

Dear *Charlie*,¹

Even if it has been a long time since we've read you,² this doesn't prevent us from worrying about you. To survive the terrible attack of January³ and then find yourself living among the counter-terrorism cops, the amassed millions, the old internal problems, and a completely new status as icon of the Republic, and to take in stride the support of Bernard Cazeneuve, Nicolas Sarkozy, Omar Bongo, Benjamin Netanyahu and François Hollande without being able to protest too much – that must not have been easy.

What leads us to write to you today, as you might suspect, is the article that was subtly titled “[Investigation:] Julien Coupat, Social Traitor,” which you published last week.⁴ We've read it, and we are worried about you for several reasons.

First of all, it seems that you've been struck by amnesia. You obviously no longer remember that your own offices were sacked during a demonstration against the CPE⁵ on 24 April 2006 because your coverage of those events already appeared “right wing” to the era. For your information, that idea figured in an article that *Libération* published the next day. When you drew your gun on [*dégaines*] Julien, who'd had the nerve to mention that attack,⁶ and when you said, “we see that Mister Librarian, who is obviously completely wrong, hasn't taken the care to consult his archives,” you put yourself in a delicate position. At the same time, if you are suffering from amnesia, perhaps you no longer remember that, at the time

¹ *Charlie Hebdo*. Written by “Aria, Benjamin, Bertrand, Elsa, Gabrielle, Julien, Mathieu, [and] Yildune.” (The only ones from the so-called Tarnac 10 missing here are Christophe Becker and Manon Glibert.) Published on-line here: <https://lundi.am/N-est-pas-Charlie-qui-veut>. Translated by NOT BORED! 24 August 2015, All footnotes by the translator.

² Note that throughout this text, the writers address “Charlie” in the familiar form of “*tu*,” and not the formal “*vous*,” which suggests that “Charlie” is the name of a person, not the name of a magazine (*Charlie Hebdo*), and that this person is on the same social level as they are.

³ 7 January 2015, during which 12 cartoonists were shot and killed, allegedly by Muslim fanatics who objected to the magazine's depictions of Mohammed.

⁴ “*Enquête : Julien Coupat, social-traître*,” published in the 10 June 2015 edition of *Charlie Hebdo*.

⁵ The *Contrat Première Embauche* (“First Employment Contract”) was introduced at the end of 2005 and adopted in February 2006. Designed to make it easier to fire young workers, it triggered an intensely negative response.

⁶ Cf. “Lightning Rod,” interview with Coupat published by *L'Observateur* on 11 May 2015. <http://www.notbored.org/obs.pdf>.

[2006], your boss was Philippe Val,⁷ and yet you don't see how anyone could speak of "right wing" politics. In any case, let's hope that it's only amnesia, because, after a trauma, amnesia sometimes occurs. But if it isn't amnesia, then you are a flat-out liar – and *that* can't be treated.

The second thing that worries us is your profession. You will remember that, when one is a journalist, it is good to verify your sources. For example: when people who've become close to you due to the events [in January] – the counter-terrorist prosecutors – seek to dishonor us (because that's their job) in an indictment⁸ that was obviously circulated among all the Parisian newspapers, it isn't a bad thing to reassure yourself that what it says is [in fact] true, rather than stupidly reproduce it. And here, we'll admit it, you *really* have us worried. You [clearly] remember the word "investigation," because you used it in your article, but you no longer see the difference between investigation and [simply] relaying the prosecutor's press release. To grasp the difference and spare you from making yourself ridiculous once again, all you have to do is call us up at the number provided by our lawyers and ask us if any of it is true. If you'd done that, you would have been informed that Julien [Coupat] never deposited 82,500 Euros in cash at any bank; that he isn't the owner of the assets⁹ of an SCI¹⁰; that the people who shared everything that they had at the time to purchase the collective farm¹¹ weren't financed by their parents; that one of them put up the money she'd received from the SNCF¹² because she'd been crushed by one of their trains, another put up the fruits of years of work for Swiss TV, and a third the contents of an old P.E.L.¹³; that Coupat's parents never put up 140,000 Euros to buy the "Goutailloux domain"; and that virtually everything else in your article is wrong, including the remarks attributed to Gérard Coupat, who never declared that Julien "didn't deal well with the contradiction between his inheritance [*patrimoine*] and his ideology." You no longer remember that you must verify such things.

The *scoop*¹⁴ that the prosecutor palmed off on you consists of this: (1) seven years ago, Julien was the official manager of an SARL¹⁵ that paid him 1,000 Euros

⁷ The editor in chief of *Charlie Hebdo* from 1992 to 2009, he is an anti-Arab bigot and staunch supporter of Israel.

⁸ March 2015.

⁹ The word used here, *patrimoine*, can also mean inheritance.

¹⁰ *société civile immobilière* (real estate company). In France, such companies can be used to transmit inherited properties and other assets.

¹¹ The "Goutailloux" farm in Tarnac.

¹² *Société nationale des chemins de fer français* ("French National Railway Company").

¹³ *plan épargne logement*: a housing-based savings account.

¹⁴ English in original.

¹⁵ *société à responsabilité limitée* (a limited liability company).

a month,¹⁶ and (2) his parents, retired from the pharmaceutical industry, earned that money in the course of their careers. But here again, it must be amnesia, because seven years ago, at the time we were arrested, these had been the principal talking points [*axe de communication*] by which the prosecutor tried to dissuade solidarity and discredit [us as] revolutionaries. At the time, these points were taken up and repeated by all the newspapers.

Fair enough [*C'était de bonne guerre*], except for the fact that, in this war [*cette guerre*], *Charlie* is now on the wrong side of the barricades. You see, it isn't good to spend so much time with the henchmen of counter-terrorism. You begin to take them at their word and, sometimes, you even begin to work for them. You end up right where you are now: of all the Parisian editorial bodies that were sent a copy of the prosecutor's indictment, you are the only one to be half-witted enough to humbly echo its calumnies. Everyone else detected [and refused to be involved in] the manipulation. You're going to end up losing the last of your readers if you keep this up. According to your colleagues, it's already too late. It happened ages ago. C'mon! Get a grip on yourself! It isn't too late. You have the *means* to do it.

The last thing concerning you that worries us is the easily explained paranoia from which you seem to be suffering. When Julien said, "If Cabu¹⁷ was *Hara-Kiri*¹⁸ and *L'Enragé*¹⁹ for the 1968 generation, for my generation he was *Récré A2*,²⁰" he wasn't trying "to spit on Cabu," and it is useless [for you] to [try to] offer a diagnosis of the "contempt characteristic of sectarian personalities." What Julien tried to express was the idea that the January attack struck at the heart of his generation, point-blank at his childhood, at all those Wednesday afternoons spent in front of the TV when his parents were at work. He tried to express how the attack emotionally affected several generations, in completely different places, all equally tender. From whence came its explosive power, its ability to distract and confuse. No one was spitting on a dead man or on Cabu's tomb. You didn't understand what was said. You only heard your own pain. On the other hand, consider this: if it came to you collectively and, we must say, a bit shamefully, to take your revenge under a pseudonym because Julien "massacred *Charlie*" – yes, you wrote "*massacred*" – because he dared to say that, for him, *Charlie* had become "politically detestable" long ago, this is a clear symptom of a persecution complex [*délire de persécution*]. Otherwise, not subscribing to *Charlie*'s political line is an act of treason not very far from "supporting terrorism" or, in any case,

¹⁶ In America, such an income would put Julien at the poverty level.

¹⁷ Jean Cabu was a caricaturist who participated in *Hara-Kiri* and *Charlie Hebdo*. He was one of those murdered on 7 January 2015.

¹⁸ Satirical French magazine founded in 1960.

¹⁹ Short-lived satirical journal founded in May 1968 by Jean-Jacques Pauvert.

²⁰ Children's TV program (1978-1988) on which Cabu worked.

scandalous conduct that must be punished immediately, through calumny – excuse us, through amnesia. Yes, this is indeed very worrisome: poor *Charlie*, you are losing touch with reality.

But our main worry is that, by losing touch with reality, you are, little by little, losing the ability to use language. And so, especially in the vocabulary of Stalinism, “social traitor” designates someone who has left the service of the working class to put himself at the disposal of the bourgeoisie, that is to say, virtually the opposite of someone who betrays the bourgeoisie lock, stock and barrel and rallies to the revolutionary camp. Do you see the difference? Where this subject is concerned, you are very amusing when you exclaim that, for all that, *Charlie* isn’t *Valeurs actuelles*.²¹ Chance would have it that the entirety of the erroneous information included in your reprisal against Julien comes from a report by TRACFIN²² requested by one Yves de Kerdrel, a chateau owner in Tarnac who didn’t like our arrival in a village that had already put in with [*flanqué*] a Communist mayor, whom he treated unceremoniously. And you know what? Kerdrel is currently the editor in chief of *Valeurs actuelles*. History [certainly] has shortcuts that lend themselves to reflection.

Well, have a good trip, just the same.

²¹ An explicitly right-wing magazine founded in 1966.

²² *Traitement du renseignement et action contre les circuits financiers clandestins* (Processing of intelligence and action against clandestine financial circuits), a federal investigatory agency.