

**TALK AT ALLIANCE FRANCAISE *TERROR IN THE CITY OF LIGHTS,***

**DECEMBER 13, 2013**

**BON JOUR, MESDAMES ET MISSEURS. JE SUIS TRES HEIREUSE A FAIRE VOTRE CONNAISSANCE AUJOURDUI.**

**MERCI, MIMI , POUR L' INVITATION.**

**PARIS—LA CITE PLUS BELLE DU LA MONDE ET NEW YORK PLEIN D' ENERGIE MAIS NE BELLE. NO!**

**IL FAUT QUE JE CONTINUE EN ANGLAIS A CAUSE DE JE OBLEIE LE PLUPART DE LA LANGUE FRANCAIS QU' JE APRIS QUAND J' HABITAIS FRANCE. MAINENANT, EN ANGLAIS:**

**I HAVE A QUESTION FOR YOU. HOW MANY OF YOU HAVE BEEN IN NEW YORK CITY? DID YOU LIKE IT? DO YOU REMEMBER TRAFFIC JAMMED DELAYS WITH DRIVERS HITTING THE HORNS IN ANTICIPATION OF BEING HELD UP, STREET VENDERS HAWKING THEIR WARES, OR THEIR TABLES ON THE SIDEWALKS CAUSING PEDESTRIAN GRIDLOCK, GARBAGE TRUCKS BANGING AROUND IN THE MORNINGS, THE FEELING OF CASUAL INDIFFERENCE IN THE MIDST OF FRANTIC HUSTLE, A TOTAL ANONYMITY ON THE SIDEWALKS,, AN INABILITY TO SEE THE SUN OR THE STARS AT NIGHT BECAUSE OF TALL BUILDNGS AND BRIGHT LIGHTS.**

**BUT THEN THERE IS ALSO THE JOY OF BEING IN THE BUSIEST YET CONFINED CITY, SINCE ALL OF MANHATTAN COULD FIT INSIDE OF THE DALLAS FT WORTH AIRPORT. IT IS ALSO MEMORABLE AND EXCITING TO BE AT THE NERVE CENTER OF THE U.S. IN SO MANY WAYS, IN FASHION AND THE**

ARTS.THEN THERE IS THE UNITED NATIONS. NEW YORK IS ALSO THE HOME OF IMMIGRATION FOR FOLKS FROM ALL OVER THE WORLD, SYMBOLIZED BY THE GIFT OF OUR LADY OF THE HARBOUR, THE STATUE OF LIBERTY, FROM FRANCE.

HOW ABOUT PARIS, FRANCE? WOULDNT YOU SAY THAT IT IS MORE RESIDENTIAL, CERTAINLY MORE ELEGANT WITH MORE BEAUTIFUL BULDINGS, AN ENERGIZED CITY LIKE NEW YORK BUT WITH A QUIETER METRO AND MORE EFFICIENT AUTOBUSES, WHILE STILL BEING A CITY OF FAST CARS AND FAST WALKERS; MORE FUN PERHAPS AND UP LIFITING, MAYBE SEXIER. ALSO, NO ONE CAN BEAT THE FOOD, THE WINE, AND THE CHEESE, AND CERTAINLY MORE HISTORICAL BY FAR. AUTHOR ALAN FURST, WHO WRITES ABOUT WORLD WAR II, IMPLIES THAT PARIS HAS ALSO BEEN A CITY OF SPIES, WHILE THAT IS NOT NEW YORK PER SE. THAT IS WASHINGTON DC.

MY BOOK IS NOT ANOTHER TALE OF TWO CITIES, HOWEVER, BUT THE NEW YORK CHARACTERS IN '*TERROR IN THE CITY OF LIGHTS*' ARE THE SAME ONES WHO WERE IN '*TERROR ON EAST 72ND STREET*', ABOUT NEW YORK AND CANADA.

THESE CHARACTERS ARE AS FOLLLOWS; PARTIALLY RETIRED FBI AGENT THEODORE EDMUNDS AND DEPUTY CHIEF OF VIOLENT CRIMES IN THE 19<sup>TH</sup> NY PRECINCT, SHERRY WILLIAMS. THE TWO ARE UNDER THE DIRECTION OF 'E', TED'S BOSS-- A JAMES BOND FIGURE LIKE JUDY DENCH'S 'M'—AND ARE

**DIRECTED TO LEAVE THE CITY AND TO AID THE “FOUR MUSKETEERS,  
“NAMED AS SUCH, I SAY IN THE BOOK, BY A PARIS NEWSPAPER. NOT THOSE  
OF ALEXANDER DUMAS, BUT THE ONES WHO HAD FOUGHT TERRORISTS IN  
ALGERIA WHO HAD ATTACKED PARIS. THEY ARE; MY MUSLIM HEROINE,  
FATIMA YOUSSEFF, AN EGYPTIAN FLIGHT ATTENEDENT; HER FIANCE AND  
UNDERCOVER OPERATIVE, ONE ARMED CHARLES WINTHROP; POLITICAL  
OFFICER AT THE US EMBASSY IN PARIS,SOBER STEVE HALLCROFT;AND HIS  
FIANCE , WISECRACKING BUT SMART NEW YORK CITY INVESTGATIVE  
REPORTER, PENELOPE WILSON. THEY ARE ASSISTED NOT ONLY BY THE  
POLICE OF PARIS BUT ALSO BY THE CRS, THE NAITONAL POLICE, AND NOT  
LEAST OF ALL BY ANOTHER ONE OF MY HEROES, SPECIAL AGENT JULES  
CROUSEAU.**

**CROUSEAU IS PHYSICALY AKWARD, NEAR SIGHTED, NEARING 60 YEARS  
OF AGE, ALWAYS WEARING A PORK PIE HAT AND OFTEN A SCRUFFY  
RAINCOAT, BUT HE IS TOTALLY SINCERE. HE IS ASSISTED IN HIS OWN  
UNIQUE WAY TO GET HIS MAN BY A MIDDLE AGED WOMAN HE MEETS,  
JEANNETTE. WHO SEES ONLY THE GOOD QUALITIES IN HIM. HE DRIVES AN  
ANCIENT CITROEN LANDAU 2CV FOUR DOOR AUTOMOBILE, A MODEL THAT  
ORIGINATED IN THE 1030’S BUT WAS RE- ISSUED AFTER WORLD WAR II . IT IS  
SMALL AND UNDERPOWERED, SLUGGISH BUT RELIABLE, SORT OF LIKE  
CROUSEAU HIMSELF. IF YOU HAVE NOT GUESSED, I PATTERNED THIS HERO  
AFTER PETER SELLERS IN THE FILM *THE PINK PANTHER*.**

**THEN THERE ARE THE ADVERSARIES, WHICH INVOLVE FIRST OF ALL A RADICAL SALAFIST ALGERIAN, NAMED ASSAD, WHO'S BROTHER HAD BEEN KILLED IN A SHOOTOUT IN THE CASBAH CAUSED BY THE FOUR ANTI-TERROKISTS FROM PARIS. ASSAD AND HIS FOLLOWERS ARE MEMBERS OF A SALAFIST SECT IN ALGERIA.**

**WHO ARE THESE SALAFISTS? A STRICT DEFINITION IS THAT THEY ARE A MILITANT GROUP OF EXTREMIST SUNNIS WHO BELIEVE THEMSELVES THE ONLY CORRECT INTERPRETERS OF THE KORAN AND CONSIDER MODERATE MUSLIMS TO BE INFIDELS. THEY SEEK TO CONVERT ALL MUSLIMS AND TO ENSURE THAT THEIR OWN FUNDAMENTALIST VERSION WILL DOMINATE THE WORLD. THEY SAY ISLAM IS NOT A SUNDAY RELIGION BUT A COMPLETE WAY OF LIFE.**

**NOW, WE ALL KNOW THERE ARE GROUPS LIKE THIS IN ALL FAITHS, AND LET IT BE SAID THAT ALL SALAFISTS ARE NOT RADICAL, NOR VIOLENT. THERE ARE CHARCTERS IN MY BOOK WHO ARE NORMAL BELEIVERS-- NOT LIKE UNCOMPROMISING ASSAD-- JUST LIKE THERE ARE CHRISTIANS WHO ARE MODERATE OR JEWS WHO ARE; IN FACT THEY ARE THE GREAT MAJORITY, WHETHER FUNDAMENTALIST OR NOT.**

**WHILE THERE IS NOTHING INTRINSIC TO SALAFIST THINKING THAT MEANS ITS AHERENTS ARE ALL LIKELY TO RESORT TO VIOLENCE. THE BREAK OFF "GROUP FOR PREACHING AND COMBAT," IS ONE OF ALGERIA'S MOST HARDLINE GROUPS. IT HAS FOUGHT THE GOVERNMENT OF ALGERIA,**

**KIDNAPPED TOURISTS, AND WAS BEHIND EARLIER BOMB ATTACKS IN PARIS. THE ARMED ISLAMIC GROUP (GIA) STARTED THIS ORGANIZATION FROM THE NORMAL SALAFISTS AND IT WAS THE ONE THAT SLAUGHTERED RIVAL RURAL ALGERIAN INNOCENTS IN THE 1990's. THE GIA ALSO SPAWNED AQIM, WHICH ALIGNED ITSELF WITH AL QAEDA AND IS NOW THE ISLAMIC MAGHREB, A SALAFIST JIHADIST GROUP, ONCE LED BY 'THE PRINCE, ' A NICK NAME FOR MOKHTAR BELMOKHTAR. HE WAS THE ONE WHO LED THE ATTACK ON THE GAS FIELD NEAR AMENAS, ALGERIA, TAKING 600 HOSTAGES EARLIER THIS YEAR. THAT ORGANIZATION ALSO SUPPORTED THE TAKE OVER OF THE DEMOCRATIC GOVERNMENT OF MALI, FORCING FRANCE TO SEND TROOPS TO RID THE COUNTRY OF THEIR INFLUENCE. THE FRENCH ARE NOW IN CENTRAL AFRICA.**

**IN MY BOOK ASSAD HEARS ON THE RADIO IN A TAXI, TAKEN ON HIS WAY TO DO HARM IN PARIS, THE CONFLICT IN MALI AND LOUDLY PRAISES ITS LEADER, MOKHTAR BELMOKHTAR AS A HERO. LATER THIS YEAR, HOWEVER, THE PRESS REPORTED THAT MOKHTAR HAD BEEN KILLED BY FRENCH SPECIAL FORCES TROOPS IN MALI. AND AS YOU MAY HAVE READ, THE FRENCH WERE VERY EFFECTIVE IN MALI.**

**BUT DON'T THINK THAT ALL RADICAL SALAFISTS HAVE COME FROM ALGERIA, HOWEVER. THEY HAVE BEEN CAUGHT OR HAVE ATTACKED FROM INDEPENDENT CELLS IN SYRIA, GERMANY, THE WEST BANK, NORTH YEMEN, AND EGYPT, SO THERE IS A SMATTERING OF THEM WORLD WIDE**

**YET THESE RADICAL SALAFISTS ARE IMPORTANT TO THE PLOT OF MY BOOK BECAUSE AS THE STORY PROCEEDS I HOPE THE READER IS PROMPTED TO MEDITATE ON THE NATURE OF EVIL. WHAT FUELS IT IN EACH OF US, LET ALONE IN THE MOST VIOLENT?. WHAT IS THE NATURE OF EVIL? WHY DOES IT EXIST IN THE HUMAN HEART?**

**IN MY VIEW, MUCH OF IT IS RELATED TO OUR HUMAN PRIDE OR ARROGANCE, AND OUR INABILITY TO FORGIVE, IF NOT FORGET. TO BE SURE MY BAD GUY ASSAD IS A DEMENTED VILLAN, NOT JUST BECAUSE HE IS A RADICAL SALALFIST, NOR BECAUSE HE CAN NOT FORGET THAT HIS BOTHER WAS KILLED, BUT BECAUSE HE IS ENTHRAWLED WITH HIS OWN POWER TO DOMINATE OTHERS.**

**WHILE REVENGE IS ON HIS MIND ALL THE TIME SO THAT HE WANTS TO KILL EACH OF THE FOUR ENEMIES IF HE CAN, HE ALSO HAS A FIXATION WITH THE PAST, WITH TRYING TO CONVINCING ALGERIA THAT IT SHOULD BECOME A TOTAL ISLAMIST STATE, AS IN SOME HALLOWED PLACE IN PAST TIME. HE WANTS ALGERIA TO BREAK ALL TIES WITH PARIS OR THE UNITED STATES.**

**CONSEQUENTLY, HE PLANS TO ATTACK SACRED MONUMENTS IN PARIS, SPECIHCALLY NOTRE DAME. IT'S A SHOW OF POWER BUT HE BELIEVES THAT IT WILL MAKE MANY OF THE FRENCH DOUBT SUPPORT OF NORTH AFRICAN DEMOCRATIC GOVERNMENTS.**

**HIS ALLEGIANCE, IF HE HAS ANY OTHER THAN TO HIMSELF, IS TO THIS GROUP FOR PREACHING AND COMBAT, WHICH IS A DOCUMENTED GROUP, AS I HAVE STATED, AND HAS BEEN RESPONSIBLE FOR THE REAL BOMBINGS THAT OCCURED IN PARIS WHEN WE LIVED THERE IN THE 1990'S. THE GROUP MEMBERS PLACED HOME MADE DEVICES TO BLOW UP IN STREET POUBELLS OR IN METRO STATIONS. IF YOU HAVE BEEN TO PARIS LATELY YOU WILL NOTICE THE GREEN BAGS THAT HANG FROM LITTLE POSTS THAT ARE THE SUBSTITUTES ON STREET CORNERS FOR THE OLD METAL GARABAGE CONTAINERS. THEY PREVIOUSLY OFFERED HORRIFIC SHRAPNEL WOUNDS TO BYSTANDERS AFTER AN EXPLOSION BUT NOW THAT THREAT HAS BEEN ELIMINATED.**

**IS THERE AN ANSWER TO THE VIOLENCE RADICAL TERRORISTS CAUSE? WELL, PERHAPS. BUT NOT ALL RADICALS ARE THE SAME, AND NOT ALL ARE VIOLENT. WE HAD TOM PAINE IN THE COLONIES, YOU HAD ROSPIERRE IN THE FRENCH REVOLUTION, BUT AT LEAST WE CAN SAFELY SAY A RADICAL IS NOT MODERATE.**

**I APPRECIATE MODERATION. ALTHOUGH LABELED A TERRORIST WHEN YOUNG BECAUSE HE ADVOCATED VIOLENCE AGAINS THE APARTHEID GOVERNMENT OF SOUTH AFRICA, NELSON MANDELA IS AN EXAMPLE.OF A MAN WHO MATURED AND CHANGED. AFTER 27 YEARS IN PRISON HE WAS RELEASED AND SAW THE BIG PICTURE, THAT IS, BY AXCKNOWLEDGING BOTH SIDES OF ISSUES. HIS FRIEND AND FELLOW ANGLICAN, ARCHBISHOP TUTU, WHO SPONSORED THE TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION TRIALS, WAS AT**

HIS MEMORIAL SERVICE LAST TUESDAY. ANGLICANS SUPPOSEDELY SEEK THE VIA MEDIA, LA MILLIEU DE ROUTE, LE MOYEN, AS I WOULD DESCRIBE ANGLICIANS WHEN ASKED IN PARIS. BUT ANCIENT GREEK PHILOSPHER SOCRATES ALSO ADVOCATED MODERATON.

IF MODERATION IS THE KEY TO NOT BEING RADICAL, IS IT BECAUSE ONE HAS DEVELOPED A SENSITIVITY TO OTHERS AND VALUES HUMAN LIFE? I DOUBT THAT A RADICAL WOULD AGEE WITH NICHOLAS BERDYAEV, EXILED BY LENIN FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF MOSCOW IN 1920 WHO WROTE IN HIS BOOK *THE FATE OF MAN*;

‘IN A CERTAIN SENSE, EVERY HUMAN SOUL HAS MORE MEANING AND VALUE THAN THE WHOLE OF HISTORY, WITH ITS EMPIRES, ITS WARS, AND FADING CIVILIZATONS,’ YOU CAN UNDERSTAND WHY LENIN WOULD GET RID OF HIM.

MORE RECENTLY, IN A *NEW YORK TIMES* OP ED PAGE DAVID BROOKS WROTE AN ARTICLE ENTITLED , ‘WHAT MODERATION MEANS.’ HE SUGGESTED THAT IT IS NOT JUST FINDING A MIDPOINT BETWEEN TWO OPPOSING POLES. THAT IS DUMNED DOWN MODERATION. I ADD THAT IT IS NOT JUST A HEGELIAN SYSNTHESIS BETWEEN THESIS AND ANTITHESIS, ALTHOUGH I HAVE PERSONAL RESPECT FOR THAT POSITION. BROOKS ADDS THAT A MODERATE STARTS WITH A POLITICAL VISION BUT NOT FROM AN INVINCIBLE IDEOLOGY BUT RATHER FROM AND UNDERSTANDING AND APPREICATION FOR HISTORY.” HE WROTE:



**‘ THE VISION OF AMERICA HAS BEEN OF IMMIGRANTS WHO COME HERE TO WORK HARD AND RISE. THERE ARE VERY MANY VIEWPOINTS IN AMERICA AND THEY NEED TO BE RESPECTED, AND WE HAVE A HISTORY OF CONFLICT. BUT THE MODERATE UNDERSTANDS THIS, AND KNOWS THERE IS NO ULTIMATE SOLUTION. HE OR SHE TRIES TO KEEP THE OPPOSING SIDES BALANCED.’**

**BROOKS BELIEVES THAT AMERICANS HAVE PROSPERED OVER THE CENTURIES BECAUSE WE HAVE KEPT A ROUGH BALANCE BETWEEN INDIVIDUAL OPPORTUNITY AND SOCIAL COHESION, AND THE POLITICAL SYSTEM KEEPS FINDING A NEW EQUILIBRIUM.**

**I QUOTED HIM DIRECTLY IN THE INTRODUCTION TO MY BOOK. I DESCRIBED MY MUSLIM HEROINE AS ONE WHO WOULD NOT MERELY THINK IN SOME AMERICAN WAY, BUT BEING TRUE TO HER FAITH, SHE UNDERSTANDS THAT THERE IS AN IMBALANCE IN ANY COUNTRY BUT IT IS NOT JUST IN OTHERS, *IT IS IN HERSELF*. ‘SHE DISTRUSTS PASSIONATE INTENSITY AND BOLD SIMPLICITY AND ADMIRES SELF RESTRAINT, INTELLECTUAL OPENNESS AND EQUIPOISE.’ THESE ARE WORDS I USED FROM DAVID BROOKS.**

**ANOTHER PERSON WHOM I HAVE ADMIRERD IS FRENCH LITERARY PHILOSOPHER ,ALGERIAN BORN ALBERT CAMUS, WHOSE EXPERIENCE OF WORLD WAR II MADE HIM DISTRUST EXTREMISM IN ALL FORMS BECAUSE HE BELIEVED IT LED TO ARROGANCE , INTOLERANCE AND THE KILLING OF**

**THOSE WHO DISAGREED, LIKE THE ACTIONS OF NAZIS. HE ONCE WROTE IN HIS *CRITICAL ESSAYS*,**

**‘THE CHORUS IN THE CLASSICAL TRAGEDIES OF THE GREEKS GENERALLY ADVISES PRUDENCE. FOR THE CHORUS KNOWS THAT UP TO A CERTAIN POINT EVERYONE IS RIGHT AND THE PERSON, WHO FROM BLINDNESS OR PASSION, OVERSTEPS HIS LIMIT IS HEADING FOR CATSTROPHE, IF HIS PERSISTS IN HIS DESIRE TO ASSERT A RIGHT HE ALONE POSSESSES.’**

**IN MY BOOK THERE ARE MUSLIMS WHO ARE NOT RADICALIZED, ESPECIALLY ONE WHO UNLIKE THE OTHER SIDEKICKS OF ASSAD, FINALLY COMES TO DISAGREE WITH ASSAD’S PROPENSITY FOR VIOLENCE. FOR EXAMPLE, MUSTAFFER IS THIS MAN, RATIONAL, YOUNG AND INTITIALY OVERWHELMED BY ASSAD’S CHARISMA, BUT HE FINALLY FIGURES HIM OUT. HE THEREFORE CAREFULLY PLANS HIS ESCAPE FROM ASSAD’S DOMINATION BECAUSE AS A THOUGHTFUL PERSON WHO COULD UNDERSTAND ASSAD’S MOTIVE FOR AVENGING HIS BROTHER’S DEATH, HE COULD NOT TOLERATE THE MASS SLAUGHTER OF INNOCENT PEOPLE NOR THE DESTUCTION OF HISTORIC BUILDINGS FOR SOME NEBULOUS ARROGANT BELIEF.**

**HE SLIPS AWAY IN TO THE PARIS NIGHT AND PLANS TO REMAIN IN THE CITY OF LIGHTS TO ENJOY ITS JOIR DE VIVE AND EVENTUALLY JOINS A GROUP OF FORMER RADICALS WHO BEGIN A PEACEFUL GROUP FOR**

**PREACHING AND PEACE, NOT PREACHING AND COMBAT. THESE ARE THE TRUE MUSLIMS, IN MY MIND.**

**SUCH CHARACTERS AS, MEHDI, BANDIRA AND HUSAM WHO I DESCRIBED IN MY FORMER BOOKS, *PARIS UNDER SIEGE* AND *PARIS ON FIRE*, TAKE MUSTAFFER INTO THEIR HOME AND CHALLENGE ASSAD. THERE IS A CONFRONTATIONAL SCENE IN THE BOOK BETWEEN ASSAD AND THE FORMER RADICALS, WHO HAVE CHANGED AND ARE LIVING PEACEFULLY IN PARIS. ASSAD WANTS THEM BACK IN THE RADICAL GROUP OF SALFISTS, BUT THEY SAY NO:**

**MEHDI'S LITTLE WIFE, BANDIRA, SPEAKS UP TO HIM, STATING FIRMLY:**

**“YOU ARE NO TRUE MUSLIM, ONLY A MAN FIXATED ON THE WRONG MEANING OF JIHAD. TO YOU A JIHADIST MEANS SEEKING REVENGE ON FORIEGN ENEMIES, BUT READ YOUR KORAN, ASSAD. THAT IS NOT THE TRUE MEANING. WORK ON YOUSELF AND BECOME A KIND AND USEFUL HUMAN BEING, NOT A KILLER ON THE LOOSE, ATTEMPTING TO WREAK HAVOC. ADMIRE YOUR BROTHER, INSTEAD, A GOOD SOUL.” ASSAD OF COURSE IS FURIOUS, BUT HER HUSBAND, MEHDI, PROTECTS HER.**

**THEN THERE ARE THE OWNERS OF THE BATEAU THAT BROUGHT IN THE ARMS AND EXPLOSIVES ON THE RIVER SIENE WHO ALSO BREAK WITH ASSAD, AND BARELY ESCAPE HIS CLUTCHES.**

**I HAVE TRIED TO PRESENT A BALANCED VIEW OF THE GOOD AND THE BAD AND THE UGLY IN *TERROR IN THE CITY OF LIGHTS*, BUT I ALSO HOPE THAT IT IS JUST A GOOD READ**

**ONE REVIEW ON AMAZON CONFIRMS THIS POINT:**

**‘A GOOD READ. HOLDS YOUR ATTENTION AS THE TENSION BUILDS UP TO A SATISFYING CLIMAX.THE PARISAN BACKGROUND IS INTERESTING. THE AUTHOR KNOWS HIS PARIS WELL. HOWEVER, A MAP WOULD HAVE BEEN A NICE FEATURE. THE STORY GIVES AN INSIGHT TO THE RADICAL ALGERIAN PROBLEM FACING FRANCE TODAY, AND SETS FORTH THE CONFLICT BETWEEN THOSE MUSLIMS WHO INTERPRET THE KORAN AS A BOOK OF PEACE AND THOSE WHO SEE IT AS A CALL TO ARMS.’**

**THANK YOU, MY FRIENDS. MERCI, MEIS AMIS**