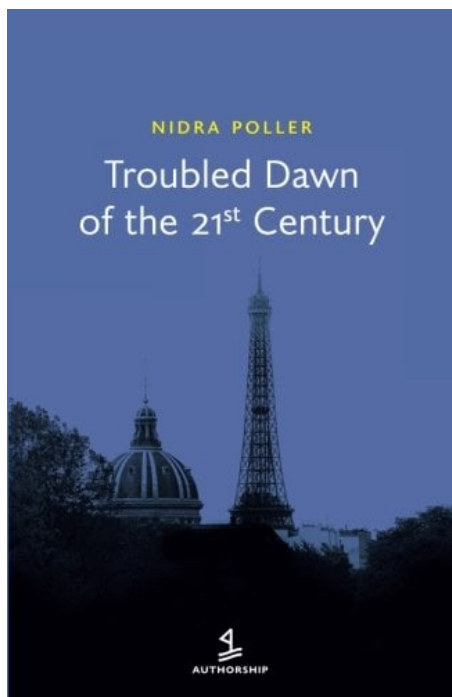


# Troubled Dawn of the 21st Century

by Nidra Poller



TROUBLED DAWN OF THE 21st CENTURY

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*"...a new world order is taking shape before our eyes. Will it be a world faithful to democratic values, and huddled under the umbrella of American military might, or a world delivered up to the logic of blackmail: we can do this to you because you don't know how much we suffer and you can't hit back at us because if you do we'll send the whole world down the tubes.*

*What is happening to Israelis today will happen to every one of us tomorrow.*

*Troubled Dawn, April 2002*

July 2000. The Oslo Process reaches a dead end with the

failure of the Camp David talks. What did you know about Islam then? September 28, 2000, Ariel Sharon's "provocative" visit to the Temple Mount triggers riots in Israel. Two days later, an international blood libel, the "killing" of Mohamed Al Dura, breaks the taboo against genocidal Jew hatred. Did you know the scene was staged? Al Aqsa Intifada! "Suicide bombers" go on a killing spree in Israel. In fact, they were martyrdom operations committed by shahids. The French called them kamikaze.

The floodgates opened, spewing murderous rhetoric and thuggish antisemitic violence worldwide. We were told peace process, national liberation, two-state-solution, and the Palestinian plight. Who knew that 9/11 was on the horizon? Did we understand why Israel and, by extension, the Jews were held responsible for endless atrocities committed against us? Accused of disproportionate force? What did I know about the history of jihad conquest?

American, Jewish, consecrated to the art of the novel, living in Paris since 1972, I found myself in the European heart of that upheaval. I set aside my literary research and focused on the 3-dimensional international novel unfolding before my eyes.

Troubled Dawn is the writer's notebook I opened at that tipping point in contemporary history, my learning curve, a bildungsroman, a singular account of events as they unfolded. No retrospective reconstitution could ever convey the dramatic suspense of those years.

Perplexed, wounded, horrified by the power of the media and self-appointed experts to hone public opinion into a destructive weapon I forged my own tools to understand and resist those hostile forces. Hundreds of pages of notebook entries published here for the first time, interspersed with my earliest articles, trace my itinerary from an alarmed citizen to an internationally recognized journalist.