

La Marseillaise, Sung Spontaneously At L'Assemblée Nationale

[Here](#).

The French do not sing La Marseillaise. But they were singing. They do not wave the French flag – it's deemed too "nationalistic." But there were flags being waved at the March, at other marches too. They do not treat the police with respect, but the theme of gratitude toward the police was evident everywhere – and of course at Jewish sites, where the police were the recipients of obvious relief and affection. All unheard-of events, and not understood by those in the BBC and CNN reporting on France.

And if you are American, you know what this brings to mind, and might bring tears. The French don't quite understand that it is not memories of Lafayette, nor Rochambeau, nor those devoted teachers of French who are awarded the Legion d'honneur by officials from the French consulates, or the programs to encourage tiny remaining bits of francophonie, with special attention to Maine and Louisiana, or the league of lycees, that keeps France most alive in the minds of Americans of a certain type – the type whose sympathy you want. And it's not the ambulance drivers of World War , or memories of French people embracing American soldiers in Paris. None of that. The single most effective and memorable propaganda for France in the minds of Americans is the movie [Casablanca](#), and that celebrated scene, where at Rick's Cafe the staff, one by one, join in singing La Marseillaise, drowning out Major Strasser and his men, with their German song. And now you are thinking about who, in France today, is sullenly holding back, not singing but scowling, and playing the role of Major Strasser.