

France: “Within five years the situation could become irreversible”

by Hugh Fitzgerald



French Interior Minister Christophe Castaner’s recent revelation, [discussed here](#), that “60 attacks have been foiled since 2013 and every week people are arrested,” recalled some statements of his predecessor Gérard Collomb, who is now mayor of Lyon, and who knows as much as anyone about France’s internal security situation. Collomb gave an interview in February 2018 which was only published in November of that year. Here is an excerpt:

In your heart of hearts, how do you judge the security situation in France?

Collomb: It’s very worrying. What I read every morning in notes from the police reflects a very pessimistic situation. The relations between people are very hard, people don’t want

to live together...

To what extent is immigration responsible for this?

Collomb: Enormously so. It's for that reason that, with Emmanuel Macron, we wanted to change the law...

Your law only attacks illegal immigration. Legal immigration allows more than 200,000 people into the country each year...

Collomb: It's true. We're doing it bit by bit. But that remains a problem...

You think there is no more need for immigration in France?

Collomb: "Yes, absolutely.

You were speaking of vivre ensemble [living together] just now. What is happening?

Collomb: Communities in France are engaging in conflict with one another more and more and it's becoming very violent...

What are you afraid of? Partition? Secession?

Collomb: Yes, I'm thinking about that, that's what worries me.

How much time do we have before it's too late?

Collomb: I don't want to create fear, but I think there's very little time left.

How much?

Collomb: It's difficult to estimate, but I would say that within five years the situation could become irreversible. Yes, we have five, six years to avoid the worst. Afterwards...

And on that note, after that terrifying aposiopsis, let us turn to [an article from around the same time](#), about Muslim

attacks on Jews in France. The author, James McAuley, never mentions the texts and teachings of Islam as a sufficient explanation for such attacks. Instead, he refers to various other conceivable causes, including anger at Israel for its treatment of the "Palestinians," and one explanation I had not heard before. That is, the supposed lingering resentment of Muslims against French colonialism, and especially against the Cremieux decree (*la loi Cremieux*), which in 1870 conferred on Algerian Jews, but not on Muslims, French citizenship.

For Rachid Benzine, a scholar of Islam and a well-known French public commentator, these killings [of Jews by Muslims] are best understood in the context of what he calls postcolonial antisemitism. 'For me, this is a holdover from the colonisation of Algeria, linked to the treatment of Algerian Jews compared with Muslim natives,' he said."In 1870, for instance, the so-called Crémieux decree secured full French citizenship for all Jewish subjects residing in Algeria, whereas Arab Muslims remained under the infamous code de l'indigénat, which stipulated an inferior legal status, essentially until 1962 [when Algeria became independent].. The legal disparity continued even after Algeria won independence, when hundreds of thousands of former colonial subjects from North Africa continued to arrive in metropolitan France, as citizens. Muslims, however, had to apply to the government for the privilege of citizenship.

But how does "postcolonial antisemitism" differ from the antisemitism that Muslims everywhere have demonstrated for more than 1,200 years before the French colonists ever arrived in Algeria? Rachid Benzine steers us away from the texts, and teachings of Islam, and instead blames France, as the "colonial power," for causing resentment against Jews among Muslims. It was the French, you see, who by granting French citizenship to Algerian Jews but withholding it from Muslims, caused the animus today among Muslims toward Jews that he

calls “postcolonial antisemitism.”

Why did the French grant citizenship to the Jews but not the Muslims of Algeria? There are two reasons. First, the Jews in Algeria were treated by Muslims as dhimmis until 1845, when the French changed their legal status. Even after that date, there were lingering effects of the dhimmi system – not a demand for the jizyah to be paid, but the ineradicable Muslim attitude of contempt for, and sometimes humiliation and persecution of, Jews. By granting the Jews French citizenship, the French state could better ensure their safety. If mistreated in any way by Muslims, Jews could now seek protection, as French citizens, from the French state.

The second reason was that the French sensed, correctly, that the Jews in Algeria, even though Sephardic, looked to Europe as “their” civilization, too. The Jews eagerly embraced French culture, studied the French language, sent their children to France for higher education, and never shared the Muslim antipathy to the French Unbelievers. Even before they were French citizens, they were French in spirit.

No doubt the Muslims in Algeria resented the *loi Cremieux*, but there is quite a leap from that to the antisemitism exhibited by Muslims 150 years later in France. When those two elderly Jewish women in Paris were stabbed, and then one was set on fire, and the other thrown out of a 3rd-floor window, when a rabbi in Toulouse saw his two tiny children killed in front of him just before he himself was killed, when a young Jewish man was tortured for three weeks by a Muslim gang, then left for dead (and he did, indeed, soon die), when seven Jews were shot to death at a kosher market – do all or any of these killings reflect a “postcolonial antisemitism,” prompted by resentment of the *loi Cremieux*? How plausible is that?

The dozens of antisemitic verses in the Qur’an, the stories inculcating hatred of Jews in the hadith – for Rachid Benzine, these hardly matter. If Muslim antisemitism today is

a result of the French state long ago favoring Jews in Algeria, then what explains all the other brutal antisemitic attacks by Muslims around the world? What explains the murders, by Pakistanis (who have never heard of the *loi Cremieux*) of that young Jewish couple at a Chabad center in Mumbai? What explains the murders at the Jewish Museum in Brussels? Or the attacks on Jews by Muslims on the streets of Berlin, Paris, London, Malmö? Or the Muslims who at demonstrations all over Europe have been chanting “*Hamas, Hamas, all Jews to the gas*”? Where does that murderous antisemitism come from?

It comes mainly from the antisemitic verses in the Qur’an, verses which Robert Spencer has usefully compiled, along with excerpts from classic and contemporary Qur’anic commentators. I have posted this material just below:

The Qur’an depicts the Jews as inveterately evil and bent on destroying the wellbeing of the Muslims. They are the strongest of all people in enmity toward the Muslims (5:82); as fabricating things and falsely ascribing them to Allah (2:79; 3:75, 3:181); claiming that Allah’s power is limited (5:64); loving to listen to lies (5:41); disobeying Allah and never observing his commands (5:13); disputing and quarreling (2:247); hiding the truth and misleading people (3:78); staging rebellion against the prophets and rejecting their guidance (2:55); being hypocritical (2:14, 2:44); giving preference to their own interests over the teachings of Muhammad (2:87); wishing evil for people and trying to mislead them (2:109); feeling pain when others are happy or fortunate (3:120); being arrogant about their being Allah’s beloved people (5:18); devouring people’s wealth by subterfuge (4:161); slandering the true religion and being cursed by Allah (4:46); killing the prophets (2:61); being merciless and heartless (2:74); never keeping their promises or fulfilling their words (2:100); being unrestrained in committing sins (5:79); being cowardly (59:13-14); being

miserly (4:53); being transformed into apes and pigs for breaking the Sabbath (2:63-65; 5:59-60; 7:166); and more.

The classic Qur'anic commentators do not mitigate the Qur'an's words against Jews, but only add fuel to the fire. Ibn Kathir explained Qur'an 2:61 ("They were covered with humiliation and misery; they drew on themselves the wrath of Allah") this way: "This Ayah [verse] indicates that the Children of Israel were plagued with humiliation, and that this will continue, meaning that it will never cease. They will continue to suffer humiliation at the hands of all who interact with them, along with the disgrace that they feel inwardly." Another Middle Ages commentator of lingering influence, Abdallah ibn Umar al-Baidawi, explains the same verse this way: "The Jews are mostly humiliated and wretched either of their own accord, or out of coercion of the fear of having their jizya [punitive tax] doubled.

Ibn Kathir notes Islamic traditions that predict that at the end of the world, "the Jews will support the Dajjal (False Messiah), and the Muslims, along with 'Isa [Jesus], son of Mary, will kill the Jews." The idea in Islam that the end times will be marked by Muslims killing Jews comes from the **prophet Muhammad himself, who said, "The Hour will not be established until you fight with the Jews, and the stone behind which a Jew will be hiding will say. 'O Muslim! There is a Jew hiding behind me, so kill him.'**" This is, not unexpectedly, a favorite motif among contemporary jihadists.

Not just contemporary jihadists, but modern-day mainstream Islamic authorities take these passages seriously. **The former Grand Sheikh of Al-Azhar, Muhammad Sayyid Tantawi, who was the most respected cleric in the world among Sunni Muslims, called Jews "the enemies of Allah, descendants of apes and pigs."** The late Saudi sheikh Abd al-Rahman al-Sudayyis, imam of the principal mosque in the holiest city in Islam, Mecca, said in a sermon that Jews are "the scum of the human race, the rats of the world, the violators of pacts and agreements,

the murderers of the prophets, and the offspring of apes and pigs."

Another Saudi sheikh, Ba'd bin Abdallah al-Ajameh al-Ghamidi, made the connection explicit: "The current behavior of the brothers of apes and pigs, their treachery, violation of agreements, and defiling of holy places ... is connected with the deeds of their forefathers during the early period of Islam—which proves the great similarity between all the Jews living today and the Jews who lived at the dawn of Islam."

It's those ferocious verses, that extraordinary hallucinatory hate that is constantly inculcated by the Islamic texts, that explains Muslim antisemitism, in France and everywhere else. Local conditions vary; some event in the news might slightly ratchet up the antisemitic fury among Muslims, but does not cause it. That antisemitism remains a constant.

Can anyone believe that Muslims in France, so many of them now the privileged recipients of all the largesse the French welfare state can lavish upon them, are still smarting – and are antisemitic – because of a law applied in Algeria in 1870, that fell into desuetude long before they were born? The Muslim hatred of Jews has been drummed into the Muslim Mind for 1,400 years, in both the Islamic texts, and the commentaries on those texts. It does not depend on the *loi Cremieux* passed in 1870, or on the proclamation of the Balfour Declaration in 1917, or on a decision in 2018 to move the American Embassy to Jerusalem. Some Muslims – thankfully – choose to ignore those texts, because they don't agree with their message. The handful of Muslim clerics who deplore antisemitism, such as Hassan Chalghoumi of the mosque in Drancy, are as a result themselves subject to death threats. As Ibn Warraq has written, "There are moderate Muslims. Islam itself is not moderate." But as we know to our sorrow, many more Muslims faithfully believe what the Qur'an and Hadith tell them to believe, about Jews as about everything else. And

of those who so believe, some translate their antisemitic beliefs into action, even to the point of committing murder. In France alone, Muslims have killed, often in unusually sadistic ways, and only because they were Jews, Ilan Halimi, the 23-year-old phone salesman who was abducted by a gang of Muslims, tortured for three weeks, and killed in 2006; Rabbi Jonathan Sandler, his small children Ariel and Gabriel, and Myriam Monsonogo, all killed in the Toulouse school shooting in 2012; Yohan Cohen, Philippe Braham, François-Michel Saada and Yoav Hattab, who were shot dead in the Hyper Cacher supermarket; Sarah Halimi, who was stabbed and thrown from her apartment balcony last year; and the latest victim, Mireille Knoll, stabbed eleven times before being set on fire. None of these victims had anything to do with the *loi Cremieux*, or Algeria, or colonialism. They were Jews; Jews are the enemies of Islam, the offspring of apes and pigs; nothing else mattered. They all deserved to die, from the youngest, who was four years old, to the oldest, who was 85.

This is what is missing from so much of the discussion about antisemitism in France. People are looking all over, just like O.J. Simpson, for “the real killer.” What, oh what, could it be? What causes Muslims to want to kill Jews or, for that matter, and slightly less hysterically, Christians, too? Might it be the effects of poverty? But Muslims in France are very well treated, with free or heavily subsidized housing, free education, free medical care, generous family allowances, unemployment benefits, and more. Could it be that the murderers’ brains are drug-addled? The drug trade in France is now mainly in the hands of Muslims, and among those drug dealers was Mohammed Merah’s father, but none of the killers have been addicts. Could the killers have been protesting French foreign policy? But France helped get rid of Qaddafi, who oppressed Muslims, bombed the Serbs to help the Muslim Kosovars, and has dutifully voted against Israel – instead of “abstaining” as many other European nations do – at the U.N. Could it be continued resentment of the *loi Cremieux*, which

gave French citizenship to Algerian Jews in 1870, as Rachid Benzine claims? Don't be silly.

Should the French, could the French, allow themselves to recognize that the real source of Muslim antisemitism is the ideology – hallucinatory in its hate – of Islam itself? Some have come close. On April 22, 2018, 300 French notables signed a letter in which they called on Muslim religious authorities to “strike to obsolescence” (or “render obsolete”) “those verses of the Quran calling for the punishment and murder of Jews, Christians, and nonbelievers,” so that “no believer can refer to a sacred text to commit a crime.” The signatories failed to realize just how many verses would have to be excised, how central and not tangential to Islam, is the hatred of Unbelievers. Throw those verses out, and what is left of Islam?

The Muslim response to that letter was one of outrage. How dare Infidels tell us which verses in the Qur'an we can keep, and those we must strike?

And 300 signatories was a start, but that leaves approximately 62 million non-Muslim Frenchmen who didn't sign. It would be a good idea to keep that letter posted permanently online, so that people could add their names, by the hundreds of thousands, or even millions. Everyone has to wake up. Everyone has to take part. Or Collomb will be proven right, to his own sorrow as much as anyone else's.

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