

Jihad attacks in Denmark: Dateline Paris

French Interior Minister Bernard Cazeneuve was on official business in Morocco when informed of the jihad attack against a free speech meeting in Copenhagen. He immediately flew to Denmark where he joined his personal friend François Zimeray, French ambassador to Denmark. Zimeray, who attended the “Art, Blasphemy, Freedom of Speech” event at the Krudttønden Café organized in reaction to the *Charlie Hebdo* massacre in Paris, put it succinctly: “I went to the meeting by bicycle and left in an armored car.”

All- news channels BFM TV and I Télé went into Special Edition, reporting on the attack non-stop from Saturday afternoon to Sunday night, and then some. Frequent zaps to other available stations—CNN, SkyNews, BBC, France24—yielded low to negligible interest in the story...aside from the BBC recording of Inna Shevchenko’s speech. The Ukrainian Femen, commenting on the current state of press freedom in the West, asked “Why do we say we have freedom of speech, but...?” As she repeated for emphasis the “freedom but” her words were brutally punctuated by the sharp crackle of gunfire.

French-Danish solidarity goes back to *Charlie Hebdo*’s publication of the original *Jyllands Posten* Mohammed cartoons in 2005. Few imagined, even one month ago, that this solidarity would turn into a ping pong of posters, bouquets, and memorial candles. We suspect the ceremonies will eventually wear thin from repetition. But, unless you followed the story on French media, you wouldn’t know the extent of this fraternity: vigils and presidential visits at the Danish embassy in Paris, the Paris mayor in Copenhagen, the Chief Rabbi of France, the president of the CRIF, leaders of political parties, special correspondents here and there, countless media debates ...

When the story broke Saturday afternoon (Valentine's Day no less!) the gunman was already on the run, one man—misreported as a passerby—was dead and two policemen were wounded. Tight-lipped Danish authorities gave the media little to chew on. The hunger for images had to be satisfied with the café's plate glass window pocked with bullet holes.

We, the gawkers, knew that the assailant had not been able to get inside. The suspense came later in a sort of playback when participants told how it felt in real time. They thought they were going to die. The gunman and the potential victims—there were 30 to 40 people in the room—were following the same *Charlie Hebdo* scenario. "Copycat," surmised a few French commentators, proudly sporting the trendy English term. No, *mes amis*, it's something worse than copycat.

And the something, this time, was immediately identified as jihad. Yes, the linguistic tricks are still fluttering like coquettish fans – Islamism, radical Islam, hijacked Islam—but there is no taboo against "jihadi" or "jihadist." And there was no beating around the bush on BFM TV and I Télé last weekend. Journalists and invited commentators recognized another three-pronged attack against liberty, law enforcement, and Jews...by a jihadi.

Suddenly, there he was, the killer, described by police as looking "North African," wearing dark clothes and a stylish bordeau ski mask, captured by CCTV in all his punknificence. A bit of a surprise for us here in France, where authorities are notoriously skittish about letting the public know who is out there armed to kill. This led to tragic consequences in the case of Ilan Halimi (see the Alexandre Arcady film 24 Days, available in DVD). The police withheld the identikit image of one of the young women who had been trolling for Jews to kidnap. Ilan was already dead when they finally released it, immediately leading to the arrest of Fofana and his accomplices.

Some of the more knowledgeable anchors were absent when the Copenhagen story broke at the start of a two-week winter break. Was Agence France Presse slow in processing information from Danish sources? For this and other newscast reasons, journalists weren't reading heat & serve press releases. There was a lot of improvisation and, consequently, less double talk and more wide-eyed ignorance. It reminded me of earnest five year-olds discussing serious issues with a mixture of childish honesty and an immature world view.

But the story was big, bigger in France than anywhere else but Denmark itself. As the hours went by, commentators streamed in and out of TV studios. The usual Islam-apologists were not among them. Are their words no longer comforting or convincing? No imams to tell us this brutal act has nothing to do with Islam. A simple consensus emerged: the jihadis are at war with us, they want to destroy our society, deprive us of our liberty, make our lives desperately miserable... And we aren't going to let them get away with it. We won't go overboard like the Americans—the Patriot Act is poison to French ears—but we have to change our strategy and face this challenge squarely. We are at war, this war is global, and our response has to be global—increased security cooperation with our European neighbors, the United States and, for example, Turkey. Granted, no one had the courage to mention Israel as a light unto the nations when it comes to fighting enemies within, without, and all about. But secretly they know it's true.

I went off screen Saturday night wondering why the policemen assigned to guard that obviously sensitive meeting were wounded, while the gunman was able to shoot up the façade, jump into his car, and ride off to an unknown destination. Why didn't they shoot him? For want of that notorious American police "brutality" a dangerous killer was on the loose. Isn't this a big part of the European problem? The late Charb had bodyguards, Lars Vilks, prime target at the Copenhagen event,

has one or several bodyguards, but they seem to be guarding against bows and arrows, not assault weapons, not jihadis.

First thing Sunday morning I switched on the TV to see if they had found him. Yes. He was already dead. But not before he had killed a Jew. *Mission accomplie*. 37 year-old Don Uzan was on duty, protecting a bat mitzvah party in the annex to the synagogue. Two policemen were slightly wounded, the Jewish man was killed, and the gunman was on the loose again until dawn when, in a now familiar confrontation with SWAT-type forces, he was shot dead.

Was it foolhardy to go ahead with a bat mitzvah party when a jihad killer was on the loose? Then again, isn't that what we do? Live our lives. Go to our places. Show our faces. *Charlie Hebdo* brought out an issue two weeks after most of the staff had been brutally gunned down. The Hyper Cacher at Porte de Vincennes is closed and deathly silent but Jews go to kosher delis, kosher restaurants, kosher synagogues. Policemen and policewomen direct traffic, answer domestic violence calls, arrest drug dealers. Dozens of jihadis have been detained this month in France.

A few days later the parents of the bat mitzvah girl, interviewed by the [MEMRI brings us a video](#) of a sermon delivered in a Copenhagen mosque on the eve of Omar Hamid el-Hussein's jihad performance. The message is implacable: shun the Christians, kill the Jews, keep to yourselves and your Muslim ways— the whole world must submit to the will of Allah.

How ironical it is to even think of accepting the myth of exquisite religious sensitivity that moves Muslims to kill when their prophet is not respected and should consequently move us to at least partially accommodate them on the grounds of "respect for religion." These exquisitely sensitive Muslims, after they kill free speakers and shoot at police, kill Jews.

Monday morning, Prime Minister Valls named the enemy as Islamofascism.

The debate ebbs and flows. At its worst it paddles in the shallow waters of socio-economic determinism. Underprivileged youths suffering from unemployment and racism stumble into crime and then, misguidedly seeking elevation, grab at undigested Islamism to give meaning to their lives. What do they know about the noble religion of Islam that has nothing to do with their sleazy lives and abject crimes?

What does the foot soldier know about military strategy? Did he graduate from St. Cyr?

Denmark is—or was?— something of a model in the business of de-radicalization. According to the *Daily Mail* the approach includes, “dialogue with a mosque regarded as a hotbed of extremism, after authorities found 22 of the young radicals who went to Syria had worshipped there. But those who return are not expected to renounce their support for radical Islamic goals.”

Hundreds of bouquets in front of the Krudttønden café, hundreds at the synagogue, and more than enough at the spot where el-Husseini died. [*reports*](#), citing Agence France Presse, that one bouquet was offered by an elderly Danish woman who said the boy didn't realize what he was doing. But the accompanying video shows immigrant youths paying floral tribute to the Copenhagen shahid. Another layer of meaning is added after nightfall. A dozen guardians of the faith toss the bouquets in the garbage because it's against Islam to lay flowers where someone died. One of the brothers declares, “He wasn't a terrorist. The terrorists are Denmark, the United States, Israel.” And they march off with a defiant *allahu akhbar*.

Radicalized? Moderate? Or simple garden variety Danish youths?