



Written by [Steve Byas](#) on October 5, 2016

Attacks by Muslims Are Driving French Jews to Israel

The well-known White House press corps veteran Helen Thomas, now deceased, was asked a few years ago what the Jews in Israel should do in the face of Arab hostility. She responded, "Tell them to get the hell out of Palestine." When asked where they should then go, Thomas advised them that they should go "home" to Germany or Poland.

Of course, the reason that many Jews migrated to Palestine after World War II was that they did not feel very welcome, to say the least, in Germany or Poland. And today, many argue that the solution for Arab-Israeli conflicts is for the Jews to "go home" to Europe. That is the solution publicly favored by many Arab governments; however, it raises an interesting question. If the Arabs truly want the Jews to leave Israel, then it makes no logical sense to target them in European countries, such as France.



They certainly do not feel very welcome in France. In the Parisian suburb of Sarcelles, Rabbi Yaakov Bitton, who leads an Orthodox Jewish elementary school, recently asked his students to give a show of hands if their family was considering moving to Israel. Almost all the children raised their hands.

Rabbi Bitton lamented that 20 years ago "there were 30,000 Jews in Sarcelles. Today there are 15,000."

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What is generating this desire among French Jews to leave France? While some French Jews might be drawn by the hope of a better life in Israel, the greater factor is the rise of anti-Semitism in Europe generally (such as in Belgium and Britain), and in France in particular, leading to both verbal and physical attacks on Jews.

In a report commissioned by the European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia (EUMC), it was noted that those committing most of these verbal and physical attacks against Jews are almost all youthful Muslims.

And most of those youthful Muslims targeting Jews are specifically *Syrian-born* Muslims. Which, of course, should raise serious concerns by Americans about the plans of the Obama administration, and the Democratic nominee, Hillary Clinton, to *increase* the numbers of Syrian refugees in the United States. In the same way as President Obama and Hillary Clinton have largely dismissed any concerns of violence from Syrian refugees, French President Francois Hollande seems mostly unconcerned about the Syrian refugees, as well.

Instead of naming the perpetrators of the attacks as Islamists, Hollande refers to them by the more neutral term of "terrorists" or "fanatics." This would be much like colonists referring to the British



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Redcoats by some more ambiguous term. Of course, back in 1775, Americans did not have to contend with political correctness, as is the case today.

In July 2014, Islamic demonstrations protesting the Israeli war with Hamas turned into a rampage against French Jews. Dozens of young Muslims chanted “Allah is great” and “death to the Jews” in Arabic while using fire bombs to attack Jewish-owned businesses. For many Jews, this recalled the terrible time in 1930s Germany, when in November 1938, National Socialist (Nazi) storm troopers and other German civilians erupted in what historians refer to as “Kristallnacht,” or in English, “Crystal Night.” As German authorities looked on with disinterest, Jewish businesses and synagogues were attacked across Germany. So many windows were broken that it gave the pogrom its name of “Night of the Broken Glass.” Hundreds of Jews were murdered, over 1,000 synagogues were burned (some centuries old), and over 7,000 businesses were damaged.

The horrors of the Holocaust, in which millions of European Jews were slaughtered, caused hundreds of thousands of Jews to flee Europe and settle in Palestine after World War II, eventually leading to the creation of the modern state of Israel in May 1948. Not surprisingly, this new state was met with great hostility by many Arab governments.

French authorities are not indifferent to Jewish suffering, however, and they do not want the Jews to leave. France has the third largest Jewish population in the world, numbering about 500,000. But with France in general, and French Jews in particular, being targeted by Islamists, there are now hundreds of French soldiers patrolling Jewish neighborhoods and businesses.

There is no question that Jews are the special target of the Islamists. Even though Jews make up less than one percent of the French population, half of all reported attacks have been directed at them.

After the 2015 retaliation against the French satirical magazine *Charlie Hebdo*, which published cartoons ridiculing the prophet Muhammad (actions considered blasphemous by Muslims), a self-proclaimed Islamic terrorist also murdered four customers of Hyper Cacher, a kosher supermarket in Paris. Then, in early 2016, a Jewish teacher in Marseille was assaulted by a machete-wielding Turkish teenager, who told police he acted in the name of ISIS.

The number of French Jews leaving for Israel has risen dramatically since 2011, when there were less than 2,000 emigrating, to nearly 8,000 leaving France last year. Jacques Canet, president of La Victoire, the great synagogue of Paris, said recently that French Jews “feel threatened.” He notes that Jews in Paris, Marseilles, Toulouse, and Sarcelles no longer consider it safe to wear a kippah (yarmulke, or skull cap) outside their homes. He said that Jews are reluctant to even send their children to public schools, where he said that “Muslim children bully Jewish children.”

A recent poll by the French Institute of Public Opinion found that 43 percent of French Jews are considering moving to Israel. Fifty-three percent have “been threatened” simply for being Jewish.

Not all go to Israel, when they do leave. Some may leave the areas of France where they now reside, and move within the country to places where they feel safer — no doubt areas with lower Islamic populations. Others leave France and go to Canada, Britain, or the United States.

But many opt for Israel.

One reason is that Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has been quite open in inviting European Jews to resettle in Israel. “Every Jew everywhere should know that they have a home in Israel,” he has declared.



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Many Jews, however, are reluctant to leave France, because they are “feeling more secure” due to increased French security around Jewish institutions, noted Dov Maimon, a senior fellow at the think tank Jewish People Policy Institute. And, of course, Jews in Israel must contend with terrorism targeting them, as well. Maimon noted, “The increase in terror attacks this winter in Israel may have scared off some people.”

And then there are the economic difficulties in making the move. When Netanyahu “promised French Jews he would take care of them if they came to Israel,” some made the move, believing the Israeli government “would provide them with jobs and housing.” However, they discovered that Israel does not have the “welfare state” to the extent that one finds in France.

This is a strong lesson for those concerned about the flood of immigration into the United States. The Welfare State is a powerful magnet for immigration. As former Congressman Ron Paul (R-Texas) has often suggested, If America were simply to cut off benefits, immigration levels would shrink dramatically.

Maimon explained that about 100 French Jews who went to Israel have actually returned, because, despite some assistance from private charities, such as the International Fellowship for Christians and Jews, and limited government help, “they didn’t find jobs, their kids didn’t learn Hebrew,” and word of their difficulty has spread to other French Jews.

Not wishing to place themselves in the boiling cauldron of Middle Eastern conflicts, most Jews have decided to remain in France — for now. Nearly two years after the attack at the kosher grocery Hyper Cacher, many have expressed gratitude at the increased security and have decided to tough it out. However, their lives, and the lives of their non-Jewish countrymen, would be much safer, and their liberty more secure, if large numbers of the Jews themselves were armed. Tragically, that was not the case during the Holocaust, and it generally not the case in France today, where restrictive gun laws have largely left the civilian population defenseless.

It is interesting to note that before Hitler commenced the “Final Solution,” he used the gun registration laws, implemented before he came to power by the previous Weimar government, to confiscate firearms from the Jews. The lesson for today is clear: While there is no perfect solution to the problem of terror attacks upon the civilian population, in France or in the United States, an armed populace would without doubt reduce the number of such attacks.

Soldiers cannot be everywhere at all times — and indeed, no liberty-minded individuals in any country would wish that they were.

Photo of the “Synagogue de la Victoire” in Paris, France: AP Images



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