



The left's mentality: 'We created radical jihadists'

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All too often in America, those on the right spend their time talking to those who agree with them on the right, and those on the left spend their time talking with those who agree with them on the left.

This reality is unfortunate because it prevents each side from watching or reading what their opponents are saying or writing. Today, the right and left deploy 140-character yelling past each other on social media and, as is often the case, they devolve to name-calling. The right watches Fox News and reads the Wall Street Journal, and the left watches MSNBC and reads the New York Times.

To check myself, I've subscribed to [Harper's Magazine](http://harpers.org/) (<http://harpers.org/>) for a couple of years. I enjoy the [Harper's Index](http://harpers.org/harpers-index/?s=united%20states) (<http://harpers.org/harpers-index/?s=united%20states>), as it always has interesting factoids. I also find an article worth passing along every six months or so.

The January 2016 issue included the article, "[The Ultimate Terrorist Factory](http://harpers.org/archive/2016/01/the-ultimate-terrorist-factory/)" (<http://harpers.org/archive/2016/01/the-ultimate-terrorist-factory/>) by Scott Sayare. I didn't include the sub-heading because I wanted to give you a minute to think about what would be the ultimate terrorist factory. Is it Syria? Iraq? Afghanistan? Saudi Arabia? A specific mosque somewhere? The Internet?



(http://www.aei.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/RTR3P57I_french_prison-e1450731624419.jpg)

The inner courtyard of the men's building in the Fleury-Merogis prison near Paris, the largest prison population in Europe, according to its director, in May 2014. REUTERS/Charles Platiau .

None of those places or things is Mr. Sayare's answer. His answer from the sub-heading is: "Are French prisons incubating extremism?"

Mr. Sayare is a Paris-based reporter whose writings appear in the ABCs of left-leaning newspapers and magazines. On Twitter, he [describes himself](https://twitter.com/scottsayare) (<https://twitter.com/scottsayare>) as an "[o]bserver, recorder, aspiring liver of life. Ex-@nytimes, still writing and reporting." His posts represent ordinary thoughts from the Left:

- July 22: until the impulses to virility and masculine honor are no longer allowed to guide policing, this will happen. (It references Sandra Bland.)
- November 23: Did The FBI Transform This Teenager Into A Terrorist After Reading His Emails? On the 2010 Portland non-bombing. (It links to a buzzfeed article on accused Portland terrorist Mohamed Mohamud.)
- December 14: (retweeted) Kal @the moornextdoor: They really think this is effective? They think this is reaching their intended audience, or did they give up? (This in reaction to a tweet by Think Again Turn Away on Ayaan Hirsi Ali winning the [Lantos Prize](http://www.lantosfoundation.org/2015-prize/) (<http://www.lantosfoundation.org/2015-prize/>)).)

At any rate, his article contains lots of very good reporting on the cases of

convicted French terrorists Kamel Daoudi and Djamel Beghal, including interviews with both men. The thrust of his piece, however, is to undermine the French law *association de malfaiteurs terroriste* ("[terrorist criminal association](https://translate.google.com/translate?hl=en&sl=fr&u=https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Association_de_malfaiteurs_en_droit_p%C3%A9nal_fran%C3%A7ais&prev=search) (https://translate.google.com/translate?hl=en&sl=fr&u=https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Association_de_malfaiteurs_en_droit_p%C3%A9nal_fran%C3%A7ais&prev=search)").

The law is used by the French to convict terrorists who are engaged in terrorist activity, but without the specifics of a target. Both Daoudi and Beghal were convicted and sent to prison under the law. Mr. Sayare tries to make the case that both men (and countless others) may have been radicalized *because of* their time in prison.

In Beghal's case, he appears to spend his time in prison radicalizing others. Mr. Sayare writes:

It would be far easier to muster sympathy for the man [Beghal] and lament his handling by the French state if he did not believe what he believes. And yet given those beliefs, what could he possibly say, or refrain from saying, to convince the world that he is not a danger? What credence can possibly be lent to his words, or to his silence? Even if he has never committed a crime, *in the traditional sense of the word*, how can he be trusted not to commit violence, or not to militate for it, or not to somehow provoke it? (emphasis added)

Mr. Sayare wants the world to refrain from prosecuting men like Beghal for his beliefs, which of course isn't what has happened to Beghal. The French convicted him with evidence that he was engaged in criminal activities.

Beghal, unlike all but a few Muslims, moved to Afghanistan in the 1990s. He left on July 29, 2001 — impeccable timing — and met with Ayman al-Zawahiri (current head of al Qaeda), Abu Musab al-Zarqawi (leader of al Qaeda in Iraq), and the *Charlie Hebdo* attackers. Beghal refused to acknowledge whether he ever met with Osama bin Laden. Beghal is either an Inspector Jacques Clouseau-type who just so happens to always find himself in the same room with terrorists, or he is what French jurists have twice convicted him of being: a terrorist.

You should read the article for additional details on Beghal and to gain a deeper understanding of what the left thinks about how the bad guys became, well, bad. This "we created the monsters" mentality unfortunately has become all too prevalent on the left. We on the right must confront it head-on.

This article was found online at:

<http://www.aei.org/publication/the-lefts-mentality-we-created-radical-jihadists/>