

# Toulouse: The Dark Side of Diversity

By Patrick J. Buchanan

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As an act of pure evil it was difficult to match.

After dragging the 8-year-old by her hair across a schoolyard, the killer put a 9 mm pistol to the girl's head and pulled the trigger.

The gun jammed. So he took out a Colt .45 and finished her.

She was one of four victims. The others -- a 30-year-old rabbi and his two boys.

As the gunman had targeted a Jewish school and the bullets were identical to those used in the murders of two North African soldiers and one black soldier, suspicion fell on some neo-Nazi racist.

And in France's tight presidential campaign, left and center moved swiftly to exploit the atrocities by charging the French right with creating an atmosphere in which such racist horrors can occur.

"Killings Could Stall Election's Nationalist Turn," ran the New York Times headline. The debate over whether the murders were "inspired by anti-immigrant political talk is likely to continue," wrote the Times' Steve Erlanger, "both as a weapon in the presidential campaign and as a more general soul-searching about the nature of France."

French President Nicolas Sarkozy was thrown on the defensive.

These murders, said centrist candidate Francois Bayrou, "because of their origin, of the religion of their family," are linked "to a growing climate of intolerance."

Politicians "have the duty to make sure that tensions, passions, hatred should not be kept alive at every moment. To point the finger at one or another according to their origins is to inflame passions, and we do it because in that flame there are votes to get."

The massacre at the Jewish school and the murders of Muslim and black soldiers, said the head of France's Council of Muslim Democrats, "are a strong signal sent to politicians and, more particularly, to those who, for several months, have played with fire."

And who had "played with fire"?

Sarkozy and Marine Le Pen, candidate of the rightist National Front.

Sarkozy has been toughening his stance on immigration and national identity. In a March 7 debate, he said that there are "too many foreigners" in France and that assimilation is "working worse and worse."

He pledged to cut immigration in half.

Last summer, Sarkozy sought to deport Gypsies who had overstayed their visas. In echo of German Chancellor Angela Merkel, he has called multiculturalism a failure.

He has spoken of revising the Schengen agreement, which lets residents of the European Union travel freely across borders. He has denounced burqas and facial veils worn by Muslim women. Boys and girls, he says, should swim together, a practice intolerable to devout Muslims.

With his rightward move to siphon votes from Le Pen, Sarkozy had surged into a tie with Socialist Francois Hollande.

So it was that the left leapt with alacrity upon the massacre to charge that Sarkozy's new populism had created the climate in which such horrors against Jews and Muslims can occur.

So it was that the Times concluded that the nationalist turn in French politics might be halted, as it had in Norway after berserker Anders Breivik slaughtered scores of children last year.

What was happening should be readily recognizable to Americans.

When John F. Kennedy was assassinated by a Marxist in Dallas, the Goldwater right was charged with creating an atmosphere of hate that had made it likelier to happen there. When Rep. Gabrielle Giffords was shot by a crazed gunman who wounded a dozen others and slaughtered six, moral responsibility was laid at the feet of Sarah Palin.

Unfortunately for the French left, however, by Wednesday, the mass murderer had been identified as a homegrown Salafist jihadi and self-styled member of al-Qaida who had spent time in Afghanistan and Pakistan and been under surveillance for years by French intelligence.

Mohamed Merah was seeking revenge against Jews for the deaths of Palestinian children and against French soldiers for fighting in Afghanistan.

Le Pen seized on the news to blast the left, which had sought to blame the atrocities on her, and charged the French government with underestimating the Islamist threat and being lax on national security.

"It is time to wage war on these fundamentalist political religious groups who are killing our children," she said.

"The threat of Islamic fundamentalism has been underestimated. ... (I) have been talking about this for months and months, and the political class has rejected (me). Some are going to have difficulty explaining themselves, but I have a clear conscience."

With the killer precisely the type of individual the French right has said bears watching, Bayrou was hastily backtracking:

Politicians must "tackle the risk of importing into French society conflicts that are foreign to us or should be foreign to us."

As Europe's native citizens age and die and immigration goes on and on -- with 5 million Muslims already in France -- issues of national identity will bedevil Europe, even as they will bedevil us, forever.

In Toulouse we see clearly now not only the dark side of diversity but perhaps the future of the West.

**SOURCE:** <http://buchanan.org/blog/toulouse-the-dark-side-of-diversity-5046>