

Summer in Paris

As the sound of “Death to the Jews!” filled the streets this summer, much of the French elite averted its gaze or blamed the Jews for their own misfortune. Do Jews still have a future in France?

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On July 13, the eve of Bastille Day (a national holiday in France), a mob laid siege to the Don Abravanel synagogue in the Eleventh district of Paris. The “protesters,” mainly of North African Arab origin, had broken off from a larger demonstration supported by a

small band of left-wing allies—Communists, militant anti-Zionist Trotskyists, a few environmentalists, and trade unionists—waving Palestinian flags and chanting “Death to the Jews” (*Mort aux Juifs*) along with the Islamist battle cry, *Allahu Akbar!*

The synagogue, located in Rue de la Roquette, was filled with about 200 congregants who were forced to barricade themselves within as the rioters, some of them armed with chairs, clubs, and knives, sought to break their way in. They were held off by a small group of policemen, Jewish activists, and members of the Jewish Community Protection Service. But it took three hours for the siege to be lifted, and then only thanks to the very belated arrival of special police reinforcements. For some, the event evoked memories of *Kristallnacht*, “Night of the Broken Glass,” the November 1938 Nazi rampage throughout Germany and adjacent lands—an exaggeration, no doubt, but testimony to the scale of the trauma inflicted.

The surrounding days saw no fewer than eight attempts to invade, damage, or set fire to synagogues in the Paris area. Already on July 11, two days earlier, a synagogue in Aulney-sur-Bois had been firebombed during Friday-night services. A week later, in the northern suburb of Sarcelles (known as “Little Jerusalem”), with its large Sephardi Jewish population, a failed effort to set the synagogue aflame led the enraged rioters to burn cars and destroy a Jewish-owned pharmacy, pizzeria, and other stores. In a scene reminiscent more of the Middle East than of Western Europe, the police needed recourse to water cannons, tear gas, and rubber bullets to subdue the attackers.

Not that France was alone in the democratic world in witnessing an escalation of anti-Jewish violence during this summer’s conflict in Gaza. From London, England to Sydney, Australia, from Boston, Massachusetts to Santiago, Chile, the chorus of anti-Israel protest—often spilling over into anti-Semitism—could be heard world-wide. In Great Britain alone, over 200 anti-Semitic incidents were

registered in July, a record for a single month. In Germany the anti-Israel mood was particularly visceral, with a visiting imam in Berlin inciting Muslims to slaughter the Zionist Jews and demonstrators screaming slogans like “Jew, Jew, cowardly pig, come out and fight!” Protesters in Antwerp, Belgium, marched while reportedly chanting threats to “kill the Jews.” In Malmö, Sweden, the synagogue was vandalized for the third time in a year, swastikas were painted on Jewish-owned shops, and Jews were insulted on the streets.

But none of these incidents caused the same devastation as in France, where, according to official statistics, no fewer than 527 anti-Semitic incidents occurred in the months from January through July of this year, double the number for the same period of the previous year. Violent acts were especially common, increasing by 126 percent. And no wonder: a variety of factors, starting with the respective sizes of its Jewish and Muslim populations, combine to make France a special but also an emblematic case for a European Jewry whose overall future now seems to be under a menacing cloud.

I. Jihadism Hits Home

At perhaps 600,000-strong (recent estimates place it lower), the French Jewish community accounts for fully half of the Jews presently living in the European Union. But if France’s Jewish population stands out for sheer size, its Muslim population is at least ten times greater, anywhere from six million to perhaps as high as eight million: easily the largest such concentration in the EU, and constituting about 12 percent of the total French population (and a much higher percentage of France’s younger generation). Like most of France’s Jews since the 1950s, French Muslims immigrated principally from the country’s ex-colonies in the Maghreb—Algeria, Tunisia, and Morocco—augmented later by Muslims from West Africa as well as from Turkey and Iran.

These immigrants and their progeny have proved particularly receptive to anti-Semitic as well as anti-Israel propaganda and incitement. Things have grown progressively worse in this respect ever since the onset of the second Palestinian intifada in 2000 and the growth of a massive Muslim presence in Europe, but there is a prehistory here that is now largely forgotten. French (and European) Jews first became victims of Arab rage against Israel between 1979 and 1983, when Palestinian groups and their local allies carried out a campaign of terrorist attacks.

For example: on October 3, 1980, a bomb intended to murder the maximum number of worshippers at the Reform synagogue of Rue Copernic in Paris exploded prematurely, killing one Israeli woman and three non-Jewish passers-by. Around the same time, in another portent of things to come, a pro-Palestinian narrative emerged in France accusing Israel of using disproportionate force, gratuitously killing Palestinian children, and committing war crimes and even genocide. In 1982, left-of-center newspapers like *Le Monde*, the left-wing daily *Libération*, the Communist daily *L’Humanité*, and the Catholic-left *Témoignage Chrétien* shamelessly denounced an imaginary Israeli “genocide” in southern Lebanon.

It is now a truism: to be seen wearing a *kippah* in public is to invite curses, insults, harassment, and physical aggression.

It was during the second intifada (2000-2004) that anti-Jewish violence began soaring to unprecedented heights in France. The slogans behind the violence were by now familiar, mixing classic European anti-Semitic tropes with radical Islam and hatred of Israel. But the form was different. For the most part, the perpetrators were not operatives of terrorist organizations but were drawn from Muslim immigrant families in the *banlieues*, metropolitan “suburbs”—more accurately, urban slums—containing high proportions of foreign-born residents and plagued by unemployment, crime, drugs,

family breakdown, and gang terror. Much of the violence took the form of pogrom-style mob attacks, spontaneous harassment, and vandalism. But some of it was carefully planned and orchestrated.

Although the violence abated somewhat after 2004, two years later French Jews received a chilling reminder of their vulnerability with the murder of Ilan Halimi, a twenty-three-year-old Jewish salesman in Paris. Halimi had been gruesomely tortured to death on the outskirts of the city by a gang appropriately called “Les Barbares.” Although the media, the police, and much of the public stubbornly resisted seeing the murder as an anti-Semitic act, it eventually emerged that the gang leader (Youssef Fofana) was a West African Muslim with Salafist connections who had already focused on Jewish targets in previous kidnapping attempts, and gang members had hurled anti-Semitic insults at the boy’s father during abortive ransom negotiations.

Six years later, in Toulouse, home to 20,000 Jews, a thirty-year-old rabbi, his two small children, and an eight-year-old pupil were gunned down at the Ozar Hatorah school, an academy of high repute located in a region relatively free of so-called “inter-community” tensions (the usual euphemism for anti-Semitic disturbances). The twenty-three-year-old killer, Mohammed Merah, a French citizen of Algerian descent, had been born in Toulouse, imbibed Islamist and extreme anti-Semitic attitudes at home, became further radicalized in prison as a juvenile delinquent, and subsequently trained as a jihadist in Afghanistan. His grisly executions, which he recorded on camera, and his own death in a shoot-out with police succeeded in turning him posthumously into a heroic figure to many of the alienated young Muslims in France’s *banlieues*.

Indeed, following Merah’s vicious acts, incidents of anti-Semitic aggression by other Muslims—especially against Jewish adolescents—soared. In Toulouse itself, though messages of sympathy were extended to the grieving Jewish community, Jews were also bombarded with threats and insults *after* the killings. As for the French general public, the innocent victims were quickly forgotten as the media, in their haste to change course after having reflexively posited the murders as the work of neo-Nazi or far-right extremists, instead soon developed a perverse fascination with the killer.

Which brings us to the grim reality of the present and to the actions of twenty-nine-year-old Mehdi Nemmouche, who committed the brutal killings at the Brussels Jewish Museum in May of this year. One of Nemmouche’s four victims, a retired art publisher, had arrived in the Belgian capital only two months earlier, having left her home in France because of the increasingly pervasive anti-Semitic atmosphere there. Instead of tranquility, she met a cruel death. Her assailant, like Mohammed Merah, was a French-Algerian jihadist, born in the northeastern French industrial city of Roubaix —today a mecca of French Islam—and (as it subsequently emerged) had just recently returned from a stint with Islamic State in the killing fields of Syria.

The growing presence of such jihadist elements has greatly accelerated the sense of eroding confidence among Jews all over Europe. In France, this is particularly the case for less affluent Jews living in places like Sarcelles or other heavily Muslim-populated suburbs of Paris where their situation has been precarious for some time. It has by now become something of a truism, for Jews living in any area largely populated by Muslims, that to be seen wearing a *kippah* in public is to invite curses, insults, harassment, and physical aggression. More than anything else, this one homely fact (amply documented in *Mosaic* by such close observers as Michel Gurfinkiel and Annika Hernroth-Rothstein) sums up the somber truth concerning contemporary Europe and 21st-century anti-Semitism.

II. The Irresistible Uses of Anti-Semitism

Neither the murder of Ilan Halimi nor the Toulouse killings, however, seemed to alert mainstream French society to the gravity of growing anti-Semitism—or, no less significantly, to the exact nature of its 21st-century face. But a wake-up call, of sorts, did come in the form of a mass demonstration on January 26, 2014, known as *Le Jour de Colère* (“The Day of Anger”). That 17,000-strong march (which I personally witnessed) included a vocal and heterogeneous group of militants shouting slogans like “Jew, Jew, France does not belong to you,” “Jews, get out of France,” and “The gas chambers were a bluff.” These merged seamlessly with the demonstrators’ more generalized expression of anti-elitism, hostility to the French state and its confiscatory taxes, fury at the policies (and the personal life) of President François Hollande, and much else besides. As then-Interior Minister (now Prime Minister) Manuel Valls remarked, it was a dangerous cocktail—the symptom of a morbid climate of opinion linking both left and right extremes against the Republic.

In an Orwellian inversion, the mythical “Jewish lobby” in France was accused of seeking a monopoly over public compassion for the victims of genocide.

Valls was at least partly right—but the toxic populist brew he described is itself not without precedent in French political history. Moreover, from the 1930s onward, some French politicians have not failed to exploit or abet this mood of bitter discontent, complete with its strong anti-Semitic admixture, even as they express shock and alarm at its potential for havoc. For our purposes here, it may be worth sorting out the main strands from the most recent past as they affect the Jewish situation in particular.

In 1990, a historic Jewish cemetery was vandalized in the southern French town of Carpentras. No doubt sensing an opportunity, President François Mitterrand—France’s first socialist president, but soon to become the object of embarrassing revelations about his wartime service to the Vichy regime—marched in a huge demonstration against anti-Semitism and “fascism” attended by some 300,000 people. Conveniently, or obediently, the French media at the time blamed the cemetery desecration on the right-wing National Front (FN), which in fact had nothing to do with it. Evidently, anti-Semitism, now defined by the left as a subcategory of racism or “fascism,” was to be pressed into service as a political weapon against the right.

But the uses not only of anti-Semitism, and specifically of the Nazi Holocaust, were to prove both many and irresistible. In short order, French blacks, Arabs, gays, and other minorities were fighting for institutional recognition of their suffering, and journalists, intellectuals, and politicians began equating anti-Muslim xenophobia with anti-Semitism if not with the Holocaust. The turnabout was completed when, in an Orwellian inversion, the mythical “Jewish lobby” in France found itself accused of seeking a “monopoly” over public compassion for the victims of genocide.

Thus, it is no accident that since 2000, both Holocaust memorialization and the “Jewish Lobby” have come under relentless attack by Dieudonné M’bala-M’bala, the French-Cameroonian “ex-humorist” who stands at the extreme ideological forefront of the new anti-Semitism in France. Dieudonné claims that Jews themselves, since the days of Abraham, have been consummate and archetypal racists. He shares this obsession with his bizarre close ally Alain Soral, a white, pseudo-intellectual, ex-Communist, and ex-National Front activist who today proudly proclaims himself to be a National Socialist *à la française*. The pair’s mix of left and right anti-Semitism is held together by the paranoid theory of a world “Zionist” conspiracy, a theory that has proved viral in several senses of the word. Even as their videos portraying Jewish domination of the economy, politics, culture, and the media reach an audience of millions, their reputation as convinced Holocaust deniers and admirers of Iran has borne fruit in the form of Iranian financing for their campaign to win membership in the European parliament through the frankly named Anti-Zionist party.

Exploiting their notoriety, Dieudonné and Soral have bridged the gulfs among whites, blacks, and *beurs* (Arabs), between middle-class youth and the impoverished drop-outs of the *banlieues*, between FN supporters and the far left, and between old-school French anti-Semites and younger immigrants. Crucial to their success has been their ability to link their eclectic, hybrid anti-Semitism to their anti-establishment, “screw the system” politics. The link is symbolized in Dieudonné’s *quenelle*—an inverted Nazi salute and a mutual recognition sign for like-minded followers around the world. As at the January 2014 “Day of Anger,” the many Internet images of individuals showing off their *quenelle* salutes in front of Jewish memorial sites—whether in Paris, Berlin, or Auschwitz—encapsulate the process by which Gallic “anti-racism,” ostensibly conceived as a tool to counter and prevent anti-Semitism, has been recomposed as gutter anti-Semitism.

III. Delusion and Denial

European elites seem powerless to respond to this hybrid anti-Semitism, especially insofar as it is connected with Islam. Denouncing the anti-Semitism of Alain Soral has not been difficult—he is, after all, a white reactionary—but the anti-Semitism of Dieudonné is much harder to grapple with. For most French intellectuals, leftist by inclination, to designate any group of blacks or Muslims as “anti-Semites” is considered highly suspect, if not racist and “Islamophobic.” It can also lead to the accuser’s being stamped as himself an “agent of Israel” seeking to cover up “Zionist crimes.”

And so, when anti-Jewish violence by Muslims occurs in France, or anti-Jewish hate speech fills the air, the media, intellectuals, and many politicians simply deny its existence—or blame it on the actions of Israel and/or the Jewish community itself. In stark contrast, Muslim youths from *les quartiers difficiles* (a euphemism for violent inner-city neighborhoods) are never held responsible for their criminal actions, any more than are the Palestinians in the Middle East. Perhaps needless to say, their solidarity with Hamas, complete with its rabidly anti-Semitic “Sacred Covenant” of 1988 and its death-cult call to Islamize Palestine “from the river to the sea,” raises remarkably few eyebrows.

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Is the French right any better? The answer is at best a qualified yes. Opposition to so-called creeping “Islamicization” in France has traditionally been led by the National Front (FN), which carries significant historical baggage of its own. Under its current leader, Marine Le Pen, the movement has sought to distance itself from the more openly anti-Arab legacy of her father Jean-Marie Le Pen, and its spectacular success in the European parliament elections of May 2014 (it polled first among French parties, with 25 percent of the vote) has made it, for the first time, a possible contender for power. Unlike the far left and some socialists, the FN took no part in the pro-Palestine marches of July 2014, and Marine Le Pen has even made some overtures to the Jews of France.

The resistance of the FN to the threat posed by radical Islamists, along with its new emphasis on republican secularism (*laïcité*), has indeed been welcomed by some Jews. But suspicions remain: in light of the party’s trivialization of the Vichy past, its current links with far-right populist movements in Europe, and its vehement rejection of Jewish communal representation (about which more below), most Jews have trouble seeing it as an ally. Moreover, when public display of the *quenelle* and Dieudonné’s anti-Semitic performances fell under a government ban, the FN voiced criticism in the name of free speech. (In the past, Le Pen *père* went so far as to express appreciation for the “provocations” of Dieudonné, and a 2005 rapprochement between the two former opponents was well publicized.)

But to return to the mainstream elites: in addition to the reluctance to identify Islamic anti-Semitism as such, there is an almost reflexive hostility to Jewish expressions of sympathy with Israel. One of the most common reproaches against Jews who defend the Jewish state has been that of “*communitarisme*,” which in English means not communitarianism but “communalism.” However inoffensive the term may sound, it is anything but. In French political discourse, communalists are tribal, selfish, and particularist, concerned only with their own community and not with the general interest. This, in some circles, is tantamount to a violation of the “republican contract” of 1791 when France became the first European nation to emancipate its Jews, granting them full civic and political rights on condition that they renounce their former communal autonomy except in the restricted sphere of religious practice.

By and large, French Jews adhered meticulously to this unofficial pact until it was brutally sundered by the French state itself in 1940. The race laws instituted by the Vichy regime in that year abolished Jewish emancipation and paved the way for the deportation by French police of 76,000 Jews and their murder in the Nazi death camps.

That was almost 75 years ago, and much happened in the decades following the war to restore the old status quo and contribute to Jewish flourishing. But today, and indeed ever since the second intifada, Jews who defend Israel have found themselves consistently branded as tribal communalists. In addition, any rise in anti-Semitism is immediately identified as the product of so-called “inter-communal tensions,” thus creating the appearance that it is the outcome of unresolved issues between French Jews and Muslims for which both parties may be equally to blame. Yet there has never been a single case of French Jews assaulting mosques, Muslim community centers, schools, or individuals because of their being Arab or Muslim, while there have been countless incidents of this kind perpetrated by Muslims against Jews.

In other words, the aggression has been in one direction only, something the official mantra covers up and may be intended to cover up. It certainly helps to explain the marked apathy on the part of successive French governments toward attacks on Jews. Between 2000 and 2003, during the high point of the second intifada and of anti-Jewish violence on French soil, ordinary Jews felt increasingly abandoned by the state. And with reason: not only were there official insinuations that Israel’s “aggression” against the Palestinians was the prime or perhaps even the sole cause of anti-Jewish incidents, but leading French officials, from President Jacques Chirac on down, denied that there was any anti-Semitism in France or invented grossly false symmetries between Jewish and Muslim behavior.

In Paris this August, I confronted a stark example of this entrenched attitude and the loaded vocabulary in which it is couched. The center-left magazine *L’Express* had just published a special report criticizing the response of French Jews to the riots of July, riots that included the three-hour siege of the Don Abravanel synagogue and its congregants described at the beginning of this essay. Accompanying the report was an editorial by the magazine’s publisher Christophe Barbier, a prominent journalist and pundit, entitled *Les Nouveaux Baal-Zebub* (“The New Beelzebubs”). Barbier’s allusion to a medieval name for the devil went unexplained, but I assumed he was warning French Jews not to surrender to the demons of fear.

One journalist hinted darkly that, by placing their Jewish identity first, Jews risked playing into the hands of those who had always warned there was a “Jewish problem” in France.

I was mistaken. Barbier’s screed began by vigorously attacking the Jewish Self-Defense League, a voluntary organization that had helped resist the rioters and that he contemptuously dismissed as a “communist [sic] gang” that should be dissolved. Assuming a more solicitous tone, he then assured

his readers that such efforts to “defend the tribe” were in any case counterproductive, bound to backfire and to lead only to more violence.

But if self-defense was bad, emigration (*aliyah*) to Israel was worse: in Barbier’s judgment, such a vote of no-confidence in the Republican order represented a virtual desertion of the colors, a “betrayal” (his word) of France. What’s more, it would be a flight to “nowhere,” an “imposture,” reprehensible and cowardly in itself and a disgraceful abandonment of those Jews who chose to remain in France. For good measure, Barbier accused French Jewry as a whole of self-asphyxiation, of “bunkerizing” Judaism and retreating into a self-imposed ghetto: in short, of communalism run amok.

And he still wasn’t through. If the Jews abandoned ship, Barbier now insinuated, almost pleadingly, the wound to French institutions would be so great as to leave other communities prey to “barbarism.” Therefore, Jews must stay, resolving to fight anti-Semitism as a point of honor and in the clear interest both of themselves and of Israel (!). In doing so, however, they would have to abjure any support for Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu—a “war-mongering” nationalist—or for Marine Le Pen, lest they encourage a “civil war” in France that would only redound to their harm. Finally, Barbier hinted darkly that, by placing their Jewish identity first, Jews risked playing into the hands of those who had always warned there was a “Jewish problem” in France.

These admonitions, at once hysterical and almost breathtakingly candid, were no less representative for that—representative not only in their contortions, which effectively turn the victims of aggression into culprits, but in what they so conspicuously omit. They completely fail to grapple with the central issue of Islamism: a danger to the French Republic and to Europe that is threatening enough, one would think, to dwarf the putative danger posed by 5,000 French Jews arriving in Israel by the end of 2014. Put that modest figure next to the shouting mobs on the Paris streets, and the very real prospect of nearly 1,000 native-born jihadists returning soon from Iraq and Syria after having trained with IS or similar groups, and one begins to grasp the accumulating layers of delusion and denial that paralyze the educated European mind.

IV. A Thin Ray of Light

If one were looking for a ray of light in this depressing picture, it could be located—unexpectedly—in the embattled Hollande administration, which has been quite robust in its response to the increasingly violent manifestations of anti-Semitism in France. On July 16, 2014, at a ceremony marking the 72nd anniversary of the French roundup of Jews in Paris, many of whom were later transferred to Auschwitz and other death camps, Prime Minister Valls publicly defended his decision to forbid any provocative pro-Palestinian demonstrations and unequivocally condemned any “anti-Semite who hides his hatred of the Jew behind an appearance of anti-Zionism and the hatred of Israel.” This was sharper language than any adopted by previous French leaders, including former President Nicolas Sarkozy.

A few months earlier, President François Hollande had been equally firm at a dinner organized by CRIF (the Representative Council of French Jewish Institutions) in Paris. Far from denying what was happening in French society, he spoke forthrightly:

Jews are being attacked on the streets because they are wearing a *kippah*. Children in French schools are being insulted because they are Jewish. Synagogues are being desecrated with swastikas. This is the reality of anti-Semitism.

On the same occasion, Hollande stressed that the rage manifested at January’s “Day of Anger” was not owing to unemployment, poverty, or hard times. It was, he averred, the old hatred of Jews “searching for someone to take the blame.” If once the anti-Semites were more cautious, now they

had come out into the open—marching in the streets, using the Internet to spread their lies and false rumors, performing in theaters, publishing books.

Hollande genuinely regards anti-Semitic acts as an attack on France. But even the best intentions will not suffice to overcome three decades of official apathy.

I do not doubt that Hollande genuinely regards anti-Semitic acts as an attack on France and the fundamental “values of the Republic.” But even the best intentions will not suffice to overcome three decades of official apathy toward (or passive complicity with) intolerance, indoctrination, insults, and hatred. It seems doubtful, moreover, especially when the president’s own popularity is at such an all-time low, that his views will find much resonance among an increasingly morose and indifferent French public. For a population increasingly battered by social malaise, economic stagnation, and fragmenting politics, the specific ailments afflicting the Jews would appear to be a very low priority.

And so, despite the current government’s welcome attitude toward anti-Semitism and the radical Islamist danger, many Jews in France feel themselves trapped. For years they have heard declarations by government ministers to the effect that an assault on the Jewish community is an “attack on France” and “the values of the Republic,” but the violent incidents have continued unabated. Legislation penalizing anti-Semitism and Holocaust denial remains severe on paper, yet seems to have little effect in practice. Despite the efforts of government to maintain a more balanced position on the Middle East, at home there remains a great reluctance to name the main perpetrators of anti-Semitic acts for who they are.

V. Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow

Less than ten years ago, an officially commissioned report to the French Interior Ministry made bold to connect the rise in anti-Semitic violence with the rise of radical Islam. French schools, those time-tested incubators of solidarity with the values of the Republic, were instead, the report noted, becoming the “lost territories of the Republic”—to borrow the title of a book edited by Emmanuel Brenner in 2002. All of the trends manifested across Europe today were already then present in French schools, where Jewish children, adolescents, and teachers were being harassed, insulted, mocked, and abused by Muslim pupils originating from North Africa—young people whom the French state was egregiously failing to integrate into French society or to bring into conformity with the “values of the Republic.”

Where did those young Muslims acquire their virulent anti-Semitism? In large measure, it was an integral component of a militant ethno-religious identity, based on hatred of the West, France, and the Jews, that they or their parents brought with them from the Maghreb. This Islamist identity blended a Qu’ran-oriented hostility to infidels with traditionalist contempt for non-Muslims (both Christians and Jews) and anti-Semitic conspiracy theories derived from European sources like the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*. What we see today, in other words, is ground that was well seeded early on, fertilized by the global jihad, the rise of Salafism, and the cult of Osama bin-Laden—and then, once transplanted to France, copiously watered by urban anomie, juvenile delinquency, economic depression, and cultural nihilism, not to mention the ongoing crisis of French national identity itself.

What we are witnessing is the slow death of the sanctified French model of integration, and with it the beginning of the end of French Jewry.

In the 1960s, General Charles de Gaulle could still project a powerful sense of Gallic pride, rooted in the continuities of French history, the global reach of France’s influence, and the country’s successful

modernization. But much of this national self-confidence has been eroded in the past 45 years, not least by the failure to control immigration from the Third World or to adapt more creatively to the challenges of globalization. One symptom of these and other failures has been the refusal of French elites to acknowledge, let alone to address, the issue of anti-Semitism or their own conspiracy of silence and acquiescence in the face of radical Islam. Today's awakening has come 30 years too late.

What we are witnessing, in sum, is the gradual fragmentation of the much-vaunted and sanctified French "republican synthesis," and perhaps even the collapse of de Gaulle's Fifth Republic. It is as a possible harbinger of this slow death that we can already identify the beginning of the end of French Jewry—hitherto considered one of the great Jewish success stories of the postwar era. That latter event may take decades fully to come about, but its likelihood can no longer be excluded.

From my own research and many discussions with French Jews who have just arrived in Israel or are currently contemplating such a move, I have reached a number of conclusions. On the whole, those leaving France believe that Jews have no future there. Though still fond of the country, its beauty, its culture, and its past greatness, they are convinced that something has definitively snapped in the republican model of integration. The French system simply does not work any longer—not for Jews, not for Muslims, and not, critically, for the nominally Christian majority. Jews, however, have experienced a unique period of personal insecurity, a feeling that they are no longer protected by a state that has somehow lost its grip. Even in an Israel at war, the new immigrants tell me that they feel far more secure in the Holy Land, where they are protected by the Israeli army and free to give expression to their Judaism in the public sphere.

I have visited France countless times during recent decades; never before did I hear French Jews say so often that they consider Israel to be their homeland. This is new. Something has indeed radically changed. A process that began its incubation after 2000 and gestated slowly thereafter is now finally arriving at its maturity.

To be sure, some French Jews would categorically reject these impressions, attributing them to panic, fear, or alarmism. But I think they deceive themselves. The resurgent tide of anti-Semitism is very real in France, and it will not disappear any time soon. This is certainly not the sole reason for emigration to Israel or elsewhere, but it is a major trigger.

In that respect, the disgust expressed by many Jews at the consistent disinformation about Israel in the French media, and their genuine anxiety about the frightening levels of Muslim, far-left, and populist hostility to both Israel and themselves strike me as an entirely healthy and normal reaction. In France, as in much of Europe, the freedom to live one's identity as a Jew has become not only much more limited but also much more perilous. If an image of the European Jewish community is wanted, the emblematic picture today is that of the synagogue in Rue de la Roquette, its congregants huddled within, marauders screaming "*Mort aux Juifs*" at the doors, the intellectual elites averting their gaze or blaming the Jews for their own misfortune, an apathetic civil society, and authorities seemingly powerless to stem the tide.

For some this may be a sad, perhaps even a tragic conclusion. These are feelings I can understand. But I also remind myself that what France loses, Israel will gain.