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Antisemitism and Racism

Antisemitism Worldwide 2009

General Analysis
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European Jewish Congress

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OPERATION CAST LEAD AND ITS AFTERMATH:
ANTISEMITISM AND THE HOLOCAUST
IN THE 2009 INTERNATIONAL DISCOURSE

The year in the wake of Operation Cast Lead was the worst since monitoring of antisemitic manifestations began two decades ago, in terms of both major antisemitic violence and the hostile atmosphere generated worldwide by the mass demonstrations and verbal and visual expressions against Israel and the Jews. The flow of materials to the Institute was so great and so continuous that the decrease in antisemitic activities in 2008 from 2007 became a thing of the past. The intensity and nature of the wave that began in January 2009 testified to pre-planned mobilization among radicals from the left and among Muslim immigrant communities, resulting in a well-coordinated onslaught which employed clear antisemitic motifs in order to de-legitimize the State of Israel and the Jewish people as a single entity.

The number of violent incidents recorded by the Institute in 2009, 1,129, represented an increase of more than 100 percent over the 2008 figure of 559. In addition, many more hundreds of threats, insults, graffiti signs and slogans and demonstrations featuring virulently antisemitic content were registered, sometimes resulting in violence. Since our policy is to document cases that show clear antisemitic content and intention, hundreds of instances of targeting of Jewish individuals or property, where there was no clear evidence of antisemitic motive, are not included. It should also be noted that many Jews prefer not to file complaints with the police or community organizations and monitoring bodies, fearing reprisal or doubting the outcome. Thus, the number of incidents, both violent and verbal, might actually be far higher than the figures presented here.

Although it is essential to distinguish between violent and verbal manifestations of antisemitism, there is little doubt that they feed off one another, provoking an escalation in both. An arson attack on a synagogue may follow threats painted on its walls, for instance, or Jews may be assaulted in the wake of a demonstration marked by incendiary rhetoric against them.

According to our criteria and data, the highest rise in numbers of violent incidents was registered in 2009 in the UK – 374 compared to 112 in 2008; France recorded 195 violent events compared to 50 in 2008; Canada – 138 compared to 13 , and the US – 116 compared to 98. In Germany, the final reports for 2009 may show a slight increase in the overall number of antisemitic manifestations, although there appears to have been a significant decrease in violent

acts against Jews. The figures for Russia and Ukraine declined, from 40 and 38 to 28 and 20, respectively. In most other countries, numbers ranged from 1 to 30, but even low numbers when doubled or tripled compared to previous years might indicate the beginning of a tendency: for instance, from 1 to 6 violent cases in Norway, from 0 to 15 in Brazil and from 0 to 22 in Austria (see Appendices below for details). In the UK the Jewish community's long-established monitoring system logged over a three-fold increase in antisemitic manifestations of all kinds since 1999, and Canada recorded a five-fold rise since the beginning of the decade.

The growth in numbers reflects better monitoring on the part of both the police and Jewish communities in countries with a western democratic tradition, where Jewish citizens and organizations work hand-in hand with the authorities. The majority of these countries also have large Muslim communities, among which cadres of radicals demonstrate a high degree of mobilization, and an ability to raise funds and disseminate propaganda. Radical left groups, many of which are active on university campuses, spew an anti-Zionism imbued with antisemitic overtones and identify strongly with the Palestinian cause. Thus, cooperation between leftists and Muslim activists, nourished by anti-American feelings in Europe and by anti-globalization campaigns worldwide, are a source of deep anxiety. Moreover, with Jewish synagogues, schools and community centers receiving better protection, close to half of violent cases are perpetrated, sporadically and spontaneously, against persons and about a sixth against private property, far from Jewish institutions. Although extreme right activists still play a significant role in perpetrating antisemitic incidents, in 2009, most violent cases in western Europe – where identification was obtained – were determined to have been carried out by individuals of Arab or Muslim background.

Operation Cast Lead in January 2009 triggered a wave of antisemitic manifestations that swept the world. This trend subsided in February and March, but even during the months that followed this peak of antisemitic incidents, the baseline remained higher than before the war. In fact, there has been a rising trend since the early 1990s, even in years when there was no significant Middle East trigger. Thus, the origins of the 2009 escalation in antisemitic expressions must lie deeper.

First, the general level of racist and xenophobic violence worldwide influences the level of antisemitic activity, because the same groups or individuals, especially those on the extreme right, target Jews as well as a variety of others. In addition, in the world of web culture where a flood of materials and information compete for attention, the bluntest and most extreme expressions are those that attract the eye and the ear. A good example is the antisemitism on social networks such as Facebook (Antisemitism 2.0), which carry a vast variety of antisemitic

material to which anyone can contribute. These tendencies are coupled with rampant ignorance of political and historical facts among contemporary youth. For many of them, Israel, Zionism and Jews represent a catchy symbol of evil, and the demonstrations organized against them are a vehicle by which they can express themselves. An abundance of Muslim propaganda, well-financed by oil money, exploits this atmosphere, which law enforcement agencies refrain from countering out of “political correctness” and respect for the right of freedom of speech. This well-coordinated and well-planned onslaught, run, as noted, by radical leftists and Muslims, exploits all existing channels of dissemination and well-known antisemitic motifs in order to establish a public consensus for the de-legitimization of Israel as a Jewish state, as well as its supporters. It should be mentioned that joint Israeli-Jewish efforts prior to and during the UN Durban II conference held in Geneva in April 2009 succeeded in weakening the de-legitimization attempts led by Iran, and a number of states either boycotted the conference or left it.

Yet the most conspicuous leitmotif of antisemitic expressions is the abuse of the Holocaust as a political tool: the equation of Israelis/Zionists/Jewish supporters of Israel with Nazis became practically an axiom in demonstrations and in expressions voiced in the political and academic arena (especially in western Europe, Canada, the US, Latin America and South Africa, and less so in central and eastern Europe), which appeared to have abandoned completely post-World War II taboos on denigrating the Holocaust. The equation of the Star of David with the swastika symbolizes the ultimate evil – extreme brutality and a disregard for human values – and implies that those that allegedly behave like Nazis, the monster of the modern era, have no right to exist.

The abuse of the Holocaust is expressed in more subtle ways as well. In July 2009 the EU adopted the Prague Declaration, which instituted August 23 as a day of commemoration of all victims of fascist and totalitarian regimes. The declaration, which was motivated by the exigencies of the post-Communist states, undermines the uniqueness of the Holocaust and Nazi ideology because it equalizes Nazi crimes with Soviet ones, and reflects jadedness with the eternal Jewish self-image of the ultimate victim. Moreover, in a few countries such as Sweden and Spain, some official voices called to suspend commemoration of the Holocaust on January 27, as instituted by the UN, until Israel changes its policies.

An allegation that Israeli soldiers allegedly harvested organs from Palestinian bodies was first published in Sweden. Though without basis in reality, as later admitted by the journalist, the story spread quickly, finding its way to the Muslim world and, as reported in March 2010, was disseminated by a UN official. The fabrication couples Middle Age blood libels with another

form of Holocaust equation: Israeli soldiers mercilessly using the enemy's bodies for medical experiments.

Finally, beyond the numbers, examples and analyses, it can be said that 2009 was a year of anti-Israel and antisemitic expressions and accusations on the international scene that were unparalleled in their viciousness. Demonization of the Jewish state and its Jewish supporters as a symbol of all evil and a major source of the world's troubles leads to the implication, whether wittingly or unwittingly, that the elimination of the State of Israel might bring global salvation.

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As in previous years, the overall view of antisemitic manifestations is not monolithic and the impact of Operation Cast Lead on the level of antisemitism differed from region to region. While it was marked, for example, in western Europe and Canada, in the post-Communist space questions relating to the behavior of the various societies during WWII and the equation of the evils of National Socialism with those of communism played a more important role in the public discourse and in bilateral relations.

Within Europe, the fact that Operation Cast Lead affected the level of antisemitic manifestations in general and antisemitic violence and vandalism in particular in western Europe to a much greater extent than in the post-Communist states of eastern and central Europe may be explained by two principal factors. One is the absence of significant Muslim and Arab communities in the former Communist states (except in some Central Asian ones) in contrast to the sizable concentrations in western Europe. The second is the prevalence of highly active anti-Zionist radical left groups in western Europe that identify strongly with the Palestinian cause. In eastern and central Europe, however, anti-Zionism, which was once part of the official policy of the Communist regimes, waned considerably after their collapse. Nevertheless, in the Czech Republic, and particularly in Hungary, growing support for extreme right parties and a troubling increase in antisemitic incidents were observed.

The following analysis will highlight these various phenomena and discuss their expression in the various geo-political regions in 2009.

WESTERN EUROPE

About half of the incidence of antisemitic violence and vandalism recorded worldwide occurred in France and the UK, where the largest Jewish communities in Europe reside. Both also have

some of the biggest Muslim communities in the EU and since 2000, in particular, have become centers for the activities of extremist anti-Israel groups and individuals that preach and disseminate antisemitic messages. While the degree of antisemitic violence and vandalism in other west European countries was much less than in the UK and France, Jewish communities in everywhere witnessed a substantial growth in antisemitic activity.

The Perpetrators

Identification of the perpetrators – their ethnicity, political views and motives – has traditionally been a difficult task for researchers of hate crimes in general and of antisemitism in particular. In most cases of vandalism, the perpetrators are almost always unidentifiable. Antisemitic or anti-Israel inscriptions or symbols left at the scene may even prove to be misleading. Young Muslims may decide to spray swastikas on a synagogue wall knowing their effect on the Jewish community, while members of extreme right groups may paint graffiti supporting Hamas on a memorial to Holocaust victims. Identifying perpetrators of physical attacks is dependent on the testimony of the victim, who is frequently unable to provide enough information. In the UK, the CST has conducted analyses of perpetrators of antisemitic incidents of all kinds by ethnic appearance since 2004, in cases when a physical description of the perpetrators was provided. The findings show that only in 2006 and 2009, when antisemitism was triggered by extreme Middle East events, did the proportion of perpetrators identified as “white” drop below 50 percent. In 2008, when there was no trigger event in the Middle East, the proportion of perpetrators described as “white” was 63 per cent, while that defined as “Asian” or “Arab” stood at 31 per cent. In 2009 “white” perpetrators constituted 48 percent of perpetrators, while the share described as having either “Asian” or “Arab” appearance (probably of Muslim or of Arab descent) was 54 percent in January alone and 43 percent for the year. While the data provided by the CST relates to incidents of all kinds, the description given by victims of physical assault, particularly in Europe and especially at the beginning of 2009, indicates that a much larger proportion of the perpetrators were Muslims or were of Arab descent. In the Netherlands, for example, in cases of violence or direct confrontation on the streets in which insults were directed at a visibly Jewish person, the perpetrators were almost invariably identified as young men of North African descent. One of the victims, a visibly Jewish man, testified that “when an Israeli military operation dominates the headline, I am the first to notice it on the streets... The verbal abuse hurled at me... is becoming more severe and more regular.” “Their reasoning goes something like this: Israelis are Jews,” explained Menno ten Brink, a rabbi for the liberal Jewish community in Amsterdam: “Palestinians are Arabs, so we Moroccan ‘Arabs’ in the Netherlands

are going to take on Dutch Jews.” Protestors in anti-Israel rallies in Copenhagen shouted “We want to kill all Jews, they have no right to exist.”

Antisemitic Incitement

The dramatic increase in antisemitic manifestations in west European countries was influenced considerably by the virulently anti-Israel discourse and propaganda that portrayed s Israel as a Nazi state and consequently delegitimized its right to exist. While radical left and anti-racist activists, and even some mainstream politicians, adamantly reject the linkage between extreme anti-Israel allegations and antisemitism, in reality this imaginary line is breached repeatedly. Incited by demonization of Israel and the idea that the “Jews must pay,” perpetrators of antisemitism make no distinction between Israel and Jews worldwide, who for them are part of a single evil entity. Thus, all Jews, even those who do not support Israel or even deny its right to exist, are potential targets. During the Gaza war in the UK for example, anti-Israel graffiti included slogans such as “Kill the Jews,” “Slay Jewish pigs,” “Nuke Jews,” and “The Holocaust was a lie.” In October 2009, a group of left-wing activists in Hamburg, Germany, protested the screening of Claude Lanzmann’s Holocaust film *Pourquoi Israel?* (Why Israel?) by reproducing an Israeli checkpoint. The demonstrators tried to prevent visitors from entering the movie theater and hurled abuse at them, such as “Judenschweine” (Jewish pigs). “They call it anti-Zionism, but it’s antisemitism,” said Lanzmann.

Memory of the Holocaust lies at the core of much anti-Israel and antisemitic agitation. It encapsulates several and even contradictory themes: the Holocaust did not happen; Zionists use the Holocaust to divert attention from Israeli actions against Palestinians; it’s a pity that not all Jews were murdered in the Holocaust; Israeli behavior is comparable to that of the Nazis.

In France, 163 instances of antisemitic graffiti and insults in January 2009 referred to the Holocaust, including: “Hitler should have turned you into soap” and “Long live the gas chambers.” The Dutch monitoring group “Israel Facts” reported that the Hyves social network and discussion forums of the popular *Volksrant* newspaper (third largest newspaper in the Netherlands) were rife with antisemitic blood libels, Holocaust denial, exhortations to “murder all Jews” and nostalgic calls to Adolf Hitler to “finish off his job.”

While Holocaust denial, on the one hand, and support for Nazi anti-Jewish policy, on the other, are frowned on by the European mainstream, the equation of Israel with Nazi Germany has become part of its discourse. By inverting the Holocaust and comparing Israel’s deeds with the Nazi policy of destruction of European Jewry, extremist opponents of Israel are not only insulting descendants of victims, but in fact, belittling the magnitude of the losses suffered by Jews and

thus distorting the memory of the Holocaust. An email, with the subject line “Holocaust Survivors,” circulated during Operation Cast Lead by Trine Lilleng, first secretary at the Norwegian embassy in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, from her foreign ministry email account, demonstrates the occurrence of this train of thought among intellectuals and even among officials. Equating Israel’s offensive against Hamas in Gaza with the systematic mass murder of six million Jews by the Nazis, the message juxtaposed black-and-white photos from the Holocaust alongside color images from Operation Cast Lead. The accompanying text read: “I always wondered why they [Holocaust survivors] didn’t learn anything from the horror during WWII. Now I see what they learnt.” In response to public protests and official complaints, foreign minister Jonas Gahr Støre, said he was appalled by the distribution of “clearly antisemitic propaganda.”

In Sweden the former archbishop of the Church of Sweden K-G Hammar withdrew his participation in an International Holocaust Remembrance Day ceremony on January 27, citing Israel’s actions in Gaza, while the diocese of Luleå decided to cancel its annual memorial event for the same reason.

Referring to “genocide against the Palestinian people,” Alexis Tsipras, leader of the Greek left-wing Synaspismos coalition (Coalition of the Left of Movements and Ecology) claimed that the Israelis had “turned Gaza into an immense concentration camp, exterminating civilians, women and small children.”

Banners equating the Star of David with the swastika and slogans in a similar vein became almost the norm in anti-Israel demonstrations in Europe. During a demonstration in Amsterdam against Israeli’s Gaza operation in January, the president of the Foreign Relations Committee of the Socialist Party, Van Bommel was heard shouting “Intifada, Intifada, Free Palestine!” while people from the public allegedly yelled: “Hamas, Hamas – Jews to the gas!”

With the former victims, the Jews, portrayed as the new Nazis, it was only natural that left-wing extremists would begin tolerating violent acts against Israel and against them for allegedly perpetrating crimes against the new victims, the Palestinians. The impact of such agitation on the general public became clear in a survey conducted by the Holocaust Center in Nottinghamshire, UK, and published in April 2009. The findings revealed that three out of ten Britons believed that Jews were both victims and aggressors in “roughly equal measure” throughout history. According to Stephan Smith, director of the Holocaust Center, “it suggests a lack of historical perspective that almost a third of those interviewed think of Jews as being as likely to be aggressors as victims.” In another survey, published by the German weekly *Stern* on January 14 (during the war in Gaza), 49 percent of Germans considered Israel an “aggressive” state and 13 percent questioned Israel’s right to exist.

Delegitimation of the State of Israel affects all Jews, whether they believe in the necessity of a Jewish homeland, or not. A Jew who does not clearly declare his opposition to Israel's deeds or even existence is regarded as a collaborator of the aggressive Jewish state. On International Holocaust Day, January 27, the mayor of Malmö, Ilmar Reepalu, said that neither Zionism nor antisemitism was acceptable in Malmö and that the Jewish community could help reduce tensions in the city by condemning Israeli actions. He then criticized the Jewish community for organizing a pro-Israel demonstration, since that "could send out the wrong signals."

Increasingly, and on university campuses in particular, Jewish students face hostility if they appear to be pro-Israel. Israel Apartheid Week (IAW) took place during March 1-8, 2009, on college campuses in 40 cities around the world. In 2005 the first such event was held only in Toronto, Canada. According to the IAW website (apartheidweek.org), the aim of IAW is "to educate people about the nature of Israel as an apartheid system and to build Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) campaigns as part of a growing global BDS movement." The focus of the campaign in 2009 was Israel's allegedly barbaric assault on the people of Gaza, and the website pointed out that these Operation Cast Lead "massacres" further confirmed the true nature of Israeli apartheid.

Ronnie Fraser, a lecturer at Barnet College in London, claims that the response in the UK to Palestinian calls to boycott Israel has been greater than in any other country. The driving forces are radical anti-Zionist leftists, such as the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) and the Palestine Solidarity Campaign (PSC), which lobby for a general boycott of Israeli goods as well as a cultural and sports boycott. On May 14, the British Fire Brigades Union called at its annual conference for a campaign to boycott Israeli goods and institutions. It repeated these calls at the annual Trade Union Congress, which represents 6.5 million members in the UK.

Increasingly, boycotters are targeting Jews. On January 9, 2009, the *Times* (London) reported that in response to Israel's Gaza operation, Giancarlo Desiderati, secretary of the small, independent left-wing trade union Flaica-Cub, posted a proposal on the union's website to "identify and boycott" Jewish-owned shops in the Italian capital. The appeal was condemned by politicians from both the left and the right. Italy's three main trade unions labeled it "shameful" and advised shopkeepers to throw Flaica leaflets in the trash under the slogan "Sales tainted by blood." Riccardo Pacifici, head of Rome's Jewish community, said he would sue the union under Italy's anti-racism laws.

In parallel, however, it should be noted that 2009 also witnessed an intense struggle by governmental as well as non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in western Europe against antisemitism and anti-Zionism. The prevention of a first formal boycott of Israeli academic

institutions by a European university is an example of success in this effort. On November 12, the board of the Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU) in Trondheim, Norway's second-largest university, voted unanimously not to support an academic boycott of Israel, following a proposal presented by the rector Torbjørn Digernes. The initiative for the boycott began with an open letter, published on November 4 and signed by 34 lecturers at NTNU and the University College of Sør-Trøndelag, in Trondheim, which stated: "We, the signatories of this letter, believe that it is time that academic institutions contributed to international pressure against Israel so that real negotiations between Israel, democratically elected Palestinian authorities and international society can begin." NTNU professor Bjørn Alsberg led the fight against the boycott by drafting a petition which received both local and international support, with 25 NTNU professors, five Nobel Laureates, and over a thousand academics and concerned citizens from around the world among the signatories.

The UK

The incidence of major antisemitic violence and vandalism in the UK tripled in 2009 compared to the 2008 figure. The Community Security Trust (CST) of British Jews registered 924 antisemitic manifestations of all kinds, the highest annual total ever recorded and an increase of 69 per cent over the 2008 figure of 546. Unlike in France, the decrease in the UK was more gradual and the level remained high for several weeks after the end of the fighting in Gaza. Although most of the acts (359) were reported during January, the rest of the year witnessed a rise of about 10 percent over the already high base level.

France

In France the Jewish Community Protection Service (SPCJ) recorded 832 antisemitic incidents (the Interior Ministry's figure was even higher – 974), an increase of about 75 percent over the 2008 total of 474. Israel's operation in Gaza served as the main trigger event for this dramatic escalation. About 40 percent of all incidents occurred in January. Thus, for example, synagogues were repeatedly targeted for attack. A considerable decline was recorded shortly after the end the war. Nevertheless, one of the most serious antisemitic incidents occurred in September when a Molotov cocktail was thrown at the Jewish ORT Bramson High School in Marseille. Nearly 400 students were present but no one was injured. The fence and nearby cars were damaged.

Belgium

Jews in Belgium reported a growing sense of insecurity. Antisemitic activity escalated during the first four months of 2009, according to the Centre for Equal Opportunities and Opposition to Racism (CEOOR), which recorded 60 incidents until April alone – usually the total for the whole year. These included violent attacks on young as well as elderly people, especially Orthodox Jews in Antwerp and Brussels. On March 4, for example, three religious Jews were attacked by a man of North African origin in a Brussels street. They were beaten with a steel bar while the perpetrators shouted “Allah Akbar” (Allah is great) and “Yahud Yahud” (Jews, Jews). One of the victims was hospitalized with serious injuries. On June 4, a 70-year-old Orthodox Jew was violently assaulted in Antwerp and a week later, on June 10, Orthodox Jewish children from the Belz community in Antwerp, were stoned by a group of North African descent.

The Netherlands

Antisemitic violence in the Netherlands included a Molotov cocktail attack on a synagogue, shots fired at a window of the Jewish center in the town of Amstelveen, and an assault on an identifiably 16-year-old Jewish girl who was waiting for a tram in Amsterdam. In The Hague, a group of youths smashed the pane in the front door of the home of a wheelchair-bound man after they spotted an Israeli flag in his hallway. They then lit a fire in front of the door and threw firecrackers into the hall. In Amsterdam alone, the number of incidents doubled in 2009 and Jews living there reported an increased sense of insecurity in the face of a growing barrage of name-calling, hate mail, firecrackers in mailboxes, graffiti and, occasionally harassment.

Denmark

During Operation Cast Lead anti-Israel demonstrations were organized mainly by young Muslims in the cities. At a rally organized by Hizb ut-Tahrir in Nørrebro, a neighborhood Copenhagen heavily populated by Middle East immigrants, a typical banner read: “Allah is great and the Jews are the enemies of God.” Green Hamas and black Hizballah flags were also common. The Jewish community organized a counter-demonstration of 600–700 participants on January 10, at City Hall Square in Copenhagen. The slogans on the placards called for peace in the Middle East, condemned terror, and decried the demonization of Israel. Toward the end a heavy police presence had to protect the participants against a large number of Muslims, who sought confrontation and tried to interrupt with slogans such as “We will kill all Jews,” and “Jews do not

have the right to exist.” After the rally members of the community were chased away by groups they identified as being of “Arab” origin.

The most serious violent incident occurred in Odense at the beginning of January. Two Israelis manning a stall of Dead Sea products in Rosengårdcenter were shot and wounded by a 27-year-old Danish-Palestinian man. Also in January, a monument to Jews who died in Theresienstadt and Jewish cemeteries in Copenhagen and Aarhus were desecrated. Threatening and abusive mail was sent to the Jewish community and to Jewish educational centers. One, to the Jewish school in Copenhagen, read: “Watch your children... They will be killed like our children got killed by Israeli soldiers... We will kill them very soon – we will bomb them.”

During the year there were two heated discussions in the media regarding Muslim-Jewish relations in Denmark. One followed a survey conducted by the University of Aarhus, which showed that antisemitism among immigrants from Muslim countries was very strong. Almost two out of three (65 percent) believed that “you can not be careful enough when it comes to contact with Jews.” Among ethnic Danes, the rate was 18.2 percent on this question. The second followed an appeal by the headmaster of a school in Odense who asked parents of Jewish children not to enroll their children in the institution due to the high proportion of Muslim students. Other schools reportedly supported this line.

Sweden

The rate of violent incidents in 2009 doubled compared to 2008. The largest proportion occurred in Malmö, Sweden’s third largest city, which has the largest Muslim community in the country. As a result of harassment and insults in the streets there, such as “bloody Jew” and “Zionist murderer,” some Jewish residents decided to leave. Twice in January 2009 a Jewish cemetery in Malmö was the target of an arson attack. In another serious incident during Operation Cast Lead, a fire was started at the Jewish community center and synagogue in Helsingborg. The entire second floor of the building was destroyed and the first floor damaged by smoke.

Norway

In 2009 six violent incidents were recorded in Norway compared to only one in 2008. Most occurred during January, triggered by extreme anti-Israel propaganda. Anti-Israel protests organized by Arabs, Muslims, and left-wing activists, and attempts to prevent a pro-Israel demonstration, turned violent and antisemitic. A 73-year-old man who had participated in the pro-Israel rally was physically assaulted and spat at by a group of people who shouted “Take him, bloody Jew.” Another serious incident occurred two days later during an anti-Israel demonstration

held outside the Israeli embassy to protest Operation Cast Lead. The participants – mostly of Middle East descent – continued into the center of Oslo, where they broke several shop windows and looted the premises. One man who tried to protect his shop was beaten after someone called out that he was Jewish. A number of demonstrators attacked the Freemasons Lodge in Oslo, breaking windows and hurling firecrackers into the building, in which a number of people were present. Demonstrators were incited to continue to the university to hunt for Jews.

Germany

In a statement issued on December 17, 2009, Joerg Ziercke, president of the German Federal Criminal Police Office (*Bundeskriminalamt*, BKA), reported that almost three acts of racial violence were committed in Germany daily and some three antisemitically motivated assaults took place per month.

Antisemitic manifestations increased during Operation Cast Lead, when activists from the extreme right, the extreme left and Islamic fundamentalists took part in many virulently anti-Israel demonstrations. On January 10, for example, a group calling itself “Mainz Initiative for Peace in Gaza” organized a rally in the city which attracted some 5,000 people. Many protesters were carrying banners with antisemitic catchphrases such as “Should Gaza become Auschwitz?” or “Israel drinks the blood of our children.” A small cluster of people waving an Israeli flag was attacked by an angry group who shouted insults such as *Ihr Judenschweine* (You Jewish pigs). Instead of guarding the few Israel supporters, the police claimed they had provoked the violence.

Final numbers issued by the Ministry of Interior may show a slight increase in the overall number of antisemitic manifestations in 2009 but a significant decrease in violent acts against Jews. This does not necessarily include the almost weekly desecrations of Jewish cemeteries which, for the most part, are not reported as antisemitic crimes but as “vandalism.” The findings of the Stephen Roth Institute, as reflected in its database, also show a clear trend of a decline in violent acts. Nevertheless, many Jews in Germany report an increased sense of insecurity, which may be explained in part by the fact that radical anti-Zionism has infiltrated the mainstream discourse, thus becoming *gesellschaftsfahig* – socially acceptable.

On August 5, in an effort to curb this trend, federal minister of the interior Wolfgang Schaueble announced the formation of an antisemitism panel, which is to report to the government on a regular basis. The panel will also make recommendations for combating antisemitism. It is composed of experts from a variety of backgrounds – both Jewish and non-Jewish.

Austria

Antisemitic violence was a relatively rare occurrence in Austria until 2009, when 20 incidents of violence and vandalism were reported. From January to June 2009, the Forum against Antisemitism in Austria recorded 125 antisemitic events compared to a total of 46 in 2008. Since they were perpetrated throughout the year, it is hard to gauge the extent to which the increase was triggered by hostile media coverage of Israel's operation in Gaza. Possibly, antisemitic activity also intensified because of the electoral successes of the Austrian Freedom Party (FPÖ) and the virulent statements of some of its leaders against leading Jewish figures in Austria. It should be noted that the continuing political gains of the FPÖ have emboldened the militant extreme right to expand their activity. In general, there was a steep escalation in violence committed by neo-Nazis in 2009, including one fatal attack.

Switzerland

Leaders of the Jewish community expressed deep concern about the sharp rise in antisemitic activity and the unresponsiveness of the Swiss authorities. In addition to Operation Cast Lead, a further trigger appeared to be the Durban II conference held in Geneva, April 20–24. During the year the police in Zurich registered dozens of antisemitic threats and vandalism of Jewish sites. Since the beginning of Israel's Gaza operation an antisemitic association calling itself Switzerland without Jews (*Schweiz ohne Juden*) has been distributing letters with death threats and antisemitic insults, such as "Jewish pig" and "Only a dead Jew is a good Jew," in Zurich mail boxes.

Italy

Thousands of people, mostly radical Muslims and extreme left activists, displaying banners equating the Star of David with the swastika and waving Hamas flags, participated in anti-Israel demonstrations during Operation Cast Lead, while graffiti calling for the destruction of the State of Israel, swastikas and antisemitic insults were sprayed on private and public buildings throughout the country. Comparing Israel with Nazi Germany was the main theme. Banners carried by the demonstrators bore slogans such "Let's stop the massacre by the Israeli Nazi-Zionist regime supported by the Italian government," and "You complain about the Holocaust but in 2009 Gaza is undergoing a Holocaust caused by you." In Mestre five hooded youths broke into the headquarters of the Israeli shipping company Zim and smeared the offices with antisemitic graffiti.

As in other European countries, extreme right groups joined the anti-Israel campaign. The antisemitic group Militia, for example, hung banners on shops around Italy calling to boycott Israel.

A decision of Pope Benedictus XVI in January 2009 to lift the excommunication order imposed on four schismatic bishops, all members of the Society of St. Pius X, including a Holocaust denier, British bishop Richard Williamson, prompted angry Jewish reactions. The Jewish community in Italy, Jewish organizations worldwide and the Israeli government expressed their disappointment over the Vatican decision. Shortly before the announcement to revoke the order, Williamson, one of four bishops ordained by ultra-traditionalist dissident Monsignor Marcel Lefebvre, denied the existence of gas chambers during an interview to a Swedish TV channel. "I believe that gas chambers never existed," he said. I think that some 200.000–300.000 Jews died in concentration camps, but none in gas chambers." After reports accusing Williamson of Holocaust denial attracted widespread media coverage, the Vatican declared that "in order to be accepted for Episcopal functions within the Church," Williamson would have to dissociate himself, "in an absolutely unequivocal and public fashion from his position on the Shoah, which the Holy Father was not aware of when the excommunication was lifted."

Greece

During Operation Cast Lead Jewish sites such as synagogues, Holocaust monuments and cemeteries were desecrated with antisemitic graffiti and slogans in Athens and other places. Catchphrases such as "Jews=murderers" and "Jews=Nazis" were common in all cases. In Veroia the synagogue door was set alight while in Larissa, an attempt was made to tear the Star of David from the door and break into the synagogue. Several tombstones were damaged in the Jewish cemetery of Ioannina. This period was marked by a spate of virulently anti-Israel articles and speeches of leading politicians and public figures some of which contained antisemitic references.

Spain

The largest anti-Israel demonstration in Europe during Operation Cast Lead took place in Spain. The participation of a representative of the governmental Spanish Socialist Workers' Party (PSOE) confirmed that the protest, organized in central Madrid on January 10, 2009, was supported by the administration. Israeli flags were burned and cries such as "Israel assassin" and "This is not a war, it is genocide" were heard.

A day later a similar mass rally took place in Barcelona, with the equation between Israel and Nazi Germany a principal motif. Interior councilor Jean Saura of the Generalitat in Catalonia,

who led the demonstration, subsequently canceled a public candle lighting ceremony planned for International Holocaust Memorial Day, January 27. A City Hall representative explained that it was inappropriate to commemorate the Jewish Holocaust when there was “a Palestinian holocaust going on.” Even after the end of the war, radical leftists continued to incite against Israel and against Jews in Spain. In April, an anti-fascist group shouted antisemitic insults at the president of the Spanish Jewish Federation when he was invited to speak at the University of Madrid. In May, Israel’s ambassador to Spain was verbally abused as he walked home from a soccer match in Madrid. Three fans following the ambassador called him “a dirty Jew,” “Jew bastard” and “Jew murderer.”

The role of extreme right groups in anti-Israel and antisemitic events was evident in Spain, too. On January 30, a man wearing military garb attacked the outer wall of the reconstructed Shlomo Ben Adret synagogue, in the Cal neighborhood of Barcelona, with a baseball bat and then injured an employee. The perpetrator, a member of the extreme right Movimiento Social Republicano (MSR), was arrested. On January 8, the MSR signature was painted on the Chabad-Lubavitch Center in the city. Many bystanders witnessed the incident but no one intervened.

CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE

Compared with western Europe, the impact of Operation Cast Lead on the level of antisemitism in the post-Communist states of central and eastern Europe was relatively limited. In Poland radical anti-Zionist rhetoric was employed by several politicians from the right and the left during Israel’s offensive. At a demonstration in front of the Israeli embassy in Warsaw on January 10, 2009, Piotr Ikonowicz, leader of the extra-parliamentary New Left party warned the Jews: “Don’t allow yourselves to be incited against Palestinians or you will die.” At the other end of the spectrum, Jolanta Szczypinska, a well-known MP representing the Law and Justice party, issued a joint statement with the leader of the Polish-Palestinian Friendship Association, condemning “the extermination of the Palestinian people.” In another untypical incident, Israel’s ambassador to Poland David Peleg was shouted down in Poznan during a ceremony awarding Yad Vashem’s Righteous among the Nations in the cathedral of the local university, by several anarchists, who shouted “Enough of the massacres.” Like other extreme right publications in Hungary, during Israel’s Gaza operation *Magyar Demokrata* published translations of anti-Zionist and anti-Israel articles. Nevertheless, mass demonstrations and heated speeches against Zionism and Israel were not common in these states due to the small size of the Muslim communities, the absence of a committed anti Zionist extreme left movement and lack of sympathy for the Arab and the

Palestinian cause. The mainstream media reproduced articles from western sources, some of them critical of Israel, but overall the tone was more reserved.

In general, the antisemitic “agenda” in the former Communist countries of central and eastern Europe remained somewhat different from that in the West. Historical issues relating to memory of the war and the Holocaust, along with revisionism, are central to the public discourse and have a considerable impact on antisemitism. Nevertheless, during the past few years there have been signs of increasing westernization in patterns of antisemitism and anti-Israelism, especially in the context of anti-globalization attitudes. Thus, the world economic crisis, which hit the former Communist countries forcibly in the second half of 2008 and into 2009, was responsible for the intensification of antisemitic attitudes. The mouthpiece of the nationalist, antisemitic Greater Romania Party (PRM), *Romania Mare*, put it simply: “... you Jews have caused the world economic crisis” (March 13).

The heated public discourse, reflected in the media, focused on the reasons for the crisis and the connection between world economic trends and the negative sides of globalization. In these debates antisemitic aspects of anti-globalization propaganda were used by both right and left. The “inflow of Jewish capital” and the alleged takeover of the local economies by Jewish-Israeli business interests were common themes on both sides. In this regard, antisemitic conspiracy theories, which since 1989 have thrived on fertile soil in eastern Europe, were interwoven with attempts to explain and find scapegoats for the economic meltdown. A survey conducted by the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) in 2008 and based on 500 people in seven European countries, revealed that in Hungary a significant part of the population sampled, some 67 percent, agreed that Jews had too much power in the economy, an increase of 7 percent over the previous year.

The most important development in the area was the expansion of the activities of extremist parties and movements, potentially threatening its political stability. The beginning of the third decade since the collapse of the Communist regimes was marked by a national accounting, including matters relating to racism, xenophobia and antisemitism. This soul-searching, which also focused on future prospects, was characterized by an atmosphere of pessimism, despite recognized achievements such as democratization, the rise of a civil society, and the entry of most of the area into the EU and other European frameworks of integration. The troubling signs of rising extremism and racism, and the ability and willingness of society, the legal system and the regimes themselves to deal with these grave challenges were at the center of many public discussions in the media, as well as at the political level.

In addition, attitudes toward minorities, especially the Roma – against whom acts of violence increased in 2009 – and the continuing battle over the shaping of national memory are major challenges for evaluating the abilities of the respective societies to reach a stage of “maturity” two decades after the collapse of the old regimes.

Although members of the EU, the former Communist countries continue to interact regionally and influence one another. Thus, for example the outcome of elections in Hungary is likely to have a close impact on the neighboring Czech Republic or on Slovakia. It is in this context that some trends and developments in 2009 should be seen, along with a clear tendency toward a growing extremist east European presence in the European Parliament, as manifested by the election of three MEPs from the Hungarian Jobbik party in June 2009 (see Raphael Vago, [“Hungary – the Case of a Post-Communist Country in Crisis”](#)).

Hungary witnessed probably the most troubling developments, notably the rapid rise of the Movement for a Better Hungary (Jobbik) and of the paramilitary Hungarian Guard. The latter is banned by the authorities but continues to play a cat and mouse game with them. Members of local chapters of the organization wearing military uniforms and displaying extremist symbols threaten and attack Roma communities with almost total impunity (see Roni Stauber, [Violence against the Roma Minority in Hungary and the Czech Republic and Its Repercussions](#)). Its website, which is linked to a complex network of extremist sites, including the virulently antisemitic kuruc.info, demonstrates the problem of rising extremism on the net. “Typical Jewish crookedness – the Palestinians are compelled to celebrate their own expulsion,” was a characteristic Kuruc headline posted on February 27, 2010.

The success of Jobbik in the 2009 Euro-Parliamentary elections – some 15 percent of the vote – was a clear indication that it will enter the Hungarian Parliament in the April 2010 general elections with a similar proportion of the ballot. Jobbik represents everything that east and central European extremists are spreading – antisemitism, anti-Roma incitement, xenophobia, extreme nationalism, anti-globalism, and “Euroskepticism.” Jobbik’s expected electoral success raises questions about the possible impact of its extremism on general elections scheduled for 2010 in the Czech Republic and Slovakia.

Perhaps in reaction to the escalation in Hungarian extremism, and following a lengthy judicial process, a Czech court banned the far right neo-Nazi Workers Party on the grounds that it represents a threat to democracy. In the Euro-Parliamentary election the party, which focused its campaign on the “Roma issue,” recorded a significant achievement: by crossing the one percent threshold it qualified for state funds based on the number of votes it received. In its ruling, the court described the Workers Party, founded in 2003, as an antisemitic, xenophobic and

homophobic organization that promotes the ideology of Hitler and the Nazi Party. This was the first time that the post-Communist Czech Republic had outlawed a political party. Following the ban, Workers Party leaders declared not only that they would appeal against the decision but would continue to act under different names and guises as they had in the past. The Czech Republic also saw a crackdown in 2009 on extremists associated with several neo-Nazi organizations that were planning terrorist attacks within the country, including against “leading government figures of Jewish origin.”

In a positive development, the Hungarian Parliament adopted a motion in early 2010 to ban Holocaust denial. While a significant move, further legal and parliamentary steps are expected since, as in other parts of the area, a lengthy debate has been ongoing over whether to equate the crimes of the Nazis with those of the totalitarian Communist regimes. The OSCE Prague Declaration of June 2008 was followed in July 2009 by its adoption by the EU and the institution of August 23 as a day of commemoration of all victims of fascist and totalitarian regimes. Such attempts provoked fierce reactions, particularly from Jewish organizations and other international bodies that commemorate the Holocaust, as well as from eminent historians such as Yehuda Bauer, who described them as a distortion of the Holocaust.

THE CIS AND BALTIC STATES

While Israel’s operation in Gaza provoked angry reactions from members of Muslim groups and the Communist Party (see [ASW 2008/9](#)), memory of the Holocaust and comparisons between Nazi and Soviet atrocities were the prime foci of the public discourse in the CIS and the Baltic States. The dimensions of the Holocaust in the occupied republics only began coming to light after the collapse of the Soviet Union. The opening of archives (if only partially) and the increased readiness of eyewitnesses to talk unveiled a unique and previously unknown aspect of this period. This new information forced the fledgling republics to face their past.

The Soviet attitude toward the Holocaust was complex, dictated by both domestic and external factors. The mass execution of Jews in the Soviet Union by the Nazi occupiers and their local collaborators was not stressed; rather it was presented as part of the immense tragedy that befell all the country’s nations. The unwillingness of the Soviet authorities to deal with the historical fact that the Jews were the only group persecuted and systematically murdered because of their nationality, led to an entire system of denying, silencing and even false accusations against the Jews.

With the fall of communism and the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, some observers believed that democratization in the emerging states would eventually bring about a

change in the attitude toward the Holocaust. However, the opposite occurred and the situation in this regard became even more complex. The process of constructing a national identity revived old conflicts and rivalries and the new states were forced to deal with historical events in their near past. The need to tackle the fate of the Jews was manipulated instead for contemporary political purposes.

In this context, the countries in the following analysis may be divided into two groups. The first (the Baltic States and Ukraine) have chosen to cover up as best as they can their role in the extermination of the Jews and present themselves as victims, who suffered both under the Soviets and Nazis. The need to draw a parallel between the struggle against the Nazis and the struggle against the Soviets has driven them to glorification of those who turned their weapons against Moscow (murdering Jews on the way) and the organization of parades in their honor each year. The second group (Belarus and Russia) continue the old Soviet narrative, which draws a clear line between Soviets and Nazis. According to this narrative, any person who acted in any way against the Red Army was a collaborator with the occupiers.

After gaining independence, the Estonian regime focused on persecuting those who had collaborated with the Soviet regime, namely, veterans of the Red Army and former members of the police and the security services. As part of their efforts to blacken the Soviet occupation, the authorities crowned as national heroes all those who had taken part in fighting against it, including soldiers who served in the German army and the SS during World War II. This tendency continued into 2009 and even intensified as a result of the OSCE decision of July 2 which effectively equated Nazism with Stalinism. It was used to excuse collaboration with the Germans as part of the struggle against the Soviets. In his Internet blog from July 13, Res Publica Party member of the Estonian parliament Marko Mihkelson, who chairs the EU Affairs Committee and sits on the Foreign Affairs Committee, even accused Efraim Zuroff of the Simon Wiesenthal Center of “contempt of the Holocaust,” when the latter objected to mentioning Nazi and Communist victims conjointly.

Since 2003 Estonia has marked International Holocaust Memorial Day on January 27 and since 2007 has been a member of the ITF (Task Force for International Cooperation on Holocaust Education, Remembrance, and Research). In June 2009 the Estonian parliament supported the European Parliament’s initiative to mark August 23 (date of the signature of the Ribbentrop-Molotov Pact in 1939) as a Day of Remembrance, which will commemorate victims of all totalitarian regimes. However, the role of the local Estonian population in the extermination of the Jews is not mentioned anywhere. All the blame falls on the Germans who committed the murder and on the Soviets who concealed information from the Jews.

Latvia, which was one of the first countries that declared its independence from the Soviet Union, also chose to focus on the lessons of the Soviet occupation while ignoring to some extent the events of World War II, including, of course, the involvement of Latvians in the murder of Jews. The official website of the Latvian foreign ministry explicitly states that those who took part in the murder of Jews were an insignificant minority that was not representative of the Latvian people, and that allegations of active Latvian involvement in the murder of Jews was a part of German and Soviet propaganda. A page on the Holocaust on the same site reads: the Holocaust was “a policy of genocide directed against Jews and Gypsies.”

In their struggle to foster the perception that the Soviet occupation was no less (and, allegedly, even more) brutal and destructive than that of the Germans, Latvians do not hesitate to exploit the Holocaust. In 2008 the Latvian director Edvīns Šnore filmed a documentary titled *The Soviet Story*, in which he sought to expose the crimes of the Soviet regime. While accusing the Soviets of various crimes and problems, Šnore also blames them for the murder of Jews: The Soviet authorities did not distribute information on German policy concerning the Jews, he claims, which prevented them from escaping in time. This is not far from the reality, but Šnore’s documentary was made as part of the anti-Soviet campaign and not out of a special interest in the Jews or the Holocaust. The film was screened in 2008–9 in the US and in several countries in Europe.

On the other hand, since 1990 Latvia has held an official Holocaust Memorial Day on July 4, commemorating the burning of a Riga synagogue full of Jews in 1941, and the ceremony on that date is usually attended by the president, foreign minister, other government officials and ambassadors.

Unlike the Estonians and Latvians, who try to argue that those who collaborated with the Nazis against the Jews were an insignificant minority within the population, the Lithuanians cannot make this claim since thousands of Jews are known to have been killed by their non-Jewish neighbors, sometimes even before the Germans reached their towns and villages. The issue of collaboration in Lithuania has long clouded Lithuanian-Jewish relations. Speaking in the Knesset during a visit to Israel in 1995, Latvia’s president Algirdas Brazauskas apologized in the name of his people for the atrocities against the Jews. However, this did not bring about a change in the politics of memory in Lithuania.

The difficulty in handling such a complicated chapter in the history of Lithuanian-Jewish relations has led to attempts to explaining the Lithuanians’ behavior. One commonly used excuse is that the Lithuanians collaborated with the Nazis in the murder of Jews because the Jews collaborated with the Soviets in 1940–41. However, this can be easily refuted since the Jews also

suffered and were persecuted during the short Soviet occupation before the German invasion. As a result of such claims, the Lithuanian prosecutor's office launched several investigations in 2008 against former Jewish partisans, including Yitzhak Arad, a past chairman of Yad Vashem and a prominent historian of the Holocaust in the Soviet Union, on suspicion of killing Lithuanians. In late 2008/early 2009 all the investigations were dropped "because of insufficient data." In early February 2010, however, the Lithuanian prosecutor's office opened an investigation against Iosef Melamed, a former inmate of the Kaunas (Kovna) ghetto and head of the Association of Lithuanian Jews in Israel, for his activity as a partisan in Lithuania during the war.

Like its neighbors, Lithuania focused in 2009 on stressing the notion of two periods of suffering – first under the Soviets and then under the Germans. In early June 2009, the parliament even discussed a bill suggesting imprisonment for anyone who denied it: two Lithuanian MPs from the right-wing Fatherland Union – Christian Democrats of Lithuania, Paulius Saudargas and Petras Luomanas, suggested an amendment to the Lithuanian criminal code according to which public support, propaganda, denial or justification of the crimes committed by the Communists and fascists would be punished with a fine or imprisonment of up to three years. On June 9, 2009 the parliament adopted a first draft of the proposal.

In mid-December 2009 Lithuanian foreign minister Vygaudas Usackas took part in the Global Forum for Combating Antisemitism in Israel. In his address he stressed the need to "fill the gaps in historical memory, to develop in citizens a sense of intolerance to antisemitism and any kind of xenophobia, [and] support the long-time tradition of harmonious coexistence of Lithuanians and Jews." At the same time he also said that those alive today "cannot be blamed for the crimes of the Holocaust." While on the one hand, he said the Holocaust was an "unprecedented phenomenon," on the other, he practically minimized it, equating it with the suffering of Lithuanians under the Soviets: "Not only Lithuanians, but also many Jews, Russians and representatives of other nationalities in Lithuania experienced the same historical losses – forced deportation, death at Gulag camps, confiscation of property, persecution because of religion, language," he said, expressing his hope that Israel and world Jewry would "understand and support our efforts to honor the memory of all victims of totalitarianism." Later, in an interview to the *Jerusalem Post* he said: "We are not making a moral equivalence... but we want a similar process of assessment [of Nazism and Stalinism]."

Since 1994, a National Memorial Day for the Genocide of Lithuanian Jews is marked on September 23 – the date when the ghetto in Vilna (Vilnius) was liquidated in 1943. Commemoration ceremonies are held in many cities, usually attended by the president, prime minister, other ministers, leaders of political parties, ambassadors and others.

Ukraine, too, has had to face a dark chapter in its national history. However, the Ukrainians chose not to accuse the Jews, but to present them as full partners in the struggle for independence and who, like them, suffered under both the Soviets and the Germans. The country even has two Holocaust research institutions (in Kiev and Dnepropetrovsk). While for the Baltic States the Soviet occupation and the loss of independence in 1940 was a national tragedy, the Ukrainians, who won independence for only a short period during the October Revolution, recalled a different national tragedy of their own, the Holodomor – the great famine of 1932–33.

After becoming president in 2004, Viktor Yushchenko pursued the idea of officializing the legacy of the Holodomor. Not infrequently it has been claimed that much of the blame for the famine falls on the Jews and sometimes collaboration of the local population with the Nazis in the murder of Jews has been explained as retaliation for the famine, but such views have never been expressed publicly by high officials. Furthermore, during 2008–9 the Ukrainian Security Services published several documents on their website revealing Soviet efforts to convince the Jews that the Ukrainian role in the “Final Solution” was greater than it really was. This was probably an attempt to exonerate UPA (Ukrainian Insurgent Army) members in the eyes of the Jews and put the entire blame on the Soviets.

During the war the UPA was involved in the murder of thousands of Jews and others. In 2007 the controversial awarding of “Hero of Ukraine” to UPA leader Roman Shukhevych by the Ukrainian president opened the way for glorification of members of Ukrainian nationalist units during WWII. In 2009 Yushchenko continued this line. During his speech at a memorial ceremony in Babi Yar on September 29, 2009, he even noted that OUN (Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists, allegedly also involved in killing thousands of Jews and others) members were also shot and buried there. This statement seemed to insinuate an equation between Holocaust victims who were murdered by the Nazis because of their Jewish nationality, and Ukrainian collaborators executed by the Nazis for advocating Ukrainian independence.

Even after it became clear that Yushchenko had lost the presidential election that took place in January 2010, he did not give up and one of his last decrees as president was to invest Stepan Bandera, leader of the OUN, as a “Hero of Ukraine.” A few days later lesser awards were given to Ukrainians who saved Jews during the Holocaust.

Unlike the Baltic States and Ukraine, Belarus sees WWII and resistance to the Nazis as one of the characteristics of modern Belarusian identity. This may be because the Soviet Republic of Belorussia was one of the countries that suffered most under the Nazi occupation – one-third of its population (including Jews) were exterminated during this period. Belarus, the most “Soviet” in political characteristics of all other post-Soviet states, recognized Jewish suffering during the

Holocaust and allowed the establishment of memorials to its victims around the country (mostly initiated and financed by Jewish communities and donors). However, high officials, writers, journalists and others refrain from attending Holocaust memorial services and some have even questioned the very existence of the Jewish tragedy.

The year 2008 seemed to be a turning point. After decades of denial, the authorities recognized the fact that Masha Bruskina, a 17-year-old girl, who has been a member of the anti-Nazi city underground in Minsk and was executed by the Nazis with other members on October 26, 1941, was Jewish. The 65th anniversary of the liquidation of the Minsk ghetto was marked by several events and for the first time ever president Alexander Lukashenko attended the main ceremony at the Yama memorial site in Minsk (see [ASW 2008](#)). However, nothing really changed.

There is still no official Holocaust Memorial Day in Belarus and the real scale of the murder of Jews in this country remains unknown. The subject of the Holocaust is covered only superficially in textbooks (if at all), and mainly stresses the aid the local population extended to the Jews and not the uniqueness of the Holocaust itself. Obviously, collaboration of the local population with the Nazis is not mentioned anywhere. Furthermore, in 2009 dissertations of a number of graduate students on the Holocaust were not approved by the relevant academic committees, allegedly for administrative reasons.

It seems that the change begun in 2008 was motivated by pragmatic political reasons. Affected by the global economic crisis, the authorities thought that modifying their attitude to the Jews in general and to the Holocaust in particular would show them in a positive light to the western world and bring financial support. But when they did not receive it, there was a complete turnabout, and on International Holocaust Memorial Day, January 27, 2010, instead of commemorating Holocaust victims, President Lukashenko held a meeting with a special envoy from Iran and expressed his deep understanding for Iran's Holocaust denying president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad.

Russia, the official successor of the USSR, has come a long way since the Soviet era. Like Ukraine, Russia, too, has a Holocaust research center – the Russian Research and Educational Holocaust Center and Holocaust Foundation (established in Moscow in the 1990s). A Memorial Synagogue, which serves both as a museum and a synagogue for the Moscow Jewish community, was founded in 1998 at the national memorial complex for the “Great Patriotic War” on Poklonnaia Gora. Holocaust denial exists only in marginal circles and is not supported by the authorities.

Still, year after year, the Duma, the lower house of the Russian parliament, rejects motions to establish an official Holocaust Memorial Day, although ceremonies have been held

since 2006 on January 27 in many Russian cities, some even attended by government representatives. The official attitude may stem partly from a refusal to recognize the uniqueness of the Holocaust, as well as the belief that, in their eyes, it constituted only a fraction of the immense suffering of the Russian people during WWII.

In this context, a statement made by the special envoy of the Russian president for international cultural cooperation, Mikhail Shvydkoii, during an international conference on the Holocaust in Prague in June 2009, should be noted. He said, among other things, that “the Russian delegation sees as one of its main objectives to remind [people of] the real history of Holocaust victims... It is necessary to remember that millions of citizens of different nationalities were lost in the Soviet Union during the war. Death does not recognize ethnic differences.” He ignored the fact that the Jews were the only nationality doomed to total destruction.

In 2009, the 70th anniversary of the Ribbentrop-Molotov Pact (August 23, 1939), Russia was faced with accusations by the Baltic States and Ukraine concerning the Soviet occupation. In response, it launched a campaign against “the glorification of collaborators” and “the distortion of history.” The Russian authorities held discussions on several occasions, and in April 2009 a special State Committee was established to combat these trends.

The collaboration of the local population in the Baltic States and Ukraine with the Nazis in the extermination of the Jews was supposed to be discussed at an international conference titled “The Legacy of World War II and the Holocaust,” initiated by the World Congress of Russian Speaking Jewry (headed by Boris Shpigel, member of the Federation Council – the upper house of the Russian parliament), in Berlin on December 15-17, 2009. Despite the conference title, the Holocaust had a secondary role in it. Most arrows were directed against the “distorters of history” and Russia’s rivals, the Baltic States, Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia. When some participants, such as Russian journalist and publicist Leonid Mlechin, noted that Russia itself never mentioned Russian collaborators, the conference organizers were furious. They were also displeased when it was decided to include in the conference’s final resolution a condemnation of Iranian Holocaust denial, and it appeared only because of the insistence of the Israeli representatives.

The sense that Russia is using the Holocaust as a political tool whenever it suits the goals of the authorities was reinforced in January 2010 when, notwithstanding continuing claims that the Jewish legacy and collective memory are an important part of Russian heritage, president Dmitrii Medvedev chose not to attend the International Holocaust Memorial Day ceremony in Auschwitz in spite of receiving a personal invitation from Polish president Lech Aleksander Kaczyński. Instead, he sent education and science minister Andreii Fursenko.

NORTH AMERICA

United States

Extremist-related violence rose sharply in the United States in 2009, with acts ranging from hate crimes to terrorism. The number of such murders in 2009 more than doubled the 2008 totals; the majority were perpetrated by right-wing extremists. A dismaying trend in 2009 was the rise of “lone wolf” incidents, in which the perpetrators were individual extremists unconnected to any organized group. There were a number of such murders in 2009, some of which were directed at Jews or Jewish-related targets, and others of which included Jews among their intended victims. “Lone wolf” incidents are among the most frustrating type of extremist-related criminal acts, because they tend to be exceptionally violent and are very hard to prevent.

On January 21, 2009, a young white supremacist named Keith Luke went on a violent rampage in the Boston suburb of Brockton, Massachusetts, killing two people and raping and wounding a third. All the victims were immigrants of West African descent. Following a chase, police arrested Luke before he could carry out what authorities say was going to be the climax of his murderous spree: that evening Luke allegedly planned to open fire into a nearby synagogue during a bingo night. After his arrest, Luke carved a swastika into his own forehead. In early January 2010, nearly a year after his arrest, Luke allegedly assaulted a psychiatrist performing an evaluation of him because he was Jewish.

On April 4, a young white supremacist named Richard Poplawski allegedly ambushed and killed three Pittsburgh police officers who were responding to a domestic disturbance call from Poplawski’s mother, with whom he lived. Poplawski had been growing increasingly extreme since the election of Barack Obama. In January 2010, a police report connected to the investigation of the shootout revealed that weeks before the incident, Poplawski had purportedly discussed a “hit list” on an Internet radio show, in which he was going to “take out” a police officer, an African-American, a Jew, and his ex-girlfriend and her parents.

One of the most noticeable incidents of antisemitism in the United States in 2009 was the shooting at the US Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington DC in June. One person was killed and another wounded when James von Brunn, 88, entered the museum and opened fire. Von Brunn was stopped when he was shot by security guards. He was later charged with first degree murder, and died while awaiting trial in January 2010. Von Brunn was a neo-Nazi and Holocaust denier who maintained a website called Holy Western Empire and had published an antisemitic book, *Kill the Best of the Gentiles*. The shooting in the museum attracted national press coverage and brought home the existence of Holocaust denial and antisemitic violence to large numbers of Americans.

A potentially violent antisemitic plot was disrupted in 2009 when four Muslim converts were arrested for planning to attack two synagogues in Riverdale, New York. In April 2009, the men allegedly planted what they believed to be bombs in cars outside several synagogues and a Jewish community center and planned to detonate them remotely via cell phone. They also intended to shoot down a US military airplane at a New York airbase. US law enforcers, however, had uncovered the plot and made sure the car bombs would not detonate. The men were arrested on May 20. An alarming number of American Muslim extremists arrested in 2009 on terror-related charges, ranging from bomb plots and attacks to providing material support to terrorists, expressed hatred of Jews and Israel.

Several major Muslim-American organizations vowed to root out radicalization in their community in response to the number of American Muslim extremists arrested in 2009. But the initial effort proved to be a sham and a cover for antisemitism and extremism. The Muslim American Society (MAS) and the Islamic Circle of North America (ICNA) held a major community convention in Chicago in December 2009 where the chair called for an Islam “clean and clear of all extremism.” But the event, which attracted more than a thousand participants, served as a forum for religious scholars and political activists to rail against Jews, call for the eradication of the State of Israel and accuse the US government of waging a war against Muslims at home and abroad.

Earlier in the year, ICNA organized a national campaign under the banner “Why Islam,” intended to educate the general public about Islam through a series of advertisements on buses, subways and billboards in Washington, DC, Chicago, New York and San Francisco, among others. Although the “Why Islam” campaign was described by its sponsors as an effort to promote interfaith dialogue, educate the public, and clarify misconceptions about Islam, its website includes links to sites promoting antisemitism and hatred of Israel.

Thousands of Americans were affected in 2009 by numerous protests of the Westboro Baptist Church (WBC), a small, virulently homophobic and antisemitic group, based in Topeka, Kansas. As of April 2009 the group demonstrated at dozens of Jewish institutions across the country. Targets ranged from Israeli consulates to synagogues and Jewish community centers, and the group distributed antisemitic fliers to announce the rallies planned at these sites. WBC also sent faxes and emails (in some cases dozens over the course of a week) with antisemitic and anti-gay messages to various Jewish institutions and individuals. At the protests, church members held signs stating that “The Jews killed Jesus,” “God hates Jews,” and “God hates Israel.” They also sang parodies of Jewish songs, replacing the regular lyrics with messages such as “You killed the savior, for this crime you all must pay.”

Numerous anti-Israel demonstrations, both on and off campus, and yearly events such as Apartheid Week, held in 2009 were rife with extreme anti-Israel, anti-Zionist and antisemitic messages, as well as offensive Holocaust imagery likening Jews and Israelis to Nazis. Many of the events were held outside Israeli embassies and consulates, US federal buildings and elsewhere around the country.

Activity on the campus of the University of California at Irvine (UCI) further demonstrated how anti-Israel efforts are often marred by antisemitism. Much of the on-campus activity was organized by the Muslim Student Union (MSU), a vocal student group responsible for staging large events every spring featuring virulently antisemitic speakers. Imams Amir Abdul Malik Ali and Abdul Alim Musa, leaders of the Sabiqun movement, an antisemitic Muslim group that advocates the creation of a global Islamic state, and Mohammad al-Asi, a noted antisemite, have spoken at such events.

Much of the antisemitic commentary found on the discussion boards of anti-Israel Facebook groups in 2009 included motifs and slogans condemning Jewish power and comparing Israelis to Nazis. With antisemitism flourishing on a variety of social networking sites, Facebook, in particular, has become a convenient platform for users seeking to link their antisemitic views to discussions of Israel. While it is not surprising that antisemitic content is posted on Facebook groups with titles like “[expletive] Israel” and “May Allah Destroy Israel,” numerous other groups that claim to be dedicated to criticizing Israeli policy (and even explicitly condemn antisemitism in their self-descriptions) still feature discussion boards filled with antisemitic postings. For example, a Facebook group titled “I Hate Israel,” with more than a thousand members, claims, “We don’t hate Jews or the citizens of Israel.” The group’s wall, however, includes several offensive posts from 2009, including “[expletive] the Jews,” “Hail Hitler!” and “... most of the Jews seems to be brainwashed and not have any morals! [*sic*]”

Another propagator of antisemitism in 2009 was Louis Farrakhan, leader of the Nation of Islam. At the March 1, 2009, Saviors’ Day convention, he implied that the validity of Holocaust records should be subject to debate; he also asserted that a “pro-Israel lobby” controls the US government, that Israelis are “liars, thieves and murderers,” and that Muslims should not withstand suicide bombers until the American Jewish community and the US government condemn Israel’s actions. Farrakhan praised Malik Zulu Shabazz, the antisemitic and racist leader of the New Black Panther Party, as a “profound teacher.” Earlier in 2009, Farrakhan delivered an antisemitic tirade during a speech about the late Michael Jackson, claiming the performer had suffered at the hands of powerful Jews throughout his career.

White supremacists and neo-Nazis continued their activity in the United States in 2009. Embittered and resentful about an African-American assuming the office of the presidency, some neo-Nazis and other white supremacists conducted symbolic protest activities on Inauguration Day, including the wearing of black armbands and parading through neighborhoods carrying American flags upside down.

In the wake of President Obama's nomination of Judge Sonia Sotomayor to the US Supreme Court, white supremacists and antisemites responded by claiming that Jewish power was responsible for her nomination and previous career success. They also employed antisemitic stereotypes to argue that Sostomayor is herself Jewish, or as one person suggested, a "cryptojew."

Some white supremacists sought to channel the populist energy of the Tea Party movement (formed in 2009 and promoting fiscal conservatism) towards racist and antisemitic ends. They attended about a dozen Tea Party events in order to distribute hate literature and recruit new adherents. Most, however, reported failure and even hostility from Tea Party activists.

By far the most important issue for American neo-Nazis and white supremacists in 2009 was illegal immigration. As many anti-immigrant groups blur the line between discussions of immigration policy and outright bigotry toward non-white immigrants, white supremacists and antisemites have become increasingly supportive of those groups whose rhetoric matches their own anti-immigrant sentiment. Extremists exploit the legitimacy of anti-immigrant groups to advance their own ideology and possibly increase their recruitment.

US college campuses were approached in 2009 by long-time Holocaust denier Bradley Smith to publish advertisements disseminating Holocaust denial in student newspapers. The ads suggested that scholars cannot provide the name of even one Holocaust victim along with proof that s/he was killed in a gas chamber. While many editors rejected his submissions, approximately 20 college newspapers printed Smith's ads. Some editors later apologized for giving Smith a platform to promote Holocaust denial, and many papers featured opinion pieces denouncing Smith's extremist views and criticizing the decision to publish them. Smith also embarked on several projects to promote Holocaust denial using "new media": starting several blogs, opening a Twitter account, and posting videos to his YouTube channel. He continued to publish and contribute to *Smith's Report*, his monthly newsletter which features articles by international Holocaust denial figures.

Canada

As in previous years, the pattern of antisemitic manifestations in Canada in 2009 was very similar to that in France and the UK, as well as other European countries with a relatively sizable Muslim

minority and/or a very vociferous radical left and extreme right, which tried to divert anger against Israel toward the Jews. The League for Human Rights of B'nai Brith Canada (the League) documented 1,264 antisemitic incidents of all kinds, an 11.4 percent increase over 2008. A considerable rise was recorded in the number of violent incidents against Jewish individuals. The figure for January 2009 during the war in Gaza and its immediate aftermath was the highest total ever recorded for a single month. Numbers remained at a high level weeks after the end of the operation. The continuing wave of antisemitic manifestations in February and March was influenced by aggressive anti-Israel agitation, particularly in universities during several well-organized events, notably Israel Apartheid Week. As in the UK, another spike in antisemitic activity occurred during the High Holiday period, when across Canada ten synagogues were attacked in September alone. In November, extensive criticism of Israel in the media following the release of the Goldstone Report probably served as a trigger for another spike in hate crimes against Jews.

In addition, conspiracy theories circulating on the Internet at the height of the H1N1 swine flu scare and accusing Jews of deliberately creating the virus, may well have encouraged anti-Jewish outbursts. As in other countries, in most cases the ethnic origin of the perpetrators remained unclear. However, in 2009 the League reported 97 cases where the perpetrator self-identified as being of Arab origin, up more than three-fold from the 31 cases in 2008, and more than four-fold from the 24 cases in 2007. In a survey of Canadian Jews, Islamic organizations were identified by respondents as being a major threat to the safety of Jews in Canada. This impression was probably based on incident reports, particularly from college campuses.

Findings from the survey also revealed that about 90 percent of Jews in Canada feared a rise in anti-Jewish hatred. Cases of antisemitism reported on university campuses rose by 80.2 percent, from 76 in 2008 to 137 in 2009. Moreover, the number of incidents on campus has increased almost four-fold since 2006, when only 36 were reported. The most serious manifestations, including violence, occurred at York University. This escalation demonstrates intensified activity on the part of extreme anti-Israel, mainly Muslim and radical left, groups, as clearly shown by the well-organized Apartheid Week at Canadian universities. Calls of "Death to the Jews" are often heard during anti-Israel campus and street rallies. In Ottawa, a blog containing antisemitic content threatened a university Jewish studies center: "We need to identify the Zionist Kikes and their handmaiden. Time to draw up a list, time is soon." On a day-to-day basis, many students report concealing their Jewish identity and avoiding participation in classroom discussions, in order to avoid negative interactions both there and elsewhere on campus, where threats and intimidation are reported with increasing regularity. The abovementioned survey also

indicated that almost half of Canadian Jewish families contemplating higher education for their high school age children were “a lot more concerned” than they were five years ago. It should be noted that Conservative and Liberal politicians in Canada have condemned Israel Apartheid Week for being such a hatefest that Jewish students “fear for their safety on campus.”

The continuing upward trend, from 200 incidents in 2000 to 1,264 in 2009, prompted parliamentarians from all parties to convene a Canadian Parliamentary Coalition to Combat Antisemitism (CPCCA), and to decide to hold a formal inquiry.

LATIN AMERICA

Operation Cast Lead triggered a wave of antisemitic manifestations in Latin America. Muslims and radical leftists were particularly active in organizing anti-Israel demonstrations in Venezuela, Chile, Argentina, Brazil, Nicaragua and Mexico (see [General Analysis 2008/9](#) and [Country Reports 2008/9](#)).

Venezuela

Since 2006 the Jewish community in Venezuela has been feeling an increase in antisemitism emanating from the government and its supporters (see [ASW 2008/9](#)). The months of January and February 2009 were marked by particular aggressiveness on the part of circles close to the government and of Chavez himself, whose declarations against the State of Israel were extremely offensive. On January 30, 15 persons desecrated and vandalized the Mariperez synagogue in Caracas. On February 26, the Beit Shmuel synagogue in Caracas was attacked; the perpetrators of these incidents remain unknown.

During this period Chavez expelled the Israeli ambassador and urged the Jewish community of Venezuela, “which speaks so much about the Holocaust,” to condemn the State of Israel. His call was repeated by foreign affairs minister Nicolas Maduro, during a visit to a mosque in Caracas, and by various pro-government publications, such as *Aporrea*. On January 20, for example, an article in *Aporrea* titled: “How to Help Palestinians against the Artificial State of Israel,” by Emilio Silva, a professor from the Universidad Bolivariana, advocated boycotting the local Jewish community. Silva also claimed that the Jews were “doing to the Palestinians what the Nazis did to them in the past.”

The intensity of anti-Israel agitation, coupled with antisemitic messages, both explicit and implicit, declined gradually after the war. However, accusations of Jewish community backing of Israeli policy continued and pro-government circles demanded that it declare support for the delegitimation of Zionism.

The impact of this antisemitic agitation became evident on June 16, when some one hundred students, professors and staff from the Bolivarian University of Venezuela in Caracas marched to the National Assembly in order to demand a law regulating the country's universities. Although their cause was unrelated to Israel and the Jews, when the marchers passed the Tiferet Israel synagogue they painted anti-Israel and antisemitic slogans on its walls, such as "Zionists, get out of our country," "You are usurers, you should pay for the economic crisis," "Fascists, get out of Venezuela" and "Down with Zionism." The walls were covered completely with swastikas, some equated with the Star of David.

Demonization of Israel and particularly its portrayal as a Nazi state are principal motifs in anti-Zionist incitement. On March 8, for example, the pro-government newspaper *Vea* claimed that Zionists were "the voice of destructive global imperialism" and "they copy the methods [of the Nazis] and go even further in murder and massacre, killing thousands of people [Palestinian] men, woman, children, innocent people... the Zionists are the new Nazis of these times." Similarly, the newspaper maintained on May 28 that "the catastrophic events of the Holocaust... were used by the Zionists as a pretext to justify their crimes against defenseless people. The term Holocaust was stolen by the Jews in order to give it the connotation of a Jewish holocaust.... The Holocaust was a Nazi crime against [all] the European people. Zionism used the crimes committed by Nazi Germany against Ashkenazi Jews to justify the genocide of the Palestinian people."

Colombia and Honduras were accused of being the "new Israel on the continent" because of their "pro-Americanism." Chavez, in his weekly broadcast to the nation on the TV program "Alo presidente" (July 2), claimed that Honduras was like Israel, which employed violence against the Palestinians every time it sought the backing of the US. Similarly, on July 27, he said in the interview program "Dando y Dando" (Giving and Giving), on Venezuelan National Television (VTV): "The Honduras crisis is not solved, so they [the US] are building a base in Colombia in order to create a kind of Israel in South America, and from Colombia they carry out their aggression against Ecuador."

Argentina

A total of 428 antisemitic incidents were documented by the DAIA, the umbrella organization of Argentina's Jewish community, compared with 302 in 2008. Of these, 253 events occurred in January and February under the impact of Israel's operation in Gaza. The war prompted groups from the Muslim and Arab communities, and from the extreme left and extreme right, to demonstrate hatred toward Israel and the Jewish community. Most of the incidents reported were

anonymous email threats and wall graffiti. During rallies in Buenos Aires and elsewhere, slogans such as “Jews assassins” were chanted. Much graffiti in Buenos Aires and other cities equated Israel with Nazi Germany and accused Israel of committing genocide.

Between March and December 2009, the numbers diminished significantly. The involvement of Arabs, Muslims and the extreme left declined while that of the extreme right increased. Nevertheless, some of the most severe manifestations occurred in these months. An event organized by the City of Buenos Aires commemorating the 61st anniversary of the State of Israel in April was violently interrupted by about 20 hooded youths. There were several desecrations of Jewish cemeteries. On December 22, 27 graves in the Jewish cemetery in San Luis were defaced with swastikas and Nazi slogans, such as “Nazism will return,” “Damn race,” “Long live Hitler,” “Jews out of San Luis” and “Dirty Jews.” The local police were investigating the attack, which was described by the president of the local branch of the DAIA as very alarming. On December 28, a protest was held in the San Luis cemetery against the desecration. In addition to local representatives of the DAIA and members of the Jewish community, the event was attended by members of Congress, government ministers and the vice governor of San Luis. According to Saadia Bentolila, president of the local DAIA, the desecration might be linked to the fact that the previous day the bishop of San Luis had participated for the first time in a Hanukah festivity.

Brazil

As in other Latin American countries during and in the aftermath of the Gaza operation, in Brazil, too, there was a considerable increase in antisemitic manifestations (see [ASW 2008/9](#)). Thereafter, the wave decreased.

The official visit of Iranian president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad to Brazil provoked some opposition from Brazilian politicians. Ahmadinejad met with president Luis da Silva and during his participation in a session of the Senate, congressman Alvaro Dias, from the Socialist Democratic Brazilian Party (PSDB-PR), which is part of the government coalition, said: “It is a great mistake to receive with honor dictators such as the president of Iran... there is no pragmatism that can justify receiving a man who denies the Holocaust and wants to destroy the State of Israel.” Congressman Marcelo Itagiba from the same party held a placard saying: “Holocaust never again.” With him was Ben Abraham, president of the survivors of the Nazis association in Brazil .

While the activities of the radical anti-Zionist left diminished somewhat after the end of the Gaza operation, as in Argentina, the extreme right remained active. On May 18, the police

confiscated more than 300 items of Nazi paraphernalia during a raid in five cities of the state of Rio Grande do Sul in an operation to arrest members of neo-Nazi groups. The material included photos, DVDs, books, knives, clothes with swastikas, and three homemade bombs which were to have been set off at least two synagogues in the city of Porto Alegre, according to police inspector Paulo Cesar Jardim. The extremists were planning to attack Jews and gays.

AUSTRALIA

During 2009 the central database of the Jewish community received 845 reports of assault, vandalism, harassment, intimidation, hate mail, offensive, abusive or threatening telephone calls, emails, graffiti, leaflets, posters and faxes. This was more than twice the average over the previous 19 years (the period national records have been kept) and almost 10 percent higher than the previous worst year, 2008. Of this total, however, 591 reports related to receipt of emails. Incidents of vandalism or assault were 12 percent below the average and the second lowest rate in 12 years. Further, there were no serious incidents such as arson of synagogues or assault leading to hospitalization. The number of reports of individuals being subject to verbal abuse while walking to or from synagogue or while on synagogue premises, however, was the second highest on record.

Sections of the Islamic community, the Arab Australian community and the radical left openly supported the overtly antisemitic Hamas, both in its attacks on Israel and in internecine Palestinian struggles (where, for the left, the PLO represented the West-leaning establishment). Most of the rallies in December and January were openly pro-Hamas,. In addition, the pro-Hamas demonstrators were reinforced by supporters of Hizballah.

Although the many small groups that comprise the Australian far left often make declarations critical of racism in all its forms, demonization of Israel is a common thread and the extremes of language used to condemn Zionism and Israel serve to promote a mythology of a powerful and evil Jewish “internationalism,” that is almost indistinguishable from the rhetoric of the far right. It should be noted that most of the groups in this sector are ambiguous, if not internally contradictory, on questions of Jews and Middle East politics, but the publication of articles promoting the concept of “Zionism” as an “international conspiracy” and of Jews as Nazis is undoubtedly unacceptable. At an anti-Israel rally in Melbourne (January 4, 2009), for example, placards with slogans such as “Chosen dirty people of the earth,” were not treated as problematic by most participants.

In May, Australians for Palestine hosted a public performance in Melbourne of the play *Seven Jewish Children*, which was widely criticized for promoting anti-Jewish tropes, while their

website published articles with comments such as, “Just like the Poles and Jews who found ways through tunnels and barbed wire to circumvent the Nazi plan to starve 400,000 people walled up in the Warsaw Ghetto, these Palestinians too are finding ways to bring succor to their people” (June 30).

Overall, however there is little evidence to support the contention that there was a sustained or substantial growth in antisemitism in Australia in 2009. As noted, the increase in numbers of incidents was attributable to a large volume of reports of abusive and offensive emails, mostly concentrated in the early part of the year. The demonization of Israel and its equation with Nazi Germany was confined to relatively small circles of extremist groups. It appeared predominantly in talkback sections of print and electronic media rather than in other forums for political debate. When such charges were made they were countered, even within the Islamic community. Nativist political movements and neo-Nazi fringe groups of the far right gained no traction in electoral politics or in public debate. The virulently anti-Israel line was espoused mainly by the radical left and by fundamentally anti-Jewish segments of the Protestant churches. Most mainstream Australian media outlets provide platforms for the expression of a wide range of views. More extreme and intellectually indefensible items, which in past years may not have reached publication or broadcast, can now be published online, some on sites with an institutional relationship to the public broadcaster the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) or the main newspaper publishers News Limited and Fairfax. A recurrent theme on these sites was the analogy between Israel and Nazi Germany. Other anti-Israel slanders, such as the allegation that Israel practices apartheid or that Israeli officials are war criminals, may emanate from some extremist organizations but they rarely reach mainstream audiences.

Australia has a culturally diverse society with a high proportion of first-generation immigrants and close to half the population having one or both parents born in another country. Despite efforts by far right-wing groups to portray immigration from non-Anglosphere societies as socially deleterious, the largest and most comprehensive survey of attitudes to cultural diversity, released in June 2009, found that only 6.5 percent of respondents declared themselves opposed to multiculturalism. Perhaps uniquely, Jews have not only been part of the dominant, mainstream community since the earliest days of European settlement (in 1788) but the two first Australian born governors general, the most prominent military personality, many well-regarded politicians and other public personas have been Jewish. This has led to a situation where proponents of antisemitism could be represented as seeking to revise rather than protect the established historic social narrative. Notably, almost all active advocacy of antisemitism as public policy has been imported – first by English migrants not accustomed to a society imbued with a

multicultural and multi-religious ethos, then by European immigrants, particularly from eastern and southern Europe who imported quasi-Christian or local cultural antisemitism themes, and more recently by those from Arab and Islamic-majority countries, where anti-Jewish theories and rhetoric were the societal norm. At present, this latter group is a disproportionate source of anti-Jewish rhetoric and propaganda, although it is far from being the cause of the majority of antisemitic incidents in Australia.

SOUTH AFRICA

Probably more so than in most other countries, antisemitic activity in South Africa is overwhelmingly generated by anger over the Middle East situation. Without this factor, antisemitism levels would be negligible. The unrest in the Middle East, and specifically in December 2008/January 2009 the three-week Gaza war, was a direct trigger for the number of antisemitic incidents recorded in 2009 reaching the 100-mark for the first time. Fully two-thirds of incidents occurred in the first two months of the year (similarly, the high 2006 total was a result of that year's Lebanon war).

What became very apparent in South Africa in 2009 was that the greater Jewish community was increasingly being subjected to a broad array of threats, whether economic, legal or security-related, because of its support for Israel. By continuing to stand up for Israel, the Jewish communal leadership was regularly denigrated in the public domain, sometimes to the extent of moves to silence pro-Israel and pro-Jewish voices altogether. The Jewish establishment was further depicted as being the equivalent of those ultra-conservative whites who fought to uphold the apartheid system, a parallel that is extremely damaging to the Jewish image and self-image in South African society.

As noted, the total number of antisemitic incidents logged in South Africa in 2009 was exactly 100, exceeding the previous high of 83 recorded in 2006. That antisemitism is on the rise in South Africa is indicated by the fact that in the 2001–5 period the average annual total was 30, whereas in the next four years, it more than doubled, to 75. However it should be noted that despite the tensions generated by Operation Cast Lead, there were only three cases of antisemitic assault in South Africa during 2009, all of a fairly minor nature, while acts of vandalism went no further than tearing down posters and hacking into Jewish websites.

It was the often threatening nature of public rhetoric that generated the most concern. Particularly culpable in this regard was Bongani Masuku, international relations secretary for the two-million member Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU). Masuku stated explicitly on several occasions that COSATU intended causing harm to Jews who continued to

support Israel. Speaking at Wits University campus in March, for example, he stated that anyone who did not “support equality and dignity... must face the consequences even if it means that we will do something that may cause what is regarded as harm,” and that COSATU members would make the lives of such people “hell.” Masuku was subsequently found guilty of inflammatory hate speech by the South African Human Rights Commission, following a complaint from the South African Jewish Board of Deputies (SAJBD).

Local Muslim radio stations regularly broadcast aggressive and inflammatory statements, accusing local Jewry of “complicity in the Zionist brutality” and threatening to target them (for example, “Let the Jews take note that if this incessant killing carries on you will be fair game in South Africa and everywhere in the world”).

In January, an e-mail campaign calling on South Africans to boycott Jewish-owned businesses was launched. The unsigned message claimed that “most SA Jews” support Israel’s attacks on Gaza and suggested that “as consumers we can avoid supporting businesses affiliated to those who believe incendiary-bombing helpless children is justified.” It named well-known chains with so-called Jewish connections, including Pick n Pay, Woolworths, Foschini, Nando’s and Discovery Health. The campaign occurred in parallel with calls for a boycott and picket protests outside supermarkets and shops stocking Israeli products, on Muslim radio stations.

Statements made by deputy foreign minister Fatima Hajaig’s at a Lenasia (Johannesburg) protest rally on 14 January generated international media coverage. This was a rare instance in South Africa of overt antisemitism being expressed by a member of the government. Hajaig’s incendiary address (she had long been noted for the extremity of her anti-Israel vitriol) included the following statement: “They in fact control [America], no matter which government comes in to power, whether Republican or Democratic, whether Barack Obama or George Bush. The control of America, just like the control of most western countries, is in the hands of Jewish money and if Jewish money controls their country then you cannot expect anything else.”

The SAJBD lodged an official complaint of hate speech against Hajaig with the SA Human Rights Commission. On February 5, immediately after the matter was discussed at a cabinet meeting followed by a meeting with president Kgalema Motlanthe, Hajaig apologised “unreservedly and unequivocally” and unconditionally withdrew her remarks. Hajaig was the only minister appointed under Motlanthe not to be reappointed to the cabinet of the new president Jacob Zuma after the April 22 elections.

ARAB COUNTRIES

With the end of Operation Cast Lead on January 17, 2009, the rate of virulently antisemitic and anti-Zionist manifestations in the Arab and Muslim world declined ([ASW 2008/9](#)). This proved once again that despite continuing antisemitic incitement in the Arab media, and especially in Islamist mouthpieces, the level fluctuates in accordance with political developments, such as former prime minister Sharon's visit to the Temple Mount, or military confrontations between Israelis and Palestinians. Moreover, despite continuity in the discourse of the mainstream and Islamist media, each confrontation seems to create its own terminology and brings certain motifs to the fore. In the wake of the Second Lebanon War in July 2006, the equation between Zionism and Nazism, and inversion of the Holocaust and usage of its metaphors to describe Israel's deeds, were very conspicuous in placards in demonstrations, articles and caricatures ([General Analysis 2006](#)). During the war in Gaza these themes were developed, with Israeli leaders demonized as war criminals and calls to the international community to try them at the International Criminal Court. Reiterated throughout the year and particularly on the occasion of the first anniversary of the war in December, they were reinforced by the [report of the UN fact finding commission headed by Richard Goldstone](#), submitted in September to the Human Rights Council in Geneva

"Gaza will likely be seen as a turning point when Israeli propaganda lost its power to mystify, silence and intimidate as it has for so long. Even the Nazi Holocaust, long deployed by Zionists to silence Israel's critics, is becoming a liability; once unimaginable comparisons are now routinely heard," wrote 'Ali Abunimah on the electronic Intifada site on January 19. Abunimah marveled at the likening of Israel's actions in Gaza to the "Nazi massacres" and of Gaza as "a giant concentration camp" in the worldwide discourse. Zionism, "an ideology of racial supremacy, extremism and hate," he asserted, "is a dying project" and would face ever greater isolation like the defunct apartheid regime in South Africa. Many of the articles used the Arabic term *muhraqa*, or even transliterated the word "holocaust" into Arabic to define the war in Gaza.

Only Israel, which launched a war of extermination in Gaza, "can grant the Holocaust its true meaning," wrote Mahmud Haydar in an article titled "The Holocaust in Inversion," in the Saudi *al-Watan* on January 1. Similarly, "it is a holocaust but the roles have changed," explained Rasim al-Madhun in the Lebanese daily *al-Mustaqbal* on January 11. The Israelis, he continued, drew "moral 'justification'" from the Nazi Holocaust against the Jews during WWII for all their "bloody history in Palestine," yet the Holocaust was being repeated by the Jews themselves.

For the Palestinians, who have lived through the tragedy of the Gaza invasion, stated Ayman El-Amir in *al-Ahram Weekly*, January 15, "Israel will forever be the implacable enemy

that came out of the Warsaw Ghetto and transferred it to the Arab world.” Husayn al-Shibakshi in the Saudi London-based daily *al-Sharq al-Awsat*, January 7, accused Israel, “a state built on the ruins of the Jewish Holocaust,” of suffering from a psychological complex that drives its policy. However, he said, it appears that it “will not rest until it kills more Arabs and Palestinians than the six million Jews who were killed by the Nazis in Europe.” Writing on the traits of the “Gaza holocaust,” Samir Jabur explained in the London-based *al-Quds al-'Arabi* on January 22, that “the barbaric deeds perpetrated by the Zionist military machine” shattered the myth of Israel “as the only democratic state in the Middle East” and proved that it was the only “Nazi, racist state” in the region. Hitler would not have been able to invent the tools used by Israel to threaten another people with “a bigger holocaust,” wrote Ihab Zubiyan in Jordan’s *al-Ghadd*, January 13. Yasin al-Hajj in another Saudi London-based daily, *al-Hayat*, January 4, saw a direct link between the Holocaust and the Balfour Declaration, since both sought a “final solution” to the Jewish problem in Europe. He concluded that the Palestinian people were today’s international victim, and hence the moral yardstick of the world.

Already during the war Israel was accused by Palestinians, Arabs and Europeans of violating international law and criticized for employing disproportionate power against Palestinian civilians. The Palestinian Authority planned to seek the prosecution of Israel’s leaders for war crimes in the international courts. Palestinian minister of justice ‘Ali Kashan raised the issue during a meeting with the chief prosecutor of the International Criminal Court in January. Isma’il Haniyya, prime minister of the Hamas administration in Gaza, called on al-Jazira, January 18, for international teams to investigate so-called Israeli war crimes and appointed a committee to document IDF deeds during the war in order to provide evidence for prosecuting Israel (Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center Bulletin, January 27). After the war, the press, too, demanded that Israelis be brought to justice. “A Time for Trial,” read the title of an article in *al-Ahram Weekly*, January 22. Israelis, it said, should be prosecuted for war crimes and other violations, since “international law not only establishes state responsibility but individual responsibility, too.” Similarly, Bassem Ahmed maintained that “if Israel is not effectively sanctioned for its Gaza holocaust, the whole world will stand complicit by omission.” ‘Abdallah al-Asha’al, on the Islamist site al-Ikhwanonline, February 4, and Bayar al-Khuri, in the Lebanese daily *al-Akhbar*, February 11, as well as others, invoked the Nuremberg trials to emphasize the similarity of the situation in Gaza with the Holocaust, and wondered about the silence of the West in the face of “massacres of the Palestinian people.” The Spanish government, in particular, was criticized for revoking a law under which Israeli leaders could be prosecuted. For many years international Jewish organizations had pursued Nazi and fascist war criminals and brought them

to trial with the help of European governments, claimed an editorial in *al-Quds al-'Arabi*, January 31, and Israeli criminals “who committed crimes against humanity” should be treated similarly. A caricature published in *al-Quds al-'Arabi* and *al-Ghadd* on January 7, also made this comparison. It featured prime minister Ehud Olmert, defense minister Ehud Barak and foreign minister Tzipi Livni standing trial in front of a Third Reich banner, as “the new Nazis” and claiming that “Israel has the Reich to defend itself!”

The Goldstone Report and its endorsement in mid-October by the Human Rights Council in Geneva strengthened the accusation against Israel of “war crimes.” Hamas considered the report a victory, and Khalid Mash'al expressed his hope that it was the beginning of “obtaining justice” for the Palestinians and “exposing Israel’s ugly face,” and that Israeli political and military leaders would be brought to trial (Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center Bulletin, October 18). The Hamas newspaper *Felesteen*, October 18, published a caricature depicting a hand coming out of a tomb and making the “V” sign; the headstone commemorated “the victims of the Israeli aggression against Gaza,” while the title read “Human Rights [Council] endorses the Goldstone Report.” Iran, too, praised the report, which seemed to reinforce its efforts to delegitimize the State of Israel. Foreign minister Manouchehr Mottaki declared that the report contained “clear evidence of war crimes and crimes against humanity committed by the Zionist regime,” and that he was awaiting the conviction of its “criminals” in an international court of justice. But not only Islamists rejoiced in the decision to adopt the report. Hasan Abu Nimah, former permanent representative of Jordan at the UN, also agreed in *Jordan Times* and on the electronic Intifada site, October 21, that “Goldstone marks another breach in the wall of Israeli impunity that is slowly but surely crumbling. It is [only] a matter of time before Israel faces the consequences of its crimes.” Similarly, Fahd al-Fanik in Jordan’s *al-Ra'y*, October 22, concluded that it is “an opportune moment to deliver painful blows to ensure that Israel’s war criminals do not escape justice.”

The Goldstone Report was perceived not only as proof of Israel’s misconduct toward the Palestinians but as an endorsement of the equation of the war in Gaza with the Holocaust. This was evident in the commentaries marking the first anniversary of the war, which sought to delegitimize the state. “A Year to the Holocaust [*muhraqa*]” was a recurring title of articles in Syrian and Jordanian papers, in particular (see for instance *al-Thawra*, December 25, *al-Ba'th*, *al-Dustur*, December 28). “How should we commemorate the memory of the aggression in Gaza?” asked Zakariya Ibrahim al-Sinwar in *Felesteen*, December 30. The Zionists commemorate the Holocaust in various ways, building numerous Internet sites in different languages, with images, videos and documents. “Can we do that?” he wondered.

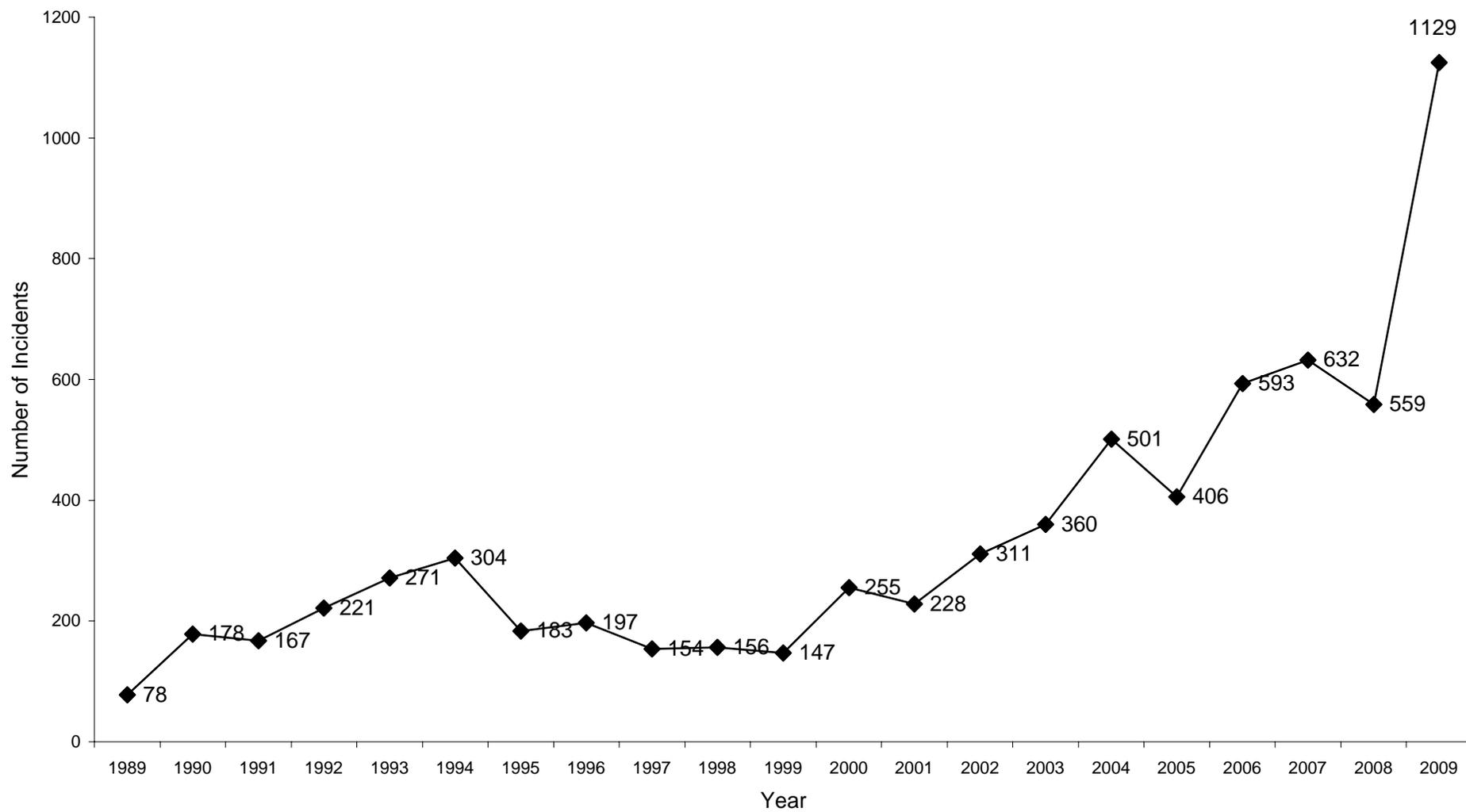
The war has become known internationally as “the big Gaza massacre,” wrote Egyptian writer Mustafa al-Fiqqi in *al-Hayat* and in the Palestinian *al-Quds*, December 22 and 23, respectively. Israel, which “pursues the whole world for the ‘first international Holocaust’ crime,” and acts “without a historical right, moral support or political justification should not escape trial,” he deemed. Misun Yusuf in Syria’s *al-Watan*, December 27, quoted the Palestinian health minister, who accused Israel of using cancerous and poisonous agents in its ammunition to harm fertility and contaminate fetuses, after failing to confront “the resistance generation.” Saleh al-Naami, in *al-Ahram Weekly*, December 24, cited reports allegedly confirming that the soil in Gaza contained “carcinogens and toxins as a result of Israel’s use of internationally prohibited weapons,” which are highly dangerous to unborn children. Citing Israeli sources, such as post-Zionist political scientist Oren Yiftahel, he maintained that Israeli behavior in Gaza “was an extension of Zionist policy that believes in the annihilation of the Palestinian people and erasure of their history and existence.”

Expressing pride in the steadfastness of the Palestinian people in Gaza, ‘Ali Abunimah, on the electronic Intifada, December 27, was encouraged by the “palpable” shift in public opinion, “as Israel’s own actions transform it into a pariah,” and by the convergence of western and Palestinian and Muslim forces “in the global Palestinian-led campaign of boycott, divestment and sanctions modeled on the successful struggle against South African apartheid in the 1980s.”

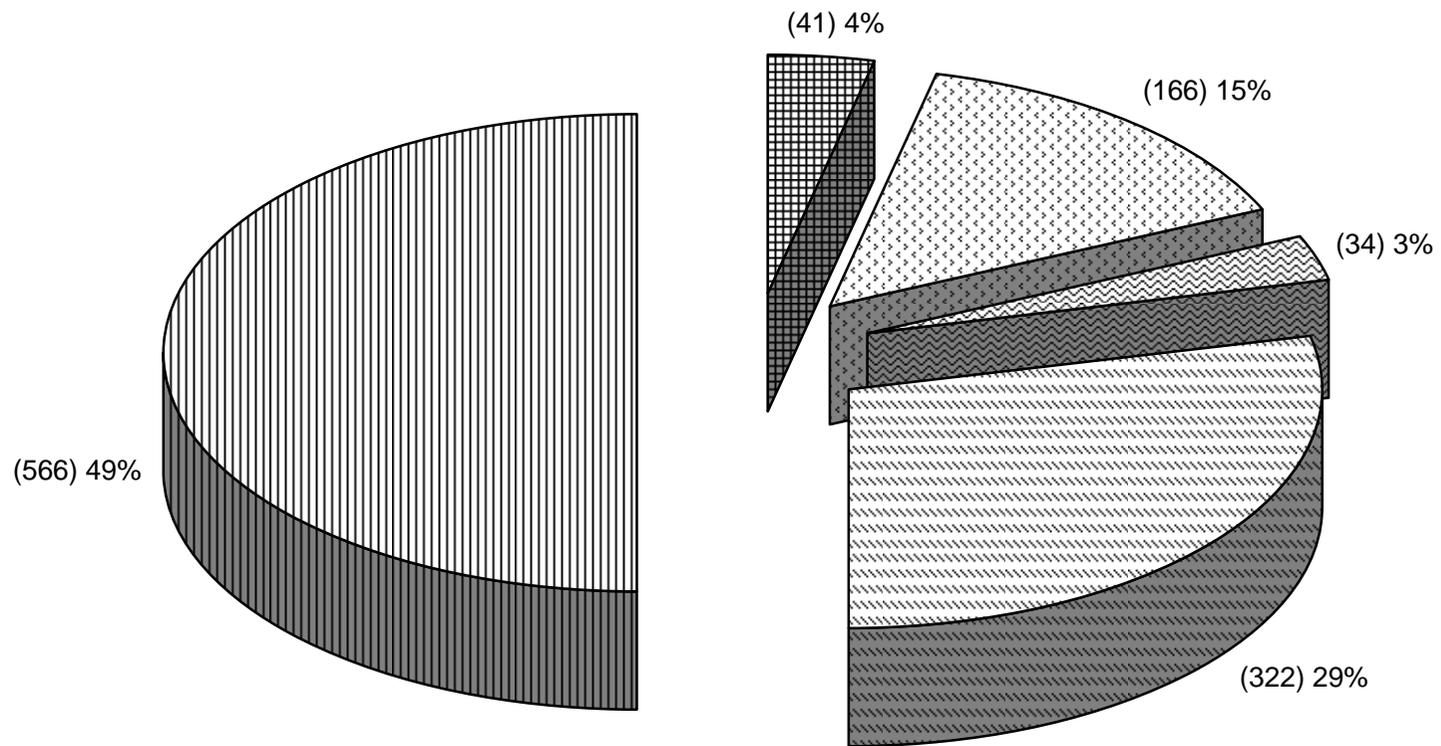
APPENDICES

The graphs in this section refer to acts of violence and vandalism perpetrated against Jewish individuals and Jewish private and community property worldwide during 2009. The figures are based on the database of the Stephen Roth Institute and reports of the Coordination Forum for Countering Antisemitism. It should be stressed that the graphs reflect only major violent acts (such as arson, weapon attacks, weaponless attacks, harassment, and vandalism or desecration).

Antisemitism - Major Violent Manifestations Worldwide 1989-2009

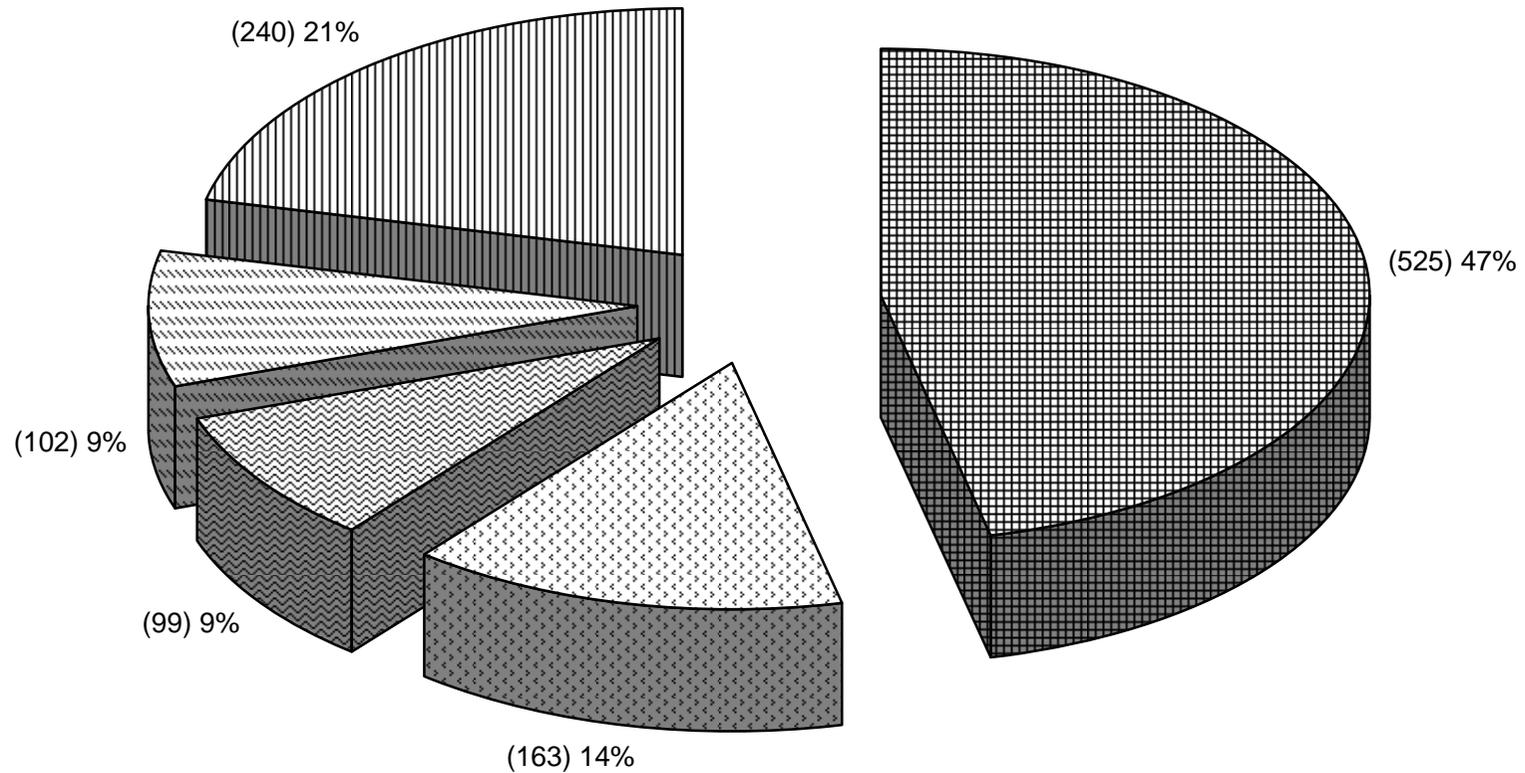


Major Violent Manifestations Worldwide in 2009 - Breakdown by Modus Operandi



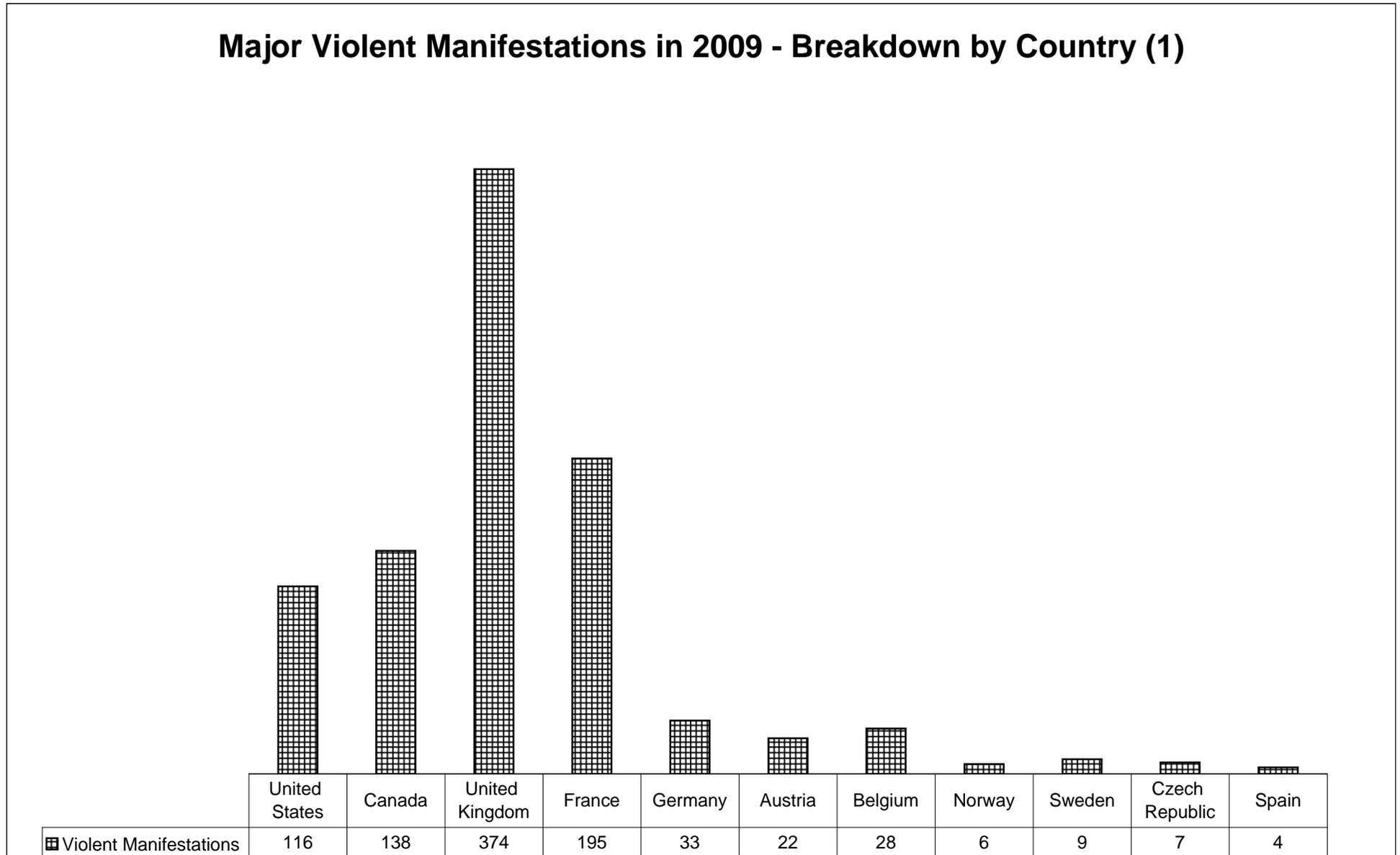
▣ Weapons ▣ Weaponless Violence ▣ Arson ▣ Threats ▣ Vandalism

Major Violent Manifestations Worldwide in 2009 - Breakdown by Target

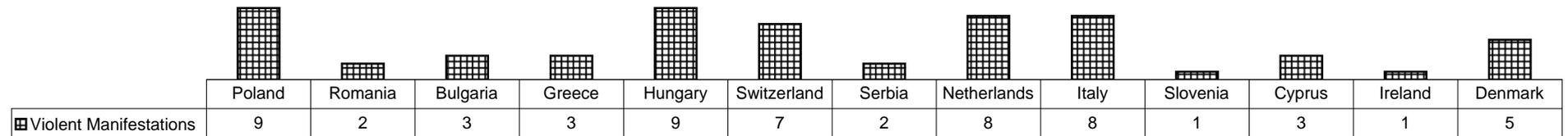


■ Persons ■ Synagogues ■ Schools & Community Centers ■ Cemeteries & Memorials ■ Private Property

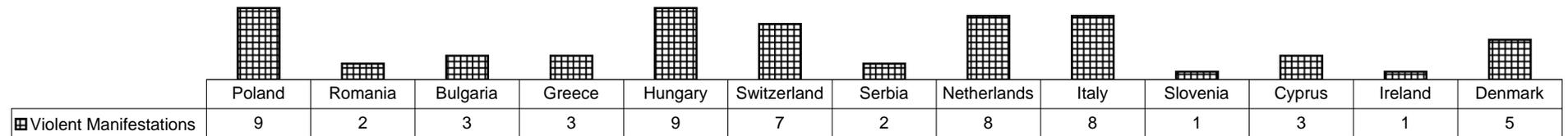
Major Violent Manifestations in 2009 - Breakdown by Country (1)



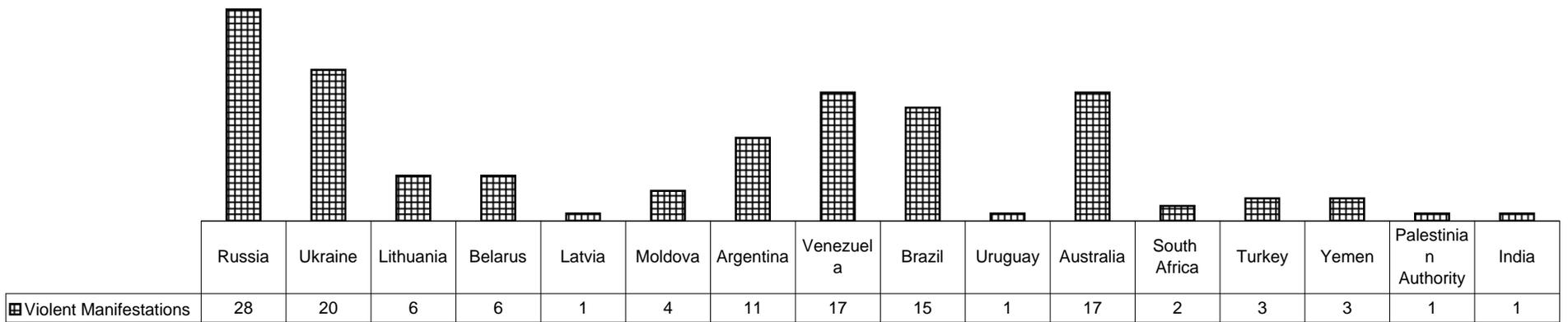
Major Violent Manifestations in 2009 - Breakdown by Country (2)



Major Violent Manifestations in 2009 - Breakdown by Country (2)



Major Violent Manifestations in 2009 - Breakdown by Country (3)



בעקבות מבצע "עופרת יצוקה" – האנטישמיות והשוואה בלב השיח הציבורי הבינלאומי בשנת 2009.

השנה שחלפה מאז החל מבצע "עופרת יצוקה" הייתה הגרועה ביותר מאז החל המעקב אחרי אירועים אנטישמיים לפני שני עשורים הן מבחינת מספרם של האירועים האלימים הבולטים, והן מבחינת האווירה העוינת שיצרו בעולם הפגנות רבות משתתפים וביטויים מילוליים וחזותיים שכוונו כלפי יהודים וכלפי מדינת ישראל. שטף החומר שהגיע למכון שלנו היה כה מתמיד ונמרץ, עד שהשכיח את הירידה שחלה באירועים ובביטויים אלה בשנת 2008 בהשוואה לקודמתה. עוצמתו ואופיו של הגל שהחל בינואר 2009 העידו על התארגנות מוקדמת של רדיקלים מן השמאל ובייחוד מקרב המהגרים המוסלמים, שתוצאתה הייתה מתקפה מכוונת, המשתמשת בכלים אנטישמיים כדי ליצור דה-לגיטימציה של ישראל ושל יהודים כישות אחת.

בשנת 2009 רשמנו וניתחנו, בזהירות מרבית, 1129 אירועים אלימים המהווים עלייה של למעלה מ-100% בהשוואה לשנת 2008 שבה נרשמו 559 אירועים כאלה. פרט להם נרשמו עוד מאות רבות של איומים בכתב ובע"פ, עלבונות, גרפיטי והפגנות שנישאו בהן שלטים וסיסמאות בעלי תוכן אנטישמי מובהק, וכמה מהן גלשו למעשי אלימות. אין באפשרותנו לנקוב במספר מדויק של אלה: מדיניות המכון היא לרשום מקרים המעידים בברור על תוכן וכוונה אנטישמיים, ולפיכך לא כללנו מאות רבות של גילויים אנטישמיים, מילוליים ואלימים, שכוונו כלפי יהודים ורכושם אך אי אפשר היה לקבוע כי נגרמו מתוך מניע אנטישמי. כמו כן יש לזכור כי יהודים רבים אינם מגישים תלונות למשטרה או למוסדות הקהילה וגם לא לגופי מעקב, משום חשש שינקמו בהם על כך ומשום שהם מטילים ספק בתוצאות. לפיכך נראה שמספר המקרים, האלימים והמילוליים, גדול בהרבה מן המספרים המוצגים כאן.

אין ספק שיש להבחין בין הביטויים האלימים של האנטישמיות לבין אלה המילוליים, אך בה בעת אפשר לראות כיצד הם מזינים זה את זה ומעודדים את עליית הרף זה אצל זה. הצתת בית כנסת יכולה לבוא, למשל, לאחר שאיומים נכתבו על קירותיו, והתקפה פיזית על יהודים יכולה לקרות בעקבות הפגנה מתלהמת במיוחד.

לפי קני המידה שקבענו ועל פיהם אנו פועלים לאורך שנים, והמידע שאספנו לאחרונה, העלייה הגדולה ביותר באירועים אלימים בשנת 2009 נרשמה בבריטניה: 374 לעומת 112 ב-2008; בצרפת נרשמו 195 אירועים אלימים בהשוואה ל-50 ב-2008; בקנדה נרשמו 138 לעומת 13 (!); ובארה"ב – 116 בהשוואה ל-98. בגרמניה, שלגביה אין לנו עדיין נתונים סופיים, תיתכן עלייה מתונה במספרם של כל סוגי האירועים, לעומת ירידה משמעותית בפעילות אלימה כלפי יהודים. ברוסיה ובאוקראינה נרשמה ירידה ניכרת, מ-40 ו-38 ל-28 ו-20, בהתאמה. ברוב המכריע של הארצות האחרות המספרים נעים בין 1 ל-30, אך גם הכפלה או השלשה של מספר נמוך עלולות להצביע על מגמה, אם כי יש לבחון זאת לאורך כמה שנים. מדובר למשל ב-6 מקרים ב-2009 לעומת 1 בשנה הקודמת בנורווגיה, ב-15 לעומת 0 בברזיל, ו-22 בהשוואה ל-0 באוסטריה (ליתר פירוט ראו נא את הנספחים). בבריטניה רשמה מערכת המעקב הוותיקה של הקהילה היהודית פי שלושה אירועים מכל הסוגים מאז 1999, ובקנדה נרשמו ב-2009 פי חמישה יותר אירועים כאלה מאשר בתחילת העשור.

ניתן לטעון שהעלייה במספרים משקפת גם שיפור במעקב שמבצעות המשטרה והקהילות היהודיות בארצות בעלות מסורת של דמוקרטיה מערבית, שבהן אזרחים יהודים וארגוניהם פועלים יד ביד עם הרשויות. ברוב הארצות האלה מתגוררות קהילות מוסלמיות גדולות, שבהן מתבלטות קבוצות של הנהגה רדיקלית צעירה המפגינה יכולת גבוהה לרכז סביבה אנשים, לגייס כספים למטרותיה ולהפיץ תעמולה. קבוצות שמאל רדיקלי, שרבות מביניהן פעילות בקמפוסים של האוניברסיטאות, מבטאות אנטי-ציונות חריפה ספוגה בביטויים אנטישמיים מובהקים, ומזדהות מאד עם העניין הפלשתינאי. שיתוף פעולה זה, בין רדיקלים מן השמאל המקומי ומן הקהילות המוסלמיות, מקורו גם במניעים נוספים המשותפים להם, כמו אנטי-אמריקניות באירופה ואנטי-גלובליזציה בכלל, והתהדקות מהווה מקור לדאגה עמוקה. כמו כן, בתי כנסת, בתי ספר ומרכזים קהילתיים ממוגנים היום טוב יותר ולפיכך קרוב למחצית מן הפגיעות באנשים וכששית מן הפגיעות ברכוש פרטי נעשות באופן ספוראדי וספונטאני, הרחק מן המוסדות היהודיים. למרות שהימין הקיצוני ממשיך להוות גורם מרכזי בפעילות האנטישמית, ברוב המקרים שאירעו בעיקר במערב אירופה בשנת 2009 ומבצעהם זוהו, המבצעים היו ממוצא ערבי או מוסלמי.

מבצע "עופרת יצוקה" שהחל סמוך לינואר 2009 הביא בעקבותיו גל של פעילות אנטישמית שלא יהיה מוגזם לומר ששטף את העולם. מגמה זו ירדה בפברואר ובמרץ, אך מספרם של האירועים האנטישמיים נשאר גבוה מזה שהיה לפני המבצע. למעשה מספרם של הגילויים האנטישמיים המתועדים היא בקו עלייה מאז ראשית שנות ה-90, וזה גם בשנים שבהן לא התרחש אירוע משמעותי במזרח התיכון. לפיכך יש לתלות את מקורותיה של העלייה בגילויים האנטישמיים למיניהם בשנת 2009 בגורמים עמוקים יותר.

ראשית, רמתה הגבוהה של האלימות שמקורה במניעים גזעניים בעולם בכלל משפיעה גם על רמתה של הפעילות האנטישמית בפרט, משום שלעתים אותם אנשים וקבוצות, במיוחד מן הימין הקיצוני, תוקפים מי שנראים להם כזרים, ויהודים בכללם. שנית, בעולם שיצרו תרבות הרשת ואמצעי התקשורת, בו האדם מוצף בחומר ובמידע, הביטויים הבוטים והקיצוניים ביותר הם אלה התופסים את העין והאוזן. דוגמה מובהקת לכך הוא antisemitism 2.0, רשת של "אנטישמיות חברתית", שכל משתתף יכול לתרום לה. שלישית, מגמות אלה מלוות בבורות ובשטחיות אצל בני נוער של היום, שדיעת העובדות הפוליטיות וההיסטוריות רחוקה מהם מאד. ציונות, ישראל ויהודים הם עבור רבים מהם סמל קליט של רוע, וההשתתפות בהפגנות משמשת להם ככלי ביטוי. רביעית, וזהו הגורם המכריע, זרם של תעמולה מוסלמית, הממומנת היטב על ידי רווחי הנפט, מלבה אווירה זו ומנצל אותה, ורשויות החוק נמנעות לעיתים מלעמוד בפניה מחמת חופש הביטוי ו"התקינות הפוליטית". זוהי מתקפה מכוונת ומתוכננת, המשתמשת בכל כלי הביטוי הקיימים היום ובנימות אנטישמיות ברורות, והיא מנוהלת כאמור על ידי אותם רדיקלים מן השמאל ומקרב הקהילות המוסלמיות, כדי ליצור הסכמה ציבורית על דה-לגיטימציה של ישראל כמדינה יהודית ושל היהודים התומכים בה. עם זאת יש לציין שההיערכות הישראלית-יהודית לקראת ועידת דרבן השנייה שהתכנסה בז'נבה באפריל 2009 הצליחה לעורר התנגדות לדה-לגיטימציה בוטה זו, שאיראן הובילה אותה, וכמה מדינות החרימו את הוועידה או פרשו ממנה.

ואולם הגורם המכריע שמאחורי הביטויים האנטישמיים הוא השימוש המתמיד בשואה ככלי פוליטי: ההשוואה בין ישראלים/ציונים/יהודים תומכי ישראל נעשתה למעשה לאקסיומה בהפגנות ובביטויים הנשמעים בחוגים מדיניים ובאוניברסיטאות (במיוחד

השימוש בשואה ככלי פוליטי מתבטא גם באופנים נוספים שבלטו ב-2009: ביולי אימץ הפרלמנט האירופי את הצהרת פראג, שקבעה את ה-23 באוגוסט כיום זיכרון לכל הקורבנות של כל המשטרים הפאשיסטיים והטוטאליטריים. ההצהרה, שמקורה בצרכים של המדינות הפוסט-קומוניסטיות, חותרת תחת ייחודיותם של השואה ושל האידיאולוגיה הנאצית והפשעים שבוצעו בשמה, ומשקפת עייפות מן התדמית העצמית של העם היהודי כקורבן נצחי ואולטימטיבי. יתרה מזו: בארצות ספורות, כשבדיה וספרד למשל, השמיעו גורמים רשמיים קריאה שלא לציין את יום הזיכרון הבינלאומי השנתי לשואה שקבע האו"ם ב-27 בינואר, עד שישראל תשנה את מדיניותה.

גם ההאשמה הנתעבת שפורסמה לראשונה בעיתונות בשבדיה, לפיה חיילי צה"ל קוצרים כביכול אברים מגופותיהם של פלשתינאים, עוררה את זיכרון העבר. ההאשמה פשטה במהירות, למרות שהכתב הודה שאין לה בסיס במציאות, מצאה את דרכה לעולם המוסלמי והערבי, והופצה, כפי שדווח במרץ 2010, גם על ידי חבר בוועדה השייכת לאו"ם. עלילה זו, המזכירה את עלילות הדם של ימי הביניים, העלתה שוב השוואה לתקופת הנאצים: חיילים ישראליים משתמשים ללא רחמים בגופותיהם של אויביהם לצרכים רפואיים.

ולסיום: מעבר למספרים, לדוגמאות ולניתוחים, ניתן לומר שהביטויים וההאשמות שנשמעו בשנת 2009 בזירה הבינלאומית לא היו כמותם בעבר. הדמוניזציה המתמדת של המדינה היהודית ותומכיה מציגה אותם כסמל של כל רוע וכמקור מרכזי לצרותיו של העולם ומובילה, במתכוון ושלא במתכוון, למחשבה שביטולה של מדינת ישראל כמדינה יהודית יביא גאולה לעולם.

הפקולטה למדעי הרוח ע"ש לסטר וסאלי אנטין

המכון לחקר האנטישמיות והגזענות בימינו

ע"ש סטפן רוט

אנטישמיות בעולם 2009

נתונים והערכות

(טיוטה)

הקונגרס היהודי האירופי

