

## France, Israel, and the Jews: The End of an Era?

*Emmanuel Navon*

*Emmanuel Navon is the Chairman of the Political Science and Communication Department at the Jerusalem Orthodox College and a Senior Fellow at the Kobolet Policy Forum (a Jerusalem-based conservative-libertarian think tank). He lectures on International Relations at Tel Aviv University and at the Interdisciplinary Center (IDC) Herzliya. He is the author of several books including, most recently, The Victory of Zionism.*

The tragic events that shook France in January 2015 (the mass shooting in Paris of *Charlie Hebdo* journalists and of shoppers at a kosher supermarket) raised questions about the safety of French Jews and revived the age-old controversy about public statements by Israeli leaders calling upon French Jews to immigrate to Israel. When Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu declared that Jews are not safe in France and that Israel is their true home, he stirred the ire of French officials. Prime Minister Manuel Valls of France retorted, "Without its Jews, France would no longer be France, and the Republic would be considered a failure." Was this just another controversy about Israel's right (or lack thereof) to speak in the name of French Jews, or do the tragic January 2015 events mark the end of an era in the history of French Jews? One cannot address this question without understanding the history of French Jewry and of the relations between France and Israel.

When, in 1791, the French National Assembly debated the issue of granting citizenship to Jews, Count Stanislas de Clermont-Tonnerre declared that "Jews ought to be denied everything as a nation and be granted everything as individuals; they should constitute neither a political group nor an order; they must be individual citizens." This famous statement summarizes the traditional attitude of the French Republic toward Jews. Napoléon Bonaparte seemed to depart from this attitude as an army officer. On April 20, 1799, during the Siege of Acre, he reportedly declared that the Holy Land belonged to the Jews and that they ought to re-establish their sovereignty there. As an emperor, however, Napoléon demanded the Jews' exclusive and total allegiance to the French Empire.

In theory, France had emancipated and integrated its Jews after the Revolution. In practice, however, antisemitism and social segregation never disappeared. In the ideological and cultural contest between the Catholic right and the Republican left, the former never hid its prejudices toward the Jews while the latter was not supposed to harbor any. This myth was fully exposed by the Dreyfus Affair. Alfred Dreyfus had met all the requirements of Clermont-Tonnerre and of Bonaparte: He had assimilated and identified with France to the point of becoming an officer in the French army. And yet he was scapegoated by the supposedly secular and progressive Third Republic.

The Dreyfus Affair is what convinced Theodore Herzl that Jean Jacques Rousseau's "social contract" was a sham and that the French Republic was no longer willing, or able, to honor its commitment toward the Jews. If Jews were denied everything, not only as a nation but also as citizens, then they had to demand everything as a nation and not only as citizens. Hence Herzl revived the idea of restoring Jewish nationhood and sovereignty.

### **Jews and the "Two Frances"**

Zionism constituted a challenge to French republicanism from its very inception. But it was also born out of the failure of French republicanism to honor its declared commitments to the Jews. This failure was confirmed by the collapse of the Third Republic. Despite the Dreyfus Affair, French Jews did rise to political prominence. The socialist Léon Blum became prime minister in 1936, and the conservative Georges Mandel, minister of posts in 1934 and minister of the colonies in 1938. Both symbolized the supposedly successful emancipation of French Jews. Yet, when the Third Republic was replaced by the Vichy regime following the collapse of the French army in June 1940, both Blum and Mandel were arrested. Blum survived, but Mandel was executed by the *Milice* (a pro-German French paramilitary force).

An estimated 76,000 Jews were deported from France to the death camps during the German occupation. The Vichy government willingly collaborated with the German occupiers. The French radical right, which for years had blamed the Jews and the freemasons for France's ills, was all too happy to rid itself of the "fifth column." The Vichy regime was welcomed by monarchist and Catholic author Charles Maurras as a "divine surprise." Vichy did express something deep about French political culture, even though it was certainly not the essence of France. As far as French Jews were concerned, the betrayal perpetrated by the Vichy regime was far more lethal than the one manifested by the Dreyfus Affair. After both, however, Jews were rehabilitated, hence the ambiguous relationship between France and its Jews. There seemed to be two Frances: one that emancipated the Jews and enabled them to flourish as free citizens, and one that was deeply antisemitic and blamed the Jews for the country's ills.

Even though the Dreyfus Affair occurred under the Third Republic, the idea of the “two Frances” survived. After all, the affair had been concocted by the French army, a bastion of conservatism, while Émile Zola had come to the defense of the Jewish officer. And precisely because Republican France was perceived as more favorable to the Jews, it was accused by radical conservatives of being their agent. Anti-republicans such as Charles Maurras typically claimed that the Third Republic regime was in fact a Jewish plot. Indeed, after being sentenced to life imprisonment in 1944, Maurras exclaimed: “This is Dreyfus’ revenge!”

### The Franco–Israeli Entente

French Jews recovered their civil rights and social status under the Fourth Republic. Léon Blum briefly served again as prime minister, and Pierre Mendès-France became France’s second Jewish prime minister in 1954. To monarchists and Catholics who had supported Pétain, this was more proof that “the Jews” had won again. Their theory was seemingly corroborated by the intimate ties between the Fourth Republic and the State of Israel.

Since the 1916 Sykes–Picot Agreement, France and Britain had shared control of the Middle East that had emerged from the collapse of the Ottoman Empire. In July 1941, British and Free French forces conquered Syria and Lebanon from the Vichy regime. From then on, Charles de Gaulle would accuse Britain of trying to take over those two territories or at least to end French rule there. When Syria and Lebanon gained independence in 1946, French resentment of Britain ran deep, so when Britain got into trouble in its own mandate in Palestine, France volunteered to help the Zionists. This was more a matter of revenge than of humanitarian concern, even though France tried to paint itself as an altruistic caretaker during the *Exodus* incident. France voted in favor of the partition of Palestine at the UN in 1947 out of resentment for Britain, not out of sympathy for Zionism. In fact, Zionism challenged French republicanism because it called upon Diaspora Jews to once again become a nation.

The ideological incompatibility between Zionism and French republicanism was superseded, however, by *realpolitik*. When the struggle between France and Algerian rebels turned into open war in 1954, a tacit alliance emerged between France and Israel. The Algerians were supported by Gamal ‘Abd al-Nasir, the nationalist Egyptian leader who also led the struggle against Israel. In 1955, Nasir forged a military alliance with the Soviet Union, thus changing the balance of power in the Middle East. The US did not respond with a similar alliance with Israel because it perceived it as a catalyst for Arab resentment. Precisely as the Eisenhower administration was trying to convince Arab states not to follow the example of Nasir, supporting Israel was a non-starter. This is why the US backed the creation of the Baghdad Pact in 1955 between Britain, Turkey, Iraq, Iran, and Pakistan.

Israel, which stood alone between a Soviet-backed Egypt and the Baghdad Pact, was considered a strategic liability by both Moscow and Washington. The two superpowers were competing over Arab and Muslim allegiance in the Middle East. In such a grim international environment, France turned out to be Israel's "divine surprise." Paris willingly sold to Israel the military hardware that Washington had refused to provide. Thanks to Nasir, a military alliance was born between the State of Israel and the Fourth Republic—an alliance that culminated in the 1956 Suez Crisis and that extended to nuclear cooperation.

### **The Gaullist Legacy**

Because the militarily successful Suez campaign ended up as a humiliating diplomatic fiasco, detractors of the Fourth Republic gained credence—first and foremost de Gaulle, the self-exiled hero who had resigned in 1946 to protest the "restoration" of the Third Republic. While de Gaulle was himself a devout Catholic who had loathed the Third Republic, he had also opposed Vichy and never openly blamed the Jews for the French disaster of June 1940. When de Gaulle was asked to return to power in 1958, it was to save France from the dangers of a military coup and a civil war. De Gaulle replaced the Fourth Republic he so decried with the semi-presidential regime he sought to establish in 1946. But de Gaulle was also determined to correct the foreign policy "blunders" of the Fourth Republic, which in his mind culminated in the Suez fiasco. In his view, the military and nuclear cooperation between France and Israel had simply gone too far, and he immediately downgraded it upon returning to power. With the end of the Algerian War in 1962, France and Israel had lost their common enemy and their strategic relationship effectively ended.

De Gaulle was eager to restore France's interests and alliances in the Arab world after the devastating Algerian War. Doing so was incompatible with openly maintaining a military relationship with Israel. Just as the alliance between Israel and France was ending, one between Israel and the US was emerging. The Middle East policy of the Eisenhower administration had proved to be a failure. The West lost Egypt and Iraq to the Soviet Union in 1955 and 1958, respectively. In 1958, Nasir established a "United Arab Republic" joining Egypt and Syria. In 1962, he started supporting the pro-Soviet side in Yemen's civil war. Obviously, the Arab world was leaning toward the Soviet Union despite America's coldness toward Israel. The Kennedy administration decided to change course. John F. Kennedy was the first US president who spoke of a "special relationship" between America and Israel. In 1964, Levy Eshkol was the first Israeli prime minister to pay an official visit to Washington. While the US considered Israel a strategic liability in the 1950s, it now saw it as a strategic asset.

The emerging strategic relationship between the US and Israel further widened the gap between Israel and France. De Gaulle had always felt humiliated and

even cheated by *les Anglo-Saxons* during World War II, and for him, restoring France's grandeur had a flavor of revenge. He made France a nuclear military power in 1960; signed a reconciliation agreement with West Germany in 1963; pulled France out of NATO in 1966 while harshly criticizing US military involvement in Vietnam; and cried "*Vive le Québec libre!*" in Montreal in 1967. Challenging the US had become a matter of principle and of Gallic pride. Distancing France from Israel was part of that policy, especially as Washington was getting closer to Israel.

What officially brought about the "divorce" between France and Israel, however, was the 1967 Six-Day War. For de Gaulle, the May 1967 crisis was a perfect opportunity to restore France's credibility in the Arab world and to prove its independence from the US. When Israeli Foreign Minister Abba Eban flew to Paris in May 1967 to inquire about France's commitment to Israel's right to self-defense following the closure of the Straits of Tiran by Egypt, de Gaulle answered that he could not honor the Fourth Republic's commitments. De Gaulle also suggested to Eban that a summit "between the Big Four" be convened (to which President Johnson replied: "Who the hell are the other two?").

After the Six-Day War, de Gaulle lashed out at Israel. In his now infamous November 1967 press conference, he suggested that Jews had always acquired lands in Palestine via dubious techniques. But when he called the Jews "an elite people, self-confident and domineering," French Jews were shocked. For the first time, they felt betrayed by de Gaulle, who had singled out "the Jews" (not the Israelis) as people with eternal and reprehensive traits. A red line had been crossed. *La politique arabe de la France* [France's "Arab policy"] was as unapologetic as it was official.

To the Quai d'Orsay, a bastion of Catholic conservatism, de Gaulle's final rupture with the foreign policy of the Fourth Republic was a "divine surprise" in its own right. Having openly decried "the Jews," de Gaulle released old demons and broke a taboo.

During the five-month-long Security Council negotiations over the wording of Resolution 242, France and the Soviet Union sided with the Arab states, while the US and Britain were sympathetic to the Israeli position. The Soviet Union and France wanted a resolution demanding a total and unconditional Israeli withdrawal to the pre-June 1967 lines. The US and Britain, by contrast, wanted such a withdrawal to be conditioned on peace agreements and argued that its depth had to be negotiated. In the end, the Anglo-American version prevailed, with Resolution 242 demanding an Israeli withdrawal "from territories" in exchange for peace (the French version purposely mistranslated "from territories" as "*des territoires*" [from *the* territories]).

## **The Post-Yom Kippur War “Divorce”**

France’s pro-Arab zeal was an isolated case within the European Economic Community (EEC). West Germany and the Netherlands were sympathetic to Israel. The 1973 Yom Kippur War is what enabled France to impose its minority opinion on the EEC. When the war broke out in October, French Foreign Minister Michel Jobert declared that the combined Egyptian–Syrian attack was not an act of aggression but a legitimate attempt to recover stolen property. The French government denied the use of its airspace to the vital US airlift en route to Israel. The oil embargo imposed by the Arab members of OPEC at the end of the war led European governments that had supported Israel to end up endorsing the French position. As a result, the EEC began to issue joint statements “demanding” from Israel an unconditional and total withdrawal to the pre-June 1967 lines.

In addition, France became an advocate of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO). While US Secretary of State Henry Kissinger tried to sideline the Soviet Union and its regional allies (including the PLO), France tried to pull in the opposite direction. Its president, George Pompidou, died in 1974 and was replaced by Valéry Giscard d’Estaing. Giscard was the first French president who had graduated from the *École Nationale d’Administration* (ENA), an elite government school established by de Gaulle after World War II to produce disciplined and patriotic high-ranking civil servants. ENA graduates are elitists imbued with the Gaullist narrative of a France that had unduly lost its “grandeur” to Anglo-Saxon supremacy and that had unnecessarily angered the Arab world by supporting Israel under the Fourth Republic. Giscard’s prime minister, Jacques Chirac, was also a young ENA graduate. Under the pair’s leadership, France’s “Arab policy” acquired a new dimension.

In 1974, France voted in favor of recognition of the PLO at the UN. In 1975, the French government authorized the opening of a PLO mission in Paris and signed a contract with Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein for the construction of a nuclear plant in Osirak. When Jacques Chirac was replaced by Raymond Barre in 1976, things hardly improved. In 1977, France refused to extradite Abu Daoud, the mastermind of the 1972 massacre of Israeli athletes at the Munich Olympics. That same year, Prime Minister Barre signed a government order meant to bypass a 1972 law forbidding the boycott of Israeli products.

When, under the aegis of the US, Egypt and Israel signed the Camp David Agreements in 1979, France was incensed because those agreements sidelined the PLO. France reacted with the 1980 Venice Declaration, a document published by the EEC and explicitly calling for the inclusion of the PLO in any future peace agreement with Israel. That same year, following a terrorist attack at the Copernic Street Synagogue in Paris, Barre declared, “This odious bombing was

meant to strike Jews who were going to the synagogue, but instead it hit innocent French people who crossed rue Copernic.” French Jews were naturally outraged.

From Israel, Prime Minister Menachem Begin castigated the French government for backing the PLO; for giving a cold shoulder to the peace agreement between Israel and Egypt; for not extraditing Abu Daoud; and for making bizarre comments about “innocent Frenchman” dying instead of Jews as a result of a terror attack in Paris. Relations between France and Israel had reached an unprecedented low. No high-ranking official visit took place between France and Israel during the seven years of the Giscard d’Estaing presidency (1974–81). Giscard d’Estaing not only aligned France with the Arab world both diplomatically and economically; he also changed France’s long-term demographic makeup by allowing post-World War II North African immigrant workers to have their family join them in France and become French citizens (a policy known in French as “*regroupement familial*”). As a result, France’s Muslim minority eventually swelled to about 10 percent of the country’s population. Today, no French politician can ignore the vote of so significant a constituency.

### From Oslo to *Charlie Hebdo*

The election of François Mitterrand as French president in 1981 had a significant impact on Franco–Israeli relations. Mitterrand had a true admiration and sincere sympathy for the Jewish people. Many of his top advisers were Jewish. He had come to Israel a few times on private visits and his children had volunteered on a kibbutz. Mitterrand made a point of paying an official visit to Israel shortly after his election. A Fourth Republic politician, Mitterrand had been part of the governments that had developed a strategic relationship with Israel in the 1950s. For the Quai d’Orsay, Mitterrand’s election was not quite “Dreyfus’ revenge,” but many on the French right deplored the 1981 election as the victory of “Jews and freemasons.”

Despite Mitterrand’s personal views, however, France’s global interests remained unchanged. Moreover, Mitterrand was a Socialist and his Israeli friends were stalwarts of the Labor Party. In Israel, Begin was in power. When Giscard promoted the PLO, he did so to pander to France’s Arab oil suppliers. When Mitterrand called for the establishment of a Palestinian state in his 1982 Knesset speech, he was not being malicious but rather sincerely expressing his belief—albeit one that was unacceptable to Begin.

Following the 1993 Oslo Agreement, the political disagreement between Israel and France had ended, at least officially. The PLO had been recognized by Israel, and Palestinian statehood had become a foregone conclusion. But when the Camp David summit ended in failure in July 2000, and after Yasir Arafat launched a guerrilla war against Israel in September 2000, Israel could not count on France’s support. France’s president at the time was the Gaullist Chirac. As prime minister

in 1975, Chirac had negotiated the delivery of a French nuclear reactor to Hussein's Iraq. Despite the fact that Arafat had rejected the peace offer of Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak at Camp David, Chirac openly sided with the Palestinians and blamed Israel for the violence. During an October 2000 summit hosted by Chirac and by US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright in Paris, Chirac made a point of expressing his sympathy for Arafat and his disdain for Barak.

Chirac reportedly torpedoed the ceasefire agreement between Israel and the Palestinian Authority, which Madeleine Albright had laboriously negotiated in Paris in October 2000. While Arafat seemed ready to end the violence, Chirac urged him not to sign the agreement without an Israeli commitment to accept an international inquiry into the causes of the violence. The Paris summit took place a few days after French state television channel France 2 had aired a report by veteran journalist Charles Enderlin accusing the IDF of aiming deliberately at a Palestinian child (Mohamed al-Dura) in the arms of his father at the Netzarim junction in Gaza. CNN refused to air the report, explaining that it did not pass the most basic test of veracity. Indeed, there were serious doubts about Enderlin's unsubstantiated claim. The effects of this dubious report, however, were devastating. They triggered a wave of violence against Jews in Israel and around the world.

Enderlin's unfounded accusation morphed into "the al-Dura Affair." As Jews were being accused of intentionally killing innocent children, France's mainstream media uncritically sided with the Palestinians and circled wagons around Enderlin. Once again, France's Jews felt betrayed. Anti-Israel demonstrations and vitriolic articles claimed that their anger was only directed at Israel and at Ariel Sharon, but there was something very passionate and irrational about the hatred expressed on the streets of Paris and on the pages of French newspapers (*Le Monde*, for example, inaugurated the expression *bébé colon* [baby settler] to describe the youngest victims of Palestinian terrorism on the eastern side of the green line).

The first years of the new millennium not only unleashed an unprecedented amount of French vitriol against Israel. Those were also years of French animosity toward US President George W. Bush. "Sharon *et* Bush" was the most hated couple of the French media and of French politics. When Washington decided to invade Iraq in 2003, the French were up in arms (so to speak). Chirac vainly opposed America's veto at the Security Council. Gaullist diplomacy was back in full swing, defying America, wooing the Arab world, and castigating Israel. French Foreign Minister Dominique de Villepin's impassioned Security Council speech against the Iraq War was a classical piece of Gaullist rhetoric.

When Arafat became ill in 2004, he was hospitalized in Paris and was visited by Chirac, who later stood by Arafat's casket for about ten minutes and eulogized

him as “a man of courage.” Chirac was a man who made a point of poking Israel in the eye. When he visited Israel in 1996, he staged a temper tantrum during his visit to the Old City of Jerusalem to embarrass his Israeli guards (whose very presence in East Jerusalem he deemed illegal). But, for Chirac, insults between France and Israel could only be a one-way street. When, in July 2004, Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon called upon French Jews to flee antisemitism and immigrate to Israel, Chirac was incensed. He withdrew the invitation he had issued to Sharon to visit Paris and wrote to inform him that he was no longer welcome.

When Chirac stepped down in 2007, both the Israeli government and France’s Jewish community were glad to see his back. Meanwhile, violent antisemitic acts had increased exponentially in France since September 2000. These acts were committed by Muslims, but recognizing that fact was considered politically incorrect. Yet, when Ilan Alimi, a French Jew, was savagely tortured and murdered by Muslim thugs in 2006, political correctness could no longer mask a dark reality. In 2007, most French Jews welcomed the election of Nicolas Sarkozy as president. Sarkozy was of Jewish origin and had begun his political career as mayor of Neuilly, a posh Paris suburb with a large Jewish community. As interior minister, Sarkozy implemented a tough policy against the 2005 rioters around France and severely punished antisemitic acts.

A professed Gaullist, Sarkozy was nevertheless an outsider. The son of a Hungarian immigrant, he did not belong to the French bourgeoisie and did not graduate from ENA. Shortly after his election, Sarkozy delivered a speech in Congress praising the historical friendship between France and the US. In 2009, he announced France’s reintegration into NATO (which was considered heresy by Gaullist standards). As Sarkozy’s presidency was drawing to an end, however, France’s Jewish community was hit by a terrorist attack carried out by a French Muslim: On March 12, 2012, Mohammed Merah murdered three children and an adult in Toulouse’s Jewish school “to avenge our brothers and sisters in Palestine.”

In 2013, Jews were gunned down by a Jihadist at Brussels’s Jewish museum. In 2014, worshipers at the Abrabanel synagogue in Paris narrowly escaped a pogrom. In January 2015, Jews were murdered at the Hypercasher supermarket in Paris by an Islamic State (IS) terrorist.

After the January 2015 terrorist attacks against the *Charlie Hebdo* newspaper and the kosher market in Paris, mass demonstrations were organized around France. Many French Jews noticed with discomfort that the “*Je suis Charlie*” campaign gathered far more hashtags and demonstrators than the “*Je suis Juif*” one. Yet both the journalists and the Jewish shoppers were murdered because they were decreed enemies of Islam, and therefore legitimate targets.

The surge and barbarity of antisemitic acts in France revived the old controversy between Israeli and European leaders about *aliyah* [Jewish immigration to Israel]. After Netanyahu declared that “Israel is not just the place in whose direction [French and European Jews] pray; the State of Israel is your home,” French Prime Minister Manuel Valls replied, “If 100,000 Jews leave, France will no longer be France. The French Republic will be judged a failure.”

Israel’s policy of openly encouraging *aliyah* has always caused tension in countries in which there are large Jewish communities. Israel’s Declaration of Independence proclaims that “The State of Israel will be open to Jewish immigration and to the ingathering of the exiles....We appeal to the Jewish people throughout the Diaspora to unite around Israel and to immigrate to the homeland.” Israel’s Law of Return makes every Jew in the world a potential citizen of Israel. As a result, in the past, many countries have accused Israel of interference in their domestic issues and continue to do so. During the Cold War, Soviet leaders were enraged at Israel’s calls to “Let my people go.” In free countries such as the US and France, Jews have been accused of dual loyalty. Something changed, however, in the status and fate of French and European Jews with the shocking terrorist attacks of 2012, ’13, ’14, and ’15.

Since the endorsement in 2009 of the idea of Palestinian statehood by a Likud prime minister, there are hardly any political disagreements between Israel and France. President François Hollande’s 2013 Knesset speech was probably the friendliest ever delivered by a French head of state. His prime minister, Manuel Valls, openly says that anti-Zionism is a disguised form of antisemitism. Never has a French government been so proactive, vociferous against antisemitism in France, and sympathetic to Israel’s concerns (including on the Iranian nuclear threat). Indeed, Valls is so outspoken about his esteem for French Jews and for the State of Israel that he was recently accused by former French Foreign Minister Roland Dumas (a Socialist politician who served under Mitterrand) of being “under Jewish influence” because of his Jewish wife. French Jews are no longer the targets of state-sponsored antisemitism. Even the once openly anti-Jewish Front national party now goes out of its way, under Marine Le Pen’s leadership, to prove its Jewish sympathies and pro-Israel credentials.

And yet, French Jews are the target of a new threat: that of Jihadist hatred and terrorism. The French government is truly sympathetic but mostly helpless.

### **The End of an Era?**

It is a fact of the twenty-first century that Jewish lives are endangered in France and that the cause of this danger is radical Islam. While the French government is doing its best to physically protect its Jewish citizens, French officials and intellectuals are unwilling to call a spade a spade.

Rather than recognizing that French Jews are targeted by radical Islam, that the French state is unable to prevent Islamic terrorism on its territory, and that only in Israel can Jews protect themselves from jihad, French intellectuals are advising Jews to stay, and even accuse those who leave of treason. In June 2014, French Jewish author Marek Halter published a column in *Le Monde* in which he claimed that Jews who leave France capitulate to their enemies. The most telling and jaw-dropping article, however, was the one published by Christophe Barbier in the August 2014 edition of *L'Express*. Barbier called the *aliyah* of French Jews a “betrayal” of France. Jews, therefore, must stay—but on the condition that they abjure any support for the “war-mongering” Netanyahu. In other words, French Jews who fear for their lives but who also happen to agree with Netanyahu should neither leave nor stay.

No less telling is the hysterical and Pavlovian reaction of France’s intelligentsia to Michel Houellebecq’s recent book, *Soumission*. While that volume addresses the appeal of Islam in a decadent society that slowly abandons Enlightenment ideas, it was metaphorically burnt on the altar of political correctness. It is a sad fact that France’s intelligentsia refuses to even discuss the incompatibility of Islam with the Enlightenment even as Jihadists murder “infidels” on the streets of Paris.

When only Jews were targeted by Jihadists, the French blamed “the policies” of Israel. But now that France itself is the target, the French must choose between either confronting the truth or attacking those who express it. Most French Jews feel that they cannot afford to find out whether France is going to capitulate or fight (although recent history indicates that this sophisticated society has no problem doing both). As a result, growing numbers of French Jews are leaving France.

Valls is correct when he claims that France would no longer be France and that the Republic would be considered a failure were French Jews to leave. But as far as French Jews are concerned, that would be France’s problem and the Republic would only have itself to blame.