

France's Intifada

Current events mirror 1973 French novel

by **Phyllis Chesler**

In 1973, the French novelist Jean Raspail artfully predicted in the form of fiction the very real Palestinian-style intifada that now rages on the west bank of Europe: France. Ten years after the book's publication, Raspail described the "vision" he had, portrayed in the book, which lasted for ten feverish months:

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They were there! A million poor wretches, armed only with their weakness and their numbers, overwhelmed by misery, encumbered with starving brown and black children, ready to disembark on our soil, the vanguard of the multitudes pressing hard against every part of the tired and overfed West. I literally saw them, saw the major problem they presented, a problem absolutely insoluble by our present moral standards. To let them in would destroy us. To reject them would destroy them.

Raspail first published this haunting and apocalyptic novel, *Le Camp Des Saints* (*The Camp of the Saints*) in France. In 1975, it was published in America, where it was compared to Camus's *The Plague* and to Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*. The book imagines a flotilla of millions of immigrants traveling from the Ganges to France. The similarities between the fictional France of the novel and the France of today are easy to spot.

Consider the plot. An all-powerful, multi-culturalist intelligentsia, having taught France that it must atone for its racist crimes, swiftly joins compassionate French Christians in ecstatically welcoming the

mass invasion that brutally destroys France. The solicitude of white Frenchmen – the priests, intellectuals, student activists, and prostitutes who wish to embrace and assist the implacably angry new arrivals – is repaid by death. And terror: The immigrants loot everything in sight. They murder for new apartments. France is run into the ground. Raw and relentless, the novel is as brilliant as Orwell's 1984.

Raspail dares to ask the hard questions: Are we our brothers' keepers? Must the West share all its resources with a barbarous East – even if it means our own demise? Can Europe and the West redeem themselves by becoming as impoverished as those they once colonized? What will be the consequences for France should it welcome profoundly hostile immigrants who do not wish to assimilate and whose own cultural and religious practices sanction violence, illiteracy, and gender and religious apartheid?

At the time Raspail published this book, he stood alone. Sympathy was very much on the "victim's" side. Europe could no longer save the Jews – they were all murdered or gone. Instead, beginning with France, Europe could save itself by saving "victims" from elsewhere, especially those whom France had previously colonized and who

were also French citizens. Indeed, the less sympathy one had for France, the more entitled one was to “victim” status. The inverse held true: Many Algerians who had fought for France in the Algerian war of independence and moved “home” to Paris, found themselves unwanted.

Sympathy for victim-uprisings was gathering great force in the world. Students rioted in Paris in May of 1968, and inspired other such riots all over Europe and North America. Revolution was in the air, and many whites viewed it as their own redemption and as the death of Western rot.

Against this backdrop, imagine how Raspail’s work was received in certain quarters. He was accused of being a racist and a fascist. In 1982, in an epilogue to one edition of the book, Raspail recalled the wrath he had incurred: “What I was saying was terrible. I waited patiently to be burnt at the stake.”

As time went on, however, French leaders and thinkers began to read his work – secretly to be sure. According to Raspail, “When it finally became apparent that in the future the denial of essential and basic human differences would work solely to the detriment of our own integrity ... I, the accursed writer, was transformed into a prophetic writer.”

Two realities remain especially curious. First, even Raspail did not dare portray the dreaded immigrant invaders as Muslims.

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But this omission ignores the fact that, in stark contrast to many Muslims in the East and West, many non-white immigrants, such as Sikhs, Hindus, Buddhists, Chinese, Vietnamese, African and Caribbean Christians, are neither inclined to violence nor averse to assimilation. Not all Muslims are rioters; but most rioters are Muslims.

Second, no one in my various intellectual and political circles seems to have read Raspail’s book. In fact, no one who is now leading the fight against the Islamization of Europe seems to know about it either. One reason may be that the politically correct have censored this crucial conversation. While Raspail was initially published by Scribners, a major American publisher, the subsequent American editions of his novel devolved to a series of four different and smaller presses: first, Grosset and Dunlop, then the Institute for Western Values, followed by the American Immigration Control Foundation. The 1995 edition was published by the relatively obscure Social Contract Press of Petoskey, Michigan.

Like so many prophets –

Jeremiah and Cassandra come to mind – Raspail saw what was coming, but he was powerless to prevent it. He was mocked and scorned, then grudgingly acknowledged. But his challenge has not been heeded. Some admirers of the book have embraced it as science fiction. I suggest that its true genre is that of prophecy and that Raspail’s “vision” has come true in our lifetime.

France is on fire. The riots have spread from the environs of Paris to Toulouse, Nice, Rennes, Rouen, Lilles, Bordeaux, and Strasbourg. Rioters have prevented the evacuation of their own wounded and have attacked police and ambulances. One group of rioters set a woman with crutches on fire. According to the Associated Press, the French Internet is ablaze with the fury of France’s radicalized Muslim community. “Civil war is declared. There will no doubt be deaths,” writes one Rania. “We are going to destroy everything,” writes someone called “Saint Denis.” My colleague, the French-American novelist and critic Nidra Poller, tells me that one African Muslim woman in Paris announced that “we will burn white people’s houses” (Has she just stepped off the pages of Raspail’s novel?). Poller also tells me that one “Fatima,” another African Muslim woman, set one of the first hellish fires. “Fatima had an assignation with a man but she was not pleased with how the evening went. Enraged, she set

fire to his apartment and walked out,” she explains.

The official response to the violence has been inept. Poller notes that, despite ten days of rioting, French authorities have yet to impose martial law. The mainstream media in America has done no better. Media outlets have explained the intifada as the function of “racial and economic injustice.” The role played by radical Islamism has been willfully minimized.

There is now a temptation to schadenfreude. After all, France applauded and supported the ongoing Palestinian Intifada against the Jews in Israel, possibly in the hope that such appeasement would pacify their own restless Muslim population. But their comeuppance gives me no joy. As it is said: First the Jews, then everyone else. If the war against the Jews is not stopped, then it will simply spread elsewhere, in a perfected form. In a worrying sign, the rioting French Muslims have begun to call their own neighborhoods “territories.” Some are demanding that they be governed by Shari’a, not French law.

Difficult questions must now be asked. Did France really believe that everyone naturally wants to become “French” and can do so on their own? Has France’s tragic mistake been to allow too many impoverished, non-French speaking Muslim immigrants in and to economically subsidize three generations of immigrants who are hostile to France and to the West? Could the ceaseless

violence in France’s Muslim community have been prevented – for instance, if French authorities had not refused to jail Muslim juveniles and adults when they committed crimes, or allowed radical Islamist mullahs to preach their hearts out via satellite and in

mosques all over France? Should France exile its Muslim immigrants and their French-born children – the innocent along with the guilty – by sending them back to countries where they will have no housing, no health care, no education, and no employment,

France’s Cultural Problems, and Ours

The Paris intifada is disturbing enough, but press coverage about the event largely has been a disaster of another sort. Much of it has been of the “West Side Story”/ Marxist variety – the rioters are “depraved on account of they’re deprived.”

Tony Blankley’s expertise about the “Islamist threat in France” (*Washington Times*, Op-Ed, Nov. 8) is therefore a relief to read, though the facts are disquieting. But really, why should anyone be surprised at the current conflict?

The French are reaping their grim reward for welcoming into their communities millions of people from what historically has been an enemy culture because of a belief in leftist, multicultural dogma and postmodern pacifism.

The leaders of radical Islam in Europe see “disaffected youth” as fertile ground for terrorist recruiting. Gangs of angry young men with time on their hands are trouble anywhere, and doubly so when militants may be channeling their rage from the local mosque or web sites around the world.

The French government may believe it is responding with appropriate moderation in order not to inflame the rioters further. However, if France looks hopelessly weak on CNN, it must also appear so to Islamist leaders. That’s bad news for all of us in America who don’t want to defend Western civilization alone.

Here at home, France’s meltdown should make Washington get serious about closing the borders and reducing immigration generally so that assimilation can begin to work again. The Hispanic gang members of MS-13 are no less disaffected than their French counterparts and are at least as dangerous. It remains to be seen whether Washington can face that much reality and develop the political will to match.

– Brenda Walker of Berkeley, California
in a letter to the editor of the *Washington Times*,
November 13, 2005

and where the lives of women will be even more endangered?

Raspail posed all these questions in his novel. France, and the West generally, have yet to grapple with them. ■