

Justice for Sarah Halimi Rally

Dr. Shimon Samuels, Tel Aviv – April 25, 2021

I had come to Paris in 1980 with the grandiose objective to contain antisemitism. Little did I foresee its nature.

On 3 October, the eve of Sukkot (Tabernacles), I was visiting an Israeli journalist, Tamar Golan. Her houseguest, Aliza Shagrir – wife of the late cineaste Micha Shagrir – had just arrived from Israel. Asking her hostess if she needed anything for dinner, Tamar suggested some dates from the fruit shop three hundred meters away, facing the synagogue on the rue Copernic. We went down to the street together. She turned into Copernic, I continued walking straight ahead. I felt the bomb where Aliza met her death.

The following day, Prime Minister Raymond Barre stated "This odious bombing meant to strike Jews who were going to the synagogue, but hit innocent French people who crossed rue Copernic." In fact, one was a Portuguese concierge, another a Jewish worshipper, third Aliza and one "innocent Frenchman."

The Copernic attack launched 73 shootings and bombings of Jewish targets in Western Europe, 29 in France.

The wave ended at Goldenberg restaurant, rue des Rosiers. Of the three murderers, two have sanctuary in the West Bank, one in Norway.

The Wiesenthal Centre had urged the Norwegian Prime Minister, Erna Solberg, for his extradition to Paris for trial, though we are now unsure of the judicial process.

Why did the wave end in 1982?

Israel's August incursion in Southern Lebanon to destroy Palestinian terrorist training camps, sent European terrorists fleeing home. Needing money, they stopped targeting Jews, now attacking banks and embassies. The authorities cracked down, French Action Directe, Italian Red Brigades and German Baader Meinhof were incarcerated.

As Simon Wiesenthal would say, "What starts with the Jews never ends with them."

Shimon Samuels' interview with Israeli i24TV

In November 2010, I was in Ottawa, attending the Inter-Parliamentary Coalition for Combating Antisemitism. A suspect in the bombing, Hassan Diab – a Sociology Professor at Carlton University – was in court proceedings only six blocks away. The subject, a request for extradition to a Paris trial. The court was full, predominantly

wearing hijabs and Palestinian keffiyeh headdress...The atmosphere was more a trial against Israel.

We followed the lengthy procedure - normally a few weeks between democracies - until Diab was brought to France in 2014... In 2018, he was released as the French court dismissed all charges, despite a pending appeal.

Reportedly, his passport had been confiscated and he was under a no-fly order. Yet his disappearance ended with photos together with his family back in Ottawa. Those allegedly in the know regarding his escape - when approached by our Centre - refused to comment.

The bottom line: After 41 years, the victim families and wounded of Copernic still have no closure... "Justice so long delayed is indeed justice denied."

Shimon Samuels and Graciela Vaserman-Samuels with Ambassador Eric Danon following the rally

Israeli jurisprudence provides for "Universal jurisdiction." This was used only once - in the 1961 Eichmann trial.

In cases where antisemitic violence is treated inadequately - as in the Sara Halimi trial - we suggest studying the feasibility for the State of Israel to call for an extradition for trial in Jerusalem.

This could be instigated by a new movement: "JLM" Jewish Lives Matter.