

# The Apathetic Cowardice Syndrome

*(July 2025)*

Early in the morning of a work day in the autumn of 1992, I landed at Roissy airport, near Paris, where a client was to greet me and drive to his factory in Eastern France.

I was traveling back from Taiwan, Xiamen, and Hong Kong, where I had worked on manufacturing contracts.

Before meeting my party I walked to the public restrooms, to freshen up and dress in my suit and tie.

There, across the entrance, laid the stark naked corpse of a young man.

Travelers, mostly busy businessmen probably on their way to the office, were walking over the dead body without looking at it. I stooped to check whether the man was perhaps still alive, while the flow of indifferent travelers continued across the body, unconcerned.

I raised my voice in anger to attract their attention, but in vain. I ran outside to warn a couple of gendarmes patrolling the arrival hall, and had to loudly insist before they condescended to follow me back to the corpse.

The flow of unconcerned travelers continued, unabated, until a couple of nurses appeared to take the corpse away.

I had a difficult time assimilating what I had witnessed. I later told my client of the event, and, back home, my friends and acquaintances. Not one seemed to understand, and show credible empathy.

Much later, it dawned on me that the phenomenon was one of apathetic cowardice before real horror, as opposed to politically romanticized reports by some third party journalist, watched on TV with a glass of beer in hand.

## BRIDGES OVER THE TROUBLED WATERS OF THE RIVER SEINE

