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## **The problem of anti-Semitism in France's domestic and foreign policy in the years of François Hollande's presidency and the ways to solve it**

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*Abstract.* The article is devoted to the policy of French President François Hollande (2012–17) aimed at combating anti-Semitism. The author describes the extent of its implementation both domestically (in cooperation with the Jewish diaspora) and internationally (development of relations with Israel). The activity of Hollande's government is demonstrated over various periods of time, which allows seeing the changes in the policy and the status of the diaspora. A conclusion is made on the predominant influence of the economic factors and the factor of political heterogeneity of the government throughout the President's policy. Possible solutions for the problem of anti-Semitism in France are proposed.

*Keywords:* François Hollande, Manuel Valls, the State of Israel, the State of Palestine, Germany, the Jewish diaspora, anti-Semitism, anti-Zionism, Aliyah

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### **Introduction**

The Jewish diaspora in France is the second largest after the American one – by 2012 it was made up of 480,000 people, which is essentially less than 1 % of the country's population<sup>1</sup>. Like other national diasporas, the Jewish community has its

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<sup>1</sup> Weiner R. France Virtual Jewish History Tour. *The Virtual Jewish World*, 2017. Available at: <http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/france-virtual-jewish-history-tour> (date of the access – 22.05.2017)

representatives in the legislative and executive authorities. It is difficult to determine the impact of the diaspora in the economy – the state does not provide any statistical data of this kind, systematized by nationality. However, given the zeal with which the Israeli government invites European Jewish experts (especially French) to the country, we can assume that their contribution to the research development should not be underestimated. The solidarity of the diaspora promotes cooperation with the citizens and authorities at the level of private organizations pursuing various goals, including the goal of reducing the level of interethnic tension.

Nevertheless, the Jews cannot eliminate the intolerant attitude towards themselves to the end. There are still stereotypes and conspiracy theories in the society, which depict the Jews as sinister manipulators-puppeteers who have undermined all spheres of public life. These views, existing previously, took a more aggressive form in the recent years, marked by the rule of Francois Hollande.

The aim of this work is to examine the problem of anti-Semitism in France's domestic and foreign policies during the presidency of François Hollande and to identify such aspects as the causes of the problem as well as the solutions proposed by the representatives of the diaspora.

### **Main part**

The March terrorist attack in Toulouse, which took the lives of three schoolchildren and a teacher of the Jewish school, could not but affect the mood within the Jewish diaspora and the electoral situation in 2012. President Nicolas Sarkozy, who initiated the antiterrorist operation, made numerous arrests of suspects and strengthened the protection of Jewish institutions, received support on part of many Jews. The previous measures of the candidate played their role to improve the Franco-Israeli relations. But this did not mean that the representatives of the diaspora completely turned away from the socialists. One of the country's largest Jewish organizations, the Representative Council of Jewish Institutions in France (CRIF) (current head Roger Coukerman), organized a meeting with the party's national secretary, Pierre Moscovici, who convinced the Jews of their friendship with the Socialist candidate, Francois Hollande<sup>2</sup>.

However, as it turned out, he made major bets on the electorate of other candidates from the Left Front and the Greens, who had not won and who participated in the anti-Zionist actions in the past (for example, called for boycotting Israeli goods).

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<sup>2</sup> Silberman Z. French voters moving on from Toulouse, but Jews can't let it go. *JTA*. 19.04.2012. Available at: <http://www.jta.org/2012/04/19/news-opinion/world/french-voters-moving-on-from-toulouse-but-jews-cant-let-it-go> (date of access – 22.05.2017)

Both candidates agreed on the need to maintain friendly relations with Israel. However, Hollande went further by declaring his support for the international recognition of the State of Palestine. In his opinion, Jerusalem should become the common capital of the two states<sup>3</sup>. This situation attracted supporters of the leftist parties, as well as French Muslims, representing the majority among immigrants.

Perhaps that is why Hollande was supported not only by the leftists and the greens, but also by many Muslims: of two million followers of Islam who took part in the vote, 93 % (1.8 million) cast their vote to favor the leader of the Socialist Party<sup>4</sup>. The opposite picture was observed in the Jewish diaspora, where most of the votes appealed to Sarkozy<sup>5</sup>.

The victory of the socialist caused a mixed reaction among representatives of the diaspora. Some were seriously worried about the possibility of strengthening the leftist parties and movements hostile to Israel. Several researchers drew attention to the fact that Hollande preferred not to link the development of Franco-Israeli relations with the Palestinian-Israeli conflict<sup>6</sup>. Yet, most of the Jews agreed that the Diaspora had nothing against the Hollande as president. Everything depends on his environment: if leading members of the Socialist Party take a position hostile to Israel, this will negatively affect the public opinion.

As we see, the problems of Hollande's policy in the matter under consideration already became apparent at the time of the election campaign. The new president sought to combine the incompatible (multiculturalism and secularization) and delimit the interrelated (the attitude of Israel and France, Israel and Palestine). These problems did not fail to prove themselves in the next four years of his presidency.

Nevertheless, immediately after taking up the new post, Hollande noted that he was interested in deepening the Franco-Israeli relations. Same as after any other presidential campaign, the French drew attention to the composition of the team of the newly-minted head of state. As it turned out, among the left there were enough citizens somehow connected with the diaspora. Yet, few of them put it for show, espe-

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<sup>3</sup> France's Hollande calls for shared Jerusalem, halt to settlement building. *JTA*. 18.11.2013. Available at: <http://www.jta.org/2013/11/18/news-opinion/israel-middle-east/hollande-calls-for-shared-jerusalem-halt-to-settlement-building> (date of access – 22.05.2017)

<sup>4</sup> Kern S. Muslim Voters Change Europe. *Gatestone Institute*. 17.05.2012. Available at: <https://www.gatestoneinstitute.org/3064/muslim-voters-europe> (date of access – 22.05.2017)

<sup>5</sup> MacDonald K. Muslims decide the French election. *Occidental Observer*. 19.05.2012. Available at: <http://www.theoccidentalobserver.net/2012/05/19/muslims-decide-the-french-election/> (date of the visit – 22.05.2017)

<sup>6</sup> Gerstenfield M. Hollande's presidency: France, Israel and the Jews. *Arutz Sheva*. 19.05.2016. Available at: <http://www.israelnationalnews.com/Articles/Article.aspx/18897> (date of access – 22.05.2017)

cially those fighting for the rights of the Jews for this reason. The appointment of Manuel Valls as Minister of the Interior (then – Prime Minister) and Arlem Desire as Minister for European Affairs became significant for the Jews in this respect. A woman from Tel-Aviv (Daphna Poznanski-Benhamou) was elected as a deputy of the National Assembly representing interests of French citizens of the Mediterranean region. Earlier, she opposed the anti-Semitic projects and upon entering the post promised to help solving such problems<sup>7</sup>.

None the less, positive actions towards the diaspora within the country were not reflected in the foreign policy. In the autumn of 2012, the European Jewish groups actively advocated that the EU declared the Lebanese organization Hezbollah as terrorist. But the initiative could not be promoted, partly because of the position of France that opposed this measure. It is assumed that the French authorities went against the initiative to maintain favorable relations with Lebanon, the policy of which policy was under the influence of Hezbollah<sup>8</sup>.

However, a year later, France's position changed: President Hollande spoke of adding Hezbollah to the list of terrorist organizations. None the less, as French Foreign Minister L. Fabius noted, the main reason for the authorities' actions was the support provided by the organization to B. Assad regime in Syria<sup>9</sup>. This event demonstrates to us the true degree of arranging priorities for the French authorities in relations with Israel and its inevitable consideration in conjunction with other more important foreign policy issues.

As already mentioned above, the presidential struggle was won by Hollande largely due to the mass support of the Muslims. At the same time, he remained faithful to the ideals of secularism and promised to fight extremism. Therefore, in 2013 Hollande continued Sarkozy's policy of limiting government funding to organizations considered religious. But the application of this law affected the Jewish organizations not related to religious activities: kindergartens and sports associations<sup>10</sup> ... In some

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<sup>7</sup> Lipshiz C. French expats elect Israeli woman to France's National Assembly. *JTA*. 18.06.2012. Available at: <http://www.jta.org/2012/06/18/news-opinion/world/french-expats-elect-israeli-woman-to-frances-national-assembly> (date of access – 22.05.2017)

<sup>8</sup> Lipshiz C. Europe's Jewish and pro-Israel groups pushing EU to classify Hezbollah a terrorist group. *JTA*. 24.08.2012. Available at: <http://www.jta.org/2012/08/24/news-opinion/politics/europes-jewish-and-pro-israel-groups-pushing-eu-to-classify-hezbollah-a-terrorist-group> (date of access – 22.05.2017)

<sup>9</sup> France wants Hezbollah added to terror blacklist. *The Local*. 23.05.2013. Available at: <https://www.thelocal.fr/20130523/france-want-hezbollah-added-to-terror-blacklist> (date of access – 22.05.2017)

<sup>10</sup> Lipshiz C. In southern France, Jews paying a price for the government's effort to curb extremism. *JTA*. 02.01.2013. Available at: <http://www.jta.org/2013/01/02/news-opinion/world/in->

cases, the authorities promised to continue to pay subsidies provided the organizations change their names to 'non-Jew'. The ban mainly touched upon Jewish and Muslim organizations. Per the representatives of the diaspora, the Jews and the institutions founded by them were victims of the state's struggle against Islamic extremism. Let us add that this situation also proved lack of competence of the local authorities that did not consider each case separately but preferred to deprive of funding all organizations directly or indirectly related to any confession.

However, in 2013 the diaspora in its main part assessed the policy of the president positively, in relation to the community. Since his appointment, hundreds of criminal cases have been brought against the citizens convicted of committing anti-Semitic acts. The Diaspora reacted positively to France's decision to reject a compromise agreement on Iran's nuclear program concluded by the world powers<sup>11</sup>. On this issue, the French authorities shared the position of Israel, the leadership of which believed that the agreement did not provide protection for their state from a nuclear threat<sup>12</sup>.

In the very same 2013, President Hollande visited Israel. He was accompanied by French businessmen – a clear indication that economic cooperation would be the main topic of discussion<sup>13</sup>. Indeed, Hollande was determined to conclude new agreements with Israel that would promote the development of bilateral trade relations. This desire distinguished him from the previous leaders of France on a deeper scale, the leaders who restricted the economic cooperation to maintain good relations with the Arab countries.

However, the president's position on the Jewish issue was not the only factor determining the attitude of the representatives of the diaspora to his policies. Let us recall that by the end of 2013, Hollande became the least popular president of France in the history of the Fifth Republic<sup>14</sup>. At the time, his unpopularity was largely deter-

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southern-france-jews-paying-a-price-for-the-governments-effort-to-curb-extremism (date of access – 22.05.2017)

<sup>11</sup> Lipshiz C. Deeply unpopular at home, French president embraced on Israel trip. *JTA*. 18.11.2013. Available at: <http://www.jta.org/2013/11/18/news-opinion/israel-middle-east/in-israel-frances-unpopular-president-gets-praises-sung> (date of access – 22.05.2017)

<sup>12</sup> Rettman A. France blocks Iran nuclear deal. *EUobserver*. 11.11.2013. Available at: <https://euobserver.com/foreign/122056> (date of access – 22.05.2017)

<sup>13</sup> Lipshiz C. Deeply unpopular at home, French president embraced on Israel trip. *JTA*. 18.11.2013. Available at: <http://www.jta.org/2013/11/18/news-opinion/israel-middle-east/in-israel-frances-unpopular-president-gets-praises-sung> (date of access – 22.05.2017)

<sup>14</sup> Llana S. Hollande's popularity hits new lows after a year at France's helm. *The Christian Science Monitor*. 06.05.2013. Available at: <http://www.csmonitor.com/World/Europe/2013/0506/Hollande-s-popularity-hits-new-lows-after-a-year-at-France-s-helm> (date of access – 22.05.2017)

mined by the plight of the French economy. The crisis affected most of the French citizens. We can say that representatives of the Jewish diaspora suffered from economic crisis directly and indirectly. The connection between the economic crisis and the flourishing of radicalism, however indirect it may be, could still be traced. The growth of unemployment rate under Hollande primarily affected workers of foreign origin: among them, there was increase in the share of the unemployed by 1.4 % (at the same time, the same figure for the native French increased by 0.3 %) <sup>15</sup>. By 2015, the contribution factor of foreign citizens in France secured the penultimate place in the EU (Belgium was last in the list).

The indicators among citizens under 30 demonstrate great polarization: young people with immigrant roots are twice as likely to be unemployed as their peers – the native French <sup>16</sup>. Namely, young people represent the most favorable environment for radical ideas. Per the researchers, not finding a worthy place in the labor market (and in the French society on a whole), young immigrants (especially their descendants) turn to radical ideas – hyperbolized ideals about the culture of their ancestors.

The relatively quiet 2013 was followed by 2014 marked by the growth of anti-Semitic outrages. Studies conducted in 2014 showed that the number of anti-Semitic acts in France doubled from 423 to 851 in the previous year. In 2013, about 3,000 Jews left the country, and in 2014 – 7,000 returned to Israel. Since the foundation of the State of Israel, it was considered a record number <sup>17</sup>. We shall not forget that the figures that were given above are relevant to the Jews who moved to Israel. It is difficult to say how many representatives of the diaspora emigrated to other countries. As an example, representatives of the diasporas of various major North American cities (Montreal, Miami and others) noticed the quantitative growth of French Jews in their communities <sup>18</sup>.

A specific feature of anti-Semitic statements was that they were held under the guise of demonstrations against domestic political transformations or foreign policy events. The so-called Day of Wrath, to protest Francois Hollande's policy remem-

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<sup>15</sup> *OECD Data – official site*. Available at: <https://data.oecd.org/> (date of access – 22.05.2017)

<sup>16</sup> Ethnic minorities in France: An edgy inquiry. *The Economist*. 4.04.2015. Available at: <http://www.economist.com/news/europe/21647638-taboo-studying-immigrant-families-performance-fraying-edgy-inquiry> (date of access – 22.05.2017)

<sup>17</sup> Hollande appeals to Jews, “France is your homeland”. *Deutsche Welle*. 27.01.2015. Available at: <http://www.dw.com/en/hollande-appeals-to-jews-france-is-your-homeland/a-18217796> (date of access – 22.05.2017)

<sup>18</sup> Liphshiz C. 5774: For Europe's Jews, a year of upheaval and uncertainty. *JTA*. 16.09.2014. Available at: <http://www.jta.org/2014/09/16/news-opinion/world/5774-for-europes-jews-a-year-of-upheaval-and-uncertainty> (date of access – 22.05.2017)

bered by anti-Semitic slogans (“Jews, get out of France!”, etc.) can be referred to the first such type.

Actions of the second type were not limited to verbal threats. Most of them happened in July – the time of active military actions of Israel in the Gaza Strip. In the light of these events, supporters of Palestine in France (most of whom are Muslims) held several anti-Israeli demonstrations, some of which resulted in attacks on the Jews and their religious institutions. The most large-scale attack was on the Parisian synagogue ‘Don Isaac Abravanel’, which turned into siege of the temple. The police forces were not enough to disperse the protesters, with the back-up arriving only ten minutes later. At that time, members of the Jewish security services, radical movements (the Jewish Defense League, etc.) supported the law enforcement officers. This event convinced representatives of the Diaspora that Jewish movements should continue to promote the work of the police officers.

To avoid the recurrence of such an incident, the French authorities temporarily banned demonstrations and protests the policy of Israel. Despite the obviously negative attitude of the government to such outrages, they continued their foreign policy, in fact, fueling the anti-Israeli sentiments. In November 2014, Fabius said that France would continue its activities to promote the international recognition of the State of Palestine within the UN. If the actions of the authorities fail, France would individually recognize Palestine in 2016<sup>19</sup>.

The Diaspora leaders could not but respond to the growing tensions. At the beginning of the year R. Kukerman met the President and invited him to declare fight against racism and anti-Semitism “a matter of state importance”<sup>20</sup>. “The matter of national importance” was a problem defined by the Prime Minister, which was covered free of charge by the state media.

It seems that the French authorities listened to the requests of representatives of the diaspora. The appointment of Manuel Valls as Prime Minister could be considered an unexpected response of the leadership to the growing crisis in the society. It was him where many representatives of the diaspora saw the defender of their interests. He was one of the first to speak out about anti-Zionism admitting that it was as a hidden form of anti-Semitism. As the Minister of the Interior, he actively supported campaigns against the intolerant attitude towards the Jews in the media. Shortly after

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<sup>19</sup> French FM: Recognition of ‘Palestine’ in 2016 if talks fail. *JTA*. 28.11.2014. Available at: <http://www.jta.org/2014/11/28/news-opinion/world/french-fm-recognition-of-palestine-in-2016-if-talks-fail> (date access – 22.05.2017)

<sup>20</sup> Anti-racism should be national cause, French Jewish leader tells Hollande. *JTA*. 05.03.2014. Available at: <http://www.jta.org/2014/03/05/news-opinion/world/anti-racism-should-be-national-cause-french-jewish-leader-tells-hollande> (date of access – 22.05.2017)

assuming office, Valls responded to the requests from the diaspora: he declared the struggle against racism and anti-Semitism a matter of state importance in 2015.

But the reshuffling in the government was somewhat belated: in March 2014, the ruling party showed unsatisfactory results in the municipal elections. The Right-wing parties, on the contrary, took more favorable positions. Whilst the ‘National Front’ gained 26 % and took the lead in comparison to the other parties, the Socialist Party had to be content with 14 % and the third place (after the ‘Union for a Popular Movement’)<sup>21</sup>. The held public opinion polls showed that at the time being, in 2014, the ‘National Front’ enjoyed the support of approximately 12 % of the Jews<sup>22</sup>. This is a significant figure taking into account the fact that the party has anti-Semitic roots (same as the views of the founder of the party, Jean Marie Le Pen – father of the current leader of the party Marin Le Pen). The explanation of such a surge in party’s popularity among the Jews should be sought in its promises. Marin Le Pen has recently worked to get rid of the reputation of the anti-Semitic party for ‘National Front’ – for this, she had to expel her father from the party. At the same time, she remained impartial with regards to ethno-confessional issues: thus, Le Pen proposed extending the ban on wearing religious symbols and to replace it with the ban of Catholic and Jewish symbols<sup>23</sup>. It is known that the ‘National Front’ takes a tough stance towards Islam. Therefore, several of the Diaspora representatives are ready to make such sacrifices if they can guarantee exercising control over the activities of the Muslims and the organizations they create.

2015 brought new hardship to the Jewish diaspora. The January terrorist attacks in the editorial office of the satirical magazine Charlie Hebdo and the kosher store Hyper Kasher in Paris claimed the lives of four Jews. The response of the authorities followed immediately: 10,000 servicemen were sent to provide security for the facilities (including synagogues). About 4,700 fighters were put up for protection of 717 Jewish schools<sup>24</sup>.

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<sup>21</sup> The National Front's victory: France in shock. *The Economist*. 26.05.2014. Available at: <http://www.economist.com/blogs/charlemagne/2014/05/national-fronts-victory> (date of access – 22.05.2017)

<sup>22</sup> Liphshiz C. Why Jews in France might give right-wing populist Francois Fillon a chance. *JTA*. 29.11.2016. Available at: <http://www.jta.org/2016/11/29/news-opinion/world/why-jews-in-france-might-give-a-right-wing-populist-a-chance> (date of access – 22.05.2017)

<sup>23</sup> Le Pen says as French president she would ban all religious symbols, including kippot. *JTA*. 18.10.2016. Available at: <http://www.jta.org/2016/10/18/news-opinion/world/le-pen-says-as-french-president-she-would-ban-all-religious-symbols-including-kippot> (date of access – 22.05.2017)

<sup>24</sup> Sokol S. France sends security forces to protect Jewish schools. *The Jerusalem Post*. 12.01.2015. Available at: <http://www.jpost.com/Diaspora/France-deploys-5000-security-forces-to-protect-Jewish-schools-throughout-France-387465> (date of access – 22.05.2017)

However, as representatives of the diaspora noted, the state support for the security of the community did not find a response in the mind of the citizenry. At that time, the march of the Republic dedicated to the memory of the dead caricaturists, gathered millions of people from all over the world, about 2,000 people visited the funeral service for the victims among the Jews. To be honest, among the few present one could see the first persons of the state – Hollande and Valls.

In the following months, each of the politicians repeatedly commented on the terrorist attacks. Whilst both politicians recognized the dangerous situation into which the Jews of France were pushed, they could not agree on the identification of perpetrators of the terrorist attacks. Valls called what was happening using the term ‘Islamophobia’, unambiguously speaking of the source of anti-Semitism. However, in Hollande’s view, what was done was the work of ‘fanatics’ whose confessional or ethnic affiliation did not matter<sup>25</sup>. As we see, in the desire to remain politically correct, part of France’s policy (including the head of state) chose not to highlight the possible source of the problem. Nevertheless, many Jews appreciated the provided government support. However, as one representative of the diaspora rightly observed, “Governments change every few years, anti-Semitism remains in place”.<sup>26</sup>

Lack of due attention to the tragedy revealed an important problem that is disturbing the community: preservation of unfriendly atmosphere in the society that is difficult to define with the help of statistics or to rectify with the help of patrols and financial injections. In view of the growing number of social elements showing unfriendly attitude towards the Jews and supported by radical representatives of the leftist parties, the Jews began to be forced out of the French identity. In some reports prepared by the diaspora, this situation was called ‘loneliness’ of the community<sup>27</sup>.

The sense of alienation prompted many Jews to leave the country. In 2015, there were about 8,000 people, that is, the ‘record’ of 2014 was broken<sup>28</sup>. The growth of these indicators alarmed the authorities. We dare assume that their anxiety partly had an economic motive.

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<sup>25</sup> El-Mouchan A. The Twilight of French Jewry, the Twilight of France. *Mosaic*. 07.10.2015. Available at: <https://mosaicmagazine.com/essay/2015/10/the-twilight-of-french-jewry-the-twilight-of-france/> (date of access – 22.05.2017)

<sup>26</sup> Liphshiz C. Among some Jews, little faith in French authorities. *Jewish Telegraphic Agency*. 11.01.2015. Available at: <http://www.jta.org/2015/01/11/news-opinion/world/supermarket-vigil-paris> (date of access – 22.05.2017)

<sup>27</sup> Schimmel N. The “Loneliness” Of French Jews: French Responses To Anti Jewish Racism, Bigotry, And Discrimination. *Shifting Paradigms*. New York, 2016, pp. 88–99.

<sup>28</sup> Liebermann O. Au revoir and shalom: Jews leave France in record numbers. *CNN*. 25.01.2016. Available at: <http://edition.cnn.com/2016/01/22/middleeast/france-israel-jews-immigration/> (date of access – 22.05.2017)

The Jews of France are on a special account with the government of Israel: unlike representatives of diasporas from other countries, French Jews tend to maintain closer ties with Israel and have property there. That is, they are more fit to life in that state and upon their arrival to the 'homeland' adapt easier.

Moving to Israel (Aliya) is not a cheap business. Usually re-emigration is provided to wealthy citizens. As a rule, they have higher education (per some estimates, about half of those who arrived have a degree)<sup>29</sup>. Even elderly citizens, traditionally considered an additional burden for the social security administration, will not find themselves in such a situation: per the agreement on economic association, France undertakes to pay pension to the citizens who have made Aliyah<sup>30</sup>. Per some sources, in 2010 around 10,000 millionaires left France, 20–25 % of whom were the Jews who emigrated to Israel<sup>31</sup>.

Another reason for the growth in indicators is the prevailing opinion among Diaspora representatives that Israel is safer. As one of the olims (a newly arrived Jew to Israel) argued, France has a negative attitude towards tougher security measures: in the Republic, the right to privacy is valued higher than security considerations. Therefore, French citizens react so sharply to the introduction of the emergency regime whilst the citizens of Israel consider it to be a norm<sup>32</sup>.

Whatever the reasons for the actions of the authorities, they continued their active pro-Jewish policy. It was included in the program for a period of three years, for which 100 million euros were allocated. The program consisted of 40 items, including an informational campaign against anti-Semitism and racism, tougher penalties for acts of racism and incitement to hatred.

The unprecedented terrorist attacks motivated the government to pursue a strict security policy. A state of emergency was introduced. It continues to this day: in December 2016, it was renewed for the fifth time<sup>33</sup>. The state of emergency allows

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<sup>29</sup> Zeff M. Aliya from France great for economy, Bar-Ilan profs say. *The Jerusalem Post*. 19.12.2016. Available at: <http://www.jpost.com/Israel-News/Aliya-from-France-great-for-economy-Bar-Ilan-profs-say-475785> (date of access – 22.05.2017)

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> Lowe J. Millionaires Flee France amid Religious Tensions. *Newsweek*. 31.03.2016. Available at: <http://www.newsweek.com/france-paris-jewish-israel-millionaires-442684> (date of access – 22.05.2017)

<sup>32</sup> Sales B. Paris attacks leave French-Israelis reeling, relieved to be out. *JTA*. 17.11.2015. Available at: <http://www.jta.org/2015/11/17/news-opinion/israel-middle-east/french-israelis-reeling-from-attacks-relieved-to-be-out> (date of access – 22.05.2017)

<sup>33</sup> France votes to extend state of emergency for fifth time. *France 24*. 14.12.2016. Available at: <http://www.france24.com/en/20161214-france-votes-extend-state-emergency-fifth-time> (date of access – 22.05.2017)

searches and citizens to be subjected to house arrest without compulsory judicial supervision.

Thousands of servicemen and law enforcement officers guarding objects of special importance were involved. Police officers in large cities and municipalities will be granted extended rights to carry and use weapons. The number of policemen will be increased by about 5,000, which will bring their number closer to the level of 2007<sup>34</sup>.

The terrorist attacks forced the establishment to think about the danger of radicalization. Since December 2015, the authorities have initiated closure of approximately 20 religious buildings (out of 120 suspected by the government) preaching the fundamentalist form of Islam – Salafism<sup>35</sup>.

A question arose about the disputable financing of places of worship. Minister Valls offered to enter a ban on foreign material support for the construction of mosques in France. An alternative to foreign funds, per Valls, should be the support provided by the Muslim community in France<sup>36</sup>. Whilst the idea of ban on funding was rejected because of its impracticality, part of the Muslim community supported the proposal to establish a French fund for the construction of mosques.

As we can see, the prevention of radicalization is not going as smooth as wished it to be. And indeed, in the case of detained terrorists and their accomplices, the use of preventive measures is inappropriate. To resolve such problems, it was decided to open the so-called centers for de-radicalization (officially – Centers for Prevention, Integration, Citizenship). In the autumn of 2016, the first such institution was opened, with the authorities planning to set up 12 such centers in total, where the young people who had traveled to the Middle East would be introduced to the values of the Republic<sup>37</sup>.

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<sup>34</sup> Brundsen J. Hollande outlines tough new laws in response to attacks. *Financial Times*. 16.11.2015. Available at: <https://www.ft.com/content/a05a5178-8c8b-11e5-a549-b89a1dfede9b> (date of access – 22.05.2017)

<sup>35</sup> Serhan Y. France's Disappearing Mosques. *The Atlantic*. 01.08.2016. Available at: <https://www.theatlantic.com/news/archive/2016/08/french-mosques-islam/493919/> (date of access – 22.05.2017)

<sup>36</sup> Serhan Y. France's Disappearing Mosques. *The Atlantic*. 01.08.2016. Available at: <https://www.theatlantic.com/news/archive/2016/08/french-mosques-islam/493919/> (date of access – 22.05.2017)

<sup>37</sup> McAuley J. France to open first of 12 'deradicalization' centers for at-risk youths. *The Washington Post*. 14.09.2016. Available at: [https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/europe/france-to-open-first-of-12-deradicalization-centers-for-at-risk-youths/2016/09/14/d596d7fe-7a78-11e6-8064-c1ddc8a724bb\\_story.html?utm\\_term=.c11db53164bd](https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/europe/france-to-open-first-of-12-deradicalization-centers-for-at-risk-youths/2016/09/14/d596d7fe-7a78-11e6-8064-c1ddc8a724bb_story.html?utm_term=.c11db53164bd) (date of access – 22.05.2017)

The authorities intend to fight radicalization in prisons: now, measures have been taken to isolate the radical prisoners. The government drew attention to the shortcomings of the intelligence system and began to rectify them. First, intelligence services will increase their numbers (2,680 people, as well as around 113 infiltrators in prisons<sup>38</sup>). Secondly, funds will be allocated for the purchase of more sophisticated equipment. Thirdly, the governments of Belgium and France stated that they would continue working to improve the quality of information exchange on potential terrorists.

No matter how comprehensive the program is, it will only work if the local authorities assist it. It has hardly reached many small towns and settlements. Regularly the rabbis of Marseilles, the city with significant Jewish diaspora, call on Jews to temporarily give up wearing kippah to avoid attacks. In some localities, mayors honored the Palestinians convicted for terrorist attacks. The history of granting honorary citizenship to the Palestinian terrorist Marwan Barghouti is known from Aubervilliers, a commune in the suburbs, Council of Paris<sup>39</sup>. Although granting honorable citizenship, recognized as excess powers of the municipal authorities, was annulled by court, it is a good indicator of the moods prevailing at the local level.

It should be noted that such political measures were usually taken by representatives of the leftist parties, most often the Communists. However, representatives of the socialists were also 'noted' in carrying out a biased policy. Thus, in 2016, the authorities of Bondy, a commune in the north of Paris, run by the mayor-socialist, proposed to boycott Israeli products<sup>40</sup>. Even though previous measures of this kind were banned in other settlements, the council of Bondy opposed them, pointing out that the acceptance of products depending on the country of manufacture is a matter of civil law.

It is difficult to promote the fight against anti-Semitism in the country, where the authorities take measures in the foreign policy that are considered hostile by the lea-

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<sup>38</sup> McPartland B. What has France actually done to fight terrorism? *The Local*. 19.07.2016. Available at: <https://www.thelocal.fr/20160719/what-has-france-done-to-fight-terrorism> (date of access – 22.05.2017)

<sup>39</sup> Flatow S. Paris attacks show France's appeasement of Palestinians and Islamists failed. *JNS*. 07.01.2015. Available at: <http://www.jns.org/latest-articles/2015/1/7/paris-attack-shows-frances-appeasement-of-palestinians-and-islamists-failed#.WSL5q-vyiUk=> (date of access – 22.05.2017)

<sup>40</sup> Municipality near Paris declares boycott of Israeli settlement goods. *JTA*. 26.06.2016. available at: <http://www.jta.org/2016/06/27/news-opinion/world/municipality-near-paris-passes-motion-declaring-boycott-of-israeli-settlement-goods> (date of access – 22.05.2017)

dership of Israel and the Jews<sup>41</sup>. In April 2015, CRIF sent a letter to Fabius. In this, the leadership of the organization warned the Minister of Foreign Affairs that the foreign policy pursued by France was damaging the friendly relations between the state and Israel. These were the actions of the French representatives in the UN Security Council, where France advocated imposition of a time limit in the negotiations between Israel and Palestine. France's actions in UNESCO were admitted to be anti-Israel in the letter with regards to recognizing part of the historical monuments (for example, the Cave of the Patriarchs and Rachel's Tomb) to be predominantly Muslim and Palestinian cultural heritage, despite their significance for the Jews. The hostile attitude towards Israel, as it was put in the letter, leads to the growth of anti-Zionism, and along with it to anti-Semitism.

It can be assumed that the taken measures were designed for the 'domestic consumer'. The first years of the presidency were marked by certain measures in the economy, which (due to the strong degree of its integration into the European one) Hollande had to defend on the international arena. It can be assumed that the first steps of the head of state related to the interethnic relations were in concert with the requirements of the economic plan.

To convince other states of the 'correctness' of France's political course, the president had to 'play the audience', trying on the old image of 'political' leader of Europe. Hence – the activity with regards to foreign policy unusual for the 'normal' president Hollande and appeal to his (in fact insignificant) authority.

To demonstrate authority, Hollande chose the Middle East, in the past – the zone of French influence, a region that was once partially colonized by it. In addition to the desire of France to take advantage of the historical ties, the US factor acted as levers of influence to favor the Middle East. President Obama tried to influence the policy in the region personally, but he failed, and the president had to abandon this direction. Carrying out an active policy where it failed the States, France would undoubtedly raise its international authority.

In this desire to demonstrate importance on the international arena lies another reason why in 2015 there was a record number of Jewish immigrants. It was at this time that refugees from the Middle East began to approach the borders of Europe. Germany decided to take the first step and announced opening of its borders<sup>42</sup>.

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<sup>41</sup> French Jews call out FM on policies seen as endangering France-Israel ties. *JTA*. 02.06.2015. available at: <http://www.jta.org/2015/06/02/news-opinion/world/french-jews-warn-fm-on-policies-seen-as-endangering-france-israel-ties> (date of access – 22.05.2017)

<sup>42</sup> Lichfield J. Germany opens its gates: Berlin says all Syrian asylum-seekers are welcome to remain, as Britain is urged to make a 'similar statement'. *Independent*. 24.08.2015. Available at: <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/germany-opens-its-gates-berlin-says-all-syrian-asylum-seekers-are-welcome-to-remain-as-britain-is-10470062.html> (date of access – 22.05.2017)

France, not wishing to stay away from the large-scale foreign policy projects, put forward a similar proposition. In these measures, one can discern the president's desire to satisfy the demands of supporters for the party and other representatives of the left movement, who lacked support to the head of the state.

However, the problem of the influx of refugees brought new conflicts to the already fragmented society. Coming from the Islamic countries of the Middle East, some refugees were hostile to the representatives of the diaspora. During the attacks, the refugees did not participate for the most part, however, their presence contributed to the hostile atmosphere prevailing in the society and strengthened the sense of alienation among the Jews. Therefore, by the end of 2015, the heads of the state have diminished their ardor. 2016 was characterized by further distancing of the tandem from the refugee problem.

As is known, politicians prepare ahead of the elections. Conducting such a policy towards Israel can also be the desire of Hollande and his team to win over other leftist parties and movements to take advantage of their support in the upcoming presidential elections. Flirting with the right forces headed by the main European partner – Germany led to the formation of a new team consisting of more moderate politicians, which was not liked by the representatives of some leftist parties and movements. The leftists have unequivocally assessed the tightening of the migration policy – the result of the radicalization of some citizens and the increase in the number of terrorist attacks in France. Now, on the eve of the election, Hollande chose the most numerous and influential from several groups of the electorate and began to take measures to attract it to his party's side.

The confirmation of this point of view can be seen in the 'Peace Conference' held in France in 2016. Representatives of world powers attended it, but Israel and Palestine refused to participate. The outcome of the conference was a statement in which the states called upon the parties concerned to start negotiations<sup>43</sup>. Israel refused to participate in the conference due to the fact that the event did not involve direct negotiations between the parties. The Director-General of the Israeli Foreign Ministry Dori Gold compared the peace conference with the Sykes-Picot agreement – an agreement concluded in 1916 between the world powers on the division of spheres of influence in the Middle East<sup>44</sup>. This comparison clearly demonstrates the attitude of the Israeli authorities towards the excessive involvement of the world powers in this regional conflict.

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<sup>43</sup> Paris peace summit issues statement less harsh than Israel feared. *JTA*. 03.06.2016. Available at: <http://www.jta.org/2016/06/03/default/netanyahu-asked-kerry-to-soften-tone-of-paris-peace-summit-statement> (date of access – 22.05.2017)

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*

No matter how difficult the situation inside or outside of France might be, 2016 was marked by decrease in the number of Jews who moved to Israel: whilst in 2015, about 8,000 Jews left France, in 2016 the figure was about 4,000<sup>45</sup>. The calculations have been made, per which this number would drop to 2,000 in 2017<sup>46</sup>. The researchers find few explanations to this phenomenon. First, many representatives of the diaspora were encouraged by the changes in the sphere of security control in France. Whether they were effective or not is another question; the main thing in this situation was that the government of Hollande symbolically moved to decisive measures and demonstrated readiness to pursue a tough policy. Secondly, the situation in Israel is not as favorable as the emigrants would like it, especially in the economic sphere. Researchers advise the Israeli government to pay attention to the sphere of employment. Many young olim trivially cannot find a job in the new place. Their friends and acquaintances who remained in France but continue to maintain close contact with them, see how hard it is for the newcomers to get a job, and this affects negatively their motivation to leave the country in search of a better life. Thirdly, by 2016, the Government of Hollande withdrew from the policy of ‘open doors’ adopted under the influence of Germany. Limiting the reception of refugees contributed to reducing the level of tension in the society.

In such cases, when the hands of the state do not reach all corners of France, the representatives of the diaspora take the initiative themselves. The Jewish societies can be conditionally divided into two types: those who work in the sphere of culture, and those whose aim is to ensure the security of representatives of the diaspora. As an example, the Society of Jewish-Muslim Friendship (AJMF), a private organization engaged in establishing understanding between the representatives of the two faiths, can be referred to the first type<sup>47</sup>.

One of the organizations that can be attributed to the second group, the Jewish Community Security Service (SPCJ), collects information on anti-Semitic acts and prepares reports on their basis. Annual reports of the organization are considered by the Ministry of the Interior, which helps the state authorities plan measures to combat this form of discrimination<sup>48</sup>. The French authorities also aid SPCJ: the government agencies and the organization’s management hold regular consultations through

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<sup>45</sup> Zeff M. Op. cit.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

<sup>47</sup> *Amitié judéo-musulmane de France – official website*. Available at: [http://www.ajmfparis1.com/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=1348&Itemid=737](http://www.ajmfparis1.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=1348&Itemid=737) (date of access – 22.05.2017)

<sup>48</sup> Liphshiz C. Mali incursion raises risk to French Jews, community says. *JTA*. 18.01.2013. Available at: <http://www.jta.org/2013/01/18/news-opinion/world/mali-incursion-raises-risk-to-french-jews-community-says> (date of access – 22.05.2017)

which SPCJ determines at what level it is necessary to support protection of the Jewish institutions. The organization does not share information about its structures and the budget. Per the president of CRIF, the organization has a “wide network of loyal volunteers”<sup>49</sup>. It is known that SPCJ promotes protection of institutions that are related to the diaspora. The organization also works to alert the Jewish communities to the security rules after the terrorist attacks. SPCJ, like many other organizations, operates under the ‘umbrella’ of CRIF, which, as we already established, is used as a voice in communicating with the government.

### Conclusion

Upon looking closer upon the events that took place during the years of Hollande’s presidency, we can understand that the socialist government and the Jewish community had a difficult relationship. The sprouting of problems that arose later could be noticed during the election campaign of 2012, when Hollande, in his desire to win the support of different political forces, simultaneously took a compromise position on many issues, instead of outlining a holistic strategy.

The first two years of the presidency were relatively safe. The first signs of incompatibility of some of Hollande’s election were revealed. Several Jewish institutions suffered as a result of the state’s offensive strategy with regards to subsidizing religious organizations. Improving relations with Israel went hand in hand with reluctance to spoil the relations with the Arab countries, pursuing an openly hostile policy towards the Jews and their state.

Since 2014, the French leadership has begun to experience difficulties in pursuing the chosen political course. The complications were experienced for several reasons. First, the relations between Israel and Palestine deteriorated. As is often the case, the conflict was ‘exported’ to the territory of France, which resulted in significant increase in the number of anti-Semitic acts. Secondly, the social and economic situation in France has reached the limit at which the authorities began to lose support of the population rapidly. To restore the lost popularity and at the same time to earn trust of the main European partner – Germany – France decided to step up in its foreign policy. One of the priorities was the Middle East. Increased attention to this region contributed to further growth of tension within the country. Thirdly, the gradual deterioration of the situation in the economy affected radicalization of part of the population. Add to this the negative impact of the crisis that brought back to life the centrifugal tendencies hidden in the French society.

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<sup>49</sup> Liphshiz C. In Europe, big gaps among security precautions at Jewish institutions. *JTA*. 19.11.2012. Available at: <http://www.jta.org/2012/11/19/news-opinion/world/in-europe-big-gaps-among-security-precautions-at-jewish-institutions> (date of access – 22.05.2017)

These negative factors migrated into 2015. Then, the intensification of the foreign policy resulted in increased support for Palestine and further strengthening the position of the duo Merkolland. The return to promise of support for international recognition of Palestine can be explained by the desire of Hollande to gather the support of representatives of the left movement, who were not satisfied with the economic policy of the president and the ‘correction’ of his government with the entry of Valls as prime minister. It can be assumed that following Merkel’s political course was a consequence of the ambition of Hollande’s team to improve the economic situation in the country by improving relations with the main partner in Europe. Thus, the president of France was trapped: once again the head of state had to win trust of the leftist parties and restore the economy of the country, but the latter could be done in close cooperation with Germany, which was not evaluated positively by the left.

In any event, both tendencies negatively affected the situation with the Jewish diaspora in the society. The government’s pro-Palestinian measures led to increased tensions both within the country (between the government and the Jewish diaspora) and abroad (between Israel and France). The result of Merkel’s course was opening the borders of the country for refugees, whose presence created an additional burden on the security and exacerbated tensions between the Muslim community and the Jewish diaspora in 2015. It was marked by major terrorist attacks, which, among other things, were an additional incentive for the Jews to leave France to move to more secure, from their point of view, Israel. The events of this year allowed Hollande to look at what was happening from a different perspective. The disappointment with Germany followed its policy of ‘open doors’. By the end of the year, the French president was seriously engaged in reforming the security system. In response to the unprecedented attacks, unprecedentedly harsh measures were taken. At the same time, the struggle against racism and anti-Semitism was intensified, and considerable funds were spent on it.

In 2016, the president was primarily concerned with security issues. If earlier for the reasons of political correctness, Hollande had to define the nature of the terrorist threat quite vaguely, now the president acknowledged that terrorism had Islamic roots. In 2016, the level of terrorist threat in France was somewhat reduced. By the same time, representatives of the Diaspora in the country realized that the economic situation in Israel was not as prosperous as they would like to think. Therefore, the number of the Jews leaving France has declined. However, the team of Hollande had to hold a peaceful conference on the Palestinian question – as it seems to us, by inertia: the authorities from 2014 promised to hold the said event. Moreover, as it turned

out, the statement prepared on the results of the conference was more lenient than was supposed by the Israeli authorities<sup>50</sup>.

The problem is that we cannot say for sure how much the changes in the political course of Hollande were influenced by the Jewish diaspora. As we can see, by the end of his presidential term, politics acquired the forms and content that were most beneficial to its representatives.

The uncertainty of the political course of Hollande is not only restricted to the Jewish issue: it was noticed both in the security and in social spheres. We can identify several reasons for this. First, the personality of the president himself invites for this – since the very beginning he has established himself as a ‘normal’ president, a ‘technocrat’, who is called upon to deal with standard issues but lacks the political will to cope with force majeure situations. Hence – the indecisiveness and the desire to follow their prospective partners (Germany). Secondly, the electorate, who brought Hollande victory in the presidential election, was a shaky platform. The French Left lost its strength and unity at any hint of a crisis. Moreover, the loss of popular support caused discontent in the government ranks.

As we found out, the power in France is not so centralized to ensure implementation of the ‘top’ decisions: some of them were simply ‘extinguished’ by the local authorities. Therefore, to some extent it is possible to blame the French government in the growth of anti-Semitism, consisting of representatives from various left forces. It was never able to achieve unity in consideration of the Jewish question and cope with the most radical elements in its ranks. Hollande began to follow his supporters and not vice versa. However, the fruitful influence of the Jewish diaspora on the policy of Hollande is noticeable. First, it manifested itself in the ability of the diaspora to draw attention of the public and authorities to their problems. And in modern politics, the ability to attract attention of the authorities to the problems of any social group is an important factor.

The Jewish diaspora carries out activities along several lines. They actively cooperate with the authorities through various organizations, events organized by them, as well as through politicians who have direct or indirect relation to the diaspora. When the state control is not enough to settle the situation locally, or when the problem requires a milder, more private approach, representatives of the diaspora take the initiative themselves. In addition to cultural influence, they provide various kinds of services to ensure protection of Jews at the local level.

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<sup>50</sup> aris peace summit issues statement less harsh than Israel feared. *JTA*. 03.06.2016. Available at: <http://www.jta.org/2016/06/03/default/netanyahu-asked-kerry-to-soften-tone-of-paris-peace-summit-statement> (date of access – 22.05.2017)

A possible way out of this situation presupposes a comprehensive approach to the problem under consideration. First, it is necessary to solve the socio-economic issues that often push citizens to the path of intolerance and radicalism. Second, the establishment needs to make efforts to maintain integrity in the power circles. Third, France should finally find its own voice in the foreign policy, and an independent, non-contradictory course. And fourth, the authorities, regardless of their political affiliation, should continue to maintain close ties with the Jewish organizations.

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