

▶ in 2014. Mr Nemmouche grew up in foster homes, like Chérif and Saïd Kouachi, the orphaned brothers who murdered 12 people at *Charlie Hebdo*. Amédée Coulibaly, who last week killed Ms Jean-Philippe, the policewoman, as well as the Jewish shoppers, was raised on one of the Paris *banlieue*'s most notorious estates. Like Mr Merah he served time for robbery before becoming drawn to radical Islam.

Yet, as Malek Boutih, a Socialist deputy, put it this week: "It's not just about poverty; social questions do not explain murder." Nobody knows what exactly pushes the aggrieved towards terror, or the newly devoted Muslim to *jihād*. Traditional networks have worked through hardline mosques and Islamic bookstores to recruit radicals and converts in the *banlieues*. Such links helped Saïd Kouachi, who was on the Americans' no-fly list, to travel for training by al-Qaeda in Yemen.

More recent "self-service" channels have also drawn some from the middle class to fight for IS. Recruited via the inter-

net, Facebook and Twitter, aided by low-cost flights via Turkey, more than 1,200 are thought to have headed off to the war. Dounia Bouzar, who runs an early-warning centre for parents, says that the number of young girls, converts and those who know little about Islam is striking.

Schools for criminality

If there is a common thread among those who become jihadists, it seems to be the quest to transform small, angry lives into powerful ones. But there are other factors, too. Perhaps the most toxic is prison. Chérif Kouachi seems to have been radicalised during his time at Fleury-Mérogis prison south of Paris in 2005-06. A one-time pizza-delivery driver, he was jailed in a case involving the organisation of jihadists to fight Americans in Iraq. But prison hardened him further, particularly through links he made to Djamel Beghal, a jihadist convicted for attempting to bomb the American embassy in Paris in 2001. Mr Beghal connects Mr Kouachi to a third in-

mate, Mr Coulibaly, who boasted in a clandestine video filmed in 2007 that prison is "the best school for criminality". For his part, Merah, in Toulouse, spoke of experiencing "divine inspiration" behind bars.

Although the French do not collect ethnic statistics, some 60% of France's prison population of 68,000 is Muslim, according to a parliamentary report last year. The proportion is higher in big prisons near cities such as Paris, Lyon, Marseille and Strasbourg. Once inside, the message of moderate Islam dims. The report found only 178 Muslim chaplains working in prisons, next to almost 700 Catholic chaplains. "Many of these criminals arrive with little religious culture," says Farhad Khosrokhavar, a sociologist. "But the less you know about Islam, the more you are likely to be drawn to radicalised religion."

After prison comes politics. Chérif Kouachi's rage was first aimed against America, at a time when France vigorously opposed the invasion of Iraq. Since then France itself has attracted more Islamist fury. The country has successfully pushed back a jihadist incursion into Mali, and carried out air strikes on IS targets in Iraq.

Moreover, France is unapologetic about its secular rules, including its 2004 ban on wearing Muslim headscarves or other religious symbols in public institutions, as well as its criminalisation of hate speech and anti-Semitism. That this does not cover blasphemy, thanks to France's history of bloody anticlerical struggle which led to the separation of religion and state in 1905, is a point of anger among some Muslims. Some Muslim schoolchildren reportedly refused to observe the minute's silence for the terror victims last week.

Such points of controversy are readily exploited. The objective of IS, says Gilles Kepel of Sciences-Po university, "is to identify fractures within European society, and ▶▶

Anti-Semitism in France

J'accuse, eventually

PARIS

Belated attention for the dangers faced by French Jews

IN EARLY December 2014 three armed men broke into a flat in Créteil, south-east of Paris, tied up a young woman and her boyfriend, raped the woman, and robbed them both. "You Jews, you have money," they told the couple. A few days later, Bernard Cazeneuve, the interior minister, along with a thousand or so other people marched against anti-Semitism; President François Hollande called the attack "intolerable". But the event passed off to wider indifference.

Long before the recent supermarket attack, in which four Jewish men were killed, France's Jews have been concerned at what some see as the *banalisation* of anti-Semitism. Fatalities grab headlines, as did the kidnapping, torture and murder of Ilan Halimi near Paris in 2006, or the shooting in 2012 of seven people, including three Jewish children and a rabbi, at a Jewish school in Toulouse. Low-level anti-Semitism does not.

A vast French majority (89%) hold "favourable" views about Jews, according to a Pew Global Attitudes poll last year. Yet anti-Semitic acts nearly doubled in France in the first seven months of 2014, compared with the previous year. Two events prompted an uptick. One was a planned tour a year ago by Dieudonné M'bala M'bala, a stand-up comedian, whose hallmark is the inverted Nazi salute he called the *quenelle*. The government banned the performances on the

ground of public security. The other surge followed a pro-Gaza rally last July that turned into a violent riot; cries of "Death to Jews" were reported.

Last week's terror attacks have prompted much introspection. Already, French Jews made up the single biggest contingent of emigrants to Israel in 2014, according to the Jewish Agency for Israel: 7,000 moved there, more than double the figure in 2013. In Paris on the eve of the march, Binyamin Netanyahu, the Israeli prime minister, said that "all the Jews who would like to immigrate will be warmly welcomed with open arms."

The government has now stepped up security outside synagogues and Jewish schools, as well as mosques. On January 14th Mr M'bala M'bala was arrested for condoning terrorism after he posted a message on Facebook saying "Je me sens Charlie Coulibaly" ("I feel like [the supermarket killer]"). In a speech the previous day Manuel Valls, the prime minister, condemned anti-Semitism, declaring that, without its Jews, "France would no longer be France".

Some Jewish leaders caution that leaving France would be ceding to terror. And many, including Mr Netanyahu, have acknowledged that on January 9th when a number of Jewish shoppers found refuge from Mr Coulibaly in a freezer, the man who led them to safety was a young Muslim.



Mais jamais oublié