



Written by [Steve Byas](#) on January 10, 2017

Lessons From Continued Jewish Exodus From France

Five thousand more Jews left France for Israel last year, continuing a trend that has accelerated since 2011. The principal reason for this exodus is fear of attacks from Islamic terrorists, which have increased dramatically in the past decade. This startling phenomenon provides many lessons for those in other countries, including the United States.



The Jewish Agency of Israel provides an annual update of such information. “The aliyah (the act of moving to Israel) of French Jews has been significant over the last decade,” said Danie Benhaim, who leads the Jewish Agency. France hosts the largest number of Jews of any nation in Europe (about 500,000), making it the home of the third-largest number of Jews in the world. While fear of terrorist attacks is the overwhelming driver of this emigration of Jews, there are other reasons, including family ties in Israel, as well as religious motives, and economic opportunities there.

The record in a single year for Jewish emigration was in 2015, when almost 8,000 opted to leave, slightly more than the 7,232 who left in 2014. Since 2006, about 40,000 Jews have moved out of France. In 2006, a kidnapping and murder of a young Jewish man, Ilan Halimi, from a Paris suburb, followed by a shooting in a Jewish school in Toulouse in 2012, are cited as two incidents that have precipitated the exodus.

In 2015, a self-proclaimed Islamic terrorist killed four customers at the Hyper Cacher kosher supermarket in Paris. More than half of all reported terrorist attacks have been directed at French Jews, despite the fact that Jews account for less than one percent of the country’s population.

For example, in January 2016, a Jewish teacher was assaulted with a machete by a teenager from Turkey. After police arrested the young man, he proclaimed that he had acted in the name of ISIS. This attack prompted a local Jewish leader, Zvi Ammar, to advise fellow Jews to refrain from wearing their traditional skullcaps (known as kippas), at least until there are “better days.”

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A recent poll by the French Institute of Public Opinion found that 43 percent of French Jews are considering moving to Israel. Some Jews choose instead to relocate within France, to areas considered “safer” — presumably areas with lower Islamic populations. Other destinations besides Israel are Canada, Britain, and the United States. The United Kingdom is also experiencing a Jewish exodus.



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Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu (shown) 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.

Some Jews — an estimated 10 to 35 percent — who do opt to go to Israel wind up returning to France, which provides one of the many lessons we can learn from the Jewish exodus from France to Israel.

When Jews leave France for Israel, they often encounter economic difficulties. Netanyahu has promised French Jews he would “take care of them” in Israel, and this has been misunderstood to mean the Israeli government would provide them with jobs and housing. But when they arrive in Israel, they discover that the government there does not have as extensive a welfare state as the one they were familiar with in France.

This is a strong lesson for those who are 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 such benefits, immigration levels would shrink dramatically.

Almost all the perpetrators of the attacks upon Jews in France are young Muslims, and almost all of them are from *Syria*. This fact provides yet another learning opportunity for Americans. President Barack Obama and the Democratic nominee for president last year, Hillary Clinton, both wanted to increase the number of Syrian refugees allowed into the United States. In the same way that Obama and Clinton largely dismissed any fear of violence from Syrian refugees, French President François Hollande has also appeared mostly unconcerned with this fact.

Instead of naming the perpetrators of the attacks as Syrian Islamists, Hollande refers to them by the more ambiguous term of “terrorists” or “fanatics.” This would be much like American colonists referring to the British Redcoats by some ambiguous term. Of course, back in 1775, Americans did not have to contend with the political correctness we encounter today.

Since President-elect Donald Trump has insisted that he is opposed to this massive immigration of Syrian refugees supported by Obama, those who agree with Trump on this issue should point out the situation in France with the Jews who have been targeted by Islamic terrorists, mostly Syrian refugees.

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 to go “home” to Germany or Poland.

Of course, the reason 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 in the region. However, this raises an interesting question. If the Arabs truly want the Jews to leave Israel, then it makes no logical sense for terrorists to target them in European countries, such as France.

These attacks certainly do not make them 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 of the children raised their hands. Bitton lamented that 20 years ago “there were 30,000 Jews in Sarcelles. Today there are 15,000.”



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Not wishing to place themselves in the boiling cauldron of Middle Eastern conflicts, most Jews have decided to remain in France — for now. About two years following the attack upon 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 is not the case in France today, where restrictive gun laws have largely left the civilian population defenseless in the face of terrorist attacks.

It is noteworthy that before Adolf Hitler commenced his “Final Solution,” he used 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 terrorist attacks upon the civilian population, in France, or in the United States, an armed populace would without doubt greatly reduce the number of such attacks. Even the perception that civilians are armed can deter a person intent on violence. It is noteworthy that mass shootings invariably take place in “gun-free zones,” such as schools, movie theaters, churches, post offices, and the like.

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

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