

The Franco and American Problem

France is calling for adherence to its vital center, ahead of the possibility of taking distastefully firm action. The United States has a simpler problem in resurrecting its vital center.

by Conrad Black



Persevering readers will recall that I have predicted for some years that France will lead the West out of the racial crisis that in different ways now besets most major Western countries. The latest developments in France are two open letters, [the first](#) from a number of retired French generals and [the second](#) from current officers in the French armed forces agreeing with those generals, who have expressed alarm at the extent to which France has become a divided society.

Large ghettos in the main metropolitan areas of France are Islamic enclaves that do not observe and in fact systematically denigrate what are broadly called "French values," and the authors of these letters fear that an inevitable showdown, quite likely a violent showdown, is almost at hand.

The French and American circumstances are easily distinguishable, though a number of commentators have been comparing them as if the social conditions of the two countries are more similar than they are. In France, the problem is that five percent of the entire population, approximately 3.35 million people, are Muslim immigrants or descendants of recent immigrants, and the task of integrating them into French society is proving very difficult.

Obviously, in the United States, the African American population is more than three times as large as a percentage of the whole population and, as we are reminded, has been gradually increasing in numbers for more than 400 years. African Americans, almost as long resident in America as Caucasians, have been nearly, if belatedly, integrated, and there is not the slightest comparison between the solidarity in most matters respecting a patriotic view of America between different American ethnicities and what is represented by these past and present officers of the French armed forces as the surly hostility and destructive impulses of most of the French Islamic community.

The United States only abolished slavery 50 years after France and 32 years after the United Kingdom, and neither of those countries ever had a substantial number of slaves within their own borders. It required an additional century for the United States to assure voting rights for black citizens and to begin the aggressive dismantling of segregation. In France there were very few Muslims until President de Gaulle agreed to the terms at the end of the Algerian war in 1963 and accepted the almost immediate movement to France of approximately a million French Algerians and another million Muslim Algerians who, having cooperated with France, were in serious danger if they remained in Algeria following the conclusion of the bitter civil and colonial war that wracked that country for nearly eight years, killing over 300,000 people.

To the extent that these Muslim ghettos engage in systematic lawbreaking and resist integration into the French population, there will be substantial problems. But five percent of the people, especially a comparatively identifiable and relatively unskilled and underpaid proportion of the population, poses no danger to France's retention of its basic character. The existence of a solid centrist majority will assert itself. This has been the basis of my confidence over many years that the French would demonstrate that the cultural majorities in our advanced Western countries possess the right and the means to defend themselves against minorities that become unjustifiably aggressive.

The French have already had recourse to methods of dealing with minorities that English-speaking democracies would go to great lengths to avoid. France requires respect for the fundamental social and political values of France, forbids dress that makes identification of people in public places impossible, and monitors houses of worship—particularly mosques—intervening whenever the authorities believe that the clergy are inciting lawlessness.

What these veterans of the French armed forces foresee is the

use of police and possibly military force to lead a breakup of these ghettos and an orderly dispersal of their populations in less concentrated areas, accompanied by a degree of law enforcement that could approach martial law, at least for a time, in a substantial part of the country. It is a discussion of the measures that may be deemed necessary to prevent what they consider to be a worsening and intolerable state of affairs.

My impression is that they underestimate the successes of the integration program, especially in education and orientation of Muslim youth, while respecting freedom of worship, and that such drastic means will not be necessary. But I have said all along that where France can lead the rest of us is that, should the provocations objectively justify such steps, the French will not hesitate to apply whatever level of force they consider to be necessary to ensure that the French retain an absolute right to enjoy the magnificent and admirably civilized and often sumptuous endowments of France. If they feel threatened in their fundamental ability to enjoy their country and to live as Frenchmen, there will be little talk of the national watchwords: "liberty, equality, fraternity." As de Gaulle said to a Red Cross delegation protesting the heavy-handedness of the French Army: "Blood dries quickly."

The traditional French legal concept of the paramountcy of the collective good over the rights of the individual will be forcefully asserted. It is the approach of that day that is a matter of vivid public discussion in France, especially as the military opinions mentioned have been endorsed by Marine Le Pen and the principal opposition party, the National Front.

The only part of this that has any applicability to the United States is the point at which American opinion will cease to defer to endless allegations against the majority of being racist and descendants of racists and hypocrites peddling a corrupt mutation of what was for nearly 250 years a slaveholding enterprise, and will no longer allow such

opinions to go almost uncontradicted. The day must be approaching when the broad majority of decent patriotic Americans of all ethnic and sectarian varieties will no longer tolerate the defamation and deconstruction of American society by both ethnic minorities and multiethnic ideological minorities who are exploiting the susceptibilities and humanitarian instincts of most Americans.

The most interesting aspect of the French official response to the problems that France is facing is a general Right-to-Left agreement that as France tackles the Islamic problem, it must not succumb in the slightest to American "wokeness," defeatism, excessive self-castigation, or any waffling in its fundamental commitment to the righteousness of allowing France to be France.

This is a reasonable preparation for what may prove to be fairly strenuous measures, but it should also serve as reliable tactical advice to the great majority of Americans who are clearly disconcerted by the level of strife in national political discourse and the apparent willingness of a counterintuitive and almost stupefying number of Americans to tolerate the country being desecrated by a discreditable ragtag of anarchists, anti-white racists, hooligans, political opportunists, and media scoundrels and myth-makers.

France is calling for adherence to its vital center, preparatory to the possible necessity of taking distastefully firm action. The United States has the much simpler problem of simply resurrecting its vital, integrated, multiethnic center; if it does that and a reasonable proportion of influencers in the academy and the media and what is still called the public service come to their senses, the rest will take care of itself. It may, of course, require leadership, and we may have to wait another three-and-a-half years for that.

First published in