goddesses, and sites of memory, the sacred (which may in fact have nothing to do with religion at all) forms the unconscious of the Republic. Or rather, the sacred is the unconscious of secular modernity. And January 11th was, for many, its great desublimation. The rhapsodies that explained “the event” spoke of *inter alia* the quest to “rediscover the Republican sacred”, (Laurentin 2015, p. 10) “the enormous *élan* of fraternity”, (Bardou 2015) a “powerful communion” (Bidar 2015, p. 15), the re-ritualization of the Place de la République as a site of memory (Ory 2016, pp. 121–24), a “sacred union, a national communion, a republican explosion” (Truong 2015, p. 7), and “the hope of a civil religion born of the effervescence of those who march (La Croix 2015)”. All of the aforementioned mythemes congealed in the “Spirit of January 11” and the anguished determination to assure that it would not fall dormant again. The hagiographies would multiply and January 11th became the object of a burgeoning intellectual industry (see Lamouthe 2015). Perhaps the mythemes were rhetorical signs. Nevertheless, the expressions of the republican sacred, as political imaginary and discursive *dispositif*, were unequivocally purposive in their attempts to embed January 11th in the *longue durée* of the national narrative. This is precisely where “the people” re-emerge as a non-recuperable agent in the unfolding drama of the revolution and the combat that continues against enemies both old and new.

Yet, if the sacred is the unconscious of the Republic, the sacred too has an unconscious. It is also an epistemological category which, as Michael Carrier perspicaciously observes, constitutes a “reflection of a generalized anxiety about collective life” (Carrier 2005, p. 140). Just as religion always contains its own blasphemy, the sacred too is never sure of itself. Many would push this uncertainty to a point of auto-critique and posit, with varying degrees of virulence, that the fracture could not be so readily resolved through Republican mythology—that myth was still a lie. The sacred is never one thing, but rather transversal in nature. It is also a site of contestation. Pierre Nora thus evokes the existence of “splittings” in the unconscious of January 11th, the unconscious of “the people”. For Nora, January 11th was indeed “an awakening of the Republican and patriotic unconscious (Nora 2015)”, one stifled for so long by the hegemony of the *libéral-libertaire*.<sup>1</sup> Yet, like all of the great “fusional events” in the history of the Republic, it was also “shot through with contradictions” . . . “an event is never what it appears to be. It can signify the contrary” (Nora 2015). January 11th, like the oscillations of the sacred and the profane, is typified by its inconsistencies and denials. Stated otherwise, in the dialectic of the sacred and the profane, one polarity contains its opposite . . .

Nonetheless, the event established a series of Manichean oppositions with little dialectical nuance or sublation. The sacred opposes the profane, but it also exists in competition with other loci of the sacred itself: the Republic and Islam/Islamism, the “political community” and the “ethno-religious community”, blasphemers and the injured, republican transcendence and religious transcendence, the nation and its enemies, the universal and the concrete, and, of course, *Je suis Charlie* and *Je ne suis pas Charlie*. These tensions and tensors form the topography of the unconscious of the event which needs to be traced in the same manner as the Republican common good needs to be tracked. *Pace* Rousseau, perhaps there can be no politics without appeals to religious sentiment and the symbolic. This being said, the cores of religion are often plagued by unspoken doubts and function as elaborate responses to deep ontological uncertainties. Civil Religions, like those which crystallized on January 11th, 2015 may not be any different. However, the sacred and the profane are not given or “always already” there. They are not spaces of deep noumena or untimely irruptions of other worldly hierophany.

---

<sup>1</sup> The irony, of course, is that despite its unequivocal commitments to *laïcité*, *Charlie Hebdo*’s politics shared more with the *libéral-libertaire* than normative framings of French Republicanism.

Rather, they are tendentious discursive categories imagined, elaborated, and marshaled by human actors driven by the most human of interests. Following from this, while “the event” may possess an unconscious, the phantasms, longings, and *desedirata* that circulate in its folds are formed of material and socio-political sediments.

With a view to unpacking and mapping the unconscious of the event, this article traces and problematizes the machinations of the dialectic of the sacred and the profane as evinced in the ritualizations of civil religion on January 11th, the discourses and actors who strained to give them meaning, and also those voices who were excluded from the latter constellations or who refused to participate *tout court*. Section one examines the sacralization of the event and pays particular attention to how the Durkheimian framework of the sacred-social-symbolic was, on the one hand, re-enacted and, on the other hand, reconfigured to affirm the eternal presence of the Republican sacred and defend its transhistorical sanctity. Conversely, section two explores the “profanation” of the event or rather how it revealed not the explosion of the Republican sacred, but its simulation; how January 11th was a desperate, feigned, and neurotic attempt to secure and render permanent an ethico-political framework that was not only impermanent and fragilized, but, perhaps, non-existent. And in between the ecstatic political tremors of Republican effervescence and the nostalgia for something that may have never existed, there can be no real resolution. We thus conclude with a sober analysis of “Republican Futures”, asking, “what now”, and questioning whether French Republicanism can endure as a comprehensive and normative political framework, particularly when its comprehensiveness is called into question within the fiery interstices of the sacred and the profane.

## 2. Union Sacrée

### 2.1. Durkheim Redux

As an event, January 11th also participated in the philosophical logic of “event” qua *événement*. In the *Annales* of contemporary French philosophy, the imagined opacity of *l'événement* refuses materialism and embedded forms of critique. On the contrary, it opposes itself to phenomena, matter, and the stuff of the quotidian. The “event” is a radical break; it is the introduction of the irreversible and the frenzied propulsion of political desires; it is the arrival of the Real as a traumatic kernel of Being and the Pauline instauration of the reign of the universal; it is the Messianic seizing of collective destiny and the paroxysm of the will to truth (see *inter alia* Badiou 1988; Deleuze 1969; and Baudrillard 1992). The hagiographies of the “spirit of January 11th” organize these *topoi* into the larger rubric of the coming to consciousness of the sacred. The Durkheimian resonances which inform and shape the sacralizing discourse of the event are not arbitrary. On the one hand, they, like Durkheim, offer theme and variation on the paradoxical rubrics of “social energies” and “social facts”. On the other hand, they attest to the perennial nature of the fundamental categories of his theory of religion, a theory which cannot be detached from his own republican commitments. Stated otherwise, the “sacred” of January 11th voices itself in the chiasmatic play of effervescence, collective representations, totemism, and temporal rupture. In Durkheim’s own framing of the undulations of the sacred and the profane, one also recognizes the pulsations of *aporia* and presence, the latent and the manifest, the repressed and the released etc. This theoretical nexus functions as a vital hermeneutic for the decrypting of the “spirit of January 11th” and the narratology of its civil religious communion.

### 2.2. Sursaut Républicain

It is a truism to suggest that communities unite around shared traumas. However, January 11th was not simply a moment of collective grieving, let alone the attempt to heal a national wound. While mourning was certainly the order of the day, the event also inserts itself into a transhistorical narrative of the Republican sacred. Its ultimate expression and actualization come in the mythical cohesion of citizen-subjects in the category of the People, who are not simply “people”, but conductors for the circulation of “social energies” which, for Durkheim, were quite real. As he notes, the “sacred is

an organizational center around which gravitates a set of beliefs and rites" (Durkheim 1995, p. 39), a center whose gravitational pull is explained in terms of the "exceptional energy" of this force which impresses itself on the human mind and inspires religious feeling (Durkheim 1995, p. 39). In *L'Individualisme et les intellectuels*, Durkheim's 1898 response to the Dreyfus Affair, the discourse of social energies is, furthermore, deeply politicized:

The moral agitation that these events have incited is not extinguished and I am among those who think that it should not be extinguished; because it is necessary . . . The hour of rest has not come for us. There is too much to be done to assure that it is not indispensable for our social energies to be perpetually mobilized. This is why I believe the politics of the last four years to be preferable to what preceded them. They have succeeded in maintaining durable collective activity of a considerable intensity . . . The essential was to not let ourselves succumb into a state moral stagnation . . . (Durkheim 1997, p. 44).

January 11th, as an "awakening", was reconfigured by many as one such mobilization. From this view, while typifying the logic of the sacred and the profane, the waxing and waning of robust forms of social cohesion and void of fragmentation, the event also partakes in a history of the waning and waxing of social energies and figures as the logical extension of a story begun in 1789. And it is in 1789 that we bear witness to the naissance of "Republican temporality" or the naissance of the people's ceaseless attempt to push through history in an impossible becoming. What has been called the national story is the story of the fading and rebirth of sacred-social energies and the continual aggregation and disaggregation of the people. The Revolution (1789), the Commune (1871), The Dreyfus Affair (1894–1906), The Liberation (1944), May 68', the 1998/2018 French World Cup victories, and January 11th are not isolated events or moments in history. Rather, they are chapters or unfoldings of the national narrative that strain to overcome the chasms between myth, memory and the material.

Therefore, on the one hand, January 11th could be considered the re-kindling of the sacred as social energy and collective morality. Society's alternation between the sacred and the profane, between sharply contrasted moments of profane diffusion and sacred effusion (Durkheim 1995, pp. 216–17) is ultimately an energetic trajectory from listlessness to exaltation and the quickening realization of society and the nation. On the other hand, the energetic trajectory is metonymically bound to the narrative of the Republic and as the people emerge through effusion, they also take solace in or "understand themselves" as *actors in the ritualization of Republican myth*. Following from this, the sacredness of the ritual depends on the density of the actors' belief in the Republican project itself or nostalgia for its potentially lost grandeur. If the sacred is the social or the recognition of the individual as being coextensive with a transcendent force larger than one's self, this transcendent force is also that which forms the sediment of the history and historical mythos of the Republic. And myths, hagiographies, and the stories we tell ourselves about ourselves can always take the form of fetishism—i.e., the story that we no longer believe to be true, but that we hold on to avoid the risk of political, subjective, and or racial/religious ontological disintegration. Here, the socializing effects and ontological transformations engendered by the Republican sacred are also imbricated in Republican time and historicity. Communion in the present is re-communion with the "people" of the past who too are re-awakened with each progressive effusion. Membership in the political community is mediated by sacralizations and rites, but also as Vincent Duclert remarks, by "History", which "essentially has for France the function of creating the feeling of belonging. The national story is written of victory and defeats . . . heroism by politics, it works! Unity constructs itself around values . . . it is democratic and civic heritage which constitutes the pride of the French people" (Duclert 2015, p. 55). On January 11th, *Charlie Hebdo*, perhaps against its own wishes, was transformed into the ultimate emblem for these values and this heritage. *Charlie* too became a fetish. And the terrorist attacks were quickly construed as, following Natacha Polony, "attacks against heritage, against French culture" (Polony 2015, p. 35). "Charlie" found itself as a new signifier for French liberty, an ideological mosaic and allegory for the Republic itself. But in the environs of January 11th, could the real structural deficits of liberty "on the ground" be so easily elided in the mantras of *Je Suis Charlie*. And resonating in this particular political unconscious was the larger question of "liberty from what . . . from whom etc".

This being said, it cannot be denied that strong forms of solidarity are produced of the people as inhabiting the same temporal framework, girded in a set of unitary and uniting narratives, material supports, myths, and rituals. Furthermore, as Henri Hubert evokes, the republic is less a manner of organizing the polis, than a subterranean *substrate* that flows under the people as the move through history and progressively realizes itself, a substrate interrupted by Empires, occupations, and attacks, but always there, ready to be resurrected in the new advents of Republican time (see Hubert 2005). Amongst the lessons of January 11th was that the ethical threshold of a given society must necessarily come from somewhere and be reborn and re-emboldened. Consolation and collective morality can only take shape through the apprehension of this vulgate, a sacro-political substrate (or temporal unconscious). However, one cannot elide the degree to which “vulgates” and “substrates” play in the nebulous interzones between history and hagiography, between social facts and simulacra.

### 2.3. Marianne Crayon: Somber Effervescence and the Saturation of the Symbolic

The French Republic, albeit *laïque* and ferociously anti-clerical, finds its singularity in its sustained engagement with the problematic of the sacred foundations of the political, or, following Mona Ozouf, the problematic of the *transfert de sacralité*. Republicanism’s insistence on the strict separation of temporal and spiritual power does not preclude the possibility of refashioning the political as sacred, a refashioning which paradoxically does not problematize the separation and the neutrality which it engenders. That is, the problem of civil religion or the sacralization of the political is the problem of the attempt to canalize religious sentiments for political purposes with a view to forging strong modes of citizenship. Citizenship then does not refer to a simple legal status, but participates in the rich nexus of community, communication, *communitas*, and communion. January 11th was a ritualized attempt to secure this community and its social morality in a historically ritualized space and locus of collective memory—*Place de la République*. However, the community cannot be secured, defined or redefined without material, acoustic, and iconic supports. The symbolic is the corollary of the sacred. Or, as Camille Tarot remarks, “religion is the symbolic system of the sacred”. (Tarot 2012, p. 275).

For hermeneutic purposes, we can designate the symbolic as the “sites”, both tangible and intangible where “social energies” are projected and negotiated. These sites are thus alternately divested of their materiality, but simultaneously “re-densified”. They serve as points of relay in an onto-political dialectic wherein politico-religious energies are sent to the sign, congealed, and sent back as collective morality. For Pascal Ory, January 11th and its refrains throughout 2015, was the permeation of the symbolic, or the attempt to “maintain—or rather create—*le lien social* through the aggregation of the group around signs of recognition (symbols); in this, an important observation: the importance of emotion as source of energy for the social motor” (Ory 2016, p. 121). The symbolic captures and makes coalesce formless reservoirs of the sacred, and its binding force depends on the strength of the ritualization and the robustness of effervescence.

Unlike Durkheim’s howling Arunta, the effervescence of January 11th was a somber state of exaltation. A state-sponsored ritual, it nonetheless was an attempt to establish moral unity through effacing the individual in the real and imagined undulations of political community. It performed a type of political “work”, bringing him to recall his belonging to something transcendent to himself, and orchestrating a “moral toning-up” where he would reconnect with the nexus of Republican values, morality, and *mana*. In this matrix of feeling and mourning, collective beliefs could potentially “gel” into a spontaneously established civil religion. Effervescence is not simply the entry into the domain of “unthinking”, affectivity, instinct, and bodily or psychic abandon. For Durkheim, it was a project designed to bring energies and political passions to the service of the nation. As witnessed on January 11th, the liminal passage that effervescence initiates can be incited by moral outrage and foment the imperative for collective agitation. Reminding participants of the vastness and density of the social, by de-atomizing them the event aspires to wrest them from the throes of finitude and the reckoning with those who have also died.

The efficaciousness of effervescence is contingent upon the symbolic constellation that anchors it. On January 11th, this constellation was “conservative” or “desiring to conserve” something. Contra global and post-national reveries and fashionable liberal cosmopolitanisms, to the surprise of many, the totemic acts of January 11th appeared as an atavism which would make even *Charlie* wince—the return of the nation. The flag, the Marseillaise, the homage to the police and the forces of order, and the slogans, all appeared to evacuate, once and for all, the legacy of May 68 and the *après-mai*. They served to awaken “the clan” to the fact that there were forces living outside of them. These forces, both religious and political, relocated the romance of the nation as both a sacro-political substrate and space of consolation. Modish taboos on patriotism as the province of rednecks and *pecnot* were lifted in the effusion and with it the pervasive slackening of the social. Symbolic life, far from returning individuals into the so-called darkness of the primitive, allows them rather to overcome the anxieties of profane life and the ever-present threat of further atomization (or terror). January 11th, as collective transference, provided a fleeting moment of social binding between individuals, symbolic life, and morality, one which inscribes itself in collective memory and therefore eases the trauma of the profane. In this regard, there is nothing strange in France’s decision to respond to the *Charlie Hebdo* attacks with appeals to the sacred-symbolic-social. The challenge, of course, is how to sustain the binding effected by effervescence, how to bring it to resonate under the roughness of the profane.

The ultimate totemic consecration came in the resurgences of Marianne, now dubbed “Marianne Crayon” or “Crayon Guiding the People” (Figure 1). She would be immortalized on the cover of *L’Obs* (January 11–21, 2015) with the caption “Continue the Combat”.<sup>2</sup> As the Mariannology of Maurice Agulhon insists upon, the goddess was never simply just an image on stamps and town hall meeting rooms. As an allegory of the republic and its liberty, it was also the symbolic means through which the nation produced and reproduced itself through various imaginary practices. As the “Republic”, she is the materiality of its values and their transmutations. After the attacks of January, 2015, it was quickly understood that in a global and post 9/11 world she may be one god among many whose absolutism and correspondence to the nation stand always be challenged. And if the gods are not ritualized, their sacred power dissipates. On January 11th, she was resuscitated and the allegory of liberty and the universal was modified with the cartoonist’s pencil. According to the photographer Martin Argyroglo, the correspondence between the photo and Delacroix’s iconic painting was forged by chance. Indeed, the moment was not staged, but the uncanny resemblance was precisely what allowed it be inscribed in a collective imaginary that evokes the “substrate” on the level of representation (See Bonnet 2015). The pen doubles as the sword and in the midst of the flags, banners, and fists waived, a woman dressed as a clown is spotted. The republic laughs. And perhaps, fundamentalists should not take themselves so seriously. In the haze of the Roman candles, one also reads signs saying “Not Afraid”, “Quickly more Democracy everywhere against Barbarism”, and, of course, the most ubiquitous, enigmatic, and potentially divisive slogan of the new civil religion; *Je suis Charlie*.

---

<sup>2</sup> Following the *Charlie Hebdo* attacks, a plethora of «Marianne Crayons» came to permeate French visual culture, in the media, in graffiti, in municipal buildings, and university campuses. The attacks produced their own distinctive «mariannology».



Figure 1. “Marianne Crayon”.

#### 2.4. Marianne Twerk

In the miasma of post-Charlie Mariannology, one Marianne was, nevertheless, overlooked. Following the attacks, journalists and anti-terrorist analysts rushed to establish the genealogies and lines of filiations, both political and personal, of those behind the violence. It soon surfaced that Amedy Coulibaly, the ISIS operative responsible for the attack of a police officer in Montrouge and the attack on the Hyper Casher supermarket at the Port de Vincennes, had an older sister of 7 years. Suffice it to say, she did not share her brother’s world view.<sup>3</sup> Maïmouna Coulibaly (aka Maïmouna Rouge Coulibaly or Maïmouna Rouge Red) is a dancer and choreographer inspired primarily by Afro-jazz, modern jazz, and African traditions. However, she is most renowned for her dance classes. She is a professor of “booty therapy”, a modern derivative of a certain style of frenetic and sexualized Afro-Caribbean dancing and dancehall, more commonly known as “twerking”. On a 2013 TV spot on *Le Grand 8*, where she also twerks with Roselyne Bachelot, former minister of solidarity and social cohesion under President Nicolas Sarkozy, she defines “booty therapy” as “therapy by the butt”, “a manner of liberating female femininity through shaking one’s butt” . . . in general we’re in a world where women are very stressed and complexed by everyday fashion, what’s in the magazines and all that . . . shaking your ass frees you” (Coulibaly 2013). For Coulibaly, booty therapy functions as an embodied critique of the reification of women by capitalism, racism and xenophobia. A second-wave feminist and post-modern situationist of sorts, she also regularly organizes “booty therapy flash mobs” at Paris train stations and malls. On the day her brother killed the police officer, she tweeted, “shooting at the end of my street”. Unaware of her brother’s implication in the attacks, on the evening of January 7th, she did not cancel her “booty therapy” courses, insisting that she “would not stop living following the massacre” and inviting all to “release”, “ease their tensions” and “express their sadness or mounting anger . . . ” With her family she would soon condemn her brother as not representative of Muslims (Coulibaly in Hall and Marie 2015).

While no means viral, images of Maïmouna began to circulate on the web, and amongst them an image of the Professor of Booty Therapy herself donning a Phrygian cap and a tricolored bustier (Figure 2). Indeed, Maïmouna Coulibaly often transformed herself into Marianne and ostensibly saw no contradiction between her religion, her Malian origins, the allegory of the Republic, and her booty—the

<sup>3</sup> Amedy Coulibaly had ten siblings of which he was the only male.

latter two united in their respective search for liberty and non-domination. Moreover, according to one blogger, this was not simply a costume, but the allegory re-constructed: “Maïmouna Coulibaly incarnates republican values so much that she poses as a sexy black Marianne, Phrygian bonnet on her head and a mini tricolor bustier. She is publicity for the “*vivre ensemble*” of Manuel Valls and certainly not anti-Semitic. In fact, on her Facebook page we find her pressed up against the wealthy television personality Arthur” (SenBuzz 2015).<sup>4</sup> The allegory is transformed again with the story of the Republic: Marianne Coulibaly, Marianne Twerk.



Figure 2. Maimouna Coulibaly/“Marianne Coulibaly.

## 2.5. #JeSuisCharlie

French Republicanism has always been bifurcated between its appeals to reason and autonomy and its rhetorical function and strained attempts to engender and seize upon political affect. As a governmentality, it is also a discursive apparatus, implicitly designed to stir passions which permeate the reciprocal dialectic between citizens and institutions. The republican public sphere is not simply delimited to those who have mastered bourgeois reason. On the contrary, it is a plane where the vectors of the passional and the rational intersect and mutually distill one another. Rhetoric, slogans, linguistic traces, and apophatic political-semiosis are indeed collective representations, precisely where language no longer communicates, but represents or allegorizes. And if *laïcité* and Republicanism are not solely ideas tied to administrative or procedural practices, but also “spiritualities” (see Comte-Sponville 2008; Buisson 2014; and Peillon 2010), one of its many spiritual exercises consists in the repetition of mantras (Liberty, Equality, Fraternity, Vive la République, Vive la France, the People etc.). The environs of January 11th were anchored in a motto, a battle cry, and a lament: *Je suis Charlie*. Yet, as with much rhetoric, there was little consensus on what the phrase really meant or, rather, such consensus was necessarily overlapping—we agree on the principle, but not its significance or application. The polysemic dimensions of the phrase allowed for everyone to locate themselves in its valences in a myriad of often contradictory significations that destabilized its purported sanctity.

The brainchild of Joachim Roncin, artistic director of the magazine *Stylist*, the slogan began to circulate on line during the afternoon of January 7th and went viral and global within a matter of hours. The public sphere and the info-sphere intersect or rather the public sphere was de-materialized. The phrase inscribes itself in a long political tradition of identification with the victim and the metonymic victim (the state, national values, history etc.) in a symbolic becoming-other; we are all Jews, we are all New Yorkers, we are all undesirables, etc. The identification is always incomplete and produces a series of slippages in the play of the signifier. In addition, the content or identificatory processes instantiated by the slogan were less important than the existence of the slogan itself as representation, or as Gilles Kepel notes, “logo” for the events; “It is thus an artifact of generation Y . . . product of the web, at once a logo and a slogan, carrying both image and sound, it is the vector of an extraordinarily powerful message . . . it does not signify, in effect, that Charlie is the name of

<sup>4</sup> Arthur is a popular TV personality and producer of Jewish-Sephardic origins, known also for his televised clashes with anti-Semitic comedian Dieudonné.



a subject—in French, one would say “my name is Charlie”; the term “suis” ties the subject “je” to a new identitarian community named Charlie—whose descent into the public sphere on January 11th is the act of collective baptism” (Kepel 2016, p. 281). *Charlie* is thus detached from *Charlie Hebdo* and functions as a new ontological index of the people who themselves remain undefined, unfulfilled, and impossible. Yet, it is curious that Kepel uses the term identitarian instead of political, begging the question of the constitution of the community, its contours, and its politics of “baptism-inclusion”. But were throngs of people at Place de la République and elsewhere really being baptized? If so, what was their religion?

In the simplest sense, one could argue that to say “*Je suis Charlie*” is to denounce Jihadism and Islamic fundamentalism. Of course, this observation already opens up longstanding debates in France concerning when the critique of terrorism becomes the critique of Islam and whether secular critique naturalizes forms of Islamophobia: More attention thus needs to be given to the mediatized rapport between “*je suis Charlie*” and “*il ne faut pas faire l’amalgame*” with the latter phrase reigning in the subtextual virulence of the former. Following from this, however, is the fact that “being Charlie” was not to necessarily identify with its dirty jokes and brashness, and if there was an identification with the cartoonists and their work, for the most part it was not out of love for *Charlie*. Indeed, the majority of the global response, including many of those who were “baptized” on January 11th, had never read or bought the newspaper. And although many a Frenchman were bemused by the destruction of their childhoods, this too was informed by nostalgia for a fading cultural landscape as opposed to an unyielding defense of bad taste.

This being said, underneath *Je suis Charlie*, one located the polarities of the strident defense of expression (now wholly synonymous with *laïcité*) and Voltairian “non, oui” logics which dictated that we may not agree with the content of your speech, but we defend your right to speak freely. In the latter case, “being Charlie” appeared to have less integrity than one imagined. For Lylia Bouzar, saying “*Je suis Charlie*” does not necessarily entail that one agrees with mockeries of the Prophet. As she suggests, one can be *Charlie* in many ways and the slogan is “one that each of us can define in their own manner; I can be wounded by the caricatures and support freedom of expression . . . I can be *Charlie* in marking my solidarity with all those who mobilize against terror . . . many felt that becoming *Charlie* prevented them from criticizing the content of *Charlie* . . . and thus finally affirmed that they were not” (Bouzar in Bianco et al. 2015, p. 16). The perspectivalism in readings of slogan and the absence of coherence on the level of the symbol revealed the internal cleavages that besieged the *Charlie* “community”. Here one oscillated between “literal” and more embracing readings of *Charlie* and more figurative interpretations that indeed dehistoricized *Charlie* and deradicalized its political vision. As for the surviving members of *Charlie Hebdo*, or those who really were *Charlie*, they readily accused a large part of the *Charlies* for being hypocrites, cowards, and liars (Bouzar in Bianco et al. 2015, p. 19). In other words, *Charlie* did not feel that “*Je suis Charlie*” signaled any real solidarity with them and also noticed, like many, how the phrase was instrumentalized and how it called into question their own longstanding pacifism and rabid atheism. How could one be *Charlie* and not steadfastly affirm the sacred right to blasphemy?

One should be suspicious of slogans, but nonetheless critically attentive to their capacity to establish Schmittian frontiers between friends and foes, between those who are and those who are not. Freedom of conscience dictates that one also has the right to not be *Charlie* without fear of reprisal. But the phrase divided the hexagon into two imaginary “identitarian communities” and, in the process, rolled back the very freedom of consciousness that it defended. *Charlie* was open in its disdain for radical Islam and radicalisms of all genres which it ceaselessly combated with the crayon. In the paranoia of the *après-Charlie*, the slogan was also entwined in the rhetoric of combat. *Je suis Charlie* . . . we are at war . . . Defend Paris. Hence, the taboo on the clash of civilizations thesis was also lifted: whereas Huntington’s ideas were once considered as mere ideological fodder for US geopolitics in the post-cold war era, after *Charlie*, references to the clash of civilizations were invoked ad nauseam by French intellectuals on the left and right without the least hesitation. For other Catholic philosophers,

the discourse of the new crusades was also not off limits (See [Marion 2015](#)). In the nexus of combat, the logo also has a dialogical function: on January 7th, one of the Kouachi brothers exclaims “we killed Charlie” and 5 days later France responded in saying *Je suis Charlie*. And is there not a fleeting analogy between the block-printed black and white flags of ISIS and the block-printed black and white design of *Je suis Charlie*, revealing the unconscious existence of a war of sacralities? If civil religion aspires to employ religious sentiments for political objectives, it does not necessarily do away with religion whose authority and visions of transcendence may often refuse those political objectives and the rituals, cults, and baptisms that fortify them. *Je suis Charlie*, an emblem of the republic, polarized—it divided Muslims against Muslims, non-Muslims against Muslims, the poor against the elites, the poor against the poor, and the left against the left. In the process, it obliged us all to rethink what the identity of the Republican political community really is. Unfortunately, the process of such rethinking and recalibration remains unachieved, just as the sacred frenzies of January 11th waned and grew exhausted. After the long cycle of terrorism that crippled France in the years following “Charlie”, “Je suis Charlie” was replaced by “Je suis fatigué”.

### 3. Sacré Union

#### 3.1. Are “They” Coming . . . ?

The sacred may oppose the profane, but it can also be deployed to suture negativity and absorb contradiction. Yet, in its attempts to establish epistemological coherence, its integrity is never guaranteed. The sacralisation of January 11th was perhaps over-determined, a desperate effort to disavow the existence of two Frances, two peoples, and the narrative of trauma and social exclusion that festers underneath all talk of the sacred republican substrate. Any posing of “the people” implicitly evokes, through the dialectic of presence as absence, the material and symbolic peripheries of the imaginary community and its eventual coming apart. Trepidation was felt in the moments leading up to the Republican Marches; the question that occupied many, but that no one dared ask, was—would “they” come? Those of Arabo-Muslim origin found themselves once again burdened with the task of offering “proof” of their belonging and solidarity. And if they remained silent/absent, one could only interpret this abstention as evidence for their belief that “Charlie had it coming”, *de facto* branding them as co-conspirators with Islamism. Beyond this, other questions loomed; What was so special about *Charlie*? Why did the Republic not march after Mohammed Meerah’s attacks on a Jewish school in Toulouse? What if the events of January, 2015 concerned only the Hyper-Kasher supermarket? Would there still be a sacred union? Many a troubled conscience also asked whether the “crystallization” of January 11th was unconsciously a march not simply against Islamic terrorism, but Islam itself. Was it indeed a glorious spectacle where white elites affirmed their right, to not just freedom of speech, but to punch down and mock the religion of the largely marginalized—an exercise in cruelty? With some exception, most accounts from the ground confirmed that “they” did not come and that underneath the slogans, totems, and chanting, there was also a coming to consciousness of, as Pierre Rosanvallon suggests, the cleavage between an “involved France” and an “abandoned France”, a tragic reckoning with how “appeals to Republican order would not suffice to recreate society” ([Rosanvallon 2015](#)). And in the midst of these ruminations, the on-going debate between classical French Republicanism and Anglo-Saxon liberalism was re-ignited. But unlike its intellectual precedents in the 1990s, it was generally admitted that, this time, the stakes of the debate were enormous, that France may have one last chance to “get it right”.

#### 3.2. Catholic Zombies

January 11th placed in relief the internal disarray of the left which had continued to gestate since the “Veil Affair” pitting an “old school” Republican left against a “new school” liberal pluralist/culturalist left. For the former, Europe and its tradition of freedom of expression was non-negotiable. For the latter, Europe was plagued by the ghosts of colonialism and its traditions of

secularism and freedom of speech risked lapsing into trenchant forms of Islamophobia. In addition, was there a normative ground for something called “Western values” or “Republican values?” In the post-*Charlie* days, these camps ceased to engage in simple mediatized intellectual gaming, but morphed into fully fledged orthodoxies vying for positioning in the public discourse and ratcheting up their respective attempts to direct public consciousness. According to Anastasia Colosimo, *Charlie* had something of a political “ricochet effect” wherein “the left tears itself apart, find itself blocked in its ambivalence to *progressisme*, which it is charged with defending and signals the fictional nature of its supposed unanimity . . . a Charlie left . . . a communitarian left . . . the stakes of the moment would concern the question of alterity, particularly that of Muslims, and its treatment which would over-determine the resurgence of blasphemy” (Colosimo 2016, pp. 21–22). In effect, the “cartoon debate” was part of a much larger debate or rather the allegorical image of the fractures themselves.

In the hexagon, the fracture(s) reached a point of paroxysm in Emmanuel Todd’s controversial excavation of the event’s real unconscious. The demographer, veering between sociological analysis and investigative journalism, took it upon himself to explain, once and for all, who *Charlie really was*. And, according to Todd, he was not what many wanted him to be. The people did not descend onto the streets on January 11th to defend their love of liberty and non-domination. Rather, the ostensible absence of the Arabo-Muslim community and mediatized concatenations of the republican marches compelled Todd to surmise that the event was an imposture, a “Catholic zombie effect” or a totalitarian and neo-populist orgy for a largely Islamophobic and hegemonic white middle class (Todd 2015, pp. 70–77). In effect, the unconscious of the event and the unconscious of the unconscious was also split between a left *laïc* polarity and a right Catholic polarity who secretly conspired within the rhetorical vacuum that was *Je suis Charlie*. Hence, for Todd,

Charlie, like Maastricht, functions in two modes, one conscious and positive, liberal, egalitarian, and republican, and the other, unconscious and negative, authoritarian and non-egalitarian, which dominates and excludes . . . it is necessary to concentrate our attention on the concrete objectives of the event (*January 11th*) to understand its latent values. Above all, it was a question of affirming a social power, a type of domination, an objective attained through marching in mass. The identification with the satiric journal *Charlie Hebdo* reveals a powerful dimension of rejection on the part of the demonstrator. The Republic reconstructs itself through championing the right to blasphemy and applies immediately the obligation to blaspheme on the emblematic personage of a minoritarian religion of a *socially excluded* group . . . the violence of the demonstrations of January 11th. Millions of Frenchmen took to the streets and took as the priority of their society the right to spit on the religion of the weak . . . does Charlie have a relationship to the darkest years of contemporary France? (Todd 2015, pp. 87–88)

Todd thus profanes the purported sacrality of January 11th and the aura of its political ritual. Underneath its supposed Islamophobia is furthermore the specter of anti-Semitism and the identification of a “people” with their “religion”, a recipe for the most unsavory of essentialisms, racisms, and xenophobias. Furthermore, regardless of the rhetorical power of its appeals to egalitarianism, the left and the extreme left are complicit with the right and extreme right in their unconscious embrace of the value of non-egalitarianism (Todd 2015, p. 176). Todd instructs us to be suspicious of the middle class who, despite their cosmopolitan posturing, remain insular and paranoid; they simply cannot “wesh, wesh” with the kids in the *banlieue* and this, it would seem, is reason enough to resent them. Finally, *Charlie* punched down and while Todd is not problematizing the critique of religion, he is ultimately claiming that irreverence and critique are conditional and contingent. One must never insult the weak or the “victims” regardless of their beliefs and dogmas.

The “Todd effect” unleashed a maelstrom. The Charlie left and the culturalist left lambasted each other as being respectively Islamophobic and Islamo-*gauchiste* apologists for terror (i.e., “the attacks were France’s fault” etc.). And if the former were denounced by Todd and co. for unconsciously endorsing the positions of the extreme right, the latter were denounced by the *laïc* for unconsciously

collaborating with Islamic extremism and rationalizing terrorism. Caroline Fourest, for instance, reproached Todd for deploying the social sciences and faulty methodology to find excuses for terrorism while also fortifying an “*islamo-gauchisme*” that chooses to remain blind to the realities of Islamism; instead, for Fourest, they prefer to pass their time performing an on-going inquisition of secularists who are all unwittingly Islamophobic (Fourest 2015). One could argue that the Todd effect forecloses the spirit of critique and intellectual rigor and vulgarly confounds appeals to secularism and *laïcité* with racism. Beyond this, it was said that Todd insulted the dignity of those who marched, perversely profited from a moment of trauma for self-interested purposes, and committed a type of treason in insinuating that the event was haunted by neo-Vichyist undertones. Fellow demographers also questioned the integrity of Todd’s findings and assailed him for over-determining the absence of Arabo-Muslims at the event and unconsciously exacerbating the anxieties concerning their absence/silence (see Harris Interactive/LCP in Levy 2015). Beyond overlooking the ethnic or “social mixity” of January 11th, Todd’s “simplism” also, according to others, elided the heterogeneity of class at the event where, indeed, the workers were present (see Corcuff 2016). And as for the “spirit of January 11th”, Luc Rouban’s demography concludes that amongst those who marched, Catholics were in the minority with the majority of demonstrators being anti-Islamophobic, tolerant, and primarily of the left; in fact, as Rouban notes, “the thesis of Emmanuel Todd is contradictory in and of itself. It remains that the general perception of Islam in France is unfavorable, but as our responses indicate, the issue is rather about what Islam represents for the Republic. Nonetheless, our survey shows that Islamophobia is above all present amongst those who did not march” (Rouban 2015). Space precludes an examination of Todd’s unconscious or that of the culturalist left, but one wonders what interests motivate their ideological agendas and those of their adversaries. *Je suis Charlie’s* identity may be a mystery, but perhaps he was more *Charlie* than Todd presumed.

Catholics themselves were none too pleased either. Beyond objecting to the appellation “zombie”, many cultural and religious Catholics objected to Todd’s attempt to group them with those who vindicated the right to blasphemy and defended the absolutism of *Charlie’s laïcité*. An equal opportunity hater, *Charlie* deplored Catholicism and indeed the one time that it lost a defamation case, it followed its decision to publish a caricature of the pope being beheaded. On the one hand, Catholics insisted that there were many species of zombie, including Jewish, Muslim, and Republican. On the other hand, they also asserted that they were not and never were *Charlie*. In the midst of the Todd effect, the Catholic newspaper *la Croix*, argued that “for Catholics, the valorization of the right to blasphemy and the suspicion of all religious discourse in the public sphere left one bitter. They are divided between a fear of Islam and a fear of *laïcité* . . . the religious, like many other Frenchmen feel less equal than many; perhaps the zombie of January 11th is the Republic” (La Croix 2015). Roland Hureau would further draw attention to a growing “non-zombie Catholic fringe” who “identified in no way with *Charlie*” and understood January 11th as “not simply a subliminal rejection of Islam, but of all religions” (Hureau 2015). And although in the crowds of January 11th, one spotted signs reading *Je suis Juif, Je suis Musulman, Je suis Catholique, Je suis Charlie*, the event was hardly an exercise in inter-religious dialogue. And what cannot be ignored was the simple fact that *Charlie’s* own political pedigree, anarchist-communist-*laïque*, resolutely opposed all religions. January 11th thus also asked the question that continues to plague the Republic; is *laïcité* the condition for all religions, as it claims to be, or an alternative to religion which secretly desires to outflank and outbid “traditional religions”. In addition, January 11th did not necessarily reconcile. Rather it produced its own demons in the “non-zombie” fringes epitomized in, for instance, Jean-Marie Le Pen’s clever *détournement* of the slogan: *Je suis Charles Martel*.

Todd’s myopic obsession with Arabo-Muslim absence/silence also refused to take into account the multitude of global Muslim voices who decried in January 2015, “Not in my name”. It also repudiated, like the mainstream media (who can only enthrall through Manichean oppositions), the existence of an Arabo-Muslim Republican-*laïque* “fringe” who were *Charlie* and who deeded Todd’s provocations and the rhetoric of “don’t punch down” to be nothing short of a type of anti-racist racism, a racism with a

friendly face. Following from this, Todd unwittingly fixes a group of people in their “ethno-religious” origins and encumbers them with the identitarian and communitarian. Such a discursive elaboration participates in the exclusionary reifying practices that it seeks to combat, all the while scientifically barring the Arabo-Muslim from the symbolic and social processes of integration. The “social question” is corrupted by the “religious question”. In short, in attacking stigmatization, Todd reproduces the performance of stigma in a paternalistic operation. Against Todd, in #Je suis Marianne, Lydia Guirous explains the political ethos of this other fringe as such:

Despite his nice feelings and his programmed revolt, he (*Todd*) cannot hide his condescendence to Muslims: a neo-colonial condescendence which drips in all his analyses . . . The hysteria of certain Muslims at the caricatures of the prophet do not, however, express the thinking of the majority. Todd wants to erect a defense of the indignant Muslim, refusing him to thus be treated as a free subject having the capacity for autonomy. For Mr. Todd, the Muslim is under-developed and cannot understand *laïcité*, the Republic, or liberty. In addition, Todd sees nothing wrong with religious fundamentalism, but rejects *laïcité* . . . “a new religion which constitutes a real threat” . . . He validates a communitarian and multicultural society. And while France has always been a multi-ethnic society, it has never been multicultural ([Guirous 2016](#), pp. 18–20).

Thus, a strange unspoken union may have also taken shape between the radical Islam and politically correct liberals like Todd. Such a silencing of critical voices, both internal and external to the religion itself, not only defers the possibility of a vital and necessary conversation, but freezes the Muslim in a purely religious identity and extricates her from the possibilities, both political and spiritual, promised by spirited public debate and critique/auto-critique.

### 3.3. The Tears of the Prophet

On January 15th, 2015, Soufiane Zitouni, a professor of philosophy at a high school in Lille and “firstly a French citizen and then someone of Muslim culture”, published an article in *Libération* entitled “Today the Prophet is Also Charlie” ([Zitouni 2015a](#)). In a predominantly Muslim classroom, he opted to read the *Hadith* against the grain; he told the story of an inconsolable Mohammed whose distress is caused by the fact that he knows that, one day in the future, he will have to testify against his own community. The fable completes itself in February of 2007 where on the cover of *Charlie Hebdo*, the sobbing prophet, “overwhelmed by fundamentalists”, appears again uttering “It is hard being loved by idiots”. For Zitouni, it was Cabu, a cartoonist at *Charlie Hebdo*, who “relayed the Hadith”. Noting that the ban on images of the Prophet is apocryphal, the professor went on to ask why, pace François Roustang, certain Muslims are incapable of laughter, why certain Muslims entertain a paranoiac rapport with their religiosity which prevents them from getting the joke—how to make a fundamentalist laugh? He concluded his brief allegory with the affirmation that “the prophet, caricatured, insulted, mocked, and, above all ignored, is, today, also *Charlie* . . . Mohammed cries with all the innocent victims of barbarism and ignorance . . . he asks Allah for forgiveness for all of the sheep who claim his religion without understanding the essence of his message (Figure 3)” ([Zitouni 2015a](#)). Zitouni found himself immediately ostracized by both his students and his colleagues.

Beyond the “tense ambiance” in the professor’s lounge (where a copy of his article was ingloriously stapled to the wall), Zitouni was subjected to a programmed “counter-attack” by the director of the high school and Sofiane Meziani, a fellow professor of Islamic ethics and supposed Muslim brotherhood sympathizer ([Zitouni 2015b](#)). The latter accused him of cultivating the abject and the racist, stigmatizing Muslims, and demonstrating a blatant lack of respect for his own religion ([Meziani 2015](#)). Simultaneously, he was accosted by a barrage of anti-Semitic conspiracy theories by his students ([Zitouni 2015b](#)) who also charged him with “kissing the feet of the enemies of Islam” ([Vécrin 2015](#)). He concluded that the high school itself, where the texts of the brothers Ramadan littered the bookshelves, was complicit in transmitting Islamism to its own students. Fatigued by the swaths of accusations of ethno-religious treason and the subterranean Koranic atmosphere of the Republican

high school, Zitouni's "blasphemy" would bring him to resign his post, after which he was sued by the high school itself for defamation.

Amongst Zitouni's ripostes against the high school was the charge of "double speak" and the manner in which it publicly lauded Republican values and *laïcité* while accommodating and thus advocating the existence of Islamist currents in classroom and in the professor's lounge. Such double-speak is also broadly representative of the bad faith laden within the discourse of much of the culturalist left where, for instance, following the November 18th anti-terrorist raids in St. Denis, the municipality's mayor pled ignorance and remarked that St. Denis, hailed by Kepel as the Mecca of France, was a peaceful, multicultural *banlieue*, known for its great cultural diversity. Zitouni was pushed out of his post for his republicanism. He was pushed out of his post for his refusal to accept the overlapping of the religious and the political. He was pushed out because he pleaded for the blasphemed to tolerate the blasphemer and affirmed that cultural diversity must also be a political and intellectual diversity. His greatest error was his claiming of citizenship, derided by his detractors as "treason". However, the cultivation of strong forms of equality, and paradoxically the possibility of religious pluralism, may require a bit of treason—the forging of a political community may require the betrayal of (but never completely) one's class, race, religion, and myth of origins (and this goes for France as well).



Figure 3. The Tears of the Prophet.

#### 3.4. Charlie Coulibaly

The Todd effect was more or less delimited to intellectual debate and the French mediasphere where, as is well known, elites reproduce themselves and attempt to direct the national conversation. However, the afterlives of January 11th were also typified by a host of underground voices and "dissident" fringes who shared Todd's fundamental theses while reshaping their veracity and provocation. What set the *Charlie Hebdo* "events" apart from other tragedies was the degree to which their significance was informed by, not simply what happened at *Place de la République*, but also what happened in the public sphere of the digital world. Unlike the material public sphere, the world of cyber-forums and social media is one of anonymity, distance, and "enabling". In these virtual folds, the ethical norms of embodied and face-to-face encounters are often dissolved. In the hashtag frenzy of *Charlie Hebdo*, one was therefore also plunged into various vindications for the terrorist acts, ranging from the complex of ambivalence connoted by #jenesuispascharlie to the fully fledged celebrations of how "they had it coming, they got what they deserved", expressed in #jesuiscoulibaly/#jesuiskouachi. And beyond these readings was also ISIS' own coding of the debate.

The attacks against *Charlie Hebdo* were not simply acts of jihad designed to avenge the prophet, punish blaspheming "miscreants", and bring the war for the new caliphate to Europe. They were also intended to exacerbate the already existing tensions between secular Europeans and Muslims with a view to laying the socio-affective foundations for a highly anticipated civil war. They were further motivated by the desire to establish an internal struggle within Islam which would purge the *ummah* of moderate elements and those Muslims who adopted European values and protested

against Salafism's regressive tendencies. Stated otherwise, "Charlie" was also about redefining Islam. The specular double of *jihad* is *fitna* (see [Kepel 2004](#)), the internal purging of the enemies of Islam.

In the February 12th, 2015 edition of ISIS' glossy "jihadology" rag, *Dabiq*, one glimpses two elderly imams holding *Je suis Charlie* signs, under which the caption reads: "From Hypocrisy to Apostasy: The Elimination of the Gray Zone". Islam's lack of central command is what informs the plurality of its religious practices, but it is simultaneously that which animates the drive, often paranoiac, to establish one definitive recension of the religion, one reading of the one book, and one dogma. An exercise in terror-porn, *Dabiq* is a recruitment vehicle and also an ideological arm for *fitna*, intended to organize the geopolitical arena into two well-defined camps and recode the social, political, and religious in terms of a cosmic war between the righteous and the infidels. And the infidels are also those Muslims who condemned the Charlie Hebdo attacks. After *Charlie*,

the time had come for another event—magnified by the presence of the Khilāfah on the global stage—to further bring division to the world and destroy the grayzone everywhere. One of the first matters renounced by the hypocrites abandoning the grayzone and fleeing to the camp of apostasy and kufr after the operations in Paris is the clear-cut obligation to kill those who mock the Messenger (sallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam) . . . (to kill those) who raise banners and slogans with the words "Je Suis Charlie" on them. There is no doubt that such deeds are apostasy, that those who publicly call to such deeds in the name of Islam and scholarship are from the du'āt (callers) to apostasy, and that there is great reward awaiting the Muslim in the Hereafter if he kills these apostate imams . . . ([ISIS 2015](#), p. 58)

Defenders of freedom of speech, regardless of their faiths, are dismissed *tout court* as heretics who, lost in the gray zone, secretly defend the "satanic newspaper" *Charlie Hebdo*. What is often neglected by media on Islamism is the extent to which its rancor is directed at fellow Muslims, including those killed at *Charlie Hebdo*, on November 13th, 2015, and July 14th, 2016. And underneath the play of *jihad* and *fitna* is the disquieting truth that they are processes defined by both religious convictions and self-aggrandizing tendencies, processes which do not hesitate to accumulate Muslim deaths for the accumulation of theo-political capital. Hence, as Tariq Ali remarks, "we now know that the assault on *Charlie Hebdo* was the outcome of intra-Wahhabi rivalry. The attack has been claimed by Ayman al-Zawahiri as an al-Qaida initiative, organized by its section in the Yemen . . . His organisation has been outflanked and partially displaced by the Islamic State and a global act of terror was needed to restore its place as the leading terror group" ([Ali 2015](#)). *Charlie* was a stratagem and the journal's sordid reputation in the Islamist world, a mere by-product of a thriving grievance industry designed to serve the needs of dueling muftis.

In unison, #JesuisCharlie would breed its dark dialectical other. French Comic Dieudonné would be amongst the first apostatic voices to "blaspheme" the spirit of January 11th and the civil religion it purported to erect. Fellow traveler of the reformed communist come Le Penist, Alain Soral, who was notorious for his unbridled anti-Americanism, anti-Semitism, and anti-americano-Sionism, on the evening of the 11th, would post on his Facebook page: "know that tonight, what interests me, is that I feel like *Charlie Coulibaly*". Within a mere 30 min, the post would receive 1938 likes and be shared 137 times ([L'Express 2016](#)). Dieudonné was well aware of what he was doing and deliberately opted to tests the Republic's own tolerance and engender a debate on the hypocrisies of freedom of expression. In the process, he also knew that his remarks would serve to protract the "fractures". The Republic was cornered. Would it let the remark pass or "take the bait" and apply its own law forbidding apologies for terrorism. It chose the latter and Dieudonné's facile provocation, "*un parole de paix*", would oblige many who occupied the gray zone to become full-fledged members of the anti-Charlie camp. For some, the Republic's sanction of "*Charlie Coulibaly*" served as proof of the existence of double standards in its policy and its latent Islamophobia and pro-Sionism. Moreover, the subtlety of the phrase and the post lie in its problematization of who the real victim was. But the obvious recurring question that perplexed was why *Charlie* had the right and not Dieudonné. According to Cypora Petitjean Cerf, following the scandal, some students in the *banlieue* did indeed, "glorify Amedy Coulibaly . . . the

young fans of Coulibaly could easily appropriate his anti-Semitism . . . as for the recurring question . . . it is not malicious if we understand the hyper-sensibility of infants and adolescents to injustice” (Cerf 2015, pp. 56–57). However, this hyper-sensibility also reproduces itself as hyper-sensibility to the imagined virility and violence bound in the mythos of *Charlie Coulibaly*, one which offers a compensatory salve to many youth who cannot define their masculinity in terms of the normative pathway of school, work, family etc. *Charlie Coulibaly* was thus a mythical sign in which the experience of alienation and exclusion were magically transformed into triumph and belonging. On the other hand, we should also recall that the entire sequence may simply be just another episode in puerile adolescent rebellion.

Soon, the cyber-world was overcome by variations on a theme: #jenesuispascharlie, #jesuiscoulibaly, #jesuiskouachi, #che (well-done!) etc. All of these iterations, occupying a spectrum between playful bad taste and real menace, registered en vivo the chasm between the two Frances. Some tweets rendered homage to the heroism of the terrorists and elevated them to the status of celebrities, while others simply noted that *Charlie*, racist and Islamophobic, had gone too far and this is what happens when . . . And there were of course a plethora of “Third ways” and mixed feelings epitomized in the tweets, graffiti, and posters which read “I am not Charlie, I am not a Terrorist, I am Muslim”. The two (or many) Frances would collide in the virtual world in a nexus of posturing, shaming, and sarcastic bloviating. And in between the celebrations of *Charlie’s* demise and the super-ego that chided them, a shadow quickly formed over January 11th transmuting its civic religion into an exercise in cynical disavowal. Yet the voices that sought to call into question the purported sanctity of the event were by no means unanimous, homogenous, or entirely Muslim. According to Romain Badouard, there exists three paradigmatic articulations of anti-*Charlie*: a “*JesuisCharlie*, mais”, which readily criticized all rhetoric of the national Union and saw through the state’s attempt to recuperate French emotion for its own political purposes. This critique generally came from the left and deplored the Republic’s usage of *Charlie* as a reason to ramp up national security and reduce civil liberties; the second iteration was a conservative and sincere “*JenesuispasCharlie*” coming from, amongst others, “Catholic Zombies” and the extreme religious right; and the third version was that of “ordinary Muslims” who rejected *Charlie* on the grounds of racism and Islamophobia (see Badouard 2016). The former two paradigms were eclipsed by the mediatized preoccupation with the third whose viral-ness was actually negligible in comparison.

### 3.5. Don’t Laïk . . .

Nevertheless, one must also remain attentive to the nascent waves of fundamentalist and Islamist political cultures in the *banlieues* and in France, in general. Although a minority, the radicalized and the radicalizing exist. Regardless of the fact that their “prison Islam”, “internet Islam” or “Islam for idiots” is not representative of the complexity of the religion, it must be recognized as a perverse current of political Islam whose mutations require the greatest of vigilance. It is not without consternation that on a stroll through St. Denis or Aubervilliers, one hears a disconcerting refrain: here Frenchman let you know “you’re no longer in France, you’re in the 93” and in their recoding and reterritorialization of the banlieue as “their’s”, they construct their identities as *banlieuesard* and often as Muslims against “eux, la française”. Indeed, the world of social media may not be the only map of the complex constellation of faith and feeling that reverberates in the hexagon, home to Europe’s largest Muslim population.

In other words, *Charlie* has to also be read in synchrony with the larger aesthetic and cultural constellation of the *banlieue*, including the halalisation of its landscape and the hip hop that forms its soundtrack. Here one sees the “crystallization” of the syncretic, on-line, and modernized Islam of adolescents who fuse the imagined virility of Islam with hip-hop culture and create a unique and, to pastiche Olivier Roy, “de-cultured” version of ‘street Islam’. This new religion is bereft of tradition and transmission. It is obsessed with dogma, not theology. It basks in strict social and political interdictions and leaves no room for fluidity or multiple interpretations. Often it plays between the disparate universes of hip-hop consumption and indulgence (jewelry, cars, dreams of harems of



groupies—this is often coupled with anti-Semitism, misogyny, and homophobia) and a religiously militant or “consciousness-based” secondary-coding that responds to the position of second generation Muslims in France. It is the latter that participates in the radicalization process, precisely where the ordinary delinquent becomes a heroic warrior for God. This is the Islam of “generation Grand Theft Auto”.

The French hip hop community was never fond of *Charlie*. For the soundtrack to the 2013 film *Le Marche* which commemorated and told the story of the 1983 March for Equality and Against Racism (later dubbed the Marche des Beurs), a French rap collective, including legends such as Akhenaton and Kool Shen, contributed the track “Marche”. And here, Nekfu would rail against those “theorists who wanted to silence Islam” and “demand an autodafé for those dogs at Charlie Hebdo”. The staff of *Charlie* was simply confused and failed to understand how a group of rappers could take a page out of the play book of the extreme right and use the release of a filmic homage to anti-racism to lash out, *in a communitarian manner*, at the historically anti-racist *Charlie* (Le Monde 2013). Following January 11th, the same rappers condemned the *Charlie Hebdo* attacks, but did not retract the criticisms expressed in “Marche”.

On January 1, 2015, another rapper, Médine, would release on Youtube the first single from his new album entitled “Don’t Laïk”. A devastating and acerbic critique of French secularism and its proponents, when asked about the song’s significance, the rapper cleverly equivocated: “Don’t Laïk is to *laïque* fundamentalists what the *Charlie Hebdo* caricatures are to religious fundamentalists” and the previous author of “Blockkk Identitaire” would castigate those other “*laïque* identitarians” who “march on the streets of Paris next those ultra-*laïque* movements who decry ‘Islamisation’ (Médine 2015). And while the rapper may have claimed to be symbolically inverting the spirit of caricature that defined *Charlie* (Médine 2015), there was nothing funny about the clip and the lyrics where self-proclaimed “Islam-racailles (thugs)” who stared menacingly into the camera as Médine called them to: “crucify the laïcards like at Golgotha . . . If I apply Sharia law, the thieves won’t be able to put their hands up when the cops come . . . I am cutting down the tree of *laïcité* before they put us on the ground . . . your veil, my sister, in this country its Don’t Laïk . . . *laïcité* is only a shadow between the light and the illuminated, we are the scarecrows of the Republic, the elites are the proselytizers and the ultra-*laïque* propagandists, I’m good with Allah, don’t need to *laïcise* myself . . . we’re all going to paradise, only if you believe”. The *racaille*, previously a lowly delinquent, has now been recast into an anti-republican and anti-secular militant. He is a soldier of God in a celestial war that plays itself out in the streets of European cities. For Médine and his cohorts, religion is “cool:” it is less an order of oppression than something that gives the oppressed the agency to take on their oppressors—a political hermeneutic and powerful place of authority deployed to assail those who are perceived to have excluded you and profane all that they hold sacred. Iconoclasm vs. Iconoclasm in a spiral of provocation and retaliation. The song would become an anthem for many of the disabused who were *JenesuispasCharlie*. Furthermore, as Kepel remarks, it would embolden the “profanations of the republican sacred” that circulated on and around January 11th, the evening of which it would receive 1000 viewers with a total of almost a million by the end of the month (Kepel 2016, pp. 290–91). As a sort of visual-aural supplement to *JenesuispasCharlie* and corrosion of the spirit of January 11th, it would counter-blaspheme. In the video’s final moments, Marianne is seen eating tri-colored cake marked Halal (Figure 4).

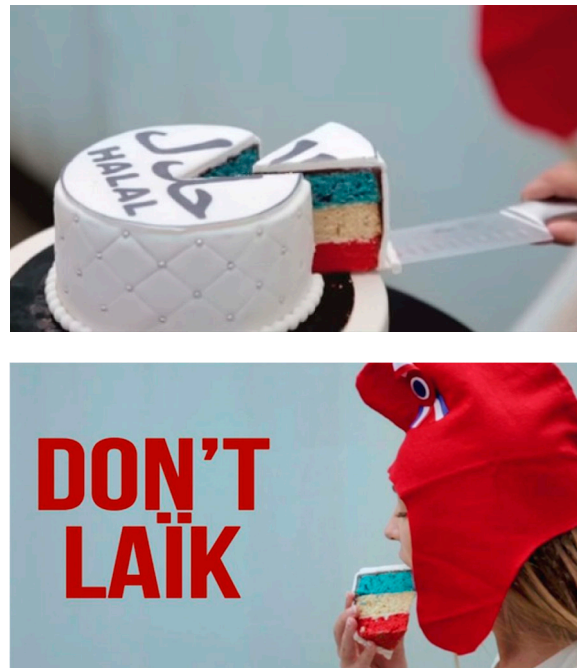


Figure 4. “Don’t Laik”.

#### 4. In Search of the People . . .

##### 4.1. *The Universal and the Really Concrete*

The divergences evinced in and around January 11th weakened the generally perceived permanence of the Republican vulgate. They also posed the question of whether the crisis of solidarity, now exacerbated by the erection of new identitarian borders within the Republic, could be remedied with appeals to that same vulgate. In addition, the event also illuminated the paradoxes laden within the Republic’s historical attempts to institutionalize social mixity and simultaneously supplement the realities of economic and social inequity with appeals to symbolic integration and the routine re-inocations of classical Republican ideological tropes. In the post-January 11th reckoning, references to “the people” and “fraternity” were repeated, by people and “zombies” alike, to abreact the traumas. Of course, the repetition of such categories does not magically bring about their realization. And the tensions between the abstract and in particular, between the universal and the concrete, seemed to reach a querulous crescendo. “The People”, already a contentious category, was again subject to interrogation, but this time, in terms of the concept’s use and limits in engaging with and explaining pluralist societies. If “the people” have historically functioned as a transcendent threshold where particularities dissolve, following January 11th, many asked, with varying degrees of irony, “what color are the people”, “what class are the people?”, “where do the people live?”, . . . “did the people really descend into the streets on January 11th?” etc. Insofar as Republican political theory is constituted by a set of overlapping and coextensive concepts and signifiers, debates concerning the existence and make-up of the people inherently damage the power of the vulgate *tout court*, including the wellspring of the Republican sacred, fraternity.

##### 4.2. *The Movement of January 11th: Of Fraternity and Conviviality*

The civil religious conceptual supplement to the people is found in fraternity, an idea which was also revived and re-interrogated with vigor after January 11th. Republics understand the purpose of politics to be not happiness or prosperity, but rather solidarity and fraternity. Stated otherwise, unlike liberal democracies, the republican ethos is not an association of strangers who search for a means of peacefully coexisting and staying out of each other’s way. Unlike liberal democracies,

republics are not simple institutional frameworks that provide the guard rails for the excesses of the state of nature. They are places of the common where citizenship is not simply a juridical category, but also the occasion for friendship and the creation of shared political passions. Fraternity is a type of political alchemy. It is a process where the individual will dissolves into the social—where freedom is not experienced as the pure articulation of self, but indeed grasped in the liberation from the self. On the one hand, it is fraternity which is wielded to compensate for the lacunae and contradictions found in the practices of liberty and equality. It is a symbolic buttress against the deficits laden in these categories and a means of gesturing towards solidarity in conditions of inequity. On the other hand, it is the highly ambitious project of mandating the dialectical play of the individual and the social with the latter functioning as the precondition of the former. In Durkheimian terms, it moreover assumes the codependence of social transformation (reform) and the transformation of consciousness (typified by effervescence). Above all, as something ephemeral, as something bound in the mystique of the nation, fraternity participates in the republican sacred. And according to Régis Debray, “as all of our great moments of fraternity make reference to a mythical order of the sacred (ancestors, ideals, nation), it appears necessary to begin by asking what the sacred wants to say concretely” (Debray 2009, p. 16).

This question was posed again following January 11th, most forcefully by the philosophers Patrick Viveret and Abdennour Bidar, who not only examined how fraternity and the Republican sacred interact, but, paradoxically, sought to institutionalize them on the level of policy and praxis. Acknowledging that “fraternity is the sacred”, they were, amongst others, instrumental in the creation of the *Mouvement du 11 Janvier* which seeks to “make live and make bigger the spirit of January 11th” and battle against the possibility of waning effervescence and the cold return to the profane (see *Mouvementdu11* 2015). In addition, both would consecrate philosophical essays exploring the historical problem of “making the sacred last” without profaning it. Frustrated by the French Republic’s longstanding status as rhetoric or a mere series of ideas, for his part, Bidar observed that the lack of social mixity in France, despite the Republic’s best intentions, remained and impermeable obstacle to any realization of the fraternal. Following from this, he demanded that fraternity be treated not as a mythical horizon of republicanism, but something learned, practiced, and taught in schools and at home.

In the logic of political consciousness and merging, for Bidar, this also meant that France must now confront its old demons (colonialism, racism etc.) and Muslims “also have a meeting with theirs. We see know the most visible pure and simple perversions of Islam: terrorist hatred, jihadist ideology, rampant fundamentalism. But it is not the tree that hides the forest; rather there is a forest in a pitiful state. Here, in the Occident, in Muslim communities and elsewhere in the Muslim world, the same general ills; the same deficits of spiritual culture, degraded often by religious sub-cultures that forbid the exercise of intelligence, which separates religion and freedom, and translates the Arab word Islam as submission” (Bidar 2015, p. 49) Yet, in the collective auto-critique demanded by January 11th, the nation must realize that there can be no fraternity without Muslims just as Muslims must realize that there can be no nation without an Islam purged of extremist elements. Hence, January 11th inaugurates a process of battling with old demons which forms the precondition for any evocation of fraternity or the republican sacred. Beyond the simulacra of the sacred-social, the unconscious of both Islam and France need to be excavated. For Bidar, the “sublime drama of January”, is the space from where a “Republican Islam of France can be born” (Bidar 2015, p. 59), and with it a “shared sacred” which competes neither with religions nor with atheisms (Bidar 2015, p. 63). In such an instantiation, a new genus of ecumenical fraternity can be erected which re-spiritualizes the nation all the while “republicanising Islam”. Therefore, religions, which are neither permanent nor fixed can be brought to adapt to national contexts, rewrite their texts accordingly, and calibrate their tenets to moral frameworks of their “host” nations. They can reform themselves and simultaneously maintain their historicity and collective memory. And in these elaborate processes of rewriting, they can write themselves into the national narrative as partners in the construction of Europe and France. The question is precisely how to dialectically surpass the “war of opposing sacreds” and create a

shared sacred of peace (Bidar 2015, p. 92). The question, of course, is how to “rewrite”, who does the “rewriting”, and who performs the necessary “translations”?

To escape the rhetorical impasses of republicanism, Bidar proposes, amongst other things, the construction of a “ministry of Fraternity”, the establishment of “spaces of fraternity” in neighborhoods and communes, the mainstreaming of “fraternal education” in public schools, the creation of governmental forums to reflect on Islam, and obligatory civic service (Bidar 2015, pp. 95–106). To these propositions, Patrick Viveret, in the name of “Fraternité, Laïcité . . . Spiritualité”, adds the need to “concretize the fraternal energy of the 11th” through regular fraternal exercises in public spaces, the construction of new associations, regular public debates with civil societies and the youth of the *banlieue*, and the concerted attempt to resist the political instrumentalisation of *Charlie* through a public denouncement of cultures of hyper-security (Viveret 2015, pp. 162–64). Despite the epistemic force of Bidar and Viveret’s vision of a new fraternal sacred, there, nevertheless, are a series of obstacles to getting there which cannot be removed through simple institutional and collective-action practices.

Nonetheless, we cannot demand those who live in abject, sordid, or unequal conditions to revel in the spirituality of fraternity. Indeed, the symbolic dimensions of fraternity and the inclusion and overcoming that it promises may serve to parry the shocks of social and economic injustice, but it does not get rid of them. Here the question appears to be how fraternity, *laïcité*, and material conditions interact and overlap in the formal construction of the free and equal. This would require that fraternity not simply be the ritual performance of the myth found in the vulgate, but an all-encompassing strategy that works in synchrony with economic and anti-discriminatory policy measures—not as a salve, but as a project. Here we observe the basic dilemma found in French Republicanism, namely the assumption that, through institutional measures, it can transform character, make political beings, and through education and the symbolic, create virtuous citizens. The supposition that citizens are malleable or raw material to be formed by Republican dogma, is problematized by the existence of and the non-malleability of post-modern identity formations for whom religion and ethnicity remain vital empowering strategies for contestation and selfhood. How can one bring modern forms of fraternity and citizenship to confront these post-modern expressions of the rooted, embedded, and encumbered subject? How can one bring fraternity and citizenship to embrace the multiple and the mosaic in a manner that does not divest these ideas of their efficacy vis à vis the sacralisation of the political and the romance of the nation?

Top down approaches to diversity and, in this case, fraternity are rarely successful. We need to then ask, not necessarily how to produce fraternity, but *in what conditions* does fraternity and Republican culture “happen”. This inquiry necessitates that we evade the great paradox of so much “thin” cosmopolitanism and diversity politics, namely the simultaneous deployment of the singularity of identity and its complete disavowal. If fraternity indeed signifies the gesture towards the concrete universal, it must seek a manner to escape such a paradox or render it more supple and dialectical. Hence, in lieu of the monolithic virtues of abstract notions of Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity, we may want to engage with the conditions for “ordinary virtues” where forms of common decency express, on a modest level, the will to fraternity. We glimpse this in Paul Gilroy’s theorization of convivial cosmopolitan life where one finds “processes of cohabitation and interaction that have made multiculturalism an ordinary feature of social life” and also “the point where multiculturalism breaks down”, introducing “a measure of distance from the pivotal term ‘identity,’” and engendering a “radical openness that . . . makes a nonsense of closed, fixed, reified identity and turns attention towards the always unpredictable mechanisms of identification” (Gilroy 2005, p. xv). In convivial technologies of sociality and “distancing”, cosmopolitan citizenship finds perhaps the foundations for an effervescent republican cosmo-polis and spaces of *phronesis* that injects itself into the public political life through ordinary forms of interaction and openness. And, as Gilroy continues, conviviality is also a bastion for a universal ethics or rather “a ‘vulgar’ or ‘demotic’ cosmopolitanism” where the “cosmopolitan attachment finds civic and ethical value in the process of exposure to otherness” and “glories in the ordinary virtues and ironies—listening, discretion, friendship—that can be cultivated

when mundane encounters with difference can be rewarding” (Gilroy 2005, p. xv). Simultaneously, we must not fall into the trap of opposing top-down “recipes for good governance” to an ethics of the ground and recognize that fraternity is not a mystical crystallization either, but the product of an ethical, political, and geographical coalescence that can *only* flourish within certain spatial and governmental arrangements. And here we also evince the other great dilemma of Republicanism, namely how to institutionally and juridically mandate mixity and fraternity—forced to be free, forced to be friends . . . .

#### 4.3. *Laïc* . . .

January 11th was a political and social moment and “place” which allegorized the existence of a divided France, a divided left, and a divided “people”. It cast doubt on the generally perceived eternity of the myths and rites described in the Republican story, while begging for it to be rewritten and heavily annotated. It precipitated a series of difficult psychic processes and purgings on both the level of the nation and within the worlds of a changing Islam. Above all, it reposed the question of the rapport between the sacred and the political in and around the totems of Marianne, the hashtags of *Charlie*, and the larger rubric of *laïcité*. In his response to *Charlie*, Debray would rhapsodize, “there can be no society without sacrality. *Laïcité* was the republican sacred. The sacred is non-negotiable and federating. When we no longer assume the republican sacred . . . hope gets placed elsewhere” (Debray 2015). But when besieged by rival sacralties and burdened by fractures that reveal only spectacles of solidarity, the Republican sacred must be understood as a fragile and tenuous construct whose “health” is only momentarily bolstered in ritual. Furthermore, we cannot simply assume the sanctity of neither the sacred nor *laïcité*. They are not givens, but part of our symbolizing activity and capacity to imagine the political and social health. Perhaps they are non-negotiable, but what we saw on January 11th and its afterlives is the need to labor in their name and continue to refine them as ideas, energies, and passions. The question is how to assure greater transparency in the deliberation where such refining occurs and also the inclusion of multiple voices which are, nonetheless, bound in the shared language of non-domination. *Laïcité* is the precondition of such a shared language and a shared life world. As such, it can be held sacred. This being said, we cannot say whether the victories won and the sacred unions forged in the name of the concept in 1905 can be won and forged again in a post-*Charlie* and post-November 13 national setting. The next chapter of the Republican story remains to be written and it is far from clear what shape it will take.

Stated otherwise, the republic, like “the people”, is the name of a problem and a process. As such, can it truly be non-negotiable, or should it aspire towards a suppleness that may facilitate the completion of the revolution. Yet, amongst the problems we face here is not simply the risk of “liberalizing” the Republic or rather succumbing to the temptation to become like America (which, in many ways would be much easier), but rather the tragic reckoning with how comprising on or rendering less “thick” one Republican principle potentially collapses the entire Republican edifice, comprehensive as it seeks to be. Perhaps the sacred is a vital component for republican society; perhaps the symbolic is a necessary condition for collective life; however, they lose their aura and capacity to enchant when they appear as compensatory salves and ideological *obscura* designed to mask the hypostasized structural inequalities that further push to fracture to its breaking point. Hence, one is led to ask whether the ultimate health of the political sacred depends on the ultimate health of material conditions which, de facto, would engender greater mutual trust and solidarity, therefore allowing for the symbol to speak in a more robust and total manner to all citizens, as opposed to being the occasion to measure good citizens from not good enough citizens. Underneath all of this looms a much larger troubling set of issues, namely those concerning the normativity of “republican values”, their imbrication in the larger nexus of “Western values”, and, often, their selective deployments and instrumentalization in various imaginary dichotomies of conflict which all too easily get sutured in slogans like *Je Suis Charlie*.

However, no one can deny the importance of January 11th, 2015, perhaps not for its recasting of the Republican Sacred or rekindling of Civil Religion, but rather for how it functioned as a space of purging, agonizing, questioning, and wistful awakening to the realities of the new geopolitical landscape and the realities of the return of religion, including those which are far from being civil, let alone civilized. Some four years later, after a spate of more and more brutal terror, the commemoration and mourning have unfortunately become repetitious, fatigued, and absorbed, and have transformed into a mediatized spectacle. Another attack, another demonstration, another march . . . and we will do it again and again, in the name of the Republic and its sacredness whose virtuality we will endlessly strain to actualize. But, perhaps, this provides us with the occasion to think through not the problem of the sacred, but the problem of how the nation and the political, like the person, is haunted by a traumatic core, by the specter of irrationalism and violence. The nation too carries trauma and longs to return to normal. And there are those traumas that are ritually mourned and others whose names are dare not spoken.

Strangely enough, there was an exception and, perhaps, a true moment of the Republican Sacred and Civil Religion: Indeed, when France won the World Cup in July of 2018, the people descended into the streets again, but this time, not to mourn and cry, but to dance, carouse, and celebrate. In this “event’s” unconscious, France was redeemed from the trauma of the recent cycle of terrorism and the reality of the fracture momentarily dissipated. But, World Cup victories are symbolic too . . . .

**Funding:** This research received no external funding.

**Conflicts of Interest:** The author declares no conflict of interest.

## References

- Ali, Tariq. 2015. It Didn’t Need to be Done. *London Review of Books* 37: 1–12.
- Badiou, Alain. 1988. *L’Être et l’Événement*. Paris: Seuil.
- Badouard, Romain. 2016. ‘Je ne suis pas Charlie’ Pluralité des prises de parole sur le web et les réseaux sociaux. In *Le défi Charlie. Les médias à l’épreuve des attentats*. Edited by Pierre Lefébure and Claire Sécail. Paris: Editions Lemieux.
- Bardou, Florian. 2015. Esprit du 11 janvier: “Imposture”, “illusion” ou “gigantesque élan de fraternité”? *Metronews.fr*. May 7. Available online: <http://www.metronews.fr/info/l-esprit-du-11-janvier-apres-l-attentat-de-charlie-hebdo-imposture-illusion-ou-gigantesque-elan-de-fraternite/moeg!U6YSvb4MnXIVc/> (accessed on 1 July 2016).
- Baudrillard, Jean. 1992. *L’Illusion de la fin ou la grève des événements*. Paris: Galilée.
- Bianco, Jean-Louis, Lylia Bouzar, and Samuel Grzybowski. 2015. *L’après-Charlie: 20 questions pour en débattre sans tabou*. Ivre-sur-Seine: Les éditions de l’ateliers.
- Bidar, Abennour. 2015. *Plaidoyer pour la fraternité*. Paris: Albin Michel.
- Bonnet, Cyril. 2015. Charlie Hebdo: “Le crayon guidant le peuple”, décryptage d’une photo culte. *L’Obs*. January 13. Available online: <http://tempsreel.nouvelobs.com/photo/20150113.OBS9862/charlie-hebdo-le-crayon-guidant-le-peuple-decryptage-d-une-photo-culte.html> (accessed on 1 July 2016).
- Buisson, Ferdinand. 2014. Le Fonds religieux de la morale laïque. In *Revue pédagogique*. Paris: Théolib.
- Carrier, Michel. 2005. *Penser le sacré: Les sciences humaines et l’invention du sacré*. Montreal: Liber. Paris: Stock.
- Cerf, Cypora Petitjean. 2015. *Ce jour-là, j’ai commencé à détester les terroristes: Paroles de collégiens*. Paris: Stock.
- Colosimo, Anastasia. 2016. *Les bûchers de la liberté*. Paris: Stock.
- Comte-Sponville, André. 2008. *L’esprit de l’athéisme; introduction à une spiritualité sans Dieu*. Paris: Le livre de poche.
- Corcuff, Philippe. 2016. Retour sur les failles scientifiques de “Qui est Charlie ?” et sur ses écueils politiques. *Médiapart*. January 15. Available online: <https://blogs.mediapart.fr/philippe-corcuff/blog/140116/retour-sur-les-failles-scientifiques-de-qui-est-charlie-et-sur-ses-ecueils-politiques> (accessed on 2 July 2016).
- Coulibaly, Maimouna. 2013. “Booty Therapy”. *YouTube*. June 20. Available online: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bJxzJowsaHA> (accessed on 3 July 2016).
- Debray, Régis. 2009. *Le moment fraternité*. Paris: Gallimard.

- Debray, Régis. 2015. C'est le moment d'assumer notre ADN culturel. *Actupolis*. January 18. Available online: <http://actupolis.com/threads/par-regis-debray-%C2%ABcest-le-moment-dassumer-n-otre-adn-culturel%C2%BB.2215/> (accessed on 3 July 2016).
- Deleuze, Gilles. 1969. *Logique du sens*. Paris: Minuit.
- Duclert, Vincent. 2015. Le récit national permet de surmonter les ruptures. *L'Express*, December 23.
- Durkheim, Émile. 1995. *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*. Translated by Karen Fields. New York: Free Press.
- Durkheim, Émile. 1997. *L'Individualisme et les intellectuels*. Paris: Arthème Fayard.
- Fourest, Caroline. 2015. On ne fera pas baisser le racisme en trouvant des excuses sociologiques aux fanatiques. *Libération*. May 20. Available online: [www.liberation.fr/societe/2015/05/20/on-ne-fera-pas-baisser-le-racisme-en-trouvant-des-excuses-sociologiques-aux-fanatiques\\_1313270](http://www.liberation.fr/societe/2015/05/20/on-ne-fera-pas-baisser-le-racisme-en-trouvant-des-excuses-sociologiques-aux-fanatiques_1313270) (accessed on 4 July 2016).
- Gilroy, Paul. 2005. *Post-Colonial Melancholia*. New York: Columbia Press.
- Guirous, Lydia. 2016. *#Je suis Marianne*. Paris: Grasset.
- Hall, Ellie, and Telling Marie. 2015. Paris Terrorist's Sister Is a Twerking 'Booty Therapy' Dance Teacher. *Buzzfeed*. January 15. Available online: <http://www.buzzfeed.com/elliuehall/paris-terrorists-sister-is-a-twerking-booty-therapy-dance-te#ucEgeXlqZ> (accessed on 6 July 2016).
- Hubert, Henri. 2005. *Les Celtes*. Paris: Albin Michel.
- Hureauux, Roland. 2015. Ce que n'a pas vu Todd: Les catholiques qui ne sont pas. *Charlie. Atlantico*. June 7. Available online: <http://www.atlantico.fr/decryptage/que-pas-vu-todd-catholiques-qui-ne-sont-pas-charlie-roland-hureauux2180458.html#xXYF1xhmW9KCTv4s.99> (accessed on 6 July 2016).
- ISIS. 2015. The Extinction of the Grey Zone. *Dabiq*. February 15, p. 7. Available online: <http://media.clarionproject.org/files/islamic-state/islamic-state-dabiq-magazine-issue-7-from-hypocrisy-to-apostasy.pdf> (accessed on 7 July 2016).
- Kepel, Gilles. 2004. *Fitna: Guerre au coeur de l'Islam*. Paris: Gallimard-Folio.
- Kepel, Gilles. 2016. *Terreur dans l'hexagone; genèse du djihad français*. Paris: Gallimard.
- L'Express. 2016. 'Je me sens Charlie Coulibaly': Dieudonné condamné à deux mois de prison avec sursis. *L'Express*. March 15. Available online: [http://www.lexpress.fr/actualite/societe/justice/je-me-sens-charlie-coulibaly-dieudonne-condamne-a-deux-mois-de-prison-avec-sursis\\_1662430.html](http://www.lexpress.fr/actualite/societe/justice/je-me-sens-charlie-coulibaly-dieudonne-condamne-a-deux-mois-de-prison-avec-sursis_1662430.html) (accessed on 8 July 2016).
- La Croix. 2015. Esprit du 11 Janvier, est-tu là. *La Croix*. June 6. Available online: <http://www.la-croix.com/Articles-du-Forum/Forum-Theme/Esprit-du-11-janvier-es-tu-la-2015-06-12-1322683> (accessed on 8 July 2016).
- Lamouthe, Jérémie. 2015. Le 11 janvier est aussi devenu un phénomène d'édition. *Le Monde*. May 13. Available online: [http://www.lemonde.fr/livres/article/2015/05/13/le-11-janvier-est-aussi-devenu-un-phenomene-d-edition\\_4633065\\_3260.html](http://www.lemonde.fr/livres/article/2015/05/13/le-11-janvier-est-aussi-devenu-un-phenomene-d-edition_4633065_3260.html) (accessed on 8 July 2016).
- Laurentin, Emmanuel. 2015. Pourquoi la République. In *Histoire d'une République fragile 1905–2015—Comment en sommes-nous arrivés là*. Edited by Emmanuel Laurentin. Paris: Fayard.
- Le Monde. 2013. "Charlie Hebdo" "effaré" par la violence d'une chanson liée au film "La Marche". *Le Monde*. November 11. Available online: [www.lemonde.fr/actualite-medias/article/2013/11/25/charlie-hebdo-effare-de-la-violence-de-la-bo-du-film-la-marche-a-son-encontre\\_3519910\\_3236.html#W0dD09qF5Tm637bs.99](http://www.lemonde.fr/actualite-medias/article/2013/11/25/charlie-hebdo-effare-de-la-violence-de-la-bo-du-film-la-marche-a-son-encontre_3519910_3236.html#W0dD09qF5Tm637bs.99) (accessed on 8 July 2016).
- Levy, Jean-Daniel. 2015. Qui sont les manifestants qui ont defiles dimanche. *Huffington Post*. January 15. Available online: [http://www.huffingtonpost.fr/jeandaniel-levy/charlie-hebdo-terrorisme-marche-republicaine\\_b\\_6479746.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.fr/jeandaniel-levy/charlie-hebdo-terrorisme-marche-republicaine_b_6479746.html) (accessed on 8 July 2016).
- Marion, Jean-Luc. 2015. L'islam doit faire l'épreuve de la critique. *Le Point*. January 12. Available online: [http://www.lepoint.fr/politique/jean-luc-marion-l-islam-doit-faire-l-epreuve-de-la-critique-12-01-2015-1895795\\_20.php](http://www.lepoint.fr/politique/jean-luc-marion-l-islam-doit-faire-l-epreuve-de-la-critique-12-01-2015-1895795_20.php) (accessed on 9 July 2016).
- Médine. 2015. Ma chanson Don't Laïk, vilipendée: C'est pourtant du pur esprit Charlie! *L'Obs*. January 13. Available online: <http://leplus.nouvelobs.com/contribution/1305180-ma-chanson-don-t-laik-vilipendee-c-est-pourtant-du-pur-esprit-charlie.html> (accessed on 9 July 2016).
- Meziani, Sofiane. 2015. "Charlie Hebdo": Le problème n'est pas religieux. Stigmatiser les musulmans est une erreur. *L'Obs*. January 20. Available online: <http://leplus.nouvelobs.com/contribution/1309232-charlie-hebdo-le-probleme-n-est-pas-religieux-stigmatiser-les-musulmans-est-une-erreur.html> (accessed on 9 July 2016).

- Mouvementdu11. 2015. Available online: <http://mouvementdu11.wesign.it/fr> (accessed on 9 July 2016).
- Nora, Pierre. 2015. Cited in Lamouthe. La manifestation du 11 janvier est le type même de l'événement monstre. *Libération*. January 20. Available online: [http://www.lemonde.fr/livres/article/2015/05/13/le-11-janvier-est-aussi-devenu-un-phenomene-d-edition\\_4633065\\_3260.html](http://www.lemonde.fr/livres/article/2015/05/13/le-11-janvier-est-aussi-devenu-un-phenomene-d-edition_4633065_3260.html) (accessed on 10 July 2016).
- Ory, Pascal. 2016. *Ce que dit Charlie: Treize leçons d'histoire*. Paris: Gallimard.
- Peillon, Vincent. 2010. *Une religion pour la République: La foi laïque de Ferdinand Buisson*. Paris: Seuil.
- Polony, Natacha. 2015. *Nous sommes la France*. Paris: Plon.
- Rosanvallon, Pierre. 2015. Une communauté d'effroi ne doit pas conduire à l'illusion de l'unité. *Le Monde*. February 2. Available online: [http://www.lemonde.fr/idees/article/2015/02/11/une-communaute-d-effroi-ne-doit-pas-conduire-a-l-illusion-de-l-unite-nationale\\_4574450\\_3232.html#HP3q72jSsDIpwc67.99](http://www.lemonde.fr/idees/article/2015/02/11/une-communaute-d-effroi-ne-doit-pas-conduire-a-l-illusion-de-l-unite-nationale_4574450_3232.html#HP3q72jSsDIpwc67.99) (accessed on 10 July 2016).
- Rouban, Luc. 2015. Qui sont les manifestants du 11 janvier 2015? *SciencesPo/CEVIPOF—Baromètre de la confiance politique*. May 13. Available online: [http://www.cevipof.com/rtefiles/File/noterech08/Confiance%20politique%20\\_%20Note%20ROUBAN%20Manifestants.pdf](http://www.cevipof.com/rtefiles/File/noterech08/Confiance%20politique%20_%20Note%20ROUBAN%20Manifestants.pdf) (accessed on 11 July 2016).
- SenBuzz. 2015. Voici Maïmouna Coulibaly, la soeur du terroriste Amedy Coulibaly, une musulmane très libérée. *Senbuzz*. January 26. Available online: <http://senbuzzpointnet.blogspot.fr/2015/01/voici-maimouna-coulibaly-la-sur-du.html> (accessed on 11 July 2016).
- Tarot, Camille. 2012. Les lyncheurs et le concombre ou de la définition . . . . In *Qu'est ce que le religieux*. Edited by Alain Caillé. Paris: La Découverte.
- Todd, Emmanuel. 2015. *Qui est Charlie?: Sociologie d'une crise religieuse*. Paris: Seuil.
- Truong, Nicolas. 2015. Penser l'événement. In *Penser le 11 janvier*. Edited by Nicolas Truong. Paris: Le monde/L'aube.
- Vécrin, Anastasia. 2015. Soufiane Zitouni, l'islamisme, ça soufi. *Libération*. February 18. Available online: [http://www.liberation.fr/societe/2015/02/18/soufiane-zitouni-l-islamisme-ca-soufi\\_1205307](http://www.liberation.fr/societe/2015/02/18/soufiane-zitouni-l-islamisme-ca-soufi_1205307) (accessed on 12 July 2016).
- Viveret, Patrick. 2015. *Fraternité, j'écris ton nom!* Lonrai: Les Liens qui Libèrent.
- Zitouni, Sofiane. 2015a. Aujourd'hui, le Prophète est aussi 'Charlie'. *Libération*. February 15. Available online: [http://www.liberation.fr/societe/2015/01/14/aujourd-hui-le-prophete-est-aussi-charlie\\_1180802](http://www.liberation.fr/societe/2015/01/14/aujourd-hui-le-prophete-est-aussi-charlie_1180802) (accessed on 13 July 2016).
- Zitouni, Soufiane. 2015b. "Interview with Thomas Sotto". *Europe*. February 9, p. 1. Available online: <http://www.europe1.fr/societe/soufiane-zitouni-il-y-a-du-double-langage-au-lycee-averroes-2367923> (accessed on 14 July 2016).



© 2019 by the author. Licensee MDPI, Basel, Switzerland. This article is an open access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).