What is behind the Gilet Jaune Insurrection in France? An interview with Nidra Poller

by Jerry Gordon and Rod Reuven Dovid Bryant

For five weeks beginning November 17th, tens of thousands of *Gilet Jaunes* (Yellow Vests) protesters have wracked Paris and other major French cities each Saturday. Instead of peaceful protests under permits granted by Paris municipal authorities, they rampaged, smashed and burned businesses, and defaced national monuments around Place de l'Étoile. They have torn apart barriers turning them into spears to throw at the police. Police have been advised not to engage in anything other than defensive measures. Some Yellow Vest protesters

have reportedly stolen assault weapons from the police. Guy Milliere, a noted French public intellectual referred to this chaotic scene in a *Gatestone Institute* op-ed as the "*Meltdown of France, disdained by President Macron.*" Ultimately, Macron, who rushed back to France from the G-20 Meetings in Buenos Aires, gave in to the demands of this leaderless anarchic mob of Yellow Vests—reversing so-called green gas taxes and taxes on pensions. But the mobs wanted more—they also wanted Macron dismissed. Even leaders of the extreme left and extreme right like Jean-Luc Mélenchon and Marine Le Pen, who both believe in a wealth transfer tax, couldn't budge this leaderless hoard.

The inevitable anti-Semitism undercurrents emerged. A hand-written sign on an overhead skywalk over Auto Route 6 translated from the French read "Macron whores after the Jews". Fears of Muslim involvement intensified when Cherif Chekatt a former convicted felon, radicalized in prison, screaming "Allah Akbar!" shot and killed five people, injuring 11 at the Strasbourg Christmas Market.

The estimates of the economic damage from the weekly violent protests by over 300,000 Yellow Vests could run to hundreds of millions, maybe billions, of Euros—from loss of tourism during the Christmas and New Year's holidays and destruction of hundreds of shops and major emporiums. Ironically, French polls show dissonance: 77 percent of the respondents condemn violence, while 85 percent approve what the Yellow Vests are seeking: elimination of low wages and massive transfers of wealth – the dead end of socialism resulting in the inevitable mass poverty most recently seen in Venezuala.

We turned to American ex-pat writer and journalist Nidra Poller living in Paris to speak about what was roiling Paris and major cities in France. Poller urges those concerned about the survival of Western democracies and Judeo-Christian values to bolster civil society alliances against the violent tribalism and Islamist alliances intended to overturn our societies and suborn the rule of law.

Sign on French Autoroute 6: “Macron PUTE A Juifs!!” “Macron whores for the Jews”

Nidra Poller is an American Zionist, a long-term resident in Paris, translator and novelist. Over the past 18 years she has warned about the political warfare of Islamist jihadists, Palestinians and compliant media. She was one of the earliest investigators into the Mohammed al Dura affair that involved France Channel 2 in a decade-long investigation in Israel and series of French trials. Her recent books of note include*: Al-Dura: Long Range Ballistic Myth* (2014), *The Black Flag of Jihad Stalks La République (2015)*, and *the Troubled Dawn of the 21st Century*. Poller’s articles have been published in *The Wall Street Journal*, *National Review*, *FrontPage Magazine*, *The New York Sun* and *The New English Review*.

Rod: Jerry, we have seen in the last few weeks a lot of chaos and turmoil in France. Many of our English-speaking listeners may or may not know of the details, they have probably seen a couple of articles and reports on TV. But this has a much broader and wider impact on modern democracy and we are going to have a conversation with Nidra Poller about that.

Jerry: Nidra Poller is a long-term friend of eighteen years, a fellow Zionist and defender of Israel. She is also the author of a rather remarkable chronicle called *Troubled Dawn of the 21st Century* in which are the views that she is about to

express on this program. They are remarkable insights, essentially captured in her book. What we are also going to hear is what is going on in Paris and elsewhere in France.

Rod: Jerry, you and I had a show here a while back when we talked about the very complex structure of Islamic chaos, (*fitnah*) that they have tried to plant throughout the world. Iran is using proxy protest and violence to push their agenda. We need to have people with their eyes wide open and realize that we are living in a different time and in a different society. With social media as it is, society can be easily manipulated. We need to be people with wide open eyes seeing very clearly. I'm hoping this show does that today.

Rod: Nidra Poller, thank you so much for joining us.

Jerry: Guy Millière published a *Gatestone Institute* op-ed called "Melt-Down in France: Macron's disdain." What is really going on in France, Nidra?

Nidra: I want to start by saying that I do not subscribe to any romantic view of the movement of the *Gilets Jaunes*, the Yellow Vests. I do not think that anything that's good for us can come from this movement and I'm astonished to see how they have been able to distort public opinion in such a short time. That is what I have been analyzing. Let's take one aspect: Jerry and I know each other as Zionists. For the last eighteen years we have been defending Israel against not just fake news—that the others have suddenly discovered—but the inability of the general public to understand the nature of the conflict between Islam and democracy, with Israel on the frontlines.

Let me tell you something extremely important that you should know about the *Gilets Jaunes*: their economic vision is Venezuela. When people listen to the first part, they only

hear, “Oh, you know, we can’t make it on these low wages.” Yes, wages are very low in France. The way people live isn’t so bad really, but wages are very low and it’s a problem. It’s not just a problem for the lower middle class, it’s a problem for highly educated people doing highly specialized work. No one has come up with the solution so when the Yellow Vests say “we can’t get along on these wages,” everybody jumps in and repeats the message: “They can’t get along on these wages! Listen to them! Why don’t you listen to them? Can’t you hear? Don’t you see what they want?”

Well, I listen to what they say *after* the first part. It’s Venezuela. They think that the solution to this problem that no one else has found is simple—we take the money from the rich and give it to the poor. Did we ever see a movement that hates the rich so much that they set fire to a home, a mansion near Place de l’Etoile, with an elderly couple inside? Elderly, maybe my age . . . *they set fire to this home with the people inside*! They set fire to the bank and the flames went up to the upper floors, where people live. They hate the rich so much. I never ever saw a movement that hates the rich and doesn’t end up hating the Jews.

Jerry: Nidra, having said that, the sense we take away is that, if this is indeed France transforming itself into Venezuela, what is the status of its Jewish leadership there and the Jewish community?

Nidra: Well, it’s not going that far yet—but that is what those people want. They are a very small minority. I haven’t seen any kind of statements of collective Jewish support. Individually, many Jewish thinkers are siding with the *Gilets Jaunes*, saying this government isn’t listening. Okay that’s one aspect.

I think, at the most, they had 300,000 people in the whole of France that were active in some way. That has been reduced. The worst was this past Saturday and yet they estimated there

were only sixty thousand activists. Violence everywhere, not just in Paris. The *Gilets Jaunes* are a very small minority. Then the pollsters chime in and, here again, you get "listen to these people that are suffering." But nothing about Venezuela. So, the poll shows something like seventy-seven percent of the French people back the movement. And eighty-five percent of the people polled say they are against the violence! Are you kidding me? How can they back the movement and be against the violence? Is the movement against the violence? No way. The movement not only accepts the violence, the movement is calling for another day of violence next Saturday.

Anyone within the movement who takes a conciliatory position receives not one but a whole night full of death threats. Threats against them, their husband or wife, their children. The threats come from people in the movement. That's the kind of movement we are dealing with. When you see the scenes of violence you have many people wearing those vests. This movement is totally unorganized. It defines itself as the "Yellow Vests." You put on a yellow vest, you belong. You see them participating in violence or standing around while the violence is being committed, and not leaving.

It's worse than that. On Saturday we had groups from the extreme left, groups from the extreme right, groups from this new Yellow Vest movement and, hold your breath, groups of what they call the "smashers" . . . from the *banlieue*. I want you to understand that this movement that claims to know better than anyone else how France should be run is using these people as its armed branch, and not disassociating from them, only saying we have to understand people are so angry. What does this mean when you consider how many people, especially in the United States, are under the illusion that this lower middle class . . . that suffers directly from illegal immigration and Islamization . . . that they were the ones that would rise up against Islamization. When things went from

bad to worse, they said, watch out there will be Civil War. They would be fighting, the jihadists . . . the punk jihadists as I call them. They thought these people would be in the street fighting them. My friends, they were in the street with them. Do you realize how serious that is? They were in the streets with them, they were looting with them, they were threatening people with them, and they were burning down whatever they could get their hands on with them and today they still don't disassociate themselves. That's why . . . don't count on me to say that you have to listen to their suffering.

Rod: I think that the alarming evidence here points to the fact that there is a history behind this kind of behavior in many different modern societies. That always ends up with a chaotic government shifting toward more antisemitism. I see it as clear as day when you mentioned it.

Nidra: We can spread it to the whole democratic world including the United States. What we are experiencing from the point of view of the jihad strategy is *Fitnah*. In other words, you attack these democratic countries with what's called terrorist attacks and then you pull back and you just let them start to fall apart.

I'm not a specialist in geopolitics, I'm a novelist and I observed it because when something is happening in front of me I can see the plot and the characters. So let's call it *Fitnah*. Now let's talk about Gaza because people rush in with comparisons. Our own Minister of the Interior called it *la peste brune*, the brown shirts are marching. People rush in with comparisons, it's the French Revolution, it's May '68. No, I believe it's Gaza. When you look at the images of Paris, last Saturday . . . it's Gaza. The stupidity is really striking. The stupidity of seeing grown men and women throwing things at the police, swarming the police, pushed back and sprayed with tear gas and water hoses, pushing back . . . all day long. It's so stupid. They know better than everybody how

to run the country . . . and this is how they demonstrate. They learned that from Gaza. There's this thick black smoke, things burning. I tell you at one-point Saturday I think I saw some of those Yellow Vests try to launch incendiary balloons. I'm not sure, but I think that's what I saw. And the TV commentator said," oh, they're sending up lanterns, a sign of peace."

Rod: That is what the Gazans have been doing all this time.

Nidra: And this commentator, Arlette Chabot, wasn't News Director at *France 2* when the al-Durrah hoax was launched but, when she was appointed, she defended Enderlin. When she saw lanterns. I saw incendiary balloons. Another aspect of Gaza is the kind of discourse that we have been trying to counter for the past eighteen years. It is: these people are desperate. Their lives are miserable. They have no other way to express or defend themselves. Israel won't listen. Israel is strong and comfortable. Their citizens are sitting easy, they are the ones who should make concessions. You can watch French TV all day long and hear people from every direction of the political spectrum insisting that concessions that should be made. The other aspect of Gaza is that they only destroy. The people that are demonstrating want more money. They want more money and they have now destroyed so much property and so much economic potential that every single person in this country could have gotten a big Christmas gift. It's incalculable what they have destroyed. They are very narrowly focused. They don't look at the outside world at all. How many people have cancelled their Christmas trips to Paris? Do you think they are going to be strolling on the Champs Elysées?

Rod: I doubt it seriously.

Nidra: The other aspect of the discourse is: we must listen to them, you must make concessions. And they're not accountable for anything. Small businesses and shops, destroyed, Christmas, when they do maximum business, destroyed. We have

policemen telling what they experience. “These people want to kill us.” For a long time now, in France, police strategy with this kind of urban warfare or violent demonstration is “no demonstrator should be killed.” So they don’t use their force. My friend Richard Landes, who happened to be in Paris, said, “They’re getting exactly what they told Israel to do! They called for restraint? Okay these are desperate people that are trying to destroy you, but don’t use the full force of your military.” That’s the Gaza comparison.

There’s also the Arab Spring comparison. Do you remember how that was covered? “Oh, great here we go . . . this is the Facebook/Twitter generation, look at these wonderful young people. They want democracy, they want freedom. Oh well, it’s true, the Muslim Brotherhood has the best organization, but we are not going to let the Muslim Brotherhood take it over. And we ended up with all these Muslim Brotherhood controlled countries. And chaos in Libya. They could criticize Bush, they can even criticize Obama, they can criticize everybody but nobody knows what to do about this yet.

Rod: Nidra, let me ask you a question that I feel that’s important. Is anyone in France recognizing that even though we are seeing the ugly head of chaos and rebellion in the society in some way it’s got to backfire on these people, don’t you agree or no?

Nidra: Backfire I don’t know. The government is going to be very active in the coming days. And the government is not just the president and his ministers it’s the legislature. Do you know what these people are demanding? They demand concessions before they meet with anybody in the government. The government says, “okay you say we don’t listen to you, please come, we want to hear what you have to say.” But they reply, “First you have to make the concessions and then we will come to talk to you.” Any member of the Yellow Vests who says he will talk to the government gets death threats.

Rod: These guys are just wanting chaos and violence. I mean it is protests for the sake of protests. It sounds very much like what we have seen in small pockets here in the United States.

Jerry: Nidra, there have been press reports mainly in English saying that the Macron government is considering a state of emergency to deal with this chaos. What is the reality of that?

Nidra: On the contrary, hardly anyone thinks that we should have a state of emergency. It isn't necessary. The existing law can deal with this. They have already made decisions and one of these decisions is that they if these people insist on coming out into the streets again next Saturday the police, the riot police, the gendarmes and all law enforcement forces will have a different approach, a different strategy. And this time, they warned that if some people get killed don't come back and tell us we should have done this or that.

The things the police describe are really horrifying. For instance, some of these people came with a tool that can cut up the rungs of the crowd-control barriers, they take them apart and sharpen the end into a spear and then throw it at the police. You can be sure the Macron government is scrambling in every direction to figure out how to handle this. I thought Macron's campaign was very deceptive and the candidate [François Fillon] that I considered to be the adult candidate was honest about what would have to be done to put France on the right track economically. The comments all around were: "Oh that's too hard, people don't want to hear that." Macron made them think that it could happen painlessly. And it can't. Anyway, they don't need to declare a state of emergency. I might emphasize that people have a right to demonstrate, but they don't have a right to demonstrate without declaring the time, the place, the route, etc.

Jerry: Marine Le Pen, what has she said about the Yellow Vests?

Nidra: Oh! Marine Le Pen! Well, of course she wants dissolution [of the legislature] she wants everybody to resign and everything to be dissolved and of course she thinks she should have won the election, and that this time she will win. In November, she was complaining it wasn't fair because the government wouldn't let the *Gilets Jaunes* demonstrate on the Champs Elysées. This week, they were told they *could* demonstrate on the Champs Elysées so they didn't. They went to l'Etoile. She encouraged them all day long to go ahead, show them [the government] . . . finally, something like seven in the evening, she solemnly called on the Yellow Vests to now leave the Place de l'Etoile. Of course they didn't listen to her in the beginning and ignored her at the end. How could she imagine anyone was listening to her? Still, I have former allies in the United States that defend Marine Le Pen. Jean-Luc Mélenchon is the far left, he is contested in his own party, Marine Le Pen is far right, contested in her own party, and economically they both support socialism. I think these people that tell me I should defend Marine Le Pen don't know or care about her economic program.

Rod: What is disturbing is we are even seeing it in the politics in the United States with this extreme polarization of political views and ideas neither one of them are very palatable. Most people would not agree with it but, yet they seem to rule the day. It boggles my mind. This needs to be exposed in our post-modern society to bring out the absurdity of these ideas and how they don't work. I would really like to ask you besides electing you president of the world what would you suggest that the listener do to be more conscious and aware of what's going on around them in their own societies and culture as well as in Israel?

Nidra: Yes, because there is a crisis in our democracies which we could see as the failure to deal with the jihad strategy. Instead of facing up to it, our societies are in deep crisis and people within our societies are turning against each

other. This is much further advanced in the United States than in Europe. I say to my friends in America, don't gloat over what's happening to us. The only solution is for our democracies to become more intelligent not less intelligent, more democratic and less tribal. And we can't have our people acting like Islamists—they are saying these people [*Gilets Jaunes*] are totally right, the government must do whatever they demand. It's totalitarian.

Rod: Right

Nidra: This is what I have been struggling with for eighteen years… observing and writing to help people see clearly. And this eruption of the Yellow Vests—it just shows us how critical the situation is. Because many people who were seeing clearly about a lot of things immediately fell into this trap. Immediately. We must remember that whether it's Gaza or Syrians or black people or poor people or women who are saying that they are abused, there is always some truth to the complaints. There is always some truth to it and the trap is to just grab onto the truth and then ignore everything else.

Rod: Are you intimating or saying that what we need to be careful with moral social outrage in situations. However, there are Islamists, there are certain elements within our cultures, within our democracies that want to use that as an instrument, a tool to bring down or tear up our democracies. Is that what you are saying?

Nidra: Yes. Always, in any collectivity there are gripes, there is injustice. Excuse me, but the people want to do away with injustice should choose another planet. Injustice is our human condition. So what do you do with injustice? How did we react to the Shoah? Do you know of a greater injustice, collectively, that happened to any human group? How did we react? We built, we rebuilt, we rededicated ourselves to life. There are always some people that would like to destroy everything and the question with any society is how do you

keep them quiet and off to the side and not bring them in to the center and give them the power. And that's the test.

Rod: What is the name of the book that you wrote and why it's so important for our listeners to read?

Nidra:. *Troubled Dawn of the 21st Century* includes a chronicle that I started on September 30, 2000. When I saw what was happening then in France, saw in a flash, and then followed it step by step. That's when I started to publish in all kinds of media. It's important to read that now, and understand better what happened then to understand what's happening now.

Rod: We are going to have to go. I'm so sorry, we are out of time. I wish we had two hours with you Nidra Poller. Thank you so much for being such a wonderful guest on the show. You have been listening to Beyond the Matrix here on Israel News Talk Radio. Shalom.

Listen to the *Israel News Talk Radio -Beyond the Matrix* interview with Nidra Poller