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The Stephen Roth Institute for the Study of
Contemporary Antisemitism and Racism

Antisemitism Worldwide
2008/9



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The Stephen Roth Institute for the Study of Contemporary Antisemitism and Racism is located in the Gilman Building, Tel Aviv University. Its extensive database monitors antisemitism and racism throughout the world, serving researchers and community, governmental and organizational workers in Israel and abroad, as well as human rights organizations and groups fighting racism.

The Institute works in cooperation with the European Jewish Congress (EJC), the umbrella organization of Jewish communities in 45 countries across Europe. The EJC was headed during 2008/9 by its re-elected president, Dr. Moshe (Viatcheslav) Kantor. The Coordination Forum for Countering Antisemitism, an Israeli state organization, collaborates with the Institute in data collection.

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PREFACE

The annual publication *Antisemitism Worldwide* presents an analysis of antisemitism and racism around the world. The present volume consists of two parts: a general analysis of the year in review, as well as the beginning of 2009, specifically focusing on reactions to Operation Cast Lead (December 27, 2008–January 18, 2009); and a country-by-country survey, divided according to region, since each part of the world has its own characteristic problems in addition to those common to all countries. The survey provides information on extremist movements, antisemitic activities, attitudes toward the Nazi period and the Holocaust, and the struggle against antisemitism and racism. Countries where there was no evidence of antisemitism in 2008/9, or where it was not reported, are not included. It describes the phenomenon of antisemitism in the various countries without delving into their history, and focuses only on the situation during this period. A series of graphs in the appendices providing statistical data complements the picture for 2008.

Categorization of antisemitic activities sometimes varies from one source to another. Our classification scheme divides these activities into: a) all expressions and modes of propaganda, most notably Holocaust denial, b) violent acts without the use of a weapon, and c) attacks using violent means. It should be emphasized that the survey is based on reported cases only, and that the data presented in the appendices include only violent attacks intended to cause loss of life and cases of actual damage to property. In fact, many more hundreds of minor incidents, such as graffiti, slogans and swastikas painted on walls, as well as personal insults and harassment, were also registered by Jewish communities and individuals. In many cases, it is hard to assess whether the injury or damage was motivated by antisemitism, or was a straightforward criminal act or an act of hooliganism, since the identity of the perpetrators is often difficult to establish.

It should be noted that the variety of data and materials coming from different areas entails a diversified approach on the part of the authors and editors, thus ruling out complete uniformity in the presentation of the contents, especially with regard to names and references.

Israeli, Jewish and non-Jewish organizations, research institutes and individuals supply the relevant data and material, useful contacts, opinions and assessments, and above all the motivation, for combating antisemitism and racism. Thus, the annual review represents an

international effort in this regard. We conclude by expressing our deepest gratitude to all the organizations and individuals who have taken part in this undertaking.

GENERAL ANALYSIS

OVERVIEW

The year 2008 witnessed a continuation of the trend of relative stability in numbers of antisemitic violence, with a small percentage decrease compared to 2007 (except for Germany, Belgium, Canada, Switzerland, and the US, where numbers increased). The economic crisis which began in the summer triggered anti-Jewish reactions, most notably in eastern Europe and the Arab world, but not violent activities (see below for a detailed analysis of 2008). We stress that despite a decrease in certain years (such as 2005 and 2008), the level of the overall number of incidents in the first decade of the new century has never returned to that of the 1990s (see graphs below).

January 2009 proved to be a striking exception. With the start of Operation Cast Lead in the Gaza Strip on December 27, a wave of antisemitic manifestations swept the world. These included both violent activities (arson attacks on synagogues, assaults on Jewish individuals, desecration of cemeteries, and vandalizing of Jewish property and Holocaust monuments) and verbal and visual expressions (insults, threats, gruesome caricatures, and stormy demonstrations). Although most of these activities featured traditional antisemitic motifs, their use was more extreme, intensive, and vociferous than was hitherto known. Muslim activists and organizations worldwide, and especially the radicals among them, showed a high degree of mobilization and were the moving force behind the demonstrations, together with leftist and human rights activists, and to a lesser degree extreme right circles. Jews and former Israelis also took part in some of the rallies, mostly in the US.

It should be emphasized that it is not yet possible to determine exact numbers of violent incidents during the first months of 2009, but Jewish communities and monitoring organizations have pointed to a sharp rise in all types of antisemitic activities. According to the CST in the UK, for instance, 250 incidents of all types were counted in January, compared to 35 during the same month in 2008. Based on the data we have received to date, we estimate that there were close to 1000 manifestations of antisemitism of all types in January world wide. The violent cases (including use of arms, assaults on persons, and desecrations) numbered close to 90, three times that of January 2008. February and March witnessed a sharp decline in violent incidents, reaching figures that were in fact lower than the equivalent months of 2008, but the virulent verbal and visual expressions and the atmosphere of anti-Jewish and anti-Israel rage have not yet subsided. A similar pattern followed the 2006 Second

Lebanon War – an immediate sharp rise and then a steep decline, albeit to a lower degree.

The leitmotif of antisemitic expressions during the last months of 2008 and beginning of 2009 was not classic stereotyping of the Jews and Israelis as Jews, but abuse of the Holocaust, first and foremost as a political tool against Israel: the equation of Israelis/Zionists/Jewish supporters of Israel with Nazis became a recurring theme in demonstrations and individual expressions, especially in the West, which appeared to have abandoned completely post-World War II taboos on denigrating the Holocaust. This outright equation – Magen David=swastika – which symbolizes ultimate evil, cruelty, and disregard for human values, is intended to underline the notion that if Nazism, the monster of the modern era, has no right to exist, then the Jewish state and its supporters, too, should be eliminated.

The key questions that might be asked are: why did this wave of antisemitism erupt with such immediacy, as if activists had been waiting for the opportunity to set their plans in motion, and why has the comparison to the Nazis, sometimes accompanied in demonstrations by slogans such as "Death to the Jews" and "Jews to the gas," caught on with such zeal?

First, despite the growing interest in the Holocaust among non-Jews in many countries, especially in the West, its burdensome, lingering memory generates fatigue of the Jewish people because of what seems to be their constant harping on their image as the ultimate victim, without regard for the many other tragedies that have happened since in the world. The equation of Israel, a Jewish state, together with its Jewish supporters, with Nazis and Nazism, transfers the yoke from Europe's neck to that of Israel and the Jews. The resulting sense of relief, especially in Europe, the focal point of World War II, is reflected in the massive demonstrations and banners carried by the participants.

An additional reason is widespread ignorance among the younger generations concerning the Holocaust and its uniqueness, despite recent attempts to teach it in a number of countries. Their vague knowledge about mass killings that took place during World War II makes the Holocaust seem similar to many other massacres that have happened since, and paves the way for an easy acceptance of the equation with Nazis. Ignorance, too, about the history of Zionism as a Jewish national movement and about the Middle East conflict is no less prevalent, and it facilitates an unqualified comparison to the Holocaust rather than to other military, territorial, or even religious struggles.

About 20 million Muslims – some estimates are higher – live today in central and western Europe, and the equation of Jews with Nazis serves

the radicals among them both as a political tool against the existence of Israel and the weakening of its supporters, and as an additional instrument for the building of a strong, cohesive Muslim identity around a common goal. Protests against the analogy or against the calls to kill Jews were scarce and weak. Western democratic Europe is torn between its liberal values – including political correctness – and anxiety that the growing Muslim presence in every sphere of life will get out of hand. The younger generations, especially on the left, which have been growing up with this reality, have been seeking direction, preferably an anti-establishment ideal. They march through the streets with a keffiyah around their necks, identifying with Hamas and other terrorist organizations and sympathizing with the Palestinians as the contemporary underdogs, with complete disregard for other conflicts and tragedies, such as Sudan and Darfur, or Tibet and Chechnya.

Classic Christian antisemitic motifs, too, have been effectively used in Muslim propaganda, two in particular. One is the ritual murder libel: continuing the myth of Jesus' crucifixion by the Jews, it alleges that Christian children are slaughtered before the Jewish Passover in order to use their blood for baking matzot. Today the sight of Palestinian children – sometimes portrayed in a crucifixion pose – in Arab TV series, in caricatures and photos, and at times even in mainstream newspapers, combined with the scenes of casualties during the Gaza operation, resonates, leaving a vivid, enduring impression. This, in turn, has led to a second motif, that of the ugly, greedy, bloodthirsty old Orthodox Israeli or Diaspora Jew (most Jews today are secular) that is reminiscent of Nazi portrayals. Moreover, cruelty and lust for vengeance are seen as ingrained, even genetically coded, in Jews since Biblical times in accordance with the instructions of a vengeful god that appeared in the Land of Cana'an. Thus, alleged Jewish characteristics are projected onto Israelis, both as individuals and especially as a public, to the extent that any decent person feels obliged to combat this evil.

Demonstrators and others who express outrage against Israelis and Jews protest when they are accused of antisemitism, claiming they are anti-Zionist. It should be stressed that according to the international Working Definition of Antisemitism, agreed upon by 25 EU countries, (and de facto, by many of the 56 OSCE member countries), anti-Israelism (a discrimination in itself) becomes antisemitism when it uses symbols and images associated with classical antisemitism, when it denies the Jewish people their right to self-determination or applies double standards by requiring of it behavior not expected or demanded of any other democratic nation, when it holds Jews collectively responsible for steps taken by the State of Israel, and – most importantly in the 2009

case – when it draws comparisons between contemporary Israeli policy and that of the Nazis.

There is little doubt, then, that the anti-Zionism of 2009, which is being expressed with such frightening hatred and intensity, serves as a focal point for various parties and is essentially antisemitic; moreover, its expression is different in nature from other protests against other states in conflict. Finally, an analysis of the early 2009 wave of antisemitic manifestations shows that it was the result of a fusion of Muslim interests, youth and activists searching for a banner, and traditional antisemitism.

REACTIONS TO OPERATION CAST LEAD – A COROLLARY OF PREVALENT ANTISEMITISM

INTRODUCTION

In many respects, the year 2008 witnessed a continuation of antisemitic trends that characterized the previous year. Although there were no major trigger events prior to the outbreak of the war on Gaza in December 2008, the number of antisemitic manifestations did not fall significantly in most western countries, and in some, such as Switzerland, Germany, and Canada, it even increased. The negative representation of Israel and Zionism persisted in Europe, North America, Latin America, and the Arab world, and the rhetoric employed by anti-Israel groups against Israeli policies frequently slid into antisemitism. In contrast to the international and state commitment to combating antisemitism and teaching the Holocaust, antisemitic perceptions still prevail and the exploitation of Holocaust metaphors and symbols of the Nazi era has been rising steadily. A study of the Washington-based Pew Research Center published in September revealed that 25 percent of citizens of Germany, 20 percent in France, and 46 percent in Spain had unfavorable views of Jews. Anti-Zionist campaigners, especially in the UK and the US, continued their efforts to boycott Israeli academics and products. Antisemitism in Muslim communities outside the Middle East was becoming more ideological, and strategic alliances between Islamist and far left groups flourished.

These trends were particularly conspicuous in connection with the sixtieth anniversary of Israel's independence, which was marked at various events in Europe and in the US, and with memorial days such as Kristallnacht, November 9, in Germany and the anniversary of the wartime fascist state in March in Slovakia. The global economic crisis, which began in the US and spilled over to the rest of the world, provoked accusations against the Jews and brought to the surface old antisemitic notions of Jewish control of the world economy, Jewish greed, and Jewish ambitions to destroy and immiserate the world, as allegedly laid down in *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*. While, in the West, such canards were mainly confined to radicals, fringe groups, and bloggers, they appeared in the public discourse in east European countries and in the Arab world, where taboos against such motifs do not exist. While the absence in the western mainstream media of such allegations might be seen as the result of a more positive view of Jews and their contribution to society in general, it was perhaps more likely

due to the existing taboos on crude antisemitism, still clearly connected to the horrifying history of European Jewry. Nonetheless, many prohibitions in the discourse on Israel, Zionism, and the Holocaust have been broken; moreover, western intellectual circles and the media do not consider anti-Zionist perceptions and instrumentalization of the Holocaust in their political analogies as deriving from antisemitism but rather from a moral standpoint. An illustration of this distorted approach was British film director Ken Loach's response to the rise of antisemitism in the wake of the Gaza operation, which he defined as "a cold-blooded massacre." Speaking in Brussels in mid-March 2009 at the launch of the Russell Tribunal on Palestine, a symbolic citizens' initiative that claims to reaffirm the importance of international law in conflict resolution, he said that "unless we take a stand... we are complicit."

The pattern of continuity was abruptly broken toward the end of the year and extending into early 2009 with the outbreak of the war against Hamas in the Gaza Strip. Israel's Operation Cast Lead (December 27-January 17) generated strong anti-Israel emotions and antisemitic manifestations throughout the world. These were expressed in demonstrations which drew tens of thousands of people to the streets, in the media and on the net, leading to a rise in the number of incidents targeting local Jewish communities. Despite the similarities in reactions to previous events, such as the second intifada at the end of September 2000 and the Second Lebanon War in July-August 2006, they appeared to exceed them in quantity and ferocity. This could not have happened without the phenomenon of rising antisemitism and the climate of opinion that has prevailed in recent years, particularly in Europe, which has allowed the delegitimization of the Jewish state, its representation as a Nazi state, and the politicization of the Holocaust.

The most common themes in the vilification of Israel in reactions to the Gaza war, manifested in protesters' banners, graffiti, cartoons, and articles in newspapers and blogs, were based on Holocaust terminology, mainly, transposing the role of the Jews as victims into perpetrators. Accusing the Jews of behaving like Nazis might be the result of conscious antisemitism, thoughtless polemics or confused rhetoric, but regardless of its motivation it should be considered antisemitism, since it denigrates the reality of the Holocaust and distorts historical perceptions of this unique historic event.

Reactions to Operation Cast Lead seemed to provide a focus for anti-Israel campaigners who had been frustrated in recent years by aborted attempts to institute academic and other boycotts of Israel, and to legitimize antisemitic perceptions that some groups harbored but rarely publicized. One of the complex outcomes of the war, explained Israeli

scholar Shlomo Avineri in *Ha'aretz*, March 18, 2009, was the gap in the way it was perceived by the majority of the public in Israel and the way it was regarded by large segments of the western world. Despite some reservations about its conduct, most Israelis believed it was a just war; the democratic world, however, focused on the serious harm caused to civilians and the widespread destruction sown. "These critical differences of opinion stem from the structural divide between participants in the war and those who watched it from a distance." Other causes were "the harsh images – a consequence of the firepower Israel used, as magnified by the media – as well as disinformation and, undoubtedly, plain old antisemitism," he concluded.

ANTISEMITIC MANIFESTATIONS PRIOR TO THE WAR ON GAZA

Western Europe

Some west European countries reported a slight decrease in antisemitic manifestations in 2008. The Community Security Trust (CST) in the UK recorded 541 antisemitic incidents, the third highest total since it began monitoring antisemitism in 1984, but a drop of 4 percent from the 561 incidents in 2007. There was also a 25 percent fall in the number of violent incidents, from 117 in 2007 to 88 in 2008. The overwhelming majority consisted of minor assaults and harassment. In the category of damage and desecration of Jewish communal property, there was a rise of 14 percent, from 65 incidents in 2007 to 74 in 2008, but expressions of abusive behavior fell by 7 percent, from 336 in 2007 to 314. The number of direct threats to people and property increased from 24 in 2007 to 28 in 2008. There was a massive increase in the distribution of antisemitic literature – 95 percent – from 19 counts in 2007 to 37 in 2008, largely due to the actions of a single individual. A disturbing phenomenon was the fifty incidents in all categories directed at Jewish schools or schoolchildren: of these 33 were assaults on schoolchildren journeying to or from school, while 9 took place on Jewish school premises. Of the overall figure, 236 were recorded in London, 125 in Greater Manchester and 180 in over 50 other locations, largely representing the demographic distribution of the Jewish community.

In France, there was little change in the total of antisemitic incidents: 474 compared to 473 in 2007. A rise was reported in the French-speaking part of Switzerland where the figure almost tripled in 2008: 96 compared to 38 in 2007. In Germany there was an overall increase of about 15 percent, to 1089, according to a first draft of the Ministry of Interior report.

No longer limited to radical fringe groups of west European society, the words "Jew" and "Zionist" have become common insults in schoolyards, mostly directed at non-Jews. A report issued by the Moses-Mendelssohn Center in Berlin in June noted that from the year 2000 there was an increase in antisemitism and anti-Jewish prejudice throughout Europe. This included criticism of Israel and use of the word "Jew" as an insult. Almost 40 percent of Europeans believed Jews should stop viewing themselves as victims of the Holocaust; 39 percent of Italians were of the opinion that Jews had a special attitude toward money; 39 percent of Europeans compared Israel's attitude toward Arabs to South Africa's former apartheid policy; and 50 percent of Swiss considered that Israel was waging a war of extermination against the Palestinians.

In other findings of surveys and analyses published in 2008, an increase in antisemitic attitudes was observed among the growing immigrant populations in western Europe, especially among Muslim youth. This phenomenon often appears to have been nurtured not only by religious influences or the Middle East conflict but by an extreme right-wing worldview. Noting that far right opinions have slipped into the mainstream of German society, a study published on June 18 by the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung suggests that immigrant and economically disadvantaged communities are likely to hold anti-democratic views since "fear and the threat of exclusion are fertile ground for right-wing extremist views." Another report, entitled "Brown Danger in Germany," issued in May by Angelika Beer, delegate of the German Green (Bundnis 90/Die Grünen) party to the European Parliament, exposed the threat of right-wing extremism to German society and pointed to the spread of right-wing networks linking extreme right-wing groups and parties all over Europe.

Antisemitic attacks did not necessarily correlate with domestic or external trigger events. Synagogues, cemeteries and Holocaust memorials were desecrated in 2008 on a weekly, sometimes even daily basis, in many countries of Europe. Vandalism of cemeteries and memorial sites are aimed at degrading and insulting the Jewish community. This was explicitly brought home in a video showing a young man urinating on a Holocaust memorial on the Greek Aegean island of Rhodes. The video, which was posted on YouTube by a group of supposedly neo-Nazi students from the Venetokleio high school of Rhodes, one of the most prestigious educational institutions in Greece, was removed in August.

Jewish children increasingly fear being attacked on their way to school or synagogue and need special protection in most European capitals. A newly observed (old) phenomenon is the use of dogs to

intimidate Jewish children and adults. On January 15, five Jewish teenagers on their way home from school in central Berlin were chased by a dog unleashed by four men who shouted antisemitic slurs at them. In London (June 9), a Jewish man was set upon by dogs, called a "f---g Jew," and told he was going to be killed, while in Antwerp (September 13), two men used dogs to frighten Jewish children outside the Belz synagogue.

Antisemitic terms related to the Holocaust, such as "Zyklon B," the gas that symbolizes more than anything else the extermination of millions of Jews, and "6 million lies," were used repeatedly. On international Holocaust Memorial Day, January 27, the text "Hooray, hooray, long live Zyklon B" (*Hoezee, hoezee, lang leve Zyklon B*) was shown on big video screens in a Dutch football stadium during a soccer match between Vitesse and Ajax. On June 20, a canister with the label "Zyklon B" was hung outside the Malmö synagogue, and on the night of November 16-17, a pig's head and a sheet daubed with the slogan "6 million lies" were found at the gate to the Jewish cemetery of Gotha, Germany.

In a non-partisan resolution passed in November, acknowledging the 70th anniversary of the Kristallnacht pogrom on November 9, 1938, the German parliament pledged to fight antisemitism and to encourage the revival of Jewish life. It urged the government to "continue its intensive political support and protection of Jewish life in Germany in all forms," expand teaching in schools on Jewish life and Israel and set up a group of experts who would issue regular reports on antisemitism. But the occasion showed once again the discrepancy between official policies condemning antisemitism and vowing to secure Jewish life and culture, and the reality in the street, with the anniversary being chosen as an antisemitic action day by militants of the growing extreme right throughout Europe. Violent incidents were reported in November from all over Europe; they were clearly initiated by neo-Nazis who, increasingly, have been using symbols and slogans of the Nazi era. This was demonstrated, for example, in a flyer found in a kosher store in Basel, Switzerland, which read "Swiss defend yourselves – don't buy from Jews" (*Schweizer wehrt Euch – Kauft nicht bei Juden*). Neo-Nazis were also suspected of perpetrating desecrations of Jewish cemeteries and memorials on November 8-9, in Germany, in Demmin (10 headstones overturned), Holzminden (historical grave destroyed), Wetter (25 headstones overturned), and Waren, among others.

The United States

The year 2008 saw a remarkable resurgence in the US of the traditional antisemitic canard that Jews should not be trusted as citizens of the countries in which they live. This charge usually claims that American Jews are more loyal to the State of Israel than to their own country, and that they willingly sacrifice the best interests of the United States in favor of their own or those of Israel. An extreme formulation of this allegation was a meeting organized by the small Muslim Jamaat al-Muslimeen (JAM), which took place in Baltimore, Maryland, in August, with the participation of antisemites of various ideological stripes. JAM leader Kaukab Siddique, an associate professor of English at Lincoln University in Pennsylvania, declared that the US was "under the grip of a Jewish Zionist power structure," which included a "Zionist-controlled media." Holocaust denier Mark Weber, director of the Institute for Historical Review, said that the US was pressured into the Iraq war by a "Jewish cabal," which was now seeking to embroil the US in a similar war with Iran (see below). Other participants in the conference were former US Attorney General Ramsey Clark, and antisemitic ideologues Mark Glenn, Hesham Tillawi, Charles E. Carlson, and Maulana Ehsanullah (ADL, Far-Right and Muslim Extremists Gather in Baltimore, August 2008).

More troubling, however, was the increasing mainstream prominence given in recent years to allegations of Jewish disloyalty, due in large part to the "Israel lobby" writings of University of Chicago Professor John Mearsheimer and Harvard University Professor Stephen Walt. Most anti-Israel activists now actively promote these academics' belief that Zionists and Jews have influenced the US, especially in its Middle East policy, in deleterious ways. Such ideas also crop up with increasing frequency on op-ed pages and in mainstream magazines.

A noteworthy variant of the disloyalty charge which appeared in 2008 was the claim that American Jews were attempting to embroil the United States in a war with Iran, ostensibly in order to strengthen Israel's regional power. This allegation was expressed by academics, political commentators, and former government officials, including former CIA analyst Michael Scheuer, former CIA officer Philip Giraldi, former UN Iraq weapons inspector Scott Ritter, journalist Alexander Cockburn, pro-Palestinian activist Mazin Qumsiyeh, and retired sociology professor James Petras. They accuse American Jews and friends of Israel of "sedition and treason," of "espionage and interference in domestic policies," and of "controlling the communications media," another classic antisemitic stereotype (ADL, Manufacturing the Next Big Lie: The 'Israel Lobby,' Jews and Iran, November 2008).

The rhetoric employed by anti-Israel groups frequently slid into antisemitism. In their writings and widespread rallies throughout the year, these groups supported terror and violence against Israelis; depicted the latter as Nazis; claimed that Israel had no right to exist; and described Zionism as an inherently racist ideology.

The year saw the continued decline of US neo-Nazi groups, which have been plagued by infighting and a lack of leadership. White supremacists, for their part, have been attempting to exploit controversial social issues such as immigration, black-on-white crime, and the country's economic crisis to strengthen their groups, increase their appeal to potential recruits, and push their antisemitic themes into mainstream circles. A major focus of white supremacists in 2008 was immigration. Stoking anti-immigration feelings present in both mainstream and extremist circles, they blamed Jews for promoting diversity and multiculturalism and argued that Jews had engineered an open immigration policy in order to diminish the power of white Americans. Anti-immigrant rallies attracted the support of antisemites and neo-Nazis, who claimed that they had done some successful recruiting at these events. However, their efforts to inject antisemitism into the more mainstream anti-immigrant movement have been largely unsuccessful (ADL, *Immigrants Targeted: Extremist Rhetoric Moves into the Mainstream*, 2008).

White supremacists also promoted antisemitism in connection with the US presidential race. They accused both John McCain and Barack Obama of being pawns of American Jews, and alleged that each of the candidates was pursuing goals which, at the behest of Jews, would undermine the culture and security of the United States. In October, former Klansman David Duke warned that both McCain and Obama were "simply in the pockets of the Jewish extremist financial network, the all powerful Jewish Lobbies like AIPAC, and the Jewish-dominated mass media." A typical post on the white supremacist website Stormfront stated, "I don't want McCain or Obama to be the president. They're both New World Order candidates and are on the payroll of the Jews... he Zionist have [sic] set it up where either person will take us further into bondage" (ADL, *Barack Obama Targeted by Extremists on the Internet*, October 2008).

In November, just days after Obama won the presidential election, David Duke convened a conference in Memphis, Tennessee, for fellow extremists to discuss their movements' plans. In a speech to white supremacists in the US, Canada, and Russia, Duke blamed Jewish control of the media and Hollywood for brainwashing white people into

accepting Obama as their president (ADL, David Duke Hosts White Supremacist Conference, November 2008).

Another noteworthy development in the world of white supremacists in 2008 was the censuring of Kevin MacDonald, a tenured antisemitic professor of evolutionary psychology at California State University, Long Beach (CSULB). MacDonald has long argued that antisemitism, including the anti-Jewish hatred exhibited by the Nazis and the perpetrators of the Spanish Inquisition, is a "rational" response to Judaism. He also claims that Jews are attempting to undermine white Americans and destroy the European heritage of the United States. Not surprisingly, MacDonald serves as an ideologue for white supremacists and extremists. In October, CSULB's Academic Senate voted to "firmly and unequivocally disassociate itself from the antisemitic and white ethnocentric views" of MacDonald. The previous month, F. King Alexander, president of CSULB, released a statement saying he considered MacDonald's views "deplorable and reprehensible." Although these statements are not likely to diminish MacDonald's influence on the white supremacist movement, they might marginalize him as a mainstream academic (ADL, Extremism in America, 2008).

The year witnessed the continued maturation of user-generated online content and forums (generally described as "Web 2.0"), where private individuals can interact with one another, form groups and online communities, and share multimedia content. On all such sites antisemitism is present, manifesting itself in both "casual" bigotry of a religious or cultural nature and the more problematic ideological antisemitism exhibited by white supremacists, anti-Israel activists and others. These extreme antisemites not only attempt to appropriate portions of these social networking sites, but often attempt to use them as propaganda vehicles to advance their views or influence and recruit others, especially younger people. Social networking sites also serve as a large mixing bowl where antisemites from a variety of backgrounds and locations can meet, share opinions, and encourage one another.

Equally troubling is the extent to which antisemites of different backgrounds and stripes are exposed to each other's ideas. It is not at all uncommon, for example, to see antisemites of Arab or Muslim background linked to those with right-wing or left-wing ideologies. Antisemites may post essays or information derived from a variety of very different sources, or read and appreciate the same from others. "We receive nothing but propaganda from Zionist media," wrote one conspiracy theorist from Oregon to a Palestinian activist, adding "Your integrity and humanity shine the light of truth into the dark heart of Zionist occupied Amerika [*sic*]."

"It is an honor to have [you] as a friend," a Palestinian-American with the screen name of "Palestine Forever" told "Goyim Pride" in October 2008. "Almost all Muslims now [sic] the truth, especially Muslims in the Middle East...our Quran tells us about the Jews or as they call themselves (Zionists)." Such "friendships" are not uncommon. "Ace" is an openly white supremacist Myspacer from California whose antisemitic profile includes the tag line "Jews can kiss my ass" and whose heroes include Jesus, Hitler, and "all men who stood up against Jews." Among his 100 "friends" are many Palestinian-American activists as well as a number of left-wing conspiracy theorists. Whatever their ideological background or national origin, their common interest is hostility toward Jews.

Canada

In 2008, the League for Human Rights (the League) recorded 1,135 incidents across Canada, a rise of 8.9 percent from 2007. Once again this figure broke previous records since the League began registering incidents in 1982. The findings represent a more than fourfold increase over ten years. The rise is especially significant in light of the absence, until the very end of the year, of the type of trigger events in the Middle East that so commonly contribute to an escalation in antisemitism. It represents a growing trend of anti-Jewish prejudice and bigotry in Canada, which reflects both the pure resilience of antisemitism and the fact that multiculturalism, whether in policy or in practice, does not, in itself, guarantee tolerance and respect.

The fact that 547 incidents, close to half the total in Canada, took place in the last four months of 2008 can be linked to fall-out from the developing economic recession and such high-profile scandals as the Bernard Madoff scam. Historically, antisemitism has increased in this type of climate, as disgruntled citizens seek a scapegoat to blame for their personal difficulties. Canadian opportunists have been just as active as bigots elsewhere in cyberspace linking Jews to the global financial crisis.

Although the war in Gaza did not begin until the final days of 2008, tensions in the Middle East were explicitly present in 211 incidents during 2008, compared to 90 in 2007. Given the undertones of anti-Jewish sentiment in much of the rhetoric against the Jewish state, it is likely that anti-Israel agitators using innuendos, distortions, and falsifications, may have prompted other 2008 incidents that did not have an obvious Middle East link.

This new bigotry often masquerades as anti-Zionism, which purports to be merely legitimate criticism of the State of Israel. In reality, however, activities such as the campus "Israeli Apartheid Week" (IAW),

for example, or the deviously discriminatory stratagems of Sid Ryan, president of Ontario's largest union CUPE Ontario, stray far beyond this type of discourse. Such campaigns set out to delegitimize the Jewish state, deny its right to exist and defend itself, and criminalize its citizens and supporters. The IAW signature poster for 2008, for example, depicted Israel raping "Palestine." In 2009, it depicted the Jewish state collectively in the role of a child killer, with a gunship helicopter targeting a toddler holding a teddy bear, the epitome of the modern-day blood libel. The findings clearly show an ongoing, disproportionate targeting of the Jewish community and its members compared to other ethnic and religious groups in Canada. This is especially significant at a time when the Jewish population is declining in numbers. The Jewish community makes up less than one percent of the total Canadian population, according to the 2006 census released by Statistics Canada.

Incidents took place across the country, in both urban and rural settings.

While in 2007, the League's Audit noted a marked increase in antisemitic activity in rural settings across Canada, this trend was not as significant in 2008. However, there was a significant rise in antisemitism in smaller municipalities in British Columbia and Quebec. Canadian antisemitism continued to reach out to infest a variety of venues, including unions, retail outlets, service industries, and social clubs. It was expressed in face-to-face encounters on campuses and on the street but ever increasingly it has been expressed in text messaging and social networking means such as Facebook. This type of web-based hate was up by 16.4 percent over the 2007 figure.

The 1,135 incidents reported across Canada were broken down into the following categories: harassment, vandalism, and violence. Harassment continued to be the method of choice for hatemongers, with 803 cases in 2008 making up 70.7 percent of the total; the 318 incidents of vandalism constituted 28 percent, an increase of one percent compared to 2007; the 14 cases of violence represented 1.2 percent, a fall of 50 percent. Harassment increased by 14.9 percent over the previous year. The language used in these cases often contained open threats of physical harm: 80 incidents of harassment – 10 percent of all cases in this category – contained such threats.

The ethnic origin of perpetrators was documented only where relevant information was available, generally, in face-to-face encounters where self-identification is sometimes provided by a particularly strident perpetrator. In 2008, there were 31 cases where the perpetrator identified himself as being of Arab origin, up from 24 such cases in 2007. The virulent propaganda being disseminated against the Jewish state by so-

called mainstream Arab/Muslim groups may be seen by some of their constituents as a virtual call to action against Jews in general.

Australia

During 2008, 614 incidents, defined by the Australian Human Rights Commission as "racist violence" against Jewish Australians, were recorded. These included physical assault, vandalism, arson attacks, threatening telephone calls, hate mail, graffiti, leaflets, posters, and abusive and intimidating electronic mail. This was the third highest total on record, well below the 2007 figure and just below the 2002 total. Most of the reports were of threats, rather than physical attacks on individuals or property, but they reveal that hundreds of Jewish individuals and organizations were targeted, some repeatedly, by persons seeking to intimidate or harass them. Over two-thirds of all incidents were emails.

In the Australian media, as well as in other public forums, commentaries, and readers' letters occasionally crossed the line to anti-Jewish slander when they spoke of the alleged strength of "Jewish lobbies" in the US and Australia. The most common theme in contemporary Australian antisemitic rhetoric is that Jews in Australia and/or internationally, individually, and/or collaboratively, exercise power and influence that is disproportionate to that of non-Jews.

"Anti-Jewism," a term coined in 1982 by Irish writer and politician Conor Cruise O'Brien to describe the slur that Israel, representing the heirs of the victims of Nazism, was behaving in a "Nazi" manner, was directed at Israel and at Australian Jews with a disturbing frequency. During periods of high tension in the Middle East, the expression of this view was increasingly tolerated, and even promoted, by sections of the mainstream media. The analogy has currency particularly in far left circles, with some members alleging that civilians who are killed during conflicts involving Israel are victims of a Nazi-like genocide; some right-wingers accuse Jews who support legal recourse for victims of racism, with Nazis who murdered political opponents. The comparison has also been used increasingly by Australian Arab and Muslim critics of Israel. Political analysts in Australia have observed the way in which consistent, inaccurate usage of Holocaust terminology reduces the historic event in a way that can be summarized thus: "If everything is a holocaust, then the Holocaust has no special significance." This phenomenon is disturbing, and can have the result of furthering antisemitic agendas, even if Jews were not part of the thinking of those behind them.

Attempts to delegitimize Israel and Zionism, conducted by public advocates of the Palestinians, included extreme allegations against Israel

and Judaism. In addition, supporters of the former regime of Saddam Husayn in Iraq or the Islamist regime in Iran used whatever opportunities were presented to them to level extremist charges against Israel, Zionism and, on occasion, Jewry. For example, after being quoted by a number of journalists as having said that the antisemitic blood libel was a legitimate part of the Middle East debate, Roland Jabbour of the Australian Arabic Council, claimed in August that, "The false charge of antisemitism by some is used to silence and blackmail those who dare to criticize the Zionist self-righteous and lawless child, the state of Israel. It is designed to frighten those who dare to engage in and encourage honest debate about these important matters... Israel continues its aggression while claiming self-defense: a right usually reserved for the victims of aggression – and the same right Israel denies its own victims."

When Australia's Senate commenced an inquiry in 2008 into academic freedom, Jewish students began to relate some of their negative experiences on campus. These included the introduction into classrooms of extraneous and tendentious material critical of the Jewish community of Australia and/or Israel, disparaging remarks regarding names of students thought to indicate they were Jewish, teaching on Israel which distorted Jewish history and beliefs, and blogs maintained by academics which promoted and hosted extreme anti-Israel and often anti-Jewish material. In most cases, the individuals responsible for creating the atmosphere in which Jewish students were made to feel uncomfortable and victims of discrimination were oriented toward the political left, with a minority from Muslim or Arab backgrounds. Despite anti-racist policies in place on most campuses, there were also reports that perpetrators of overt antisemitic acts were not facing any negative consequences for their activities.

While books promoting terrorism in an overt manner are subject to official censorship, anti-Jewish material can only be dealt with under the various state and territory anti-racism legislation and these laws are generally not well-framed to deal with this type of situation. Despite public criticism, including some from prominent Islamic groups, some Muslim bookshops continued to stock antisemitic material, such as copies of *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*. A paper delivered at the Australian Association of Jewish Studies conference, held in February, claimed that many "modern Muslim Australian youth" hold strong antisemitic views, with the swastika seen as a reminder of "good things," belief in Jewish control of Australian government, and the echoing of Hizballah anti-Jewish chants being typical. The discussions on Islamic and Arabic internet forums and the content of postings to newsgroups also testify to a vigorous anti-Jewish sub-culture.

Central and Eastern Europe

The year 2008 seemed to be one of transition to more active manifestations of antisemitism in central and eastern Europe, as the impact of the Arab-Israeli conflict intensified and the global economic crisis was felt. However, there was no marked change in the level of violence. Desecration of Jewish sites continued, the worst case being the overturning of 130 tombs at the Jewish cemetery in Bucharest in October. The act was immediately condemned by the authorities and the Jewish community. Police inquiries found that it had been carried out by a small group of teenagers who claimed they had wanted to shoot a dramatic scene with a mobile phone camera. Although there appeared to be no antisemitic motive behind the deed, one might ask how it came about that those youngsters found it natural to vandalize Jewish tombs.

The strengthening since 2005 of "right-wing populism," which potentially harbors the seeds of antisemitism, continued to influence the political map of the post-communist space. Right-wing populism, which converges with left-wing populism, is a possible ally of the more extremist, openly nationalist, xenophobic, antisemitic right. While the new populism promotes the "voice of the people" by democratic means, it is anti-liberal, opposing values such as tolerance toward minorities and individual human rights and promoting traditional and religious ones verging on traditional antisemitism. Such views are voiced, for example, by Radio Maryja in Poland. However, with the formation of a more Polish moderate government in November 2007, this tendency has slowed. In Romania, too, the Greater Romania Party (GRP), which promotes antisemitic anti-Israel rhetoric as well as Holocaust denial, suffered a blow in the November 2008 parliamentary elections. The party, led by Corneliu Vadim Tudor, received less than 3.5 percent, failing to pass the electoral threshold of 5 percent. Another nationalist party, the Party of the New Generation, obtained less than 2.7 percent of the vote.

The right wing in central and eastern Europe seems able to re-group and reorganize itself. In Hungary, for example, a new right-wing nationalist paramilitary organization was formed in 2007, the Hungarian Guard, representing several right-wing groups. Legal procedures to disband the organization and ban its activities had not been completed by early 2009. This process has been accompanied by wide-scale debates in the Hungarian liberal media, especially in the daily *Népszabadság*, and the weeklies *168 Óra* and *Elet és Irodalom*. In Hungary, Slovakia, and the Czech Republic right-wing extremists have been focusing more on Roma issues than on the Jews.

While the new realities facing those countries that joined the EU in 2004 (the Baltic republics, Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, and Slovenia) and in 2007 (Romania and Bulgaria) may gradually alter their agendas, including in their attitudes toward antisemitism and related issues, it is still possible to trace some specifically east and central European motifs and trends.

The Holocaust, and the Jewish past and its contemporary revival are continually recalled in the media and in the political-social discourse of these countries. More so than in Western Europe, except perhaps Germany, manifestations of antisemitism are related to the yearly calendar of significant historical events and their commemoration. These represent divisive issues, reflecting cleavages within post-communist societies, with the line running from the center to the right and to the left rather than between extreme right and left. Another emerging meeting point between the two poles is their pro-Arab, pro-Palestinian, pro-Iranian and pro-Muslim positions. Both use expressions such as "Zionist colonialism" and "worldwide Jewish imperialist interests" to describe the forces behind events in the Middle East and the war against terror. However, this new common ground is fragile since the extreme left in the post-communist countries is weak, whereas the extreme right's embrace and defense of Islam is conspicuously artificial.

The area's media continued to focus in 2008 on historical memory relating to World War II and the liberation of the camps, as well as to the postwar Soviet communist takeover. Likewise, right-wing extremists complained of "overemphasis" on the alleged suffering of the Jews and disregard of the "Judeo-communist" terror of the communist period. In most of the former socialist countries of eastern Europe and the Balkans, the behavior of Soviet troops was evoked, often in gruesome detail so as to highlight the end of one type of suffering and the beginning of another. The emergence of the postwar world, as recalled more than sixty years later, is a polarizing issue, with Jewish collective memory stressing the element of liberation and the end of the attempt to annihilate the Jewish nation by the Nazis and their local collaborators, and non-Jewish memory focusing more on attitudes – albeit divergent – toward the communist regime, the postwar plight, Soviet plunder of what remained of local economies and the nature of the postwar trials.

Many of these issues were highlighted in 2008 in the numerous discussions in Poland following the publication in early 2008 of Jan T. Gross's *Fear: Antisemitism in Poland after Auschwitz*. Like his previous book, *Neighbors*, published in 2001 on the 1941 massacre in Jedwabne during the Nazi occupation, Gross' book on the aftermath of the Holocaust generated a heated debate based on his conclusion that after the

Holocaust "a very brutal antisemitism was widespread in Poland." Polish public figures emphasized that Jews were not the only victims of the turbulent postwar years (see "Confronting Poland's Antisemitic Demons," *Time*, January 23, 2008).

The year 2008 also marked the 40th anniversary of the antisemitic and anti-Zionist campaign in Poland, as well as the 40th anniversary of the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia, following which reformist Communists of Jewish origin were denounced by the new hard-line pro-Soviet rulers. In light of the ongoing process of Polish-Jewish rapprochement, the overall tone in Poland was one of regret and apology for the vicious campaign and purges, which drove several thousands of Polish Jews, especially intellectuals, out of the country (for a comprehensive background of the events in Poland in 1968, see Rafal Pankowski, "When 'Zionist' Meant 'Jew': Revisiting the 1968 Events in Poland," in the blog ZWord, February 2008). In their numerous recollections of the 1968 events, Polish intellectuals discussed and admitted the antisemitic policies of the Communists.

ISRAEL'S SIXTIETH ANNIVERSARY

The pledges of heads of states and church officials of west European democracies, on the occasion of Israel's sixtieth anniversary, to stand by Israel and guarantee its secure and prosperous existence, were at odds with the antagonistic, anti-Israel, and often anti-Jewish attitudes manifested in the public discourse. While British PM Gordon Brown, for example, speaking in the Israeli Knesset, promised to fight, together with his European partners, against any attempt to boycott Israeli academia, British university unions intensified their efforts to pass a motion to boycott Israeli universities.

On May 30, delegates of the British University and College Union (UCU) voted in favor of a motion calling for a boycott of Israeli academic institutions, despite legal advice stating that a boycott would be unlawful. Philosophy Professor Tom Hickey, who headed the initiative, said that British lecturers must re-evaluate their ties with Israeli institutions, noting the illegal settlements and the situation in Gaza. David Hirsch, editor of the website Engage, however, claimed a boycott would be institutionally antisemitic since it would have a disproportional impact on Jews, while Israeli Ambassador to the UK Ron Prosor stated that the recurring calls for an academic boycott on Israel were another yet attempt to delegitimize the country. The Palestinian Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel (PACBI) saluted the UCU for its decision.

Although the attempt ultimately failed, in June the UCU adopted Motion 25 promoting the "greylisting" of Ariel College in the West Bank. According to UCU general secretary Sally Hunt, greylisting was a voluntary boycott. Since then many members have resigned in protest against what they consider a racist and discriminatory union.

In Italy and France, book fairs honoring Israel on its anniversary triggered anti-Israel and antisemitic incidents. The decision of the organizers of the Turin book fair, held on May 8-12, to invite Israeli writers as guests of honor resulted in violent protests from Arab intellectuals, led by Egyptian writer and president of the Arab Writers Association Muhammad Salmawi and Islamist scholar Tariq Ramadan. On May 10, 3,000–4,000 people (10,000, according to the organizers) demanded a boycott of Israel. Italian playwright and recipient of the 1997 Nobel Prize for Literature Dario Fo supported the protesters because of what he called "the absence of the Palestinian question during the fair." Similarly, Paris' prestigious annual book fair, March 14-18, which hosted Israeli President Shimon Peres and Israeli writers as guests of honor, was met with strong resistance by Arab writers. Several Arab countries, including Morocco, Algiers, Tunisia, Lebanon, and Saudi Arabia, announced they would shun the event, in response to a call from the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (ISESCO). Tariq Ramadan accused the organizers of a "silent conspiracy" toward "Israel's apartheid policies" (*Le Monde*), whereas Egyptian writer Alaa el-Aswani claimed that it was "a very serious crime" to honor a country "guilty of crimes against humanity" (*Le Figaro*, March 6). However, according to journalist Elif Kayi, not all Muslim intellectuals agreed with Ramadan's position (<http://blog.z-word.com/2008/03/book-fair-war-of-words-rages-on/>). Moroccan writer Tahar ben Jalloun, for example, stated on his homepage that according to the logic of the boycott supporters, he should get rid of books of Israeli authors that he had been reading merely because they had been written by Israelis.

In the US American Arabs and anti-Israel circles coalesced to criticize the founding of Israel and its existence in various events around the country. They focused on the notion that Israel's 60 years of statehood marked the Palestinian catastrophe – the *nakba*. A leading group involved in this activity was Al-Awda, The Palestinian Right to Return Coalition, a grassroots organization that opposes Israel's right to exist and which openly supports terror groups that target Israelis. Al-Awda's Sixth Annual International Convention, labeled a "Nakba commemoration" and held on May 16-18 in Anaheim, California, featured speakers who expressed virulently anti-Israel rhetoric. Al-Awda co-founder Salman Abu Sitta referred to the *nakba* as the "largest,

longest operation of planned ethnic cleansing in history," and to Gaza as "the new Auschwitz." A Jerusalem-based bishop, 'Atallah Hanna, spoke of the need for Palestinian Muslims and Christians to unite against the "one enemy [Zionism]." The convention was endorsed by a wide array of groups, including the New York-based International Action Center (IAC) and the affiliated anti-war ANSWER (Act Now to Stop War and End Racism) coalition. Arguing that all of Israel should be returned to the Palestinians, IAC representative John Parker vowed, "From the river to the sea, we will not stop until all of us are free."

On May 16, a nakba commemorative rally that took place at Dag Hammarskjold Park in New York City featured demonstrators holding signs that read, "Palestine peace not ethnic cleansing" and "Free Palestine from the river to the sea." A banner signed by Al-Awda stated, "Return resistance liberation / by any means necessary." One poster declaring "Zionism is Nazism" showed a drawing of a Star of David equated with a swastika. Demonstrations organized specifically to coincide with Israel's Independence Day were also widespread throughout the US (ADL, The 'Nakba': A Driving Force Behind U.S. Anti-Israel Activity in 2008, June 2008).

The anniversary festivities triggered a wide debate in the Arab media, as they had done a decade before when the State of Israel celebrated its 50th anniversary. Although they marked, as previously, what they perceive as a parallel event – the nakba – the 2008 anniversary in the Palestinian Authority (PA) was a far cry from its observance in 1998. The hopes that accompanied the 50th anniversary of the nakba gave way to despair, reflected in the reportedly few, separate and poorly attended events in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, as well as in the barrage of articles published in Arab and Palestinian papers. Ironically, the day seemed to be noted more in Lebanon, London and San Francisco, as well as in the electronic media. Clearly, the Palestinians were in a much worse situation than they were ten years previously – a society divided and torn between two worldviews. Hence, unlike in 1998, 2008 was not an occasion for self-examination but for a return to old patterns of discourse, in which the onus of past and present predicaments were placed on external forces, and Zionist and Israeli wrongdoings were amplified.

With the exception of PA President Mahmud 'Abbas, no reference was made to the peace process, co-existence or even to a two-state solution. Rather, articles, as well as demonstrators and speakers at rallies, launched scathing attacks on Israel and Zionism, reiterating support for armed struggle and commitment to perseverance (*sumud*) and the right of return (*haqq al-'awda*). Stressing this pledge, the National Committee to

Commemorate the Nakba at 60 stated that "those that expelled us can reject and conspire and deny, but we continue to remain steadfast and resist and resist and resist, and we will continue to resist until we return. For there is no right that is not granted without the sacrifices of struggle, and there is no oppressor that can continue to commit grave injustice for ever."

Generally agreeing with the spirit of this statement and making no attempt to assess the Palestinian situation or its causes, opinion pages of Arab papers focused on discussing Israel's sixtieth anniversary festivities in order to uncover the "skeletons in its closet," and expose it as a racist state doomed to extinction (*ẓawaʿal*). "Does Israel have a future?" was a frequent question, with the answer almost self-evident: "The Zionist entity lacks the basic components of a state"; as a superficial entity relying on foreign aid and external military support, it would always be rejected as a foreign body by its neighbors, wrote Egyptian intellectual Hasan Hanafi, in *al-Ittihad*, May 17, suggesting a return to the one-state solution appearing in the Palestinian National Charter. Several articles attempted to prove that Israel was "a failed state," and that the sixtieth anniversary of the nakba bore the seeds of its annihilation. Despite its military and economic strength, Israel suffered from "existential anxiety" (*qalaq wujudi*), explained Islamist Ibrahim `Allush in *al-Sabil*, May 13; moreover, a growing number of its intellectuals believed the state might "soon implode by force of its contradictions and failures" (Saleh al-Naami in *al-Abram Weekly*, May 15).

Based on Israeli academic Ilan Pappé's book *The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine*, translated in 2008 into Arabic, the Palestinian Mustafa Barghouti in *al-Abram Weekly*, May 15, and Egyptian `Abd al-Wahhab al-Masiri, in *al-Ittihad*, May 17, suggested that the term "ethnic cleansing" was more accurate than "nakba" to describe what had happened and was still happening in Palestine.

Nazi era terminology and Holocaust metaphors were also intertwined in the debate. Palestinian scholar Joseph Massad described the PA leadership as *Judenrein* and Zionist policies as aimed at rendering Palestine *Arabrein*. Palestinians were presented as the victims of victims, while Israel was accused of exploiting the Holocaust in order to rehabilitate its tarnished reputation resulting from its barbaric crimes, or of denying the existence of a victimized people and monopolizing its identity.

Palestinian commentator Hani al-Masri, writing in the Palestinian daily *al-Ayyam*, May 17, accused Israel of successfully instrumentalizing the Holocaust for achieving its goals, whereas Egyptian journalist Ayman al-Amir defined Israel in *al-Abram Weekly*, May 1, as "a racist, belligerent, arrogant, and colonial pariah." While Israel would be showered with

words of admiration by those who helped create it, the Palestinians would be "huddled together in exile or under military occupation, encircled by the Israeli wall of shame that was probably inspired by the Nazi wall that enclosed the Jewish ghetto in Warsaw in 1940," he asserted. While Israel forced every visiting dignitary to include a stop in their schedule at Yad Vashem, it treated the Palestinians like the Nazis did the Jews and other minorities – "subjugat[ion] by destruction." Egyptian director of the Arab Center for Development and Futuristic Research Gamil Mattar explained in *al-Ahram Weekly*, May 22, that one could easily understand why a movement that "insists upon the holocaust [sic] as the moral and ethical foundation of the relationship between all other peoples with the Jewish people, and with Israel in particular," was so adamant to keep alive tales of the future extinction of the state. "If Israel had attained the success commensurate with a 60-year old state it would not have to rely on the historic catastrophe of the holocaust as its *raison d'être*." Zionism, he concluded, had succeeded as a racist, colonialist military venture, but it had failed "to found a stable and secure state, that is to say, a state that can survive and succeed."

Writing of the "Nakba Culture," `Abduh Wazin in *al-Hayat*, May 26, accused Israel of attempting to annihilate the notion of the nakba, while it forcefully pursued any historian who doubted the number of Holocaust victims. The Holocaust and Auschwitz had come to symbolize Nazi barbarism against European Jews, but the Zionist movement knew how to use this tragedy to influence Europe by nurturing a sense of guilt, which it did not feel regarding its own major crime in Palestine, he wrote. Israel had succeeded in exploiting its victim status to carry out "the role of the Nazi butcher against the Palestinian people."

Shaykh Kamal Khatib, deputy leader of the northern Islamic Movement in Israel, also linked the Holocaust to the nakba. In an article published in the Arab-Israeli daily *al-Sinara*, April 18, titled "On the Sixtieth Commemoration of the Nakba: Their Holocaust Our Nakba," he reiterated the claim that the Palestinians "were paying the price" for the Nazi crime, although they had no connection to it. He accused the international community of backing Israel and the "massacres" it had perpetrated and was continuing to perpetrate against them. Khatib described Gaza as a huge concentration camp which Israel was threatening to annihilate, just as the Nazis had done to the Jews in the concentration camps before the gas chambers and after their starvation and humiliation. Despite its horrors, the Holocaust did not erase the Jewish people; would the Jewish holocaust against the Palestinian people be the reason for its extermination, he asked.

ANTISEMITIC MANIFESTATIONS IN THE WAKE OF THE GLOBAL ECONOMIC CRISIS

A survey commissioned and published by the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) in February 2009 among 500 people in Austria, Britain, France, Germany, Hungary, Poland, and Spain found that nearly one-third of Europeans blamed Jews for the global economic meltdown in 2008. Indeed, the worldwide financial crisis triggered a wave of verbal and written antisemitic attacks in east European states and in the Arab media, among others, but had a limited impact in western Europe and Australia. Thus, while traditional metaphors, such as "bankers" and the "East Coast" for describing the "greedy Jew" hardly appeared in the western mainstream media, they were prevalent on the net, especially among radicals, fringe groups, and bloggers.

With the onset of the crisis, antisemites across the ideological spectrum in the United States increased their propagandizing on the classic theme of Jewish control of banks and governments, and alleged that Jews and Zionists were responsible for the economic recession in the country. Antisemitic publications such as *American Free Press* accused Jews of "pillaging" the American people and concluded that Jews "should be treated as the traitors they are." Others blamed the financial crisis on "Zionist robber barons" and called on ordinary Americans to "reclaim their country from rapacious Zionism." Some antisemitic groups tried to connect the financial crisis with another perennial favorite – 9/11 conspiracy theories. The antisemitic website Rense.com, for example, posted an essay alleging that the fiscal crisis and the 9/11 attacks were both part of a vast Jewish conspiracy to control the United States. The essay has since been re-posted on numerous sites across the net.

An original antisemitic conspiracy theory that developed alleged that the Wall Street investment firm Lehman Brothers sent \$400 billion to Israeli banks shortly before it declared bankruptcy. This notion, which has no basis in reality, originally appeared on a website associated with well-known US antisemite Willis Carto. It, too, was disseminated widely on other sites.

A surprising amount of anti-Jewish rhetoric regarding the economic crisis also appeared on popular websites and venues such as YouTube, Yahoo! Groups, and the comments sections of online mainstream newspapers. A September 2008 video on YouTube entitled "The Court Jewsters" conflated photos and clips of failing banks with those of present and former Federal Reserve chairmen Ben Bernanke and Alan Greenspan, respectively, as well as with other Jews. Another YouTube

video entitled "We the People" blamed Jews for "enslaving" non-Jews to serve their own interests and greed. The video stated, "...the same Jewish bankers have been robbing us in this same manner for nearly an entire century now..." Thousands of antisemitic comments were posted on online discussion boards run by Yahoo! Finance. After receiving numerous complaints, Yahoo deleted most of the messages (ADL, Financial Crisis Sparks New Wave of Antisemitism, October 2008).

Following shortly after the onset of the US recession, the revelation of a \$65 billion Ponzi scheme run by Bernard Madoff led to yet more antisemitic rhetoric about Jews and money. "Ho hum, another Crooked Wall Street Jew. Find a Jew who isn't crooked. Now that would be a story," wrote one anonymous poster on a mainstream financial discussion site. "The greed and corruption of the Jews has brought the financial system and the American economy low," wrote another (ADL, Antisemitism and the Madoff Scandal, December 2008).

In contrast, in Britain, neither in the mainstream media nor, virtually, in the extremist media were the Jews blamed for the worsening financial crisis. This might be seen as a result of a more positive view of Jews and their contribution to society in general. Indeed the mass media continued to feature many programs and articles on Jewish culture, history, and personalities, which were underpinned by substantial progress in teaching about Jews, Judaism, and the Holocaust within the school system. The views of the Jewish community and its religious and lay leadership are continually sought by government and the media on a wide range of issues, and the community's main institutions are represented on an ever widening range of legislative, interfaith and other consultative bodies.

In Australia, too, there were very few attempts to blame Jews for the global financial crisis. In fact, to accuse a person or organization of antisemitism in Australia is to allege that their behavior is antisocial and unacceptable. No one with aspirations to public credibility admits to holding antisemitic views or to associating with openly antisemitic organizations. Politically left-linked individuals and groups that accuse Israel of racism, accompanied, sometimes, by offensive and gratuitous anti-Jewish imagery, are keen to assert that they are not antisemitic. Even some far right and neo-Nazi groups publicly profess to be "anti-Zionist" rather than anti-Jewish, although the material they distribute belies any such distinction.

The severe effects of the economic crisis in central and eastern Europe in the second half of 2008, on the other hand, caused the intensification of antisemitic attitudes. These were summed up bluntly by the nationalist, antisemitic *Romania Mare*, mouthpiece of the Greater

Romania Party (PRM), in its issue of March 13, 2009, thus: "You the Jews have caused the world economic crisis." Debates on the reasons for the meltdown and the connection between world economic trends and the negative aspects of globalization flourished in the media, with antisemitic anti-globalization propaganda very much evident from both the right and the left. Allegations of the "inflow of Jewish capital" and the takeover of local economies by Jewish-Israeli business interests were common to both sides.

Antisemitic conspiracy theories, which since 1989 have found fertile ground in eastern Europe, were interwoven with attempts to explain and find scapegoats for the economic meltdown. The ADL survey, mentioned above, found that some 67 percent of people sampled in Hungary believed that Jews had too much economic power, an increase of 7 percent over the previous year. While Hungary was the only former communist country sampled by the ADL, the findings would appear to be indicative of the overall situation in other countries of the region.

The crisis triggered a wave of antisemitic statements and articles in the Arab press by officials and well-known columnists. Syrian economist Muhammad Sharif Mazlum held the Jews responsible for the meltdown, tracing its roots to the early 1970s when President Richard Nixon, allegedly succumbing to "the whims and schemes of the Zionist lobby," severed the dollar from the gold standard. In an interview aired on al-Kawthar TV on October 10, quoted by Memri, he declared that the goal of this lobby was, and still is, "to take control of the world's gold... as well as to enslave peoples and then to impoverish them." Similarly, Mustafa al-Fiqqi, head of the Egyptian Parliamentary Foreign Liaison Committee, in an article published in *al-Hayat*, October 7, found a close link between the events of September 11, 2001 and the economic crisis which erupted in September 2008, claiming that both were global political conspiracies aimed at plundering the Arabs and Muslims and gaining political and economic control. His conclusion was that it would not be wrong to assume that "the Jewish mind" was implicated. Ahmad 'Umarabi also raised the specter of the "Jewish conspiracy" to explain America's financial crisis, in an article in the Qatari dailies *al-Watan* and *al-Bayan*, October 21 and 22, respectively.

Speaking in mid-October, Hamas leader Isma'il Haniyya, considered the global financial crisis God's punishment of the US for supporting Israel and for occupying Iraq and Afghanistan, whereas Hamas spokesman Fawzi Barhum attributed the collapse of the American monetary system to "the Jewish lobby," which controls the American economy and political life (daily *Filastin*, October 7). Contending that the American people were suffering a bitter, painful, and shameful blow,

similar to the pain and wounds inflicted by the country on other peoples, he wondered whether President Bush would have the courage to admit to his people that "the Jewish lobby" was directly responsible for the calamity.

In a series of articles published in the Jordanian daily *al-'Arab al-Yawm* on October 14, 25, 26, and 29, Mufiq Muhadin, known for his antisemitic statements, invoked *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, claiming that even if there was doubt regarding their authenticity, they should be read today in light of the worldwide economic crisis. Muhadin pointed to specific "protocols" dealing with financial and economic affairs, such as the third, entitled "Global economic crisis and the clandestine organization," and the twenty-first, "Loans, stock exchanges and the prices of bonds." He analyzed what he called "the Jewish culture of lending with interest" and its destructive influence on the global economy, emphasizing that "global Judaism was the first to gain control over the cash and banking global movement."

While Saudi lecturer Umayma Ahmad al-Jalahma in the Saudi *al-Watan*, October 5, wondered who was responsible for "the American crisis," Fu'ad Matar in the Lebanese daily *al-Liwa'*, October 3, asked whether Zionism was behind "the destruction of capitalist America." Noting that in *Mein Kampf* Hitler had dedicated several chapters to the Jews' systematic plunder of Germany's national economic resources by gaining control over the banks and the stock markets, he suggested that history was repeating itself. The UAE daily *al-Ittihad* delivered a similar message in a caricature published on November 1, depicting a hand holding a gun engraved with a Star of David and an American dollar pointed at the globe. The smoke coming out of the gun read "The economic collapse."

The Madoff scandal also featured in Arab and Muslim papers. Most venomous was *Pakistan Daily*, which published, on January 4, 2009, an extensive article by Israel Shamir: "The Madoff Affair: A Guide to the Perplexed Antisemite," which originally appeared on December 20 on the Truth Seeker site. Analyzing the scandal, Shamir, an anti-Zionist and harsh critic of Israel, disputed statements made by Jews and opinion articles in western papers. Quoting William Pierce, who wrote the antisemitic tract *The Turner Diaries* (1978), he praised the American white supremacist's "valuable observation" that "Jews aren't the only crooks, but they're certainly the biggest crooks." Moreover, he said, though not necessarily Jews they "were devoted to Jewish causes, be it the Holocaust cult or the Zionist cause...This was the case with Madoff. He contributed a lot to Jewish causes, so he had to be a swindler." Shamir dismissed the claim that Jewish foundations took the biggest hit. The harm to them

was dwarfed by the damage done to numerous other financial institutions, funds and firms, he asserted. Besides, he said, Jewish American investors would get back their investment under the US government's financial fraud protection scheme, concluding that "even if some Jewish and Zionist organizations lost money, the total sum of Jewish holdings would increase, and "this new wealth will again find its way to the Zionist Lobby and other such bodies."

OPERATION CAST LEAD

When the Gaza operation was launched on December 27, 2008, it immediately provoked a wave of Israel bashing and violent antisemitic activities on an almost worldwide scale. Encouraged by the multiple attempts to deligitimize Israel and deny the "Jewish" or "Zionist" entity's right to exist, tens of thousands of people marched the streets to protest Israel's "war crimes," which were compared to the worst Nazi crimes. During a demonstration in Brussels on January 11, 2009, protesters carried posters and banners pronouncing: "Gaza Worse than Auschwitz," "Stop the Holocaust of Palestinian People," "No to the Final Solution," "Ghetto Warsaw=Gaza," "Gaza the new Shoah," and "Stop the Genocide in Gaza." Even in Iceland, a sign greeting visitors to a Reykjavik shop: read, "Jews [are] not welcome here" (*Judar Ekki Velkomnir*); similarly, in Switzerland wall graffiti in Zurich declared, "Switzerland without Jews" (*Schweiz ohne Juden*).

"Kill all Jews" chants were heard frequently during protest marches in the UK, as well as in France and Germany. During a demonstration in Holland protesters shouted "Hamas, Hamas, Jews to the gas" (*Hamas, Hamas, Joden aan het gas*). In an attempt, perhaps, to avoid charges of incitement to murder, the word "Juice" was substituted for Jew in the banner "Kill all Juice" borne in an anti-Israel rally in London (see http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Operation_Gegossenes_Blei#cite_note-234). Another popular slogan expressed in graffiti on the walls of many European cities, in cartoons in daily papers or on banners during anti-Israel or so-called pro-Palestinian demonstrations, labeled Israelis "child killers," thereby invoking the traditional antisemitic blood libel. On January 1, thousands took to the streets in Catalonia against Israel's so-called genocidal policies. Graffiti equating the swastika with the Star of David appeared on hundreds of walls throughout the region. Boosted by TV images of horror scenes from Gaza and accusations of Israeli massacres of children, the graffiti became a powerful means of transmitting stereotypical antisemitic themes. (http://www.idea.de/index.php?id=181&tx_ttnewspercent5Btt_newspercent5D=72069&tx_ttnewspercent5BbackPid_percent5D=181&cHash=d0e971c0fb).

On January 26, the government of Catalonia announced the cancellation of a ceremony in Barcelona to mark International Holocaust Memorial Day, although the war had ended ten days earlier. Minister of Home Affairs Joan Saura i Laporta, who had taken part in a demonstration during which protestors accused Israel of genocide, explained that "it is inappropriate to commemorate the Jewish holocaust [*sic*] when a Palestinian holocaust is being committed."

European politicians, artists, and academics joined the protests against the Israeli operation. In a letter published in the *Guardian*, January 16, over 300 British university professors accused Israel of aggression, massacres, and colonialism in the Gaza Strip, and expressed their hope that Israel would lose the war against Hamas. In Stockholm, the head of Sweden's Socialist Party and the country's former foreign minister, Mona Ingeborg Sahlin, joined 8,000 protesters on January 10, in a mostly Muslim demonstration packed with anti-Israel slogans. In Spain, representatives of Prime Minister Jose Luis Rodriguez Zapatero attended a rally in Madrid, January 11, in which some participants called for jihad, praised Hizballah, and cursed Israel. After the rally, which drew about 100,000 people, the vast majority of them non-Muslims, the Israeli embassy in Madrid took the rare step of openly chastising Zapatero for "fueling anti-Israel anger." A Norwegian diplomat, Trine Lilleng, first secretary at the embassy in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, sent out emails from her foreign ministry email account equating Israel's offensive against Hamas in Gaza with the Nazis' systematic mass murder of six million Jews.

Italian conservative Catholic priest Floriano Abrahamowicz asserted at the end of January 2009 that "the only thing certain" about the gas chambers was that "they were used for disinfection." He also compared the Nazi murder of the Jews to "other genocides" that did not receive similar publicity, including Israel's military offensive in the Gaza Strip. Giancarlo Desiderati, head of a small Italian union, appealed to comrades in early January not to buy products from businesses run by the Jewish community. In February, a teacher of Islamic religious instruction at a secondary school in Vienna handed out a list of "Jewish" international companies to his students with a request not to buy their goods.

According to the Swiss CICAD (Coordination Intercommunautaire Contre l'Antisémitisme et la Diffamation), antisemitic acts and expressions increased in the country with the outbreak of the Israeli offensive. Jewish students in Geneva received antisemitic messages via the Facebook network; others in a college in Geneva were called "dirty Jews," and Israel's policy was compared to that of the Nazis. In France

352 antisemitic manifestations were reported to the SPCJ (Service de Protection de la Communauté Juive) during the month of January. During the first two weeks of the month, there were arson attempts on synagogues and desecrations of cemeteries in Toulouse, Bischheim, Saint Denis (where 9 Molotov cocktails were also thrown at the synagogue), Velleneuve, Saint George, and Hayange. Violent antisemitic attacks, including armed assaults on individuals and attempts to torch synagogues, were also recorded in Belgium, Sweden, Germany, and Denmark. On January 15, the Austrian daily *der Standard* reported that in a sermon delivered on January 9 in the Schura mosque in Vienna, Imam 'Adnan Ibrahim branded Israel a "beast" and commended the Hamas. In Brussels, 30,000 demonstrators met in the center of the city for a pro-Palestinian rally incited by activists shouting in Arabic.

Throughout Europe radicalized youth and hundreds of university students took to the streets in solidarity with the Hamas fighters. This revival of student militancy was observed above all, but not only, on UK campuses, such as the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), the London School of Economics (LSE), and King's College in London, as well as the universities of Birmingham and Essex. internet sites and so-called occupation blogs especially set up to organize solidarity with Palestine and Gaza disseminated anti-Israel propaganda to thousands of students, accusing Israel of war crimes and terror. Many of the perpetrators of virulent antisemitic attacks and incitement during the Gaza operation were of Muslim origin, encouraged directly by the Hamas and other Islamic fundamentalists, who circulated antisemitic propaganda among Europe's Muslim communities.

The UK

In the UK, the CST recorded over 250 incidents, the highest number ever in a four week period. This might be compared to 35 incidents registered by the organization during the same period in 2008, and 105 incidents in October 2000, after the outbreak of the second intifada. While manifestations included an arson attack on a north London synagogue and assaults on visibly Jewish people by pro-Palestinian supporters, the overwhelming majority were repeated antisemitic and jihadist daubings on synagogues, community buildings, and public spaces in areas with large Jewish communities. Over one hundred anti-Israel rallies took place around the country, and while many demonstrators voiced their protests in legitimate ways, many were blatantly antisemitic, with chants such as "Dirty Jews go to hell" and "Heil Hitler" (London, January 21), "Kill the Jews" (London, December 30 and January 3; Birmingham, January 29); "O Jews of Khaybar, the army of Muhammad

will return" (*Khaybar Khaybar ya ya Yabud, Jaysb Muhammad sa'fa ya'ud* (Luton, January 11).

Equating Israel with Nazi Germany was a common feature of many anti-Israel rallies, voiced by speakers, organizers, and participants alike. In one London event, a protestor wearing a monster mask "ate" a baby covered in fake blood, in a clear demonstration of the blood libel. Many anti-Israel demonstrators moved beyond protest against Israel's actions into open support for Hamas and Hizballah, encouraged by platform speakers at some rallies. Placards and flags with the groups' emblems were carried by many demonstrators.

The majority of protests against Israel were initiated and organized by pro-Palestinian and Hamas linked groups, as well as Muslim Brotherhood affiliates, in concert with far left groups. Many demonstrations were characterized by a level of violence not seen on Britain's streets for many years. Windows of Starbucks and Tesco shops, both perceived to have Israel connections, were smashed and looted by demonstrators in several parts of London and an attempt was made to firebomb one east London branch of Starbucks. Protestors stormed the shopping area of Golders Green, a north London suburb with a substantial Jewish population, harassing patrons of kosher restaurants, and the central London Jewish student center Hillel House was targeted by demonstrators because of the visit of an Israeli speaker. Their attempts to force their way into the building was rebuffed by police and CST stewards.

While the police were quick to react, the government was less so. Parliamentary debates and meetings tended to focus on Israel's perceived disproportional response to Hamas bombardment, and it was only following expressions of concern by communal leaders, and statements and motions by some members of parliament that the government issued a tardy condemnation. Additionally, a group of prominent Muslim leaders signed an open letter, published in *The Guardian*, January 16 and distributed to mosques, stating that "British Jews should not be held responsible for the actions of the Israel government."

The United States and Canada

In response to Israel's military action in Gaza, ANSWER and the Muslim American Society helped organize a "National Day of Action" on December 30, in more than 30 locations around the country. Many of the demonstrations, which were held in front of Israeli embassies and consulates and US federal buildings, as well as Holocaust museums and memorials, were accompanied by offensive Holocaust imagery likening Jews and Israelis to Nazis, anti-Zionist and antisemitic rhetoric, and

slogans in support of terror. One demonstrator in Ft. Lauderdale was depicted in a YouTube video screaming, "Jews go back to the ovens!"

Approximately 200 anti-Israel rallies were documented in various US cities in the first weeks of January. On January 10, at least 10,000 demonstrators picketed in Washington DC, with signs reading "Jewish run media hides Jewish terrorism," "Hitler was right. Jews are blood suckers," and "Stop Israel's Nazi genocide." At one point the crowd chanted, "Hitler, Olmert they're the same. The only difference is their name."

Major anti-Israel protests took place in New York City, San Francisco, Los Angeles, and Chicago. A sign at a January 19 rally in Chicago read, "Death to Jews and the State of Israel," while at a January 5 rally in San Francisco, another read "Jews: The first terrorists." Placards at a demonstration in the city five days later, said, "Target all Zionist businesses" and "Globalize the intifada," while another at a rally in Los Angeles held on the same day described Israel as a "cancer upon the world." A January 9 rally in Chicago included a banner claiming that the Mossad was responsible for the 9/11 terrorist attacks (ADL, Israel's Action in Gaza Spurs Anti-Israel Rallies, January 2009).

Equally troubling were the antisemitic incidents directed at Jews or at Jewish institutions. Synagogues and Hebrew schools in Dalton (Georgia), Irvine (California), New York City, and Wilmington (Delaware) reported receiving threatening messages referring to Israel's operation in Gaza. On December 31, more than 22 Jewish institutions in Chicago, received letters warning that they would be bombed if Israel did not exit Gaza immediately. On January 10, vandals broke windows at three Chicago synagogues and a Hebrew school and sprayed the walls with graffiti, reading "Death to Israel" and "Free Palestine," among other slogans. A Holocaust memorial in San Francisco was defaced with red spray paint declaring "Israel, their blood is on your hands." Each of these incidents was decried by community leaders and investigated by justice officials. Of the 151 incidents that occurred in December, the month with the highest total of the year, 70 related to the emerging Mid-East crisis. Of these, 36 occurred in the last few days of the year as tensions heightened.

Australia

An unprecedented 214 incidents were recorded in the month of January in the wake of the Gaza operation. Over 180 of these were abusive and antisemitic emails. As in December, there were a number of public demonstrations marked by blatantly antisemitic placards, as well as slogans chanted in English and Arabic. While Jewish and Islamic communities in Australia enjoy a generally positive relationship and there

is little evidence that anti-Jewish sentiment is widespread, in December 2008/January 2009, a number of Muslim groups which had been involved in long-term ties with the Jewish community distributed offensive and/or misleading material, precipitating a re-evaluation of the nature of the relationship.

Central and Eastern Europe

In central and eastern Europe, too, the Gaza campaign did not go unheeded. Although there is little pro-Arab sympathy and there are no significant Muslim and Arab communities in these countries, a more critical line toward Israel was voiced, including antisemitic propaganda accusing the Jews/Israelis of "genocide" and "war crimes," especially on the web. There were anti-Israel demonstrations in all major cities, including some with antisemitic messages. Yet, the intensity of public demonstrations was much lower than in the West. Furthermore, since the post-communist countries are in the process of expanding relations with the more moderate Arab and Muslim states, they are interested in fostering a solution of the Arab-Israeli conflict, and not in supporting even tacitly radical Islamist positions. Hence, the mainstream is careful to avoid a direct connection between Israeli "behavior" and Jewish stereotypes. On the contrary, there is a sense that whenever antisemitism is evident in some events in the West, the central and east European media will not hesitate to expose it.

CIS and Baltic States

A wave of anti-Israel demonstrations and statements and antisemitic emotions swept the CIS and Baltic States with the outbreak of the Gaza operation. However, no violent antisemitic incidents were recorded. Most of the anti-Israel manifestations stressed the alleged mass killing of women, the elderly, and children and accused Israel of genocide of the Palestinian people. In Russia, comparisons were also made with more familiar historical events ingrained in Russian collective memory – the siege of Leningrad during World War II and the Holocaust.

The post-Soviet *umma* (Muslim community) and its official spiritual leaders are becoming increasingly drawn to issues related to the general Muslim world and the Arab-Israeli conflict. Antisemitism and anti-Israel rhetoric is employed by radical Islamists, to whom the Gaza operation was a good opportunity for recruitment of supporters – most of them elderly Muslims who still remember the anti-Zionist propaganda from Soviet times, and susceptible young ones. More moderate spiritual leaders were forced to react by making anti-Israel statements in order to prevent radicals from taking the lead.

Russian Federation

The Russian authorities were restrained in their reaction to the conflict in Gaza, perhaps because during the relevant period all attention was concentrated on the gas crisis with Ukraine. Most of the mass media were relatively objective in their reports, which prompted the ambassador of the Palestinian Autonomy to Russia, 'Afif Safiya, to complain that they were biased in favor of Israel.

Already in the first days of the operation several anti-Israel events took place, mostly organized by Muslim organizations. On January 1, an unauthorized meeting took place near the Israeli embassy in Moscow, at which about 50 people shouted at Israel to stop its activity in Gaza. The following day during an attempt to hold a similar meeting initiated by members of the Palestinian diaspora, 37 of the 50 participants were detained, among them Maksim Shevchenko, a TV host of Russia's first channel and a member of the Public Chamber (which monitors the federation's governing bodies). On January 16, a day before Israel announced a unilateral ceasefire, about 1000 people gathered in the main mosque in Makhachkala (Dagestan) to protest the operation. The local imam, chairman of the Makhachkala Council of Imams Magomed Rasul Saaduev, declared that Israel was "the enemy of God and humanity since only God can kill unarmed and defenseless children, women, and the elderly." Saaduev called on all those gathered to help by making donations to their "Palestinian brothers." One speaker said that while in Dagestan the Jews were treated well, "Jews around the world are supporting Israel; they too are responsible for the genocide of the Palestinian people. The patience of the Dagestanees should not be tested; they can answer appropriately." Participants at the meeting shouted slogans such as "Israel – evil," "Zionists get out of Palestine," and "Israel – no, Palestine – yes." In a resolution issued at the end of the meeting, Israel's actions in Gaza were equated with the atrocities of the Nazis, and Gaza was compared to Leningrad under the Nazi siege.

On January 17, a picket took place in St. Petersburg attended by a few hundred people. Addressing them, Muhammed Khenni, chairman of the Islamic Cultural Center, accused Israel of genocide of the Palestinians and compared Israel's actions in Gaza to the Holocaust. Another Islamist picket took place the next day in Kazan, attended by 200-350 people. The participants, many of whom carried Palestinian flags, held posters showing photos of alleged victims of the operation, with slogans such as "No to Zionism," "Zionism = Fascism," and "Israel is repeating the history of Hitler." Aleksei Kornienko, Duma deputy and member of the Communist Party of the Russian Federation (KPRF),

organized an anti-Israel demonstration in Murmansk, January 17, in which the demonstrators also accused Israel of genocide and called on the Russian authorities to stop it.

The Communist Party, too, organized anti-Israel rallies. The largest took place on January 15, near the Israeli embassy in Moscow. About 200 people participated, half of them members of the Palestinian diaspora. Calling for its elimination, they denounced Israel as a fascist terrorist state. In St. Petersburg, Kazan, and Makhachkala local Muslim activists tried in vain to organize a boycott of Israeli products as well as of companies that distribute their goods in Israel, such as Colgate, Palmolive, Coca-Cola, McDonalds, and Nokia.

Several Islamic leaders made historical comparisons. On December 30, for example, Mufti Nafigulla Ashirov, head of the Muslim spiritual directorate of the Asiatic part of Russia and co-chairman of the Council of Russian Muftis, compared the situation in Gaza to "the genocide which fascist Germany executed on the occupied territory of the Soviet Union during World War II," and the blockade of Gaza to the siege of Leningrad. On January 14, he declared that Gaza had become "a concentration camp," which humanity had never witnessed "in its history," while Geydar Jamal, president of Islamic Committee of Russia, claimed during an interview to the nakanune.ru website (<http://www.nakanune.ru/articles/13811>) that Operation Cast Lead was genocide, and an attempt to break the will of the Palestinian people to resist.

It should be noted, however, that not all Islamic leaders in Russia spoke against the Israeli operation. The spiritual directorates of Muslims in St. Petersburg and Tatarstan refused to take part in anti-Israel demonstrations, and the head of the Central Spiritual Directorate of Muslims of Russia, Talgat Tagudin, even issued a statement labeling Hamas a "terrorist organization."

Communist media and internet sites cited leaflets of the Hamas claiming that "Jews" were attacking Gaza. During an interview to the party's website posted on January 15 (<http://kprf.ru/actions/62814.html>), Aleksei Kornienko labeled the situation "a holocaust of the Palestinians." On January 5, the KPRF posted on its website an article by E. Kopyshev, a party member and chairman of the Union of Soviet Officers. Among other things, he stated that from December 27, Israel had been punishing the Palestinian population in Gaza by "fascist methods" and that Arab League members were incapable of warding off Zionist aggression because they were too busy with interstate disputes (http://kprf.ru/rus_soc/62566.html).

Yet, most prominent leaders of ultra-nationalist groups, to whom Islamists are no less the enemy than Zionists, chose to ignore the Gaza operation. Their position was elaborated on December 31 by Konstantin Krilov, who is known for his extremist and antisemitic views, in his internet blog (<http://krylov.livejournal.com/1774392.html>). According to Krilov, the defeat of Israel in the operation was dangerous for nationalists since Russia would become the new target of radical Islamists.

Moreover, supporters and members of the Liberal Democratic Party of Russia, whose leader and members had made antisemitic and anti-Israel statements in the past, held a small gathering on January 16, in Pskov, to protest what they saw as the media's one-sided coverage of events in Gaza. In addition to the party's banner, participants bore posters reading "Israel – the stronghold of peace, civilization and stability," "Russia, be objective, support Israel," "Hamas terrorists are a threat to the world," and "Israel has the right to exist."

Republic of Ukraine

At the beginning of the operation, the Ukrainian Foreign Ministry issued a statement saying it had doubts regarding the proportionality of Israel's attack. As a consequence, local Jewish organizations protested and a meeting took place on January 9 at the foreign ministry offices between the chairmen of the General Council of the Euro-Asian Jewish Congress and of the VAAD (Association of Jewish Organizations and Communities) of Ukraine, and Deputy Foreign Minister Alexander Gorin. They discussed among other things the situation in Gaza and manifestations of antisemitism and xenophobia in Ukraine.

On December 27, the first day of the operation, several Ukrainian Muslim organizations issued a joint declaration branding Israel's actions "barbarian bombardment," claiming there were already hundreds of dead women and children as a result of Israel's genocide, and calling to assist the Gazan population both morally and financially. On January 2, during his Friday sermon, Imad Abu al-Rub, imam of the mosque of the An-Nur Kievan Muslim cultural center, put the entire blame on Israel. He also held the "Zionists" responsible for "the daily killing of tens of innocent women, the elderly, and children."

On January 9, members of the Arab diaspora, supported by left-wing activists, such as representatives of the Communist and Socialist parties, held a demonstration in front of the UN offices in Kiev. Some among the several hundred participants held photos of dead children and ruined buildings, as well as posters reading "Freedom for Palestine" and "Israel

– murderer of children." A similar demonstration took place the following day in Simferopol.

In addition, an antisemitic incident related to the Gaza operation was recorded on January 24. Eight leaflets were found near the entrance to the synagogue in Donetsk, reading "You owe us. Shalom, Jewish brother. You are one of those who kill, burn, and annihilate the Muslims of Palestine. We can't be indifferent to crimes committed by you and world Jewry. You are to blame. You and your children must be punished as our children and elderly were punished there." The police opened an investigation, but no results were reported.

A few pro-Israel demonstrations took place on January 11 and 14, in Kiev and Dnepropetrovsk, organized by Ukrainian Jewish leaders, the Ukrainian Union of Jewish Students and members of the local Jewish community; they were attended by local officials and representatives of various ethnic and religious groups.

Central Asian and Transcaucasian Republics

In Azerbaijan, the initiators of anti-Israel events were Islamists known for their connections with Iran. On December 29, Iranian diplomats held a ceremony of solidarity with the Palestinians in a mosque in the capital Baku. Members of the Islamic Party of Azerbaijan (IPA – a pro-Iran, pro-Hizballah, anti-US, anti-Zionist, and anti-EU stronghold of conservative Islam) were present at the event. On the same day the Iranian embassy distributed an official announcement to the Azerbaijani media stating that "the death of a great number of citizens as a result of the bombardment of Gaza by the air force of the Zionist regime adds another black page to the black dossier of that regime."

On December 30-31, and on January 1-2 and 7, Islamists tried to organize pickets near the Israeli embassy in Baku. All these attempts were stopped by the police, and about 50 people were detained. Half were fined and released and the rest imprisoned for ten days.

The largest demonstration, organized by the IPA, took place in the main square of the small town of Nardaran, 25 kilometers north of Baku, on January 5. About 100 people gathered, burned Israeli and American flags and puppets representing Ehud Olmert and George Bush, and shouted anti-Israel and anti-American slogans, such as "Death to the US and Israel" and "Death to American Zionism." Calling for closure of the Israeli embassy in Baku and the severance of all political, economic and military ties with Israel, they urged Muslims in Azerbaijan to unite against "world Zionism."

In the Republic of Tajikistan, the main initiator of anti-Israel action was the opposition Islamic Renaissance Party. On January 5, it issued an

announcement alleging that Israeli's operation in Gaza was "a brutal crime and an inhuman act." The party demanded that Israel stop it and called upon the UN and other international and regional organizations to expose the crimes of the Israeli regime and bring the perpetrators to trial at an international court. Party supporters also called on the government to publicly condemn Israel and to express its condolences to the Palestinian people. On January 6, the Tajikistan foreign ministry issued a statement claiming the Palestinian people were facing a humanitarian disaster. However, a demonstration scheduled for January 23 was banned by the authorities.

In the Republic of Kyrgyzstan, the Union of Muslims, a party established in November 2008, distributed a statement on January 5 calling on "worldwide society to immediately intervene in the conflict in the Gaza Strip and stop Israeli aggression against the Palestinian people." On January 14, when party members tried to publicly burn the flags of Israel and the US, its leaders were arrested. They were released the following day and fined for disobeying the police. The party also organized an exhibition of photos of "victims of Israel in Gaza" and anti-Israel cartoons from various Islamic websites, in the State Historical Museum, as well as in mosques of the capital Bishkek. The images allegedly testified to "Zionist brutality toward the inhabitants of Gaza." On January 9, the chief mufti of the country, Murataly Aji Djumanov, speaking in the name of the Kyrgyz Spiritual Directorate of the Muslims, also demanded that Israel "stop the murder of innocent people."

An anti-Israel meeting of several dozen people took place on January 16, near the offices of the Jewish Agency in Almaty, former capital of the Republic of Kazakhstan. Participants held banners with slogans condemning Israeli aggression against the "peaceful people of Palestine."

Other FSU Republics

The only notable reaction to Operation Cast Lead in Belarus was that of Mufti Ismail Voronovich, head of the Muslim Spiritual Directorate of Belarus, who in early January submitted a letter to Israel's ambassador to Belarus, Zeev Ben-Arie, labeling Israel's actions "a genocide of the Palestinian people" and "crimes against humanity," and demanding an immediate end to "the murder of the peaceful population."

One antisemitic incident, probably connected to the operation in Gaza, was recorded in Lithuania. Over the weekend of January 17-18, a swastika and graffiti reading "Palestina" and "Kill Yids" appeared on the building housing the offices of the Jewish community of Klaipeda. The use of swastikas was banned in Lithuania in July 2008. Simonas

Gurevicius executive director of the Lithuanian Jewish Community, condemned the graffiti.

No anti-Israel or antisemitic incidents were recorded in the republics of Moldova or Georgia during the period of the Gaza operation. On the other hand, a pro-Israel demonstration, initiated by the Jewish Congress of Moldova and attended by about 250 people, took place on January 14, in the capital Chisinau near the monument to the victims of the local ghetto. In Georgia, too, about 150 students demonstrated at the end of December in support of Israel. Later, however, the foreign ministry expressed its concern over the escalation of hostilities in the Gaza Strip and the deteriorating humanitarian situation. Alexander Rondeli, president of the Georgian Foundation for Strategic and International Studies, explained that Hamas was not popular in Georgia because during the Georgian-Russian war in August 2008, the Hamas leadership took the Russian side.

Latin America

The war in Gaza marked a watershed in attitudes toward the State of Israel and toward Jews in general in most Latin American countries and changed traditional antisemitic patterns.

Venezuela

The transformation in attitudes has been marked since the ascension of President Hugo Chavez to power in 1998, due to his harsh anti-Israel rhetoric. This is the result of various factors, among them the government's anti-American and pro-Arab position, and its growing political and economic ties with Iran. The anti-Israel viewpoint has created a hostile climate not only toward Israel but also toward Jews, legitimizing antisemitic expressions. This trend came to the fore during the Second Lebanon War against Hizballah in July-August 2006.

Reactions to the war against Hamas marked yet another phase in the deterioration of the official Venezuelan stand toward the Jews. For the first time in the history of the country, a synagogue, the Tiferet in Mariperez neighborhood, Caracas, was attacked on January 30; its security guards were tied up and its property desecrated. Antisemitic slogans such as "Jews out of here" and "Damn the Jews" were scrawled on the walls of the office, Torah scrolls were thrown on the floor, safety boxes broken into, and computers and documents stolen. The attackers, numbering about 15, appeared to be well organized. They disabled security cameras and reportedly spent five hours ransacking the premise. A week earlier the building had been sprayed with graffiti equating the Star of David with the swastika. Although the government issued a

statement saying those responsible would be brought to justice and calling on Venezuelans to condemn the attack, a representative of the Venezuelan Israelite Association reported that the Jewish community felt intimidated.

The attack may be seen as the result of the virulently anti-Israel statements and speeches of Chavez himself, who, *inter alia*, compared the Israeli government to the Nazis. In spite of his condemnation, he suggested that adversaries in the country who portrayed his regime as antisemitic might be behind the violence. This insinuation might be understood by some as an endorsement of the attack. The ADL described it as "a modern day Kristallnacht," and most Latin American Jewish communities organized rallies to protest it.

Uruguay

Uruguay does not have an antisemitic history; however, the situation has changed since the war in Gaza. The most conspicuous expression of antisemitism was graffiti in Montevideo and in other cities, such as Maldonado and Rivera, mostly equation of the Star of David with the swastika and slogans branding Israel a genocidal state.

There were also several open letters and petitions containing antisemitic content, mainly circulated by labor organizations. At the faculty of medicine in Hospital de Clinicas, the leading state hospital in Montevideo, a Power Point presentation shown to students by a professor compared the situation in Gaza to the Holocaust. The daily press also published anti-Israel articles from the European media. Several writers and intellectuals made virulently anti-Israel comments; journalist and novelist Eduardo Galeano, who is well known in all Spanish-speaking countries, for instance, accused Israel of systematic genocide of the Palestinian people.

Several protests and rallies against the Gaza attack and supporting the Palestinians also took place, such as one on January 10, in Montevideo, under the slogan "A song of solidarity with Palestine," with the participation of labor, left wing and human rights organizations. Although there was no antisemitic incitement at these events, their frequency, combined with the anti-Israel rhetoric of many mainstream organizations and the media, were understood as legitimizing attacks on local Jewish organizations. Indeed, on January 12, a bomb was set off at the headquarters of Ziklovsky, a Jewish non-Zionist left-wing organization, causing damage to the front of the building.

Brazil

In Brazil, too, antisemitic manifestations increased significantly during the war, due in part to the intensive TV imagery of scenes showing dead children and other civilians. Criticism of Israel, which in the past appeared mostly in left-wing newspapers and journals with limited circulation, became much more common in the liberal press after the war. In major journals such as *Isto E* and *Veja*, for example, the operation was depicted as "a total war" of destruction.

In January, pro-Palestinian, anti-Israel rallies took place in the main cities of Sao Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, Belo Horizonte, Recife, Brasilia, Curitiba, Porto Alegre, and Foz do Iguacu (on the Triple Frontier between Brazil, Paraguay, and Argentina). Members of the Arab-Palestinian community, together with left-wing militants bearing Palestinian flags, were the principal demonstrators. In Sao Paulo, for example, 3,000 people carried placards showing the Star of David equated with the swastika and referring to Israelis as "terrorists" and "assassins." According to a member of the Muslim community in Sao Paulo, Nadia Salem Jabbar, the aim of the rally was to raise Brazilian awareness and mobilize people to support the Palestinian cause. Antisemitic banners were reported at five of the rallies in Sao Paulo. Participants burned flags with the Star of David=swastika equation. Graffiti branding Israel "a terrorist state," among other such expressions, was daubed on the walls of the Consolation cemetery in the center of Sao Paulo.

Three hundred participants took part in an anti-Israel rally in Rio de Janeiro; most were from left-wing parties and radical left-wing workers organizations. Speakers contended that Israel had been created by the US as a tool of imperialism to help control Middle East oil. Dismissing any religious aspect to the conflict, they considered the Palestinian struggle a progressive battle against imperialism and capitalism. They also labeled the Israeli ambassador an imperialist spy and, like Venezuela, called for his expulsion from the country. One of the banners proclaimed that Israel had turned Gaza into a Nazi concentration camp. Supporters of the Arab Palestinian Federation of Brazil, the Muslim Society of Paraná, as well as unions and student groups, also demanded the expulsion of Israel's diplomatic delegation in Brazil and burned the Israeli flag at a rally held in the city of Curitiba. In addition, the organizers held a symbolic campaign of blood donations for Palestinians allegedly massacred by Israel. An exhibition in the center of Curitiba highlighted the so-called Palestinian holocaust.

At the end of a rally held in January in the city of Belo Horizonte, participants threw objects and red paint at the building of the Jewish

Federation of the State of Minas Gerais. On the walls of the city of Recife, northern Brazil, graffiti signed by the Communist Party of Recife said, "Israel leave" and "Long live the Palestinian Resistance." The differences between Hamas and Fatah flared up on December 31 at a rally in front of the Israeli embassy in the capital Brasilia, with sympathizers of these camps fighting each other.

Emphasizing the link between the State of Israel and the Jews of Brazil, the president of the Arab Palestinian Federation of Brazil, Ualid Rabah, speaking in the southern city of Porto Alegre on January 28, called on the Jewish community to denounce Israel. Claiming that the silence of the Jews was incomprehensible, he said it was important to ask every Jewish man and woman whether Israel spoke on their behalf when it carried out its crimes.

Also in Porto Alegre, the slogan "Death to the Jewish pigs" and a swastika with the sign of the neo-Nazi Walhalla 99, appeared on the walls of the Jewish Association. The leaders of the Workers Party (Partido dos Trabalhadores – PT), a moderate pro-Palestinian organization, which supports Israel's right to exist, published on January 4 an aggressive statement signed by its national president, Ricardo Berzoini, and its secretary of international relations, Valter Pomar, claiming that Israel was a terrorist and Nazi state. Several PT members criticized the move, saying that it contradicted the traditional party position and distorted Nazism as a unique, historical phenomenon. It also censured the organization for not condemning Hamas terrorism and denying Israel's right to exist.

In response to the anti-Israel rallies, the Jewish community of Sao Paulo organized a demonstration in support of Israel under the banner, "Demonstrating on behalf of peace," attended by some 3000 people – Jews, Evangelists, Catholics, Buddhists and others.

Argentina

About 310 incidents were reported in Argentina in 2008 until the war in Gaza. Most – 190 – were graffiti sightings on street walls, 5 of them in Jewish cemeteries. Two incidents caused material damage; 70 were verbal antisemitic insults directed at individuals, 10 of them in the work place; 20 were threats; and there were 2 reports of the sale of Nazi literature. The impact of the Gaza war was strongly felt in Argentina, with many virulently antisemitic expressions, mostly emanating from extreme left groups. During the two months of January and February, 240 complaints were received by the DAIA (Delegación de Asociaciones Israelitas Argentinas), equivalent to the average amount received over eight months in other years. Some of them were from individuals who claimed

their neighbors or work colleagues had blamed the local Jewish community for the Israeli government's policies.

Much of the graffiti appearing in cities throughout the country featured the Star of David equated with the swastika, allegations that Israel was a "genocidal state," denial of the Holocaust and the hope that Israel would be wiped off the face of the map. At a rally organized in January in front of a Jewish-owned hotel, the proprietor was accused of financing Zionism and hence of responsibility for the killings in Gaza. With the end of the conflict, antisemitic manifestations diminished gradually in quantity and tone.

Mexico

In general, antisemitism levels in Mexico tend to be lower than in many other countries. However, as in previous Mid-East crises, Israel's operation in Gaza triggered a wave of antisemitic and anti-Zionist expressions, many of which verged on antisemitism. Most appeared in the center or left-wing press, where Israel was described as a violent, militaristic nation insensitive to the plight of others and interested only in furthering its own expansionist aims. Although most of the informative articles were relatively impartial, many headlines and photographs were sensationalistic, such as "Israel Celebrates Shabbat, Its Holy Day, with the Worst Massacre of Palestinians in 40 years" (*Crónica*, December 28); "Stop the Genocide, Demand to Israel" (*La Prensa*, January 11; "The Palestinian Holocaust" and "Israel and Nazi Methods" (*La Jornada*, January 12, 18, respectively).

Editorials, cartoons, and readers' letters expressed venomous opposition to Israeli policies. Editorials by Pedro Miguel, Guillermo Almeyra, Alfredo Jalife-Rahme, Jose Steinsleger, and Héctor Delgado argued in defense of the legitimacy of the Palestinian and Hamas' cause, criticized the "privileged" US-Israeli relationship, and compared the situation in Gaza to the Holocaust. "Israel is a Jewish state, this is not a problem. The problem is that it is a terrorist state," proclaimed Pedro Miguel (*La Jornada*, December 30), while Juan Gelman in *Milenio*, asserted: "The objective of Israel's Operation Cast Lead is to throw the Palestinians from their land. The 4 million evacuated since 1948, are not enough for Tel Aviv" (January 10). Jesus Sanchez declared that "the first great genocide of the new century" was going on in the Gaza Strip and no one was doing anything about it... it's an extermination" (*La Prensa*, January 1).

Many journalists with no previous experience and little knowledge of Middle East affairs wrote on the operation, displaying ignorance and prejudice. Moreover, the Electricians Union, the Teachers Union and the

Workers of the National Autonomous University of Mexico Union displayed ads in the press expressing solidarity with Palestinian suffering and accusing Israel of genocide.

Left-wing Jewish intellectuals, mainly Argentineans living in Mexico, expressed opposition to the operation in articles published in *La Jornada*. They also created an organization, "Adopt a dead Palestinian child" to "preserve the memory of Palestinian children killed or injured by the Israeli army." A blog denouncing Israel's actions provided information on their project.

Accusing Israel of genocide, the Iranian ambassador in Mexico alleged that rabbis had ordered Jews to kill Palestinian children in order to prevent them from becoming soldiers in the future.

During this period NGOs, such as International Amnesty, the Mexican Chapter of Not in Our Name, and Solidarity with the Palestinian People Movement, organized mass demonstrations outside the Israeli and American embassies in Mexico City, as well as in Oaxaca, Puebla, Mérida, Guadalajara, and Monterrey. They carried dolls stained with red paint representing Palestinian children, and placards with antisemitic and anti-Zionist slogans and imagery, such as an Israeli flag with the Star of David evolving into a swastika. They also organized conferences with pro-Palestinian speakers, who demanded that the Mexican government expel the Israel ambassador. A demonstration in support of Israel was organized by the Jewish community, the evangelical group Am Israel, and the Mexican representation of the International Christian Embassy in Jerusalem.

Jewish institutions received emails blaming Jews in general for the violence in the Middle East, accusing Israel of genocide, and transforming Israel the victim into Israel the murderer.

The Mexican government demonstrated impartiality. While its foreign ministry condemned Israel's "excessive" use of force, it also criticized the continued mortar attacks on Israeli territory.

In order to counter anti-Israel propaganda, Tribuna Israelita (the Jewish institution that deals with antisemitism) met with journalists and opinion leaders and published a booklet, "Myths and Facts about Operation Cast Lead." Some 14,000 copies were sent to representatives of the media, intellectuals, academics, politicians, and religious leaders, among others. Representatives of the Jewish community also met with members of the left-wing PRD (Party of the Democratic Revolution), which publicly supported the Palestinians, in order to demand impartiality.

A marked reduction in anti-Israel and anti-Zionist articles in the media and a cessation of demonstrations and conferences on the war were noted a few days after Operation Cast Lead ended.

Arab and Muslim World

As during the Second Lebanon War of July-August 2006, official reactions to Israel's Operation Cast Lead were mixed in the Arab and Muslim world, reflecting the rift between two camps: that of the moderate regimes led by Egypt and Saudi Arabia and that of the radical axis led by Iran and including Syria, Hizballah, and Hamas. The former, fearing the expansion of Shi'i influence, lent muted support to the Israeli action, while the latter called for a third intifada and jihad against Israel, and incited armies and the masses to rebel against "treacherous" Arab regimes. This schism was also apparent in press articles: Jordan-based journalist Hayat al-Huwayk 'Atiyya, for example, condemned Egypt's conduct, in *al-Dustur*, December 30, while an *al-Abram* editorial on December 29 accused Hamas of triggering "the Israeli crime."

Popular demonstrations and rallies of support with the Palestinian people swept most Arab and Muslim countries, with participants denouncing Israeli aggression and expressing anger, especially against the Egyptian regime, seen as complicit in the Israeli campaign. The uproar in Arab streets, as in the case of the war with Hizballah, had drawn "battle lines between the masses and their regimes," pronounced Sherine Bahaa in *al-Abram Weekly*, January 1. There were demonstrations of solidarity with Hamas and riots by Israeli Arabs and in the Fatah-governed West Bank, where criticism was also directed at PA President Mahmud 'Abbas. In Egypt, Jordan, and Turkey, which maintain relations with Israel, demonstrators burned the Israeli flag and called on their governments to sever ties. In Jordan the Israeli flag was even set alight in Parliament, and members joined the protesters in the demand to return the ambassador from Israel. Most vocal were Islamist groups, such as the Egyptian Muslim Brothers, who constitute the main opposition to the regime in Egypt and Jordan.

Iranian Supreme Leader 'Ali Khamanei issued a decree on December 28, urging jihad against Israel, and defining it as "an infidel" that should be fought for "slaughtering Palestinian Muslims" and "plundering Islamic lands." According to the Iranian news agency Fars, thousands of Iranians responded to the pronouncement urging martyrdom for the cause of Palestine. Hamas women, too, vowed on al-Aqsa TV, December 30, to blow themselves up among "the apes and pigs." Also inciting to jihad on al-Jazira, December 28, Jordanian Islamist MP Muhammad 'Abd al-Qadir invoked a Qur'anic verse stating that Allah

would "bring them [the Jews] to disgrace," and sent Muslims to fight and torment them, while Egyptian clerics intensified their attacks on Jews in interviews (quoted by Memri, Special Dispatch, nos. 2169 and 2167, December 31; no. 2171, January 1; no. 2165, December 30, respectively). On January 5, Islamist spiritual leader Shaykh Yusuf al-Qaradawi called upon the Muslim *umma* to declare the following Friday as a day of anger and solidarity with Gaza.

Hamas on its official website (posted also on December 31, by Emirnet, a United Arab Emirates website) urged Muslims to attack Jews across the world, claiming that "a Jewish adolescent boy in an Australian synagogue, a Jewish minister in the Georgian government, a Jewish businessman at the New York Stock Exchange, and an illiterate Jew from the Ethiopian desert...all belong to the same gang and the same nation, apart from the rest of humanity." Speaking on Hamas' al-Aqsa TV, on January 5, Mahmud al-Zahar, a prominent Hamas leader, praised the organization's fighters and urged them to "crush your enemy."

The reaction in Turkey was particularly disturbing since public outrage against Israeli policies turned into antisemitic sentiment. On January 6, fans shouting "Death to the Jews" and "Israel, killers" threatened to attack an Israeli basketball team, causing cancellation of the match. Graffiti saying "We will kill you" was drawn on the biggest synagogue in Izmir, and posters on stores read: "Do not buy from here since this shop is owned by a Jew" and "Jews and Armenians are not allowed but dogs are welcome." Turkish PM Recep Tayyip Erdogan, who heads the Islamic Justice and Development Party, appeared to set the tone with his unprecedented attack on Israel, branding the Israeli operation a "crime against humanity" and warning that Allah would punish those who violated the rights of innocents. His rage reached a peak on January 29, after the war, at the World Economic Forum meeting in Davos, where he called Israeli President Shimon Peres a baby killer and spoke of "barbarian Israeli acts" before departing the stage in a huff. The emir of Qatar, Shaykh Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani, identified with the radical axis, also labeled the Israeli action a "war crime" and the Israeli siege on Gaza "illegal" and "inhuman."

Expressing similar outrage, Arab and Muslim newspapers and websites accused Israel of committing war crimes and crimes against humanity. Although they also reflected the approach of their respective regimes, most articles perceived the Israeli operation as "a mark of disgrace on humanity's forehead" (*al-Quds al-'Arabi*, December 29) and many verged on blatant antisemitism, using Holocaust terminology to describe the Israeli attack. For example, Jordan's *al-Dustur*, December 29 and 30, and the Hamas mouthpiece *Palestine Times* described the

operation as "Zionist Nazi aggression" and an "Israeli holocaust," while Syria's *al-Thawra* and *Tishrin*, December 28 and 29, described it as "ethnic cleansing" and a "war of annihilation," similar to the massacres in Deir Yasin (1948) and Sabra and Shatila (1982). Ghasan Shirbil in *al-Hayat*, December 28, called to stop the slaughter, explaining that there was no need for Israel to prove its barbarism to the Arabs, whereas an *al-Sharq al-Awsat* editorial of the same day agreed that "this loathsome bloody show" has repeated itself over the last few decades, and there was "nothing new about it except the victims." In an article entitled "The Gaza Ghetto Uprising," posted on electronicintifada.net, January 4, Columbia Palestinian Professor Joseph Massad accused the Israeli leadership of ethnic cleansing ideals and plans to turn Israel into "a purely Jewish state that is *Palästinenenser-rein*." Comparing Gaza to the Warsaw Ghetto, he assumed that "the crushing of the Gaza ghetto uprising and the slaughter of its defenseless population" would be a relatively easy task for the "giant Israeli military machine and Israel's sadistic political leadership."

Israeli Arab Sa'id al-Shaykh joined the Arab chorus in the local *Kul al-'Arab*, December 29, condemning "the Zionist tsunami" and contending that Israel's "barbaric deeds" exceeded those of the Nazis. The truth was, he said, that peace had been assassinated with the crucifixion of Jesus, "the son of Palestinian Bethlehem." Christian writer George Haddad resorted to the blood libel motif and the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion* for his denunciation of Israel and the Jews. In an article published in *al-Dustur*, December 29, entitled "The Search for a Lull and Peace with the Eaters of Sacrifices and Blood," he explained that one had to understand the idea of "the Chosen People" to explain the Jews' crimes against the Arabs since their arrival in Palestine, concluding that these had been committed in accordance with their God's instructions. God described his people as "a people who would not sleep until it eats of the sacrifice and drinks the sacrificed blood," he concluded.

The war ended on January 17, 2009, and despite Israeli superiority, the number of casualties on the Palestinian side, and the destruction of Gaza, Hamas perceived itself as the victor for its mere perseverance, presenting the war as "a turning point in the struggle with the Zionist enemy," and as the first war won by "our people on its land," as head of Hamas Political Bureau Khalid Mash'al declared in an address aired on al-Quds TV, January 21 (Memri, Special Dispatch, No. 2204, January 22). As soon as the war ended, Isma'il Haniyya, prime minister of the Hamas administration in the Gaza Strip, called on al-Jazira, January 18, for international teams to investigate Israeli "war crimes" and appointed a committee to document IDF deeds during the war in order to provide

evidence for Israel's prosecution (Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center Bulletin, January 27). The demand that Israelis be brought to justice was also raised by the Arab press after the war. In "A Time for Trial," an *al-Abram Weekly* article (January 22) declared that Israelis should be prosecuted for war crimes and other violations, since "international law not only establishes state responsibility but also individual responsibility."

COUNTRY AND REGIONAL REPORTS

Western Europe

AUSTRIA

Austria witnessed a decrease in antisemitic manifestations in 2008, mostly expressed in written and spoken abuse of individual Jews, Jews in general and Israel by circles associated with the Austrian Freedom Party. Such attacks intensified during Israel's war in Gaza.

THE JEWISH COMMUNITY

Austria has a Jewish population of 10,000 out of a total population of 8 million. Most registered members of the community are affiliated to the Israelitische Kultusgemeinde Wien (IKG – Jewish Community Vienna). The community, largely located in Vienna, is made up of several groups, the most numerous being returnee Austrians and their families, as well as former refugees from Eastern Europe. A Jewish primary school and high school, as well as several Jewish publications, such as the monthlies *Die Gemeinde* and *Aufbau* and the quarterly *David*, serve the needs of the community.

EXTREMIST PARTIES AND GROUPS

The Extreme Right

The continually radicalizing FPÖ (Austrian Freedom Party) posted some impressive election gains in 2008. At the National Assembly elections in September, it obtained 17.5 percent of the vote, a rise of 6.5 percent; at the state elections in Vorarlberg, also in September, 25.3 percent (+12.4 percent); and in Oberösterreich (Upper Austria), 15.3 percent (+6.9 percent). Its campaigns were openly racist, with anti-Muslim slogans, and in Vorarlberg undertones of antisemitism. It should be noted, however, that the attitude of senior FPÖ officials regarding anti-Muslim propaganda is not monolithic. In January 2008, during an election campaign in Graz, the leading FPÖ candidate Susanne Winter called the Prophet Mohamed a "child abuser," who wrote the Qu'ran during "epileptic bouts." Some German and Austrian neo-Nazis applauded this statement, but the majority rejected it as a provocation "on behalf of Zionism."

The appearances of FPÖ chairman Heinz-Christian Strache attracted a large number of neo-Nazis and Hitler salutes were clearly visible on video recordings of rallies. Some FPÖ leaders also participated in neo-Nazi meetings. In October 2008 Hans-Georg Jenewein, FPÖ secretary of state in Vienna, lectured at the "43 Political Academy" of the neo-

Nazi AFP (Arbeitsgemeinschaft für demokratische Politik) and made antisemitic remarks during the year (see below).

As noted in previous years, there is considerable overlap between the FPÖ and neo-Nazi circles, both content- and personnel-wise. The RFJ FPÖ Youth (Ring Freiheitlicher Jugend) is an example of such association and in Upper Austria and Styria a range of personnel overlaps with the neo-Nazi Bund Freier Jugend (BFJ) was made public in 2008. Some German neo-Nazis contribute to the bi-monthly magazine *Die Aula*, which has close ties to the FPÖ. In April 2008 Jürgen Gansel (NPD), for instance, objected to "the foreign infiltration of people of different culture and race."

The continuing political gains of the FPÖ led to increased activity and boldness on the part of the militant extreme right, and there was an increase of neo-Nazi attacks on political opponents. Neo-Nazis often go to neighboring countries to rally as their demonstrations have been banned in Austria since the FPÖ left the government in 2005 (as in the years before the FPÖ came to power in 2000).

On March 29, more than 5,000 people gathered in Vienna city center to support the nationalist slogan "Neutrality saves. No to the EU Treaty, organized by the racist tabloid *Neue Kronen Zeitung* and the anti-EU movement. More than 200 neo-Nazis followers of Gottfried Küssel, founder (in the 1980s) and leader of the neo-Nazi organization VAPO (Volkstreue Außerparlamentarische Opposition) were among them. Also among the participating groups was the National People's Party (NVP), founded in early 2008 as a political organization, despite the laws banning Nazi propaganda and political agitation. Part of its program appeared to be identical to a manual published by the SS-Hauptamt (SS Main Administration) called Education Plan for the Political Education of the SS and the Police. Although it was barred from competing in the Upper Austrian provincial and municipal elections, the NVP's neo-Nazi agitation was increasingly more open and provocative.

The Extreme Left

The isolation of the extreme left has begun to erode in recent years. Even SPÖ (Social Democratic Party of Austria) circles have ceased distancing themselves from anti-Israel groups. Thus, for example the AIK (Antiimperialistische Koordination), which disguises its support for Hamas as aid to the civilian population in the Gaza Strip, aroused sympathy through its campaign "Gaza must live" (*Gaza muss leben*). More than 900 surfers on the internet signed a petition during 2008 demanding a removal of the blockade of the Gaza Strip without a cessation of the shelling of Israeli cities beforehand. The AIK continues to struggle

against the "[Jews'] misuse of the Holocaust." However, it denies the existence of antisemitism, claiming that "neither its political nor social causes continue to exist nor does it serve its former propagators as a political-social instrument." Only "Zionism" profited from antisemitism, which explains why it tries to "encourage it."

ANTISEMITIC ACTIVITY

Government sources reported 333 extreme right criminal (2007: 280), 56 racist (2007: 48) and 23 (2007: 15) antisemitic acts in 2008. In 2008 eight individuals were injured as a result of racist or antisemitic motives (2007: 5). According to the Forum against Antisemitism, there were 46 antisemitic incidents in 2008 (2007: 62), including one physical assault (2007: 1), 2 acts of vandalism to property (2007: 2) and 7 incidents of threats and abuse (2007: 12).

Propaganda

As in previous years, the president of the IKG (Jewish community) Vienna, Ariel Muzicant, continued to be the target of insults of FPÖ politicians. FPÖ secretary of state in Vienna Hans-Georg Jenewein claimed that Muzicant would only sanction parties joining the government that had the IKG's "moral legitimization."

Israel is another target of the FPÖ. Speaking to the German news magazine *Der Spiegel* (41/08), FPÖ MP Harald Stefan announced he would celebrate the termination of Israeli-Austrian diplomatic relations if the FPÖ joined the government. "I will open a bottle of champagne when the Israeli ambassador won't be in Vienna anymore," he said. The former Carinthian FPÖ MP Karlheinz Klement published an openly antisemitic text on his homepage, previously posted on the neo-Nazi website Altermedia. Responding to criticism by the Israeli media of the collective hysteria following the death of Jörg Haider in a car accident in October 2008, he proclaimed that once all Jews were dead, there would be, "a sense of relief and satisfaction, especially in the German-speaking world." He openly threatened extermination or a "second lesson," since Jews "have not learned anything from history," as the criticism from Israel proved.

The pro-FPÖ weekly and state-funded *Zur Zeit*, published by FPÖ-MEP Andreas Mölzer, combines antisemitism with apocalyptic theories. On January 25, 2008 the paper proclaimed that the world was already "afame" due to the (Jewish) Antichrist "behind the Zionist mask of Israel and the United States of America." In September, exiled Hungarian journalist Johann F. Balvany, a member of the Viennese Association of the Foreign Press, claimed that Hungary was "an Israeli

European beachhead": Jews who had originally emigrated and fled to Israel, "had seeped back... and established themselves in politics, economy and culture after the regime turnaround in Budapest in 1990." Overall, Israel was following "in the footsteps of the Soviet occupying power." In Turkey, too, there were Jews everywhere; even the founder of the state Kemal Atatürk tried to "conceal his alleged Jewish roots." To this day, "many generals [in Turkey]... of Jewish origin are... holders of key positions in the media and economy." An antisemitic caricature blamed the August 2008 Georgian-Russian war on the Jews.

In *Die Aula* (16/09), extreme right-wing author Heinz Thomann (see also below) claimed he – in line with 36 percent of Austrians, according to an ADL survey conducted in 2009 – believes "there is too much economic power in the hands of Jews worldwide." He also notes approvingly that "nearly 50 percent of the people" had declared that "members of the Jewish people" were the cause of the 2008 "economic crisis."

A group of Catholic fundamentalists, operating anonymously, runs the site kreuz.net, which is filled with attacks on Jews and Judaism, feminists and other dissenters from the "pure doctrine." The Holocaust is openly denied. On this difficult-to-access forum, neo-Nazis from Austria and Germany, with Nazi nicknames, greet each other with "Heil Hitler" and swap ideas on various antisemitic and racist issues. ("Each Jew running free is an advertisement for the next Holocaust").

Attitudes toward the Holocaust

In early 2009, FPÖ MEP Andreas Mölzer referred in *Zur Zeit* to remembrance of Holocaust victims as a "civil-religion," and to mass murder in the gas chambers as the "dogmas to which you're not allowed to doubt, but in which you have to believe with fervor."

In mid-January 2008 Austrian lawyer and Holocaust denier Herbert Schaller, who defended British Holocaust denier David Irving during his trial in Austria in 2005, spoke of Austria's Nazi prohibition law to the state-published *Wiener Zeitung*, and proposed denial of the Holocaust as a legitimate opinion. He also spoke on these issues during the year to groups of right-wing extremists and neo-Nazis both at home and abroad. Although his extended fight "against the gas chambers" has led to several disciplinary proceedings against him by the Austrian legal association, he is immune to facing charges in a court of law because he is a lawyer.

In April 2008, *Zur Zeit* celebrated the Nazi "economy and social politics," culminating in the claims that World War II and thus the beginning of the end of the economic and social boom only began "with the declaration of war by Great Britain and France on September 3,

1939." The extreme right newspaper *Die Umwelt* remembered the 70th anniversary of the annexation of Austria in neo-Nazi style. In an article entitled "1938 – the Happy Year," editor Hemma Tiffner spoke of her "joy about the annexation."

Wehrmacht and SS veterans at Ulrichsberg in Carinthia were joined by Austrian and German neo-Nazis for their annual meeting in September 2008. Two days before, 15 hooded neo-Nazis attacked and injured some antifacists, who were demonstrating against the event.

In November 2008, some 100-150 veteran Nazis and young neo-Nazis marched to the Vienna Zentralfriedhof (central cemetery) and gathered at the grave of the Nazi "pilot hero" Walter Nowotny, to mark his death in 1944, at the invitation of the FPÖ-associated Vereins zur Pflege des Grabes Walter Nowotny. FPÖ-MP Lutz Weininger declared that Nowotny was a "war hero, an honorable man, a model."

Operation Cast Lead

The war in Gaza was used by the extreme right for further attacks on the head of the Jewish community in Austria and on the Jewish people in general. In *Die Aula* (16/09), Heinz Thomann branded Ariel Muzicant "the Tel-Aviv immigrant," and held the Jews themselves responsible for the fanatic hatred against them: Antisemitism was legitimate as Israel had tried to "annihilate once and for all in the fashion of the Old Testament... the rest of the hopelessly oppressed... Palestinian people... in the open air-concentration camp the Gaza Strip." Thomann even observed a "delusive wish for annihilation in the Talmudic sense" at work in Israel. And "the Zionist Muzicant" kept quiet about all this.

FPÖ chairman in Styria Gerhard Kurzmann accused Israel in a press release of systematic war crimes in the Gaza Strip. Confusing Hamas and Hizballah, he stated: "It's unbearable, how the Israeli army is conducting war against children, women and the elderly under the guise of self-defense." FPÖ general secretary Harald Vilimsky referred to an "Israeli campaign of destruction against the Palestinians." The FPÖ press release made no mention of Hamas rocket fire into Israel.

In early 2009, two RFJ activists claimed, in an article that was retrievable for a short time on the website of RFJ-Tirol, that Israel would lead a "war of extermination against the Palestinians.... What in every other nation at any other time would count as genocide and war crimes, is deemed to be self defense for the Jewish occupiers." However, the chairman of FPÖ Tirol Gerhard Hauser pronounced such statements "radical right wing" and stressed that the FPÖ had "nothing to do with [them]."

Officials of the Muslim community, who in previous years had been criticized for their close ties to Hamas, were successful in preventing organized protest action by their members. The extreme left tried to stir them up (also against their own officials), but they failed. Thus, only about 5,000 protesters answered the AIK call for a "Solidarity with Gaza" demonstration in Vienna on January 9.

There were a number of antisemitic incidents during this period in Tyrol. Antisemitic graffiti, together with the slogan "Boycott Israel!" and a Magen David merged with a swastika, was reported in January, and on the 10th of the month bottles were thrown at the synagogue in Innsbruck by pro-Palestinian protesters. Similar manifestations were registered until March.

BELGIUM

While Belgium witnessed a slight rise in antisemitic incidents in 2008, the number recorded in the first four months of 2009 equaled the total for the whole of 2008. The strengthening of ties between some mainstream francophone parties and Muslim immigrants was demonstrated by their joint participation in rallies, such as a pro-Hamas demonstration held on January 17, 2009. Sketches broadcast by the leading Flemish TV channel portraying Hitler in a humorous fashion were condemned by Jewish organizations as antisemitic provocation.

THE JEWISH COMMUNITY

Some 35,000 Jewish citizens live in Belgium out of a total population of 10 million. The two main centers of Belgian Jewry are Antwerp and Brussels. The Comité de Coordination des Organisations Juives de Belgique (Coordinating Committee of Jewish Organizations in Belgium – CCOJB) in Brussels is the community's roof organization. The Forum Der Joodse Organisaties (Forum of Jewish Organizations; hereafter, the Forum) is the Flemish equivalent of the (now) francophone CCJOB. As the seat of the European Union and NATO, Brussels attracts Jewish organizations and institutions seeking to advocate European Jewish or Israeli interests. In Antwerp most Jewish children attend religious schools, whereas the more secular Brussels, location of the Centre Communautaire Laïc Juif, has two lay Jewish schools and a religious one. Radio Judaica, the first European Jewish radio station, is centered in Brussels. There are two monthly publications: *Regards*, published by the Centre Communautaire laïc Juif, and *Contact J*, issued by the Cercle Ben Gourion. The state-mandated Center for Equal Opportunities and Opposition to Racism (CECLR/CEOOR) includes in its brief the struggle against antisemitism.

POLITICAL PARTIES AND EXTRA-PARLIAMENTARY GROUPS

While separatist rhetoric in Belgium originated on the extreme right, it has entered the mainstream in Flanders, the Flemish part of Belgium. All Flemish parties across the political spectrum demand a new Belgian model – some kind of confederation which, in effect, would mean the end of Belgium – and reject unity between the rich north and the poor south (Wallonia). Flanders has not yet proclaimed its independence because it wants to include Brussels in the new state. However, although encircled by Flanders, Brussels is a separate region (Belgium has three: Flanders, Wallonia and Brussels) whose population is 90 percent francophone. The Jewish population, even in Antwerp (Flanders), is francophone and pro-Belgian, and fears secession.

Immigrant and Islamist Groups

Belgium is home to a large number of Muslim communities. In fact, according to demographers such as Eric Corijn of the Flemish University of Brussels (VUB), Brussels is already the western capital with the highest percentage of persons from Muslim cultures or professing the Muslim religion. Population projections show that in about 2030, Islam will be the first religion in Brussels. Twenty percent of Brussels' citizens originate in Muslim countries (about 7 percent in Belgium as a whole). The majority are naturalized Belgians or are Belgian by birth; thus, some 20 percent of Brussels' regional MPs have Arab-Muslim roots, mostly in Morocco. All were elected on democratic lists, mostly Socialist (Socialist Party – PS), but also Green (Ecolo) and Christian Democratic (CdH) ones. Because of their French colonial history, most Belgians of North African origin vote for francophone lists. In addition, a few organizations with undemocratic ideologies are active on the political scene, including two Islamist parties, Parti Citoyenneté et Prospérité (PCP) and Parti des Jeunes Musulmans (PJM, an offshoot of the PCP) (see *ASW 2004*), as well as the newer Egalité, whose establishment was inspired by the French humorist and antisemite Dieudonné (see *France*).

The Arab European League (AEL), an immigrant protest movement promoting the introduction of Islamic law (*Shari'a*) into Europe "by democratic means," was created in Antwerp in 2000. Its leader Dyab Abou Jahjah, a Lebanese-born Muslim, has aroused controversy due to his opposition to integration and to his demand to "de-zionize" Antwerp (see *ASW 2003/4*; also *ASW 2006*).

While Belgian Muslims do not aspire to form a political party of their own, they have become increasingly active in Belgian political life, gaining concomitantly more representation within the democratic parties, city councils and legislative bodies of the state, especially within the French-speaking PS, to which the Muslim vote has become crucial. In order to become the leading party in the Brussels region, the PS has turned, since the 1989 institutional reform creating the Brussels region, to the immigrant, particularly the Moroccan, community. This has meant, above all, that the traditional pro-Israel position of the PS in the Brussels region has been replaced by a very aggressive anti-Israel stand. The Swiss theologian Tariq Ramadan has close ties to the PS.

Further proof of the strengthening of ties between mainstream francophone parties and Muslim immigrants may be found in their joint participation in rallies, such as in the pro-Hamas demonstration held on January 17, 2009 during Israel's Cast Lead Operation (late December 2008-mid-January 2009), with the exception of the liberal-conservative

Reformist Movement (MR), and in contrast to France, where mainly extreme left parties took part in such rallies.

During Israel's Gaza operation, the local Muslim population demonstrated its ability to quickly organize a series of mass demonstrations over the period of the war. Most of these rallies were infiltrated by Muslim extremists who equated Israel with the Nazis, IDF soldiers with the SS and the Star of David with the swastika. Local Muslim youth who joined this movement rapidly popularized those slogans.

In Belgium, a significant development among the pro-Palestinian far left has been the emergence of a strong pro-Hizballah movement, which views both the PLO and the Palestinian Authority as traitors and which ties its support for Hizballah/Hamas to that for the so-called Iraqi resistance. For instance, the Marxist-Leninist PTB/PVDA (Parti du Travail de Belgique) links the fight against capitalism and imperialism to the Hamas/Hizballah struggle against Israel. The messages of these groups combine classical and modern antisemitic motifs: Jews have undue influence in the world; the Jews are trying to exploit the Holocaust for their own gain; Israel's attitude toward the Palestinians is in principle no different from that of the Nazis toward the Jews; and Israel is waging a war of extermination against the Palestinians. Among all progressive and leftist circles, the Jew who does not openly disown the State of Israel is considered the enemy of humankind. Indymedia Belgium (see also below) is one of the vectors of radical anti-Zionism and the new antisemitism.

Belgium, a Special Case

Belgian attitudes toward Israel and even toward Judaism are also influenced by internal factors: 1) the Catholic tradition, which has been anti-Jewish since the Middle Ages; 2) difficulties in dealing with the Holocaust, especially in Flanders; anti-Zionism is thus a way to forget, forgive or trivialize Flemish collaborationism.

For contemporary Belgium, opposition to Israel serves the interests of many components of its society, on the left as well as on the right, Catholic as well as secular, immigrant as well as Walloon or Flemish. A veritable "cultural code," anti-Zionism serves to express all sorts of resentments: failure to integrate, fear of globalization, class warfare and conspiracy theories, such as the 9/11 attacks and H1N1 influenza as Jewish plots. As in the Middle Ages, the Jew, reclassified as the Zionist, has become the primary cause of the world's ills. If one is to believe the leading editorialists of Wallonia, Flanders and Brussels, all the frustrations of the Arab world are a result of non-resolution of the

Palestinian question. By its very powerfulness and arrogance, Israel constitutes the main threat to world peace. No other issue commands such attention (or any attention at all) in Belgian universities.

Flemish and French Political Parties

The Vlaams Belang (Flemish Interest – VB) succeeded the racist Vlaams Blok (see *ASW 2004*). After toning down some of the Blok's extremist rhetoric, VB won significant percentages of the vote in Flanders. Despite its demonstrations of solidarity with the Jewish community since the creation of the AEL, and its more moderate tone in relation to the Holocaust and the Jews in general, the VB continues to hold ties with small neo-fascist and antisemitic groups, such as Voorpost, Were Di and the Vlaamse Militanten Orde (VMO). Besides being the leading political party in the city of Antwerp, having gained 35 percent of the overall vote in the 2004 elections, the VB is also the main Flemish political party in the Brussels regional parliament, with 6 out of the 11 seats held by Flemings.

In September 2008, MEP Frank Vanhecke, one of the leaders of Vlaams Belang was interviewed by Israel's *Ha'aretz* after the European Parliament's Committee on Legal Affairs decided to lift his immunity (see below). Vanhecke said he was aware that many Jews viewed Vlaams Belang as antisemitic, but that this "misconception" was due in part to a "grave error" on the part of some Flemish secessionists who had sided with the Nazis in the 1940s "only as a misguided and naïve attempt to achieve independence." He also referred to "the unacceptable behavior of a few weeds" who associated themselves with the party, adding: "They say I'm antisemitic when the truth is I am one of Israel's staunchest defenders in the European Parliament." After the interview, the leader of the Forum Der Joodse Organisaties reaffirmed the necessity of the Cordon Sanitaire, a pact between all other Belgian parties pledging to refrain from joining any coalition with the VB. This reasoning is based, inter alia, on the following:

- In June 2008, former American KKK leader David Duke came for a second visit to Flanders to participate in a nationalist meeting. While there, he was the guest of two VB militants: Karin Milik, a VB council member of the Sint-Niklaas municipality, and Thierry De Rijcke, the bodyguard of Filip Dewinter, the party's number two.
- In 2008, Roland Pirard, a former staff member of the FN (see below) now in the VB, published an apologetic biography, *Adolf Hitler, Sa véritable histoire* (Adolf Hitler: His True Story). This 479-page book, published in France by Grancher, tries to rehabilitate

Hitler's work in the social field. Pirard is a VB representative on the Brussels municipal council for the constituency of Berchem-Sainte-Agathe.

- In December, Roeland Raes, a former VB vice president, was again convicted of Holocaust denial (see below).

Since its establishment in Brussels in 1985, the francophone Front national belge (FN) has attracted the leaders of political groups and circles known for their endorsement of antisemitism and Holocaust denial, such as the Fraternité sacerdotale Saint-Pie X (see below), Belgique et Chrétienté (see below), and Cercle Copernic (a cultural group belonging to the neo-Nazi stream of the New Right). A number of "independent" publications with antisemitic content, such as *Walloon Altair*, have expressed support for the Front's political struggle. Following the June 2004 regional elections, the FN became the second major party in Charleroi after the Socialist Party, but remains only the fifth largest within the Wallonia region.

Unlike its Flemish counterparts, the French-speaking right has never put antisemitism on hold, as demonstrated by postings on the forum of the Tonnelier.be website, where the "Jewish Internationale" is fiercely denounced. Senate member Michel Delacroix was forced to resign from the FN presidency over a video showed him sitting with some VB acquaintances (such as Luc Vankeerberghen) and singing a song to the tune of "L'eau vive" by Jewish singer Guy Beart, but with the lyrics changed to tell the story of a Jewish woman sent to the gas chamber in Dachau. He suggested that former FN president Daniel Féret, who fled to France to avoid a prison sentence imposed in 2008 for fiscal fraud, might have had a role in exposing the tape (see also *ASW 2006*).

In October, during a conversation with students, FN parliamentary deputy Patrick Cocriamont denied that gas chambers existed during World War II. He also revealed that links existed between some FN militants and neo-Nazi organizations.

Extreme Right Extra-parliamentary Groups

Among extra-parliamentary groups of the Belgian far right antisemitism is less of a taboo than among parliamentary rightists, and many such groups maintain regular contact with parliamentary representatives of right-wing extremism. In francophone circles, the Nation movement, a self-proclaimed alternative to the FN, represents the radical far right (see *ASW 2006*). Nation also has ties to the outlawed Unité radicale in France and the NPD in Germany, as well as to the local FNB and VB, and significantly, to radical Islamist elements, such as the French Parti

des musulmans de France and the French black racist Mouvement des Damnés de l'Impérialisme, condemned in France for antisemitism.

The integrist Belgique et Chrétienté (B&C), created in Liège (Wallonia) in 1989, has links to the FNB and is a recognized lobby in the European parliament. The organization could be considered the political wing of the Catholic fundamentalist Fraternité Saint-Pie X. The latter is a dissident (and excommunicated) branch of the Catholic Church, whose declared mission is to fight "anti-Belgian and anti-Christian racism." B&C leader Alain Escada is also founder of *Polémique-info*, a weekly magazine appearing both online and in print, which frequently attacks "restless and anonymous high finance," a euphemism for the Jews.

In Flanders, the Flemish branch of the international neo-Nazi movement Blood & Honour organized two events commemorating Hitler's birthday, on April 18 and 19, 2008, first a ceremony and the next day a concert with the German antisemitic band Die Liebenfels Kapelle.

ANTISEMITIC ACTIVITY

Belgium witnessed a slight rise in antisemitic incidents in 2008 – 72 compared to 69 in 2007. There were 5 cases of physical assault, 8 of threats, 4 of vandalism of Jewish property, 27 of offensive articles, cartoons and graffiti, and 28 of abusive letters, emails, and comments on internet forums. The number of antisemitic incidents in the first four months of 2009 equaled the total for the whole of 2008 and returned figures to the 2001 level. In January 2009 alone, during Israel's Cast Lead Operation, 40 incidents were recorded, including 2 of physical assault, 9 of threats, and 6 of vandalism of Jewish property.

The perpetrators tend to be youths of various backgrounds: East European, as well as Maghrebi and, more recently, Turkish. In the Antwerp region, strong support for the extreme right and incitement of young Muslims by extremist Arab organizations such as AEL constitute a potentially explosive cocktail.

Violence, Vandalism and Harassment

While the cities most affected were Brussels and Antwerp, there were also incidents in Charleroi and Ostend, where only a handful of Jews live. Most were directed against members of the small but visible Orthodox Antwerp Jewish community. For example, on September 13, several Jews who had been praying at the Balz synagogue in Antwerp were attacked with a golf club and other means after they came to the defense of some children outside the synagogue who were being harassed by two men with dogs. The police had to be called in twice and one of the Jewish victims was hospitalized. Later that night, a young Jew

who was approaching his car after he had come out of a bar was accosted by five men of North African origin, who assaulted him and abused him with antisemitic remarks. In addition, in February three members of a group of 16-year-old "native" Wilrijk (Antwerp) youngsters were arrested after they were caught insulting and threatening students from the Wilrijk Yeshiva. The harassment against the students had reportedly been going on repeatedly. Also in February, a Hassidic Jew was harassed by four youths of North African origin at a gas station in Brussels, with insults such as "Eh, Rabbi, we know you. We know where you live, Rabbi Jacob." The victim was rescued by the gas station owner.

The peak of the violence occurred with the start of Israel's Gaza operation and was directed especially against Jewish symbols: vandalizing of the menorah of in Antwerp (December 26); desecration of the Charleroi synagogue three times (December 29, with a Molotov cocktail, and January 5 and 7, 2009); an arson attempt on the Sephardic synagogue in Brussels; and a threat against the Ostend synagogue. As in previous cases, most of those incidents were ignored by the press.

Insults and Propaganda

In soccer stadiums antisemitic insults hurled at Jewish teams have become more common. For instance, in February, a football match between two local teams, Maccabi and Sint-Katelijne-Waver, was interrupted when the goal keeper of the Flemish team told one of the Maccabi players: "Go back to Germany."

On June 24, activists from the anti-Israel Paix Juste au Proche-Orient (Just Peace in the Middle East) movement (led by Marc Abramowicz, a Jew) performed a psychodrama in the streets of the city center of Nivelles, some 30 km south of Brussels, in protest against Israel's 60th anniversary. Seeking to illustrate what their leaflets called the "expulsion of Palestinians in 1948 when Israel was created," two politicians, MP Thérèse Snoy, from the Greens, and former Belgian Defense Minister and Socialist MP André Flahaut, a city councilor in Nivelles, addressed the crowd, proclaiming to be "determined to fight against all exclusions, all Nazisms, all fascisms wherever they are." The Israeli embassy deplored the performance, claiming that "these associations are taking an active part in importing a regional conflict into the streets of Belgium and feeding antisemitism." According to historian Joël Kotek, the drama was reminiscent of medieval antisemitic Christian processions and mystery plays and had succeeded in dramatically reigniting fear of fellow Jewish citizens. Children who witnessed the psychodrama were terrified.

In November and December, drawing on a Christian deicide theme, over 30 non-confessional NGOs (including Oxfam and 11.11.11, an umbrella group of NGOs – both funded by Belgian taxpayers) formed a human chain against the "apartheid wall" and the "sly ethnic cleansing" Israel was allegedly perpetrating against Palestinians. The organizers also claimed that 400 Christian families had had to leave Bethlehem because of Israeli violence.

The Belgian site of the "alternative" internet press agency Indymedia Belgium publishes antisemitic cartoons of the controversial Brazilian caricaturists Carlos Latuff and Belgian Benjamin Hecht, and is the most radically anti-Zionist among the European Indymedia sites.

ATTITUDES TOWARD THE HOLOCAUST AND THE NAZI ERA

While anti-Zionist propaganda used to legitimize antisemitic positions is disseminated widely in Belgium and antisemitism itself has penetrated mainstream Belgian society, taboos that have been in place since World War II are also being broken. This is exemplified by several skits broadcast on the leading Flemish private television channel VTM. On October 27, protests by the Forum and CCOJB forced VRT (Flemish public television) to scrap a TV show about Adolf Hitler's supposed favorite dish – alpine trout in butter sauce – as part of a series about famous people's favorite foods. On November 29, VRT again caused a furor when during a travel show promoting Berlin it portrayed Hitler as a male stripper giving the Nazi salute before the flag of Nazi Germany. The incident triggered a protest by the German embassy, which called it extremely tasteless. This sketch was cancelled too, but a few ads for both shows had already appeared in a TV magazine.

On December 21, comedian Philippe Geubels [*sic*] accused Belgian Jews of overreacting to the food show. "What are they going to do if there is a big gas leak in Antwerp?" he asked, referring to the Belgian port city, which has a large Jewish community. "Take the city to court for provocation? Preemptively file charges against anyone who dares joke about that?" Geubels also said the Holocaust could not happen again because Jews are much smarter. "They have spread across the world. Try rounding them up! Most are in America so you cannot send them by train to Germany to die in gas chambers."

Although most mainstream humorists no longer dare mock the Jews or the Holocaust, according to the Forum and CCOJB, the VRT's repeated antisemitic provocations disguised as humor dishonoured its role as a public broadcaster. They said they planned to take legal steps against the VRT and asked the government of Flemish-speaking Belgium, which is responsible for the station, to act against the culprits.

A poster campaign launched by the SNCB (public railways company) in Flanders illustrates the extent of trivialization of the Holocaust in Belgium. In October, during a cleanliness drive on the railways, posters bearing reproductions of timetables with destinations such as Auschwitz-Birkenau, Belzec and Chelmno appeared at some Flemish railways stations. They were later removed.

French Holocaust denier Vincent Reynouard who fled to Belgium after being convicted in France in November 2007 was tried in Brussels too, in June 2008, together with Siegfried Verbeke, founder of the Belgium-based Foundation for Free Historical Research (Vrij Historisch Onderzoek – VHO), on Holocaust denial charges.

On December 12, the same tribunal convicted Roeland Raes a former VB senator and party vice president. He had been charged in 2001 with Holocaust denial under the Belgian Holocaust denial law after saying on Dutch television: "I doubt the systematic extermination of the Jews and I also doubt the number of deaths... and also whether camps such as Auschwitz were all meant to be extermination camps." The charges were dropped in early 2006, at the request of the public prosecutor and after a hearing, but following an appeal by the Forum, the case was resumed. In December, he was given a suspended sentence of 4 months imprisonment. The Forum and the Centre for Equal Opportunities and Opposition to Racism (founded by parliamentary act) received €1,000 in damages. His civil rights were revoked for a period of ten years.

DENMARK

While only four incidents were recorded in Denmark in 2008 compared to ten in 2007, twice this number was registered during the period of Israel's Gaza operation. Fears of another crisis similar to the one that arose following the publication of cartoons of the Prophet Muhammad in September 2005 grew when some Danish newspapers reprinted one of them in February.

THE JEWISH COMMUNITY

Denmark was the first Scandinavian country to permit Jews to settle when they arrived there in the 17th century. Jews have enjoyed civic equality since 1814 and citizenship since 1849. Today there are 7,000 Jews in Denmark, out of a total population of 5.25 million. Most of the community is concentrated in Copenhagen, but smaller ones exist in Odense and Aarhus. The central communal organization is the Mosaiske Troessamfund. The community operates only one synagogue, the Great Synagogue completed in 1833, as well as the Caroline Jewish Day School (established in 1805). Together with Copenhagen Municipality, the Jewish Community is involved in running Deborah Center, a new home for the aged. *Joedisk Orientering* is the leading Jewish publication, together with *Goldberg*, a cultural magazine. There is also a small progressive Jewish community, Shir Hatzafon, as well as a Chabad Lubavitch center.

EXTREMIST GROUPS

Left-Wing Groups

Danish left-wing groups tend to emerge in relation to developments in the Israeli-Palestinian arena. In addition to older groups such as the International Solidarity Movement and Boycott Israel, a new arrival on the scene was Gaza Initiative, an umbrella organization for small Danish left-wing groups, various sections of Palestinian groups, and mixed groups (comprising both Danes and Palestinians), such as Free Palestine. Gaza Initiative was the prime mover behind the majority of anti-Israel demonstrations during the Israel's military offensive in Gaza. They have excellent relations with the immigrant communities and work closely with their leaders.

An appeal was lodged by the Danish Prosecution Service in the case of seven persons from the clothing company Fighters and Lovers who were acquitted of lending support to the terrorist organizations PLFP (Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine) and FARC (Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia), through sales of T-shirts with various slogans and logos (see *ASW* 2007). The second highest court (*Landsretten*) found six of the seven guilty of supporting terrorist

organizations and handed down varying sentences of up to six months in prison.

Right-Wing Groups

Neo-Nazi and other extreme right groups, such as Dansk Front (Danish Front), the Danish National Socialist Party (DNSP) and Blood & Honour, tend to maintain a much lower profile in Denmark than their counterparts in Sweden and Norway. Membership is small: the Danish police estimate that Dansk Front, for example, has 400–500 members. Calling for "Denmark for Danes," the main concern of the extreme right is immigration. In 2008, they organized a few minor demonstrations, handed out fliers on some occasions, and held a few neo-Nazi music concerts.

MUSLIM AND MIDDLE EAST IMMIGRANT POPULATION

Muslim Population

Muslim sources estimate their number in Denmark at 300,000, while official sources put it lower at 225,000; there are 115 functioning mosques. According to researchers, only about 10 percent of this population are practicing Muslims. Most Muslims live in the main cities of Copenhagen, Aarhus and Odense. During the 1970s, many Muslims immigrated to Denmark from Turkey, Pakistan, Morocco and Yugoslavia. From the 1980s, most Muslim immigrants came from Iran, Iraq, Somalia and the Palestinian territories. The last significant immigration wave – which is still ongoing though at a lower level – was from Iraq. There are no statistics on illegal immigration.

A growing number of teenagers are converting to Islam. One in three converts is 14–19 years old. While 2,500 people converted to Islam in 2005, this number is estimated to have escalated to 4,500–5,000 in 2008.

As in other west European countries, a large part of the Muslim community is concentrated in ghettos, such as Vollsmose (Odense), parts of Nørrebro (central Copenhagen) and Rosenhøj, close to the city of Aarhus. The more militant among them claim that these areas are autonomous neighborhoods: "This place belongs to us and here we have our own rules." Ambulances, police, firemen and postmen are harassed when they try to enter the area, and are often stoned. In addition young Muslims are increasingly implicated in growing criminality and violence between gangs.

Islamist Groups

Extremist Islamist organizations seek to recruit members in radical mosques, online, on university campuses and in prisons. The

transnational fundamentalist Hizb ut-Tahrir (HuT), for instance, which refers to Israel as "the Zionist entity," is well-established and very active in Denmark. Its influence on young Muslims is illustrated by its ability to attract up to 1,500 people to their events.

Other fundamentalist organizations especially active in educational institutions (universities, colleges) include Minhaj-ul-Quran, which operates among people of Pakistani origin, and al-Muhajiroun. Both disseminate propaganda urging implementation of the *khilafa* (political system in Islam – Caliphate) and Shariah laws in Denmark and other countries with Muslim communities. It is generally assumed that both the Kurdish Ansar al-Islam/Ansar al-Sunna and Hamas have supporters in Denmark. The al-Aqsa Spannmål (al-Aqsa Foundation), an international organization with branches in various European countries, and which both the US and Israel claim channels money to Hamas' terror activities, continues to function although several of its European branches have been shut down by the authorities (see *ASW* 2007).

A new radical Islamic group, Asir, or Nordic Jihad, made up of former criminals who have returned to Islam, has reportedly been formed.

Fears of another crisis similar to the one that arose following the publication of cartoons of the Prophet Muhammad in September 2005 (see *ASW* 2005 and 2006) grew when some Danish newspapers reprinted one of them in February in protest against threats to the cartoonist. However, following a short period of remonstrations in the Arab media, tensions died down. Only Sudan declared that it would boycott Danish merchandise and in Gaza, Rabbit Assud (from Hamas TV for Kids) declared: "If they repeat it – we will kill them. I will bite them and eat them." The program also called for a boycott of Danish goods.

The case involving the arrest in 2007 of eight militant Islamists from Glasvej for planning a series of terrorist attacks (see *ASW* 2007) ended in 2008. The two main suspects, Hammad Khürshid (from Pakistan) and Abdoulghani Tokhi (from Afghanistan) were sentenced on October 22 to 12 years and 7 years in prison, respectively.

ANTISEMITIC AND RACIST ACTIVITY

Antisemitic Incidents

While between 2001 and 2006, the Jewish Community of Copenhagen received an average of about 30 complaints of antisemitism a year, only four incidents were recorded in 2008 down from 10 in 2007.

An Israeli rabbi was harassed and chased in the Copenhagen Airport underground car park by three men of Middle Eastern origin. He

succeeded in reaching the airport police station, but the men disappeared. In addition, a member of the Jewish community complained that someone with a "Middle East accent" had rung his intercom and said: "You Zionist pig, all Jews have to die." A journalist working at DR (Danish Radio & TV) had the tires of this car slashed a week after receiving the message: "You will soon shut your dirty Jew-mouth." Antisemitic graffiti was also reported on the wall of a shopping mall in Greve.

Israel's Gaza Operation

Denmark's Muslim population appeared well-prepared and effective in organizing anti-Israel demonstrations in all the large cities. In Odense (main city of Fyn), two Israelis manning a stall of Dead Sea products in Rosengårdcenter were harassed and then shot at on January 1. Both fled the shopping mall but were wounded during the attack.

Among the many anti-Israel demonstrations, the Gaza Initiative organized rallies in various areas of Copenhagen and Odense, including in Nørrebro, a neighborhood of the capital heavily populated by Middle East immigrants, on January 4, 5, 7 and 13. Slogans included "Israel=child murderers," "Israel =aggressor" and the letters [Waffen] SS represented as symbols for lightning. Another rally was organized by Hizb-ut-Tahrir in Nørrebro. In addition to slogans similar to the above, there was also the call "Allah is great and the Jews are the enemies of God." Green Hamas and black Hizballah flags were common. Some leading members of the Islamic community such as Khalil Assi of the Islamic Faith-Society participated in this demonstration.

The Jewish Community organized a counter-demonstration of 600-700 participants, calling for peace in the Middle East, against terror, and against the demonization of Israel, on January 10, at City Hall Square in Copenhagen. Toward the end a heavy police presence protected 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 right to exist."

Eight antisemitic incidents were reported in January 2009 alone during the Gaza operation. Besides the shooting incident in Odense and the threats to Jewish demonstrators, the Jewish school in Copenhagen received a mail threat, which said: "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." In addition, abusive mail was received by a member of the community and by an employee of the Danish Zionist Organization ("Now I understand why Hitler wanted to exterminate all Jews..."), and a colleague of the latter organization was

the target of an abusive voice mail from "'Abd al-Jabr" (f***ing Jewpig," etc.). A monument to Jews killed in Theresienstadt was desecrated and a car belonging to a Jewish participant in a demonstration was vandalized.

The month of February witnessed a similar but declining trend.

FRANCE

The number of antisemitic incidents reported in France for 2008 remained stable compared to the previous year. However, the downward trend that began after the peak year of 2004, came to an abrupt end in January 2009, when 360 incidents were recorded, as a result of mass mobilization against Operation Cast Lead. With the tone largely set by Islamists, supporters of the far left, the radical left and some activists of the far right joined in virulently anti-Israel demonstrations, the peak being on January 3, when some 50,000 people rallied.

THE JEWISH COMMUNITY

The French Jewish community, which numbers a little less than 600,000 out of a total population of 64 million, is the largest in western Europe. The greatest concentration is in the Paris area, followed by Marseille, Lyon, Nice and Toulouse. Strasbourg, where 12,000 Jews live, is a major religious and cultural center.

The three main organizations of French Jewry are the Conseil Représentatif des Institutions Juives de France (CRIF), the Consistoire Central de France (which elected a new chief rabbi, Gilles Bernheim, in June 2008), and the Fonds Social Juif Unifié (FSJU). The Jewish Community Protection Service (SPCJ) operates under the auspices of all three organizations and publishes a yearly report.

There has been a dramatic revitalization of communal life since the early 1980s, reflected in the large number of Jewish private schools (about 100, attended by 30 percent of Jewish schoolchildren, or some 30,000 pupils), as well as synagogues (over 150 in the Paris area). Since the beginning of the antisemitic wave which began in autumn 2000, many families have transferred their children from state-run secular to Jewish schools, or to other private schools, either Catholic or non-denominational. Some 1,560 French Jews immigrated to Israel in 2008 compared to 2,335 in 2007.

POLITICAL PARTIES AND EXTRA-PARLIAMENTARY GROUPS

There were no national elections in 2008, but elections to one half of the Conseils Généraux (in the *départements*) and to the city councils (nationwide) were held in March. The extreme left Lutte Ouvrière had a few councilmen elected on Communist slates, and the Ligue Communiste Révolutionnaire passed the 10 percent threshold in 11 cities, also electing a few councilmen, either on its own or on joint slates with other left-wing parties. The extreme right Front National fielded candidates in fewer cities than in 2001. It won no mayoralty, although

Marine Le Pen, daughter of party head Jean-Marie Le Pen polled 30 percent in her stronghold of Hénin-Beaumont, in northern France.

Extreme Right Parties

The Front National (FN), founded in 1972, has been on the decline, especially since Jean-Marie Le Pen's poor showing in the 2007 presidential election and the subsequent cuts in public funding of the party. The image of the party has also been damaged due to internal strife over Le Pen's successor as chairman. In 2008, Le Pen (born 1928) confirmed that he would step down after the next FN national convention, to be held in 2010 or 2011. Although his daughter Marine declared that she intends to take over as FN president, she will have to compete for the leadership with another candidate, Euro MP Bruno Gollnisch. While Marine is often compared to Italy's Gianfranco Fini (see *ASW* 2004) and the latter is regarded as a hardliner, Marine has stated that she does not intend to change the fundamentals of FN ideology on such issues as immigration, opposition to Islam and multiculturalism, and law and order. On Jewish and Israel-related issues, she, unlike her father, has not been psychologically shaped by World War II history and has repeatedly said she does not support her father's trivialization of the Shoah. The official position of the party on Operation Cast Lead was to condemn the Israeli invasion. Jean-Marie Le Pen stated on January 3, 2009 that Gaza looked like "a gigantic concentration camp" and that the Palestinian resistance was similar "to the uprising of the Warsaw ghetto."

The leader of the Mouvement National Républicain (MNR), Bruno Mégret, announced in May that he was retiring from politics. His successor is Annick Martin, but the party is almost non-existent. In September, the MNR took part in an anti-Islam rally held in Germany by the Pro-Köln movement.

Three parties tried to take advantage of the vacuum on the far right: the Nouvelle Droite Populaire (NDP); the Parti de la France (PF) and the Bloc Identitaire (BI). The NDP, led by Robert Spieler, is a populist, anti-Islam party launched in June 2008. While it did not take sides during the Hamas/Israel confrontation, in September, it split, with Jean-François Touzé forming the Nouvelle Droite Républicaine, which gave Israel unconditional support. The PF has been led since early 2009 by Carl Lang, a former FN top executive. The Bloc Identitaire, led by Fabrice Robert, appears to be a rising force on the extreme right. Although originally radical, including on the issue of anti-Zionism, it now seeks to become a broad populist movement similar to Italy's Lega Nord, Belgium's Vlaams Belang or Austria's FPÖ, opposing

multiculturalism and the "islamization" of Europe. Espousing "neither keffieh, nor kippa," the BI does not take sides in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, although in January 2009 it clashed with Muslim demonstrators who marched in Nice in support of Gaza.

On the other hand, when Le Pen steps down, some groups and individuals will seek to rally radicals from within and outside the party around an anti-establishment, racist, "anti-Zionist" Third Way, which would include anti-capitalist and anti-globalization ideas. The most vocal of these groups is the neo-Nazi Parti Solidaire Français (PSF; formerly Droite Socialiste), led by Thomas Werlet. On July 12, a PSF demonstration against the presence of IDF soldiers at the Bastille Day parade in Paris, was banned and on September 27, the PSF leadership showed up at the demonstration commemorating al-Quds Day, despite a police ban. The former Réseau Radical, now active on the net at www.voxnr.com and led by Christian Bouchet, is an interesting example of how a radical anti-Zionist, pro-Iran, national-revolutionary group has chosen to work from within the FN and support Marine Le Pen, in order to influence her policies.

The Left, the Greens and the Anti-globalization Movement

The divide between the extreme left and the radical left can be drawn on the issue of electoral alliances with the Social Democrats, namely, the Socialist Party (PS). While the NPA (see below) and others refuse to become part of a government coalition, the Communist Party and the Greens seek such an alliance.

There are very few examples of plain, open antisemitism coming from the far left, and people or organizations mentioned in this section cannot be labeled antisemitic. However, they support various forms of anti-Zionist and anti-Israel prejudice which convey a distorted view of the situation in the Middle East to members and voters. Demonization of Israel and its citizens continues to be one of the reasons for the high level of antisemitism in France, and this is of grave concern to the Jewish community. Several Jewish communal leaders have suggested that there is a direct link between the pro-Palestinian solidarity propaganda that a number of Communist city councils have been disseminating, and the level of antisemitism in those cities.

There were two major events in 2008 on the extreme left. The first was the transformation of the former Ligue Communiste Révolutionnaire (LCR) into the Nouveau Parti Anticapitaliste (NPA). In a leaflet distributed on January 5, 2009, the NPA summed up its stand on the Israel-Palestinian conflict and the Gaza operation as follows: economic, political, cultural and sports relations with Israel should be

immediately suspended (both on the national and EU level); the "slaughter" in Gaza and the blockade should be ended; refugees should have the right to return; and all Palestinian prisoners should be freed.

Second, on December 8, Lutte Ouvrière (LO), the other important Trotskyite party, announced that its 68-year-old leader, Arlette Laguiller, would step down in 2009 and would be replaced by a 38-year-old teacher, Nathalie Arthaud. Because of its rigid secularism, LO is hostile to cooperation with Islamists. Thus, although it took part in the anti-Israel demonstrations, it played a minor role. On January 9, 2009, Arlette Laguiller wrote an editorial in the party weekly, stating that although Hamas came to power in Gaza by a majority vote, it was "a reactionary organization that imposes a dictatorship on its own people, by suppressing the other Palestinian movements." NPA, on the hand, asked the EU to remove the Hamas from its list of terrorist movements, and supports the right of the Palestinian people to armed resistance. Undoubtedly, the majority on the extreme left support the line of the NPA, while LO is in the minority. All extreme left groups agree upon a "single, secular, democratic, bi-national state in Israel/Palestine" solution.

In December 2008 and January 2009, all groups from the Trotskyite, Maoist and anarchist extreme left demonstrated against Israel during Operation Cast Lead. The issue of whether some of the slogans in those demonstrations were antisemitic (such as "Zionists, fascists, you are the terrorists" and comparisons of Gaza with the Warsaw Ghetto and Nazi concentration camps) was not raised by the leadership of these groups, except by that of anarchist groups such as the Confédération Nationale du Travail (CNT). On January 24, several extreme right groups called to demonstrate against Israel, alongside far leftists and Islamists, under a banner that called for a "united front against Zionism." The demonstrators from the extreme right were attacked by CNT stewards and were obliged to march apart from the main group.

A development of concern has been the broad support for Hizballah and Hamas both on the extreme left and among Muslim activists of the Palestinian cause. Groups that now endorse those terrorist movements are the Indigènes de la République, the Association Générale des Etudiants de Nanterre (AGEN), the Comité de soutien à Georges Ibrahim Abdallah, the French branch of the International Solidarity Movement (ISM), and the Mouvement de Soutien à la Résistance du Peuple Palestinien (MSRPP). This radical pro-Palestinian coalition is predominantly secular, not Islamist, and although many followers are Arab immigrants, some leaders are native French, non-Muslim leftists. The largest such group is CAPJPO (Coordination des Appels pour une

Paix Juste au Proche-Orient: <http://www.europalestine.com>), whose leader is Olivia Zémor, a Jew. The Union Juive Française pour la Paix (UJFP) is another Jewish-led, anti-Zionist group used by the anti-Zionist Far Left in media appearances to rebuff accusations of antisemitism.

Another high-profile movement is the loose network of individuals supporting the well-known comedian Dieudonné M'Bala M'Bala, whose unofficial website (<http://lesogres.org>) is undoubtedly one of the most virulently antisemitic sites in France. In 2008, Dieudonné intensified his involvement in radical anti-Jewish activities. In July, he chose Jean-Marie Le Pen as the godfather of his newborn girl. The ceremony was performed by Father Philippe Laguérie, a traditionalist priest who is known for his anti-Jewish sermons. On December 28, during a public performance in Paris, Dieudonné invited Holocaust denier Robert Faurisson to join him on stage and asked him to wear a yarmulke in a skit mocking the victims of the Shoah. Both men were indicted for this offense. In January 2009 Dieudonné began working with Shi'i activists from the Centre Zahra, a small group known for its close ties to the Iranian regime. Its Moroccan-born leader Yahia Gouasmi, decided on January 16, 2009 to launch a political party named Parti Anti-Sioniste (PAS), whose aim is to contest the June 2009 European election on a common slate with Dieudonné and antisemitic novelist Alain Soral.

The Communist Party played a leading role in the anti-Israel rallies. It claimed that Israeli military actions were "crimes against humanity" and asked both France and the EU to impose sanctions on Israel. The party drew particular criticism from Jewish institutions such as CRIF for having used as posters during the demonstrations a front page from the Communist daily *l'Humanité*, which showed the severed head of a child lying on the ground (<http://www.pcf.fr/spip.php?article3334>). The Greens, who are as probably as biased against Israel as the extreme and the radical left, also took part in the demonstrations and called for sanctions against Israel because of its alleged war crimes. However, it condemned the rocket fire by Hamas, which it labeled "an extremist, religiously fanatic and women-oppressing movement." One of the most vocal supporters of Hamas is Alima Boumédiène-Thierry, a Green senator from Paris who wants the EU to remove Hamas from its list of terrorist organizations.

In November 2008, Senate member Jean-Luc Mélançon, split from the Socialist Party and launched (officially on January 30, 2009) the Parti de Gauche (PG). The PG took part in the anti-Israel marches, but because of its secularist ideology, issued a statement on January 13, which explicitly condemned the "communitarian" approach to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict as well as the antisemitic actions perpetrated in

France during Operation Cast Lead. The PG explicitly supports a two-state solution, as do the Communists and the Greens.

On January 14, the Communist Party, the PG and the Green Party signed a joint statement condemning the antisemitic incidents that took place in France. The statement also condemned both the actions of the IDF in Gaza and the Hamas rocket attacks on Israel, and re-affirmed the right of both Israel and the Palestinians to their own state, "within secure and mutually recognized borders." However, in order not to anger militant rank and file opponents of Israel, it was first issued by two NGOs close to the left, the Ligue des Droits de l'Homme and the Ligue de l'Enseignement.

On January 15, 2009, several Muslim associations called for a sit-in demonstration in front of the national headquarters of the Socialist Party, in order to protest the party's refusal to condemn Israel. One of the slogans was "Parti Socialiste, Parti Sioniste" (a pun on the party's name, equating it with a "Zionist party"). Far from being a fringe event, the demonstration was staged by the UOIF (see below), the Addawa mosque (the largest in Paris), the Tawhid Center (pro-Tariq Ramadan – see *ASW* 2007), Présence et Solidarité Musulmane (the French branch of the Moroccan Al Adl Wal Ihsane) and several of the largest mosques in Paris suburbs.

Islamist Groups

There was little change in this sector in 2008 (see *ASW* 2007). In regard to the operation in Gaza, the orthodox Sunni Union des Organisations Islamiques de France (UOIF), a faction of the Conseil Français du Culte Musulman (CFCM), the representative body of religious Muslims in France, issued a press release on December 29 condemning the "unprecedented genocide of the Palestinian population by the Israeli army" (<http://www.uoif-online.com/webdispip/spip.php?article421>), a phrasing erroneously interpreted by CRIF as meaning that the Gaza operation was "the worst genocide in the history of humanity" (<http://www.rue89.com/2009/01/04/le-dialogue-entre-musulmans-et-juifs-de-france-gele-par-la-guerre>). The UOIF also called on France to impose sanctions on Israel. As a result, the dialogue between CRIF and the CFCM was suspended, although the new chairman of CFCM, Mohammed Moussaoui, took a very moderate stand on the Gaza issue. The problem for CRIF was that UOIF is one of the founding members of CFCM and sits on its board.

ANTISEMITIC ACTIVITIES

The number of antisemitic manifestations reported in France for 2008 remained stable compared to the previous year, with 397 incidents reported by the Ministry of the Interior and the CRIF compared to 402 in 2007. Sixty-one percent were physical violence (such as murder/attempted murder, assault and arson/attempted arson) and 38 percent vandalism of private property. However, the downward trend that began after the peak year of 2004 (974 incidents), came to an abrupt end in January 2009, when 360 incidents were recorded, as a result of mass mobilization against Operation Cast Lead.

Operation Cast Lead

The first rally against the Israeli operation in Gaza took place in Paris on December 30, 2008 and the last, on January 24, 2009. The biggest was held on January 3 in Paris, with an estimated 50,000 participants, many of them Muslims. This was more than took part in the demonstrations against prohibition of the Muslim headscarf in public schools (see *ASW 2004*) or even in support of the second intifada. (It should be noted that the Muslim population is estimated at 4 million, including 2 million holding French citizenship. French legislation forbids census questions relating to religious affiliation.) The number of demonstrators, in fact, reached the level of mobilization against the war in Iraq in 2003, with the difference that the left and extreme left had much less control over the 2009 ones. This may be illustrated by focusing on the Paris demonstration that took place on January 3, which turned into an Islamist-led urban riot: cars were burned, private property destroyed, and policemen were hurt by an angry mob of about 500 anti-Jewish youth, who came in large part from the suburbs of the capital city to loot and yell their hatred of anything Israeli, Jewish, or simply representing the French state, which they see as an ally of the "Zionists" in the oppression of first and second-generation immigrants from the former colonies.

From the start of the anti-Israel demonstrations, it was clear that the crowd was asking for more than the usual slogans in support of the PLO, Mahmoud Abbas, and the "rights of the Palestinian people." The Association France-Palestine Solidarité (AFPS), traditionally the organization to set the tone, was no longer unable to channel the feelings of the militants: its open support for the PA and a two-state solution was too moderate for the demonstrators who wanted to voice their support for Hamas and the destruction of Israel, and also blamed the "Zionists" for every evil in the world. These disaffected youth lack a coherent ideology, think that the only "resistance" is that of Hamas and Hizballah,

and use anti-Zionist slogans that are merely code words to avoid prosecution for antisemitism. While the official slogan during the period of the operation was "Stop the bombing and blockade in Gaza," on January 3, there was a huge banner in the crowd which read: "Paris – Gaza – Beirut – Kabul – Baghdad – Jenin, Resistance!" On January 10, shouts of "Zionists out of France" were heard in Paris and reliable sources reported that "Death to the Jews" was also the slogan of a tiny group of pro-Hizballah demonstrators.

On December 31, a demonstration was organized in Paris by the Parti des Musulmans de France (PMF, led by Mohammed Ennacer Latrèche and based in Strasburg) and the Collectif Sheikh Yassine (Sheikh Yassin Group, led by Imam Abdelhakim Sefrioui), named after the late leader of Hamas. The PMF is a radical fringe movement which is openly antisemitic. It marched through heavily Muslim districts of northern Paris and explained that Operation Cast Lead was decided because the Israeli soldiers believe in "their Torah, which has become an inspiration for committing the filthiest crimes." The same slogans were repeated on January 1, when Israeli Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni was in Paris: 800 Islamists burned Israeli flags in front of the Paris Opera, while a group of radicals chanted, "Israel, you are Nazi" and "Long live Hamas." Another popular slogan was: "United Nations, in 1948 you gave birth to a monster and you named it Israel."

As noted, the peak of anti-Jewish mobilization was on January 3. The protesters planned to march through Paris to the Israeli embassy, located near the Champs-Élysées, which meant that it had to walk through the strongly Jewish district located near the Grands Boulevards. When it arrived there, the Jewish quarter was under heavy police protection and the streets leading to it were closed, but the calls of "Allahu Akbar" and "Weapons for Hamas" left no doubt that many wanted to physically confront the Jews. Much anti-Jewish literature was sold on the sidewalks alongside the march. The Comité sur le génocide en Palestine distributed a leaflet, entitled "The Planned Genocide of the Palestinians" written by Ginette Skandrani, who was banned from the Green Party because of her links to Holocaust deniers. The fact that this material was sold to marchers is particularly interesting, since the committee is a network of Jew-bashers from opposing ideological sides. The most interesting leaflet, however, emanated from the Mouvement des Indigènes de la République, a secular group led by intellectuals of Arab descent who denounce the French state as "neo-colonial." The leaflet featured a photograph of Shaykh Izz ad-Din al Qassam, "hero of the Palestinian revolution, who gave his name to the armed branch of Hamas."

Late in the evening, riots began. There were cries of "Death to the Jews," youths wearing Hamas T-shirts threw stones at the police and looted shops (not specifically Jewish-owned property), while black supremacists of the Mouvement des Damnés de l'Impérialisme (MDI) distributed their propaganda. During the demonstration MDI leaflets called on the "Arab diaspora" to "fight effectively against the Zionist enemy who is occupying our lands." In 2008 and 2009, the MDI evolved into an ethno-differential movement with a "pan-African" branch, an "Arab" branch and a "European" branch, composed of white supremacists from national-revolutionary movements on the extreme right.

GERMANY

The level of antisemitism in Germany remained high in 2008, despite a slight decrease in manifestations. There was a considerable spike in antisemitic activity, in which members of the Muslim community played a prominent role, following the start of Israel's Cast Lead Operation in Gaza. Other triggers of antisemitic activity included the global financial crisis and the US presidential election. Neo-Nazi and Holocaust denial activity has increased at German universities.

THE JEWISH COMMUNITY

There are more than 200,000 Jews in Germany, out of a total population of 82.5 million, according to government estimates. The largest Jewish centers are Berlin, Frankfurt, Munich and Hamburg, but Jewish communities are active in most other large urban areas. Religious, cultural and social support is provided to a total of 83 communities. In many cities, especially those in former East Germany, newcomers from the former Soviet Union account for the majority of Jews.

The Zentralrat der Juden in Deutschland (Central Council for German Jews – CCGJ) acts as the roof organization of Jews in Germany, with headquarters in Berlin. There are synagogues in most cities with communities, and the larger communities have Jewish schools as well. The weekly *Allgemeine Jüdische Wochenzeitung* is the most prominent of a number of publications serving Germany's Jews. The Frankfurt-based *Tribüne* is the leading Jewish scholarly journal. The Jewish Museum in Berlin, opened in 2001, houses two millennia of German Jewish history.

RIGHT-WING EXTREMISM

According to German Interior Wolfgang Schäuble in April 2009, 31,801 politically motivated crimes took place in 2008 (11.4 percent more than in 2007), the majority (20,422) perpetrated by extreme right activists (an increase of 16 percent). Of the total, 1,935 were violent attacks and 2 were murders. The most dramatic incident occurred on December 13, when Passau Police Chief Alois Mannichl was almost stabbed to death in Bavaria by a suspected neo-Nazi. His words before the attacks: "You won't stamp on the graves of our comrades anymore. Best regards from the national resistance," referred to Mannichl's tough stand against violent neo-Nazis. Since the attempted murder was obviously not a spontaneous act, it has added a new dimension to extreme right attacks, said Bavarian Interior Minister Joachim Herrmann. It has also led to a renewal of the debate about banning the extreme right NPD (see below).

Right-wing extremists remain the biggest threat to the constitutional state, says a report of the Federal Office for the Protection of the

Constitution (BfV). A study on right-wing extremism and attitudes toward democracy, published on June 18, 2008, by the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (SPD), confirmed that far right views have infiltrated the mainstream of German society. It also suggested that immigrant – and especially, economically disadvantaged communities – are more likely to hold anti-democratic views than others, as "fear and the threat of exclusion are fertile soil for right-wing extremist views" ("A Look at the Center," <http://library.fes.de/pdf-files/do/05433.pdf>). A survey conducted by the Institute of Social Science of the German Army revealed that 13 percent of soldiers polled agreed with the declared aims of the "new right," and had doubts about Germany's parliamentary democracy.

At the end of 2008, 156 active extreme right-wing organizations and parties, with an estimated 30,000 members (2007: 31,000), were known to the BvF (2007: 180). They included 9,500 (2007: 1,000) youths, mostly skinheads, who were ready to use violence. Neo-Nazi groups, largely organized in local comradeships (*Kameradschaften*), showed a rise in membership to 4,800 (2007: 4,200) although fewer groups were active in 2008 than in 2007.

Parties

The NPD (German National Democratic Party), the oldest extreme right party in Germany (see *ASW 2007*), continued to be the more active and successful of the two extreme right-wing parties observed by the BfV. In November 2008 the German magazine *Der Spiegel* described the NPD as a "racist, antisemitic and revisionist" party which was gaining political ground.

Notwithstanding its partial success in elections (see below), the party is losing members and influence (from 7,200 in 2007 to 7,000 in 2008). Udo Voigt's position as party leader is threatened, the party's financial situation is precarious and several members face legal proceedings. As a result, the NPD may no longer be able to fulfill the conditions necessary for government support. In February 2008 Berlin police raided NPD national headquarters in Berlin and arrested the organization's treasurer Erwin Kemmer on suspicion of embezzlement. If convicted, he faces up to ten years in prison. Furthermore, the Bundestag is demanding that the NPD repay 870,000 euro, which it alleged the party received by fraudulent means. In an attempt, to revive the ranks of the NPD leadership, convicted Holocaust denier and lawyer Jürgen Rieger, known for his defense of neo-Nazis, was appointed vice chairman of the NPD in May 2008. (He died, however, in October 2009.)

Continuing the strategies of recruitment and extending its influence (see *ASW 2007*), the NPD increasingly included propaganda targeting the Russian group of *Volksdeutsche* (ethnic Germans). Important means of transporting their messages are the *Volksdeutsche Stimme* (similar to the party mouthpiece *Deutsche Stimme*), an internet site (<http://www.volksdeutsche-stimme.de>), and a group of Russian Germans who began working within the NPD in February 2008. In addition "German *völkisch* socialism" is disseminated via a monthly news show called "Critical News" (*Kritische Nachrichten*). The show is linked to the internet sites of the various branches of the NPD and its aim "is it to counter the propaganda flood of re-education institutions of the Federal Republic" (<http://www.faz.net/s/Rub475F682E3FC24868A8A5276D4FB916D7/Doc~E7B194EC245664794BB7C29A2534CE077~ATpl~Ecommon~Scontent.html>).

By 2008 the RNF (Ring Nationaler Frauen - National Women's Circle), founded in 2006 as an affiliate of the NPD, had expanded to 13 groups in nine German states. Michaela Koettig, researcher of the extreme right from the University of Goettingen, noted that the RNF could develop into an umbrella organization for many conservative and right-wing women who prefer not to join the NPD. RNF tries to attract women in a variety of ways, notably through family-centered issues such as day-care centers for children.

The other party monitored by the BfV, the DVU (German Peoples' Union: The New Right), founded in 1987, has been dominated by millionaire publisher Dr. Gerhard Frey for almost 30 years. However since January 2009 Mathias Faust has replaced the old leader. The weekly *National-Zeitung/Deutsche Wochenzeitung* reflects its xenophobic, antisemitic, anti-American and anti-Israel tendencies. The branding of all "foreigners" as criminals and the threat of the islamization of Germany have been leading mottos of their election campaigns. DVU membership decreased from 7,000 to 6,000.

Elections

The NPD improved its results by about 4 percent in district elections in Saxony in June 2008. The party now has delegates in every district parliament in Saxony and in one district got even more votes than the mainstream SPD (Social Democrats) and CDU (Christian Democrats) together. In the September elections in Brandenburg, the NPD received 1.8 percent and the DVU 1.6 percent of the votes. The NPD is represented in six provincial governments and in the parliament of the city of Cottbus (with 3 percent of the votes); the DVU is represented in Potsdam.

Extra-parliamentary Groups

Modus Operandi

A change in the dress-code of neo-Nazis and extreme right-wingers in Germany has been noted in recent years. Instead of military-style clothing, they wear casual fashion with coded symbols such as "18" or "88," which can be translated as AH or HH (Adolf Hitler, Heil Hitler). They prefer the clothing brand "CoNSDAPle" (which includes the letters NSDAP). Also, clothes linked to leftists, such as Che Guevara T-shirts, are worn more often by extreme rightists making it more difficult to identify them. Fashion labels like Thor Steinar, popular among ultra-rightist youth, are monitored by the authorities for illegal symbols such as swastikas and runes that imply identification with National Socialist opinions or glorification of Adolf Hitler. In early February 2008 an outlet store selling the Thor Steinar label opened in the center of Berlin, stirring up a controversy. The store is located, symbolically, at 18 Rosa Luxembourg Street (Adolf Hitler's initials, 1=A, 8=H). Local business people, as well as the antifacist organization ANTIFA protested. The windows of the store have been broken frequently and attacked with paint bombs.

Music and Internet

Because of the consensus against antisemitism in Germany and strict legislation (see, for example, *ASW 2005*), openly aggressive antisemitism can be found only among hate groups, mostly neo-Nazis and skinheads, who disseminate and incite mainly through song lyrics. The number of public concerts held by such groups has decreased since 2006 (2008:127; 2007:138), possibly because many events are dissolved by the police or disturbed by antifascist activists. Consequently, efforts to produce and disseminate music with direct hate messages and antisemitic propaganda through social networks such as YouTube and Facebook were intensified in 2008. Illegal in Germany, they are produced abroad and can be bought or downloaded free of charge from foreign servers. In June 2008, Stephan Kramer, secretary general of the Zentralrat, filed a lawsuit in Hamburg asking for a temporary restriction to pull especially offensive hate material from YouTube Germany, a subsidiary of the US-based Google. According to Kramer, in one video, a photograph of the late president of the Central Council, Paul Spiegel, was burned against a background of swastikas. The German edition of YouTube – which allows members to post their own material free of charge – went online on November 8, 2007, one year after the site was purchased by Google.

Eliminatory antisemitic texts are propagated by the band Sturmkommando, with songs such as "Not Nice" (Nicht nett) from the CD *Hate Notes* (Noten des Hasses):

"Sieg Heil! Sieg Heil!/The world does not need more Zionist lies./Sieg Heil! Sieg Heil!/The only solution is to kill them all./6 million more!/6 million more!/We want to see them shower."

Although the band and such lyrics are banned in Germany, similar inflammatory texts can be downloaded from their website, <http://www.last.fm/music/Sturmkommando>.

The group Racial Hatred consider music a weapon to fight Zionists, *Kanaken* (Turks) and Communists, as in their song "Hate!" from the CD *Open Your Eyes* (Macht die Augen auf!). The lyrics include messages such as "If they don't leave of their own free will, Zyklon B will help us [to get rid of them]" and "Dirty Jews are in the government, we have to pay them without end."

The term cyber mobilization is used for building networks and overcoming geographical as well as political frontiers and legal obstacles. The number of internet sites in German with extreme right-wing content is rising steadily, and by the end of 2008 had reached more than 1,700.

Europe-Wide Cooperation

Cross-border cooperation of right-wing extremists takes place not only at public rallies and commemorations, but also at seminars, culture days, celebrations and memorial days. In many right-wing circles the possibility of collaboration with Russian right wing extremists was discussed in 2008.

Systematic incitement against the alleged threat of islamization of Europe serves to recruit members and sympathizers Europe-wide. In September 2008 an anti-islamization congress was supposed to have taken place in Cologne with the participation of representatives of far right organizations from seven other countries. The event had to be aborted after a number of protest actions.

Extreme right activists from Spain, Britain, France, Austria, Sweden, the Czech Republic and the Netherlands participated in a march in Dresden city center in February 2009 on the occasion of the 63rd anniversary of the destruction of Dresden by the Allies. By the end of October 2008 an online petition circulated by the Dresden-based antifacist Geh Denken (Go Think) had been signed by 190 politicians and celebrities. One of the first signatories was former President Richard von Weizsacker.

ANTISEMITIC ACTIVITIES

A survey conducted by the Pew Global Attitudes Project and released in September 2008 revealed that 25 percent of Germans harbor antisemitic opinions. Although latent anti-Jewish feelings have stayed at 20-25 percent in postwar Germany, antisemitic manifestations during the last decade have adjusted to the mainstream, often anti-Israel narrative, which has become more socially acceptable (*gesellschaftsfähig* – see *ASW* 2007 and *General Analysis*), even among those who may not be aware of and would vehemently reject any suggestion of having expressed an antisemitic worldview. They speak of "Zionists" and "lobby," instead of "Jew" or "conspiracy." (German journalist Marek Broder coined this phenomenon "antisemitism without antisemites.") This almost politically correct attitude leads to the legitimization of antisemitic activity and sometimes even inspires physical attacks.

Antisemitic Triggers in 2008

The level of antisemitic manifestations in Germany remained high in 2008, despite a slight decrease. However, there was a considerable spike in antisemitic activity, expressed especially during anti-Israel demonstrations, following the start of Israel's Cast Lead Operation in Gaza in late 2008–early 2009. On January 3, 2009, for example some 7,000 people took part in a rally during which antisemitic placards with slogans such as: "Israelis are child murderers" were displayed. Four days earlier, in a similar event held in Berlin, demonstrators carried signs such as "Death to Israel" or "Kick out the Jews." Criticizing the support Chancellor Merkel gave Israel during the Gaza operation, Dr. Kersten Radzimanowski (NPD) accused Israel, on the party's website, of perpetrating a Palestinian holocaust and asked whether Merkel would have to defend herself for denying the holocaust of the Palestinians. Comparisons between Israel and Nazi Germany were common and Israel was accused of setting up ghettos and concentrations camps for the Palestinians.

From the onset of the global financial crisis in 2008 harsh criticism of bankers and managers gave birth to comparisons, such as "managers are the Jews of today," amounting to banalization of the persecution of the Jews during the Nazi era ("Studio Friedmann," November 6, 2008, *Tagespiegel*, October 27). Moreover, economically deprived groups of immigrant background were also compared to the Jews. On May 19, 2008, in an article in the Turkish newspaper *Referans*, Faruk Sen, director of the Center for Turkish Studies (Zentrum für Türkeistudien) at Duisburg-Essen University, called the European Turks "the Jews of

today." Sen's statement initiated a heated debate during which he was accused of downplaying the Holocaust.

The US election campaign in 2008 revived the argument of "Jewish influence" on global decision making. The German-English website of the *National Journal* claimed that Governor Sarah Palin of Alaska (Republican) belonged to the so-called evangelicals in the United States which was "created by the Lobby [Jews]," also known as Jesus for Jews. *National Zeitung* (NZ), mouthpiece of the DVU, made a similar allegation about the Democratic candidate, but more indirectly, in order to avoid legal problems in Germany. Showing a photo of Barak Obama wearing a kippa at the Wailing Wall in Jerusalem, the NZ asked in November 2008: "To what extent can and will Obama free himself from the Israel lobby?" Shortly after the 2008 US election, NPD Deputy Jürgen Gansel published a statement titled "Africa Conquers the White House," further claiming Obama's victory was a result of "the American alliance of Jews" (<http://jta.org/news/article/2008/11/11/1000886/german-politician-decries-jewish-negro-alliance>). The American Jewish Committee's office in Berlin condemned Gansel's remarks as "an open expression of racism, antisemitism and anti-Americanism." This incident added fuel to the debate about the possibility of banning the NPD (see below).

Applying the term "fake victimhood" to the Jews has become a central theme in the discourse of the established extreme right: "That Knobloch [Charlotte Knobloch, head of the Zentralrat] is afraid of antisemitism is understandable. But sometimes you can not avoid the impression that the danger is deliberately exaggerated so as to reinforce a fictional victim role to serve their own interests" (*Nation & Europa – German Monatshefte*, no. 6, 2008, p. 60).

Antisemitism in Academia

Neo-Nazi and Holocaust denial activity has increased at German universities since 2006. It is almost impossible to remove students from the neo-Nazi camp as freedom of speech is a central value on campus. An attempt was made to curb neo-Nazi influence in November 2008 when the student union of the University of Greifswald, AStA, distributed flyers warning freshman of extreme right-wing tendencies of several members of the Markomannia fraternity, which tries to recruit members by offering cheap living quarters. During the 2008 summer semester, posters inciting to racial hatred and denying the Holocaust appeared at Johannes Gutenberg University in Mainz, where the majority of the students are left wing. Mario Matthes, deputy chairman of the NPD in Hesse and a student at the university, was believed to be responsible for the propaganda. The universities of Trier, Giessen and

Cologne, where right-wing extremists were elected to student councils, have also experienced confrontations with neo-Nazis.

Antisemitic views were also expressed by other members of academia. On June 20, 2008, Arnd Krüger, professor of the history and sociology of sports at the University of Göttingen, delivered a paper at a conference of the German Federation of Sport Science (DVS), claiming that the Israelis who were killed during the terror attacks at the 1972 Munich Olympic Games had known about the risk of an attack, and therefore their deaths should be seen as freely chosen suicide to help Israel and to prolong financial restitution from Germany and preserve guilt among Germans for the Holocaust. He also suggested that Israelis perceived the body differently than in other western countries, claiming, falsely, that Israel had a higher abortion rate. In July, a panel of three scientists from the university cleared Krüger of all charges of antisemitism.

Muslim Antisemitism

The Amadeu Antonio Foundation (<http://www.amadeu-antonio-stiftung.de/eng/about-us/>) and the scientific journal *Focus Schule* reported a rise in antisemitism among Muslim children and teenagers. According to the Federal Ministry of Interior, there were some 600,000–700,000 schoolchildren in Germany out of a total Muslim population of 3.1–3.4 million (one million with German citizenship) in 2007. A study published in February 2009 found that 15.7 percent of youngsters with a Muslim background agreed with the statement "Jews are greedy and arrogant," while 21.8 percent showed general anti-democratic tendencies. There has also been a rise in the number of antisemitic crimes in which the suspected perpetrators were of Muslim background.

The number of active Islamist organizations remained relatively stable (2008:29; 2007:30), although there was a rise in membership and supporters (2008: 34,720; 2007: 27,920). Although radical Islamists are a minority, they have become increasingly predominant. On September 16, 2008, the Berlin-based migration and racism group Amira organized a conference in the city, at which the findings of a survey they conducted between autumn 2007 and summer 2008 among immigrant associations and staff of youth clubs in Berlin Kreuzberg about their experiences with antisemitism, were presented and mooted. It was revealed that the Middle East conflict was the leading context for antisemitic expressions and that global political affairs were apt to trigger antisemitic conspiracy theories mixed with anti-Americanism; however, classical antisemitic stereotypes were found to be less widespread than expected, as was

religiously based antisemitism (Berlin.de/Aktuelles/Presse+ percentC3 percentBCber+amira/45.html).

Often youngsters who use them are unaware of the significance of the antisemitic impact of insults such as "You Jew." But the consequences may amount to abuse as in the case of a 14-year-old Jewish girl at a high school in the Kreuzberg district of Berlin, who was harassed for weeks with such taunts by Muslim classmates as she made her way home. Finally the girl received police protection before she moved to a well-secured Jewish school.

Anti-Jewish vilification and sometimes even incitement to violence among the Muslim community reached a peak during the Gaza crisis. According to the testimony of a visitor to a mosque in Bielefeld, the Palestinian imam and Hamas activist Ismael Gharaballi declared: "Jews are the enemy of Allah," Turning to another page in the Koran, he read, "and kill them [he explained this to mean unbelievers, especially the Jews] wherever you overtake them and expel them from wherever they have expelled you" (Surah 2, verse 191). "What are you waiting for?... Allah Himself is telling us kill them. No peace can be made with the Jews" (<http://islam-watch.org/Sami/Radical-Muslims-of-Germany.htm>).

In an effort to combat antisemitism and radicalization among the Muslim immigrant population, Interior Minister Wolfgang Schäuble banned the antisemitic satellite TV station al-Manar, mouthpiece of Lebanon's Hizballah in November 2008. The channel which has already been outlawed in the US and France, describes itself as "the first institution in an effective psychological war against the Zionist entity.

Antisemitic Incidents

There was a slight decrease in antisemitic incidents in 2008 – 1,496 compared to 1,561 in 2007 – as reported by the Federal Ministry of Interior. These included several attacks on visibly Jewish young people. For example, shouting antisemitic insults, seven pupils from the Kepler Gymnasium in Pforzheim (Baden-Württemberg) threw fireworks at the windows and urinated at the home of a Jewish schoolmate on December 26. The boy had been the victim of ongoing antisemitic harassment at the school. His family demanded that the perpetrators be expelled and was considering leaving the town. In addition, Rafael David Reinecke, 17, son of Peter Reinecke, CDU, was kicked and beaten on July 19 during a birthday party in Gummersbach by three neo-Nazis who called him "a dirty Jew pig." He required hospitalization.

The desecration of Jewish cemeteries throughout Germany remained a regular weekly phenomenon. Fifty-three were targeted in 2008, mostly, it is suspected, by youth influenced by extreme right ideology. On the

night of November 16–17, for example, a pig's head and a sheet with the text: "6 million lies" written on it were found on the entrance gate to the Jewish cemetery of Gotha. Synagogues and Holocaust memorial sites were also vandalized frequently. On June 5, for instance, the Museum des Todesmarches (Museum of the Death March) in Wittstock, Belower Wald, was partly demolished.

Threats and antisemitic abuse communicated by email, post or phone were frequently received by Jewish institutions such as schools, community buildings and museums, as well as homes and individual property. As a result, security measures were increased with the help of the local authorities. The Jewish Museum of Frankfurt, for example, was to be provided with barriers and visitors searched at the entrance for guns or explosives. These steps were taken by the museum's director, Raphael Gross, as a result of warnings received from the state criminal office and the police. The state of Frankfurt has doubled the funds given to Jewish institutions for security purposes.

Holocaust Denial

Denying the Holocaust is illegal in Germany and those who disseminate the Auschwitz Lie (*Auschwitzlüge*) violate the law. German Holocaust deniers such as Germar Rudolf and Ernst Zündel, who played a leading role internationally, are currently in prison. Consequently, their activities are limited.

Direct Holocaust denial is published and distributed almost exclusively from abroad. In 2008, the UK-based publishing house Castle Hill Publisher (CHP), which was headed until his arrest and extradition to Germany in 2005 by Rudolf, issued a popular pamphlet entitled "Auschwitz Forensically Examined" (edited by Cyrus Cox), basically a re-edition of the *Rudolf Report* (1993; see Sarah Rembiszewski, *The Final Lie: Holocaust Denial in Germany. A Second-Generation Denier as a Test Case*, Stephen Roth Institute, October 1996). Outlawing the activities of groups associated with Holocaust denial continued in 2008, and Collegium Humanum (CH) and Bauernhilfe, for instance, were forced to abandon their activities.

RESPONSES TO RACISM AND ANTISEMITISM

Official and Public Activity

Many NGOs, as well as, government organizations, work to combat antisemitic manifestations in Germany. In June 2008 the German version of innovative materials for teaching antisemitism was launched in Berlin by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights

(ODIHR), the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Federal Agency for Civic Education. In a symbolic gesture acknowledging the 70th anniversary of the Kristallnacht pogrom on 9 November 1938, the German parliament approved a draft of a non-partisan parliamentary resolution on November 4, pledging to "resolutely counter every form of anti-Jewish hatred and antisemitism."

Interior Minister Schäuble (SPD) instructed interior ministers of the federal states to prepare a report by April 13, 2008, regarding the possibility of re-opening proceedings to ban the NPD. However, fearing that the process might fail again (see *ASW* 2002/3) and thus strengthen the party, the ministers of several states refused to organize reports. Frank-Walter Steinmeier, SPD candidate for prime minister in the 2009 elections, branded the NPD a racist, antisemitic, anti-democratic and generally antagonistic party. Thomas Oppermann, executive director of SPD, said it was "intolerable" that the NPD received funding from the German budget.

In addition, on October 14, 2008 the Federal Supreme Court in Karlsruhe banned the public use of Celtic crosses. The Celtic cross is known as a symbol of the anti-government extreme right movement VSBD/PdA (Volkssozialistische Bewegung Deutschlands/Partei der Arbeit), banned in February 1982. Although the cross is often used for cultural and religious purposes, the court issued a general ban, unless the intention is other than supporting the VSPD/PdA.

A campaign against neo-Nazism in sports (via interactive internet platforms) was started in May 2008 by the German weekly *Die Zeit*. The aim is to stop the extreme right from infiltrating sports clubs. The captain of the German national football team, Michael Ballack, is one of the celebrities taking an active part in the project. One month later, police arrested fans of the German national soccer team at the European championship match against Poland. German fans clashed with Polish fans, shouting "All Poles must wear a yellow star." Following an antisemitic demonstration of the Leipzig Free Power (*Freie Kräfte*) organization on October 25, 2008, the soccer fan club "1. FC Lokomotive Leipzig" banned the "Blue Caps" fan group from the Bruno-Plache Stadium in Leipzig, since it allegedly participated in the incident and is known to support neo-Nazi groups. The Blue Caps rejected the accusations, claiming they were a non-political organization.

Court Proceedings

Among those tried and sentenced for neo-Nazi activities in 2008 were the three founders of the criminal Kamaradschaft Sturm 34.

Country Reports

Former left-wing RAF (Red Army Faction) member turned neo-Nazi Horst Mahler, went on trial in Potsdam in October, accused of disseminating Holocaust denial on the internet and by email.

In October 2008 a Danish court ruled that a German and a Dane would be extradited to Germany for distributing neo-Nazi music and inciting ethnic hatred. According to German prosecutors, the men distributed the music, which contains antisemitic and Holocaust denying lyrics, through the Danish label Celtic Moon. The German suspect admitted having contacts with the British neo-Nazi group Blood & Honour.

GREECE

A total of 13 antisemitic incidents of vandalism and graffiti were recorded during Israel's Operation Cast Lead (late December 2008–mid-January 2009), compared to only 3 such incidents throughout the year 2008. Politicians, popular Greek figures, senior clerics and local officials, as well as the mass media, resorted to antisemitic references in their harsh criticism of Israel during this period. MEP George Karatzaferis, leader of the far right LAOS party, published a virulently antisemitic article in the official party weekly Alpha Ena.

THE JEWISH COMMUNITY

The Jewish population of Greece is estimated at 5,000 out of a total population of 10 million. There are eight active communities, the main ones being Athens, Thessaloniki and Larissa, which have synagogues, Jewish primary schools, cultural centers, museums and homes for the aged. The Kentriko Israilitiko Symvoulío (Central Board of Jewish Communities in Greece – KIS; hereafter, the Board) is the governing body of Jewish communities. Jewish periodicals and books are published by the Board, the Athens and Thessaloniki communities and the Jewish Museum of Greece.

POLITICAL PARTIES AND GROUPS

The far right, nationalist and xenophobic LAOS (Popular Orthodox Rally) party, led by founder George Karatzaferis, has been represented in the Greek parliament since 2007 and has 10 seats (see *ASW* 2007). Karatzaferis was also elected to the European Parliament in 2004. Since then, Karatzaferis has attempted to project a new political profile devoid of antisemitic statements; however, during Israel's Operation Cast Lead, he published a virulently antisemitic attack (see below). Karatzaferis disassociated himself from antisemite and Holocaust denier Kostas Plevris, who gained the majority of votes for the LAOS ticket in the 2004 general election (although the party did not win any seats then) and who left the party that year. He was replaced by his son Athanasios Plevris, who was elected to parliament on the LAOS ticket in 2007. Athanasios was also his father's defense lawyer during the trial concerning the publication of his antisemitic book *Jews – the Whole Truth* (see *ASW* 2007 and below). Another LAOS MP is former party spokesman Adonis Georgiades, who was one of the defense witnesses for Kostas Plevris in the trial. On his show, broadcast on Teleasty, the TV station owned by Karatzaferis, he advertised Plevris' book.

In 2005, the extreme right nationalist and xenophobic Elliniko Metopo (Greek Front), founded in 1994, merged with LAOS. Its

president Makis Voridis was elected to parliament in 2007. Despite his ties to the French Front National and its leader Jean-Marie Le Pen, Voridis has no record of antisemitic statements.

Chrissi Avghi, the principal neo-Nazi organization in Greece, has been behind many incidents of antisemitic vandalism and graffiti over the years. Operating in ten major cities, it publishes a weekly newspaper, *Chrissi Avghi*, as well as the magazine *Antepithessi* (Counter-Attack), which contains a supplement in English.

ANTISEMITIC ACTIVITY

A total of 13 antisemitic incidents of vandalism and graffiti were recorded during Israel's Operation Cast Lead (December 27-January 18) compared to only 3 throughout the year (8 in 2007). In February 2009, the number of incidents declined to one, reported in Ioannina, where swastikas appeared on the gate of the Jewish cemetery.

The Year 2008

In May, a gravestone was broken and glass fragments were spread in the alleys and around the graves of the Athens Jewish cemetery. In August, a video showing a young man urinating on the Holocaust memorial on the island of Rhodes, against a background of rock music with violent antisemitic lyrics, was aired on YouTube. The recorded act was committed by the self-proclaimed "Antisemitic Group of Venetokleio Senior High School of Rhodes." The Board sent protest letters to the ministers of interiors and education. It also filed a complaint with the District Attorney's office and notified the Authority against Electronic Crimes. In September, the general secretary of the Education Ministry visited the school where he lectured on tolerance. The school's students denied any connection to the incident.

In November, graffiti reading "Juden Raus," signed by the neo-Nazi Chrissi Avghi, appeared on an underpass of one of Athen's major thoroughfares.

The Metropolitan Bishop of Piraeus wrote an encyclical letter on the occasion of the Christian festivity of the Dormition of the Madonna (on August 15) accusing "the directorates of Zionism, the contemporary illuminati, alias the followers of Lucifer" for the adoption of a recent law allowing cremation of the dead.

The mainstream daily *Avriani* published an antisemitic article on its front page on November 4. "The anticipated victory of Obama in the US elections signals the end of Jewish domination," it said. Everything is changing in the US and we hope that it will be more democratic and humane." The allusion is to the link between American Jewish

organizations, the so-called Jewish lobby, and the US government. The American Jewish Committee, in cooperation with the Board, issued a press release condemning the article.

Operation Cast Lead

There was a revival of anti-Israelism in Greece with the onset of Israel's Gaza operation in late December after a period of relatively little anti-Israel foment, and the level of antisemitic activity escalated. Greek public opinion is overwhelmingly pro-Palestinian. Politicians, popular Greek figures, senior clerics, public administrators and mayors, as well as the mass media, made harsh anti-Israel statements that were often tainted with antisemitism (such as drawing parallels between Israelis and Nazis and Gaza and Auschwitz).

Incidents against Jewish Targets

Between December 31, 2008 and January 21, 2009, Jewish sites, such as synagogues, Holocaust monuments and cemeteries, were desecrated with antisemitic graffiti and slogans in Athens, Larissa, Volos, Corfu, Veroia, Drama, Komotini and Ioannina. Catchphrases such as "Jews = murderers" and "Jews=Nazis" were common in all cases. In Veroia there was an arson attempt on the synagogue door while in Larissa, someone tried to tear the Magen David from the door of the synagogue and force entry into it. Several tombstones were damaged in the Jewish cemetery of Ioannina.

Political and Public Reaction

At the official New Year's Eve reception on January 1, President of the Republic Karolos Papoulias stated: "Aren't they [the Israelis] ashamed of killing children?" The Greek press also reported that Papoulias asked former Prime Minister Konstantinos Mitsotakis (1990–93, who recognized Israel in 1990 and upgraded Greek-Israeli diplomatic relations): "What are our friends, the Israelis, doing? Are they flying airplanes and killing in cold blood?" On the other hand, Prime Minister Konstantinos Karamanlis did not mention the Gaza issue, while Foreign Minister Dora Bakoyannis made some careful, balanced statements.

The main opposition party PASOK adopted a clearly pro-Palestinian position. Neither the leader of the opposition, George Papandreou, who is also president of the Socialist International, nor any MP from PASOK referred to Israeli victims of Hamas. In an interview with the mainstream weekly *Real News*, the political spokesman of PASOK, MP Andreas Loverdos, stated (January 4, 2009): "One cannot keep an equal distance from unequal subjects... We have harassment from one side and

hundreds of deaths on the other. ...I believe that today Greeks could say that 'we all feel like Palestinians'!" In a letter to the Israeli ambassador that was leaked to the press, Theodoros Pangalos, parliamentary spokesman of PASOK, explained to the former that he could not accept a New Year's gift of wines produced in the Golan "which Israel illegally occupies," and compared Gaza to the Warsaw Ghetto.

Some representatives of left-wing parties crossed the line to antisemitism. Alexis Tsipras, leader of the Synaspismos coalition, spoke of "genocide against the Palestinian people," and claimed that the Israelis had "turned Gaza into an immense concentration camp, exterminating civilians, women and small children." Asking the government to recall the Greek ambassador from Israel, Alekos Alavanos, chairman of the Parliamentary Group of Synaspismos, defined the Israeli attacks as a "crime against humanity" and said "the EU should condemn, instead of encouraging, Israeli pogroms against the Palestinian people." Synaspismos MEP Dimitris Papadimoulis submitted an interpellation to the EU Council demanding that Israel be tried for war crimes by The Hague International Court.

On the far right, LAOS leader and MEP George Karatzaferis published a virulently antisemitic article in the official party weekly *Alpha Ena* (January 3–4, 2009), stating that "the Jews have turned themselves into murderers as equally heinous as the Nazis," that "the Jew smells of blood," and that one would not expect any better from the "race that crucified God. Would the murderers of God care about a few hundred innocent children being murdered?"

There was no reaction from any Greek political figure. The Board addressed a letter of protest to the president of the Greek Parliament, Dimitris Sioufas, pointing out that Karatzaferis' attack was "unique in Greek records, as well as being an open expression of antisemitism, coming from a member of the Greek Parliament and even a leader of a political party.

After the Special Secretary of the Greek Parliament communicated the Board's protest to the LAOS parliamentary group, Karatzaferis responded through him to the Board, also publishing the letter in *Alpha Ena* (January 24–25, 2009). Though conciliatory toward Greek Jews, his tone remained ironic and antisemitic: "They are certainly right. It is not the JEWS but the ISRAELITES who are reeking with blood. They are the ones who claim that among all nations on Earth they are the Chosen People of the Lord whose Son they crucified and carried out the bloodiest invasion in recent years in the Gaza Strip."

While Ieronymos II, archbishop of Athens and All Greece, issued a balanced statement, a few local bishops made anti-Israel and antisemitic

comments. Bishop Ambrosios of Kalavryta, for example, stated that "Israeli attacks spread death among civilians. The powerful people of the earth, through their silence and guilty tolerance cover Israel's aggression! A genocide is going on in Gaza and nobody protests." The Bishop of Piraeus Seraphim spoke of "the claws of the Zionist monster" and referred to a "global Zionist attack."

Many municipalities, prefectures, public entities and labor unions around Greece issued resolutions and organized rallies of solidarity with the Palestinian people. During a demonstration in Athens, organized by the Greek-Palestinian Friendship Association, with the participation of members of the Arab community, held on December 29, for instance, protesters burned Israeli and American flags in front of the Israeli embassy. Another demonstration, organized by left-wing parties, was held in front of the Israeli embassy on the same day. The Greek Consumer Institute urged Greeks to boycott Israeli products. The Municipal Council of Athens passed a resolution condemning "the Israeli military attack in Gaza which has assumed the characteristics of a genocide against the Palestinian people." During the New Year festivities in Nikea, south-west of Athens, the municipal authorities placed a Palestinian flag on the town hall, while the mayor, Stelios Benetatos, spoke of "mass murders" committed by the Israelis.

Many organizations, such as the Union of Journalists of Athens, the Coordination Committee of Lawyers Associations and the Workers Struggling Front (PAME - labor Union affiliated to the Communist Party), issued statements condemning Israel.

Mass Media and Internet

The Greek press, including TV channels and mainstream newspapers such as *Eleftherotypia*, maintained a pro-Palestinian line, stressing Palestinian losses and condemning Israel's military operation. Articles and cartoons comparing Israel and Israelis with the Nazis and the Holocaust were common during this period throughout the media. Among front page headlines, the following were characteristic: "They've Begun Practicing for World War III" (mainstream *Avriani*, December 28); "Auschwitz – the Gaza Strip, with the Jew as Baker This Time" (far right, pro-junta *Eleftheri Ora*, December 29); and "Holocaust" (conservative, mainstream *Apogevmatini*, January 5, 2009).

The site of the daily *Rizospastis*, official mouthpiece of the Communist Party, showed a flash animation on its home page of the Israeli flag disintegrating and the Star of David becoming one of the stars on the US flag. The stars on the US flag then evolved into swastikas, followed by

the slogan: "Imperialism has dropped its mask and pulled out its Zionist knife."

ATTITUDES TOWARD THE HOLOCAUST

January 27 was instituted by law in 2004 as the Memorial Day for Greek Jewish Martyrs and Heroes of the Holocaust. On January 27, 2008, a ceremony was held at the Athens Concert Hall, organized by the Board and the Athens prefecture. The event was well attended by government officials and foreign dignitaries. Holocaust remembrance events were also held under the auspices of the local prefectures in a number of Greek cities.

Sponsored by the General Secretariat for Youth, of the Ministry of Education, the book *Young People in the Maelstrom of Occupied Greece – the Persecution and the Holocaust of the Jewish People (1943–1944)* was circulated in high schools and university libraries in January 2008, on the occasion of Holocaust Remembrance Day. The book, edited and published by the Board, contains personal testimonies of Greek-Jewish camp survivors, resistance fighters and children who were kept hidden.

RESPONSES TO ANTISEMITISM

Following their conviction on charges of antisemitism, the editor of the far right Greek weekly *Eleftheros Kosmos*, Dimitris Zafeiropoulos and journalist Theodoros Hatzigogos appeared on September 18 before an Athens appeals court, whose three member panel unanimously handed down a suspended 5 months prison sentence (under Law 927/1979 against racism). The charge related to an article published in the newspaper's March 12, 2006 issue, which stated, "Thank God, fewer than 1,500 Jews are left in Thessaloniki."

The appeal of well-known Greek antisemite and Holocaust denier Kostas Plevris, who was convicted in 2007 for his 1,400 page racist and virulently antisemitic book *Jews – The Whole Truth* and given a suspended sentence (see *ASW* 2007), was postponed 14 times between April 2008 and March 2009, when he was finally acquitted.

ITALY

Sixty-nine antisemitic incidents were recorded in Italy in 2008 compared to 53 in 2007. A controversy triggered by a group of leftist intellectuals and politicians against the decision by Torino Book Fair organizers to invite a delegation of Israeli writers on the occasion of Israel's 60th anniversary became tainted by antisemitism. The large demonstrations held during Israel's operation in Gaza and organized chiefly by Arab-Islamic organizations were unprecedented in Italy for the large numbers they attracted and their virulent anti-Zionism.

THE JEWISH COMMUNITY

Some 30,000 Jews live in Italy out of a total population of 57 million. The largest communities are in Rome (15,000) and Milan (10,000), and there are smaller ones in Turin, Florence, Livorno Trieste, Genoa and several other cities. Jews have been present in Italy for over two thousand years and have developed unique customs and traditions.

The Unione delle Comunità Ebraiche Italiane, UCEI (<http://moked.it/>), founded in 1930, is the roof organization of Italian Jewry. It represents the communities in official matters and provides religious, cultural and educational services. There are Jewish schools in Rome and Milan. The Jews of Rome publish a monthly journal, *Shalom* (www.shalom.it), and the Milan community puts out the monthly *Bollettino della Comunità ebraica di Milano* (www.mosaico-cem.it).

The CDEC (Contemporary Jewish Documentation Center) Foundation in Milano (www.cdec.it) maintains the website L'Osservatorio sul pregiudizio antiebraico contemporaneo (Observatory of Contemporary Anti-Jewish Prejudice) (www.osservatorioantisemitismo.it).

POLITICAL ORGANIZATIONS AND GROUPS

Far Right and Populist Parties

The Northern League for the Independence of Padania (Lega Nord per l'indipendenza della Padania – LN; general secretary, Umberto Bossi) combines ethnic and populist regionalism, strongly tainted by xenophobia, but less so by antisemitism. LN continues to cling to the separatist notion of a politically autonomous Padania in Northern Italy and opposes the symbols of the Italian unitary state. It has a strongly Christian identity with a certain proclivity to fundamentalism. With its aggressive style, sometimes peppered with direct insults, LN kindles social alarm regarding Roma people, illegal immigration and "the Muslim invasion," and assumes a direct link between immigration from non-European countries and crime and prostitution. LN fights the permanent

settlement of Muslims in Italy, and acts to prevent the erection of symbolic structures, such as mosques, which they claim are potential gathering places for terrorists. Some LN representatives have been strongly criticized for xenophobic and homophobic statements, as well as for comments against southern people and women. Giancarlo Gentilini, deputy mayor of Treviso, was charged with inciting racial hatred because of statements against Muslims and "black, brown or grey teachers." In September, another LN representative, Mario Borghezio, known for his past militancy in radical right movements, attended an international meeting of nationalist and radical right organizations against Islam in Köln. The meeting was stopped by the local authorities.

The Forza Nuova is represented in the European Parliament by its national secretary Roberto Fiore, formerly founder of the Third Position (Terza Posizione). Fiore replaced Alessandra Mussolini, who was elected to the House of Representatives as a representative of the Freedom Party (Partito della Libertà – PdL) in April 2008. In the Italian general election Forza Nuova got 0.30 percent of the vote for the House of Representatives and 0.26 percent for the Senate.

Based on Catholic fundamentalism, Forza Nuova is influenced by the Romanian Iron Guard. It is the most established movement on the Italian far right scene, with offices throughout the country, an efficient propaganda apparatus and work guild structures modeled on those established by the fascist regime. Forza Nuova seeks recruits among the Ultras (Italian football hooligans), who support the Lazio team in particular.

The party program includes abrogation of two "freedom-killing" laws: the Scelba Law (forbidding reorganization of the Fascist National Party) and the Mancino Law (against racial, ethnic and religious discrimination); the party claims to defend Italian history and the Italian religious and cultural heritage; it is against abortion and non-European immigrants, demanding their immediate repatriation; and it advocates a ban on Freemasonry and secret sects.

Forza Nuova's website includes an article about B'nai B'rith and Freemasonry extracted from the book *Mysteries and Secrets of B'nai B'rith*, by Emmanuel Ratier. The website also includes anti-Israel, anti-Zionist and other antisemitic texts. At a meeting between Italian businessmen and Iranian President Ahmadinejad, Roberto Fiore told the latter that Forza Nuova was against any war proposed by the Jewish-American lobbies.

The MS-FT (Movimento Sociale-Fiamma Tricolore – Social Movement-Three-Colored Flame) is led by national secretary Luca Romagnoli, Maurizio Boccacci (co-founder in 1991 of Base Autonoma, a

national skinhead network dissolved under the Mancino Law) and Piero Puschiamo (leader of the Veneto Skinhead Front – Veneto Fronte Skinhead).

In April 2008 Boccacci left the position of secretary in protest against the party's decision to vote for the Alleanza Nazionale (formerly, the neo-fascist Movimento Sociale Italiano – MSI; see *ASW 2004*) candidate Gianni Alemanno as mayor of Rome. (Alemanno was subsequently elected). In his resignation letter, Boccacci criticized Alemanno for what he termed his liberal, anti-social and philo-Zionist stance, and accused leaders of the political right of being "the new servants, dressed up with their kippot above their napes." In October and November, Boccacci used the "Militia" signature (a reference to the book by Catholic and philo-Nazi Belgian Leon Degrelle) on huge antisemitic wall banners affixed in Rome against the president of the Senate, Mayor Alemanno and the president of Jewish community of Rome, Riccardo Pacifici ("Alemanno is an infamous Zionist shit"; "Alemanno-Pacifici: Roma-Auschwitz one-way"; "Holocaust is history's Biggest Lie! Ahmadinejad"). He was arrested and charged under the Mancino Law.

Skinhead MS-FT member Andrea Miglioranza, a former activist of Veneto Fronte Skinhead, has become the party leader in Verona city council. In addition, following a Nazi-type blog filled with antisemitic and Holocaust-denying references in the October 2008 Trento provincial election campaign, which included statements such as "Jews are enemies of God and enemies of our holy religion," a MS-FT candidate was expelled from the party.

Skinheads and Other Far Right Groups

According to a report of the Internal Security and Information Agency, northeast Italy has "the highest density of skinhead militants in the country" and Veneto Fronte Skinhead has hundreds of activists. The report claims that most of the 20,000 hard-core football hooligans in recent years are far right supporters (65 Ultras groups with about 15,000 members). The Ultras have learnt how to militarize their groups during their years of hooligan fights in stadiums.

Skinheads partially overlap with Ultras; their antisemitism is expressed through slogans chanted at football matches and wall graffiti. Small neo-Nazi inspired groups – many linked also to Ultras – commit acts of violence against immigrants, Southern Italians and leftists or those "who look like leftists" in several areas of the country. Following an escalation of such attacks, police in Bolzano arrested 16 neo-Nazis and charged 62 people with violation of the Mancino Law in May 2008. According to political commentators, this tendency is due to the AN

moving to the center of the political axis, leaving political representation of the far right to others.

Dozens of Italian songs with antisemitic and Holocaust denying lyrics can be found on YouTube. Concerts are promoted by far right cultural centers or small political parties such as MS-FT and Forza Nuova. Clips of the band 99 Fosse appear on YouTube. The band is well-known on the Italian extreme right and skinhead scene. Their songs are parodies of Italian hit pop songs reworked with antisemitic words. At the end of the 1990s, 99 Fosse collected their songs in the album *Zyklon B*, which though not actually published has been circulating on the web since then. In 2008 the Public Prosecutor's office opened a file against them for violation of the Mancino Law.

Casa Pound Italia (CP), founded in 2003 in Rome, now has branches in major Italian cities. Led by Gianluca Iannone, its goals is to disseminate far right culture mainly through social and cultural activities (concerts, conferences, books presentations). Such activity enables the organization to attract recruits among the poorer classes and in schools. CP offices are often established in squatter dwellings, which are converted into houses for homeless families and become popular gathering centers. CP claims to have fascist roots. It organizes concerts with far right bands and sometimes its members are charged with violent acts.

Similar goals are pursued by other groups, such as Casa d'Italia Prati in Rome, Cuore Nero in Milan and Skinhouse in Bollate (Milan).

Islam in Italy

The Italian Islamic community totals some 1.2 million residents. In absolute figures, Islam is the second religion of Italy behind Catholicism. The most established Muslim entity representing "organized Islam" in the country is the Unione delle Comunità ed Organizzazioni Islamiche in Italia – Onlus (Union of Islamic Communities and Organizations in Italy – UCOII; www.islam-ucoui.it). The Islamist-inspired UCOII is a member of FIOE (Federation of Islamic Organizations in Europe), the umbrella association of European organizations which is influenced by the Muslim Brotherhood.

The president of UCOII is Mohammad Nur Dachan, a Syrian heart surgeon with Italian citizenship and the "spokesman" (director of Social Affairs and Human Rights Department) is El Zir Izzedine. Former UCOII spokesman, Roberto Hamza Piccardo, manages the UCOII publishing house (Al Hikma) and its unofficial on-line bookshop www.libreriaislamica.it, both of which sell antisemitic books.

UCOII radicalism prompted Minister of European Affairs Andrea Ronchi to state, in December 2008, that UCOII must be "prevented from managing mosques, and those [mosques] that are coordinated by this organization must be blocked" and that "these people must be culturally isolated." In a March 2008 report, the Central Direction of Prevention Police stressed the risks of fundamentalism in UCOI-run mosques.

The Far Left

Far left parties were clearly defeated in the April 2008 general election: as a result, no party based on this ideology had any candidate elected to the Italian Parliament. The Italian far left rejects the Jews as a nation and thus their right to a state. Its anti-Israelism and anti-Zionism is linked to anti-Americanism, philo-Arabism, philo-Islamism, anti-westernism and Third-Worldism. In line with this approach, the conflict between the Arab-Islamic world and the State of Israel and Zionism amounts to a Manichean clash in which all good is embodied in the Muslims (and particularly the Palestinians) while Israelis/Zionists represent all that is evil

Holocaust denial is almost absent from the propaganda of the far left. However, by continuously suggesting – in the context of demonizing Israel – a comparison between the Shoah and the "Palestinian holocaust," the far left's discourse leads to relativization of the genocide of the Jews. According to the far left, Israel is a colonialist, genocidal and racist entity on a par with Nazi Germany and Apartheid South Africa. It ascribes racist feelings and genocidal tendencies to every Israeli prime minister, regardless of their politics, as well as to a large portion of Israeli politicians while military operations carried out by Israeli armed forces are equated to the massacres perpetrated by the Nazis during WWII. Such expressions were marked in particular during Operation Cast Lead (see below).

Catholic Fundamentalists

A few Catholic fundamentalist circles, marginal even in the Catholic traditionalist world, disseminate religious antisemitism. Although their periodicals reflect the pre-Conciliar (pre-1965 Vatican Council) rejection of the Jews, they have modified their polemics in recent years. Militia Christi is a small fundamentalist Catholic movement present mainly in Rome, whose circulation of antisemitic and anti-Zionist leaflets goes almost unnoticed. It also runs a website. It supports a "Christian fight against Zionism [which includes only a subset of the Jewish people] and

Freemasonry," which are both "hidden and willful enemies of Catholic Church and of the Peoples of the Earth."

The decision taken by Pope Benedictus XVI in July 2007 to liberalize the celebration of a pre-Conciliar mass in Latin according to a 1962 rite – forbidden after the Second Vatican Council – has revived the question of the Good Friday prayer *Oremus pro judaeis*, included in that rite. In the prayer, God is asked to "take away that people...from its darkness" and to remove its "blindness." Following protests from the Jewish communities, in February 2008 the Pope decided to modify the prayer in the Latin rite also, without renouncing, however, the invocation to convert the Jews.

The decision to modify the prayer stirred up protests from the pre-Conciliar traditionalist Catholic world, among them, Lefebvrian circles, which complained that rules establishing worship in the Church were being determined by suggestions from the synagogue. *Sodalitium*, the periodical of a small group of Lefebvrians who are particularly critical of the modernization introduced by the Second Vatican Council, protested that the teaching of the Church "is dictated or at least influenced by those who are irrelevant or even opposed to the Church," and claimed that "the religion of the Jews is a fake" and "the Jews are aggressive as per usual."

ANTISEMITIC ACTIVITY

Sixty-nine antisemitic incidents were recorded by the Observatory on Anti-Jewish Prejudice of the CDEC Foundation in 2008 compared to 53 in 2007. They included vandalism, offensive graffiti and emails against Jewish individuals and institutions.

A May 2008 report by Italian Intelligence (Aisi) foresaw a resurgence of antisemitism and a new phenomenon of antisemitic slogans chanted at football matches coming not only from skinheads and football Ultras, but also from the far left.

The most serious incident occurred in December when a 14-year-old boy was physically assaulted on the regional Genoa-Savona train by a 17-year-old youth who called him "Dirty Jew," and said, "This train is going to Auschwitz." The attacker was reported to the police. In January, some tombstones were destroyed in the Jewish cemetery in Scandiano (Reggio Emilia).

Twenty-one of the incidents were reports of graffiti (2007: 26), nine of which were in Rome. Most denied the Holocaust and ended with the "Militia" signature. For example: In July, neo-Nazi graffiti against Jews and Roma appeared on the walls bordering the Jewish cemetery in the Borgo Venezia neighbourhood of Verona. In March, posters advertising

a concert in Rome of Australian pianist of Jewish origin David Helfgott were defaced with the words "Jew, leave Rome" or were ripped off the walls.

Of the 33 insulting emails received, 28 were sent by the same individual (2007: 12 emails, all sent by the same individual).

Only one antisemitic incident was reported in sport, down from the previous year. This could be a result of the educational campaign carried out by the Interior Ministry in response to violence by football supporters. During a match between Barga and Ghivizzano in the Football Amateur League held in Barga (Lucca) some Ghivizzano supporters chanted choruses praising the extermination of Jews and homosexuals and comparing them to the players and supporters of the opposing team.

Propaganda

In the first half of 2008, a controversy triggered by a group of leftist intellectuals and politicians against the decision by Torino Book Fair organizers to invite a delegation of Israeli writers on the occasion of Israel's 60th anniversary became tainted by antisemitism. It began with a letter from the provincial secretary of the Party of Italian Communists in Torino to the presidents of Piedmont region and Torino province, to the mayor of Torino, Sergio Chiamparino, and to the president of the Torino Book Fair Foundation, demanding that representatives of the Palestinian state also be invited. The debate between supporters and critics of boycotting the book fair sometimes crossed the line from anti-Israel to antisemitic statements. Considering the media too pro-Israel, philosopher Gianni Vattimo, for example, declared that he had "re-evaluated" *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, and now felt they basically reflected the truth about the Jews.

In another serious affair, a list of 162 "Jewish" university professors was posted in February on a blog hosted by the web platform Il Cannocchiale (for freely loading messages and documents). The author of the post, who reportedly compiled the "list" from a petition submitted by the professors in response to an antisemitic incident, accused them of "lobbying for the Zionists" and called it "the list of Jewish top brass in Italian universities." He was investigated by the Public Prosecutor's Office in Rome for violation of privacy and for vilification. The blogger had a previous record of antisemitic commentaries and had signed a petition in favor of French Holocaust denier Robert Faurisson.

In response to the Madoff fraud (see *USA*), anthropologist Ida Magli, a columnist for the daily *il Giornale*, posted an article on her website

Italiani Liberi (Free Italians) claiming the "Jewish manipulators" were controlling world finances.

In May 2008, during a protest march in Torino against Israel organized by the association "Free Palestine," the secretary of the Communist Workers' Party (Partito Comunista dei Lavoratori – PCL), Marco Ferrando, stated: "Refoundation [the Communist Refoundation Party] and the others are not here because they hope to return to power soon, and to do that they need the support of the Zionist lobby." Earlier, on January 4, he had said: "PCL feels committed to fully supporting the armed resistance of the Palestinian people against the occupation troops of the Zionist state... PCL proclaims itself proudly anti-Zionist... so turning that colonial page from which the State of Israel was born in 1948, with terror and anti-Arab ethnic cleansing methods.

Although it is difficult to document evidence of antisemitic prejudice among Italian Muslims, sermons in some mosques and Muslim cultural centers closest to Islamism reportedly combine anti-western and "jihadist" themes with antisemitism. UCOII spokesman El Zir Izzedine stated during the KlausCondicio show broadcast on YouTube, that "the Palestinian question is a forgotten Holocaust" and compared the Palestinian tragedy to the "Jewish Holocaust." Dagoberto Husayn Bellucci, a Shiite Muslim, managing director of the Islam Italia press agency, contributor to the quarterly review *Eurasia* of the neo-Nazi monthly *Avanguardia* (www.avanguardia.tv), and author of a venomously antisemitic pamphlet and several antisemitic articles, stated during a long interview to the online periodical *Iniziativa Meridionale* (Southern Initiative; www.iniziativameridionale.it) that "in Italy we have to say clearly that politics now wears a kippah"; he also referred to "the Zionist occupation government" (see also below).

Books

Nine anti-Jewish books were published in 2008, two denying the Holocaust. Their publishing houses are: Effepi edizioni, Effedieffe, edizioni di AR, Controcorrente Edizioni, Roberto Chiaramonte Editore and Helvetia Editrice. The first three publish anti-Jewish material on a regular basis; Controcorrente has published some antisemitic and conspiracy theory books, while the last two had never published antisemitic works before.

The most active is Effepi (<http://www.libroelibri.com/Italia-Effepi.htm>), a small publishing house in Genova with headquarters in the owner's house. Effepi's catalogue includes almost only antisemitic, Holocaust denying and Nazi books. The most significant anti-Jewish book published by Effepi in 2008 was *Dal giudaismo rabbinico al*

giudeoamericanismo (From Rabbinical Judaism to Judaeo-Americanism), by Catholic priest don Curzio Nitoglia (www.doncurzionitoglia.com), who specializes in anti-Judaic polemics. The central thesis of Nitoglia's book is that Jews profess a degenerate religion ("rabbinical Judaism" or "talmudism") aimed at conquering and dominating the world. Effepi also published two books denying the Holocaust in 2008.

Effedieffe (www.effedieffe.com), a publishing house of "Catholic orientation" based in the Viterbo area, issued the 400-page *Omicidio rituale ebraico. Storia di un'accusa* (Jewish Ritual Murder. History of an Accusation) by Domenico Savino, which analyzes the "Jewish blood libel," and infers that Jews have repeatedly committed it. Effedieffe has an online daily newspaper edited by journalist Maurizio Blondet, which regularly posts anti-Jewish articles (often written by Blondet himself). Savino is also a regular contributor.

Edizioni di AR (<http://www.edizionidiar.com/>), founded by neo-Naziist Franco Freda in 1963 and active since 1964, is the oldest publishing house of the Italian radical right. In 2008 it published an anthology of the monumental work of antisemitic polemics *Giudaismo svelato* (Judaism Unveiled), by 17th century German Orientalist Johann Andreas Eisenmenger.

Controcorrente Edizioni (www.controcorrentedizioni.it), based in Naples, publishes texts by Julius Evola and books supporting fascism and the Italian Social Republic. In 2008 Controcorrente published an updated version of *Massoneria e sette segrete. La faccia occulta della storia* (Freemasonry and Secret Sects: The Hidden Face of History) by Epiphanius.

Roberto Chiaramonte Editore (www.chiaramonteeditore.it), a small publishing house in Piedmont, published an unannotated reprint of the 1921 edition of the Italian version of *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*. The Afterword, written by publisher Roberto Chiaramonte, has strong antisemitic overtones.

The Veneto-based Helvetia Editrice (www.edizionihelvetia.com) published the fictional work *L'ebreo nazista* (The Nazi Jew), written by Padova doctor Alessandro Moro. The thesis of the book is that all the main representatives of National Socialism, starting from the Führer, were Jews and that their racism was inspired by Jewish religious texts.

Websites

The extremely antisemitic Holywar website (www.holywar.org) appears mainly in Italian and English. Although Catholic-inspired, it accuses the contemporary Church of having betrayed its original apostolic mission and having become a slave of the "Jewish mafia." The website includes a

huge quantity of anti-Jewish material: hundreds of cartoons, *The Protocols of Elders of Zion*, documents accusing Jews of ritual murder, and even the Nazi film *The Jew Süß*.

The name Thule in www.thule-toscana.com derives from the far right German secret society which was the first unit of Hitler's National Socialist Party. Managed by one person, it includes many sections and pages with a huge quantity of material denying the Holocaust, as well as a large selection of Nazi and fascist posters.

Italian Islamic-inspired websites are characterized by virulent anti-Zionism and anti-Israelism. Antisemitic stereotypes are rare and generally disguised in anti-imperialist rhetoric. Comparisons between the State of Israel and Nazi Germany or Apartheid South Africa are common, as well as use of terms such as genocide and ethnic cleansing. The websites <http://www.islam-online.it/> and <http://www.ilpuroislam.net/>, in particular, are aimed almost exclusively at demonizing the Jewish state and Zionism. Radio Tehran (which broadcasts two hours daily of Italian speaking programs) has a website <http://italian.irib.ir/>, which reflects the regime's information strategy: Holocaust denial and anti-Israel and anti-US propaganda. Among the site's contributors are well-known Italian journalists and intellectuals.

Surveys

According to a survey conducted in 2008 by the Ispo Institute directed by Professor Renato Mannheimer on behalf of the Monferrato Cult, which organizes a Jewish culture festival, one Italian out of three thinks Jews are unpleasant people, while one Italian out of four does not consider them "fully Italian." The study, which was based on a sample of 1000 individuals, related to other populations as well. Accordingly, the Roma are the least loved ethnic group (81 percent of Italians).

Mannheimer distinguished three kinds of antisemitism: "classical" religious antisemitism (expressed by 10 percent of pollees); the "new" antisemitism, linked to attitudes toward Israel (11 percent); and absolute antisemitism (11 percent). Based on an analysis of answers, the antisemitic individual tends to be mainly male, aged 50-60, self-employed, leftist and secular.

Operation Cast Lead

At the beginning of January 2009, the entrance gates to the villa of Emanuel Segre Amar, vice-president of the Italy-Israel Association, were defaced with the slogan "Zionist Murderer" and red paint poured on the ground and on the bars of the gate. Dozens of leaflets proclaiming "Free Palestine" were also scattered in the vicinity.

Large anti-Zionist demonstrations organized principally by Arab-Islamic associations in Milan, Bologna, Rome, Torino, Brescia and Vicenza, were unprecedented in Italy for the large numbers they attracted and their virulent anti-Zionism. Thousands of people, mostly of Arab descent, marched, together with Italian squatter leftists and anarchists and far left activists. Carrying banners showing the Magen David equated with the swastika and waving Hamas flags, many shouted slogans against the "Nazi-Zionist regime" and for the destruction of the Jewish state. One of the most serious incidents occurred in Mestre, where five hooded youths broke into the headquarters of the Israeli shipping company Zim and smeared the offices with antisemitic graffiti; anti-Israeli insults written in red paint and signed with a hammer and sickle and a five-pointed star also appeared on the walls in downtown Mestre.

Marco Rizzo, leader of the Party of Italian Communists (Partito dei Comunisti Italiani) said: "When Nazis killed people on a one to ten ratio they called it retaliation, today Israel's government kills on a one to hundred ratio and everyone is silent." In the same vein, the extreme leftist, anti-Zionist daily *il Manifesto*, which leads the anti-Israel campaign, wrote of "dozens and dozens of poor bodies of young men, crushed and piled up in front of the barracks" (Ali Rashid, *il Manifesto*, December 28, 2008). It should be noted that on March 13, *il Manifesto* also published an antisemitic caricature of Jewish parliamentary candidate, Fiamma Nirenstein as "Frankenstein," with fascist insignia, a campaign button and a Star of David.

Giancarlo Desiderati, provincial secretary of Flaica – Uniti – Cub, a trade union with some 8,000 members working in large-scale retail and catering in Rome, proposed boycotting all Roman shops managed by Jews and drawing up lists of Jewish-owned shops to be avoided, because of "what is happening in Gaza." After being severely reprimanded by leading Italian politicians and intellectuals, Desiderati replied: "When faced with what is happening in Gaza we have to respond; in war there are no rules... We have been caring about Jews for fifty years because they suffered the Holocaust, now we have to care about Palestinians who are today's Jews." Flaica website includes instructions for boycotting products made in Israel.

ATTITUDES TOWARD THE HOLOCAUST AND THE NAZI ERA

Commemoration

In September Gianfranco Fini, president of Alleanza Nazionale, who was appointed president of the House of Representatives on April 30, 2008, restated that fascism is absolute evil, that "the Right must

recognize itself, in freedom, equality and solidarity – antifascist values – without ambiguity and without reticence" and that "those who fought for the right cause, the cause of freedom, can't be equated with those who were on the wrong side."

In October, Mayor of Rome Gianni Alemanno, speaking to students and teachers who were going to visit Auschwitz in November, stressed the need to close down websites inciting antisemitism and clearly condemned fascism and Nazism. His statement was made a few weeks after the heated controversy he triggered during a visit to Israel's Yad Vashem when he spoke of "absolute evil," fascism and racial laws ("Racial laws demanded by fascism were the absolute evil. Fascism was a more complex phenomenon. Many people joined it with good intentions and I don't feel like labeling them with that definition").

Holocaust Memorial Day, established in 2000 by state law and observed every January 27, was marked in 2008 throughout Italy, but especially in central and northern areas. As in previous years, the programs were spread over a span of two months. State institutions – including the Presidency of the Republic, the Senate and the House of Representatives as well as regional, provincial and municipal administrations – organized, sponsored and joined dozens of ceremonies, conferences, educational exhibitions, trips to Auschwitz, national competitions, stage performances, testimonies, movies, essays, novels and art exhibitions. Tuscany regional administration alone promoted more than 250 initiatives.

As in previous years, educational institutions were among the most active, using the occasion to stress democracy and tolerance. The Holocaust is dealt with not only by referring to the deportations but also, in several Italian cities, to the contribution made to their hometowns by deported Jewish citizens. For example, the Senate set up an exhibition celebrating two Jewish senators, Vito Volterra and Carlo Levi. Some Italian Righteous among the Nations are honored, as well as the Jewish Brigade. The persecution of Roma and the disabled are also remembered, and occasionally, political deportees.

On the occasion of the 70th anniversary in 2008 of the promulgation of the Racial Laws a conference was held in the House of Representatives, which was attended also by its president Gianfranco Fini; there were also several exhibits, including one in Rome, promoted by the Ministry of Cultural Heritage.

Holocaust Denial

Dissemination of Holocaust denial in Italy has remained unchanged over the past few years: apart from the Italian website Thule-Toscana.com

and the Italian pages in two international websites, Aaargh and Radioislam, texts denying the Holocaust are posted and commented mainly in blogs and in graffiti. Holocaust denial propaganda is spread mostly by the radical right, as well as by some of the Catholic fundamentalist fringe and a few individuals.

In 2008 two new books denying the Holocaust were published, both by Effepi in Genova: *Il processo della Risiera di San Sabba. Messa in scena per uno sterminio* (The Trial of Risiera di San Sabba: Mise-en-Scene for a Mass-Murder,) by Ugo Fabbri, and *Il dottor Mengele e i gemelli di Auschwitz* (Doctor Mengele and the Auschwitz Twins), by Carlo Mattogno.

Denial of the Holocaust meets with strong disapproval by the authorities and in public opinion. For example, an art school teacher was suspended in November by the Regional School Office in Rome, after making statements such as: "The Holocaust was a British invention"; "there is no concrete evidence"; "enough with this Zionist culture. Jews are not even Italians"; and in January 2009, after echoing the Holocaust denying statements made by Bishop Williamson on January 27, Lefebvrian priest don Floriano Abrahamovicz of the Brotherhood of Saint Pius X in Treviso was expelled from the order "for serious disciplinary reasons." He had said during an interview with a Treviso newspaper that he knew the gas chambers had been used for disinfection, but did not know whether they had killed people or not, because he hadn't investigated the matter.

RESPONSES TO ANTISEMITISM AND RACISM

National and Local Initiatives

In September, on the occasion of the ninth European Day of Jewish Culture, representatives of Coreis (Comunità Religiosa Islamica Italiana – Italian Religious Islamic Community) visited synagogues and Jewish sites to reaffirm dialogue against antisemitic and islamophobic stereotypes and "to renew the values of religious brotherhood and spiritual connection shared all along with the Jewish Community."

In December all parties in the House of Representatives approved a motion on the initiatives prepared for the UN Conference against racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and intolerance that was to be held in Geneva in April 2009. Among others, the motion, committed the government to exert maximum vigilance and act concretely so that the conference would actually be aimed at promoting the struggle against racism and every kind of discrimination, rather than be used to incite hatred against some people, states and ethnic or religious minorities, specifically mentioning the "campaign of moral, political and religious lynching against the Jewish people and the state of Israel."

In April, the Jewish community of Mantova established an "Observatory on Discrimination" called Article 3 (referring to equality of all citizens as prescribed in the Italian Constitution), together with two Mantova associations dealing with Sinti and Roma, a gay committee and the Mantova Institute of Contemporary History.

In January, police headquarters of Nuoro in Sardinia launched an inter-cultural educational campaign for teenagers, based on meetings in schools and the distribution of 34,000 copies of a leaflet to students of secondary schools. The initiative is aimed at fighting racism, antisemitism, xenophobia and intolerance.

Legal Action

The editor of the far right antisemitic review *Avanguardia* was to face trial on the charge of racial discrimination against Jewish progeny and the State of Israel. The decision was taken by the court of appeal in Palermo, which also confirmed his acquittal, issued by the preliminary hearing judge, on charges of defense and reconstitution of the Fascist National Party.

The trial against 18 skinheads charged with forming a criminal organization based on Nazi-fascist ideology and aimed at inciting racial hatred began in September 2008. The group allegedly attacked non-European, gay and Jewish individuals, stirred up fights at the football stadium with opposing Ultras, and established contacts with neo-Nazi groups.

In May, 16 skinheads were arrested and 60 more in the area around Merano (Alto Adige) were charged with violation of the Mancino Law and judged socially dangerous. A veritable "neo Nazi International," with an almost military structure, came to light as a result of investigations.

In October, the Court of Cassation sentenced the editor of the website Holywarvszog to four months imprisonment for spreading racist ideas. On the site, the "holy war" against "Zionist racism" and the "government of Jewish minorities over society" was invoked in the name of the Movement of Popular Resistance, Christian Alternative. The sentence was subsequently commuted to charity work in a hospital.

In May, the Prosecutor's Office in Bologna acquitted leading UCOII officials of the charge of "inciting racial hatred and disseminating news based on racial hatred" for an ad published in August 2006 in the newspapers of the Riffeser Group (*Giorno*, *Nazione*, *Resto del Carlino*), entitled "Nazi Bloodshed Yesterday, Israeli Bloodshed Today"; the ad ended with the equation "Marzabotto=Gaza=Ardeatine Caves=Lebanon."

NETHERLANDS

One hundred and eight antisemitic incidents were recorded in the Netherlands until the last days of December 2008, compared to 104 in 2007. During Israel's operation in Gaza, the number of antisemitic incidents rose sharply, reaching almost the total for the entire year – 98. Antisemitic slogans previously restricted to the soccer stadium were heard in the streets during this period.

THE JEWISH COMMUNITY

An estimated 40,000 Jews live in the Netherlands out of a total population of 16.4 million. Dutch Jewry is represented by three religious councils: the Nederlands Israelitisch Kerkgenootschap (Orthodox), the Verbond van Liberaal Religieuze Joden (Reform) and the Portugees Israelitisch Kerkgenootschap (Sephardi Orthodox). The vast majority of the Jewish population, however, is unaffiliated to any religious organization. CIDI (Israel Information and Documentation Center) monitors antisemitic manifestations in the country. The community sustains a large variety of religious and educational institutions, as well as a Jewish weekly, *Nieuw Israelitisch Weekblad*.

POLITICAL ORGANIZATIONS AND RACIST ACTIVITY

Extreme Right

According to the AIVD (General Intelligence and Security Service) report for 2008, right-wing extremists remained divided and failed to gain representatives in Parliament and local city councils. The neo-Nazi Dutch People's Union (Nederlandse Volks-Unie, NVU), which has successfully used legal action to counter local authority attempts to restrict its demonstrations, remained the largest group organized along traditional party lines, but was increasingly forced to depend upon the participation of other far right groups, such as National Socialist Action/Autonomous National Socialists (NSA/ANS), and unorganized right-wing youths who network on internet forums.

Traditional right-wing extremists have resorted to mustering support on the internet and have adopted tactics previously associated mainly with the far left. These include squatting and pie throwing, as well as alliances with animal rights activists, directed mainly against Islamic slaughter but also against *shechita* (ritual Jewish slaughter). Right-wing extremists also formed alliances with extreme left-wing activists protesting against alleged suppression of their freedom of speech by the state and the police. Following a police raid on their homes and computers, the operators of the website Holland-Hardcore.com, a more nationalist variant of the neo-Nazi forum Stormfront, organized a

demonstration calling for freedom of expression, which attracted some 80-100 activists from a wide variety of right-wing groups.

Ten NSA/ANS supporters held a protest outside the Dutch Parliament in The Hague against the right-wing Party for Freedom (PVV) leader Geert Wilders, whom they regard as too pro-Israel. Wilders, who is outspoken on issues such as immigration, freedom of speech, Islam, and the behavior of Moroccan youth in the cities, aroused international controversy in 2008 with his film about Islam in the Netherlands, *Fitna* (see below).

Left-Wing Groups

Under the slogan "Keep the right off the streets!" the Anti-Fascist Action (AFA) is one of the main militant left-wing organizations. Among its activities, it organizes counter-demonstrations, particularly against the NVU, which on occasion turn violent. The confrontations, in fact, are normally "delegated" to local antifacist youths or football hooligans. In a few cases, actual or suspected supporters of the extreme right have been assaulted and robbed. AFA cooperates with like-minded groups, particularly in Germany. In 2008 a Dutch court ruled for the first time that AFA had been the aggressor in a left-right confrontation, at Uitgeest, in February 2007.

Left-wing groups related to the more mainstream political left such as the Socialist Party, some left-wingers in Dutch Labour, and leftist Christian organizations tend to support anti-Israel demonstrations and boycotts (see below).

Islamist Activity

The Muslim community in the Netherlands numbers about 850,000. According to the AIVD, members of mainstream Dutch Muslim society, particularly the Turkish community, are increasingly distancing themselves from radical Islamic movements, such as the declaredly non-violent but socially polarizing Salafist centers. Disaffected Moroccan youth remain susceptible to radicalization. They meet on the internet and at events such as religious gatherings. Parts of the Moroccan community were active during the conflict in Gaza, in late December 2008/January 2009, in demonstrations, petitions, fundraising and calls to boycott Israeli products.

The 2008 AIVD report notes that small cells engaged in radical Islamist activity and jihadist terrorism remain a threat to the Netherlands. A contributing factor in 2008 was the critical domestic debate about Islam, which was fueled, among other factors, by the release of Wilders' film *Fitna*. The film, which features excerpts from Suras of the Qur'an

interspersed with media clips and newspaper cuttings showing acts of violence and/or hatred by Muslims, seeks to demonstrate that the Qur'an motivates followers to abhor all who violate Islamic teachings, thus encouraging terrorism, antisemitism, violence against women and homosexuals, and Islamic universalism.

The situation with regard to Islamic websites in the Netherlands has changed little from 2007, according to the AIVD. Many convey Salafist messages. However, the number of extremist postings fell slightly, due partly to stricter moderation by some of the larger, government-funded Moroccan web forums, but also seemingly because of less interest among young Muslims in expressing extremist ideas online. The fact that internet users are increasingly aware that such postings are monitored, and that threats are in many cases reported to the police, may also have contributed to their decline.

ANTISEMITIC ACTIVITY

CIDI registered 108 antisemitic incidents up until the last days of December 2008, a slight rise from the 104 recorded in 2007, but a clear decline from previous years. In the last week of December, when Operation Cast Lead was launched in Gaza, the number of antisemitic incidents began rising sharply, reaching almost the total for the entire year – 98 – during the period of warfare. It should be noted that statistics on antisemitic incidents from other sources, which were included in the 2008 numbers, were largely unavailable for the Gaza period. Both the escalation and an analysis of antisemitic emails sent during this period indicate a clear correlation between antisemitic expressions in the Netherlands and a rise in tensions in the Middle East. It should be noted that in 2008 the number of hate crimes registered by the police against Muslims, who number 20 times that of the Jewish population, was 116, while the number of hate crimes registered against Jews was 141. CIDI does not include statistics on antisemitism on the internet; the national internet anti-discrimination watchdog also recorded more antisemitic expressions than anti-Muslim ones.

The number of violent incidents and threats of attacks against Jews also rose sharply during Operation Cast Lead. In 2008 a total of 5 violent incidents were recorded compared to 3 in 2007. However, during the period of Israel's Gaza operation alone, 9 such incidents were reported. These 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, also in Amstelveen-Buittenveldert, by a gang of three youths. In The Hague, a group of youths smashed the window of the front door of a

wheelchair-bound man because they spotted an Israeli flag in his hallway. They then started a fire in front of the door and shot firework rockets into the hall, "because we are Palestinians."

In the case of violent incidents or direct confrontations on the streets such as insults directed at a visibly Jewish person, the perpetrators were almost invariably identified as young men of North African descent. It should be noted, however, that perpetrators of other antisemitic acts were native Dutch citizens.

This was especially true for antisemitic emails, at least half of which appeared to have been sent by native Dutch persons. One of the differences between 2007 and 2008 was a sharp increase in antisemitic emails after the start of Operation Cast Lead. Thirty emails were received in 2008, and 48 during Operation Cast Lead, many claiming that what Israel was doing in Gaza was the same, or worse, than what the Nazis did to the Jews in the Holocaust. These comparisons were sometimes accompanied by images from Gaza alongside Holocaust-era photos. In extreme cases, the Holocaust was justified by references to Israel's actions in Gaza or senders of antisemitic emails expressed the wish that "Hitler should have finished the job" because this would have saved the suffering in Gaza. Trivialization of the Holocaust was never as common in the Netherlands as it was during this period. There were also many antisemitic reactions on the internet in the form of talk-backs to news reports during the Israeli operation.

Another difference was the scale of the incidents, with large crowds chanting antisemitic expressions such as "Hamas, Hamas, all Jews to the gas" at anti-Israel demonstrations in Amsterdam, Rotterdam and Utrecht during the period of Israel's Gaza operation in Gaza. They were organized by the left-wing anti-Israel lobby, together with Muslim organizations and even the small dissident Another Jewish Voice (EAJG). Socialist Party MP Harry van Bommel was filmed chanting "Intifada, intifada, Free Palestine" at a demonstration in Amsterdam at which the above Hamas slogan was chanted. Van Bommel claimed not to have heard it.

RESPONSES TO ANTISEMITISM AND RACISM

Judicial Response

Many antisemitic incidents in the Netherlands are not reported at all. Some Jews feel there is no point in reporting them because they don't want to cause trouble, can't be bothered, or occasionally because they don't trust that the authorities will deal with the complaint seriously. The Netherlands has a sound anti-discrimination policy, but sometimes individual police officers display an unwillingness to record antisemitic

50, most with a criminal record. Three members of Boot Boys were responsible for the murder in Oslo of the Norwegian-African teenager Benjamin Hermansen, in January 2001 (see *ASW* 2003/4).

The Norwegian National Socialist Movement (Norges Nasjonalsosialistiske Bevegelse), led by Erik Rune Hansen, has 40-50 members, publishes the magazine *Gjallarhorn*, and in 1999 issued *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*. The group is associated with the transnational neo-Nazi Blood & Honour, whose Scandinavian branch includes the Norwegian neo-Nazi activist Henrik Blücher. In contrast to National Youth, the Norwegian National Socialist Movement counts older individuals among its members, some of whom were active Nazis during World War II.

Vigrid, founded and led by Tore Wilhelm Tvedt, former leader of Boot Boys, is the only group that appears to be growing. It identifies closely with the US National Alliance, and members of Vigrid have been involved in murders and armed robberies. The group has published the magazine *Vigrid* since 1999, but most of its propaganda, directed mostly against Jews but also against non-white immigrants, is spread via the internet.

Vigrid actively recruits very young followers, and practices its own versions of Christian baptism and confirmation. Tore Wilhelm Tvedt, who claims to be the prophet of the Norse god Odin, seeks to convert Norway to paganism after expelling or killing Jews and immigrants.

Tore Tvedt was convicted in April 2002 for claiming that Jews had sexual intercourse with their dead. He was sentenced, but appealed to the Supreme Court, which acquitted him. In October 2006, Tvedt was sentenced to 45 days in prison for stating in an interview (in 2003) with the daily tabloid *VG* and elsewhere that all Jews "must be wiped out"; his appeal to the Borgarting (local) appeal court ended in his acquittal. However, it was overruled by the Supreme Court in 2007.

ANTISEMITIC ACTIVITIES

Most anti-Jewish activity in Norway took place during Israel's Operation Cast Lead in late December 2008-January 2009, when the level of verbal attacks and hostility toward Jewish Norwegian in the media, in the streets, and against school children increased significantly.

On January 15, 2009, the Socialist Left Party (SV), which is part of the centrist-left government coalition, called for a trade boycott of Israel. They were accused of antisemitism in several op-ed sections in Norwegian newspapers, on the grounds that they never called for trade boycotts of other countries involved in acts of war and for referring to Israeli policy towards the Palestinians as "worse than apartheid." The

government did not adopt this position, and there is no official Norwegian boycott of Israeli goods.

Earlier, on January 3, Trond Andresen, a member of the extreme left extra-parliamentary Rødt (Red) party, had published an op-ed in the extreme left daily *Klassekampen* accusing Jews in general of lacking empathy and humanistic attitudes. After being accused of harboring antisemitic attitudes by fellow Rødt members, he left the party on his own accord a few days later.

On December 29, a demonstration against Israel turned violent when demonstrators threw firecrackers and stones at the Israeli embassy in downtown Oslo. Buildings close to the embassy were vandalized and attacked with bricks. Similar events took place in January, organized by Palestinakomiteen (the Palestine Committee – the main organizing body of pro-Palestinian supporters in Norway, which had no previous record of violence) with the support of several left-wing organizations, including Arbeiderpartiet i Oslo (Oslo Labour Party), Sosialistisk Venstreparti (Socialist Left Party), Rødt (Red) and Norges Kommunistiske Parti/NKP (Norwegian Communist Party), as well as the youth sections of most of them. The Labour Party and the Socialist Left Party are both members of the government.

Violence escalated and turned antisemitic on January 8, when youths – mostly of Middle East and North African origin, as well as adherents of the far left autonomous group Blitz – attacked a peaceful pro-Israel demonstration outside the parliament with the participation of MPs Siv Jensen (Progress Party) and Ingebrigt Sørfohn (Christian People's Party). The demonstration had been organized by Med Israel For Fred/MIFF (With Israel for Peace), with the backing of several Christian groups. The attackers shouted "Death to the Jews" in Arabic, and vandalized several restaurants and shops in downtown Oslo.

Simultaneously, a pro-peace demonstration was taking place at the Youngstorget marked place, with the participation of Norwegian community leaders and public figures, including Oslo Rabbi Joav Melchior and president of the Oslo Jewish Community Anne Sender, as well as Lutheran Bishop Ole Christian Kvarme. Shouts of "Get out!" and "Kill the Jews!" were heard from some members of the public, who urged the Israeli army and not Hamas to cease fire. Melchior and Sender departed the area.

An anti-Israel demonstration on January 10 in downtown Oslo also turned violent and antisemitic. Pro-Palestinian groups, such as the Palestine Committee with support from leftist groups, had received permission from the police to protest against Israel outside the Norwegian parliament. The demonstrators, however, decided to march

on the Israeli embassy some blocks away. Children smeared with red paint were positioned between the embassy and the police forces to act as living shields while the embassy was pelted with fire-crackers and stones. After the police had dissolved the demonstration, the participants continued to wreak havoc in downtown Oslo. Restaurants and shops were damaged, and the Oslo Free Masonry headquarters were fire-bombed while 200 children were inside the building during a post-Christmas party. Several bystanders were injured, and an elderly (non-Jewish) man was beaten "because he's a Jew." Shouts of "Let's go to the university to hunt for Jews!" were uttered by the mob; however, they did not enter the campus area. The Oslo police arrested 194 individuals in the following days, several with criminal records. Ten faced charges of vandalism and violence.

In the media, the centrist daily *VG* published a cartoon depicting Israel as Adolf Hitler http://www.document.no/2009/01/norge_har_et_problem.html. On Norway's state Radio 2 (NRK P2), former Prime Minister Kåre Willoch, from Høyre, the Conservative Party, claimed on December 30 that incoming US President Barack Obama was unlikely to pressure Israel because his chief of staff was a Jew. Willoch is outspokenly pro-Palestinian, and was accused of antisemitism in 2003 for participating in an anti-Israel demonstration on the anniversary of Kristallnacht, November 9. Similarly, in January, professor of North American Studies at the University of Oslo Ole Moen claimed on the same station that Obama's Mid-East policy would be heavily influenced by "the Israel lobby" due to his having several Jewish staff members.

In addition, leaflets were distributed in Oslo by immigrants of Middle East and North African origin calling for attacks on Jewish community buildings and verbal abuse of Jewish Norwegians. The Oslo Jewish Community reported the matter to the police. The leaflets, which were not produced professionally, may have been prepared by individuals or by a small, unknown group.

On January 9, a class of 6th grade students and their teachers from Åsveien elementary school in Trondheim refused to visit the Trondheim Jewish Museum because of "angry feelings toward Israel." Visits to local museums and religious institutions are recommended for Norwegian school children as part of their history and religion instruction.

On January 12, Norwegian physicians and professors of medicine Mads Gilbert and Erik Fosse, who worked as volunteers in Shifa hospital in Gaza City during the war, told the center-leftist daily *Dagsavisen* that "Gaza is like the Warsaw Ghetto, only worse." It also transpired in January that Norwegian diplomat and first secretary of the Norwegian

embassy in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, Trine Lilleng, had used her foreign ministry email account to distribute mail comparing the war in Gaza to the Holocaust and the Israelis to Nazis.

RESPONSES TO ANTISEMITISM

In June 2008, the perpetrator of the armed attack on the Oslo synagogue in 2006, Arfan Bhatti, was acquitted of terrorism, but sentenced to eight years in prison for vandalism by an Oslo court (see *ASW 2006*).

General security measures to protect the Jewish community were strengthened as a result of the threatening atmosphere generated by the anti-Israel rallies and Hamas' calls for attacks on Jews throughout the world. The location of outdoor activities of the Jewish kindergarten was changed, for instance.

As a sign of solidarity with Jewish Norwegians following the war in Gaza, Foreign Minister Jonas Gahr Store, Oslo's Lutheran Bishop Ole Christian Kvarme, and the head of Oslo City Council Erling Lae, participated in the Shabbat service of the Oslo synagogue on February 17.

The Jewish communities received a large number of calls, emails and letters of support from members of the public during this period. Moreover, a greater number of letters-to-the editor and opinion pieces criticizing antisemitic statements and anti-Israel views appear to have been published in the Norwegian media than during the 2006 Second Lebanon War.

In order to try and prevent a repeat of the violent demonstrations that took place in downtown Oslo in early January 2009, the lawyer and politician (from the liberal-centrist Venstre [Left] party), Abid Q. Raja arranged a series of open "dialogue meetings" in Oslo, inviting public figures, members of the royal family and government, representatives of immigrant youth, and officials from the Oslo Jewish Community to debate the subjects of tolerance and freedom of speech. During one meeting, Norwegian Muslim Mohammed Ali Chishti, an invited speaker, said that he "hates Jews and homosexuals" and that "Jews are behind all the evils of the world." Chishti received little support from the audience, and the representatives from the Oslo Jewish Community did not feel threatened.

When asked why he invited Chishti to state his opinions in a high-profile debate, Raja, who had read and accepted all speeches to be given during these meetings, answered that extremist views, too, should be freely expressed and debated. In 2006, Raja criticized the publication of the Danish Muhammad cartoons and called on Norway to adapt anti-blasphemy laws to prevent offense to Muslim religious sentiments.

PORTUGAL

Emails and letters sent to Jewish individuals and institutions during Israel's war in Gaza reflected traditional Portuguese perceptions about Jews.

THE JEWISH COMMUNITY

The small Jewish community is well integrated into Portuguese society and well-regarded by the political authorities. The 4,000 Jews in Portugal (including continent and islands) out of a population of 10 million are organized into four independent Jewish communities – Lisbon, Oporto, Belmonte and Algarve. The leading one is the Lisbon community, Comunidade Israelita da Lisboa (www.cilisboa.org), which maintains a synagogue (with daily services), a Jewish club, and a cemetery; it publishes a periodical, *Tikva*, and provides kosher food through the shop El Corte Inglés. The Somej Nophlim association cares for the Jewish aged as well as the needy. The Oporto Jewish Community (<http://comunidade-israelita-porto.org/>) provides regular services in the synagogue. The Algarve Community is oriented basically toward non-Portuguese Jews holidaying in the south of Portugal. The Belmonte Community was formed for descendents of the *anusim* (forced converts to Catholicism). It provides a synagogue with regular services and maintains a cemetery, and promotes traditional Portuguese kosher products such as olive oil and wine.

POLITICAL ORGANIZATIONS

Left-wing parliamentary groupings such as the Left Bloc (BE) and the Democratic Unity Coalition (CDU), the latter a coalition between the Portuguese Communist Party and the Greens, were active in condemning Israel for starting the war in Gaza, and attempted to pass anti-Israel motions in the legislature.

The extreme right, represented, for example by the National Renewal Party (PNR – see *ASW 2007*) and the skinhead movement, is relatively weak and marginal in Portugal. Widely criticized by the majority of the population, their results in national elections tend to be insignificant.

ANTISEMITIC ACTIVITY

Traditional perspectives about Jews (see *ASW 2007*) came to the fore in Portugal during Israel's war in Gaza in late December 2008–January 2009. In emails and letters sent to members of the Jewish community or community institutions denunciation of Israel was mixed with antisemitic slurs, such as: 1) Israel's attack is supported by the richest and most powerful people on earth; 2) Israel is perpetrating a "holocaust" on the

Palestinians; 3) the Jews in Israel were cowards during World War II because they cowered in a corner rather than attack the Nazis; and 4) everyone living in the Middle East is Semitic, therefore those who criticize Israel cannot be accused of antisemitism. Vice president of the Lisbon Jewish Community Esther Mucznik, who has a biweekly column, with an email address, in one of the widely read daily newspapers, *Jornal Publico*, received several messages in her electronic mail box sent by regular readers criticizing her for supporting Israel. Some contained antisemitic motifs, especially comparisons of Israelis and Jews with Nazis.

On the other hand, the general attitude expressed by both opinion leaders and the public in general, especially in mainstream newspapers and on television, tended toward support of Israel in its fight against Hamas. The atmosphere during the Gaza war differed considerably to that during the second intifada, when there was much more criticism of the State of Israel and its then Prime Minister Ariel Sharon.

The perpetrators of the 2007 Jewish cemetery desecration in Lisbon remained behind bars while their trial was ongoing (see *ASW 2007*).

SPAIN

Spanish demonstrators were among the most vociferous in Europe in accusing Israel of "genocide" and Nazism in protest against the war on Gaza. The largest demonstration in Europe took place in central Madrid on January 11, with the approval of the government party and the participation of its members. The Generalitat in Barcelona canceled a public candle lighting ceremony planned for Holocaust Memorial Day, January 27, 2009. The Barcelona Tribunal reduced the prison sentence of neo-Nazi Pedro Varela, handed down in 1998 for denial and advocacy of genocide.

THE JEWISH COMMUNITY

The Jewish population is estimated at 50,000; however, the number of registered Jews does not exceed 14,000. The Federation of Jewish Communities of Spain (FCJE), which represents Jewish interests to the government, consists of thirteen traditional and Orthodox communities, the largest of which are located in Madrid, Barcelona and the Costa del Sol (Malaga). There are Jewish day schools in Barcelona, Madrid and Melilla. A cultural magazine, *Raíces* (Roots) appears on a quarterly basis and is sold also in South America. The Federation of Jewish Communities operates an internet radio station, Radio Sefarad - www.radiosefarad.com. The Segovia-Israel Association of Cultural Relations researches the influence of Jewish culture in Spain.

The Superior Spanish Rabbinical Council was established in November 2008, integrating rabbis and members of the Religious Commission of the Federation of Spanish Jewish Communities. The Council now serves as the supreme religious Jewish authority in the solution of religious Jewish affairs.

The FCJE, in its role as representative organ of the Jewish communities with respect to National Institutions, issued a communiqué on the status of medieval Jewish cemeteries found in Spain by chance. Accordingly, each case should be dealt with on an individual basis in cooperation with the Spanish authorities.

Some 600 people gathered at the Plaza de Olavide in Madrid on December 22 to observe the lighting of the three first candles of the Chanukah menorah by the Great Sephardi Rabbi of Israel Shlomo Amar and the Great Rabbi of Madrid Moshe Bendahan. It was the first time that a menorah had been kindled publicly in Madrid.

A team of geneticists has found that there were mass conversions of Jews and Muslims to Catholicism on the Iberian Peninsula during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Research on the DNA of the

population reveals that 20 percent and 11 percent, respectively, have Jewish and Muslim ancestors (JTA, December 8, 2008).

POLITICAL ORGANIZATIONS AND EXTRA-PARLIAMENTARY GROUPS

Elections

The national legislative elections held in Spain on March 9, 2008 were again won by the Spanish Socialist Workers' Party (PSOE) of President of the Government Rodríguez Zapatero. It gained 43.3 percent of the vote, while the conservative People's Party (PP) of Mariano Rajoy obtained 38.3 percent. Both parties strengthened their position in both the national and autonomous provincial elections, thanks partly to the collapse of two parties of the extreme left, the United Left (IU) and the Republican Left of Catalonia (ERC).

The Far Right

The extreme right has had no representation in either the Spanish Congress or the Senate for the last thirty years. The leading organization is National Democracy (DN) which, since 2004 has enjoyed the support of Jean Marie Le Pen, leader of the French National Front.

Prior to the March elections, DN organized an anti-immigrant demonstration, expecting a turnout of 1,000, but only 180 came. The main slogans were "Social support for nationals" and "There is a causal relationship between immigration and delinquency." The march, banned by the government because of its xenophobic and racist objectives, was later permitted by a decision of Madrid's Superior Tribunal of Justice. A large police force accompanied the demonstrators. There were no incidents.

Movimiento Social Republicano (MSR), associated with former leftist republicans and created in year 2000, comprises the neo-fascist groups Alternativa Europea, Resistencia, and the Red Vértice network (which split from the Falange – see below). Resistencia is the most militant group within the MSR with respect to the Palestinian issue and the September 11 attacks, which it supported unequivocally. The movement praises the extermination of the Jews by the Nazi regime (see also below). In previous general elections, they formed an electoral platform, España 2000, together with Democracia Nacional and other extreme right groups, which was supported by Le Pen (see *ASW 2000-2*).

The antisemitic, anti-Muslim, anti-immigrant National Alliance (AN), successor to the ultra-right Alianza por la Unidad Nacional of convicted criminal Ricardo Saenz de Ynestrillas, kept a relatively low profile in 2008 (see *ASW 2007*).

The small traditionalist fascist parties, principally *las tres falanges* (Falange Espaniola de las JONS, Falange Espaniola Independiente (FEI) and Falange Espaniola Autentica), continued to participate in elections at the local, regional and national level, but are concerned mainly with their own survival. Membership of the Confederacion de ex-Combatientes, an umbrella organization linking associations that yearn for Spain's fascist past, is dwindling due to the death of veterans; around the date of November 20, however, remaining veterans commemorate annually the execution in 1936 by Socialist forces of Jose Antonio Primo de Rivera (founder of the Falange) and the death of General Francisco Franco (1975).

The Far Left

As noted, the United Left (formed by the Communist Party together with some smaller parties), the only extreme left entity with national parliamentary representation, suffered a major blow in the general elections of 2008 and in the autonomous elections of Catalonia. There are numerous small antifascist and anti-establishment far left groups that are openly antisemitic, anti-Israel and pro-Palestine. Although their political enemies are the extreme right parties, they are all united by anti-Israelism, which sometimes crosses the line to antisemitism. During Operation Cast Lead far left groups participated actively, together with Muslim groups, in the demonstrations and vandalistic acts against synagogues and the Israeli embassy (see below).

The Muslim Community

The majority of Spain's Muslim immigrants originated in Morocco, Algeria and Pakistan (over 700,000). Two-thirds of the Pakistanis and one-third of the Moroccans live in Catalonia, whose immigration policy gives preference to North African Muslims and Pakistanis (over Spanish-speaking immigrants from South America) since they do not know Spanish and are obliged to learn the Catalan language.

Several Islamist terrorist actions in Catalonia in the last few years have been either aborted by the police or by the terrorists themselves. However, the Catalan authorities tend to suppress such information and deny there is any threat. For example, it was revealed by the private Group of Strategic Studies (GEES), a leading think tank which analyzes security matters created by former Prime Minister José Maria Aznar of the People's Party, that Islamic terrorists had been planning to attack Barcelona's subway in the rush hour in January 2008. The terrorists, who had conspired in the Tarik Bin Ziyad Mosque, in the distressed Raval neighborhood, abandoned the plan a few days before they were due to

carry it out (*Libertad Digital*, February 4, 2009). The police, reportedly, had been monitoring them.

ANTISEMITIC ACTIVITY

The Year 2008

In 2006, after the pro-Israel representative Pedro Gomez-Valades was elected president of the newly established Association of Friendship with Israel (AGAI), in Vigo, Autonomous Community of Galicia, proceedings were begun to expel him from his party, the small ultra-nationalist Nationalist Gallego Bloc (BNG) (see *ASW 2007*). In April 2008, the mainstream newspaper *Faro do Vigo* published an article claiming that Gomez-Valades's expulsion from the party had been confirmed that month because it was suspected he was secretly "judaizing [a phrase employed ironically by the paper and used during the period of the Spanish Inquisition for Jews who converted to Catholicism but were still living secretly as Jews]" in favor of the "Imperialist State of Israel." Gomez-Valades had refused to give up the presidency of AGAI, which includes representatives of all the main parties in Galicia. The Association strongly condemned the BNG for its "fascist" and "unconstitutional" conduct.

Operation Cast Lead

On January 30, 2009, 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 wounded an employee. The perpetrator, who was arrested, is a Spanish member of the extreme right MSR. The MSR signature was also painted on January 8, 2009, on the Chabad-Lubavich Center in the city (*Europa Press*, January 30, 2009).

Spanish demonstrators were among the most vociferous in Europe in accusing Israel of "genocide" and Nazism in protest against the war on Gaza. The largest demonstrations against Israel took place in Madrid and Barcelona, but there were numerous rallies across Spain, including one called by the Islamic Community of Pamplona, Navarra's capital city, as well as in Oviedo, Cordoba, Seville and Almeria. There were also demonstrations in the autonomous cities of Ceuta and Melilla, which have large Muslim populations.

The biggest demonstration in Europe took place on January 11 in central Madrid. Participants included representatives from the governmental PSOE, the far left IU, three leading trade unions, more than forty associations, a group of artists and intellectuals from the No War movement, and the former director of UNESCO, Federico Mayor

Zaragoza. The proceedings of the demonstration were reportedly approved by the PSOE after discussion with the rest of the organizers. Initially, the Socialists had rejected the word "genocide," but gave in to pressure from the extreme left and accepted the term in the banner placed at the head of the demonstration. Israeli flags were burned and slogans such as "Israel assassin" and "This is not a war, it is genocide" were heard. When the official demonstration ended, hundreds of people, mainly Muslims, began an illegal and uncontrolled march towards the Israeli embassy, which they pelted with stones and shoes, breaking 37 windows; they also attacked and injured a policeman.

Next day the PP strongly criticized the demonstration and the PSOE. While Prime Minister Rodriguez Zapatero condemned the word "genocide" he described Israel's reaction in Gaza as "disproportionate."

On January 25, another demonstration organized by the IU, the Spanish (non-Jewish) Paz Ahora (Peace Now), and the Spanish-Palestinian Jerusalem Association began at the US embassy and ended at the Israeli embassy, with similar slogans and a demand to the Spanish government to cut diplomatic relations with Israel.

On January 10, between 30,000 and 180,000 (depending on the source) anti-war demonstrators in Barcelona, mainly of North African and Middle East origin, demanded a commercial boycott of Israel in Catalonia. Some 300 civil organizations marching under the slogan "Stop the massacre in Gaza" were led by Interior Councilor of the Catalanian government, the Communist Joan Saura. They held antisemitic banners with catchphrases such as "Jew assassins" and "You are worse than Nazis," as well as Israeli flags with a swastika superimposed, shouted slogans in favor of Hamas, and distributed pamphlets threatening activist journalist Pilar Rahola (see *ASW* 2007) and other pro-Israel Catalanian intellectuals.

Interior Councilor Jean Saura of the Generalitat in Barcelona, who, as noted, participated in the January 10 demonstration, canceled a public candle lighting ceremony planned for January 27, Holocaust Memorial Day. A City Hall representative explained that it was inappropriate to commemorate the Jewish Holocaust when there was "a Palestinian holocaust going on." When the Israeli ambassador in Spain protested, President of the Generalitat José Montilla reprimanded him for denouncing antisemitism in Catalonia. As a result, the Jewish community cancelled the only public event it had planned in commemoration of the Holocaust. Montilla, however, fearing accusations of antisemitism, met with members of the Jewish community and reached a compromise. The ceremony, held in a plaza close to the Generalitat, was led by Saura in

the presence of lower ranking community members, as well as other public officials.

ATTITUDES TOWARD THE HOLOCAUST AND THE NAZI ERA

Holocaust Denial

The organization SOS Racism Barcelona sent a letter to Catalonia's district attorney asking him to ban a lecture by British Holocaust denier David Irving scheduled for December 13, 2008, after another tour of Spain that took him to Madrid, Valencia and Barcelona (see *ASW 2007*). However, the event was permitted to take place.

Holocaust Commemoration

The official event commemorating the Holocaust and Prevention of Crimes against Humanity took place on January 27, 2008, at Madrid's Complutense University. Organized by Casa Sepharad-Israel, it was attended by leading figures from the Jewish and Roma communities and members of the Spanish government. Both the president of the Federation of Jewish Communities and the president of the Roma Union deplored the verdict of the Spanish Constitutional Tribunal decriminalizing Holocaust denial in the name of freedom of expression. The event was closed by Spanish Minister of Foreign Affairs Miguel Angel Moratinos, who reaffirmed the government's commitment to remember the victims of the Holocaust. A similar event was held the following year.

RESPONSES TO ANTISEMITISM AND RACISM

Official and Public Activity

Foreign Affairs Minister Moratinos reaffirmed Spain's commitment to fight antisemitism at a meeting with representatives of the Latin American Jewish Congress.

Toledo was the venue of the first international seminar, June 20–22, 2008, on "The Holocaust – Historical Aspects." Organized by Casa Sefarad-Israel, it was attended by French, Spanish and Israeli experts, such as George Benssoussan (France) and Dan Michman (Israel).

Madrid's Jewish community organized an international seminar on antisemitism in the Círculo de Bellas Artes of the Regional Government of Madrid, on November 25–26. Participants included Spanish academics such as Gonzalo Alvarez Chillida and J.L. Rodríguez Jiménez, Wolfgang Benz, from the Technical University of Berlin and Emanuele Ottolenghi from the Transatlantic Institute, Brussels.

Saudi Arabia's King Abdullah organized an inter-religious conference in Madrid, to which representatives of the World Jewish Congress and

other Jewish organizations were invited. The event, held in the presence of King Juan Carlos I of Spain, was inaugurated on July 17. The concluding Madrid Declaration called on the UN General Assembly to convene a special session in order to promote understanding between religions, civilizations and cultures.

On October 23, the City Council of Malaga signed over a plot to the Jewish community, formerly inhabited by Jews of medieval times, for the construction of a synagogue, a community center and a Sephardic museum. The complex will constitute a cultural and tourist attraction.

On December 17, Spain was confirmed a member of the Task Force for International Cooperation on Holocaust Education, Remembrance and Research. President Zapatero sent a message saying that it was the duty of the state to re-establish the Shoah in Spanish civic consciousness.

Some 3,000 people from all over Spain, including non-Jews, gathered in front of the Israeli embassy on January 18, 2009, to show their support for the state. The event was organized by the Association of Spain-Israel Solidarity under the banner, "In defense of Israel, against lies and terrorism." There were no incidents although a small group waving Palestinian flags was moved away by the police. A minute's silence was held for all the victims of the conflict.

Legal Activity

On March 6, 2008, the Barcelona Tribunal reduced the prison sentence of Pedro Varela, handed down in 1998, from five years in prison (three years for genocide denial and two for its advocacy) to seven months. Varela is the owner of the Europa bookstore and former president of the dissolved neo-Nazi group CEDADE. The Catalan judges took into account a verdict of the Constitutional Tribunal from 2007, which determined that denying an act of genocide is not a crime, although the Penal Code (Art. 607.2) punishes the "dissemination by any means, ideas or doctrines that tend to justify" genocide. The Barcelona Tribunal reduced Varela's two year sentence for advocating genocide to seven months because of the seven year delay in the Constitutional Tribunal's arrival at a decision (see *ASW* 2007).

In 2008 the Palestinian Center for Human Rights submitted a petition to the Spanish Supreme Court regarding Israel's assassination in July 2002 of Hamas military leader Salah Shahede, during which at least 14 civilians were killed. In January 2009, Judge Fernando Abreu decided to prosecute senior Israeli military officers for "crimes against humanity," based on the principle of Universal Jurisdiction. The Israeli ambassador in Spain claimed the lawsuit had been politically motivated, with the objective of "delegitimiz[ing] the very existence of Israel."

At least three persons of Algerian origin were arrested in Vitoria by the Basque police in February 2008 for proselytizing and raising funds to support jihad among the Muslim community. Six Pakistani citizens were arrested in Barcelona for an alleged fiscal fraud and terrorist financing, but were freed for lack of evidence.

A court in Madrid, the Audiencia Nacional, will demand the extradition of four men accused of working as guards at the Nazi camps of Flossenbürg, Sachsenhausen and Mathausen. They will be tried for causing the death of (non-Jewish) Spanish citizens at the camps. More than 7,000 republican Spaniards were held as prisoners at the Mathausen camp and over 4,300 of them died, according to *El Mundo*. The lawsuit was brought by a Brussels-based rights organization, Equipo Nizkor, under Spain's Universal Jurisdiction principle. All four defendants, among them, John Demjanjuk, were living in the US but had their US citizenship revoked.

SWEDEN

A total of 159 antisemitic hate crimes were registered in 2008 by the Swedish National Council for Crime Prevention, compared to 118 in 2007. A further escalation in antisemitic hate crime was recorded during Israel's operation in Gaza.

THE JEWISH COMMUNITY

The number of Jews in Sweden is estimated at 18,000-20,000, according to the Council of Swedish Jewish Communities (Judiska Centralrådet), representing about 0.2 percent of the total population of 9.2 million. Approximately half of all Swedish Jews reside in the larger cities such as Gothenburg, Malmö and Stockholm. Smaller Jewish communities exist in Borås, Eskilstuna, Helsingborg, Jönköping, Karlstad, Lund, Norrköping, Uppsala, Varberg and Västerås. The various communities are independent, but linked through the Council of Swedish Jewish Communities.

The Jewish communities in both Gothenburg and Stockholm are unified, with their synagogues – Conservative as well as Orthodox and Progressive – belonging to the same organization. There is a Jewish elementary school, a junior high school and a variety of communal organizations. The Jewish library in Stockholm provides 23,000 titles. Paideia, the European Institute for Jewish Studies in Sweden offers a one-year intensive study program. The bimonthly *Judisk Krönika* (Jewish Chronicle) and weekly Jewish radio programs provide information about Jewish cultural events. There is an annual Jewish film festival in Stockholm. *Shechita* (Jewish Ritual Slaughter) is prohibited and kosher meat is imported from abroad.

POLITICAL PARTIES AND EXTRA-PARLIAMENTARY GROUPS

Extreme Right-Wing Parties

Since its founding in 1988, the Sweden Democrats (Sverigedemokraterna – SD) have grown from a small group of marginalized neo-Nazis into a political party that won several municipal seats across Sweden in 2006 (see *ASW 2006*). SD have demonstrated support for Israel and denounced antisemitism on several occasions; however, their stance toward the Muslim population has become increasingly islamophobic. With a populist agenda modeled after Denmark's Dansk Folkeparti, the SD seeks to gain parliamentary seats in the 2010 election. Their campaign includes projecting what could be termed a "conservative yet concerned" image, thus distancing themselves from more vocal racist and extremist groups on the subject of immigration.

The National Democrats (Nationaldemokraterna – ND), a breakaway group from the SD, are represented in the local government of Södertälje and Nykvarn south of Stockholm. In recent years the party has undergone further radicalization as activists from several neo-Nazi groups, such as National Youth (Nationell Ungdom – NDU), have been signing up as members.

Founded in 1994, the National Socialist Front (Nationalsocialistisk Front – NSF) gradually filled the vacuum created in the extreme right movement after the demise of the White Aryan Resistance (Vitt Ariskt Motstånd – VAM – White Aryan Resistance, a militant racist group formed in the 1980s). Led by Anders Årleskog and Daniel Höglund and with close to 500 members, the party is Sweden's largest white power organization, whose ideology includes virulent antisemitism reminiscent of the Nazi era. A large number of NSF members have been convicted of violent crimes. Besides their web magazine *Den Svenske Nationalsocialisten*, the NSF cooperates with the publishing house Logik Förlaget, a distributor of Swedish and foreign antisemitic books and music. In 2008 NSF was reorganized under the name Folkfronten (The People's Front) and their organ was renamed *Realisten* (The Realist). Cosmetic changes were made in policy documents; for instance, specific references to the National Socialist ideology were removed in an attempt to attract more supporters.

Extreme Right-Wing Groups and Activity

The anti-racist magazine *Expo* reported a total of 1,946 activities carried out by right-wing extremist groups in Sweden during 2008, 1,176 of which were attributed to the NSF, 404 to the Info-14 network, including so-called Independent Nationalists, 185 to the SMR and 105 to the Nordic Union (Nordiska Förbundet) (see below). Of these, circulation of propaganda amounted to 90 percent. The other 10 percent consisted of demonstrations, parties, concerts and lectures.

Under the banner of holy racial war, the Swedish Resistance Movement (Svenska Motståndsrörelsen – SMR), founded in the mid-1990s, has become the most militant of Swedish right-wing extremist groups. SMR is led by Klas Lund, one of the most notorious neo-Nazis in the country. Internecine conflict within the Nazi movement resulted in attacks by SMR members on members of a local Nazi network in Helsingborg. This led to the exclusion of SMR from one of the largest demonstrations of the Swedish extreme right, the People's March (Folkets Marsch – see below). SMR has been trying to regain its reputation within the Swedish Nazi movement by radicalizing its image, apparently with some success, as former critics, such as the Info-14

network (see below) have expressed solidarity with the group. In March 2008 the police found weapons and explosives in the residence of a SMR member. He was sentenced to 2½ years in prison.

Info-14, established in 1995, describes itself as an "independent patriotic news medium," which seeks to replace the traditional group structure of right-wing extremists with a network of independent groups modeled after similar networks in Germany. In 2008 the Independent Nationalists (Fria Nationalister) network was established for this purpose. Some of the Independent groups have connections to the National Democrats. In 2008, Info-14 and the Independent Nationalists initiated a campaign in support of the National Democrats' publication, *Nationell Idag*. The Info-14 website, established in 1995, informs of right-wing extremist activities and incites to political violence. Daniel Vesterlund may be regarded as the informal leader of Info-14, the "14" of which refers to the popular neo-Nazi slogan, "We must secure the existence of our people and a future for White children," coined by American white supremacist David Lane (d. 2007), who was inspired by Hitler's *Mein Kampf*.

Info-14 arranges the two largest annual meetings of neo-Nazis in Sweden: the People's March in Stockholm on Sweden's National Day, June 6, and the Salem March on December 8 or 9, organized in memory of a youth with links to ultra-right-wing groups who was murdered in 2000. Both these events are met with strong opposition, mainly from AFA (Antifascistisk Aktion) activists. In 2008 roughly 700 activists participated in the Salem March and the People's March attracted some 1000, making it the largest white power manifestation of 2008.

The Nordic Publishing House (Nordiska Förlaget), founded in 2002, became an organization, the Nordic Association (Nordiska Förbundet), in 2004. Influenced by the US National Alliance, it has thousands of registered users on its Internet platform (Nordisk.nu). It describes itself as an ideological association of various enterprises, projects and private individuals, whose aim is to maintain the interests and survival of the people of the North.

The Nordic Publishing House is by far Scandinavia's largest distributor of extreme right-wing propaganda, literature and music. Its list includes David Duke's *Jewish Supremacy* and Holocaust denier Lars Adelskog's *En tom säck kan inte stå* (An empty sack cannot stand), of which a new edition was published in 2007. The Nordic Association and Nordic Publishing House circulate the magazine *Folkets Nybeter*. They also run the White Power movement's imitation of Wikipedia, *Metapedi*a and the blog portal *Motpol* (Opposite Pole). The Nordic Association

created a web portal, *Motstånd* (Resistance), for their independent activists in 2008.

ANTISEMITIC ACTIVITY

Violence and Harassment

The governmental Swedish National Council for Crime Prevention (BRÅ) groups hate crimes into subcategories by motive. According to the council there was a 35 percent increase in antisemitic hate crimes in 2008 – 159 compared to 118 in 2007 – the highest number recorded by the organization since 1999. Of these, 80 were cases of violence, verbal harassment and threats against individuals, 21, incidents of vandalism of cemeteries and Jewish institutions or their defacing with graffiti, 37, acts of incitement against an ethnic group (the Jews), 17, defamation and 4 were miscellaneous incidents (including unlawful discrimination).

Mainstream Antisemitism

Torbjörn Björlund from the Left Party (Vänsterpartiet) said in a debate held in the Swedish parliament on foreign policy and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict that "the victims of the Holocaust are the ones who today conduct this system of state terrorism." Björlund added that the Holocaust was the worst crime ever committed against human beings and that one should learn from it. He underscored his inversion by claiming that "today, many settlers function in the same way as the guards did during the time when there were camps for Jews during World War II, when Jews were captured and murdered." Björlund was criticized by Fredrik Malm and Birgitta Ohlsson from the Liberal Party (Folkpartiet) for equating Israeli policies with the Holocaust. However, Björlund insisted that there were "clear parallels" between the two.

A debate was initiated in early 2008 when a member of the advisory group of the Swedish Arts Council objected to continued public funding for the periodical *Mana*, a left-leaning journal which describes itself as anti-racist. On a number of occasions it has demonized Israel and the Jews when discussing the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The editor-in-chief before and during the debate, Babak Rahimi, redefined the word "antisemitism" to mean Israeli oppression of Palestinians. Rahimi also claimed that Israel was conducting a Holocaust of Palestinians and dubbed the accepted narrative of the Nazi genocide of Jews during World War II "the Zionist version." According to Rahimi, "the Zionist version" makes it possible for Israel to conduct a Holocaust today. Another contributor claimed that throughout its history Israel has blackmailed the western world's economies. *Mana* has also published antisemitic author Israel Shamir/Adam Ermash (see *General Analysis*).

Mana was criticized by the anti-racist organizations Expo and by members of the Swedish Committee against Antisemitism. The chairpersons of the Swedish Arts Council and the advisory group claimed that only a court could decide if *Mana* was antisemitic. Some opinion makers (mainly liberal) criticized *Mana* for having published antisemitic texts while others (mainly on the left) defended it and claimed that what was termed antisemitism was merely criticism of Israel. *Mana* did not lose its public funding.

The Palme Center, an organization associated with the Social Democratic Party, invited author Ghada Karmi and Azzam Tamimi of the British Muslim Initiative to a conference on "alternative peace roads" in the Middle East. Karmi insinuated in her book *Married to Another Man*, which was sold at the conference, that the Jews control America. Tamimi, who has previously claimed that Israel is a "cancer" that should be "eradicated," repeated his views at the conference. Liberal editorial writers and some Social Democrats criticized the Palme Center.

Anti-Zionism and Antisemitism in Left-Wing Circles

Anti-Israel sentiments are common in Swedish left-wing circles. Statements from left-wing politicians and intellectuals sometimes incorporate hostile anti-Zionism and even antisemitic expressions.

Left-wing tropes include the concept of Israel as an illegitimate and artificial colonial construct based on Apartheid South Africa and sometimes, comparisons with Nazi Germany and the Holocaust. Besides various bloggers, papers such as *Proletären* (extreme left Communist Party), *Arbetaren* (Syndicalist Labor Union) and *Flamman* (independent socialist) employ such expressions (see for instance the blogs *Jinges Web och Fotoblog*, <http://jinge.se> and *Lasse Wilhelmson*, <http://lassewilhelmson.wordpress.com/>; and Staffan Beckman, "60 Years since al-Nakba: What is Israel Celebrating?", *Proletären*, May 14, 2008, http://www.proletaren.se/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=1372&Itemid=49).

In response to Israel's 60th anniversary celebrations in 2008, the hall in Stockholm where an event was held was vandalized on May 13. In addition, AFA (Anti-Fascist Action) wrote on their homepage that Israel is "a state built on the ethnic cleansing of those who once lived in the place where the leading imperialist states decided to establish an Israeli state after the Second World War," and concludes: "The capitalist states in the world give Israel their support. Now it's time for us in the international workers' movement to boycott, block and sabotage Israel's attempts to legitimize its occupation of Palestine" (<http://www.antifa.se/index.php?p=1&id=214>).

Proletären linked Israeli attacks in Gaza to the anniversary: "A few days ago Israel once again fired its advanced rockets against Gaza – and killed among others a mother and her three small children in their home. It can be seen as a part of the preparations for the 60th anniversary of the state of Israel on May 15 this year. There will be great pomp and circumstance – and various kinds of rockets" (http://www.proletaren.se/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=1372&Itemid=49). Following the start of Operation Cast Lead, many bloggers reacted with similar expressions.

Operation Cast Lead

According to police in southern Sweden, the number of antisemitic incidents in that region in the first half of 2009 more than doubled that for the year 2008, while the Jewish communities claim that there was an escalation in antisemitic hate crime during this period throughout the country. Among the more severe incidents that occurred were four fire bombings in the south of Sweden. Two were directed against the Jewish community building in Helsingborg and two against the cemetery chapel in Malmö.

There was also an intensification of antisemitism on blogs and forums, as well as in newspapers and other media. Per Rehnberg, a representative of the Left Party in Helsingborg wrote two articles on his party's local website in which he accused the Jews of having destructive and disproportionate power in American as well as in Swedish politics and the economy. He also demonized Israel as a threat to the future of the world. The local party organization supported Rehnberg while the regional board demanded that the articles be removed from the party's website.

Ingalill Bjartén, vice chairperson of the regional Social Democratic women's organization in Skåne, claimed that Israel was doing "exactly the same as the Nazis."

Because Israel's war in Gaza took place close to International Holocaust Remembrance Day (January 27) some connected the two. The former archbishop of Sweden, K.G. Hammar, asserted that Israel's actions made it difficult for him to honor the memory of the victims of the Holocaust. The annual memorial procession in Luleå, in the north of Sweden, was also canceled. The director of a play about the Holocaust based on the book by Primo Levi *If This Is a Man*, in Helsingborg, canceled his participation in preparations for the play due to Israel's actions.

Some newspaper articles, including in mainstream papers such as *Sydsvenska Dagbladet* and *Nyheter 24* described Israeli actions and the

driving forces behind them as motivated by the biblical saying "an eye for an eye."

Text messages claiming that McDonalds and other companies had donated money to the Israeli army were widespread, and eventually forced McDonalds to repudiate such allegations.

Myths about Jewish control gained momentum as antisemitic bloggers spread the idea that people were not being told the truth about what was happening in Gaza because of "Zionist" manipulation of Swedish public debate.

Hans Linde, foreign policy spokesperson for the Left Party, quoted the lyric "who will the chosen ones to burn next?" in his blog.

The Communist Party made an official statement on December 29, 2008, denouncing Israel, which they call "the criminal colonial state": "The attack against Gaza is not directed against any group in particular, but is rather an attack against all of the Palestinian people – it's a terror attack aimed at forcing the Palestinians to silence and submission under the Zionist occupation."

In an editorial comment, *Arbetaren* wrote (January 13, 2009) that Operation Cast Lead once again proved that the State of Israel must be dismantled and replaced by a bi-national state for both Israelis and Palestinians, and that the international community should force such a solution upon the unwilling Israelis.

On January 9, 2009, the tabloid *Expressen* published an article by Mohamed Omar, a well-known intellectual, known for his emphasis on the importance of coexistence between Islam and Christianity in Europe. He has published in many of the most respected papers and magazines in Sweden such as *Dagens Nyheter*, *Sydsvenska Dagbladet*, *Kyrkans Tidning*, *Axess* and he was also the editor-in-chief of *Minaret*, the leading Swedish Muslim magazine. The article was Omar's declaration to the world that he was an Islamist and that he supported Hamas and Hizballah, "the Islamic resistance movements." He blamed his turn to Islamism on Israel, stating that "the latest bloodbath was quite simply too much." He described Operation Cast Lead – "the current massacre" – as "the peak of 60 years of ethnic cleansing." Omar then said that "the demonization of Muslims has been an important part of Israel's psychological warfare," since Islam is considered the only force that can oppose the American and Israeli colonial project in the Middle East.

Omar wrote additional articles and blogs during 2009 further clarifying his new worldview. His support of antisemitism, homophobia and anti-feminism has made him persona non grata in the Swedish public discourse; he has grown increasingly close to various right-wing

extremist groups, and has announced his intention of establishing an "anti-Zionist" party in Sweden to run in the 2010 elections.

RESPONSES TO ANTISEMITISM

In October 2008 five parliamentarians from the Liberal Party raised the issue of persistent antisemitism in Swedish society and the importance of combating it. Liberal Party leader Jan Björklund delivered a speech in a Stockholm synagogue on Israel's 60th anniversary (May 2008) in which he underscored that antisemitism was still pervasive and was being articulated in new ways. Björklund stated that "the fight against antisemitism is one of the most important tasks we can undertake." Social Democrats leader Mona Sahlin stressed the importance of educating about antisemitism and other forms of intolerance.

In a formal question to Foreign Minister Carl Bildt, Birgitta Ohlsson (Liberal Party) asked what he intended to do to ensure that the Durban Review conference of 2009 would not be a repetition of the 2001 Durban one (see *General Analysis 2001-2*). Carl Bildt responded that Sweden and the EU would focus on review and application of the action plan adopted in 2001. He added, "of course, all manifestations of antisemitism are completely unacceptable."

SWITZERLAND

Data collected from both the French and German-speaking parts of Switzerland showed an increase in antisemitic activity in 2008/9 compared to 2007. The rise was related to the tense political atmosphere both in the Middle East and in Switzerland in two periods during the year: in April 2008 in reaction to severe Jewish criticism of the visit of the Swiss foreign minister to Tebran, and at the end of the year/beginning of 2009, coinciding with Israel's war in Gaza. Most of the manifestations reported were antisemitic graffiti on or near Jewish facilities and abusive texts in print and in the electronic media, but there were also a few violent incidents.

THE JEWISH COMMUNITY

Jewish community numbers remained stable at about 18,000, or 0.25 percent of Switzerland's population of 7.3 million. All major cities in Switzerland have a Jewish community, the largest being located in Zurich, Geneva, Basel and Lausanne. Seventeen communities throughout Switzerland are members of the Swiss Federation of Jewish Communities (SIG/FSCI). CICAD (Coordination Intercommunautaire Contre l'Antisémitisme et la Diffamation), based in Geneva, is the coordination center for monitoring antisemitism and rendering assistance to victims in the French-speaking part of Switzerland. Switzerland's two liberal communities cooperate with the SIG on political and antisemitism-related matters.

As a result of reorganization, at the end of August 2008, the SIG's monitoring methods were revamped. However, the overall assessment for 2008 is not affected. In the future, the SIG will also include the findings of the GRA Foundation against Racism and Antisemitism, which monitors racist incidents in general.

There are Jewish day schools in Zurich, Geneva, Basel and Lausanne and five newspapers: *Tachles* and *Jüdische Zeitung* (in German) and *Revue Juive*, *Hayom* and *Shalom* (in French).

POLITICAL PARTIES AND ORGANIZATIONS

The right-wing Swiss People's Party (SVP/UDC) is the major political party in Switzerland. More than 25 percent of the population voted for this party in the 2007 elections. It continued in its attempts to abolish the clause in Swiss criminal law that prohibits racist acts and public denial of genocide on the grounds that it unduly restricts freedom of expression. Many of its initiatives were rejected in 2008 either by the government or by parliamentary commissions. Some were still pending. The party tried to collect signatures for a petition demanding abolition of the provision, but failed to get the required number. Furthermore, the party launched

or supported anti-foreigner initiatives, such as a campaign banning the erection of minarets, since they supposedly symbolize ideological opposition to the country's constitution. A referendum on this subject was to be held in November 2009.

The small, extreme right-wing Party for Nationally Oriented Swiss People (PNOS), which has no significant political influence, continued to pursue their explicitly xenophobic and anti-Jewish agenda.

Members of the Palestinian Solidarity Organization, which has close ties with extreme left parties in Switzerland and which, on occasions, is supported also by socialist and/or ecological parties (such as the Swiss Party of Labour and the Green Party), continued their struggle against Israel, questioning its right to exist and justifying the anti-Israel and anti-Zionist declarations of Hamas leaders and of Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad.

ANTISEMITIC AND RACIST ACTIVITY

Data collected from both the French and German-speaking parts of Switzerland showed an increase in antisemitic activity in 2008 compared to 2007. The rise was related to the tense political atmosphere both in the Middle East and in Switzerland in two periods during the year:

- in April 2008 in reaction to severe Jewish criticism of the visit of Swiss Foreign Minister Micheline Calmy-Rey to Tehran. The visit was condemned by the US and Israel, by national and international Jewish organizations and, even by parts of the Swiss population and by some political parties (such as the Swiss People's Party);
- and in late 2008/beginning of 2009, in the wake of Israel's war in Gaza.

Ninety-six incidents were recorded in the French-speaking part in 2008, compared to 38 in 2007 and 67 in 2006. Similar tendencies were registered in the German-speaking part. (The SIG did not publish figures for the reasons stated above).

Most of the manifestations reported were antisemitic graffiti on or near Jewish facilities and anti-Jewish texts in print and in the electronic media. However, there were also a few violent incidents. In February, for example, a recognizably Jewish man was threatened on a Zurich street with a knife while the attackers shouted "Jew" before running away without actually harming him. In addition, during a football game of Jewish juniors on November 2, in Zurich, the supporters of the other team, mostly immigrants, beat up and injured the coach, who they believed to be Jewish.

Verbal insults were a frequent complaint in both the German- and French-speaking parts. In Geneva, during a flea market organized in January 2008 by Jewish associations, a woman who saw menorahs offered for sale said: "Those are Jewish things; the Jews have all the money and rule the world." Jewish pupils suffered verbal antisemitic abuse by youngsters of undefined origin at school or on their way to school in several cities and towns. A group of youths in their mid-teens blocked the way of a skull-capped Jew on his way home on Friday eve. Another incident occurred at a Jewish summer camp in the mountains where a group of young people, knocked at the door of one of the chalets, saw the Shabbat candles, asked whether they were Jews and shouted that they would "break" the Jews.

Between October and December 2008, several Jewish leaders and organizations in the French-speaking part received three issues of a leaflet with virulently antisemitic content, such as claims that the Jews were criminals, that they were mad and sexually deviant, and that they had planned the Bolshevik Revolution, and calling for the destruction of Israel. The leaflet was unsigned.

Antisemitic graffiti and posters were reported in various cities throughout 2008 and early 2009: for example: graffiti with the slogan "Death to the Jews," sprayed at the entrance of the Jewish community building in Zurich on April 12, 2008, and a placard with the slogan "Swiss defend yourself! Don't buy from Jews," posted on the door of a Jewish store in Basle on November 10, 2008.

A steep increase in antisemitic postings on the internet was observed in 2008, including on electronic forums of mainstream newspapers. Responding to events in the Middle East, many participants made comparisons with the Holocaust or questioned it and denied Israel's right to exist. This tendency increased in December 2008–January/February 2009.

In January 2009, the entrance to a Jewish synagogue in Zurich and the window of a Kollel in Geneva, as well as the El Al offices in Zurich, were damaged. Also during the war in Gaza graffiti equating the Star of David with the swastika was reported in major cities across Switzerland. Jewish organizations and individuals received dozens of hate letters.

Also in January 2009, there were antisemitic reactions in connection with the attitude of the Catholic Church toward the reintegration of Bishop Richard Williamson, among others. In several internet publications (such as blogs of newspapers and TV stations), writers made parallels with the Gaza events questioning, for example, why the pope should react against Williamson's antisemitic statements when rabbis had not spoken out against Israel's behavior in Gaza.

RESPONSES TO RACISM AND ANTISEMITISM

For the first time, Switzerland made a submission in 2008 to the Universal Periodic Review of the UN Human Rights Council. It accepted 20 out of the 31 recommendations. A few months later, it was subject to a review by the CERD (Convention for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination) Commission. In neither case was antisemitism identified as a major concern, nor was Switzerland asked to take any specific measures to combat antisemitism.

UNITED KINGDOM

The UK registered 541 antisemitic incidents in 2008, the third highest total since recording began in 1984. The four percent fall from 2007 was a consequence of the lack of "trigger events," particularly from the Middle East. Israel's Cast Lead Operation (December 27–January 21) provoked a total of 250 antisemitic incidents compared to 35 in the same period of 2007.

THE JEWISH COMMUNITY

The Jewish community in the United Kingdom numbers about 350,000, out of a total population of 58 million. Two-thirds are concentrated in Greater London. Other major Jewish centers are Manchester (30,000), Leeds (10,000) and Glasgow (6,500). The Jewish population has experienced a decline in recent years, due mainly to a low birth rate, intermarriage and emigration, although the strictly Orthodox minority is experiencing low but sustained growth due to larger family size.

The Board of Deputies of British Jews (BoD) is the principal representative of British Jewry. Security and defense activity is organized through the Community Security Trust (CST). The Scottish Council of Jewish Communities (SCOJEC) represents Jews in Scotland. Welfare and education are given high communal priority through organizations such as the United Jewish Israel Appeal and Jewish Care. A network of Jewish day schools operates in London and other major cities. There are also a number of tertiary centers for Jewish studies, including the London School of Jewish Studies (formerly Jews College) and Leo Baeck College, as well as the Jewish Studies departments at University College London, Southampton University, and the Oxford Center for Hebrew and Jewish Studies at Yarnton, all leading institutions in Europe in this field. The main community papers are the 168 year-old *Jewish Chronicle*, the *Jewish Telegraph* published simultaneously in northern cities, and the *Jewish News*. The *Jewish Tribune* and *Hamodia* cater for the strictly Orthodox community. Three Jewish websites are based in the UK: www.jc.com; www.totallyjewish.com and www.somethingjewish.co.uk carrying national and international news.

The Jewish Leadership Council (JLC), formed in 2003, brings together the heads of major national Jewish organizations and key communal leaders with the aim of enhancing the long-term effectiveness of communal representation, and to ensure greater consultation by communal organizations and leaders.

The London Jewish Forum was launched by a coalition of BOD members representing London constituencies and London based groups, including the strictly orthodox communities, at the end of 2006 to

represent London's Jews on statutory bodies , including the Greater London Authority (GLA – the governing body for London).

POLITICAL PARTIES AND PARLIAMENTARY GROUPS

Far Right Parties

Internal squabbles which have long crippled the largest far right party, the British National Party (BNP), surfaced again in March when party leader Nick Griffin launched proceedings in Manchester High Court against the six officials he expelled in December 2007.

In a report to the parliamentary Speaker's Committee on the Electoral Commission in June, it was stated that the BNP had been fined on three separate occasions for breaches of electoral law in 2007. The Commission had also investigated other irregularities in electoral law committed by the BNP going back to 2003 but was unable to establish if other offenses had been committed which would warrant prosecution.

At the May local council elections, the BNP stood 612 candidates but failed to make any great impact and received a reduced average vote. They now have 55 local councilors, as well as 45 town and parish councilors. In the Greater London election their candidates received 130,714 votes or 5.3 percent of the total. Their candidate in the London mayoral election, Richard Barnbrook, received 69,710 first choice votes (2.4 percent) and 128,609 second choice votes (5.23 percent) and was elected as the BNP's first member of the GLA. He has since been ostracized by other members of the GLA from all parties.

In May the BNP invited Bruno Gollnisch, a French MEP and vice president of the far right National Front, Andreas Moltzer, an Austrian MEP expelled by his own Freedom Party for being too extreme, and George Mayer, a Freedom Party official, to a meeting in central London to discuss European coordination.

The BNP annual Red Blue and White festival in Denby, Derbyshire, in August was attended by delegates of far right groups from the Czech Republic, Sweden and Australia. Police intervened to restrict the number of people who attended an antifacist rally near the festival site. International links were further strengthened when Griffin spoke at far right demonstrations in Hungary and the Czech Republic in October. In December, he was denied a visa to visit Australia where he planned a speaking tour, but in September, leading BNP members, including Richard Barnbrook, attended an anti-Islam conference in Cologne, which was abandoned after protests by local residents.

BNP member Ellis Hammond, who worked as a Police Community Support Officer in southeast London, was convicted of possessing illegal

weapons in March. A police search of his home revealed a collection of neo-Nazi literature and insignia.

In September, the BNP organized a rally and demonstration to publicize the murder of BNP activist Keith Brown who was stabbed to death in July 2007 by his Asian neighbor, who had suffered a long-running campaign of racial abuse. The theme of the protest echoed the party's developing strategy of campaigning against the Muslim community, immigration in general and downplaying its anti-Jewish background.

The National Front (NF), led by Terry Blackham, stood in 5 constituency seats for the GLA election and received a total of just under 35,000 votes. In April, the NF held its annual St George's Day march in April in Eltham southeast London. The annual Remembrance Day march to the national Cenotaph war memorial in central London in November was attended by only 150 people, but among them was a representative of the German far right National Democratic Party.

The England First Party and Democratic Nationalists both stood a handful of candidates in the May elections but failed to win any seats, and exist only in name or at elections.

Far Right Extra-parliamentary Groups

Membership of far right groups amounts to no more than a few hundred, and their public activities are limited to group meetings and demonstrations.

The British Peoples Party (BPP), led by Kevin Watmough, Peter Williamson, Eddie Stanton and Peter Rushton, maintains an association with the remnants of the British Movement, which is no longer active.

Blood and Honour mostly operates abroad or at very small venues, but 800 people attended their September tribute event to the late Ian Stewart Donaldson, leader of the far right Skrewdriver band, in Redhill Somerset. Displays of swastika flags and other Nazi symbols led to complaints by local residents.

The November 9th Society, renamed the British First Party, and led by Kevin Quinn, is the most overtly pro-Nazi group in the UK. In February, Quinn was charged with racially aggravated public disorder following an incident the previous December in which he delivered an impromptu political speech in a local shopping center against immigrants. In November, members held a rally to commemorate fallen National Socialists at the German military cemetery in Staffordshire.

Militant Islamist and Other Extremist Groups

There are approximately two million Muslims living in the UK, the majority originating in Pakistan, Bangladesh and India. Smaller communities from East Africa, North Africa and the Arab world came to the UK in later years.

The remnants of the far left anti-Zionist Respect Coalition, which split into two groups in 2007 – Respect led by George Galloway MP and the Left List – both stood a small number of candidates in the May elections, but none were elected except in the Sparkbrook ward of Birmingham, where Respect won a third seat.

The Muslim Public Affairs Council (MPAC) continued to campaign against Israel and to publish anti-Zionist and antisemitic material on its website. In particular, it held "Neocons and Zionists" responsible for the war in Iraq and for controlling the world money supply. The leadership of MPAC is based on a small group in east London but their influence among young Muslims nationally is considerable, particularly during elections, when they have campaigned against MPs perceived to be pro-Israel.

Six leaders of the successor group to the disbanded extremist al-Muhajiroun (AM) were convicted at Kingston Crown Court in April in connection with speeches made outside the Central London Mosque in November 2004 at which they incited people to fight coalition troops in Iraq and donate money to fund terrorism. The speeches were on a DVD discovered during a raid on the home of Omar Bakri Mohammed, the group's founder (see also below), in March 2006, following a protest outside the Danish embassy.

Delegates of the General Union of Palestinian Students (GUPS) were expelled from the annual National Union of Students conference in Blackpool in April for distributing antisemitic leaflets.

In June, former leader of Supporters of Sharia Abu Hamza al-Masri was refused leave to appeal to the House of Lords against his extradition to the US to face terrorism charges. He remains in the UK, however, until he has served his seven year sentence for inciting murder and race hate against Jews and others. In February, he lost his final appeal against extradition to the US.

Hizb ut-Tahrir (HUT) continues to recruit and influence young Muslims. In August it held its annual conference entitled "Khilafah, the Need for Political Unity" at an east London venue.

Islam4UK, one of the successor groups to AM, held a conference in August entitled "Khilafah for Britain – the Divine Alternative." Although their booking was cancelled by the venue owners at the last moment as a result of external pressure, the group were able to meet nearby and the

meeting was addressed by Omar Bakri Mohammed from Lebanon (see *ASW 2005*), via video link. The group held a second London meeting on the anniversary of September 11, which again was addressed by Mohammed via video link.

The annual al-Quds march, initiated by the late Ayatollah Khomeini, took place in September at the end of Ramadan. The event, entitled "In support of Palestine. End child killing. End oppression. End Israeli apartheid," was organized by the Islamic Human Rights Commission and supported by a number of Shi'ite and Sunni Islamist, as well as far left and anti-Zionist organizations, including HUT. In past years the march was an occasion for distributing antisemitic literature, but pro-active policing has now stopped this.

ANTISEMITIC ACTIVITY

Violence, Vandalism, Harassment and Threats

The CST recorded 541 incidents in 2008, the third highest total since recording began in 1984, and a four percent fall from 2007 (561 incidents). This was in spite of the fact that there were no major "trigger" events in the Middle East until the end of the year. Israel's offensive against Hamas in Gaza occurred too close to the end of the year to affect the annual trend.

As in 2007, the CST registered one incident of extreme violence, involving the stabbing to death of Michael Kahan, a random victim, in Bury, north Manchester in June. His attacker, Jonathan Mills, was a paranoid schizophrenic who had delusions that Jewish people were preventing him from getting his medication. At his trial he admitted manslaughter on the grounds of diminished responsibility and was detained indefinitely in a high security psychiatric hospital.

There were 88 violent incidents, a fall of 25 percent from the 117 assaults in 2007, the highest ever recorded. Eighty-one appeared to be random opportunistic attacks on Jews in public places, and 77 of the victims were identifiably Jewish. Nineteen assaults took place on people going to or coming from synagogue services. For example, on May 9, a rabbi was going home from synagogue with his family in London when two men drove past them in a car and shouted antisemitic abuse. The car then returned and the men sprayed soda at the family from a soda bottle.

Incidents of damage and desecration to Jewish property rose by 14 percent to 74 incidents, from 65 incidents in 2007. Of these, 33 involved desecration of synagogues, compared to 9 in 2007.

There were 314 incidents of abusive behavior, a fall of 7 percent from the 336 incidents reported in 2007, and 28 reported threats, including direct threats to people and property, an increase from the 24 incidents

reported in 2007. The distribution of antisemitic literature, including mass produced mailings, rose by 95 percent from the 19 incidents recorded in 2007, largely a consequence of one man's mailings to Jewish communal bodies (see Court Cases below).

It is noteworthy that 50 incidents were directed at Jewish schools, and that of these, 33 were against schoolchildren on their way to and from school; 9 took place at Jewish school premises. Of the 541 incidents recorded, 236 took place in Greater London, 125 in Greater London and 180 were reported from over 50 other locations around the country.

Operation Cast Lead

Between December 27 and January 21, 2009, the CST recorded over 250 incidents as a consequence of Operation Cast Lead. This compares with 35 during the same period in 2007. They included an arson attack on the north London Brondesbury synagogue, which sustained only limited damage due to security measures; two assaults on visibly Jewish men; numerous anti-Israel and anti-Jewish daubings on synagogues and other communal buildings; and extensive hate mail and abusive messages to Jewish organizations and communal leaders.

Several slogans appeared repeatedly in Ilford, Finchley, Stamford Hill, Golders Green and other Jewish-populated areas of London. They included: "Slay the Jewish pigs," "Jihad4Israel" and "Kill the Jews." Web forums on Islamic websites threatened prominent members of the community and Jewish communal events. On the Ummah Forum, "Saladin 1970" called for forum members to compile a list of British people who supported Israel, and reproduced the "JC Power 100," a compilation of prominent Jews published annually on the web. Several on the list subsequently received abusive emails. The web forum of MPAC published reasons for disrupting Jewish events in the UK, including one at a synagogue, but no demonstrations actually took place.

Antisemitic themes and slogans featured in many of the more than 100 demonstrations that took place during the Gaza crisis. Many of the rallies were initiated by Muslim Brotherhood-affiliated and pro-Hamas groups in concert with far left and anti-Zionist organizations, but others such as Islam4UK and Submit2Allah, another AM successor group, carried out their own protests. They included shouts of "Kill the Jews" heard at a Birmingham demonstration on December 29, at a demonstration on December 30 outside the Israeli embassy in London, and again at a central London rally on January 3; and "Heil Hitler" and "Dirty Jews go to hell" chants at a Islam4UK demonstration outside the US embassy in London on January 2.

In contrast to past mass demonstrations against Israel, those during the Gaza crisis were marked by open displays of support for Hamas (and Hizballah) and for anti-Israel terrorism. For example, at another central London demonstration on January 10, Azzam Tamimi of the British Muslim Initiative told a cheering crowd three times that, "We are all Hamas," and "Today, Hamas has acquired, in addition to democratic legitimacy, not that I believe in democracy any more, it has acquired resistance legitimacy... Today, Hamas is our leader to liberation... Israel has dug its grave. Zionism has dug its grave... That embassy there one day will be a Palestinian embassy. The Zionist flag will come down, and the flag of Palestine will go up."

There were also accusations on the internet against Jews that echoed traditional far right anti-Jewish themes, such as Jewish world domination and money power, as well as street violence that included assaults on police officers accompanying demonstrations. The Israel equals Nazi trope became increasingly common. In addition, stores perceived to be supportive of Israel or which sold Israeli goods were invaded, including branches of Starbucks and Tesco. Anti-Zionist activists at the January 10 demonstration forcibly occupied the Ahava Israel cosmetics shop in central London.

Public Opinion Polls

The Pew Global Attitudes Project published the report of its large-scale inquiry, under the title "Unfavourable Views of Jews and Muslims on the Increase in Europe," in September. The study found that the United Kingdom stood out as the only European country in the survey without a substantial increase in antisemitic attitudes. Just 9 percent of those polled rated Jews unfavorably, a figure that has remained largely unchanged in recent years, while 73 percent were favorably disposed toward Jews. However, it also showed that that 19 percent of British respondents did not answer the question about their attitude to Jews, which may suggest some reticence in appearing to be seen as antisemitic or more ambiguous in their feelings. It found that there was a notable parallel between anti-Jewish and anti-Muslim opinion in western Europe, with those in the older age bracket and with less education being more antisemitic and anti-Muslim.

ATTITUDES TOWARD THE HOLOCAUST

Holocaust Commemoration and Education

The theme of the annual national Holocaust commemoration on January 27, 2008 was "Imagine... Remember... Reflect... React," and the host city was Liverpool. The service was attended by the secretary of state for

communities and local government and other ministers, the chief rabbi, the archbishop of Canterbury, concentration camp and Kindertransport survivors and Jewish community leaders. The prime minister spoke via video link.

For the first time members of the Muslim Council of Britain, the largest Muslim umbrella group, attended the event officially, although some Muslim leaders have participated since its inception.

Over 3000 packs were distributed to 500 local organizers and a further 3000 education packs, posters and DVDs were sent to schools, local councils, public libraries and museums to enable them to mark the event. The Holocaust Memorial Day Trust, the government-funded central organizing body, reported that its website received over 1.5 million hits in the weeks leading up to National Holocaust Memorial Day.

In response to a parliamentary question in February, the secretary of state for education stated that more than 1,500 high school students had visited Auschwitz-Birkenau, under the "Lessons from Auschwitz" project organized by the Holocaust Education Trust, and that the government was giving a further £4.65 million in funding for the next three years.

In Scotland, the first deputy minister, communities minister, members of the Scottish parliament and faith communities leaders attended the national commemoration in Renfrewshire. In November, the Scottish government announced that it too would fund school trips to Auschwitz. In addition, the Scottish government confirmed in June that it will set money aside to fund a national Scottish Holocaust museum.

In November, the London University Institute of Education launched a large-scale national survey funded by the government department for children, schools and families to establish how well the Holocaust is taught in English schools.

Also in November, Prince Charles, the heir to the throne, spoke about his paternal grandmother, Princess Alice of Greece, who sheltered Jewish refugees, when he attended the seventieth anniversary of the Kindertransport operation which brought 10,000 Jewish children from Germany to Britain in 1938. Other participants included the minister for welfare, the chief rabbi, and film director Lord Richard Attenborough, whose parents adopted two Jewish refugee sisters.

Anne Frank Day is marked in July with an annual award to school students who have displayed great personal courage; it was commemorated in 2008 in over 2000 schools.

Holocaust Denial

Nicholas Kollerstrom, an academic astronomer, had his research fellowship withdrawn by University College London in April after he published *The Auschwitz Gas Chamber Illusion* on the website of the Committee for Open Debate on the Holocaust, an American denial site, and on the site of the Iranian linked Press TV.

Organizers of the annual War and Peace Show, a large militaria exhibition held annually in June, issued a warning to exhibitors that they would have their exhibition passes cancelled if they showed displays of concentration camp artifacts and antisemitic material, after a BBC Panorama television documentary showed British Holocaust denier David Irving selling his books at the 2007 event.

Australian Holocaust denier Frederick Toben was arrested in October on a European warrant issued by the German government while in transit at London's Heathrow airport. He was released from custody in November following a court hearing which decided that he could not be extradited for a criminal offense that does not exist in British law and repatriated to Australia. On his release, a reception was held for him by advertising model Michelle Renouf, now the most vocal proponent of Holocaust denial in Britain.

David Irving continued his writing and lecturing activities, although two universities and several public venues refused to host him. During the summer months he toured the US speaking at a number of venues. In October, he hosted a garden party at his home near Windsor which was attended by Holocaust denier Richard Williamson, a bishop in the ultra-conservative Society of St Pius against which the excommunication order was lifted by Pope Benedict XVI (see <http://www.tau.ac.il/Anti-Semitism/updates.htm>). Earlier in the year Irwin was interviewed for a Swedish television program, during which he stated that only 200,000 to 300,000 Jews had perished in World War II, and none in gas chambers. In previous statements he has accused the Vatican of being controlled by Satan and the Jews of world domination.

RESPONSES TO RACISM AND ANTISEMITISM

Legislation

During the course of the year the government published its Equalities Bill, which is designed to make the United Kingdom a fairer society by introducing a single equality duty. Public bodies will have to consider the diverse needs and requirements of their workforce, and the communities they serve when developing employment policies and planning services.

Public bodies will have to adopt transparent and measurable policies, and employment tribunals will be required to make recommendations to employers on their working practices. The planned legislation will also extend existing positive action measures to allow organizations to be more representative of the population, and public bodies will have to deliver more effective services to disadvantaged groups. Additionally, the law will be made more accessible and easier to understand by bringing together major, disparate pieces of past legislation.

The bill has implications for the Jewish community, which may now be in a position to legally challenge proposed boycotts of Israel on the grounds that a boycott of Israeli manufactured kosher goods creates inequalities for Jews who might not be able to buy alternatives.

Court Cases

The year 2008 saw a large number of people, including several neo-Nazis, convicted of antisemitic and racist offenses. Several verdicts were issued in June. For instance, Martin Gilleard, a leader of the BPP and former member of the NF, was sentenced to 16 years imprisonment at Leeds crown court following his conviction for terrorism offenses. He had planned to bomb mosques and other buildings connected to minority groups, including Jews, in Leeds where he lived. In court, the police stated that he had a collection of Nazi memorabilia and propaganda at his home. Jefferson Azevedo was sentenced to four years imprisonment at Southwark crown court for sending over 150 racist messages and packages containing caustic soda, which burns on contact with the skin, through the post. They included one containing a swastika and copies of American white supremacist groups' publications to an elderly Holocaust survivor. Ashraf Ali was convicted at Portsmouth magistrates court of sending an anthrax-like white powder together with antisemitic messages to the offices of the *Jewish Chronicle*, and to Portsmouth and Southsea synagogues. In one of them he wrote "All Jews Die." He was given a nine-month sentence suspended for two years and put under a two-year supervision order. Owen Dodds was jailed for seven years for possession of high explosives, bomb-making equipment and firearms. In court police stated that his home contained neo-Nazi music, flags and literature.

Two far right activists who published racist and antisemitic pamphlets and articles on the Heretic Press website hosted in the US were found guilty at Leeds crown court in June of publishing racially inflammatory material. However both men fled to the US before the end of their trial and claimed political asylum on arrival at Los Angeles airport. Simon Sheppard was found guilty of the eighteen charges he faced, and Stephen

Whittle, who wrote under the pen name of Luke O'Farrell, was found guilty of the five counts he faced. In March 2009 they were due to have their asylum request reviewed but were detained in the interim in Santa Anna jail in Orange County, Los Angeles. The pamphlets, which were delivered to homes and synagogues, included the American publication *Tales of the Holoboa*x and *Don't be Sheeple*, both of which deny the Holocaust.

Nathan Worrell, a neo-Nazi sympathizer and former member of the BNP, NF, BPP and WNP, was sentenced to six years imprisonment for terrorist offenses in December at Grimsby crown court. He had planned a bombing campaign against immigrants and was described by the trial judge as a dangerous individual who harbored extreme antisemitic views. The court was also told that police had found Nazi regalia in his flat at the time of his arrest.

A few teenagers (unnamed because of their age) were also convicted of various antisemitic and racist crimes. One had been involved in assaulting a rabbi at his Prestwich Manchester home and stealing Hebrew books and phylacteries in February 2008. Another was charged in December with racially aggravated harassment and assault for attacking a Jewish Free School pupil on a bus in Hendon, north London. The arrest followed a proactive policing operation designed to catch assailants of Jewish pupils.

At the end of December, Rangzieb Ahmed became the first al-Qa`ida member to be convicted in the UK for directing terrorism and membership of al-Qa`ida, and was jailed for life. His co-defendant, Habib Ahmed, was also found guilty of being a member of al-Qa`ida and possessing a document for terror-related purposes, namely one used in the bombing of Balfour House, the office of the United Jewish Israel Appeal and Zionist Federation, in 1994; he was jailed for 10 years. The men had been gathering information on a range of targets, including a prominent Jewish community figure.

Official and Public Activities

The "All-Party Inquiry into Antisemitism: Government Response One Year On Progress Report" was published in May as a command paper, which elevated its status to that of government policy. The report summarized the findings of the Inter-Departmental Working Group on Antisemitism and their response to the 2007 report of the Parliamentary Committee Against Antisemitism. The report noted a rise in antisemitic incidents and antisemitic discourse, and among the various initiatives it pledged to carry out were: funding a report on the impact antisemitic discourse has on the "acceptance" of antisemitism; providing £2 million

of funding to roll out a schools linking network for Jewish and Muslim schools; development of the Race for Justice initiative for criminal justice agencies; improving national collection of data on antisemitic incidents by police forces, by April 2009; funding for Jewish schools' security; increasing financial support for the "Lessons from Auschwitz" project which sends high school students from all public schools to Auschwitz-Birkenau; updating and reissuing guidelines to schools and universities on promoting good relations; and public opposition to academic boycotts of Israeli academics and universities.

Additionally the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) gave a commitment to improve training for prosecutors and police, provide better witness support and involve Jewish community representatives in these and other initiatives involving antisemitism.

In response to inquiries by the CST, the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families confirmed in June that his department would make clear to local authorities that they could fund security equipment for Jewish schools but only from existing capital resources. Discussions continue with the government to find a longer term solution.

Eastern Europe

CZECH REPUBLIC

A cluster of groups, some with a clear neo-Nazi ideology, has been increasingly involved in organizing xenophobic, racist and antisemitic activities, targeting chiefly the Roma. There has been a slow rise in antisemitic manifestations in recent years, mostly against Jewish property and sites. The Czech Republic has become the last member state that has not implemented the EU Race Equality directive.

THE JEWISH COMMUNITY

The Jewish community in the Czech Republic numbers some 4,000 (2006 figure) out of a total population of 10.2 million. The great majority are concentrated in Prague, with smaller communities in Brno, Plzen, and Olomouc. The Federation of Jewish Communities of the Czech Republic is the umbrella organization of ten individual communities in the republic. International Jewish organizations take an active part in the restoration of Jewish sites and property as well as in fostering educational activity at the Terezin concentration camp site.

While in 1989 the average age of community members was sixty plus, over the years it has dropped since greater attention has been paid to the younger generation. The community has an active youth organization, which arranges events on the Jewish holidays, as well as a well-known annual seminar attended by Jewish youth from neighboring countries, too. A Jewish kindergarten, elementary school and high school have operated since the late 1990s.

Jewish organizations and the community take part in the restoration of the numerous abandoned synagogues, monuments, and in the maintenance of cemeteries. Prague's historic Jewish town, considered the best preserved complex of Jewish monuments in Europe, together with the Jewish Museum, is a major international tourist attraction.

EXTREMIST PARTIES AND GROUPS

In the past few years, and particularly since the 2006 general elections, there have been dramatic changes in the environment and activities of extremist groups and movements in the Czech Republic (see <http://www.errc.org/db/04/10/m00000410.pdf>). A cluster of groups, some of them with a clear neo-Nazi ideology, have been increasingly involved in organizing xenophobic, racist and antisemitic activities, targeting chiefly the Roma. Several reasons can be proffered for growing extremism in the Czech Republic, which has dimmed somewhat the very positive image of the country since the Velvet Revolution, and the

relatively smooth transition from communism to democracy and membership in NATO and the EU.

One factor is the "explosion" of freedom of speech, and the weaknesses of the new legal system in coping, throughout the 1990s, with cases testing the limits of such freedom. Anti-fascist legislation has proven to be rather lax and often ineffective. In addition, the Czech Republic has become the last member state that has not implemented the EU Race Equality directive. Vetoed by Czech President Václav Klaus in 2008, it was to be discussed again by Parliament in 2009.

Another factor is the growing populist, often Euro-skeptic, nationalist discourse, similar to that in some of the other former communist states. Against the background of the economic crisis and political instability, which in the past decade have clouded the Czech political scene, the "pessimistic classes" – an expression which might be applied to frustrated segments of society that feel that they "have been left behind" – appear to have adopted a more tolerant line toward the extremists. According to some experts, the media, manipulated by extreme right groups, inflates the significance of the latter (see <http://www.radio.cz/cz/clanek/116773>).

While these groups might change their names and blur their identities, the actual extremist spectrum does not seem to have broadened in recent years. Nevertheless, there appears to have been an increase in membership and in participation in extremist meetings and demonstrations, as well as in the number of political events, indicating a shift from notoriously racist rock concerts to a quest for legitimization and eventual involvement in the political process (see <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2008/eur/119075.htm>; <http://www.errc.org/db04/10/m00000410.pdf>). Further, the extreme right Workers Party (Delnicka Strana – DS) and the National Party (Národní strana – NS) were intending to participate in the June 2009 EU elections. Crossing the one percent threshold would qualify them for state funds.

In addition to those two extreme right parties, National Resistance (*Narodni Odbor* – NR) is the leading, largest neo-Nazi organization in the Czech Republic. Constructed of cells in various locations throughout the country, it organizes chiefly neo-Nazi concerts. Membership is estimated at 500, but together with other like-minded organizations, the number of neo-Nazi activists totals 2,000–3,000. In 2006 the NR organized a demonstration outside the Israeli embassy in Prague, during which they asked the Czech president to be allowed to join foreign forces in waging a war on Israel (see www.networkeurope.radio.cz, January 9, 2006). The propaganda of the organization is openly xenophobic, antisemitic and

anti-Roma, and it cooperates closely with the Workers' Party. In early 2009 the two groups invited former US Ku Klux Klan leader David Duke to speak at Charles University in Prague but the university banned the meeting. It was relocated to a restaurant, which was raided by the police. Duke was arrested and questioned on suspicion of denying the Holocaust, an offense under Czech law, and was ordered to leave the country forthwith.

The Autonomous Nationalists (Autonomi Nacionaliste – AN) represent yet another extremist group with racist and antisemitic messages. The group, which has been active since 2002, began organizing annual marches in 2005, on St. Wenceslas Day – regarded as a rallying date for nationalist events – with the participation of 200-300 neo-Nazis. Neo-Nazi speakers from Germany, Poland and Sweden are also invited. Some 900 marchers joined forces, in November 2008, in the largest extremist rally since 1989 against the Roma, at the Janov housing in Litvinov (see <http://www.tau.ac.il/Anti-Semitism/articles/roma.pdf>). The march was organized by the National Resistance, the Autonomous Nationalists and the Workers Party.

RACIAL AND ANTISEMITIC ACTIVITY

Another reason for growing extremism is the continuing crisis between the Roma, the authorities and parts of the population, reflecting the difficult relationship between this minority and post-communist realities (see <http://www.tau.ac.il/Anti-Semitism/articles/roma.pdf>). While leading political figures and numerous NGOs have attempted to deal with the various aspects of the Roma problem – social, economic, cultural and political – there has been a spiraling trend of violence against the Roma population, sometimes in reaction to offenses committed by Roma criminals, and a growing sense among Roma activists that they can no longer trust the state to defend them. The strategy developed by the Roma is two-pronged: 1) appealing to the EU in order to open European eyes and ears to their plight, and emigrate, thus drawing more attention, and 2) relying more on their own communities to organize and defend themselves against what they perceive as a surrounding hostile environment. The tactic of "Roma self-reliance" may cause further alienation and increase the vigilante activities directed at them, mainly physical attacks, which, in turn, trigger bitter reactions from Roma youth, who not only try to defend their often ghetto-type shanty neighborhoods, but organize reprisal raids against non-Roma persons and property. Certainly, this state of affairs may bring about a vicious circle of violence in the country.

There has been a slow rise in antisemitic manifestations in recent years, mostly against Jewish property and sites. In March 2008 during a neo-Nazi march in Plzen, anti-Jewish slogans were shouted in front of the local synagogue. The organizer was sentenced in 2009 to 300 hours of community work. At his trial he stated that the march was "against Zionism" and "for National Socialism." In April 2008, 824 plaques were removed from tombstones in the Terezin cemetery. In early January 2009 the Holocaust memorial in Teplice was vandalized. In 2009 it was reported that the small neo-Nazi group White Justice, which is linked to other extremist organizations, especially the Workers' Party, had planned terrorist attacks against highly-positioned Jews and Jewish targets, as well as against strategic installations in the country such as power plants.

The Czech authorities continue their efforts to counter extremist activities. While they issue assurances that Czech democracy is not in danger, the news of the abovementioned planned attacks raised a general alert and generated a heated debate in the country during which some observers claimed that the authorities' lax attitude toward the extremists in the past had enabled a seemingly small group dedicated to violence to conspire to commit terrorist acts.

In light of growing violence against the Roma, the Czech authorities will have to toughen legislative and legal measures and increase surveillance and monitoring of extremist activities. Such steps were taken in the past but appear to have been inadequate.

HUNGARY

One of the most significant developments in this period was the emergence of two extreme right-wing groups, the paramilitary Magyar Garda (Hungarian Guard) and the Jobbik movement. Attempts to ban the latter were evaded by means of various legal manipulations. The battle over historical memory and its place in contemporary Hungary has intensified since the 50th anniversary of the 1956 Hungarian uprising in 2006.

THE JEWISH COMMUNITY

The 80,000 Jews living in Hungary, out of a total population of 10.55 million, constitute the largest Jewish community in eastern Europe outside the borders of the former Soviet Union. The great majority live in Budapest, but there are also communities in Miskolc and Debrecen, as well as in smaller cities.

The Federation of Jewish Communities (Mazsihisz) is the main body of Hungarian Jewry. Among other activities, it supports the publication of a yearbook, *Antisemitic Discourse in Hungary*, published in Hungarian and English by the B'nai B'rith Budapest Lodge. The Hungarian Jewish Cultural Association publishes a monthly, *Sombat* (Saturday), and conducts a wide variety of cultural and educational activities. The quarterly *Mult es Jovo* (Past and Present) publishes original and translated essays on a variety of topics. The content of the community's bi-weekly *Uj Elet* (New Life) reflects a religious revival among some segments of the Jewish population.

The Rabbinical Seminary, which has university status, has become an active, well-known institution for Judaic studies, continuing its long tradition as one of the most established rabbinical seminaries in Europe. There are several Jewish schools, which have expanded their activities over the last few years.

The Budapest Holocaust Memorial and Documentation Center conducts activities related to the Holocaust and its memory.

POLITICAL PARTIES AND EXTRA-PARLIAMENARY GROUPS

One of the most significant developments in this period was the emergence of two extreme right-wing nationalist groups, the paramilitary Magyar Garda (Hungarian Guard) and the Jobbik (a play on words, meaning "more to the right" as well as "better") movement. There is some overlap in membership between the Guard and Jobbik. The latter tested public opinion with its website (www.jobbik.net) before its formation as a political group and then a party (see <http://www.tau.ac.il/Anti-Semitism/articles/hungary.pdf>).

The appearance of the Hungarian Guard as a paramilitary group, with a growing number of branches in Budapest and other localities, raised a series of debates in the Hungarian media, as well as condemnation by members and officials of the two government coalition parties, the Hungarian Socialist Party and the SzDsz (Alliance of Free Democrats), and of numerous NGOs. Several attempts to ban the Guard were aborted due to the latter's legal manipulations – leaving the Hungarian situation seemingly without parallel in the EU. This raised the question of the ability of the legal system to prevent the rise of a right-wing paramilitary organization. The Guard aroused fears among the Roma community and the Jews, since their marches, aimed at "safeguarding Hungarian interests and security" and marked by right-wing symbols from the past and nationalist and xenophobic slogans, attracted support from among pensioners and youth.

In contrast, the number of neo-Nazis is small, but they are visible at public demonstrations on national days or anniversaries linked to World War II. The most notorious neo-Nazi group is the Hungarian Welfare Association, which has appeared under various guises and adheres openly to the legacy of the Hungarian fascist Arrow Cross movement, led during the war by Ferenc Szalasi. Small groups such as Blood & Honour organize demonstrations on anniversaries linked to World War II and the legacy of Hungarian fascism. Skinheads, whose numbers remain stable, have been less active on the streets and in the dissemination of propaganda. Nevertheless, this violent sub-culture with its neo-Nazi symbols continues to be a threat to public order.

As in previous years, in February 2007 and 2008, Hungarian police confronted groups of local neo-Nazis, especially from the transnational Blood & Honour, who were celebrating the anniversary of the 1945 attempt of Hungarian and Nazi troops to break out of Soviet-besieged Budapest. Following such displays of neo-Nazi power, the authorities promise to clamp down. However, the marches have become an annual display of neo-Nazism and Holocaust denial and are condemned by liberals and leftists in the Hungarian media.

As in previous years, in October 2007 and 2008 a small group of neo-Nazis tried to commemorate the anniversary of the rise to power of the Nazi Arrow Cross party in Hungary in 1944. The open endorsement of the legacy of the Arrow Cross and its leader Szalasi by the Group for a Hungarian Future (Magyar Jovo Csoport), serves to spotlight the re-emergence of similar groups, which attract dozens of sympathizers.

Extremist nationalist groups have intensified their use of the internet. Several websites, such as jobbik.net, disseminate xenophobic and antisemitic/anti-Israel views, often in vague terminology in order to

avoid legal action. Such sites are monitored by www.antiszemizmus.hu of the Jewish publication *Szombat* (see below).

ANTISEMITIC AND RACIST ACTIVITY

The highly politicized Hungarian society is split between the liberals, the left (some of them reformed Communists), the center-right, and the more extreme right, over the significance of the legacy of the 1956 Hungarian uprising for the present. Since October/November 2006, when Hungary experienced perhaps its most acute crisis since the change of regime in 1989 and extremist and antisemitic activity reached a new level with the events commemorating the 50th anniversary of the uprising (see *ASW 2006*), the battle over historical memory and its place in contemporary Hungary has become a key topic in the sharp-tongued political discourse. As Csurka's movement (see below) did for years, the anti-communist right wing emphasizes the role of Jews during the Stalinist years of oppression in Hungary under ruler Mátyás Rákosi (1945–56). They present that regime as a Jewish tool, led by Jewish Communists who betrayed the Hungarian nation. (For a comprehensive analysis of the situation in Hungary, including its extremist manifestations, see G.M. Tamas, "Counter-revolution against a Counter-revolution," in www.eurozine.com, 18 Sept. 2007.)

Liberal voices such as *Nepszabadsag* and the weekly *Elet is Irodalom* warning against a revival of extremist and antisemitic forces that would endanger the new Hungarian democracy and which emerged against the background of the October-November 2006 events, were vindicated, with the expansion of extreme right activities, an escalation of violence against Roma and general intensification of the antisemitic discourse, which appears to have triggered a rise in antisemitic incidents. As in other member states from the former Communist bloc, all these trends should also be seen against the background of the world economic crisis and the parallel rise of Euro-skepticism among some segments of Hungarian society – a result of expectations from the EU not being met in terms of improved material stability.

The rising trends in antisemitism, xenophobia and extremism were discussed widely in the liberal media, which, as noted, had originally sounded the alarm. They were monitored, too, outside Hungary. Political analyst Agoston Mraz commented in the *International Herald Tribune* (May 8, 2008): "While I myself don't believe that there is a clear increase in anti-Semitism, there is now an opportunity to be more explicit about it." Another observer, Janos Ladanyi noted in the same paper that "in Hungary it is all right if you behave as a religious Jew. But what is being

denied here is the notion that Jews, no matter how we behave, are the same as non-Jews."

Stating that acts of vandalism against Jewish cemeteries were on the rise in 2007–2008, the Jewish community originally linked this to a general rise in vandalism, including against Christian cemeteries. It took some time for the community to issue a call for government action that would include measures to stem the rising racist violence against Roma and the formation of extremist organizations such as the Hungarian Guard and Jobbik. There was special concern over the appearance of flags with the "Arpad stripes," a centuries-old nationalist symbol, also used as a fascist emblem by the World War II Arrow Cross movement. The contemporary standard bearers of the flag in the Hungarian Guard deny its symbols have any connection with the Arrow Cross. In parallel, the debate in the media focused on the usage of a recognized historical symbol, whose display could not be seen as innocent as some claimed because of the memories it evoked among those who had seen it carried by Hungarian fascists during the Holocaust. The right-wing daily *Magyar Nemzet* and the weekly *Magyar Demokrata* supported the extremist fringe groups, which were becoming more active and visible in defending the display of the Arpad flags.

A new dimension was added to the emotional public debates on the intensification of antisemitism in 2007, when Peter Feldmajer, president of the major Jewish community organization, the MAZSIHISZ, urged Jews to remain at home during the March 15 demonstrations commemorating the 1848 revolution, during which nationalist groups traditionally convey nationalist and antisemitic messages. Feldmajer's warning was intended as a provocation to generate a more open debate on the dangers facing the Jewish community, but some elderly Jews took it literally.

Yet another furor developed with the publication of an article on March 18, 2008 in the conservative mainstream daily *Magyar Hírlap*, alleged by the liberal media to have drifted in recent years to the far right. In it, Zsolt Bayer, a well known publicist of alleged Jewish origin, attacked Jewish journalists who "back in 1967 [as part of communist propaganda] were vilifying Israel. Today the same Jewish journalists of Budapest are vilifying the Arabs, FIDESZ [opposition conservative/center-right party] and us ["decent" Hungarians] all. Because they hate us more than we hate them... Their mere existence justifies antisemitism." Dozens of articles were published for or against Bayer. The author's claim that he did not mean all Jews, just a few of the "bad Jews" did not help moderate the debate. The owner of *Magyar Hírlap* wrote that the piece might be offensive to some, but in the name

of freedom of speech it should have been published. (For coverage of the debate in English, see the blog at politics.hu, "National Furor Erupts in Hungary over Publication of Alleged Anti-Semitic Essay," March 28, 2008.)

Istvan Csurka, leader of the xenophobic and antisemitic Hungarian Justice and Life Party (MIEP) continued to provide regular analyses in his party's weekly and monthly *Magyar Forum*, in an attempt to prove complete Hungarian servitude to foreign interests. Csurka reiterated that in Hungary everything was decided according to the interests of the Washington–Tel Aviv global war axis. *Magyar Forum* also continued to use the word "Judapest" to describe alleged Jewish attempts to judaize Budapest (see *ASW 2006*). In addition, Jewish infiltration of the Hungarian nation and their undermining of Hungarian national interests appeared in the right-wing weekly *Magyar Demokrata* and on several websites, such as www.jobbik.net. The monitoring site www.antiszemizmus.hu claimed that Csurka, whose party has had no parliamentary representation since 2002, was no longer "the flagship of antisemitism" due the proliferation of extremist websites and small groups.

As it did during the Second Lebanon War, *Magyar Demokrata* published translations of western anti-Zionist and anti-Israel publications during Israel's military operation in Gaza in early 2009.

RESPONSES TO RACISM AND ANTISEMITISM

The anniversaries of the Holocaust in Hungary in March and April were marked similarly to previous years, with the various events stressing the "Hungarian tragedy" (the crime carried out by the Hungarian people against their nation when they destroyed a community of fellow citizens) while the right-wing media continued attacking "holo-propaganda."

Annual seminars were held for Hungarian teachers both locally and at Yad Vashem, which updated them on the latest educational approaches and methods for dealing with the Holocaust, the Hungarian Jewish legacy, antisemitism and Holocaust denial. Textbooks on these issues are updated regularly and included in the curriculum.

All parliamentary parties, including FIDESZ, which was often accused of being "soft" on the extreme right, proclaimed their determined efforts to combat any forms of antisemitism, racism and xenophobia.

Prime Minister Ferenc Gyurcsany visited Israel in May 2008 in honor of the latter's 60th anniversary. In June 2008 both Prime Minister Gyurcsany and FIDESZ leader Viktor Orban met with the visiting Ashkenazi Chief Rabbi of Israel Yona Metzger, and stressed their

support for the Jewish community. Also in June, a multiparty delegation of the Parliamentary Foreign Affairs Committee visited Israel, including Yad Vashem. Earlier, in May, Hungary's defense minister, Imre Szekeres, joined the Israeli ambassador to Hungary, Aliza Bin-Noun, in the March of the Living at Auschwitz.

Nevertheless, such official gestures of support by Hungarian leaders could not counterbalance the growing specter of political polarization in Hungary, in which the extreme right has become more assertive and visible through the proliferation of web sites and the formation of extremist groups such as the Hungarian Guard and the Jobbik movement.

POLAND

Cemetery desecrations, violent attacks and antisemitic slogans and banners at football matches were among the 196 incidents categorized as being of a violent racist or antisemitic nature committed in Poland in 2008. Radical anti-Zionist rhetoric was employed by several politicians from the right and left during Israel's military offensive in Gaza. Although ultra-nationalist parties such as the League of Polish Families and Self-Defense were no longer represented in the Polish parliament following the October 2007 election, a number of former antisemitic League activists continued to serve as members of the Law and Justice faction. A group of League activists, led by former neo-Nazi skinhead Piotr Farfal, managed to seize control of Polish state TV in December.

THE JEWISH COMMUNITY

There are some 5,000–10,000 Jews in Poland out of a total population of close to 40 million. The majority live in Warsaw, Wrocław, Kraków and Łódź, but there are smaller communities in several other cities. There are virtually no Jews in the eastern part of Poland where once large, important communities, such as those of Lublin and Białystok, existed.

The Union of Jewish Religious Communities (Związek Kongregacji Wyznania Mojżeszowego), or Kehilla, and the secular Jewish Socio-Cultural Society (Towarzystwo Społeczno-Kulturalne Żydowskie), or Ferband, are the leading communal organizations and these, together with other Jewish groups, are linked by membership in the KKOZRP, which acts as a roof organization. There is a Jewish primary school in Warsaw maintained by the Lauder Foundation, which has been active in rehabilitating Jewish life in Poland, especially through youth projects. The American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (the Joint) is also active in Poland, particularly in social welfare. The leading Jewish publications are the monthly *Midrasz* and *Dos Jidische Wort*, which appears in Yiddish and Polish.

Important institutions are the Jewish Historical Institute, with its revamped museum, the E.R. Kaminska State Yiddish Theater in Warsaw and the Jewish Cultural Center in Kraków. There are centers for Jewish studies in Warsaw University and the Jagiellonian University in Kraków.

PARLIAMENTARY ORGANIZATIONS AND EXTRA-PARLIAMENTARY GROUPS

Political Parties

Radical nationalist parties such as the League of Polish Families (Liga Polskich Rodzin, LPR) and Self-Defense (Samoobrona) were no longer represented in the Polish parliament (Sejm), following the October 2007

election (see *ASW* 2007), but retained their seats in the European Parliament until the June 2009 election. Nevertheless, a number of former LPR activists, with a long record of antisemitism, continued to serve as members of Jaroslaw Kaczynski's Law and Justice (Prawo i Sprawiedliwosc, PiS) faction. They included Ryszard Bender, a retired history professor at the Catholic University of Lublin, who is a member of the Senate. Bender is notorious for having claimed in a 2000 Radio Maryja broadcast that Auschwitz was not a death camp. The right-wing PiS is the main opposition party to the liberal government. Despite its apparent mainstream status, it maintains a close alliance with the antisemitic Radio Maryja. Veteran Radio Maryja broadcasters Anna Sobecka and Gabriela Masłowska also represent the PiS in parliament.

Michal Kaminski, a leading PiS member, was President Lech Kaczynski's spokesman in 2008. At the beginning of his career he was a member of the extreme right National Rebirth of Poland (Narodowe Odrodzenie Polski, NOP). In 2000, he publicly declared his support for the slogan "Poland for the Polish," while in 2001, he campaigned against commemoration of the 1941 pogrom at Jedwabne.

Extra-parliamentary Groups

Both LPR and Self-Defense carried on their activities as extra-parliamentary groups. Former LPR leader Roman Giertych continued to enjoy media interest and was invited frequently to participate in various TV programs and give press interviews. Through behind the scenes manipulations, a group of LPR activists, led by former Nazi skinhead Piotr Farfal, managed to seize control of Polish State TV in December 2008. As a result, many members of the LPR, and its notoriously antisemitic youth organization All-Polish Youth (Młodzież Wszechpolska, MW) found employment in the institution, subsequently influencing the content of the programs, while mainstream parties could not agree on how to remove Farfal from the post of public TV chairman.

Another ex-Nazi skinhead, Mateusz Piskorski, former spokesman of Self-Defense, continued his active cooperation with the radical New Left (Nowa Lewica, NL) group and the so-called anti-globalist magazine *Obywatel* (The Citizen), edited by Remigiusz Okraska. Piskorski was also active on the international scene through his involvement with Aleksandr Dugin's Eurasian Movement in Russia.

The National Rebirth of Poland (Narodowe Odrodzenie Polski, NOP) remains active as a radical antisemitic organization, *inter alia*, distributing posters and stickers bearing the slogan "Bombs on Israel." In 2008, the NOP's activities were somewhat overshadowed by its rival

on the "national-revolutionary" scene, the National-Radical Camp (Oboz Narodowo Radykalny, ONR). The ONR is a Nazi skinhead organization which carries on the tradition of its violent fascist namesake banned by the Polish government in 1934. Its latter day incarnation operates legally with several branches registered as independent associations throughout Poland. The ONR specializes in organizing street marches and counter-demonstrations as well as an annual festival marking the 1936 Myslowice pogrom (see *ASW 2007*). A split in the ONR gave birth to a smaller, neo-fascist offshoot called Falanga.

The Polish National Party (Polska Partia Narodowa, PPN) led by Leszek Bubel continued to publish mass-circulation papers, such as the weekly *Tylko Polska* (Only Poland), which are sold and distributed by the government-owned company Ruch.

Other active antisemitic organizations include the Polish branch of the international skinhead Blood & Honour (B&H) network, the Bytom-based skinhead White Eagles Association (Stowarzyszenie Biale Orly, SBO) and neo-pagan groups such as Niklot and Zadruga.

The neo-Nazi hit list Redwatch operated by Blood & Honour continued to post threats against members of minorities, journalists, teachers of Holocaust education and human rights activists. According to the Never Again Association, there are about 500 racist and xenophobic Polish websites currently online.

ANTISEMITIC AND RACIST ACTIVITY

The *Brown Book* (Brunatna Ksiega), published jointly in March 2009 by the anti-racist Never Again (Nigdy Wiecej) Association and the academic institution Collegium Civitas, details cases of racist, antisemitic and xenophobic attacks, vandalism and insults committed in Poland from 1987 to 2008. In 2008 there were 196 incidents (compared to 149 in 2007), mostly of an antisemitic and neo-fascist (such as swastikas daubed on walls) character. They included cemetery desecrations, violent attacks and antisemitic slogans and banners at football matches.

For example, on the night of March 4, the local Jewish cemetery was vandalized with swastikas and a Star of David on the gallows in Lezajsk. One of the graves desecrated was that of the famous 18th century Polish rabbi Elimelech Weissblum. The walls of the *obel* (a small brick tomb) were daubed with misspelled slogans such as "Entry to Jews forbidden." The police launched an investigation. On April 21, they apprehended one of the perpetrators, aged 18. He faces up to two years in prison for offending religious feelings and profaning the tomb of a holy person.

In May an Orthodox Jewish-American tourist was beaten and intimidated by a group of youths after he asked them directions to the

grave of Rabbi Yitzhak Kalish in the town of Warka. After the story was published in the press, the local authorities and police flatly denied any problem of antisemitism in the town, despite overwhelming evidence to the contrary. (For example, many antisemitic comments made by local youths were quoted in the press.)

Radical anti-Zionist rhetoric was employed by several politicians from the right and the left during Israel's military offensive in Gaza. 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, declared: "Israel is an imperialist puppet in the midst of the Arab world trying to divide Palestinians. Those who won elections [Hamas] are not terrorists. Israeli criminals are terrorists"; and "We want to tell you Jews, Israelis, 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" conducted by Israel. In an interview with the Arab website safsaf.org, Szczypinska referred to events in Gaza as a "Holocaust." She added: "Every criticism of the policy of the Israeli government is met with attacks and the charge of antisemitism. I experienced it myself. But I don't care." In reaction to events in Gaza, Szczypinska established the Polish-Palestinian Parliamentary Group, with the support of four other Law and Justice MPs and one left-wing MP.

RESPONSES TO RACISM AND ANTISEMITISM

During an official visit to Israel in April 2008, Prime Minister Donald Tusk (from the liberal Civic Platform) declared that "there is no tolerance for antisemitism in Poland." Such high-level statements rarely translate into concrete measures against antisemitism on the ground. According to Poland's official submission to the United Nations in 2008, in the framework of the National Program for Combating Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance, the National Prosecutor's Office "undertook activities aimed at establishing whether there were any organizations based on anti-Semitic or racist ideology operating in Poland." The conclusion of this search "proved that there were no such organizations on the territory of Poland"; this is despite evidence to the contrary. This shows yet again the reluctance of Polish governmental institutions to acknowledge the existence of antisemitic activity.

High-level tolerance toward the far right was demonstrated by the failure of mainstream parties to agree on the removal of the former Nazi

skinhead Piotr Farfal from the post of state TV chairman. No antisemitic group was banned in 2008 and there were few convictions of individuals in the courts. The state-owned company Ruch continued to sell racist and antisemitic publications such as those published by Leszek Bubel.

The state Institute of National Memory (Instytut Pamięci Narodowej, IPN) is influenced by the far right and has been accused of promoting an ethno-nationalist interpretation of Polish history. For example, in 2008 the IPN published a book *After the Holocaust*, written by the US-based historian Jan Marek Chodakiewicz. The latter alleges that Jews killed in Poland after the war were mostly communist collaborators. Chodakiewicz reinforces the stereotype of Jewish communism while criticizing the findings of Jan Gross who, in his book *Fear*, documented the strength of antisemitism in postwar Poland.

In a rare intervention with regard to antisemitism and racism, the ombudsman (human rights commissioner) Janusz Kochanowski sent a letter to the president of the Polish Football Association (PZPN), expressing concern about incidents of racism in Polish stadiums.

Two leading football clubs in Poland, Legia Warsaw and Widzew Lodz, participated in the events of the International Day Against Racism (March 21). On March 22, players from both teams entered the field wearing T-shirts with the slogan "Let's kick racism out of stadiums." After the game the T-shirts signed by the players were sold to fans on an internet auction. The money raised was turned over to the Never Again Association.

The main response to racism continues to come from NGOs. The Never Again Association publishes an anti-racist magazine and provides information to journalists and researchers interested in the problems of racism and xenophobia. It also runs a national hate crime monitoring program.

ROMANIA

The Greater Romania Party's loss in the 2008 national elections prompted it to hint that this was yet another Jewish-Israeli attempt to destabilize the party. There were several cases of desecration of Jewish cemeteries and tombs in 2007-8. Antisemitic and anti-Israel articles continued to appear in some Hungarian language media in Romania, especially in Erdelyi Naplo.

THE JEWISH COMMUNITY

According to the 2002 census, the Jewish community in Romania had dwindled to fewer than 6,000 out of a total population of 21.5 million. Several thousand more, mostly in mixed marriages, are thought not to have declared themselves as Jews. The major Jewish centers are Bucharest, Iasi, Cluj and Oradea, where the local communities are well organized.

The Federation of Jewish Communities of Romania promotes and coordinates communal activities. In addition to publishing a monthly journal, *Realitatea Evreiasca*, the Federation documents the history of Jewish life in Romania through an active research center and its publications and symposia are well covered by the Romanian media. The Hasefer publishing house issues dozens of titles on Jewish topics, including works by the community's historical center. The historical studies published by the Federation of Jewish Communities are of primary importance in the study of the Holocaust and the past of Romanian Jewry. The American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee has been especially active in fostering welfare work among Romania's elderly and needy Jews.

The universities of Cluj, Bucharest and Iasi have academic centers for Jewish studies, and hold conferences on Jewish topics and Romania's Jewish past. The Babes-Bolyai University in Cluj was the first institution in Romania to initiate annual seminars on the Holocaust for Romanian educators; it also holds seminars on past and present trends in antisemitism. Similar events are organized at the University of Bucharest. Academic periodicals such as *Studia Judaica* (Cluj) and *Studia Hebraica* (Bucharest) publish studies on antisemitism and the Holocaust.

The issue of restitution of private and communal property has yet to be resolved in Romania, although the community has secured the return of several individual items. The community's task of maintaining the vast number of synagogues and cemeteries, a reminder of the large Jewish population that existed in Romania before the war, has been alleviated by a government decree of March 2002 ordering the protection of Jewish sites as part of the national heritage.

The NGO Center for Monitoring and Combating Antisemitism (MCA Romania, www.antisemitism.ro) monitors antisemitic manifestations and, jointly with the Federation of Jewish Communities in Romania, initiates activities to combat antisemitism and Holocaust denial.

POLITICAL PARTIES AND EXTRA-PARLIAMENTARY GROUPS

The Greater Romania Party (PRM), led by Corneliu Vadim Tudor, which suffered a resounding defeat in the November/December 2004 parliamentary and presidential elections (see *ASW 2004*), received only 3.15 percent of the vote in the 2008 parliamentary elections, the smallest number since 1990. Left outside both houses of Parliament, it has intensified its antisemitic campaign, linking all the PRM's misfortunes to the "Jewish mafia," and attacking Israeli business interests that are allegedly corrupting the Romanian system, while ignoring the fact that in 2004 the party used the services of one of Israel's best known public relations firms.

Nevertheless, after Romania joined the EU in 2007, the PRM sent five members to the European Parliament, enabling the formation of a right-wing group led by Le Pen's Front National. Relating to this event, the London *Guardian* (January 8, 2007) branded it "Romania's first gift to the European Union – a caucus of neo-fascists and Holocaust deniers." PRM representatives in the European Parliament focus more on anti-Roma and anti-immigration issues facing Europe than on Jewish ones.

Small nationalist, xenophobic, antisemitic Iron Guard, or Legionnaire, groups (deriving from the wartime fascist movement) form the extra-parliamentary extreme right in Romania. "Nests" (the original name of local branches of the movement) of such groups exist in several localities. The Bucharest nest of the Legionnaire movement owns the Majadahonda publishing house, which issues works by Iron Guard founder Corneliu Zelea Codreanu and books about the movement. Pro-Iron Guard, antisemitic and Holocaust denial publications, such as *Obiectiv Legionar*, are openly displayed at book stalls in the major cities. The New Right organization Noua Dreapta organized marches and religious ceremonies in 2007 and 2008 to commemorate Codreanu (see US State Department Country Reports on Human Rights Practices, 2008). In November 2007 and 2008 (see also below) the annual march commemorating Codreanu took place in Tancabesti (where Codreanu and 13 of his men were killed on the orders of King Carol II in 1938), with the participation of several dozen extremists. The events, which have become an annual ritual were covered by extremist websites, but largely ignored by the mainstream media. During the 2008

commemoration march, *Puncte Cardinale*, one of the most notorious pro-fascist publications of the 1990s and now an "independent [online] periodical with a national-Christian orientation" (www.punctecardinale.ro), dedicated its November issue to their memory. Stressing the Orthodox Christian dogma, *Puncte Cardinale* has moderated its brutally antisemitic tones of the 1990s, but still harps on conspiracy theories involving Jews and Freemasons.

The discourse of the New Generation Party (PNG), which received approximately 2 percent of the vote in the 2004 general election, and 2.28 percent in the 2008 elections, mixes nationalist and religious messages, similar to those of the Iron Guard movement.

ANTISEMITIC ACTIVITY

In general, manifestations of the "new antisemitism," which in western Europe is associated with the identification of Israel, Zionism and Jews as a single evil entity, are rarely evidenced in Romania, except in the extremist media. In fact, there has been no marked change in recent years in the positions of nationalist and extreme right elements vis-à-vis the Jews/Zionism/Israel, and they continue to focus less on the Middle East situation and more on issues such as the penetration of Jewish/Israeli capital into the Romanian economy, and the Holocaust, the fate of Romanian Jewry and Jewish demands for compensation.

In addition to extremist publications and Internet sites (see below), antisemitic and anti-Israel articles continued to appear in some Hungarian-language media in Romania, especially in *Erdehyi Naplo*. In its issue of December 17, 2008 it attacked "left-liberals" in Hungary, who were pressing for legislation against "alleged Holocaust denial," which "would limit freedom of opinion." Such attitudes among the Hungarian minority – albeit a small segment of it – reflect the polarization among Hungarians in Romania, who are divided on a number of issues linked to their status and rights in Romania. The extremists embrace nationalist views from Hungary, including antisemitism.

Antisemitic attitudes continued to surface in debates on the role of the Jews in the communist regime in Romania and in other east European states. The formation, in March 2006, of a Presidential Commission for the Study of the Romanian Communist Dictatorship, headed by a well known American scholar of Jewish-Romanian background Vladimir Tismeneanu, whose father was a communist activist, provided such an opportunity. From the time of its inception until the commission submitted its report to President Traian Basescu in 2007 (on the report and its Romanian text, see Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, Washington, DC), the antisemitic

press frequently mentioned Tismaneanu's Jewish family background. As echoes of the report continue to reverberate in the Romanian media, the Jews' alleged role in establishing and maintaining the communist regime in Romania remains a major item on the antisemitic agenda.

While the overall number of antisemitic events was no higher than the average for recent years, the authorities are showing more openness, publicizing antisemitic incidents and responding more rapidly. However, according to MCA Romania, they still tended to downplay antisemitic incidents, often attributing acts of vandalism to children, drunkards or the mentally deranged. Disappointment was also expressed over the high number of court acquittals in vandalism cases.

There were several cases of desecration of Jewish cemeteries and tombs in 2007–8, including in Bucharest, Tulcea and Resita. On October 22, 2008 some 131 gravestones were desecrated in the Jewish cemetery in Bucharest, an act unparalleled in recent years. The Romanian media reported widely on the incident, and leading officials such as the prime minister and the minister of justice condemned the act and all manifestations of antisemitism. The Federation of Jewish Communities called for an urgent inquiry. The police reportedly identified a group of school children aged 13–15 who admitted to having vandalized the cemetery.

The Federation of Jewish Communities has begun a new tactic of suing individuals caught but not prosecuted by the authorities – for example, in the Tulcea case, in which several tombstones were desecrated on two occasions by two minors.

In February 2008 a youth who drew swastikas and "Heil Hitler" on the windows of a trolleybus in Bucharest, was charged with vandalism of public property.

ATTITUDES TOWARD THE HOLOCAUST AND THE NAZI ERA

The debate in Romanian society over the nation's role in the Holocaust continued in 2007–8, with arguments for and against the rehabilitation of wartime fascist leader Ion Antonescu. Despite Romania's entry into the EU in 2007, antisemitic propaganda accompanied the pro-Antonescu campaign. The material posted on pro-Legionnaire sites such as Pagina Romaniei Nationaliste and Dreapta Noua attempts to introduce Codreanu's doctrines to the younger generation through historical revisionism, including whitewashing the Iron Guard's murderous activities, such as the January 1941 pogrom in Iasi, which it attributes to "Jewish behavior." Such propaganda activities may be linked directly to official and public reactions following submission of the Report of the

International Commission of Historians on the Holocaust in Romania in October 2004 (see below).

There were several unsuccessful attempts to prosecute a professor of history, Ion Coja, who denies in his lectures and books that a Holocaust took place in Romania. The Federation of Jewish Communities had filed a criminal complaint against him in January 2007. He presented himself as a candidate for the 2010 presidential elections, and on his Internet site www.ioncoja.ro/ emphasized that although Holocaust research has produced a vast body of documents and research, there is insufficient evidence of a planned, systematic Nazi policy of exterminating the Jewish nation. He also reiterated on his site his thesis that there was no Holocaust in Romania, and again at a conference in Bucharest in November 2008 and before a group of German journalists (see his website; for some of Coja's previous views, see Michael Shafir, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, October 13, 2004; Andrei Oisteanu, "The Holocaust in Romania: New Studies, Testimonies and Documents," *Studia Iudaica* (Bucharest), no. 2/2002, pp. 368–78.)

Frequently, newspapers such as the daily *Zina* published articles alleging that the Jews' fate during the Holocaust was more positive in Romania, including a higher rate of survival and the possibility of emigration under the Antonescu regime. While not overtly denying the Holocaust, such publications promote a revisionist view of events.

RESPONSES TO RACISM AND ANTISEMITISM

There were numerous responses to antisemitic, xenophobic and Holocaust denial publications and statements and a discourse on the implications of the past for the present and future of the country. The wide media coverage following publication of the report of the International Commission of Historians on the Holocaust in Romania (the Wiesel Commission – see *ASW* 2004) generated much public discussion of "the Holocaust in Romania," a concept that has now entered Romanian terminology after years of debate as to whether there was a Holocaust there.

In January 2007 and 2008 various events were held to commemorate the anniversary of the 1941 pogrom in Bucharest. In June of both years, commemorative events and a major conference were held in Iasi, where more than 15,000 Jews were killed during several days of atrocities, also in 1941.

Romania's Holocaust Day, held in October to mark the beginning of the deportations to Transnistria in 1941, was commemorated in 2007 and 2008. The official events, attended by high-level functionaries, indicated Romania's determination to confront its past despite

continuing nationalist pressures and pro-fascist ideas often expressed in parts of the media. President Basescu stated that there was still much to do in order to prove that the nation felt remorse over the fate of Romanian Jewry. The president laid the cornerstone for a Holocaust memorial in Bucharest.

In September 2008 an international conference on antisemitism was organized in Bucharest by the CSCE (Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe).

At the Elie Wiesel National Institute for the Study of the Holocaust in Bucharest, inaugurated in 2005, Director General Mihail E. Ionescu stressed the importance of the institute for research into Romania's past and its role in the Holocaust. Among its activities in 2007–8, the institute organized conferences and projects related to the Holocaust in Romania.

The years 2007–8 saw the expansion of educational projects and teachers seminars, and the introduction of the Holocaust and antisemitism as topics in school textbooks. Romania's acceptance into the Task Force for Holocaust Education in late 2004 has increased the scope for cooperation in this field with foreign organizations and bodies.

BETWEEN ANTI-ISRAELISM AND ANTISEMITISM

The outbreak of Operation Cast Lead in Gaza in December 2008 prompted a few expressions of criticism of Israel with antisemitic messages. The extremist media, including the two papers of the PRM, *Romania Mare* and *Tricolor*, strongly denounced "Israeli aggression" and the "murder of innocents."

On some mainstream websites the headlines and titles were often milder in tone than those in the western media. Moreover, some of the talkbacks were more anti-Hamas than anti-Israel. For example, an article posted on www.ziare.com under the headline "Obama Is Silent, People Are Dying" (January 17, 2009) received many talkbacks focusing on Hamas' use of civilians as shields facing superior firepower.

SLOVAK REPUBLIC

Publications such as Kultura and Pravo naroda continue the revisionist, pro-Tiso trend of almost two decades, fueling Slovak extremism. Leading revisionist writers include Milan S. Durica and Jozef M. Rydlo. There has been a shift in the public discourse in recent years, with growing recognition that a neo-Nazi movement actually exists in the country. Slovakia recorded a low level of antisemitic activity in 2007–8, although the trend of desecrating Jewish sites continued. The situation of the Roma continues to play a major role in the political and public discourse as anti-Roma manifestations, including acts of violence, have continued.

THE JEWISH COMMUNITY

Slovakia has some 3,000 Jews out of a total population of 5.35 million. The largest Jewish community is in the capital Bratislava; smaller communities exist in Kosice, Presov, Komarno and Dunajska Sreda.

The Central Union of Jewish Religious Communities in the Slovak Republic is the main communal organization. In general, the Jewish community is an aging one; however, there are signs of a revival of interest in Jewish roots among many of the younger generation. Various Jewish organizations organize programs and activities in Bratislava and in smaller cities.

The Museum of Jewish Culture, directed by Pavol Mestan, has an impressive collection displaying the rich Jewish heritage of the country. It organizes cultural and educational activities, as well as seminars for teachers, and prepares documentary films featuring Holocaust survivors. It also issues a variety of publications and books on Jewish topics, and takes a leading role in Holocaust-related education and activities in Slovakia. (Prof. Mestan provided the information on Slovak publications mentioned in this report.)

POLITICAL ORGANIZATIONS AND ANTISEMITIC ACTIVITY

The Extreme Right

Slovakia's entry into the EU in May 2004 changed the internal and external status of the country, which in several years has advanced rapidly from what was considered a "second rate" state of the former communist bloc to the elite club of the first eight former communist states to join the EU. However, as in other post-communist states, this achievement has been overshadowed by the impact of the 2008 economic crisis and the economic downturn preceding it, which has enabled extremists to intensify their propaganda and activities.

Slovakia's new standing has hardened the position of extremist parties toward the EU as well as toward other European structures of

integration. The small extreme left and the more vocal extreme right, as well as some populist groups, have warned against the "march of globalization." The Roma have become the chief target of violence and hatred of the extreme right, with the support of other segments of society, prompting widespread discussions in the Slovak media and debates in various forums and conferences.

In the June 2006 general elections, the first since the country joined the EU, the Slovak National Party (SNS), long branded an "ultra-nationalist, right-wing extremist" organization, won 11.73 percent of the vote and joined the new coalition government led by Robert Fico's Smer Party. Although a self-declared "center-left" party, Smer was suspended from membership of the Party of European Socialists (PES), on the grounds that its coalition partner the SNS "incites or attempts to stir up racial or ethnic prejudices and racial hatred." It should be noted, however, that since joining the coalition, the SNS has had no record of antisemitic pronouncements. However, it has continued its strongly nationalist line, and rising tensions with neighboring Hungary over the issue of the status of the Hungarian minority in Slovakia has largely been attributed to this party. The SNS was criticized by Roma activists and Slovak liberals after it blamed the Roma for aggravating Slovak-Roma relations.

The Matica Slovenska group has traditionally been behind the campaign to rehabilitate Jozef Tiso, head of the wartime fascist regime, which was responsible for the deportation of the country's Jews to the death camps. Other ultra-nationalist organizations include the fringe Slovak People's Party (SLS), which spreads xenophobic hate messages, and the Slovenska Pospolitost (Slovak Community), formed in 1996 by skinheads and other right-wing extremists. Like other organizations of similar ilk, Slovenska Pospolitost publishes bulletins of its activities on the website of the UK-based International Third Position.

The organizational structure and modus operandi of Slovenska Pospolitost bring to mind the wartime fascist Hlinka Guard. For instance, it has adopted the anthem of the Tiso-led state. The movement organizes yearly marches in March commemorating the anniversary of the establishment of that state. The aim of the movement is to "rid ourselves once and for all of enemies and parasites" and its motto is "For the good of the Slovak family, as Jozef Tiso wanted."

Slovenska Pospolitost registered as a political party in January 2005, prompting calls from liberal segments of Slovak society, and later on in the year, from Prime Minister Robert Fico, for its outlawing (see, for example, *Slovak Spectator*, August, 6, 2009). The movement's bulletin praises the wartime state and displays its symbols. It opposes the EU and

accuses the Jews of harming Slovakia's interests, often warning, "Don't let Slovakia be circumcised."

There has been a shift in the public discourse since Slovakia's entry into the EU and the intensification of extremist activity as a result of the economic crisis, with growing recognition that "neo-Nazis" – usually the term used by the Slovak media – are not "abstract groups and persons, representing a sub-culture that eventually will die out," but are "teachers, computer experts, shopkeepers, musicians. They are not just unemployed ... alienated youth, they might be your neighbors, even colleagues. Human rights activists have been warning that the neo-Nazi movement is real." This analysis, published by the *Slovak Spectator* on October 15, 2007, now typifies the discourse in Slovak society. Such recognition seems to indicate that Slovak society and the authorities will eventually take a firmer stand against manifestations of extremism and racism.

As in other central European countries such as Poland, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Germany and Austria, Slovak extremists have been expanding their international contacts, with cross border visits, cooperation, rock concerts marked by racist symbols and lyrics, and joint marches. Such activity has no doubt been facilitated by the EU's open borders. Serbia, Ukraine and Russia were also on the travel itinerary of Slovak extremists, according to the *Slovak Spectator* (October 15, 2007). In November 2007 the Czech authorities banned a neo-Nazi march through the historic Jewish quarter in Prague in which neo-Nazis from several countries, including Slovakia, were about to participate (*Ha'aretz*, November 9, 2007).

The country recorded a low level of antisemitic activity in 2007–8, although the trend of desecrating Jewish sites continued. In early 2008, the memorial to the famous 19th century rabbi Chatam Sofer in Bratislava was damaged; three persons were arrested in April. Some incidents of verbal abuse were recorded against Jewish persons

The Situation of the Roma

The situation of the Roma continues to play a major role in the political and public discourse as anti-Roma manifestations, including acts of violence, have continued. A major aspect of the problem is the degree of their integration or rather non-integration in society. Numbering 400,000–700,000, most live in squalid rural settlements and urban ghettos. Many were moved into segregated areas. Since Slovakia's entry into the EU, and even before, Slovakia was under international pressure supported by local human rights groups to work toward the integration of the Roma. However, the relocation of Roma families into areas

branded as "ghettos," outside or on the periphery of towns caused further segregation. In light of acts of violence and other offenses – committed by Slovaks against Roma and vice versa – the dialogue between the communities has become more difficult. One observer noted that "politicians rarely make openly racist statements about Roma, but on the other hand, politicians rarely defend the Roma" ("Anti-Roma Racism in Former Czechoslovakia," www.errc.org, Washington, DC, June 9, 2009). An interesting angle of the anti-Roma xenophobia is the identification by Slovak nationalists of Hungarian-speaking Roma, as "yet another type of Hungarian," a paradoxical perception, since the Roma face a very difficult situation in Hungary, with rising incidents of violence.

On the governmental level, the Plenipotentiary Government Office for Roma Communities is a "representative consultative body of the Government which seeks to address the problem of the Roma communities in Slovakia" (www.romovia.vlada.gov.sk/).

ATTITUDES TOWARD THE HOLOCAUST AND THE NAZI ERA

As in Romania with the Antonescu cult (see *Romania*), right-wing extremists (including neo-fascists, antisemites and populists) continued their campaign to rehabilitate the wartime Tiso regime. Their attempts to rewrite history took place in a variety of forums, such as "scientific" meetings and publications. The works of leading revisionists were especially praised in the bi-weekly *Kultura*, which identifies with the Slovak fascist state and its Christian ideals. Its pseudo-intellectual discourse is described by the editors as a forum "dedicated to ethics."

In 2007, Durica published three position papers of international authors on Tiso and war-time Slovak history – *Jozef Tiso in the Eyes of Non-Slovak Authors* (Bratislava: LUC, 2007; in Slovak). The chapters in this collection continue the myth that Tiso saved Jews, with supposedly thousands of them being put on a "non-persecution list." For example, Rino Cammilleri, in his "Jozef Tiso-Slovak, the Martyr" (originally published by Catholic Studies, Milan), refutes any comparison between Tiso's regime and other forms and movements of European fascism, such as Oswald Mosley's British Union of Fascists, the Belgian Rexist movement or the Hungarian Arrow Cross. Tiso is presented as a martyr, with his final testament: "I die as a defender of Christian culture against civilization."

In another publication, *Getting to the Truth* (Bratislava: LUC, 2007), Durica, answers at length criticism by the Historical Institute of the Slovak Academy of Sciences of his book, *History of Slovakia and the Slovaks*. Adopting the well-known revisionist approach, he claims that

Tiso "saved" Jews and that his regime was not fascist, thus distorting the real events of the Holocaust in Slovakia. (For further information on attitudes toward the Holocaust in Slovakia, see the Stephen Roth Institute database.)

Another pro-Tiso Slovak who distorts the Holocaust is S. Majek, whose *Dr. Jozef Tiso, Priest and President* (Bratislava: Eko-konzult, 2008; in Slovak) defends the Tiso regime and its legacy, claiming they sought to solve the Jewish problem with justice, in a "Christian" spirit. The book also focuses on his trial and execution by the Communists.

Another myth perpetuated in Slovakia and elsewhere in the region, is the alleged role, of Jews and Freemasons in particular, in the destabilization of Slovakia and Slovak interests. Durica's book, *The Freemasons Yesterday and Today* (Bratislava: LUC, 2007) claims that in the interwar period Slovak Jews accounted for 70–80 percent of Freemason lodges; the rest were Czechs, Hungarians, Germans and only a tiny minority of Slovaks.

The myth of a world wide conspiracy also appeared in another book on the Freemasons, Peter B. Podolsky's *Freemasons – Misfortune of Our Age* (Bratislava: Magnificat, 2007). Freemasonry is presented as an occult, anti-Christian and Satanist cult, manipulated by Judaism. The author is careful not to equate Jews collectively with the Freemasons, rather Jewish ideals and leaders of Jewish origin, stating that "like most Christians, most Jews suffer at the hands of the Freemasonry's command junta." Freemasons, according to Podolsky, are all powerful: they installed the communist regimes, but it was also in their interests to bring them down. They are behind the UN and the EU, and their present goal is to "wipe out the Catholic Church." He emphasizes the large number of Jews among Freemasons, including in leading positions, noting that as early as 1843 Jews from Germany were present in US Masonic lodges, and that in pre-World War I Slovakia under Hungarian rule, most active members were Jews.

Among the periodicals covering issues linking the past to the present from a pro-Tiso perspective is the monthly *Pravo naroda* (Rights of the Nation), mouthpiece of the Slovak Awakening Movement (Slovenske hnutie obrody – SHO), founded in 2001, with a reported circulation of 1,600 copies. This nationalist monthly opposes the EU and NATO and praises Tiso's legacy, while downplaying or denying the Holocaust and the impact of antisemitism in Slovakia (see, for example, its January 2007 issue). It came to media attention in 2007 when the state supported and largely funded the nationalist heritage organization Matica Slovenska, which began publishing its news and activities bulletin as a supplement

of *Pravo Naroda*. Furthermore *Pravo Naroda* and *Matica Slovenska* share the same website (see *Slovak Spectator*, February 5, 2007).

While the paper attempts to refute the image of SHO as an extremist movement, it continues to use arguments characteristic of the revisionist camp – denial of the Holocaust in the case of Slovakia, the claim that the Tiso regime was not involved in crimes against the Jews, and that others who committed crimes against Jews, such as the Hungarians, were also innocent. The paper does mention the suffering of the Jews at the hands of the Nazis, maintaining that the latter were responsible for the crimes they carried out. It also emphasizes that Hitler carried out a "holocaust" against the Slavs, and that millions of Russians and Poles were killed by the Nazis, implying that western behavior enabled the Nazis to target the Slavs.

Such publications continue the revisionist, pro-Tiso trend of almost two decades, fueling Slovak extremism. While its propagators are careful to keep their arguments within the bounds of the law, this approach not only encourages antisemitism, but in defending Tiso's legacy and denying the Holocaust and the true character of the regime, it hinders Slovak society's attempts to face its own history.

RESPONSES TO ANTISEMITISM AND RACISM

Members of the Jewish community, together with liberal and democratic forces, have been actively involved in the campaign against rehabilitating the Tiso regime.

Several events commemorating the beginning of the transports to the death camps from Slovakia on March 25, 1942 took place in 2007–8. Traditional memorial services were held in Nitra, Kosice and Poprad, the starting points of the first transport of unmarried girls. Such public events are usually covered by the media, and institutions such as the Museum of Jewish Culture and organs of the Jewish community also publicize, and take a leading part in, organizing them.

Deputy Prime Minister Dusan Caplovic was very active in condemning any type of extremist activities. For example, supporting a ban against the *Slovenska Pospolitost* (see above), he said, "Zero tolerance should be used against any manifestation of extremism, racism, xenophobia or intolerance."

Excellent relations between Israel and Slovakia contribute to the development of joint plans for programs in both countries to assist educators from Slovakia teach the subject of the Holocaust. As a result, Slovakia became a member of the Task Force for International Cooperation on Holocaust Education, Remembrance and Research in late 2005. In 2008 the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Slovak Republic

published a review of Slovakia's activities in commemorating and teaching the Holocaust since joining the Task Force.

Slovakia took an active part in the events and activities of the international project "Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005–2015," supported by the EU, government agencies and NGOs. Its representative participated in the XIIIth International Steering Committee in June 2008, in Budapest, where regional and all-European representatives discussed the situation facing the Roma and their inclusion in society.

CIS and Baltic States

BALTIC STATES

REPUBLIC OF LITHUANIA

The Jewish Community

There are about 6,000 Jews in Lithuania (out of total population of 3.5 million), most of whom live in Vilnius (Vilna), the capital. The Jewish Community of Lithuania is the umbrella organization of Lithuanian Jewry. A Jewish secondary school and kindergarten operate in Vilnius while other towns have Jewish Sunday schools. The community in Vilnius publishes the monthly *Jerusalem of Lithuania* in Lithuanian, Russian, Yiddish and English. The Jewish community building in Vilnius houses the State Jewish Museum, the Israel Center of Culture and Arts, the Center of Yiddish Culture and Music, and the Zalman Reizen Foundation which supports Jewish culture, education and science. The town of Trokai has a museum of the Karaite community.

Antisemitic Manifestations

Several buildings of the Jewish community were vandalized. During the weekend of August 9–10, swastikas and other antisemitic graffiti were painted on the Jewish community building in Panevezys, while swastikas, Stars of David on gallows and the slogan "Juden raus" appeared on the Jewish community building in Vilnius. In late August, Israeli tourists discovered swastikas and the slogan "Jews – out" on the fence of the Jewish community building in Klaipeda, as well as at the local Jewish cemetery. On September 24, an Israeli flag placed on the building of the Jewish community in Klaipeda, alongside a Lithuanian flag, was set alight.

Two cases of desecration of Holocaust memorials were recorded in 2008. In May there was an attempt to set alight the Holocaust memorial in Vernikai forest, where the Nazis murdered 1,446 Jews from nearby towns, while on October 16 antisemitic graffiti was painted on the Holocaust memorial near the village of Pluskiai, and parts of the memorial were broken.

Complaints were filed in all cases and police investigations were launched, but no perpetrators were caught.

At the annual festival in Vilnius held in early February 2008 and which traditionally takes place on Ash Wednesday (during the seventh week before Easter), some participants were dressed as peddlers in stereotypic Jewish clothes and grotesque masques, beards and ear locks and spoke with "Jewish" accents. Imitating Halloween-style trick-or-

treating, two children dressed in horns and tails knocked on the door of Simonas Gurevicius, executive director of the Jewish community of Lithuania, and when he opened it they sang in Lithuanian: "We're little Lithuanian Jews/We want blintzes and coffee/If you don't have blintzes/Give us some of your money." Several festival participants also masqueraded as gypsies, wearing gaudy makeup, holding babies and asking for money.

On March 11, 2008 (Lithuanian Independence Day) about 200 skinheads held an unauthorized demonstration in the center of Vilnius. They shouted antisemitic and racist slogans such as "One, Two, Three, Lithuania is beautiful without Russians," "Juden Raus," "Kill this Jew" and "Lithuania for Lithuanians." The participants held banners with swastikas and skulls, as well as the flags of Lithuania and Latvia. Police videotaped the demonstration and opened an investigation. The meeting was condemned by Lithuanian Prime Minister Gediminas Kirkilas and President Valdas Adamkus, as well as by the Simon Wiesenthal Center. A public opinion poll published in a Lithuanian daily revealed that 32 percent of respondents approved of the antisemitic and racist slogans shouted during the march. Another 22 percent supported the march in general. In June 2008 an 18-year-old female and two 20-year-old males, who had participated in the demonstration, were convicted of incitement of ethnic hatred and fined 377–867 euros. In February 2009 one of the people arrested after the march was released since in the opinion of the court the slogan he shouted, "Lithuania for Lithuanians" was not racist. In early March 2009 a court sentenced another participant to home detention at night for shouting "A better Lithuania without Russians."

Attitudes toward the Holocaust and World War II

On February 27, 2008, Avner Shalev, chairman of Yad Vashem, handed a letter of protest to Lithuanian Foreign Minister Petras Vaitiekunas during his visit to Israel, after it became known that the Lithuanian General Prosecutor's Office had launched an investigation against Yitzhak Arad, former chairman of Yad Vashem and a historian of the Holocaust in Lithuania, for allegedly killing civilians while he was a partisan in Lithuania during World War II. The FEOR (Federation of Jewish Communities in Russia) also protested. On May 28, the Simon Wiesenthal Center sent an official protest to the Lithuanian authorities after it became known that two more investigations were being launched against former partisans – Fania Brantsovsky, a librarian at the Vilnius Yiddish Institute, and Rachel Margolis, founder of Vilnius's Jewish museum. In September the general prosecutor dropped the investigation

against Arad "because of insufficient data." There is no further information about the other investigations.

On July 4, the Lithuanian Court of Appeals ruled that Algimantas Mykolas Dailide (87) would not be imprisoned for collaborating with the Nazis during World War II and taking part in atrocities against the Jews, on the grounds of age and the fact that he posed no danger to society. The Appeals Court thus ratified the ruling of the Vilnius District Court handed down in 2006 (see *ASW 2006*).

On April 19, 2008, a large red cloth with a swastika was discovered on a deserted building in Klaipeda. It was removed by local firemen and the police opened an investigation. This was not the first time that a Nazi flag was displayed in Klaipeda around the time of Hitler's birthday.

The Nazi and Soviet regimes were equated in practice when on June 18 the Lithuanian parliament approved a law prohibiting the public display of Nazi and Soviet symbols, including portraits of Nazi and Soviet leaders, flags, hammer and sickle representations, swastikas, military symbols, uniforms and playing the Nazi and Soviet hymns.

In October 2008, during a meeting with Rabbi Andrew Baker, director of the International Affairs Department of the American Jewish Committee, Lithuanian Foreign Minister Petras Vaitiekunas promised that the government would solve the problem of Jewish property in Lithuania confiscated by the Nazis. The real estate will be used for religious, cultural, educational and charity purposes and Holocaust survivors will be recompensed.

Responses to Antisemitism

In October the Lithuanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the police announced that an investigation would be launched against Lithuanian showmen Algis Ramanauskas and Rimas Shapauskas for distributing a video on YouTube in which they are seen mocking Jews and even blowing them up. One of the episodes is entitled "Orbit – the Jews Are Being Smoked out of the Nest" and another, "Orbit – Jews are Eating Catholic children." The video was removed from the platform.

REPUBLIC OF LATVIA

The Jewish Community

There are about 15,000 Jews in Latvia (out of a total population of 2.2 million), most of whom live in the capital Riga. The leading Jewish organization is the Society for Jewish Culture. Synagogues are active in Riga, Daugavpils, Liepaja and Rezekne. There is a Jewish school where children learn Hebrew and Yiddish. The main Holocaust memorial in

Riga marks the site of the Choral Synagogue, in which hundreds of Jews were burnt to death in July 1941.

Political Background

Latvia is a parliamentary democracy, where the prime minister is head of the government and the president holds a primarily ceremonial role as head of state. The parliament (Saeima) has 100 members, elected by citizens on the basis of proportional representation for four years. The Saeima elects the president, who must be at least 40 years old. The president appoints the prime minister, who appoints the other ministers. Latvia has a multi-party system and usually no party is able to gain power alone. While there is no official antisemitism or racism in Latvia, an extreme right-wing organization called All for Latvia (Visu Latvijai), which began as a political youth organization in 2000, became a political party in January 2006.

Racism

Members of "visible" minority groups claim they do not feel safe in many places, including the center of Riga and the old town, and especially at night, due to the increasingly aggressive behavior of youths often skinheads. The groups most vulnerable to such violence are those of African, Asian and Roma descent. No less worrying are reports that the police do not always behave appropriately when victims complain of racist attacks. In fact, there are reports of police harassment of minority members who came to police stations to file a complaint. According to a report issued for 2008, the Ombudsman's Office received 23 written and 34 oral complaints of ethnic and racial discrimination.

Antisemitic Manifestations

Two cases of desecration of Holocaust memorials were recorded: on February 27 swastikas and Stars of David were painted on the Holocaust memorial in Rumbula. More than 25,000 Jews from the ghetto of Riga were murdered there between November 30 and December 8, 1941 by the Nazis and their collaborators. On May 18, footprints were discovered on a Holocaust memorial in Riga.

It was discovered in April that *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion* and other antisemitic works by Russian authors were being sold freely in one of the biggest bookstores in Riga, Pa Rokai. Since there is no list of banned books in Latvia, it is practically impossible to take steps against such stores.

Attitudes toward World War II and the Holocaust

In late February 2008 the municipality of Riga announced that it had received several requests to allow events commemorating Latvian soldiers, the so-called legionaries who fought on the Nazi side during World War II against the Soviet Union. The main event, held on March 16, had earlier aroused the concern of Latvian Minister of Interior Marek Seglinsh. However, on that day, after a memorial service was held in a Riga church, about 1,500 participants, including, reportedly, several former German soldiers, marched through Old Riga and laid flowers at the Liberty Monument. An antifacist demonstration attended by about 200 people was held near the monument. Similar events have been held in Latvia every year on March 16 since 1994. The date marks the day in 1943 when the Latvian Waffen SS legion began to participate in battles against the Soviet army.

Responses to Racism and Antisemitism

On March 6, 2008 the regional court in Riga sentenced Andris Yordans to 18 months imprisonment for incitement of ethnic hatred. In February 2007 he attended a discussion titled "The Problems of Nazism, Neo-Nazism and Xenophobia in Latvia," where he announced that he was a neo-Nazi and that "the neo-Nazi idea is the only one that helps a person to live a full life." He also spoke in favor of ethnic cleansing, claiming it was an "ideal possibility" for Latvia. According to Yordans, Roma and Jews "are not human beings."

REPUBLIC OF ESTONIA

The Jewish Community

About 2,500 Jews live in Estonia (out of a population of 1.3 million), mostly in the capital Tallinn. The Jewish Community of Estonia is the umbrella organization of Estonian Jewry. A Jewish Sunday school and a Jewish school for 1st–12th grades have operated in Tallinn since the early 1990s. Until the end of 2006 the synagogue in Tallinn was located in a small building that had been adapted for the purpose (the original synagogue was destroyed during the Holocaust). A new synagogue was opened in May 2007, financed by local and foreign donations. On December 17, 2008, a Jewish museum was inaugurated in Tallinn. The ceremony was attended, among others, by Mayor Edgar Savisaar, Estonia's Chief Rabbi Shmuel Kot and leaders of the Jewish community. The museum, which shows the history of Estonia's Jewry since 1828, also has an archive.

Attitudes toward World War II

In July 2008 Estonian SS veterans held their annual meeting in Sinimäe, near the Russian border. It was attended by MP Trivimi Velliste and Regional Governor Veikko Lukhalaid, as well as SS veterans from Norway and Denmark. Velliste called on the Estonian parliament to recognize the Estonian SS soldiers as liberators.

In September, a calendar entitled "Eesti Leegioni kalender 09" (Calendar of Estonian Legions 09) went on sale in book stores in Estonia. The calendar contained 12 posters from World War II calling for recruits to the Estonian legions (which collaborated with the Nazis during World War II and numbered about 80,000). The calendar was condemned by the Jewish Community of Estonia and the Union of Camp Prisoners. In November the calendar was still on sale.

BELARUS

Belarus witnessed a number of desecrations of synagogues and Holocaust memorials in 2008. In October, President Alexander Lukashenko attended the annual ceremony commemorating the 65th anniversary of the liquidation of the Minsk ghetto for the first time.

THE JEWISH COMMUNITY

There were 29,000 Jews in Belarus (out of a population of about 9 million), according to the last census to have been carried out in Belarus, in 1999. Local Jewish organizations claim there are presently 50,000 Jews in the country, while the Jewish Agency estimates that about 70,000 people in Belarus are entitled to immigrate to Israel.

The Jewish Religious Union, Chabad Lubavich, and Reform Judaism represent the Jewish religion. The Karlin religious community in Pinsk runs a synagogue and boarding schools. The Union of Jewish Organizations and Communities, headed by Leonid Levin, has branches in many cities and publishes the monthly *Aviv*. Other Jewish publications in Belarus are *Berega* (a monthly published by the Jewish Religious Union), *Gesher* (Bobruisk Jewish community) and *Karlin* (Pinsk Jewish community). The annual journal *Mishpokha* is issued in Vitebsk. Other Jewish organizations in Belarus are the Union of Former Ghetto and Concentration Camps Inmates, the Union of World War II Veterans, the Holocaust Foundation, the Maccabi sports club and Chesed, a charitable organization that provide services such as food, homecare and medical treatment in many cities.

The Museum of History and Culture of Belarusian Jews was opened in Minsk in 2002. It organizes educational events and engages in teaching and researching the Holocaust and the history and culture of the Jewish people. Several Sunday schools are run by the Union of Jewish Organizations and Communities and the Jewish Agency. There are also two Reform Jewish Sunday schools (in Bobruisk and Grodno) and one Sunday school for Jewish deaf children. The Jewish Religious Union supports B'nei Akiva schools in Minsk; Chabad has two elementary schools (in Minsk and Bobruisk).

No Jewish school, newspaper or cultural establishment is subsidized by the state budget. Nor is any air time on radio or television allocated to the Jewish minority. There is no Jewish publishing house, and in academic, referential and educational literature the history of the Jews in Belarus, including the Holocaust, is minimalized (for an outline of the political structure and government policy in Belarus, see *ASW 2007*). In

July 2008 a new Yiddish-Belarusian dictionary, financed by private donations, was published for the first time in 76 years.

THE POLITICAL SITUATION

As a result of the global financial crisis in 2008, Belarus began to drift away from Russia and look to the West to help its collapsing economy. For example, in late 2008 Belarus joined the Eastern Partnership program of the European Union, dedicated to establishing an economic and strategic partnership between the EU and the European and Caucasian parts of the former Soviet Union without their becoming members of the EU.

The opposition in Belarus is very weak and unable to serve as an alternative to the existing government. Any attempts to garner wide public support have so far failed.

ANTISEMITIC MANIFESTATIONS

While as in previous years, no assaults on Jews were recorded in Belarus in 2008, there were at least two attacks on synagogues: on May 28, 2008 the slogan "Yid – out," and drawings of a swastika and a person throwing a Star of David into the garbage were painted on a building in Borisov where the local synagogue and Jewish community center are located; and on December 20, a group broke into the building housing the Bobruisk synagogue, entered one of the storage rooms on the second floor and set the place on fire. No one was injured. The mayor ordered security to be reinforced in the vicinity of the synagogue and the local Jewish Or Avner School. Two Holocaust memorials were desecrated: on February 10, flowers and wreaths at the Holocaust memorial in Brest were set alight. This was the third attack on it in two years (see *ASW* 2007). Some 34,000 Jews were murdered in Brest during the Holocaust. On April 20 (Hitler's birthday) the Holocaust memorial in Slutsk was defaced with dozens of swastikas and the number 88 (representing "Hail Hitler"). City services helped to clean the memorial which marks the spot where in 1941 the Nazis shot and burned to death 3,000 Jews. In none of those incidents were the perpetrators caught. It should be noted that no information is available about neo-Nazi groups in Belarus.

Antisemitic graffiti appeared also on non-Jewish facilities. In February swastikas were painted at several places in Homel, including the Palace of Culture, a newspaper kiosk and the local market; on June 4, "Stop Jew" and a crossed out Star of David were reported on a wall in the center of Minsk; and in October graffiti reading "Nazi," together with Nazi symbolic numbers, appeared in an underground passage in Vitebsk. Two months later the graffiti was still there.

The only notable reaction to Operation Cast Lead in Belarus was that of Mufti Ismail Voronovich, head of the Muslim Spiritual Directorate of Belarus, who in early January 2009 submitted a letter to Israel's ambassador to Belarus, Zeev Ben-Arie, labeling Israel's actions "a genocide of the Palestinian people" and "crimes against humanity," and demanding an immediate end to "the murder of the peaceful population."

ATTITUDES TOWARD THE HOLOCAUST AND THE NAZI ERA

Both negative and positive tendencies in attitudes toward the Holocaust were observed during 2008. In March, during a session in Minsk of the Coordination Council of the Republic of Belarus which discussed approving a memorial to Holocaust victims in Vitebsk, one of the participants, a Belarusian sculptor said: "Until when will the Jews exaggerate their tragedy? There was no Holocaust. This must be stopped." The memorial was approved.

In April Leonid Levin, head of the Union of Belarusian Jewish Associations and Communities, announced that local Jewish organizations had asked the Belarus government to establish a national Holocaust memorial day, such as October 21, 22 or 23 – the period of the destruction of the Minsk ghetto. However, the response was that there was no need since there were several international Holocaust days, although even January 27, the UN-sanctioned Memorial Day, has not been officially adopted in Belarus.

On the positive side, several events connected to commemoration are worth mentioning. On May 22, a memorial park was inaugurated in Dokshitsi, Vitebsk region, on the site of the former Jewish cemetery. About 2,800 local Jews, including children, were murdered by the Nazis on this and the following days in 1942. The original memorial was destroyed by the Soviets in 1965. The initiative to restore it came from the town authorities.

In June 2008, for the fourth time in recent years, the Jewish community of Mogilev asked the city authorities for permission to establish a Holocaust memorial (financed by private donations) on the site of the local ghetto, where more than 10,000 Jews were murdered by the Nazis. In August permission was finally granted.

Three events were connected to the 65th anniversary of the liquidation of the Minsk ghetto. On October 20, an annual ceremony was held at the Yama memorial complex in Minsk. The ceremony was attended for the first time by President Alexander Lukashenko, who said that "[only] a small part of Belarusian Jews survived... They were killed merely because they were Jews." He also declared that a memorial would

be established at the site of the Maly Trastsianets death camp, where thousands of Jews and others were murdered by the Nazis. "The new generations have not forgotten what happened in the middle of the last century... We are full of determination to counteract any manifestations of Nazism and religious intolerance," the president declared.

On October 21, the Belarus Ministry of Communication issued a stamp entitled "In Memory of Holocaust Victims." The ministry also issued a First Day Cover marking the 65th anniversary of the liquidation of the Minsk ghetto.

On October 24, Minister of Defense Leonid Maltsev awarded medals for courage and heroism to 21 heads of groups in the Jewish antifascist resistance in the Minsk ghetto during World War II (the list of underground members contains a total of 317 names). The medals were transferred to the Museum of the History and Culture of Belarus Jews in Minsk. After locating their descendants, the museum held a ceremony on November 25 during which the medals were presented.

RESPONSES TO RACISM AND ANTISEMITISM

As noted, and as in previous years, no perpetrators of antisemitic incidents were caught and/or tried. On June 22, during a meeting in Brest between Russian President Dmitry Medvedev and Belarus President Alexander Lukashenko, both leaders condemned "any attempt at rewriting history and revision of the results of World War Two." They said that "in other countries, Britain for example, Nazi criminals are arrested, not justified." The condemnation came in response to the attempts of Ukraine and the Baltic States to claim that they had suffered equally under the Soviets and the Nazis and to rehabilitate local nationalists who collaborated with the Nazis during the war.

In December a regional court in Minsk ruled that 13 books published by the Khristianskaia Initsiatsiva publishing house (see *ASW* 2005, 2006 and 2007) were extremist and antisemitic. Among other things, the books call for an armed struggle against Jews and insult the Catholic Church. The publishing house appealed the verdict in January 2009; however, the Minsk City Court ratified it in early March.

In May 2008 about 2000 members of the Belarusian Protestant community held a special prayer for the "Jewish people and peace in Israel," to mark the 60th anniversary of the establishment of the State of Israel. Father Oleg Akulenko explained that "the Bible says that every Christian has to pray for Israel and the Jewish people" and that "the 60th anniversary of Israel is a time to confess persecutions, oppressions and lack of respect for the Jewish people that took place in the past."

MOLDOVA

Two violent antisemitic incidents were recorded in 2008, both in the unrecognized republic of Transnistria. While Israel's war in Gaza in late December/early January 2009 triggered almost no increase in antisemitic manifestations, antisemitic remarks appeared on some internet forums.

THE JEWISH COMMUNITY

The Jewish population in Moldova is 13,000 (based on the 2004 population census) out of a population of approximately 4.3 million. While the mixed marriage rate has always been high, local Jews have strong links to the Moldovan Jewish Diaspora in Israel, the US and Germany. The Jews live mostly in Chisinau, the capital of Moldova, and in the second largest town Beltsy, in northern Moldova.

The main Jewish organizations are the Association of Jewish Organizations and Communities of Moldova and the Jewish Congress of Moldova. Others are the Union of Jewish Organizations of Chisinau, the Dor-le-Dor Charity Foundation, the Society of War Veterans, the Khava women's organization and the Association of Jewish Prisoners of Ghettos and Concentration Camps, as well as branches of the international student organization Hillel and the Maccabi movement.

About a dozen Jewish Chabad-Lubavitch communities operate in Moldova, headed by the chief rabbi of the country. There are also a Chabad-Lubavitch kindergarten, an Agudat Yisrael yeshiva, several Jewish schools and a Jewish pedagogic women's college in Chisinau, as well as the Enlightenment University of Jewish Culture and a branch of the Open University of Israel. Two Jewish newspapers are published: *Evreiskoe Mestechko* (Jewish shtetl) and *Istoky* (Roots).

A lengthy dispute between the Jewish community and the local business company Olmosdon was revived in 2008. The disagreement concerns the right to leave a monument to Jewish victims murdered in 1941 at the old Jewish cemetery in Chisinau versus building a car trading company. Construction work was halted in 2006, but restarted in 2008. Following an appeal by the Jewish community to the authorities and to President Vladimir Voronin, the work was again stopped.

POLITICAL BACKGROUND

Since the inception of independence in 1991, and even earlier, there have been debates and controversies concerning Moldovan identity. Two rival models of identity exist in Moldova today, Moldovanism and pan-Romanianism. Ethnic and national minorities made up 22 percent of Moldova's population, according to the 2004 population census (75.8 per

cent of the population considered themselves ethnic Moldovans, while 2.2 percent stated they were ethnic Romanians).

Supporters of Moldovanism claim that Moldova had a different historical path from Romania and its population did not participate in the process of construction of a modern Romanian identity. Their main goal is to maintain Moldova as an independent state and to stress the multiethnic character of the country.

Supporters of pan-Romanianism focus on ethnic and linguistic ties with Romania. They deny a specific history of Moldova and the diversity of its population, and believe the state should undergo a process of Romanization in order to achieve a homogeneous national culture. An important objective of pan-Romanianism in Moldova is to increase cultural links with Romania as a step toward forming a political union. Pan-Romanianism remains a hegemonic ideology in universities and the school system and among a large part of the humanist intelligentsia. The pan-Romanian version of identity, which has been dominant in Moldova since the early 1990s, excludes minority narratives, such as Holocaust history. The Moldovan version of identity is more open to minority narratives, including Holocaust history, and is well accepted among minorities. A pro-Moldovan identity historian Sergei Nazaria, for example, is author of the book *Holocaust in Moldova* (see below).

The Communist Party, which came to power in 2001, fostered an inclusive civic Moldovan identity. In addition, in 2001 the law on national minorities was adopted and in 2003 Moldova was officially declared a multiethnic state. The initiative was enthusiastically supported by ethnic and national minorities in Moldova, including the Jewish community; however it was harshly opposed by pro-Romanian oriented humanist intelligentsia and some non-governmental organizations. Jewish education in Yiddish was guaranteed and the issue of Holocaust memory began to enter the public discourse, too.

If during the period of the Soviet Union the issue of the Holocaust in Moldova was silenced, then in the immediate post-Soviet period, Holocaust "revisionism" became a tacitly accepted mainstream view. In recent years, debates about the Holocaust have intensified, although denial of the Romanian Holocaust remains firmly entrenched in mainstream consciousness. Since the beginning of 2000, efforts have been made both at the governmental and non-governmental levels to initiate commemoration of the Holocaust.

EXTREMIST AND ANTISEMITIC GROUPS

At least two antisemitic nationalist Legionnaire groups deriving from Romania's wartime fascist antisemitic Iron Guard exist in Moldova. The

Moldovan branch of the New Right organization Noua Dreapta (ND) maintains close contact with its Romanian counterpart. In 2008 a Romanian delegation of the ND, among them its leader Tudor Ionescu, visited various locations in Moldova, including Chisinau, Orhei and Soroca, to evaluate their activities and strengthen contacts there. ND's leader in Moldova Sergiu Bacalov is employed at the history department of the Moldovan Academy of Sciences.

The Legionnaire group headed by Sergiu Lascu organized an annual gathering on Victory Day, celebrated in Moldova on May 9, at the cemetery where Romanian army soldiers from World War II are buried. The pro-Iron Guard *Obiectiv: Legionar* has become available in Moldova and is distributed during such gatherings.

While no political party has a clear racial or antisemitic agenda, several nationalist parties, such as the National Liberal Party (NLP) headed by Vitalia Pavlicenco, the European Action Movement headed by historian Anatol Petrencu, and the Liberal Party headed by Mihai Ghimpu, include members with revisionist views. None of the three parties has seats in the parliament; however, in the 2007 local elections the Liberal Party received 18.31 percent in Chisinau municipality and 11 seats on the city council. The parties' ideology promotes Moldova's unification with Romania.

Pavlicenco and Petrencu are known as admirers of Romania's wartime fascist leader Ion Antonescu, who was responsible for the murder of many Jews and Roma during that period. They seek to imbue Moldova with a pan-Romanian ethnic identity and actively promote the cult of Antonescu, who, with his territorial claims, became an important symbol of pan-Romanian ideas. Anatol Petrencu, a nationalist pro-Romanian historian, has been accused repeatedly by other historians, as well as by the Jewish community, of distorting the Holocaust. In addition to justifying Antonescu's crimes and blaming the Germans alone for the Holocaust in some of his works, Petrencu also minimizes the number of victims. He founded the European Action Movement with the purpose of returning the "History of Romanians" course (which reflects an ethno-nationalist line that excludes minorities completely) to the school curriculum (see *ASW 2006* and *2007*).

With the date of the parliamentary elections announced for April 2009, all three parties and their leaders immediately became actively involved in the pre-election campaign, which was marked by antisemitic expressions. For example, the negative influence on Moldova of presidential advisers Oleg Reidman and Mark Tkachuk, with allusions to their allegedly Jewish roots or closeness to Jewish circles, was stressed by some politicians. Conspiracy theories relating to Tkachuk's "Jewishness"

were circulated on the online forums of various newspapers. Readers of the online version of a leading newspaper, the respected Russian-language *Moldavskie vedomosti* (Moldovan news), posted remarks such as, "Moldova is poor, because Jews rule Moldova today." Such comments were not deleted by moderators of the forums. The frequent visits of then Israeli MK Avigdor Lieberman, who was born in Moldova, also provoked such slurs.

Several large-circulation newspapers support the above-mentioned parties both officially and unofficially, including the political aspiration of Moldovan unification with Romania. *Literatura si Arta*, *Timpul de Dimineata* and *Glasul Natunii* publish articles containing veiled and explicit minority hatred and are notorious for idolizing Antonescu and whitewashing his crimes during World War II. For example, on November 27, *Literatura si Arta*, an unofficial media platform for Petrencu's European Action, published an article by professor of engineering Valeriu Dulgheru entitled "The De-Judaization of Bessarabian Politics." Attempting to distinguish between religious Judaism and "political Judaism," he used the word "Judaism" negatively in reference to various political manipulations on the Moldovan right-wing scene.

ANTISEMITIC MANIFESTATIONS

Violent Incidents

Two violent antisemitic incidents were recorded in 2008 (both in Transnistria): on April 19 (the eve of Adolf Hitler's birthday) four ancient tombstones at the Jewish cemetery in Grigoriopol were broken, while on September 6, the Holocaust memorial (erected in 2002) in Bendery was desecrated with swastikas and slogans such as "Death to the Jews," "The Holocaust is a Myth," and "Why do Jews have more rights than Russians?" The Jewish community asked the Transnistrian authorities to investigate; however, the perpetrators were never caught. Several days later the local Jewish community organized a seminar, with the participation of local authority representatives, students and journalists to discuss this particular case, as well as antisemitism in Transnistria in general and ways to combat it.

Transnistria, a largely-Russian-speaking, post-Soviet secessionist republic on the border with Ukraine, has equal representation of Russians, Ukrainians and Moldovans. Transnistria seceded from Moldova in 1990, in response to the growth of nationalism and fear of being united with Romania. Although independent *de facto*, Transnistria remains *de jure* part of Moldova.

Antisemitic Propaganda and Holocaust Distortion

While Israel's war in Gaza in late December/early January 2009 triggered almost no increase in antisemitic manifestations, antisemitic remarks were reported on some Moldovan internet forums during this period (see also *General Analysis*).

The most common form of antisemitism in Moldova is Holocaust distortion, linked to the issue of Romanian participation in World War II and the creation of a pan-Romanian ethnic identity (see also *ASW 2006* and *2007*). Holocaust distortion in various forms – from outright denial to relativization and trivialization – can be found in the academic, political and media discourse. Hardcore denial is easily identified by the Jewish community and the authorities and condemned, but rarely punished. Relativization and trivialization which is more typical in Moldova and the other post-Soviet republics, is more insidious and difficult to resist. For example, on June 24, *Literatura si Arta* published a provocative article, "From the History of the 'Partisan Movement' in Moldova," in which it referred to Romanian participation in World War II on the side of Nazi Germany as a "holy war."

Although Moldova has laws against discrimination of minorities and against hate speech in the media, it does not have a specific law against Holocaust denial. While neighboring Romania has taken some important steps at least on the official level in this area, such as the establishment of the Elie Wiesel Commission and recognition of the crimes of Nazi ally Ion Antonescu (see below), Moldova has not followed suit.

Antisemitism and Holocaust Denial on the Internet

One of the most popular youth internet resources in Moldova is curaj.net. It has a political forum and links to various nationalist websites such as romanism.net, which, among others, tend to stress the negative role of the Jews during communism.

Curaj.net belongs to Hyde Park, an NGO founded in 2003. An honorary member of Hyde Park, also known as a long-term apologist of Holocaust revisionism, is Bessarabian-French author and dissident from the Ceausescu period, Paul Goma (see below). During one broadcast in 2003, Hyde Park's founder Oleg Brega expressed regret that Hitler's plans for a "Final Solution" were not fully realized. The website promotes Goma's books.

On July 26, 2008, Hyde Park participated in a meeting in Chisinau Central Park devoted to the "67th anniversary of the liberation of Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina from the occupation of the Russian-Communist fascists." Participants held posters with photos of Antonescu and old maps of Greater Romania. They signed a declaration

stressing the importance of Romanian military involvement in World War II and describing both German Nazi and Romanian fascist front operations as liberation. The declaration demanded an immediate "union of the Romanian lands" and ended with the slogans "Long live the Romanian army! Freedom to Bessarabia! Ion Antonescu is the hero of all Romanians! Long live Greater Romania!" The declaration, photos and videos from the event are available on curaj.net, on Brega's personal website and on YouTube.

Some other Moldovan websites, such as forum.md and salut.md, often contain messages justifying and even praising the policy of Ion Antonescu toward Jews and Roma. It is believed that nationalist historians from Moldova, but not exclusively, use those internet forums for expressing their views, which they cannot present publicly.

RESPONSES TO ANTISEMITISM AND RACISM

Official and Public Responses

The Moldovan authorities, including President Vladimir Voronin and Speaker of the Moldovan Parliament Marian Lupu, participated, as usual, in commemorative events, including the events marking Victory Day and the 70th anniversary of Kristallnacht, where they officially condemned antisemitism and xenophobia in Moldova.

Jewish publications such as the *Jewish shtetl*, the youth newspaper *Puls* and the weekly *Saptamana* (Saturday) systematically monitor and condemn manifestations of antisemitism and xenophobia in Moldova. Organizations such as the African society *Fatima* and the Helsinki Citizens' Assembly, the main anti-racist organizations in Moldova, monitor racist manifestations and organize events to combat xenophobia and racism, such as the Football against Racism in Europe action week in October 2008.

The Higher Anthropological School in Moldova organized a summer school on hate speech in the media from June 29 to July 4 with the participation of foreign experts and Moldovan and foreign journalists.

In 2008, the director of the Moldovan Museum publishing house and member of the center-right alliance Moldova Noastra (Our Moldova), Yurii Kolesnik, was interrogated by the Office of the Public Prosecutor after the Jewish community lodged a complaint about publication of the antisemitic book *Red Week: 23 June-3 July 1940, or Bessarabia and the Jews* by Paul Goma. In *Red Week*, Goma, who is not a historian, argues, for example, that the Jews of Bessarabia and Bukovina (which today are a part of Moldova and Ukraine) who were murdered during the Holocaust, deserved their fate, because they were guilty of being Communists and carrying out atrocities against Romanians and Romanian soldiers. The

protest was made after the book was widely promoted and distributed at the annual book fair held at the Moldovan National Library in 2007 and then sold in Fat Frumos, a central bookshop in Chisinau. The book has since been banned in Moldova.

In its report on Moldova for 2008, the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance of the Council of Europe (ECRI) recommended that the Moldovan authorities monitor all instances of antisemitism and strengthen efforts to punish perpetrators.

Holocaust Commemoration

While Holocaust memorial events have traditionally taken place on the initiative of the Jewish community, steps have been taken by some non-Jewish organizations to commemorate the Shoah as part of the response to antisemitism and racism. Important work in commemorating the Holocaust has been done by the NGO Nemurire, founded in 2001 with the purpose of locating and marking all places where Jews and Roma were murdered during the fascist occupation of Moldova. Thanks to the initiative of this organization, for example, the street in the small Moldovan town of Edinets, where more than 100 Jews were murdered and buried in October 1941, was named after the victims. The contribution of local Moldovans in the villages to building such memorial places should be also stressed.

The 70th anniversary of Kristallnacht was commemorated by the Jewish community of Chisinau. The meeting which took place on November 10, 2008, at the memorial complex of the Chisinau ghetto, was attended by representatives of the local Jewish communities, foreign embassies and the authorities, as well as journalists. President of the Association of Jewish Prisoners of Ghetto and Concentration Camps Shaps Roif said the authorities should pay more attention to the problem of antisemitism in Moldova. "Unfortunately," he said, "in Moldova today some people, even those with academic titles in the history department of the Moldovan State University, engage in antisemitism and deny the Holocaust."

An international conference, "The Role of Historical Memory and Lessons of the Holocaust in the Education of Today's Youth," was organized by the Center for Training and Professional Careers, with the support of the American Jewish Committee. More than three hundred people attended, including students, teachers, scientists, representatives of Jewish organizations from Moldova, Israel, Romania and Ukraine, and representatives of the Moldovan government. Among the speakers were historian and Wiesel Commission member from Romania Lia Benjamin, director of the Ukrainian Centre for Holocaust Studies Anatoly

Podolsky, and Moldovan historian Sergei Nazaria, who published the first book on the Holocaust in Moldova with the support of the Jewish community in 2005.

In November 2008 a conference on different interpretations of history, including the issue of the Holocaust, was organized by Tiraspol University in Transnistria.

RUSSIAN FEDERATION

As in previous years, the year 2008 in Russia was marked by numerous incidents of vandalism of Jewish sites and property, as well as a few assaults on Jewish individuals. Many right-wing extremists were tried and punished for antisemitic and racist offenses, indicating an improvement in the authorities' response over previous years.

THE JEWISH COMMUNITY

About 230,000 Jews were living in Russia in 2002, according to the census of that year, out of a total population of about 144 million. However, the World Jewish Congress estimates there are some 450,000 Jews, while the Euro-Asian Jewish Congress reckons that 450,000-500,000 Jews are eligible to immigrate to Israel.

Jewish umbrella organizations in Russia are the Vaad of Russia (Federation of Jewish Organizations and Communities, FEOR) and the Russian Jewish Congress (REK). Communal religious organizations follow three trends: traditional Rabbinic Orthodoxy, Reform Judaism and Lubavitch Hasidim (Chabad). There is a Congress of Jewish Religious Communities and Organizations of Russia (KEROOR) and a World Congress of Russian Speaking Jewry, founded in 2002.

There are Jewish elementary schools, Sunday schools, pre-school education, religious high schools (yeshivas) and pedagogic colleges. Most schools are financed by the national budget and/or community organizations, the Jewish Agency, ORT or international religious organizations. Other institutions are the Russian-US Center for Bible and Jewish Studies attached to the Russian State Humanitarian University (which operates jointly with the Jewish Theological Seminary in NY), the Maimonides State Classical Academy, the S. Dubnov Higher School, the Department for Jewish Studies and Civilization at the Moscow State University, the 21st Century University, St. Petersburg Institute of Jewish Studies, and the Center for Bible and Jewish Studies at St. Petersburg State University. Holocaust studies are coordinated by the Russian Research and Educational Holocaust Center and Holocaust Foundation. The Jewish international youth organization Hillel has branches in several cities. Some of the Jewish communities and organizations issue newspapers and operate internet sites.

POLITICAL BACKGROUND AND EXTREMIST GROUPS

Two main events affected the country in 2008: the war in Georgia (August) and the presidential elections (March). The accession of Dmitrii Medvedev as president meant continuation of the policies of his

predecessor, Vladimir Putin, who became prime minister. Russia's hard-line policies toward the West and toward rival states reached a peak with the war in Georgia (see *Transcaucasia and Central Asia*). Following the war, Russia became even more at odds with the West and there was even talk of a return of the Cold War.

Russia was not immune to the effects of the global financial crisis in the second half of 2008; however, most of the damage was felt only in 2009.

Election Campaign

The presidential election campaign was marked by some antisemitic incitement in the media. The election committee of the Pskov region accused the Communist Party mouthpiece *Pskovskaia Iskra*, distributed in the city as part of the party's campaign, of inflaming ethnic hatred. The newspaper had published an article entitled "And Again the Eternal Yid," blaming the Jews for all Russia's problems since 1917.

In February 2008 extreme right-wing internet sites, such as that of the Movement against Illegal Immigration (MII), alleged that presidential candidate Dmitrii Medvedev was a clandestine Jew. Such claims were based mainly on his mother's maiden name (Shaposhnikova) and patronymic (Veniamin), which could indicate either Russian or Jewish roots.

The Extreme Right Scene

The year 2008 witnessed numerous manifestations of radical nationalism. The number of racially motivated crimes continued to be high. However, the public appeared to be losing interest in such crimes and the authorities preferred not to publicize incidents of racist violence. Extreme-right wingers use evasive tactics to avoid discovery, and there is a wide network of neo-Nazi groups that cooperate with each other, at least in the larger cities, and which are very successful in attracting young supporters.

Antisemitic slogans were reported at a number of anti-immigrant demonstrations. For example, on the eve of Hitler's birthday, April 19, some 400 extreme right-wing activists from the National Great Power Party of Russia and the neo-Nazi Slavic Union (Slavianskii Soiuz – SS), among others, demonstrated in a central Moscow square. In addition to placards against "Jewish fascism" and the "Jewish mafia," participants shouted "Russia for the Russians" and called on women to "guard the purity of your race." Olga Kasianenko (MII) urged Russians to arm themselves and defend their families. The police did not intervene.

In another such demonstration organized on May Day (May 1) by the MII, members of the Slavic Union and others shouted antisemitic and racist slogans, and distributed racist leaflets.

During a demonstration in Perm against illegal immigration held on November 30, participants shouted antisemitic insults such as "Glory to the Holocaust" and "Beat the Jews, save Russia." Yevdokim Kniazev, leader of the local branch of the MII, claimed afterwards that he had not heard any antisemitic insults during the demonstration.

The Muslim Community

According to recent estimates, there are about 20 million Muslims in Russia and Islam is the second most widely professed religion in the country. The majority are Sunni Muslims and only about 10 percent are Shi'ites. In several regions, such as Chechnya, there is a tradition of Sunni Sufism. A growing number of Russians have converted to Islam, and many of them participated in hostilities against Russian forces in North Caucasus. The main organization of the Muslim community is the Union of Muslims of Russia, represented politically by the Nur All-Russia Muslim Public Movement. The party's main goal is to defend the political, economic, and cultural rights of Muslims in Russia. The Islamic Cultural Center of Russia, established in 1991, includes a *madrassa* (religious school). The city of Kazan has a large Muslim population (the second largest after Moscow) and a Russian Islam University, where teaching is conducted in the Russian and Tatar languages. Copies of the Qur'an are readily available throughout the country and many mosques are being built.

The rapidly growing Muslim population, terrorist attacks and the continuing decline in the ethnic Russian population have caused a rise in xenophobia and islamophobia in Russia, with violent attacks against Muslims by Russian neo-Nazi skinheads becoming more frequent. Although Muslim leaders take part in inter-faith meetings with Jewish leaders, they frequently make anti-Zionist and anti-Israel statements.

During the launch of a book by Sergei Komkov, entitled *Wahabit* (about islamophobia in Russia), at the Moscow Independent Press Center held in March, invited speaker Mufti Nafigulla Ashirov, co-chairman of the Council of Muftis of Russia and chief mufti of the Russian Muslim community in Siberia, claimed that Zionism was "a cancerous tumor because Zionism is fascism." The statement was condemned by the Russian Jewish Congress, the Israeli ambassador to Russia, the Central Spiritual Muslim Board of Russia and others. Although FEOR announced it was suspending all contacts with the Council of Muftis, they were resumed after a meeting between

representatives of the two bodies. In early April, Visam Ali Bardvil, mufti of Karelia, announced that he agreed with Mufti Ashirov's statement.

ANTISEMITIC MANIFESTATIONS

Violence and Vandalism

The level of antisemitic activity in 2008 was similar to that of the previous year. Attacks against Jews are just a small part of a general atmosphere of intolerance in Russia. According to the Moscow Bureau for Human Rights, there were at least 293 racist attacks during 2008, with 122 dead and at least 380 wounded. The most frequent targets of such attacks are people of Central Asian origin.

Only in one of the four cases of assault on Jews recorded in Russia in 2008 were the perpetrators caught and tried. Mikhail Altshuler, a well known Jewish musician, was beaten and abused with antisemitic insults on November 22 by a three skinheads on the Moscow metro. Two of the attackers (16 and 17) were caught and in March 2009 a court gave them a warning and forbade them from appearing in public places for two years after 22:00 during the week and after 23:00 on weekends.

There were numerous, sometimes repeated, attacks on synagogues and Jewish centers, as well as desecrations of Jewish tombstones and Holocaust memorials. Some of the perpetrators were caught and tried. For example, on January 23, three 18-19-year-olds stormed into a synagogue in Nizhnii Novgorod, threw religious books out of the windows and beat the guard when he tried to stop them. Eight months later the windows of the same synagogue and those of the guard's cabin were broken. In late January, a group of ten people painted swastikas, the slogan "Jews leave Russia" and "Russia for Russians" on the building housing the synagogue and Jewish community center in Ulianovsk. They also threw antisemitic leaflets and shouted antisemitic insults. Four of them were arrested and in September they were convicted of incitement of ethnic hatred; two received prison sentences and the other two community service. On April 11, a group of 20-22-year-olds with Nazi tattoos painted a swastika and antisemitic insults on a synagogue in Orenburg. They were arrested in July and the police found extremist leaflets and other objects proving they belonged to a skinhead group. On November 2, a home-made bomb was left at the gate of a synagogue in Omsk. The perpetrator, a 20-year-old, called the police to tell them about the bomb. He admitted his guilt and said he had prepared the bomb according to instructions he had found on the internet. He was given a suspended sentence in April 2009.

Among the many cemetery desecrations, during the first week of May Jewish gravestones were broken at the Mariina Roshcha cemetery in

Nizhnii Novgorod. Several days later someone left a cell phone video at the local synagogue showing the culprits at work. The film was submitted to the police. Thirteen gravestones were again broken there later in the month. On May 14, dozens of Jewish gravestones were discovered broken at the Petrodvoretsk cemetery at the outskirts of St. Petersburg. The day after Jewish gravestones were smashed in June at the Krasnaya Etna cemetery in Nizhnii Novgorod, the police detained an 18-year-old male, two 14-year-olds and a 17-year-old female as suspects. The oldest, admitted that between May 25 and June 8 he had desecrated graves at the same cemetery several times. He had admitted that he did not like Jews and the prosecutors stressed that he had desecrated only Jewish graves and ignored others. In August 21, Jewish gravestones were broken in the same cemetery. Jewish community leaders in Makhachkala also discovered more than 80 gravestones smashed in two Jewish cemeteries in the city.

Two cases of desecration of Holocaust memorials were recorded. On International Holocaust Memorial Day, January 27, people attending a ceremony at the Holocaust memorial in Volgograd, erected only two months previously, discovered that graffiti insulting the dead had been painted on the obelisk and the word "Jews" on the marble board was damaged. The Holocaust memorial at the old Jewish cemetery in Kaliningrad was defaced with swastikas, antisemitic slogans and paint in October. In addition, on April 20 (Hitler's birthday), a portrait of Hitler, with "Hitler was right," was painted near a memorial plaque on the building in Moscow which housed the Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee during 1942-1945.

Many other Jewish facilities were vandalized in Russia during 2008 as well. For example: On May 9 (Victory Day), swastikas, "glory to Hitler," "Death to the Yids," "Yids to the oven," "Russia for Russians" and the letters "SS," were painted on the Jewish Culture and Charity Center in Tula. In another incident, swastikas were painted on the door of the apartment of Ervin Kirshtein, head of the Jewish community of Ivanovo, as well as at the entrance to the building. A few days earlier swastikas and antisemitic graffiti had appeared on many buildings in the city. Community leaders said the new incident may be a response to their complaints to the police about the previous incidents, although the police never caught the perpetrators.

Antisemitic Propaganda

As in previous years, virulently antisemitic expressions and neo-Nazi signs appeared in 2008 on the streets of various cities and towns. On the eve of Purim, March 19, for instance, dozens of antisemitic posters

appeared on buildings in Novosibirsk, calling on parents to protect their children before the Jewish holiday of Passover because "these disgusting people still engage in ritual practice to their gods. They kidnap small children and remove some of their blood in order to prepare their holy food – matza – and eat it during their Passover and throw the bodies onto garbage dumps." Similar posters reappeared on several buildings on April 14. In addition, an antisemitic poster was discovered in May at a bus station at the Shchukino region of Moscow, calling for the annihilation of the Jews and stating that all wealth was concentrated in Jewish hands and all problems were the fault of the Jews. A similar poster was reported in November at a bus station in Moscow.

In April, during a series of lectures for future teachers as part of the government-sponsored program "Basics of Religious Culture," Svetlana Shestakova, assistant professor of sociology at Tyumen State Oil-Gas University, stated that matza was "a Jewish Eucharist that uses a small quantity of blood of [Christian] Orthodox people whom they [the Jews] martyr... They use a special method for killing an Orthodox child or a saint, such as when the tsar's family was killed... That's why children sometimes go missing, it's the Jews."

In addition, the Murmansk newspaper *Poliarnaia Pravda* (24 January) published a quiz entitled "Are You a Cultured Person?" One of the questions was "Were there Jews in your bloodline?" According to the compiler of the quiz, if the answer is positive, "You should not be upset. You are a complete nobody, but you are adored." The local Jewish community sent a letter of protest to the newspaper and the deputy chief editor apologized.

Tracts such as *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, *Why We Hate the Jewish Mafia* and *Xenophobia or Self-Defense* were sold in central Moscow in July during an event commemorating Tsar Nicholas II and his family, who were murdered by the Bolsheviks 90 years earlier.

Attitudes toward the Holocaust

Evgenii Nikiforov, chairman of the Radonezh Orthodox Society of the Russian Orthodox Church, asserted in January that Russian students should not learn about the Holocaust of the Jews. Instead, he said, tolerance should be taught through the Russian tragedies of the 20th century, which he termed "the Russian Holocaust."

Reactions to Operation Cast Lead

The Russian authorities were restrained in their reaction to the conflict in Gaza, perhaps because during the period attention was concentrated on the gas crisis with Ukraine. Several anti-Israel demonstrations were held,

mostly by Muslim organizations, but also by the Communist Party. Islamic leaders compared the situation and events in Gaza with those of World War II, including the Holocaust and the siege of Leningrad (for further details, see *General Analysis*).

RESPONSES TO ANTISEMITISM

Official Activity

As in previous years, antisemitism (and xenophobia in general) were publicly condemned by the country's leaders. For example, during a meeting at the Ministry of Internal Affairs on February 6, then President Vladimir Putin said that nationalism and xenophobia are a "a time bomb ticking beneath our government" and must be "cut off at the root." Further, during a meeting with heads of diplomatic missions and Russian representatives abroad at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs offices in Moscow, on July 15, President Dmitrii Medvedev promised to counter any manifestations of neo-fascism, racial discrimination, nationalism, antisemitism and xenophobia, as well as "attempts to rewrite history and use it for the purpose of provoking confrontations and revanchism in world politics, and of revising the treaties ending World War II." On November 16, he sent a message to participants of a memorial event in Kaliningrad dedicated to the 70th anniversary of Reichskristallnacht, stating, among other things, that "we must not just remember the past, but also clearly realize what threats ethnic hatred and racist intolerance pose to the modern world."

On being asked about interethnic relations in Russia during a live TV broadcast on December 4, Prime Minister Vladimir Putin answered that Russia had become a great state only because of its "tolerant attitude toward the nations and ethnic groups of which it is composed. Russia will be able to stay a great state only if every nation and every small ethnic group feels at home in Russia. Those narrow minded, simply stupid, dull people who violate this principle, thinking they are acting in the interests of the Russian nation, are causing this nation irreparable harm."

On December 7, the Russian Jewish Congress initiated a Tolerance Day in Moscow, including a special evening attended by about 400 representatives of local student organizations of different nationalities. Viacheslav (Moshe) Kantor, head of the European Jewish Congress, said that this day showed "how important it is to develop interethnic consent in society... Tolerance is not just training and education for mutual respect, notwithstanding skin color. It is also a harsh attitude toward any display of ethnic intolerance."

Court Proceedings

Many perpetrators of antisemitic and racist incidents were caught and prosecuted, indicating an improvement in the authorities' response over previous years. For example, Moscow police announced that nine youths, members of the skinhead Ryno's Gang, were arrested on charges of establishing skinhead groups, murdering 20 people of Central Asian and Caucasian origin, 12 attempted murders and incitement of ethnic hatred in August-October 2007. The attacks were video-taped and posted on the internet. On December 2, the court convicted seven members of the gang, sentencing them from 6 to 20 years in prison.

In April the Cherepovets prosecutor's office opened an investigation into a library affiliated to the Russian Orthodox Church for screening several times during 2007 the film *Russia with a Knife in Its Back – Jewish Fascism and the Genocide of the Russian People*, which was banned by the Federal Registration Service for Extremism. In mid-April the librarian who screened the film, N. Yuganova, was fired. Her trial opened in September 2008 and in April 2009 she was sentenced by the Cherepovets City Court to 6 months community service and a fine. Dmitrii Kovaliov, owner of the Patriot store in Briansk, was fined 25,000 rubles for selling the film.

An Omsk Regional Court fined a local kiosk owner 2000 rubles for selling extremist materials, including CDs with the antisemitic movie *Der Ewige Jude* (The Eternal Jew), produced in 1939 in Nazi Germany. The movie was recognized by the court as extremist and added to the list of such materials banned in Russia.

A court in Chita convicted Alexander Yaromenko, editor of *Russkoe Zabaykale*, the newspaper of the local branch of the patriotic, pro-Orthodox Union of Russian People, of extremism for publishing antisemitic articles, and for asking among other things "To whom and why should we lie about the Holocaust?" or "What is the Holocaust?" The court ruled to confiscate the newspaper's property.

In November a Regional Court in Moscow classified the *Duel* newspaper as extremist and ordered it to be closed for publishing antisemitic articles. For instance, on July 4, 2006 it stated that Russia was ruled by kikes who want to continue "their domination over their Russian slaves." The newspaper's editor, Yuri Mukhin, was given a two year suspended sentence in mid-June 2009 for "publicly calling for extremist activity through the media."

The Novosibirsk regional court convicted Boris Mironov, former Russian minister of the press, of inciting ethnic hatred after he published two antisemitic articles in a 2003 election campaign newspaper (see *ASW* 2003/4). Mironov was released because of the statute of limitations.

Proceedings were also held against some inciters to extremism on the internet. The Kemerovo police charged Vyacheslav Spitsyn with incitement of ethnic hatred for posting articles on his internet blog calling for the killing of Jews and Muslims between June 2006 and February 2008. The police found antisemitic leaflets in his house. In February 2009 he was given a one year suspended sentence. Victor Rogozhin, member of the regional municipal committee of Akhtubinsk, Vladimir Naydanov, engineer, Valerii Salnikov, senior lecturer at an aviation university, and Sergei Pospelov, a civilian military worker, were accused of operating an antisemitic organization since 2002 and of calling in public for the deportation or annihilation of the Jews. In October 2008 Pospelov was sentenced to 3.5 years imprisonment, Salnikov – 3 years, and Rogozhin – 1 year. In addition, in December a regional court in Penza gave Mikhail Zinkin a 1½ years suspended sentence for incitement of ethnic hatred after he posted anti-Jewish, anti-Caucasian and anti-Afro-American comments on an internet forum during 2006-2008 under the nickname "Fighter for the Truth."

TRANSCAUCASIA & CENTRAL ASIA

As in previous years, antisemitism remained at a low level in 2008. Nevertheless, several antisemitic and anti-Israel demonstrations took place in various countries of the region during Israel's Operation Cast Lead in Gaza.

INTRODUCTION

The eight national republics in Transcaucasia and Central Asia gained their independence in the early 1990s after the disintegration of the Soviet Union. Six of them have a Muslim majority (Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Azerbaijan), and two have a Christian majority (Armenia and Georgia). Armenia, Azerbaijan and Turkmenistan share a long common border with Iran; Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan adjoin Afghanistan.

The revival of nationalist movements and conflicts following independence in these countries led to civil wars in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia and Tajikistan; as a result, demarcation of their borders has not been completed. The issue of national minorities is also complex since there are more than one hundred national groups in the region.

An armed conflict broke out in August 2008 in South Ossetia between Georgia and Russia (supported by local Ossetians and Abkhazians). The conflict had actually been ongoing since the South Ossetia war in 1991–92 between Georgians and Ossetians, which left most of South Ossetia under an unrecognized government supported by Russia, while some ethnic Georgian inhabited parts remained under Georgian rule. A similar situation occurred in Abkhazia after the war there in 1992–93. On the night of August 7–8, 2008 Georgia attacked South Ossetia and Russia reacted on the following day by attacking Georgia. The largest battle of the war took place in Tskhinvali (the capital of South Ossetia) and lasted three days. On August 9 a second front was opened when Russians and Abkhazians attacked the Kodori Valley, held by Georgia, and entered western parts of Georgia itself. After five days the Georgians were forced out of South Ossetia and Abkhazian and Russian troops occupied several cities in Georgia. A preliminary ceasefire agreement was signed on August 12 as a result of French and European Union intervention and Russia gradually pulled its troops out of Georgia. Buffer zones were established around Abkhazia and South Ossetia. On August 26, Russia recognized the independence of South Ossetia and Abkhazia. Russia completed its withdrawal from Georgia on October 8; however, its troops remained in Abkhazia and South Ossetia according to agreements with the local governments.

There are also complex interstate economic difficulties relating to taxes, transportation, and ownership as well as use of natural resources. The question of the exploitation of the oil- and gas-rich Caspian Sea, for example, involves Russia, Iran, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan.

The socio-political situation provides fertile ground for the activity of radical political and religious groups (see *ASW 2007*).

JEWISH COMMUNITIES

The Jewish population is made up of several sub-groups: Bukharan, Georgian and Mountain Jews have been living in the region for centuries while most Ashkenazi Jews arrived during and after World War II. The massive emigration from the region has left some 30,000–50,000 Jewish residents, mostly Ashkenazi Jews living in the capital cities. In Bukhara (Uzbekistan), for example, only a handful of Jewish families are left, and a similar situation exists in other regional cities of Uzbekistan. Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Azerbaijan have about 10,000 Jews each; about one thousand remain in Georgia and a few hundred each in Armenia, Turkmenistan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan.

Apart from Turkmenistan, where there is no synagogue or Jewish cultural center, the republics impose no limitations on the activities of local or international (the Jewish Agency for Israel and the Joint) Jewish organizations, which all have representatives and offices in the capitals. Chabad is the most active Jewish religious organization in the region. Religious services include mikvehs and kosher food.

Chabad operates four Jewish schools (in Tashkent, Alma-Ata, Baku and Tbilisi), as well as Sunday schools and kindergartens. Two schools in Uzbekistan (in Tashkent and Bukhara) are sponsored by Midrash Sfaradi (the Israeli Sephardic religious organization); a school in Kyrgyzstan (in Bishkek) is supported by a private Jewish donor, while another in Azerbaijan (Baku) is funded by the anti-Zionist Vaad ha-Hatsala. Sunday schools are also operated by the Jewish Agency and the Israeli embassies.

In 2008 a major issue in Tajikistan concerning the Jewish community was the demolition in June of the only synagogue in the country, in the capital Dushanbe. This was the result of four years of debate between the Jewish community and the authorities, which were planning to build a new presidential palace and national park there. According to Chief Rabbi Mikhail Abdurakhmov, the community received no promises about an alternative location for the synagogue or offers of compensation. In addition to services, the synagogue operated a food aid program for sick and poor Jews, which had to be halted.

ANTISEMITIC MANIFESTATIONS AND RESPONSES

As in previous years, antisemitism remained at a low level in 2008. Several antisemitic and anti-Israel demonstrations took place during Israel's Operation Cast Lead in Gaza in late December 2008–January 2009 in Azerbaijan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan. The main organizers and participants were Islamist organizations, such as the Islamic Party of Azerbaijan and the Islamic Renaissance Party in Tajikistan (see *General Analysis*).

One antisemitic incident was recorded in Georgia where on April 26 swastikas and the slogan "Heil Hitler" appeared on graves in the Jewish cemetery outside Batumi. According to the cemetery's director, Nodar Jorbenadze, this was the first time that such an incident had taken place there. It was condemned by Shabtai Tsur, Israel's ambassador to Georgia, and the police opened an investigation.

In September 2008 Avaz Zeinally, editor of the nationalist newspaper *Khural*, in Azerbaijan, was tried for translating Adolf Hitler's book *Mein Kampf* from Turkish to Azeri and writing a preface to it. The legal proceedings followed a complaint by the Israeli embassy in Baku and the local Jewish community. Zeinally was charged with incitement to ethnic hatred and faced a prison sentence of up to four years or a fine. However, he was acquitted in late July 2009.

UKRAINE

Besides a spate of attacks on synagogues, cemeteries and Holocaust memorials, as well as on other Jewish facilities, several Jewish individuals were assaulted. There appeared to have been a major decline in antisemitic articles published in the Ukrainian press in 2008. Several individuals were convicted of antisemitic activity.

THE JEWISH COMMUNITY

According to the last official census (2001), about 105,000 Jews live in Ukraine; however, Jewish organizations estimate that 250,000-400,000 people are entitled to immigrate to Israel. The Jewish umbrella organizations are the Vaad of Ukraine (Association of Jewish Organizations and Communities), the Jewish Confederation of Ukraine, the All-Ukrainian Jewish Congress, the Association of Jewish Religious Organizations of Ukraine, and the Federation of Jewish Communities of Ukraine (Chabad).

Both the Jewish Agency and the Joint are very active in Ukraine, and Jewish charity organizations, supported by the Joint, operate in many cities. Many schools, Sunday schools, kindergartens, yeshivas, Hebrew ulpanes and summer camps for children are supported by the Or Avner fund. Other Jewish educational institutions are the International Solomon University in Kiev (with a branch in Kharkov), Beit Khana women's college in Dnepropetrovsk, the Institute of Jewish Studies in Kiev, the Ukrainian Center for Holocaust Studies and the religious Jewish University in Odessa. Jewish publications include the *Jewish Observer* of the Jewish Confederation of Ukraine (closed in early 2009), *Hadashot* (Vaad of Ukraine), *VEK* (All-Ukrainian Jewish Congress), and the literary almanac *Yebupets*.

Antisemitism in Politics

Politicians who make antisemitic (and racist) statements can be found across the political spectrum. Nevertheless, extreme right political organizations such as the Ukrainian Conservative Party (UKP) and the Ukrainian National Assembly (UNA) and others, which promote antisemitism as an integral part of their platform, have been losing electoral power, and although the threshold for entering parliament in Ukraine is low compared to other European countries, they have not been able to gain enough votes to enter it independently.

Speaking out against Ukraine President Viktor Yushchenko on July 1, 2008, Oleg Tiagnibok, former member of the Our Ukraine bloc of President Viktor Yushchenko and now leader of the extremist All Ukrainian Union Svoboda (Liberty/Freedom – see *ASW 2007*) declared

that "Kikes and Moskali [derogatory term for Russians] and their minions have seized power, and without a tough, merciless purge, there is nothing we can do about it."

On September 6, Sergei Kirichenko, a member of the Kherson city council from the Union of Leftists (established in December 2007, with goals such as empowerment of local communities, providing state support for poor regions, and granting Russian the status of second state language), praised the Nazi occupation of Kherson during World War II on the local radio program "Vik." The leadership of the local Jewish community sent a letter to the leader of the party, Vasilii Volga, complaining that Kirichenko had already made antisemitic statements in the past on the program, such as accusing the Jews of robbing the Ukrainian people and plotting to enslave them. He also posted on his website a "Catechism of a Jew in the USSR" – a version of *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*. In April 2009 Kirichenko was expelled from the party because of "ideological differences."

ANTISEMITIC ACTIVITY

Violent Incidents and Vandalism

According to the Congress of National Communities of Ukraine (CNCU, an NGO established in 2001), 84 people were victims of hate crimes (4 dead) in Ukraine in 2008. Most (including some students) were from Africa, central and south-eastern Asia, the Middle East, Caucasus and Latin America, but a few were Jews.

On January 24, 2008, Rabbi Dov-Ber Baitman, a teacher at the Jewish Shiurey Torah educational center in Dnepropetrovsk, was beaten and abused with antisemitic insults by four youths when he left the Golden Rose synagogue after evening classes. Six weeks later the police announced that they had identified the attackers but not caught them because they gone into hiding. In May, Dmitrii Groisman, a human rights activist of Jewish origin, was beaten near his apartment building in Vinnitsa. Groisman said that the attack was probably connected to his human rights activity. In September, a group of youths taunted the chief rabbi of Vinnitsa, Shaul Horovitz, his 3-year-old son, and a guest from Canada with antisemitic insults, such as "We'll kill all Yids," "We'll bury you in the ground," and "Heil Hitler" in the center of the city. When the Jews did not react, the youths started beating them. A driver in a passing car helped them and reported the incident to the police, who arrived and arrested some of the attackers.

There was a spate of attacks on synagogues, cemeteries and Holocaust memorials, as well as on other Jewish facilities, in 2008. Following are some examples. On November 22, eight wooden crosses

were erected on the site where a synagogue is to be built in Poltava. The local chief rabbi Yosef Yitzchak Segal labeled the act "a provocation aimed at stirring religious hatred in the city," and preventing the establishment of the synagogue. A group calling itself the "Regional Association of Repressed Persons" took responsibility for the act. On December 1, stones were thrown at the synagogue in Rovno, breaking several windows. The perpetrators escaped before the police arrived. Windows of nearby buildings were broken too.

Swastikas were painted at the 18th century burial site of Rabbi Levi Itzhak, as well as on other gravestones at the Jewish cemetery in Berdichev in 3 March. The perpetrators also painted the symbol "14/88" (14 = 14 words: "We must secure the existence of our people and a future for white children" – a slogan used by neo-Nazi groups; 88 = Heil Hitler) on several graves nearby. After a complaint was filed, the police arrested a 21-year-old suspect, leader of a local skinhead group. In June 2008 he was sentenced to 1½ years imprisonment. During the night of April 15, the memorial to Rabbi Aaron at the Jewish cemetery in Zhitomir was set alight. The perpetrators also painted swastikas, and antisemitic and satanic graffiti such as "Satan is come" and "Dark Angel." A few days later the police announced that two high-school pupils who had been playing soccer near the cemetery had lit a fire there to warm themselves. The fire had gotten out of control and partly burnt the memorial. The police did not mention the graffiti.

A Holocaust memorial and the "Mourning Mother" memorial, located at a mass grave in Poltava, were sprayed with paint, Ukrainian national symbols and racist and antisemitic graffiti, including a Star of David on gallows and the slogan "Death to the Jews." The memorial is dedicated to more than 3,000 local Jews murdered by the Nazis on November 23, 1941. The other memorial commemorates some 5000 Red Army prisoners of war and partisans murdered in the region during World War II. The Holocaust memorial in Enakievo, Donetsk region, to local Jews murdered in 1942 by the Nazis was vandalized twice in 2008.

In late January 2008, the expressions "Achtung Jude," "Hitler" and other insults were discovered on the building and fence of the Jewish charity organization Khesed in Krivoy Rog. In July a gang broke into the offices of the Jewish youth program "Stars" at the Shalom Chaverim Center for Religious Jewish Youth in Lvov, smashed several windows and beat two workers of the center with metal rods. The perpetrators also shouted antisemitic insults, such as "Kikes leave Ukraine" and "Ukraine is occupied by Kikes." The attackers were a man and a woman living in the same building. They were caught and fined 119 griven each (about 15 US dollars).

Virulently antisemitic graffiti also appeared on non-Jewish facilities. For example, in late March 2008 posters warning that Jews murder children and use their blood to make matza for Passover appeared in Sumy, north-east Ukraine. They also accused Jews of a series of recent disappearances and murders of children in the region. In August posters calling for a boycott of kosher products were put up outside the Aleksandr Nevsky Russian Orthodox Cathedral in Kamenetsk-Podolsk. An article distributed inside the cathedral, probably by pro-Russian activists or Russian nationalists, claimed that the "Kikes" had created the "artificial state called Ukraine" in order to weaken Russia; and a Jewish conspiracy serving the US was behind the Russian Revolution in 1917 and the Orange Revolution in 2004. On October 31, a group entered the Garazh night club in Chernigov during an antifacist concert, shouting "Kikes leave our city!" and "Kikes to the oven." They also attacked several people, caused damage to property and painted antisemitic and racist graffiti on the walls.

The Mass Media

Some 53 antisemitic articles were counted in the Ukrainian press during 2008, according to a report of the Vaad of Ukraine. The number, however, was probably much higher due to the proliferation of regional, religious and other newspapers. Nevertheless, there appears to have been a major decrease compared to previous years: 2007 – 542; 2006 – 676; and 2005 – 661. The main reason appears to be a decline in the role of MAUP in antisemitic activity in Ukraine. As the largest private university in Ukraine with more than 50,000 students, MAUP published the majority of printed antisemitic materials in Ukraine in the early and mid-2000s. However, as of September–October 2007 the "MAUP era" in Ukrainian antisemitism appeared to be coming to an end (see *ASW* 2007) and this tendency continued in 2008 (partly, it is speculated, due to reduced interest in their publications with the ascension of the internet). Circulation of its newspapers decreased and several of them, such as the youth supplement *Ukrainskii Leader* or *Personal Plus*, ceased publication altogether. The only MAUP newspaper that continued to print antisemitic propaganda was *Za Vilnu Ukrainu*. For example, on January 1, 2008 it published a call for Christians and Muslims not to buy food with a "kosher" label.

In early February 2008 the Israeli newspaper *Ha'aretz* published an interview with Mykola Golavatiy, rector of MAUP, who maintained: "There is no such thing as antisemitism... it's an invention of scientists... Those [Jewish] organizations are antisemitic. Every time there is talk of Jews, they say it's antisemitism... Chabad gave the world nothing good..."

This is an international organization with branches around the world and you cannot say they are for peace; they do evil things. They are also tied to extremism and terrorist actions... Nobody will stop me from researching those negative things in the history of the Jews."

Antisemitism was expressed in other Ukrainian media, too. On February 5, 2008, for example, the Ukrainian Antena cable channel broadcast an interview with Kostya Zarudny, head of the Historical Truth organization. He said: "We see how the lie of the Holocaust continues in Ukraine, how once again the fantastic figure of six million is brought out, and that in Ukraine one and a half million kikes were supposedly killed... How long is this kike lie going to brainwash us?" Zarudny has a Ph.D. in history on "the distorted history of Ukraine."

A week later, the same channel aired an interview with political analyst Igor Mazur on Ukrainian nationalists who fought with the Nazis against the Soviets during World War II. Responding to criticism of those justifying Ukrainian activity during this period at a press conference held in Russia the previous day, Mazur said that "the kike-lovers and other freaks gathered in Moscow" in order to criticize Ukrainian politicians who "for the kike's money" betray their nation. According to Mazur, "the Jews' task is not to allow the foundation of truly independent, strong states in Europe... Otherwise, their power will come to an end."

In July 2008 the *Informatsionnii bulletin* (Information Bulletin, issued by the Ukrainian Conservative Party), which has a previous record of antisemitism, published an article titled "Why Was Ukraine Chosen for the Killing of People by Starvation." The article accuses American Zionist organizations of organizing the famine in Ukraine in 1932–33.

On July 12, *Redaktor*, the newspaper of the Plast National Scout Organization of Ukraine, which won a grant from the president's office and in 2007 was named "the best public organization in Ukraine active in the patriotic education of youth," published an article complaining that Jews had participated in a Ukrainian music festival, which had become "a place where the enemies of the Ukrainian people committed their satanic rites."

The Gaza War

On December 27, the first day of the operation, several Ukrainian Muslim organizations issued a joint declaration branding Israel's actions "barbarian bombardment." On January 2, during his Friday sermon, Imad Abu al-Rub, imam of the mosque of the An-Nur Kievan Muslim cultural center in Kiev, put the entire blame for the violence on Israel.

He also held the "Zionists" responsible for "the daily killing of tens of innocent women, the elderly, and children."

On January 9, members of the Arab diaspora, supported by left-wing activists, such as members of the Communist and Socialist parties, held a demonstration of several hundreds in front of the UN offices in Kiev. Some held photos of dead children and ruined buildings, as well as posters reading "Freedom for Palestine" and "Israel – murderer of children." A similar demonstration took place the following day in Simferopol.

On January 24, eight leaflets were found near the entrance to the synagogue in Donetsk, reading "You owe us. Shalom, Jewish brother. You are one of those who kill, burn, and annihilate the Muslims of Palestine. We can't be indifferent to crimes committed by you and world Jewry. You are to blame. You and your children must be punished as our children and elderly were punished there" (see also *General Analysis*).

RESPONSES TO ANTISEMITISM

As in previous years, Ukraine's leaders, including the president, spoke out publicly in 2008 against antisemitism and racism. For example, on February 5, a meeting took place in Kiev between Ukraine President Yushchenko and then head of the Jewish Agency Ze'ev Bielski, during which the former stressed the need to pay more attention to the issue of antisemitism in general, and to MAUP in particular. On April 11, Yushchenko asked Prosecutor General Oleksandr Medvedko and Interior Minister Yuriy Lutsenko "to work out an effective program to counteract all forms of xenophobia, racial and national intolerance in Ukraine, as well as to institute criminal proceedings against those guilty of the above-mentioned crimes" in light of the increase in cases of "xenophobia, [and] racial and national intolerance."

In early January 2008 the Ukrainian Security Services announced they had caught the person who distributed antisemitic leaflets in Odessa in December 2007 signed by the Pravoslav Society of Odessa (see *ASW 2007*). According to the preliminary investigation, he distributed the leaflets on his own initiative. The ADL called on President Yushchenko to publicly condemn antisemitism.

Several persons were convicted of antisemitic activity in 2008. In mid-January the Pecherskii Regional Court in Kiev imposed a four-year suspended sentence on Vasili Ostrinskii for distributing antisemitic leaflets in the city in 2007. The leaflets called for the extermination of the Jews and for an armed uprising in order to establish a joint Ukrainian-Belarusian-Russian monarchic state.

On April 22, a 48-year-old teacher of Russian language and literature in Kirovograd, Nikolaii Iakimchuk, was convicted for telling his pupils in 2005 that "Jews are bad, insolent people... they should be exterminated, they have no place among people." He was pardoned immediately by the court because he was an invalid.

The trial of Igor Volin-Danilov, editor of *Nashe Delo*, opened in Odessa in August. Volin-Danilov had published an antisemitic article titled "Kill the Best Goys" under the pseudonym Iulii Streicher [Julius Streicher, editor of *Der Stürmer*] on March 18 and April 15, 2007. The piece contained false translations and interpretations of Talmudic texts. The conclusion of the article was that "the Jewish religion... is criminal and immoral, and only complete villains and criminals can follow it." On January 15, 2009, a regional court in Odessa gave Volin-Danilov a suspended sentence of 1½ years imprisonment.

On October 6, the Ukrainian Security Services announced that in February it had uncovered an extreme right-wing group of 14 members in Kirovograd. The group had prepared antisemitic leaflets, planned to blow up the local synagogue and attack Jews and other minorities. The head of the group is a 38-year-old former police officer.

On August 1, during an online press conference on the obozrevatel.com news site, Josef Zissels, chairman of the Vaad, assessed the level of antisemitism in Ukraine. According to Zissels, it was much lower than often claimed by observers, especially from abroad. He referred to the sharp decline in the number of antisemitic publications and to a certain decrease in attacks on Jews in 2007/8 compared to previous years. Nevertheless, taking into account not only antisemitic incidents, but xenophobic acts in general, the problem continued to be very worrisome. In his opinion, the main reason for the existence of racism in a society was the passiveness of the authorities and the attitude of the media. He recommended that the subject of tolerance be taught at schools.

The Middle East

ARAB COUNTRIES

INTRODUCTION

The demonization and de-humanization of Israel, Zionism and the Jews continued unabated in Arab countries in the course of 2008. Classical antisemitic motifs, *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion* and demonic imagery, as well as Nazi and Holocaust terminology conveying their vicious traits, were accompanied by Islamist assertions that Israel was doomed to extinction and by calls to kill Jews wherever they were. Up until the end of December, when Operation Cast Lead was launched, there was no change or significant increase in antisemitic manifestations. Issues that triggered such expressions were the continuing confrontations between Israel and the Palestinians in Gaza during the year, Israel's celebration of its 60th anniversary in parallel with the Palestinian *nakba*, and the world economic crisis. The Israeli operation in Gaza, which began on December 27, sparked an intense wave of antisemitic writing and incitement, previously witnessed in other periods of crisis, such as the 2006 Second Lebanon War and the outbreak of the second intifada in September 2000.

The cohesion and resilience of Israel and Israeli society have preoccupied Arab public discourse since the establishment of the state. Renewed discussion of this issue was prompted by its 60th anniversary and new publications on Israel and Zionism by Arab as well as Jewish and Israeli writers. In the article "Is Israel's Existence Legitimate?" Egyptian intellectual Hasan Hanafi assessed that "Israel's excessive festivities were covering up a crisis," casting doubt on the legitimacy of its existence. He claimed that sympathy toward the tragedy of European Jews was diminishing and sound historical studies had begun to question "the Holocaust" [*sz*] narrative and the Zionist resort to Nazi methods against the Palestinians.¹ Hanafi's logic testifies to the prevailing attitude toward Israel and Zionism among Arab intellectuals, despite the peace process and the common strategic interests that have emerged between Israel and moderate Arab regimes. Although Hanafi's language cannot be labeled antisemitic, it conveys the sense that "the return of Arab revival is conditioned by the defeat of the Zionist project," as expressed

¹ *Al-Dustur*, 4 Sept.; *al-Sharq*, 6 Sept.

by another Egyptian writer, Adib Dimitri² and which less inhibited observers defined as the inevitable demise of Israel³; others bluntly used antisemitic motifs to describe Israel: "this beast, cancerous entity and germ,"⁴ emphasizing that Arabs were not the only ones who harbored hatred toward "international Jewry" and its occupying state.⁵

In the wake of Israel's 60th anniversary festivities, statements vowing to liberate Palestine and editorials predicting Israel's demise abounded. Most notorious was Usama Bin Ladin's audio cassette released on May 16, calling to wage jihad against Israel and describing the Palestinian cause as the heart of al-Qa'ida's holy war against the West, which always sided with Israel against the Palestinians.⁶ 'Abdallah Najib Salim asserted in the Kuwaiti daily *al-Qabas* that "Israel is not just the enemy of the Palestinians, the Arabs or the Muslims, but the enemy of all mankind, a global cancer centered in Palestine."⁷

In the 60th anniversary context, several writers referred to Holocaust Memorial Day, which is commemorated in Israel a few days before Independence Day. They accused Zionist organizations and Israel of causing the *nakba* and carrying out an ongoing holocaust against the Palestinians. In an article titled "The Globalization of the Palestinian 'Holocaust'," published in Jordan's *al-Dustur* on May 14, Nawaf al-Zaru claimed that Zionist crimes had reached a "holocaustic" level which had no historical precedents. In a previous article, he contended that the Holocaust had paved the way "politically, morally, and psychologically for the Palestinian *nakba*," and therefore he admitted, Arabs attach great importance to leaving "the Holocaust file" open for questioning its facts, impact and exploitation.⁸

The "parade" to Israel by western leaders to mark its anniversary was also heavily criticized by Arab writers. The visit of Germany's Chancellor Angela Merkel to Israel on March 18 aroused particular anger, especially since she did not include the Palestinian Authority in her agenda. This

² *Al-Quds al-'Arabi*, 26 July.

³ *Al-Bayan*, 18 May; *al-Hayat*, 19 May; *al-'Arab al-Yawm*, 25 June; *al-Sharq al-Ansat*, 29 June; *al-Quds al-'Arabi*, 3 July.

⁴ *Al-Safir*, 29 Feb.

⁵ *Al-'Arab al-Yawm*, 26 April.

⁶ Memri, Special Dispatch (Islamist Websites Monitor Project), no. 1931, 16 May; Reuters, *al-Sharq*, 17 May; *Ha'aretz*, *New York Times*, 18 May.

⁷ *Al-Qabas*, 23 May. See also *al-Hayat*, 15 May.

⁸ *Al-Khalij*, 5 May; *al-Dustur*, 11, 14 May.

led to a barrage of articles discussing Germany's "guilt complex" over the Holocaust.⁹

Israel and Zionism's racism and barbarism were attributed to the teachings of the Talmud and the "falsified Bible,"¹⁰ as well as to a "Shylockian mentality"¹¹ and the Protocols' conspiratorial schemes.¹² These explained the Israeli personality and mentality, which were characterized by "a hunger and thirst for Arab Palestinian blood." Similarly, new books dealing with Israel's alleged racism were published in 2008, among them: *Israel's Racism. The Case of the Palestinians of 1948*, by 'Abbas Isma'il (Beirut: Zaytuna Center); *The Acceptance of the Other in Judaism – a Fact or Illusion*, by Jordanian physician Kamil al-'Ajluni, and *The Encyclopedia of the Open Palestinian Holocaust*, vol. 1, by Jordanian journalist Nawaf al-Zaru (Amman: Dar Majdalawi). In addition, books by Israeli scholars that seek to challenge Zionism and its precepts continued to attract Arab interest. UK-based Israeli post-Zionist scholar Ilan Pappé's book *The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine*, which was translated into Arabic, and Tel Aviv University scholar Shlomo Zand's book *When and How Was the Jewish People Invented?* were discussed extensively in the media, for allegedly providing further proof of Arab claims.¹³

Stemming from these views, Jews and Zionists were accused of being behind all the disasters in the world. The crisis in the world economy which began in September triggered a spate of antisemitic publications in the Arab media. Hamas spokesman Fawzi Barhum declared in the movement's daily *Filastin* that the managerial and monetary corruption of a polluted banking and financial system ruled by "the Jewish lobby" was behind the collapse and wondered whether the American president would have the courage to disclose this to the American people. "Who Is behind the American Crisis?" "Is Zionism behind the Destruction of American Capitalism?" and "The Financial Crisis as a New September 11: A Reading in Conspiracy Theories," were titles indicative of views expressed by Arab commentators and even by an Egyptian

⁹ See for example *al-Sharq*, *al-Kalij*, *al-Dustur*, *al-Quds al-'Arabi*, 20 March; *Filatin*, *al-Watan* (Oman), 21 March; *al-Hayat*, 24 March; *al-'Arab al-Yawm*, 26 March.

¹⁰ *Al-Dustur*, 7 May; *al-Ra'y*, 25 June.

¹¹ *Ukaş*, 3 March.

¹² *Al-Ra'y*, 25 June.

¹³ *Al-Dustur*, 6 Jan.; *al-Sharq*, 11 Jan., 12 March; *al-Ayyam*, 22 March; *al-Raya*, 30 March; *Aafaq*, 23 Oct. – www.aafaq.org/masahas.aspx?id_mas=2599#; *al-Masri al-Yawm*, 7 Nov.; *al-Quds*, *al-Sharq al-Ansat*, 13 Nov.; *al-Khalij*, 16 Nov.

parliamentarian, Mustafa al-Fiqqi. In an article published in the London-based liberal daily *al-Hayat*, al-Fiqqi wrote that in light of the successive collapse of financial and economic institutions in the US and worldwide, he found himself pondering conspiracy theories. He compared the crisis to the September 11 attacks that "changed the world" and compelled Arabs and Muslims "to pay the bill." He also alleged that the economic crisis was the result of conservative American and Jewish manipulations to achieve two global goals: one political in 2001 and the other economic in 2008. Similarly Lebanese columnist Fu'ad Matar in the Lebanese daily *al-Liwa'* and Saudi scholar Umayya Ahmad al-Jalahma in the Saudi *al-Watan* bluntly pointed to the Jews and Zionism as the instigators of the crisis, which was intended to divert attention from the main issue of solving the Middle East conflict and establishing a Palestinian state. Syrian economist Muhammad Sharif Mazlum also considered that the "whims and schemes of the Zionist lobby, whose goal was, and still is, to take control of the world's gold," were behind the crisis, whereas Ahmad 'Umarabi, columnist in the Qatari daily *al-Watan*, referred to chapters from Hitler's *Mein Kampf*, allegedly exposing the Jews' systematic plunder of Germany's national economic resources through their control over the banks and stock markets. Asking whether history was repeating itself, he suggested that the crisis was a Jewish conspiracy aimed at "ruining the global economy in order to realize the hidden interests of a small group of Jewish tycoons."¹⁴

The terrorist attacks by Pakistani Islamists from the militant group Lashkar-e-Taiba (Army of the Righteous), in Mumbai, India, on November 26, which targeted among others a Jewish center, causing the death of six Jews and Israelis, were also seen by a few Arab writers, especially in Syria, as the result of Jewish machinations. Hasan Hasan and Ahmad Hamada in *al-Thawra* claimed that "hidden Zionist fingers and their heinous role in the explosions" were apparent, whereas Ghasan Yusuf in *al-Watan* noted that Israel customarily "profits" from terrorist attacks and exploited them to cause suffering to the Palestinians. Pakistani security expert, Zayd Hamid, too, accused "western Zionists and Hindu Zionists" of planning the attacks in an interview to a Pakistani TV channel. He claimed that "the Indians have themselves

¹⁴ *Al-Liwa'* (Lebanon), 3 Oct.; *al-Watan* (Saudi Arabia), 5 Oct.; *Filastin*, *al-Hayat*, 7 Oct.; *al-Watan* (Qatar), 21 Oct.; Memri, clip No. 1886, 10 Oct., Special Dispatch No. 2091, 22 Oct.

always wanted to orchestrate a 9/11, to create the same drama in which they could include Americans and Israelis."¹⁵

Similarly, Zionists and Jews were implicated in the re-publication in March of one of the Danish cartoons first published in the Danish daily *Jyllands-Posten* in 2005, causing a Muslim outcry (see *Denmark*), and in criticism of the film *Fitna* (Sedition) by Dutch politician Geert Wilders, released in March. Although Arab and Muslim reactions to the cartoons were much milder than in 2006 (see *ASW 2006*), writers such as Muhammad Hasan al-Tal in Jordan's *al-Dustur* repeated the allegation that the infiltration of the Jews into Europe and their control over its media and political and intellectual institutions had paved the way for publication of the cartoons. Saudi commentator Muhammad al-Hirfi in *al-Watan* warned that the cartoons, the film attacking the Qur'an, which he compared to Hitler's *Mein Kampf*, and the "gruesome massacres" by the Zionists in Palestine were symptomatic of "the bad times" for Arabs and Muslims and their lack of confidence. Asad Mahid in Qatari *al-Watan* considered that the phenomenon of abusive films was not new, and was the result of Zionist meddling which excelled "in causing sedition between peoples."¹⁶ Several articles angrily repeated the criticism expressed in 2006 of the western idea of freedom of expression, claiming that it was reserved mainly for offending and denigrating Islam, whereas doubting the Holocaust – its occurrence, the number of victims, the gas chambers – was considered a violation of the law and not included under the definition of freedom of expression.¹⁷ Similar claims were raised regarding Wilders' film.¹⁸

Calls to attack Crusader and Jewish interests were issued by Usama bin Ladin's right-hand man Ayman al-Zawahiri, on March 24, and by other Islamists such as the Jordanian Muslim Brotherhood's Supreme

¹⁵ *Al-Thawra*, 30 Nov., 3 Dec.; *al-Watan* (Syria), 1 Dec.; Memri, Special Dispatch Series No. 2140, 4 Dec. See also Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center, "Anti-Israeli and antisemitic incitement in the Syrian media accuse Israel, the Zionist movement and the Jewish people of responsibility for the terrorist attacks in Mumbai," 8 Dec.

¹⁶ *Al-Dustur*, 21 Feb.; *al-Watan* (Saudi Arabia), 5 March; *Jerusalem Post*, 1 April; *al-Watan* (Qatar), 2 April. See also *al-Ittihad*, 14 March; *Tishrin*, 1 May.

¹⁷ See for example: *al-Watan* (Saudi Arabia), 18, 22, 24 Feb.; *al-Qabas*, 14 April; *al-Sharq al-Ansat*, 3 March; *al-Quds al-'Arabi*, 8, 11 March; *al-Sharq*, 29 Feb., 16 March.

¹⁸ *Al-Riyadh*, 31 March; *al-Watan* (Kuwait), *al-Sharq al-Ansat*, *al-Watan* (Qatar), 31 March; see also *al-Bayan*, *al-Safir*, 1 April; *al-Sharq al-Ansat*, 1, 2, 4 April.

Guide Shaykh Himam Sa'id in December.¹⁹ Yemen's fewer than 400 Jews, remnants of a thriving community, continued to be embroiled in the conflict between rebellious Shi'ite Islamists and the Sunni central government (see *Arab Countries* 2007). In April 2008, rebel Shi'ite Huti militiamen looted and partly destroyed several homes belonging to Jews who were forced to evacuate them in 2007 in the northwestern Sa'ada province.²⁰ On December 11, Moshe Ya'ish-Nahari, brother of a prominent rabbi, was shot to death in Rida, a city in 'Amran province, north of the capital San'a. The suspected killer, 'Abd al-'Aziz al-'Abadi, a former pilot in Yemen's air force, had reportedly called upon Nahari at the market to convert to Islam and then opened fire and killed him. A few days later, on December 15, two petrol bombs were thrown at the home of another Yemeni Jew, Sa'adiya Ya'aqub. In response to the plight of Nahari's brother, Rabbi Yihya Yehuda, Yemeni President 'Ali 'Abdullah Salah, promised to relocate the Jews from Rida to San'a.²¹

ANTISEMITIC MOTIFS IN HAMAS INDOCTRINATION

Since Hamas took over Gaza in June 2007, its "sermons and media reports preaching violence and hatred have become more pervasive, extreme and sophisticated," reported *New York Times* correspondent Steven Erlanger from Gaza in April. Adopting the model of Hizballah and its television station al-Manar in Lebanon, Hamas intensified the indoctrination of its brand of radical Islam, which combines politics, social work and military resistance, through adult and children's programs on al-Aqsa television and radio. Imams refer frequently in their sermons to Jews and their early encounter with Islam to show their alleged vileness. A political scientist from the local al-Azhar university admitted to Erlanger that Friday prayers and imams' sermons were bound to incite against the Jews, since they used verses from the Qur'an "to say how the Jews were the enemies of the prophet and did not keep their promises to him 1,400 years ago." Imam Yusuf al-Zahhar preached that "Jews are people who cannot be trusted," for they have been

¹⁹ www.aljazeera.net/NR/exeres/8361EFF6-87B0-43A5-85D6-CA5E605870B8.htm – 3 April; Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center, 6 April, 15 Dec.; Memri, Clip No. 1940, 3-5 Dec.

²⁰ *Ha'aretz*, 6, 7 April.

²¹ *Aafaq*, 11 Dec. – www.aafaq.org; *Ha'aretz*, 12, 18 Dec.; *al-Sharq al-Awsat*, *al-'Arabiya*, 12 Dec. – www.alarabiya.net/articles/2008/12/12/61866.html; *The National* (UAE), 16 Dec.; *al-Quds al-'Arabi*, 20 Dec.; *al-Watan* (Saudi Arabia), 23 Dec.

traitors, breaching all agreements with them. Another imam reportedly cursed the Jews and "the Crusaders" describing them as "brothers of apes and pigs." On March 13, a Hamas legislator and imam, Shaykh Yunus al-Astal, discussed in the Hamas weekly *al-Risala*, the Qur'anic verse: "You [Jews] will taste the punishment of Scorching Fire" [Quran 3:181], suggesting that this was the Jews' destiny in this world and in the next. The fire punishment was fitting retribution for what they had done, he claimed, concluding that "we are certain that the Holocaust is still to come upon the Jews."²²

On April 9, Hamas Culture Minister 'Atallah Abu al-Subh contended in an interview with al-Aqsa TV that *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion* were "the faith that every Jew harbors in his heart." Everything we see in the Arab region and around the world, he continued – "the evil of the Jews, their deceit, their cunning, their warmongering, their control of the world, and their contempt and scorn for all the peoples of the world" – was based on the Protocols and proved their goal to control the world. Salih Riqab, Hamas deputy minister of religious endowment, also referred to the Protocols in an interview broadcast a month later. The goal of the Zionist movement, he declared, was to establish a state in Palestine, "which would become a base for ruling the entire world," destroy the religions it opposes, particularly Islam; corrupt values and morality; spread permissiveness and sex; and generate moral decline.²³ Explaining references to the Jews in the Qur'an, in an interview broadcast on July 13, another Hamas cleric, Muhsin Abu 'Ita, said that they had incurred Allah's wrath and that the Qur'an foresaw the demise of the state of Israel. The "most splendid blessings of Palestine" which would be followed by the establishment of the Caliphate, he predicted, would come with the annihilation of the Jews in Palestine, "when the head of the serpent of corruption is cut off here in Palestine, and its octopus tentacles are severed throughout the world."²⁴

The Holocaust, too, was discussed on Hamas's al-Aqsa television station. In a lecture aired on February 29, Saudi scholar Walid al-Rashudi, head of the department of Islamic Studies at King Saud University, challenged the use of the term "Holocaust" for describing what happened to the Jews. We believe, he said, "that there was indeed a

²² *Al-Risala*, 13 March - http://www.palwatch.org/pages/news_archive.aspx?doc_id=530; *New York Times*, 1 April.

²³ Memri, Special Dispatch Nos. 1905, 1944, 22 April, 30 May.

²⁴ Memri, Special Dispatch, No. 2087, 28 Oct.

holocaust, but how many died?... A holocaust is not the burning of 50-60 Jews in Germany or Switzerland, but the Jews continue to call it the Holocaust," and to use it to blackmail these countries. In conclusion, he wondered what should be said in the face of the Gaza holocaust, vowing that "we [Arabs] will not be satisfied even if all the Jews are killed."²⁵ In a documentary screened in April, Jewish leaders were accused of concocting the mass murder of handicapped Jews, "and this murder is what the Jews term 'the Holocaust'." Moreover, Amin Dabbur, head of the Center for Strategic Research in Gaza, defined the Holocaust as "a complete farce," explaining that it was "part of a show orchestrated by Ben Gurion, the head of the Zionist political movement, in order to drag the Jews of the world to Palestine." The documentary also claimed that Jewish leaders blamed the Nazis for their own massacres of Jews "so the Jews would seem persecuted and try to benefit from international sympathy."²⁶

Indoctrination of children to hatred toward Israel and Jews through television persisted as well. The program "Tomorrow's Pioneers," which caused an uproar in 2007 for its unlawful use of a Mickey Mouse character, Farfur, who encouraged the annihilation of the Jews (see *Arab Countries* 2007), continued to be broadcast, conveying the same messages of hatred, resistance and martyrdom through construction of a narrative of suffering which would be relieved only by sacrifice and fighting till liberation and "eradication of the Jews." In June 2007, Farfur was replaced by the bee Nahul, who died a few months later and was replaced by his brother Assud the Bunny, because he could not get to a hospital in Egypt for surgery. Assud, who returned from "the diaspora," says: "We will sacrifice our souls and everything we own for the homeland," and vows to get rid of the Jews and eat them up. "I come from the diaspora, bearing the key of return... Allah willing, we will use this key to liberate our al-Aqsa Mosque... from the filth of those Zionists." According to political scientist Matthias Küntzel, antisemitic propaganda broadcast via satellite channels like the Hamas-run al-Aqsa is helping to bring a message of hate to Europe and affects Muslim immigrant thinking and behavior in Germany.²⁷

²⁵ Memri, Clip No. 1711, 29 Feb.

²⁶ Memri, Clip No. 1756, 22 April; *Ha'aretz*, 1 May; *Jerusalem Post*, 5 May; *Guardian*, 8 May.

²⁷ Memri, Special Dispatch, No. 1841, 13 Feb.; Palestinian Media Watch Bulletin, 11 Feb.; Matthias Küntzel, "Antisemitic Hate Speech in the Name of Islam," *Der Spiegel*, 16 May.

GAZA UNDER HAMAS – CONTINUING MILITARY ESCALATION

The situation in the Gaza Strip under Hamas control and the continuing rocket attacks on Israeli towns deteriorated steadily during 2008. In response to the military escalation between 27 February and 3 March, the Arab media launched a massive attack on Israel, mincing no words in portraying its alleged brutality and making extensive use of the term "holocaust" and other related terms such as "massacre" and "annihilation." Moreover, the use made by Deputy Defense Minister Matan Vilnai on February 29, of the Hebrew word "shoah" to threaten the catastrophe that would befall the Palestinians if they continued their attacks on Israel, gave the Arab media further legitimization for their comparisons between the Holocaust and Palestinian suffering and between Nazi and Israeli conduct, and for minimizing and relativizing the Jewish tragedy in WWII. Palestinian Authority Chairman Mahmud 'Abbas stated on March 1 that "what is actually going on is more than a holocaust," while Khalid Mash'al, head of Hamas political bureau, said that it was "the real holocaust."²⁸

Egyptian columnist Salama Ahmad Salama, writing in *al-Abram Weekly* on these "semantic squabbles," defined the situation in Gaza as a "slaughter," warning that "soon it will be too late to worry about whether to call it genocide or a holocaust." Another Egyptian writer Muhammad Jamal 'Arafa claimed in an article published in *Filastin* on March 2 and titled "the Nazi Holocaust Forbidden... the Israeli 'Holocaust' Allowed," that Vilnai's threat was not a slip of tongue but a Zionist precept guiding its attitude toward non-Jews, and which was reflected in endless political statements and rabbis' edicts licensing the killing of Palestinians.²⁹

Similarly, the leading Saudi dailies, *al-Watan*, *al-Riyadh* and the London-based *al-Sharq al-Awsat*, reported that Saudi Arabia viewed Israel's acts as an "imitation of Nazi crimes," since they were causing a "holocaust disaster" reminiscent of "the false holocaust in Germany, where it is claimed that a few Jews were cremated."³⁰ Muwafaq Muhadin

²⁸ *Jerusalem Post*, *Ha'aretz*, *al-Safir*, *al-Akbbar*, *al-Thawra*, 1 March; Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center, 12 March – www.terrorism-info.org.il/malam/multimedia/English/eng_n/htm/hi_090308e.htm.

²⁹ *Al-Abram Weekly*, 6 March; *Filastin*, 2, 3 March; *al-Jumhuriyya*, 8 March. For further references in the same vein, see *al-Sharq*, 1, 4, 5 March; *Tishrin*, *al-Raya*, *Akbbar al-Sharq*, *al-Ayyam*, 2 March; *al-Dustur*, 3, 6 March; *al-Thawra*, 6 March; *al-Ittibad*, 7, 9 March.

³⁰ *Al-Watan*, *al-Riyadh*, *al-Sharq al-Awsat*, 3 March.

claimed in Jordan's daily *al-'Arab al-Yawm* on March 8 that *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, the myth of "the matza of Zion" and other Jewish legends lay at the core of the state of Israel. The death of Arab children caused by the IDF, he said, was not a mistake but part of the Jewish faith. Moreover, the kidnapping and killing of Christian children by Jews was still alive in the memory of residents of Christian neighborhoods in Damascus, Buenos Aires and Lithuania.³¹

The Arab media was filled with cartoons conveying similar messages. Israeli soldiers were portrayed as bloodthirsty Nazi soldiers³²; and Prime Minister Ehud Olmert was depicted as a modern-day Hitler.³³ A cartoon in the London-based *al-Quds al-'Arabi* showed four Israeli helicopters in the shape of a swastika, with the caption "The Gaza Holocaust," and the Hamas *Filastin* stuck a swastika over a helicopter dropping missiles over a baby's bottle floating in a puddle of blood.³⁴ Another caricature in *al-Dustur* depicted Israeli soldiers raising the Nazi flag over the dead bodies of Palestinians in Gaza. The cartoon mimics the famous photo of US Marines raising the flag after the battle of Iwo Jima in Japan in March 1945.³⁵

Even those who acknowledged the Holocaust, such as Ziyad bin 'Abdallah al-Daris, a Saudi living in France, who considers the Holocaust an inhuman crime, believed that it was legitimate to compare the "old Holocaust" with the "new holocaust," and that Israel like the Third Reich was responsible for "its continuing holocaust" against the Palestinians, which had lasted for over sixty years.³⁶

During a closed meeting of the UN Security Council on April 23, 2008, Libyan Deputy UN Ambassador Ibrahim Dabbashi compared the situation in the Gaza Strip to Nazi concentration camps. In response, diplomats of the United States, Britain, France, Belgium and other members walked out. Telling reporters that he agreed with the Libyan ambassador, Syria's UN Ambassador Bashar Ja'fari said, "those who complain of being victims of some kind of genocide are repeating the

³¹ *Al-'Arab al-Yawm*, 8 March; www.aljazeera.net, 4 March

³² *Al-Watan* (Saudi Arabia), 3 March.

³³ www.aljazeera.net, 3 March.

³⁴ *Al-Quds al-'Arabi*, *Filastin*, 3 March.

³⁵ *Al-Dustur*, 4 March. For an extensive review of caricatures see http://www.adl.org/Anti_semitism/gaza_cartoons.asp.

³⁶ *Al-Hayat*, 19 March.

same kind of genocide against the Palestinians."³⁷ A Palestinian group called the National Committee for Defense of Children from the Holocaust unveiled in Gaza its first display in mid-March, entitled "Gaza: An Exhibit Describing the Suffering of the [Palestinian] Children of the Holocaust." It reportedly included a large oven within which small children were being burned. The Zionist Organization of America condemned the exhibit, stating that there seemed "to be no limit to the depravity of Palestinian hate education and incitement." In March, IslamOnline.net also launched the Palestinian Holocaust Memorial Museum (PHMM), a virtual museum featuring photos, names and stories of Palestinian children killed by Israeli forces "in the context of a new holocaust," and highlighting the locations, weapons and impact as well as testimonies of survivors.³⁸

Several officials and columnists, however, were highly critical of Hamas, accusing it of responsibility for escalating the situation in Gaza. PA Information Minister Riyadh al-Maliki claimed Hamas was giving Israel a pretext to attack, while Egypt's Shaykh al-Azhar, Muhammad Sayyid Tantawi, asserted that Hamas rockets were useless and only brought trouble upon the Palestinians. Similarly, in the March 1 issue of in the Kuwaiti *al-Siyasa*, local reformist Ahmad al-Baghdadi criticized Palestinian society for supporting Hamas and refusing to see that their daily suffering was the result of the movement's arrogance. Another writer from the same paper (March 10), Nasir al-'Utaybi, and Tariq al-Humayyid in *al-Sharq al-Awsat* (March 2), accused Syria and Iran of exploiting the Palestinian problem by funding Hamas and pressuring it to escalate the fighting.³⁹ The only clear voice denouncing both the Palestinians and Israelis for the events in Gaza, as well as Holocaust denial, was that of Syrian-American psychiatrist Wafa Sultan. She participated in a debate with Egyptian Islamist Tal'at Rumayh on western-Islamic relations, the Danish cartoon crisis, Islamic teachings, the situation in Gaza and the Holocaust, on al-Jazeera's program "The Opposite Direction" (March 4). Sultan attacked the narrow-minded Muslim response to the cartoons and islamization in the Arab and Muslim worlds. One issue exemplifying the absurdity of Arab beliefs, she said, was the attitude toward the Holocaust, the existence of which has

³⁷ *Jerusalem Post*, 25 April; *al-Quds al-'Arabi*, 25 April; www.ikhwansyria.com, 26 April; *al-Sharq al-Abram*, *al-Safir*, 29 April.

³⁸ *Jerusalem Post*, 25 March; <http://www.palestinianholocaust.net/index.shtml>.

³⁹ Quoted from Memri, Special Dispatch No. 1879, 25 March.

been established by historical documents, yet the Arabs continued to deny it. The impact of her words was so strong that Shaykh Yusuf al-Qaradawi accused her of "publicly cursing Allah, his Prophet, the Qur'an, the history of Islam, and the Islamic nation," in his program aired on March 16, and the Qatari satellite network had to issue an apology for Sultan's offensive remarks because of the furor they aroused among Arab and Muslim viewers.⁴⁰

"FROM THE HOLOCAUST IN AUSCHWITZ TO THE 'HOLOCAUSTS' IN GAZA"⁴¹

Operation Cast Lead, launched at the end of December by the IDF in response to continuing rocket attacks on Israeli towns, marked yet another peak in the anti-Israel discourse in the Arab media. Although hardly a new phenomenon, the usage of Holocaust metaphors for demonizing Israel and Zionism seemed increasingly to dominate texts and the imagery in caricatures (for further details, see *General Analysis*). But even this issue could not conceal the controversies and deep schisms dividing Arab countries and societies, especially the Palestinians. The rift between Fatah and Hamas, which exacerbated after the Hamas takeover in Gaza in June 2007, was reflected in mutual attacks during the war. While the PA and Fatah officials held Hamas responsible for the bloodshed because of its arrogance and blindness, Hamas accused Mahmud 'Abbas and his government of treason, of betraying the Palestinian cause, and of succumbing to and collaborating with Israel and the US.⁴²

A glaring manifestation of such differences was Hizballah Secretary General's Hasan Nasrallah's criticism of Arab regimes, particularly Egypt, for supporting Israel in crushing Hamas. He urged Egyptian

⁴⁰ Memri, Special Dispatch, Nos. 1864, 1976 – 7, 26 March; *al-Watan* (Qatar), 7 March; Ynet, 9 March; *al-Sabil*, 11 March; *al-Quds al-'Arabi*, 1 April.

⁴¹ Emile Amin, www.elaph.com/Web/ElaphWriter/2008/12/395048.htm, 27 Dec.

⁴² On the rifts between Arab countries and between societies and leaders see, for example, *al-Quds*, 28 Dec.; *al-Abram Weekly*, 1 Jan. 2009; *Washington Post*, 4 Jan. 2009; *al-Ra'y*, 5, 14 Jan. 2009; Memri, Special Dispatch, No. 2174, 5 Jan. 2009; *al-Sharq al-Ansat*, 14 Jan. 2009; *al-Khalij*, *al-Raya*, *al-Watan* (Saudi Arabia), 15 Jan. 2009; <http://electronicintifada.net/v2/printer10218.shtml>, 19 Jan. 2009. On the rift between the Palestinians see *al-Abram*, 29 Dec.; Memri, Special Dispatch, No. 2164, 29 Dec.; *New York Times*, 6 Jan. 2009; *al-Abram Weekly*, 15 Jan. 2009.

officers to rebel against the regime and Arab people to take to the streets to pressure their governments to act.⁴³ Another sign was the debate over the description of the war and its victims. Whereas Hamas supporters spoke of the "Zionist entity's warplanes" and of "martyrs," opponents spoke of "Israeli warplanes" and of "casualties," or of "the killed and wounded." These disparities were especially conspicuous in the reporting of the two competing satellite channels, al-Jazeera and al-'Arabiyya, representing opposite poles: al-Jazeera identified completely with the Islamists and hence was considered by al-'Arabiyya to be broadcasting "propaganda." Al-'Arabiyya, in turn, was defined as "the Hebrew channel" for its identification with moderate Arab regimes and relative neutrality in reporting.⁴⁴ Another example was the gloating of some Arab writers, such as Muhammad Abu Rumman in Jordan's *al-Ghadd*, that Gaza was creating a new spirit of struggle through which the Palestinian cause was regaining its "respected place" and the victory declaration of Khalid Mash'al's (and of other Hamas members in Gaza),⁴⁵ compared to the gloomy realization of others, such as Kuwait's Sajid al-'Abdali, who wrote an article titled "Sorry, Muhammad's Army won't Return Soon," or Youssef Ibrahim's address to the Palestinian Arab brethren that "the war with Israel is over – and they won."⁴⁶

In addition to mass demonstrations against Israel in the major capitals of the Arab and Muslim world, angry reactions were voiced by Arab leaders, clerics and commentators. Israel was accused by Syrian President Bashar al-Asad of building its existence on massacres and mass extermination, and of speaking and understanding only the language of bloodshed. Israeli aggression, he said at the Arab summit held in Doha, Qatar, on January 16, was not a response to rockets but part of a process of establishing a pure Jewish state by displacing non-Jews from Palestine and exterminating what remained of them.⁴⁷ Kuwaiti Head of Parliament

⁴³ Memri, Special Dispatch No. 2172, 2 Jan. 2009.

⁴⁴ *Ha'aretz*, 2 Jan. 2009; Memri, Special Dispatch No. 2205, 23 Jan. 2009.

⁴⁵ *Al-Ghadd*, 5 Jan. 2009; Memri, Special Dispatch No. 2204, 22 Jan. 2009.

⁴⁶ *Al-Quds*, 31 Dec. This is a pun on the slogan "Khaybar, khaybar ya yahud, jaysh Muhammad sawfa ya'ud," often chanted in demonstrations and warning Israel of its approaching defeat by Muslim forces, as in the 638 battle of Khaybar in the Arabian Peninsula.
<http://israelagainstterror.blogspot.com/2009/01/youssef-m-ibrahim-to-my-arab-brothers.html>, 13 Jan. 2009.

⁴⁷ <http://reformsyria.com>, 17 Jan.; Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center, *Operation Cast Lead – Update No. 17*, 19 Jan. 2009.

Jasim al-Kharafi joined those who termed the operation in Gaza "a Jewish holocaust" against the Arabs, whereas Egyptian Minister of Culture Faruq Husni was quoted by Jordanian *al-'Arab al-Yawm* as saying that Israel's deeds were a crime "no less barbaric than the Holocaust."⁴⁸

Egyptian clerics also directed their anger and hatred at the Jews. Shaykh Muhammad Hasan explained on al-Rahma TV on December 29 that the Jews "specialize[d] in the shedding of blood, in crime, and in killing – even the killing of prophets." Also referring to this theme, Shaykh Amin al-Ansari claimed that Jews viewed themselves as superior and saw other human beings as pigs and as their servants, whose backs they could ride on and blood they could suck. On the same day but on another Egyptian TV channel, another cleric, Salah Sultan, invoked *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion* and the frequently quoted hadith about Judgement Day: "Oh Muslim, there is a Jew behind me, come and kill him."⁴⁹

Despite the schisms, commentators were unanimous in their depiction of the Israeli operation as "a crime against humanity," "a premeditated war of annihilation," "an ethnic cleansing project," and "a new holocaust." Seeking to understand "the real" aim of the Israeli operation, Galal Nassar in *al-Abram Weekly* saw it as a "Nazi-inspired onslaught" and "a re-enactment of the Holocaust."⁵⁰ Rasim al-Madhun, in the Lebanese daily *al-Mustaqbal*, defined it "as a hysteria of collective killing," which can only be termed "a holocaust."⁵¹ Yasin al-Hajj Salih explained the meaning of the "Final Solution" in order to show that the establishment of Israel at the Palestinians' expense and without asking their opinion was "the real final solution to the Jewish question in Europe." He accused Israel of refusing to integrate into the region, not only because of its demand to be recognized as a Jewish state, but because it wished to be perceived as a "superior state for a superior people."⁵² Other commentators, conspicuously Islamist, attributed Israel's deeds to the so-called Zionist mentality derived from the Jewish

⁴⁸ *Al-Siyasa* (Kuwait), 12 Jan. 2009; *al-'Arab al-Yawm*, 13 Jan. 2009.

⁴⁹ Memri, Special Dispatch, No. 2165, 30 Dec.

⁵⁰ See for example *al-Dustur*, 28, 29 Dec.; *al-Thawra*, 1 Jan. 2009; *al-Quds al-'Arabi*, 8, 12 Jan. 2009; *al-Ghadd*, 13 Jan. 2009; *al-Abram Weekly*, 15 Jan. 2009.

⁵¹ *Al-Mustaqbal*, 11 Jan. 2009.

⁵² *Al-Hayat*, 4 Jan. 2009; *al-Sharq al-Ansat*, 7 Jan. 2009.

scriptures the Torah and the Talmud, which allegedly instruct the Jews to destroy and annihilate their enemies.⁵³

In addition to the calls for jihad against Israel issued by Islamist clerics and posted on Islamist websites, Arab leaders and the international community were urged to condemn Israel for its deeds. Even before the end of the Gaza operation, the PA, possibly in an attempt to stem criticism of its initial reaction, revealed that it was planning to seek the prosecution of Israeli leaders for war crimes in the international courts. "If Israel is not effectively sanctioned for its Gaza holocaust, the whole world will stand complicit by omission," wrote political science lecturer at the British University in Egypt, Bassem Ahmed in *al-Abram Weekly*.⁵⁴ In an article published by the Muslim Brothers' site ikhwan online, former Egyptian diplomat 'Abdallah al-Ash'al recalled the Nuremberg trials after World War II, which sentenced prominent Nazi leaders for crimes committed also against the Jews. Since, he claimed, no one had seen the crematoria and all the accounts were by Jewish sources, Ash'al wondered whether the West was ready to expose and sentence Israel for the "Palestinian holocaust" witnessed for over three weeks by the whole world.⁵⁵ Once the operation ended, Prime Minister of the Hamas Administration in Gaza Isma'il Haniyya urged the international community to investigate Israeli deeds during the war, and appointed an ad hoc committee to document and collect evidence of "Israel's crimes."⁵⁶

CONCLUSION

In an article on global reactions to the Gaza war, Efraim Karsh, head of Mediterranean and Middle Eastern Studies at King's College, stated that "the Palestinians are the lightning rod unleashed against the Jews, their supposed victimization reaffirming the millenarian demonization of the Jews in general, and the medieval blood libel – that Jews delight in the

⁵³ www.almoslim.net/node/105027, 8 Jan. 2009;
www.ikhwanonline.com/Article.asp?ArtID=44175&SecID=0, 12 Jan. 2009;
www.felesteen.ps/?action=showwrite&id=5117, 15 March 2009.

⁵⁴ Jonathan Cook, "Human Rights Criticism of Israel's War Crimes Mounts," *The Electronic Intifada*, 9 Jan. 2009; *al-Abram Weekly*, 22 Jan. 2009. See also *al-Quds al-'Arabi*, 12 Jan. 2009; *New York Times*, 11 Feb. 2009.

⁵⁵ www.ikhwanonline.com/Article.asp?ArtID=45010&SecID=0, 4 Feb. 2009.
See also *al-Akhbar*, 11 Feb. 2009.

⁵⁶ PalMedia website, Gaza, 26 Jan., as quoted from Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center, *The Battle for Hearts and Minds*, 27 Jan. 2009.

blood of others – in particular."⁵⁷ Karsh's conclusion derives from the extent and ferocity of criticism of Israel during the war. Muslim antisemitism was growing in scope and extremism to the point that it had become a credible strategic threat to Israel, and increasingly found its own Islamic reasons for anti-Jewish hatred through new interpretations of Islamic history and scripture, according to a new report by the Israeli semi-official Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center released in April.⁵⁸ The report's basic premise, however, that antisemitic sentiments were basically injected into Muslim lands and spurred by opposition to Zionism and by Nazi rhetoric was contested by Andrew G. Bostom, an American physician who became involved in the study of antisemitism in the wake of the rise of Muslim antisemitic manifestations. In his book *The Legacy of Islamic Antisemitism*, Bostom, challenged "the conventional academic and journalistic wisdom which continues to assert Muslim Jew hatred is only a recent phenomenon that began in the late 19th or early 20th centuries," and was a mere by-product of the Arab-Israeli conflict. Refuting also the claim that this strand of antisemitism was an amalgam of re-cycled medieval Christian Judeophobic motifs and European racist propaganda, he attempted to prove by meticulous documentation of texts that Muslim hatred of Jews was not a "borrowed phenomenon" but a legacy deeply rooted in Islam's sacred texts which affected Jewish life in Muslim lands.⁵⁹

Arab commentators reject such charges. In reaction to the US State Department's global report on antisemitism, published in March, they claimed that the term the "new antisemitism" it employed encompassed any criticism of Israeli policy. They challenged the need for monitoring antisemitism by a governmental agency, especially when the really disquieting phenomena were the Israeli "massacres" and "ethnic cleansing." "Israeli crimes," they charged, were the real cause for the increase of antisemitism.⁶⁰

⁵⁷ Efraim Karsh, "What's Behind Western Condemnation of Israel's War Against Hamas?" *Jerusalem Issue Brief* 8, no. 17, 11 Jan. 2009.

⁵⁸ *Jerusalem Post*, 22 April; Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center, Contemporary Arab-Muslim anti-Semitism, its Significance and Implications, 17 April.

⁵⁹ Andrew G. Bostom, "Misunderstanding Islamic Antisemitism," *American Thinker*, 11 May; Andrew G. Bostom, *The Legacy of Islamic Antisemitism* (Amherst, NY, 2007).

⁶⁰ *Al-Watan*, 15 March; *al-Abram*, 17 March.

Yet, despite this gloomy picture, it should be noted that the interfaith dialogue continued in the course of the year, promoting principles of human rights, freedom of expression and religious tolerance.⁶¹ Discussing the difference between Jew-hatred and hostility toward Israel, Lebanese commentator Joseph Bishara on the liberal website elaph, criticized the Islamist and particularly Hamas discourse for intentionally confounding the terms Jews and Israel, and channeling their hostility from Israel's deeds to the Jewish religion and to Jews at large. If the Arabs and Muslims, he concluded, called on the world to distinguish between Muslims and terrorism, it was incumbent upon Arabs and Muslims to stop confusing their enmity toward the Israeli occupation with the Jews.⁶²

Moreover, in parallel to the traditional discourse on the Holocaust, the limits of Muslim/Arab Holocaust representation were tested with the publication of a novel published in French by Algerian author Boualem Sansal, *Le village de l'Allemand ou le journal des Frères Schiller* (The Village of the German, or the Journal of the Schiller Brothers), which centers on the Holocaust and the Algerian attitude toward the Nazis during WWII.⁶³ On November 20, the film of Jewish French filmmaker Claude Miller, *The Secret*, dealing with the shattered life of a Jewish family in occupied France, opened the Tunis European Film Festival. Although both the book (in the Algerian daily *al-Bilad*), and screening of the film were criticized in the Arab media, they reflect a change and a degree of courage on the part of some Arab intellectuals in dealing with the issue since, as film critic Khamis al-Khayyati claimed, they treated the Holocaust as a real historic event that had nothing to do with the situation in Gaza.⁶⁴

⁶¹ In mid-November, for instance, a meeting was held in New York between representatives of the three monotheistic religions – *al-Quds al-'Arabi*, 29 Nov, 2008.

⁶² www.elaph.com/ElaphWeb/AsdaElaph/2008/4/322613.htm, 18 April.

⁶³ *Al-Bilad*, 13 Jan.; *La-Croix*, 16 Jan.; *Le Monde*, 17 Jan.; *Ha'aretz*, 18 Jan.

⁶⁴ *Filastin*, 22 Nov.; *al-Jazeera.net*, 23 Nov.; *al-Arabiya.net*, 28 Nov.; *al-Watan* (Saudi Arabia), 30 Nov; MEMRI, Special Dispatch, No. 2155, 17 Dec.

IRAN

One of the founding precepts of the Islamic Revolution and one that has guided its path ever since has been the uncompromising battle between the *mostaz'efin* (the oppressed) and the *mostakberin* (arrogant [western imperialism]). These two notions divide the world between righteousness and falsehood, between justice and injustice. For the Islamic Republic of Iran the cause of the *mostaz'efin* is one of the mainstays of its policy, at least officially. Iran's attitude toward Israel and Zionism is based on this principle, regarding Israel as a *mostakberin* which has crushed the just rights of the defenseless Palestinians. Alongside their continuous denunciations of Zionism and Israel during the past thirty years, the leaders of the Islamic Republic have continually reasserted the fact that they differentiate between Jews and Zionists.

THE ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN AND THE JEWISH COMMUNITY – THIRTY YEARS AFTER

In 1979, with the victory of the revolution, the first challenge the Jewish community faced was to define and build ties with the new institutions and leaders. The anti-Israel and anti-Zionist orientation of the revolution, which was evident from the outset, made this task particularly urgent. On May 14, 1979, almost four months after returning to Iran, leader of the revolution Ruhollah Mousavi Khomeini outlined his views concerning the status of the Jewish community in Iran, at a meeting with Jewish spiritual leaders. He said that the Islamic Republic's attitude toward Iran's religious minorities would be the same as toward other members of the Iranian nation; Islam would not discriminate against them in any way. At the meeting he compared Moses' struggle against the pharaohs of Egypt with the Islamic Republic's struggle against the *mostakberin*. The Zionists, he said, who cooperated with the *mostakberin*, deserved the loathing of all Jews for carrying out crimes against the *mostaz'efin* in the name of Judaism.

Khomeini thus established the distinction between Jews and Zionists, laying the foundations for the official policy of the Islamic Republic of Iran with the words, "We know that the narrative of the Jewish community differs from that of the Zionists" (*ma midanim keb hassab-e jame'e-e yahood qir az hassab-e jame'e-e anbast*).

Realizing the importance of this differentiation to its wellbeing, the Jewish community has done everything in its power to express disapproval of Zionism and Israel. Its representatives have participated in demonstrations, carrying signs with slogans such as "Death to Israel," and after any Israeli operation in Lebanon or against the Palestinians, the

community has published denunciations of Israel and its policies. In August 2006, during Israel's war against Hizballah, the representative committee of Iranian Jewry announced its willingness to hospitalize Lebanese and Palestinians wounded in the "savage killing carried out by the army of the Zionist regime." In response to the Gaza war (late December 2008–mid-January 2009) the supreme religious leader of the Jewish community, Haham Mashalleh Golestani-Nejad, issued a religious ruling that called on Jews to boycott Zionist products. In an interview with Fars News Agency, he said the Zionists were not the sons of Jacob and did not belong to the nation of Moses, and their deeds were illegitimate, contravening the laws of the Torah. Siamak Moreh-Zedek, the Jewish representative in the Majles (Iranian parliament), praised the victory of the oppressed of Gaza, and applauded the Islamic Republic for aiding the people there and facilitating their victory.⁶⁵

Alongside these efforts, Iranian Jews have gone to great lengths to stress loyalty to the Islamic Republic. In his book titled *The Iranian Jews* published in 1990, Ali Asqar Mostafavi, a member of the Iranian Jewish Committee, referred to Shi'i culture as being an umbrella under which the Jews and the Jewish religion had found protection. An important event enabling the community to express support for the revolution takes place annually when the Islamic Republic celebrates its victory. In 2009, at the official gathering to mark the thirtieth anniversary of the revolution, Siamak Moreh-Zedek said that the Islamic revolution strengthened the possibility of brotherhood between the believers of different monotheistic religions. The 1979 revolution had been neither political nor economic in nature but a cultural and religious uprising, he said, and one of its most important achievements was the transformation of a secular society into a religious one.

JEWS AND ZIONISTS – AN OBSCURE DISTINCTION

The Jewish community's consistent efforts to differentiate themselves from Zionists are challenged repeatedly by the remarks and declarations of Iranian officials, who mention Jews and Zionists interchangeably. The seemingly simple division has not always been easy to follow at the official level and even less so at the conceptual one. During the 64th session of the General Assembly of the United Nations in September 2009, Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad pronounced: "It is no longer acceptable that a small minority dominate the politics, economy

⁶⁵ <http://www.farsnews.com/newstext.php?nn=8505250536>.

and culture of major parts of the world through its complex networks, establish a new form of slavery, and harm the reputation of other nations, even European ones and the US, to attain its racist ambitions."⁶⁶ Nevertheless, in an interview to the Associated Press, a day before this speech, Ahmadinejad tried to clarify the distinction: "We differentiate between Jews and Zionists; Zionism is a political party but the Jews are followers of a Divine Messenger."⁶⁷

Due to the Islamic Republic's stance on the Palestinian issue, Zionism, Israel and even Jews and Judaism are dominant topics not only in the political arena but also in the publishing, media and academic ones. Over the last several years, more than 80 books dealing with Judaism and/or Zionism have been published in the Islamic Republic of Iran. "Global Zionism" has also been the explicit theme of several TV productions of IRINN (Islamic Republic of Iran News Network). Two of these were alleged documentaries: *The Secrets of Armageddon* and *The Secrets of Armageddon 2 – Army of Shadows*, screened in 2008 and 2009, respectively. The first series made widespread use of *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion* to prove that international Zionism was aiming to take over the world. Over twenty-six episodes, the film presented the supposed historical schemes of global Zionism to take control over Iran. The second production, premiered on August 22, 2009 (the first day of Ramadan), dealt with "the historical, social and political roots of the cultural invasion of the Crusado-Zionist West in the last four centuries."⁶⁸ According to IRINN, the decision to produce a sequel was made due to the popularity of the first series in Iran and abroad.⁶⁹

The Islamic Republic of Iran directs considerable efforts toward substantiating its claims against Jews and Zionists upon supposedly academic grounds. Abdollah Shahbazi, former head of the Political Studies and Research Institute (PSRI)⁷⁰ and a well-known historian in Iran, has published over the last decade a comprehensive five-volume study, titled *The Jew and Parsi Plutocrats, British Imperialism and Iran*, which contains conspiratorial anti-Jewish themes and has been uploaded to his

⁶⁶ http://www.un.org/ga/64/generaldebate/pdf/IR_en.pdf.

⁶⁷ <http://cms.mfa.gov.ir/cms/cms/Tehran/fa/news/17778>.

⁶⁸ <http://smostaghaci.persianblog.ir/post/324>.

⁶⁹ As evidence of its popularity, 25,000 websites reportedly responded to the series, or posted excerpts with English or German subtitles. Ibid.

⁷⁰ One of the leading institutes in the Islamic Republic for contemporary Iranian historical research, <http://www.ir-psri.com/>.

website.⁷¹ Pseudo-scholarly books, articles and studies continuously "uncover" and analyze the history of Jews and Zionism. Suffice to mention two books published in 2006: *The Ungrateful Loan Holders – a Short History of Judaism and Jews in Iran*, and *Introducing Judaism to Youth – Why the Jews Should Be Driven Out of Palestine?* In 2008, in addition to exhibitions and conferences on the subjects of Judaism and Zionism, multimedia software also became available: "The Research Project on Satan," for example, presents discussions on these issues. Multimedia software on Judaica was displayed, ironically, during the seventeenth international Qur'an exhibition held in the Great Mosque of Tehran.⁷² The software includes information regarding "the image of Jews in the Qur'an," "seditious acts of Jews in the early period of Islam," *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, and a complete version of Henry Ford's booklet "The International Jew."⁷³

THE ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN AND THE HOLOCAUST

Much has been said and written regarding the Islamic Republic's attitude toward the Holocaust. Like Zionism and Judaism, the Holocaust has been the topic of books, articles and TV productions. Since 2007 more than ten books have been published in Iran directly tackling the issue of the Holocaust. These include *Holocaust and Islamophobia* (Council [Jameeh Modarresin] of Qom Islamic Academy, 2007) and *The Hidden Half – the Creators of the Myth of the Holocaust* (Kayhan, 2008).

Ahmadinejad's frequent inflammatory statements regarding the Holocaust have reinforced denial attitudes in Iran and attracted worldwide attention, as illustrated by Iran expert David Menashri.⁷⁴ Yet, alongside the extremism of official public statements, one can point to a change in the essence of claims regarding the Holocaust. The traditional ones were aimed mostly at distorting, belittling its historical significance, or trivializing Holocaust atrocities,⁷⁵ and demonstrating that the Zionists were using the Holocaust to attract sympathy and legitimize their actions.⁷⁶ In recent years, the demand for "impartial research" of the

⁷¹ <http://www.shahbazi.org/Plutocracy/index.htm>.

⁷² <http://www.irna.ir/View/FullStory/?NewsId=674045>.

⁷³ [http://hanif-ngo.ir/index.php?option=com_content&view=article &id=43&Itemid=57](http://hanif-ngo.ir/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=43&Itemid=57).

⁷⁴ <http://www.tau.ac.il/Anti-Semitism/asw2005/menashri.html>.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ This line of argument was well summarized in an article titled: "Holocaust – the Goose that Lays Golden Eggs," *Jam-e Jam* online, 15 Nov. 2003.

Holocaust has been added to this discourse. In May 2006 in an interview to *Der Spiegel* less than a year after his election to the presidency, Ahmadinejad said, "we have started a significant debate. We ask two clear questions: one, did the Holocaust really happen?... We believe that if a historical event really occurred, the more you examine it and the more you talk about it, the clearer it becomes... Let an impartial group from all over the world examine it... In Europe there are two opinions regarding the subject: there is a group of scholars or people, most of them with political motives who say the Holocaust happened; however, another group of scholars disagrees with this opinion and most of those have been arrested."⁷⁷ Ahmadinejad repeated the same argumentation in his interview to Larry King on CNN (September 23, 2008). In referring to the Holocaust Ahmadinejad said: "They just simply do not allow anyone to freely discuss the history that happened. They just say this is our account of the history and this is what happened and everybody else just listen... What I'm saying is let more research be done... on that history, there is a claim that the extent of this calamity was what it was, there are people who agree with it, there are people who disagree, some completely deny it, some absolutely agree with the whole account of it. What we were saying is that we should have an impartial group do their own research about the extent of the calamity... and let them announce the result."⁷⁸

The call to conduct "impartial research" regarding the Holocaust was directed not only at western countries; Iran, itself, took a step in this direction. In December 2006, it hosted an international conference that was intended to provide an opportunity to "clarify the hidden and open corners of this issue."⁷⁹ At the last session the participants resolved to establish a foundation to strengthen motivation for conducting more research into the Holocaust in order "to find out the truth."⁸⁰ Mohammad Ali Ramin, director of the conference, was unanimously elected as head of this "international foundation to review the Holocaust."⁸¹ Ramin, an engineer by training, is a political scientist and publicist who lived for many years in Germany. During that time he cooperated with Iran's

⁷⁷ *Der Spiegel*, May 29, 2006, based on the Farsi translation of the interview as published in <http://www.alefbe.com/translationInterview.htm>.

⁷⁸ <http://www.farsnews.net/newstext.php?nn=8707021357>

⁷⁹ IPIS call for papers: <http://www.ipis.ir>.

⁸⁰ http://www.moqavemat.ir/?lang=fa&state=showbody_news&row_id=7219

⁸¹ http://www.bbc.co.uk/persian/iran/story/2006/12/061214_mf_holocaust.shtml.

foreign ministry and Islamic culture and guidance ministry and organized dozens of political gatherings and cultural seminars for the benefit of German-speaking Muslims in Europe.⁸² Ramin is also an advisor of Iran's president and one of his staunchest advocates. In an interview to IRNA (Islamic Republic News Agency) in October 2009, Ramin alluded to a connection between Iran's nuclear program and Ahmadinejad's stand regarding the Holocaust, suggesting there was a link between international pressure on Iran's nuclear program and Ahmadinejad's propensity to raise the Holocaust issue. "In the last thirty years," he said, "international imperialism (*estekbar-e jehani*), together with Zionism, has been repeatedly concocting allegations against the Islamic Republic, one of the main ones in recent years being that regarding Iran's nuclear program." For the first time, he continued, in response to the West's allegations, the president had presented claims regarding one of their own "crimes" (inventing the myth of the Holocaust). In the years prior to the Ahmadinejad era, the West's repeated allegations had put Iran constantly in the position of the accused, but now Iran was the prosecutor, he asserted. Praising Ahmadinejad for his courage in raising the issue of the Holocaust, Ramin told IRNA that by doing so Iran had entered the arena of international diplomacy and management of western public opinion.⁸³

THE TENTH PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION AND THE HOLOCAUST

Besides celebration of its thirtieth anniversary, in 2009 a vigorous presidential campaign was conducted in Iran that ended with controversial election results. In addition, due to Ahmadinejad's repeated statements regarding the Holocaust and international denunciations, it became an issue in the tenth presidential campaign. In his first press conference as a candidate, Mir Hossein Mousavi, representing the pragmatic and reformist wing of Iran's political map, was asked by foreign journalists to clarify his attitude toward the Holocaust. Mousavi said that Islam was a religion of love and kindness that treated the killing of a single individual with the same severity as the killing of many; yet in regard to the Holocaust, there were questions related to the number of Jews killed and their Jewishness. "What I'm saying is if something like the so-called Holocaust happened, why should the Palestinians pay the

⁸² <http://www.farsnews.com/newstext.php?nn=8808101683>.

⁸³ <http://www.irna.ir/View/FullStory/?NewsId=722985>.

price for the Nazis' sin."⁸⁴ On another occasion, Mousavi said that the Holocaust was not Iran's business,⁸⁵ and criticized Ahamdinejad's policy on the matter as not beneficial to Iran. A similar opinion was sounded by Mehdi Karroubi, the other pragmatic reformist candidate. In response to a question of his supporters regarding the truth of the Holocaust, Karroubi said: "I have expressed my view on this subject several times... This event indisputably took place... and there was killing, and it shouldn't matter if in this event six million or six thousand were killed. The Holocaust certainly happened."⁸⁶

Conservative presidential candidate Mohssen Rezaee, former chief commander of the AGIR (Army of the Guardians of the Islamic Revolution), refused to discuss the Holocaust. In an interview to Channel Two of the IRIB (Islamic Republic of Iran's Broadcasting), he said: "We should put aside the Holocaust debate; it is not desirable for us to let this issue enter our revolutionary political literature."⁸⁷

CONCLUSION

In analyzing trends of antisemitism in the Islamic Republic of Iran, one should bear in mind the gap between explicit antisemitic references in books, articles and official statements, and the relative tranquility of the life of the small Jewish community in Iran. According to *New York Times* columnist Roger Cohen, Iran's behavior toward its Jewish community tells us more about Iran, its sophistication and culture, than all the inflammatory rhetoric of its official spokesmen.⁸⁸ Yet, even if one chooses to dwell on this positive aspect, it should be borne in mind that the Islamic Republic's position regarding the Holocaust, its uncompromising attitude toward Zionism, its blurring of the distinction between Jews and Zionists, and its explicit antisemitic discourse increasingly evident in the academic and public sphere should serve as a warning light to all concerned.

⁸⁴ <http://www.farsnews.com/newstext.php?nn=8801171029>.

⁸⁵ <http://aftabnews.ir/vdcawyna.49n0u15kk4.html>.

⁸⁶ <http://aftabnews.ir/vdca06na.49n0a15kk4.html>.

⁸⁷ <http://aftabnews.ir/vdcew78o.jh87ei9bbj.html>.

⁸⁸ <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/02/22/opinion/22iht-edcohen.3.20350579.html>.

TURKEY

Some articles published in fringe right-wing newspapers during 2008 were extremely antisemitic. From the start of Israel's Gaza operation, the virulently antisemitic atmosphere fomented by the fundamentalist press was exacerbated by emotional speeches of state officials. From mid-January they began condemning antisemitic manifestations.

THE JEWISH COMMUNITY

The Jewish community numbers approximately 20,000 out of a total population of 70 million. Some 18,000 live in Istanbul, 1,800 in Izmir and the rest are scattered throughout the country.

The Jewish community is represented by the Chief Rabbinate. There are 23 active synagogues in Turkey, more than half of which are located in Istanbul, which also has Jewish social clubs, a Jewish school, two homes for the elderly and a Jewish hospital. The community publishes a weekly newspaper, *Shalom*, in Turkish and a one-page bulletin in Ladino.

POLITICAL IDEOLOGIES AND PARTIES

The National View (or *Millî Görüş*, in Turkish) is an Islamist ideology and movement developed in 1970 by Necmettin Erbakan and now continued by the Felicity Party. The National View promotes Islamic values and opposes Israel, Zionism, the EU, the western world, the US and globalization.

The ruling Justice and Development Party (Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi – AKP) split from the National View movement in 2001. While it defines itself as a conservative democratic party its ideology is influenced by Islam. The "nationalist" stream generally opposes the *umma* (extended Muslim community) concept and imposition of Shar'ia law, although a few of its adherents may be both nationalist and Islamist. It consists of: the traditional Nationalist Action Party (Milliyetçi Hareket), the second largest opposition parliamentary party; left-wing groups (such as the Workers Party – İşçi Partisi, which is socialist in its economic agenda, but supports nationalist values), which oppose the EU, the US and globalization; and various small groups. Nationlist supporters attack the allegedly pro-Israel and pro-US line of the Justice and Development Party led by Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan. The main opposition party is the secular, socio-democratic Republican People's Party (Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi – CHP), which is a strong upholder of Atatürk's legacy. It also has nationalist traits, in that it views foreign and economic affairs through a nationalist prism.

ANTISEMITIC ACTIVITY

The Media

Until the start of Israel's war in Gaza on December 27, most antisemitism in Turkey was expressed in the media. Some articles published in the Islamist *Vakit* and *Milli Gazete* (semi-official organ of the National View), and the ultra-nationalist *Ortadoğu* and *Yeni Çağ* were extremely antisemitic. A few columnists writing for the more mainstream *Yeni Şafak* also wrote antisemitic articles. Some antisemitic references were in the context of criticism of Israel: labeling Israeli attacks against civilians as genocide; comparing Zionism with Nazism and Israeli leaders with Hitler; and cursing Israel and praying for a world without it. Jewish conspiracy theory themes, such as "Jews rule the world" and quotations from *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*; the claim that Israel is buying up land through Jewish Turkish citizens in southeast Turkey for colonization as part of the biblical Eretz Israel Project, whose borders are the Euphrates and the Nile; and the allegation that Israeli soldiers are cooperating with the Kurds in northern Iraq against Turkey, since Jews and Kurds are "relatives" – are frequent themes in those newspapers.

Another subject that continued to figure in 2008 was the "Shabtaists," the followers of Shabetay Zvi, Jews who converted to Islam in the 16th century. Today's alleged followers are branded secret Jews and are accused of having hidden agendas aimed at harming Turkey. Some surnames and families are clearly identifiable as "Shabtaists", but they try never to expose themselves. Many years ago a certain "İlgaz Zorlu" applied to the judicial authorities claiming that he was Shabtaist and converted to Judaism by court decision.

Articles praising Hitler and denying Holocaust sometimes appeared in fundamentalist newspapers such as *Milli Gazete* or *Vakit*. TV stations such as the Islamic Mesajtv, although not major channels, take advantage of every news item concerning the Middle East to attack the Jews through derogative religious statements and quotes from the Qu'ran. Furthermore, a significant number of the thousands of local radio channels in Turkey incite to hatred against Jews.

Israel's Gaza Operation

As soon as Israel's Gaza operation began, the focus in Turkey was on Israel's cruelty. Articles praying for a world without Israel became very common in the fundamentalist press, and blatantly antisemitic articles were published without the cover of criticism of Israeli policies.

The fundamentalist press such as *Vakit* warned the chief rabbi of Turkey that it was time for the rabbinate to leave the country because he did not condemn Israel. Comparisons with the Holocaust were rife, with

articles branding Israel's operation a "holocaust" and comparing Israel to Hitler or claiming it was worse than Hitler. They also quoted verses from the Talmud, declared Jews were a cursed nation that fed on blood and stated it was no longer a mistake to declare that all Jews were enemies. A columnist in *Milli Gazete* hoped that eventually no Jew would walk on Turkey's streets ever again.

This virulently anti-Jewish atmosphere was fanned by emotional speeches by state officials, who harshly condemned Israel and supported the Hamas, without calculating the antisemitic effect they might have.

That being said, during all those tense days, no physical attack or incident took place against the Jews of Turkey. It should be also emphasized that from the first day of the operation, the Turkish police took steps to protect Jewish institutions. It should be noted, too, that many liberal journalists writing for papers such as *Hürriyet*, *Milliyet* and *Vatan* wrote more balanced columns, advising people to avoid antisemitism and not distress Turkish Jews, and frequently stating that criticism of Israel should never turn to hostility against Jews.

The announcement made by the Chief Rabbi of Turkish Jews Isak Haleva on January 6, stating that he and his fellow Jews felt deep sadness about the death of innocent people, was read by Prime Minister Erdoğan at a party meeting and applauded.

Following are the most striking events that took place during this period, demonstrating the initial emotional response and gradual attempts to tone down its antisemitic aspects. A cultural association, the Federation of Osmangazi Culture Associations in Eskişehir, organized an anti-Israel press conference, at which it displayed a banner stating, "Jews and Armenians cannot enter but dogs can." A complaint was lodged and legal proceedings were to follow.

Banners appeared around the city of Istanbul in two versions; "This does not exist in your book [the Torah] either," and "You cannot be the child of Moses." They were removed following intervention by the Turkish Jewish Community.

The Ministry of Education circulated a directive to all schools urging students to stand for a minute's silence in memory of the children killed in Gaza. An essay and painting competition about the war it also organized was canceled by the minister the following day, on the grounds that it might incite antisemitism among children.

Following a visit by the leaders of Turkish Jewish Community, the mufti of Istanbul who, along with other imams in the mosque had delivered emotional speeches denouncing Israel, softened his tone on the following Fridays and urged his followers to behave fairly toward Jewish citizens.

Further, awareness of increasing tensions by the state's leaders, led Prime Minister Erdoğan to begin a campaign on January 13 to condemn antisemitism. From then on, the media, too, began criticizing antisemitism and emotions began to cool. On January 15, the Turkish Jewish Community issued a press statement emphasizing the right of its members to equality with Turkish citizens and stating that they had nothing to do with what was going on in the Middle East. A day later, Erdoğan made a stronger statement condemning hatred against Turkish Jews, also noting they had no connection to the events in Gaza.

After the operation ended, a letter by a prominent Turkish Jewish psychologist explaining the feelings experienced by the Jews of the country during that period was published in a leading newspaper. She said that as a Turkish citizen with equal rights, she was embarrassed by the atmosphere created in her homeland Turkey against Turkish Jews. Subsequently, she received a phone call from President Gül, who expressed his sympathy.

There followed a series of declarations both by Turkey's leaders, condemning antisemitism and assuring the Jews of their status as citizens with equal rights, and by representatives of the Jewish Community, including a demand for legislation against hate speech.

Books

Many of the best-selling antisemitic books of 2007 remained popular in 2008. These included *Moses' Kids*, about Prime Minister Erdoğan and his wife, and *Moses' Rose*, about President Abdullah Gül (see *ASW* 2007). Translations of *The Protocols of the Learned Elders of Zion* were sold under new names, such as *Being a Jew in the Mind*, although the tract is less popular and not highly visible at bookstores.

Books by Turkish authors that promote Jewish conspiracy theories continued to be sold in Turkish bookstores. These included two older works *The Code of Israel* and *The Hidden Laws of Talmud* by "Hakan Yılmaz Çebi." Both describe the secret plans of Israel and the Jews to conquer the world. Two new books appeared in 2008. *The History of the Jew* by "Mahmut Nana" claims that the Old Testament is distorted by the Jews; as an example, the author provides an alleged quote: "Only the Jews are human; all the others are different types of animals; only the Chosen People deserve eternal life; all the others are donkeys..." The second, a modern version of *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, is titled *The People Who Run the World and Their Systems*, by "İsmail Tokalak."

Many Turkish websites promote anti-Jew hatred and racism. Examples include www.vahdet.com.tr; www.kudusyolu.org and www.kudusyolu.com.

ATTITUDES TOWARD THE HOLOCAUST

Although following Turkey's signature of the UN agreement denoting January 27 as Holocaust Memorial Day, the foreign ministry issued a declaration in 2006 and 2007, no pronouncements were made in 2008 (see *ASW 2007*).

As in previous years, the Independent Cinema Group, with the support of the Jewish Community of Turkey, held a Holocaust cinema week in Istanbul in April, during the week of Israel's Yom Hashoah. Some leading journalists invited to the gala night wrote about the event in their columns. An exhibition of Holocaust photos was also set up in the Istanbul mall housing the cinema.

Another project carried out, together with the History Foundation and Bilgi University, took place on December 18, when a full-day conference discussed the contributions made by Jewish German professors who fled Nazi Germany to the development of modern Turkish universities.

North America

CANADA

Canada witnessed an 8.9 percent rise in antisemitic incidents from the previous year. The 1,135 incidents reported were almost double the number reported in 2003. A large number of antisemitic events were linked to the societal fall-out from the global recession, while the start of the war in Gaza at the year's end resulted in December being the month with the highest number of incidents in 2008. There was an increase in antisemitic outbursts, harassment and intimidation against Jewish students on university campuses.

THE JEWISH COMMUNITY

Based on the 2006 Statistics Canada census, there are approximately 315,000 Jews in Canada out of a total population of 33,224,000. This figure represents a significant drop from the 2001 census figure of 348,605. The main Jewish centers are Toronto (177,300), Montreal (68,500), and Vancouver (21,500). Jewish communal organizations generally regard these figures as an underestimation since the 2006 census was based only on questions regarding ethnic origin; the question relating to religious origin is asked only once every ten years.

The main advocacy organizations are B'nai Brith Canada and the Council for Israel and Jewish Advocacy (CIJA). CIJA oversees the activities of the Canadian Jewish Congress, the Canada-Israel Committee and National Jewish Campus Life. B'nai Brith Canada maintains an independent parallel structure with its League for Human Rights (henceforth, the League), Canada Israel Public Affairs Committee (CIPAC), and Campus Action Initiative.

The Canadian Jewish community publishes some 20 newspapers and journals, including the *Jewish Tribune* and the *Canadian Jewish News*. Approximately 12,000 day school children are served by the Jewish educational system, while thousands more attend supplementary after-school programs affiliated with synagogues. It is estimated that more than half of all Jewish students in the Toronto area, the largest urban concentration in Canada, receive some form of Jewish education, whether formal or supplementary. A recent survey indicates that there are some 70 day schools and supplementary programs and 1,700 Jewish educators in the greater Toronto area alone.

EXTREMIST GROUPS

While the range of symbols and slogans featured in graffiti sightings was broad, swastikas and Nazi-related symbols featured prominently in 176

incidents in the vandalism category of antisemitic manifestations reported in 2008. This constitutes a 17 percent increase from 151 such incidents registered in 2007, despite the fact that a number of police forces have ceased classifying the swastika as an antisemitic incident without further proof of motivation, even if drawn on a Jewish institution.

In a 2009 report, the United States-based Southern Poverty Law Center reported that there were 920 neo-Nazi and white supremacist groups within the United States, including areas bordering Canada. Postings on online forums frequented by individuals who share white supremacist views confirm that persons and groups sharing such opinions can be found throughout Canada.

The increased presence of white supremacists in Calgary has been a cause for concern. In March 2008, a white supremacist group organized a "White Pride" march in downtown Calgary. In July, the same group posted an offer on an online forum providing housing incentives to potential group members. Other recruitment activities were reported to police in August. Like-minded groups have also been active in London, Ontario, where white supremacist flyers were distributed in 2008. A case in Winnipeg, in which a young girl arrived at school with a swastika drawn on her arm, led to public condemnation and brought the family to the attention of Child and Family Services. Although school staff reportedly erased the swastika, the mother later redrew it. The child was removed from the custody of the parents and was under review before the courts. An individual expressing white supremacist views in Saskatchewan has been the subject of criminal and human rights investigations.

Anti-Israel activities led by Muslim and Arab groups, and especially on university campuses, were marked by displays of anti-Jewish slogans and propaganda. Complaints of hate crimes against the Jewish community as a result of such incidents were dismissed by police (see also below). Left wing groups, including unions and church groups, have been active in such activities.

Security and enforcement experts continue to warn about the preparedness for terrorist action of Islamist-based extremist groups operating under cover in Canada.

ANTISEMITIC ACTIVITY

In 2008, 1,135 incidents were reported to the League, as documented in its Audit of Antisemitic Incidents, up 8.9 percent from the previous year and almost double the number since the 584 incidents reported in 2003. Of these, nearly one-half (547) took place in the last four months of the

year. The year-end spike was clearly linked to the upsurge in concern about the economy and widespread coverage of the Madoff scandal (see USA). Further, the beginning of the war in Gaza had an effect. Of the 151 incidents registered in December, the month with the highest total of the year, 70 related to the emerging Mid-East crisis. Of these, 36 occurred in the last few days of the year as tensions heightened. This is typically a very quiet period due to the holiday season (see also below).

Although there were regional differences, a further concentration of incidents (101) was noted in July in Canada overall. Increases during the summer were particularly noticeable in Quebec during July and August, when 63 out of the 245 cases reported in the province occurred – that is 25.7 percent of the total for the entire year in just two months. In rural Quebec, 33 out of the 44 incidents reported during 2008 (75 percent) occurred during those two summer months. This can be explained in part by ongoing prejudice against members of the ultra-Orthodox Jewish community, who customarily vacation in the countryside each year. This is, in fact, a continuation of a trend noted in the 2007 Audit.

Over the last 10 years, there has been an overall upward trend, with incidents jumping more than four-fold. The majority of antisemitic manifestations tend to occur in Ontario, where in 2008, 682 incidents (60.1 percent of the total) took place. Of these, 538 incidents took place in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) and 62 in Ottawa. The figures for Quebec – representing 21.6 percent of all Canadian cases – dropped by 15.8 percent to 245, compared to 291 in 2007. Of these, 201 incidents took place in Montreal. Significant increases in antisemitic incidents took place in 2008 in the western regions of the country – British Columbia (31.1 percent increase), Saskatchewan (56.3 percent), and Alberta (78.6 percent).

Violence, Vandalism, Harassment and Graffiti

Of the total number of reported incidents, 803 involved harassment (70.7 percent) compared to 699 in 2007. There were 318 cases of vandalism, up marginally from the 315 cases in 2007. Violence, however, was down from 28 incidents in 2007 to 14 in 2008. Despite this overall drop, three areas that did not experience violence in 2007 – Quebec Region, Alberta, and Ottawa – all reported violent incidents in 2008.

Within the harassment category, there were 80 threats of physical harm, including death threats, bomb threats, and threats of physical assault. This was a slight decline from the 95 threats registered in 2007. Despite the one percent increase over 2007 in vandalism, certain areas, such as the Atlantic Region, Montreal, Quebec Region, Saskatchewan, and Alberta, saw a significant rise.

Fifty vandalism incidents involved synagogues in 2008. These attacks, which were reported throughout Canada (such as Moncton, Barrie, Montreal, Toronto, Winnipeg, Saskatoon, Edmonton, Vancouver, and Kelowna), represent a significant increase from the number reported in past years: 22 in 2007, 42 in 2006, and 35 in 2005. Twenty-seven cases of harassment involved threatening calls and emails to synagogue staff and clergy. One case of violence (physical assault) took place within a synagogue setting.

In 2008 the federal government launched the Communities at Risk: Security Infrastructure Pilot (SIP) Program, designed to enhance the security infrastructure of communities targeted by hate-motivated crime. Funding for SIP will be made available to eligible places of worship, community centers, and provincially recognized educational institutions.

Antisemitic graffiti was also reported at ten Jewish institutions compared to only six such incidents in 2007. The language of the graffiti was often vicious and threatening, including death threats. Many of these graffiti attacks were accompanied by neo-Nazi symbolism.

A total of 105 private homes were vandalized, down from an all-time high of 132 in 2007. Included in these cases were mezuzah desecrations, a traditional form of antisemitism because the mezuzah instantly identifies a house as Jewish. Swastikas were found on homes and cars in a number of regions. One Jewish resident's car was defaced with the slur "Jewboy." Harassing phone calls to families were frequently reported.

There were 40 cases related directly to the victim's workplace, up from 31 in 2007. These included on-the-job harassment and discrimination by colleagues and supervisors who failed to make reasonable accommodation for religious observance days. Eight of these incidents occurred in government settings. In many of these cases, employees found themselves subject to reprisal as a result of their requests for religious accommodation.

Analysis

The ethnic origin of the perpetrators of reported incidents was documented only where relevant information was available. This was possible in face-to-face encounters where self-identification was provided by the perpetrator. In 2008 there were 31 acts of harassment, vandalism and violence where the perpetrators were identified as being of Arab origin. There is concern that the virulent propaganda being disseminated by "mainstream" Arab/Muslim groups based in Canada may be seen by some of their constituents as a virtual call to action against Jews. Other ethnic groups identified in incidents of harassment

and violence in 2008 were: aboriginal (7), black (5), Russian (5), German (3), Hungarian (3), Chinese (2), Greek (2), Polish (2), and Iranian (1).

Early 2009

The upsurge in incidents noted in December 2008 continued into early 2009. The effect of the economic downturn and the ongoing war in Gaza, which were identified as prime reasons for the spike in incidents at the end of 2008, continued to play out throughout January 2009. Demonstrations against Israel across Canada featured open displays of Jewish hatred. "Death to the Jews" was a chant heard along with "Down with Israel" on the streets of major cities in Canada. University campuses were a prime venue for this continued animosity as tensions heightened and anti-Israel activities intensified. Jewish students reported acts of ongoing harassment and even death threats from fellow students. For example, at York University in Toronto, Jewish students were confronted with open hostility and threats by an angry mob on February 11, 2009. The incident followed a campaign involving both Jewish and non-Jewish student groups to oust the existing student administration (see also *General Analysis*).

Campuses and Schools

There were 76 cases of antisemitism on campuses, sustaining the dramatic escalation in antisemitic activity at universities in 2007 when 78 were cases reported, significantly more than the 36 registered in 2006. Many students report hiding their Jewish identity and refraining from participating in classroom discussions in order to avoid negative interaction in the classroom and university corridors where threats and intimidation are commonplace. The level of anti-Israel activity has escalated. Overall, there was an increase in openly antisemitic outbursts, harassment, and intimidation against Jewish students. The 2007 and 2008 figures suggest that this campaign of hate is in danger of becoming entrenched in Canadian universities.

The scope of violence in educational settings has received significant attention in the public school system, but there has been a much more lackadaisical approach on campus. Ontario's Youth Commissioners Roy McMurtry and Alvin Curling, commenting on youth violence, noted that "racism is worse than it was a generation ago, while there are fewer resources and structures to counter this great evil than existed in years past... Racism is alive and well and wreaking its deeply harmful effect on Ontarians." These comments apply as much to university campuses as to the school system.

There were 57 incidents in school settings, compared to 82 reported in 2007. In nine of those, Jewish day schools or their students were targeted. Others involved vandalism of school buildings with swastikas and other symbols of hate. Neo-Nazi references such as "I love Hitler" were also used. Jewish individuals within the public schools were also singled out. A Jewish teacher received threatening phone calls to her personal residence and a Jewish student at a public school was assaulted.

Internet

In 2008, the League's Anti-Hate Hotline received 405 reports of web-based hate activity with a Canadian connection in terms of content, perpetrators and/or victims, an increase of 30.6 percent over the 310 cases in 2007 and more than double that of 2005. Nearly one-third involved threatening messages, directed at Jewish victims of all ages. The trend toward using a wide variety of networking means, such as blogs, online videos, and text messages continued. On one occasion students on a Toronto campus reported that text messaging was used to quickly gather a group to harass Jewish students. On websites, and via email and social networking sites, Jews were blamed for the economic recession and disasters, such as a propane blast in the city of Toronto in August 2008. A YouTube video declared "Zionist control of world economy causing financial crisis," while a Montreal-based group named "Nazi" was created on Facebook "for the promotion of racism and antisemitism." Virulent hate material, such the notorious forgery *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, was freely available on internet sites, while white supremacists used the internet to discuss strategies and programs to spread their brand of hate.

ATTITUDES TOWARD THE HOLOCAUST AND THE NAZI ERA

Holocaust Denial

There were 42 reported cases of Holocaust denial, down from 55 in 2007, but a significant increase from the 17 recorded in 1999. International events, such as the 2006 Holocaust denial conference sponsored by the Iranian president, and ongoing efforts to spread this type of pernicious propaganda at another Iranian Holocaust denial conference in 2009, have given great encouragement to Holocaust deniers throughout the world.

Holocaust denial appeared frequently in antisemitic postings on the web. The persistence of Holocaust denial in Canada was also encouraged by neo-Nazi and white supremacist activity within the country. The Holocaust was trivialized in the debates leading up to the 2008 federal

election where for example during ugly exchanges, one candidate called another a "Nazi."

Holocaust Commemoration and Education

Canada has continued the process of seeking full membership in the Task Force for International Cooperation on Holocaust Education, Remembrance and Research (ITF). In June 2009, the St. Louis Era Conference, a conference examining Canada's restrictive immigration policy during the Second World War, was due to take place. Organized by the League, this conference was to be the culmination of Canada's efforts to seek membership in the (ITF).

Community events commemorating the nationally proclaimed Holocaust Memorial Day continue to be held in various cities, including the capital city Ottawa, where politicians and other public figures join with community members to reiterate the call for tolerance and understanding. A bill proposing a national monument in Ottawa to commemorate the Holocaust was introduced in the Federal Parliament. Various community groups continue to hold educational events to mark the day. The Law Society of Upper Canada, the organization representing lawyers in the province of Ontario, organizes a commemoration event each year in partnership with the League; the theme in 2008 was the struggle for full disclosure of documentation on war criminals. Holocaust Education Week, hosted by Canada's Holocaust centers, features a wide variety of educational programs that are widely attended.

RESPONSES TO RACISM AND ANTISEMITISM

Legal and Legislative Activity

Only 301 out of the 1,135 cases documented by the League were also reported by victims to the police. In 2007 and 2006, more than one-third of incidents were reported to the police, as well as to the League. This decrease might reflect the fact that a higher percentage of reported cases involved verbal or written harassment, where a criminal remedy is unlikely. It might also reflect reluctance on the part of police to classify incidents such as swastika graffiti as hate motivated. There appears to be a chronic hesitation to contact the police, as victims apparently fear that their claims will not be taken seriously. Likewise, the number of charges laid by police decreased from 18 in 2007 to 15 in 2008. Sociologists and police estimate that only 10 percent of victims of hate crimes ever report their experience.

A 2008 incident involving an attack against two gay women highlights some of the difficulties in seeking redress for criminal acts of hate. Police

refused to label the incident a hate crime, despite the slurs shouted at the women in front of several witnesses. The police stated that the matter fell outside the scope of the legislative provisions of inciting hatred. A coalition of community groups, including the League, had urged that hate motivation be a crucial part of the investigation.

Similarly, after a year long investigation, police in Hamilton, Ontario, announced in February 2009 that no charges would be brought relating to a 2008 McMaster University campus rally where slogans such as "Death to Jews" were shouted. Hate crime officers indicated that they did not have the necessary evidence to proceed, although they noted that some protestors had "crossed the line."

Even where charges were brought, some of the punishments were considered by the League to be too light. In November 2008, for example, Rouba Elmerhebi Fahd was convicted as an accessory after the fact in her son's 2004 firebombing of the United Talmud Torahs Jewish Day School by a Quebec court and given a 12-month probationary sentence. In February 2009, while Omar Bulphred, one of two individuals charged in connection with the firebombing of Montreal Jewish institutions in 2006 and 2007, was handed a seven-year sentence after pleading guilty, Azim Ibragimov, his co-accused, was sentenced to only four years. Further, in 2006, Mustafa Taj attacked four teenagers in Calgary after determining that they were Jewish. In July 2008, he received only a one-year jail sentence with credit for time served.

In October 2008, the Ontario Court of Justice imposed a 45-day jail sentence on Luke Granados for willfully promoting hatred, followed by one year of probation. He was arrested for displaying a black plastic skeleton mounted on a flagpole flying the Confederate flag. The skeleton was suspended by its neck with a noose. This incident, along with other hate-related activity in the same area targeting Asian fishermen, was lauded by community groups as a paradigm for what "a coordinated effort by law enforcement officers and the judicial system" can achieve.

Other prominent court cases heard in 2008 included the November hate crime re-trial of Aboriginal leader David Ahenakew concerning remarks he made at a conference and then to a journalist in 2002 (see *ASW* 2003). In February 2009, the decision of the Saskatchewan provincial court was handed down acquitting him. Whether this decision is ultimately appealed by the Crown or not, B'nai Brith Canada has called on the federal government to step in and review the existing hate crimes legislation.

In February 2008, the criminal system levied a six month prison sentence on Bill Noble, who was convicted of "willfully promoting hatred against identifiable groups, namely Jews, Blacks, homosexual or

gay persons, non-whites and persons of mixed race or ethnic origin" with virulent hate on the internet. His six-month sentence is to be followed by three years of probation, which included terms restricting his internet usage. Though such convictions are rare, this case emphasizes that the criminal system is capable of combating the ever-growing problem of web-based hate.

Canada's human rights system dealt with a number of antisemitic incidents in 2008. In one, a tribunal examined a white supremacist website (BC White Pride) that included postings decrying the alleged power of the Jewish community. One article on the website accused Jews of using their "vast power and their unchallenged control of almost every walk of life" to manipulate and control "White nations." In January 2008, the site's operator was fined \$6,000 and ordered to desist from posting similar messages on the internet. Another website, the Canadian Heritage Alliance, which included postings calling the Holocaust a "holohoax," "big business," and "the most important trump card for international zionism," was also ordered to cease posting such comments. The tribunal decision (September), however, did not mandate a monetary penalty.

There has been much discussion in the public realm about the human rights system. In one incident, the complainant alleged bias and requested disclosure regarding staffing of the commissions in order to determine whether there were conflicting allegiances or loyalties. Additionally, there is a question as to whether tribunal decisions can be sufficiently enforced. Terry Tremaine, for example, was reportedly still posting antisemitic material to the internet, despite a 2007 cease and desist order issued by the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal (see *ASW* 2007).

Nazi War Criminals

The "Tenth Annual Report on Canada's Crimes against Humanity and War Crimes Program 2006–2007" was released by the Department of Citizenship and Immigration, Department of Justice and the Solicitor General of Canada in 2008. According to the report, 160 allegations had not moved beyond the initial stages; 20 active files were being investigated and 7 cases were under litigation.

In January 2008, Michael Seifert, who tortured and killed at least 18 prisoners in Italy's Bolzano concentration camp between 1944 and 1945, was extradited to Italy to face the life sentence imposed on him *in absentia* after losing all appeals in Canada (see *ASW* 2000-1 and subsequent reports).

Revocation proceedings against Jura Skomateczuk, a former guard at the Travniki concentration camp in Poland, were ongoing in the Federal Court (see *ASW 2004*). In May the federal government announced that it would revoke the citizenship of Walter Oberlander and Jacob Fast clearing the way for their deportation. Oberlander appealed the decision, but on October 27, 2008, the Federal Court upheld the decision to revoke his citizenship. In 2009, the Federal Court was to judicially review the decision not to strip the citizenship of Wasyl Odynsky, a former guard at the SS forced labor camps of Trawniki and Poniatowa, following a court challenge by B'nai Brith Canada in 2007.

Public Education

Promoting tolerance and understanding continues to be the focus of public education efforts by Jewish communal organizations. For example, the League holds an annual Student Human Rights Awards to encourage grade school students from a range of backgrounds to engage creatively on issues relating to human rights. Public schools and educators can also take advantage of outreach and educational programming offered by Holocaust education centers based in communities across Canada, and by the Friends of Simon Wiesenthal Centre for Holocaust Studies which runs a Tools for Tolerance program. Fast – Fighting Antisemitism Together continues to host school-related activities to promote harmony and diversity through its "Choose Your Voice" anti-racism education program. Several grassroots initiatives continue to operate, such as the "Walking Together," project created by Edmonton-based Rabbi David Kunin, designed to encourage understanding of religious diversity in Canada among school-age children. One such example of outreach and educational programming took place in November 2008. The League organized the Community Alliance Forum: Building Partnerships to Counter Hate in order to collaborate and communicate in a forum targeted at promoting positive change. Numerous speakers and panelists addressed issues of racism in the workshops and seminars spread out over the course of two days, and discussed effective means of countering its ongoing strength.

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

A total of 1,352 incidents of vandalism, harassment and physical assaults against Jewish individuals, property and community institutions were reported in 2008, representing a decline for the 4th consecutive year. The antisemitic rhetoric of anti-Israel groups was especially marked in connection with the 60th anniversary of Israel's independence, and with Israel's military operation in Gaza. With the onset of the world financial crisis, antisemites across the ideological spectrum increased their propagandizing on the classic theme of Jewish control of banks and governments. The year 2008 saw a remarkable resurgence of the long-running antisemitic canard that Jews are more loyal to the State of Israel than to their own country. White supremacists accused election candidates John McCain and Barack Obama of being pawns of American Jews.

THE JEWISH COMMUNITY

The Jewish community in the United States – the largest concentration of Jews in the world outside Israel – numbers 5.2 million, or 2.2 percent of the total population of 282.1 million. The bulk of American Jewry live in major metropolitan areas and their environs, including New York (1.45 million), Los Angeles (519,000), Southeast Florida (498,000), Chicago (261,000), Boston (227,000), San Francisco Bay (210,000), Philadelphia (206,000) and Cleveland (82,000). The intermarriage rate is high, accounting for more than 50 percent of all unions involving a Jewish partner.

Leading national Jewish organizations include the American Jewish Committee, American Jewish Congress, American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JDC), Anti-Defamation League (ADL), B'nai Brith, Hadassah, Zionist Organization of America (ZOA), Jewish War Veterans (JWV), American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC), and many other religious, fraternal and Zionist groups. The Conference of Presidents of Major Jewish Organizations acts as the domestic and foreign policy umbrella group for 52 member organizations. The United Jewish Communities (UJC) represents Jewish community federations and independent Jewish communities throughout North America.

There is an active Jewish press and almost every community with a large Jewish population supports its own English-language weekly.

RACIST ORGANIZATIONS AND GROUPS

White Supremacists and Neo-Nazis

The year 2008 saw the continued decline of US neo-Nazi groups, which have been plagued by infighting and a lack of leadership. In general, white supremacists are attempting to exploit important social issues such

as immigration, black-on-white crime, and the country's economic crisis to strengthen their groups, increase their appeal to potential recruits, and push their antisemitic themes into mainstream circles.

A major focus of white supremacists in 2008 was immigration of Latin Americans, and especially Mexicans, into the United States. Antisemites, including Indiana-based neo-Nazi Tom Metzger and Michigan-based neo-Nazi Jeff Schoep, stoked the anti-immigration message that was present in both mainstream and extremist circles. Blaming Jews for promoting diversity and multiculturalism, they argued that Jews have engineered an open immigration policy in order to diminish the power of white Americans. Anti-immigrant rallies attracted the attendance and support of antisemites and neo-Nazis, who claimed they were able to recruit individuals into their movement at these events. However, their efforts to inject antisemitism into the more mainstream anti-immigrant movement has been largely unsuccessful.

White supremacists also promoted antisemitism in connection with the 2008 US presidential race. They accused both John McCain and Barack Obama of being pawns of American Jews, and alleged that each of the presidential candidates was pursuing goals which, at the behest of Jews, would undermine the culture and security of the United States. In October, former Klansman David Duke warned on his website that both McCain and Obama "are simply in the pockets of the Jewish extremist financial network, the all powerful Jewish Lobbies like AIPAC, and the Jewish-dominated mass media." A typical post on the white supremacist website Stormfront stated, "I don't want McCain or Obama to be the president. They're both New World Order candidates and are on the payroll of the Jews... the Zionist have [sic] set it up where either person will take us further into bondage."

In November 2008, just days after Barack Obama won the presidential election, David Duke convened a conference in Memphis, Tennessee, for fellow extremists to discuss their movement's plans. In a speech to white supremacists from the US, Canada and Russia, Duke blamed Jewish control of the media and Hollywood for brainwashing white people into accepting Obama as their president.

Another noteworthy development in the world of white supremacists in 2008 was the censuring of Kevin MacDonald, a tenured antisemitic professor of evolutionary psychology at California State University, Long Beach (CSULB), who serves as an ideologue for white supremacists and extremists. MacDonald has long argued that antisemitism, including the anti-Jewish hatred exhibited by the Nazis and the perpetrators of the Spanish Inquisition, is a "rational" response to Judaism. He also claims that Jews are attempting to undermine white Americans and destroy the

European heritage of the United States. In October 2008, CSULB's Academic Senate voted to "firmly and unequivocally disassociate itself from the antisemitic and white ethnocentric views" of MacDonald. The previous month, F. King Alexander, president of CSULB, released a statement saying he considered MacDonald's views "deplorable and reprehensible." These statements will not diminish MacDonald's influence on the white supremacist movement, but may help marginalize him as a mainstream academic now that his views have become public.

ANTISEMITIC ACTIVITY

The number of antisemitic incidents in the United States in 2008 declined for the fourth consecutive year. A total of 1,352 incidents of vandalism, harassment and physical assaults against Jewish individuals, property and community institutions were reported to the ADL in 2008, representing a 7 percent decline from the 1,460 incidents reported in 2007.

There were 37 antisemitic assaults on Jewish individuals (or individuals thought to be Jewish). These included attacks with baseball bats and BB guns, punching, and rock-throwing. In some cases victims were hospitalized. There were no antisemitic homicides.

Leading Jewish community institutions and communal properties were among the targets of 702 cases of antisemitic vandalism. Dozens of graves at a Jewish cemetery in Chicago were defaced with swastikas and symbols of hate groups (see below for further examples).

There were 613 cases of antisemitic harassment, including verbal attacks and slurs against Jewish individuals (or individuals perceived to be Jewish); antisemitism conveyed in written or electronic communications, including antisemitic cyberbullying; and antisemitic speeches, picketing and events. Among the latter were a small number of left-wing protests containing antisemitic elements (see below).

In some cases, anti-Israel sentiments may have led to the targeting of Jewish institutions. One of the repeated defacements of the San Francisco Holocaust Memorial, for example, included the phrase "Israel, their blood is on your hands." In May, an Israeli flag was burned in front of a synagogue in Brooklyn, NY.

When Israel's Gaza operation began in late December, signs containing Jewish stars and swastikas, and the phrases, "Israel: How many innocents will you kill... Stop the cold blooded murder" were left on the door of Temple Beth El in Dalton, GA. Also, 22 Chicago Jewish institutions received a letter threatening bomb attacks unless Israel left Gaza. At least five other Gaza-related incidents of harassment or

vandalism against Jewish institutions took place in January 2009 (see below).

Antisemitism and the Economic Crisis

With the onset of the world financial crisis, antisemites across the ideological spectrum increased their propagandizing on the classic theme of Jewish control of banks and governments, and alleged that Jews and Zionists were responsible for the US economic recession. Publications such as *American Free Press*, an extremist tabloid published by the notorious white supremacist Willis Carto, accused Jews of "pillaging" the American people and concluded that Jews "should be treated as the traitors they are." Some postings to online discussion groups blamed the financial crisis on "Zionist Robber Barons" and called on ordinary Americans to "reclaim their country from rapacious Zionism." Some antisemites tried to connect the financial crisis with another perennial favorite – 9/11 conspiracy theories. The antisemitic website Rense.com, for example, run by Oregon-based conspiracy theorist Jeff Rense, posted an essay alleging that the fiscal crisis and the 9/11 attacks were both part of a vast Jewish conspiracy to control the United States. The essay has since been reposted on numerous sites across the internet.

An original antisemitic conspiracy theory that developed out of the crisis alleged that Lehman Brothers, a Wall Street investment firm, sent \$400 billion to Israeli banks shortly before it declared bankruptcy. This theory, which has no basis in reality, originally appeared on a website associated with noted US antisemite Willis Carto and was disseminated widely on other sites.

A surprising amount of anti-Jewish rhetoric regarding the economic crisis also appeared on popular websites and venues such as YouTube, Yahoo! Groups, and the comments sections of online mainstream newspaper sites. A September video on YouTube entitled "The Court Jewsters" conflated photos and clips of failing banks with those of former Federal Reserve chairmen Ben Bernanke and Alan Greenspan, as well as other Jews. Another YouTube video entitled "We the People" blames Jews for "enslaving" non-Jews to serve their own interests and greed. The video stated, "...the same Jewish bankers have been robbing us in this same manner for nearly an entire century now." Thousands of antisemitic comments were posted on online discussion boards run by Yahoo! Finance. After receiving numerous complaints, Yahoo deleted most of those posts.

Following shortly after the onset of the US recession, the revelation of a \$65 billion Ponzi scheme run by Jewish Wall Street financier Bernard Madoff led to yet more antisemitic rhetoric about Jews and

money. "Ho hum, another Crooked Wall Street Jew. Find a Jew who isn't Crooked. Now that would be a story," wrote one anonymous poster on a mainstream financial discussion site. "The greed and corruption of the Jews has brought the financial system and the American economy low," declared another.

Although Jews are always a convenient scapegoat in times of crisis, the Madoff scandal, and the fact that so many of the investors he defrauded were Jewish, created an environment in which antisemitic expressions could flourish. For weeks, the mainstream news media featured stories that dealt, at least tangentially, with the impact of Madoff's embezzlement on Jewish institutions and their management of financial portfolios. For some Americans, this may have reinforced the allegations of antisemites that Jews are obsessed with money.

The Disloyalty Charge

The year 2008 saw a remarkable resurgence of the long-running antisemitic canard that American Jews are more loyal to the State of Israel than to their own country, and that they willingly sacrifice the best interests of the US in favor of their own interests or those of Israel. An extreme formulation of this allegation in 2008 was a meeting organized by the small Muslim Jamaat al-Muslimeen (JAM), which took place in Baltimore, Maryland, in August. Present were antisemites of various ideological stripes. JAM leader Kaukab Siddique, an associate professor of English at Lincoln University in Pennsylvania, told the audience that the US was "under the grip of a Jewish Zionist power structure," which included a "Zionist-controlled media." Holocaust denier Mark Weber, director of the Institute for Historical Review, stated that the US had been pressured into the Iraq war by a "Jewish cabal," which was now seeking to embroil the US in a similar war with Iran. Other participants in the conference were former US Attorney General Ramsey Clark, and antisemitic ideologues Mark Glenn, Hesham Tillawi, Charles E. Carlson, and Maulana Ehsanullah.

More troubling however, has been the increasing mainstream prominence given to this accusation in recent years, due in large part to the "Israel lobby" writings of University of Chicago professor John Mearsheimer and Harvard University professor Stephen Walt (see *ASW* 2007). Most anti-Israel activists now actively promote these academics' claim that Zionists and Jews have influenced the US, especially in its Middle East policy, in deleterious ways. Such ideas also crop up with increasing frequency in op-ed pages and in mainstream magazines.

A noteworthy variant of the disloyalty charge is the allegation that American Jews are attempting to embroil the United States in a war with

Iran, ostensibly in order to strengthen Israel's regional power. Such a claim has been expressed by a diverse range of individuals, including former CIA analyst Michael Scheuer, former CIA officer Philip Giraldi, former UN Iraqi weapons inspector Scott Ritter, journalist Alexander Cockburn, pro-Palestinian activist Mazin Qumsiyeh, and retired sociology professor James Petras. Some of the promoters of this theory accuse American Jews and friends of Israel of "sedition and treason," of "espionage and interference in domestic policies," and of "controlling the communications media," another classic antisemitic stereotype.

Antisemitism and Anti-Zionism

The rhetoric employed by anti-Israel groups in 2008 frequently slid into antisemitism. In texts and numerous rallies throughout 2008, such groups supported terror and violence against Israelis; depicted Israelis as Nazis; claimed that Israel has no right to exist; and described Zionism as an inherently racist ideology. Since such messages effectively demonize Jews and deny Jewish aspiration to self-rule, they may be characterized as antisemitic.

Anti-Israel groups were mobilized to employ such rhetoric twice in 2008: first in connection with the 60th anniversary of Israel's independence, and then toward the end of the year (and continuing into 2009) in connection with Israel's military operation in Gaza.

Groups bent on criticizing the founding and existence of the State of Israel organized events around the US, focusing on the notion that it has been 60 years since the *Nakba* (Arabic for "catastrophe" or "disaster," referring to the 1948 war and the establishment of the State of Israel). A leading group involved in this activity is Al-Awda, The Palestinian Right to Return Coalition, a grassroots organization that opposes Israel's right to exist and which openly supports terror groups that target Israelis. Al-Awda's sixth annual international convention, labeled a "Nakba" commemoration and held from May 16-18, in Anaheim, California, featured speakers who used particularly virulent anti-Israel rhetoric. Al-Awda co-founder Salman Abu Sitta referred to the Nakba as the "largest, longest operation of planned ethnic cleansing in history" and referred to Gaza as "the new Auschwitz." A Jerusalem-based bishop, Atallah Hanna, spoke of the need for Palestinian Muslims and Christians to unite against the "one enemy [Zionism]."

The convention was endorsed by a wide array of groups, including the ANSWER (Act Now to Stop War and End Racism) coalition and the International Action Center (IAC). Arguing that all of Israel should be returned to the Palestinians, IAC representative John Parker, said, "From

the river to the sea, we will not stop until all of us are free" (see also *General Analysis*).

Numerous rallies organized around the country commemorating the Nakba were marked by denunciations of Israel's existence. For example, on May 16, demonstrators at Dag Hammarskjold Park, New York City, held placards reading, "Palestine Peace not Ethnic Cleansing," among other slogans. A banner signed by Al-Awda proclaimed, "Return Resistance Liberation/ By Any Means Necessary." Another poster declaring "Zionism is Nazism," displayed a drawing of a Star of David equated with a swastika. Demonstrations organized specifically to counter celebrations of Israel's 60th anniversary were also widespread throughout the US on Israel's Independence Day.

In response to Israel's military action in Gaza, ANSWER and the Muslim American Society helped organize a "National Day of Action" on December 30, 2008, in more than 30 locations around the country. Many of the demonstrations, which were held in front of Israeli embassies and consulates and US Federal buildings, as well as at Holocaust museums and memorials, were marked by offensive Holocaust imagery comparisons of Jews and Israelis with Nazis, and anti-Zionist and antisemitic rhetoric, as well as expressions in support of terror. One demonstrator in Ft. Lauderdale appeared in a YouTube video screaming, "Jews go back to the ovens."

Approximately 200 anti-Israel rallies were documented in various US cities in the first weeks of January 2009. On January 10, at least 10,000 demonstrators picketed in Washington DC, where signs read "Jewish Run Media Hides Jewish Terrorism," "Hitler was Right. Jews are blood suckers," and "Stop Israel's Nazi Genocide." At one point the crowd chanted, "Hitler, Olmert they're the same. The only difference is their name."

A sign at a January 19 rally in Chicago read, "Death to Jews and the State of Israel," while others at an earlier demonstration in San Francisco on January 10, proclaimed, "Target all Zionist Businesses," and "Globalize the Intifada." A placard at another rally on January 10 in Los Angeles described Israel as a "cancer upon the World." A day before, a sign at a Chicago demonstration claimed the Mossad was responsible for the 9/11 terrorist attacks. In San Francisco, on January 5 Jews were presented as "the first terrorists." Other major anti-Israel protests took place in New York City, San Francisco, Los Angeles, and Chicago.

Perhaps even more troubling was the antisemitic targeting of Jews and Jewish institutions. Synagogues and Hebrew schools in Dalton, Georgia; Irvine, California; New York City; and Wilmington, Delaware, reported receiving threatening messages referring to Israel's operation in

Gaza. On December 31, 2008, more than 22 Jewish institutions in Chicago, Illinois, received letters warning that they would be bombed if Israel did not exit Gaza immediately. On January 10, 2009, vandals broke windows at three Chicago synagogues and a Hebrew school and spray-painted the walls with anti-Israel graffiti, including "Death to Israel" and "Free Palestine." A Holocaust memorial in San Francisco, California, was defaced with red spray paint reading "Israel, their blood is on your hands." Each of these incidents was decried by community leaders and investigated by the law enforcement agencies.

Web 2.0

The year 2008 saw the continued maturation of user-generated online content and forums (generally described as "Web 2.0"), where private individuals can interact with one another, form groups and online communities, and share multimedia content. Social networking sites serve as a large mixing bowl where antisemites from a variety of backgrounds and locations can meet, share opinions, and encourage one another. It is not uncommon, for example, to see antisemites of Arab or Muslim backgrounds linked to those with right- or left-wing ideologies. Antisemites may post essays or information derived from a variety of very different antisemitic sources, or read and appreciate the same from others. "We receive nothing but propaganda from Zionist media," wrote one conspiracy theorist from Oregon to a Palestinian activist. "Your integrity and humanity shine the light of truth into the dark heart of Zionist occupied Amerika [sic]."

"It is an honor to have [you] as a friend," a Palestinian-American with the screen name of "Palestine Forever" told "Goyim Pride" in October 2008. "Almost all Muslims now [sic] the truth, especially Muslims in the Middle East... our Quran tells us about the Jews or as they call themselves (Zionists)..." "Ace" is an openly white supremacist Myspacer from California whose heroes include Jesus, Hitler, and "all men who stood up against Jews." Among the 100 "friends" on his profile are many Palestinian-American activists as well as a number of left-wing conspiracy theorists. Whatever their ideological background or national origin, they share an extreme hostility toward Jews.

Latin America

ARGENTINA

The Middle East conflict was the principal trigger for antisemitic manifestations in Argentina in 2008. However, up until the start of the war in Gaza, the incidence of antisemitism was relatively low compared to previous years. The period of the Gaza war was marked by many virulently antisemitic expressions, mostly emanating from extreme left groups.

THE JEWISH COMMUNITY

The Jewish community of Argentina, numbering about 180,000 out of a total population of 37 million, has been declining since the 1960s. Some 80 percent live in Buenos Aires city and the Greater Buenos Aires area. Other cities with a large Jewish presence include Rosario, Córdoba, San Miguel de Tucumán, Mendoza, Bahía Blanca, La Plata and Santa Fe.

The Jewish community maintains many educational, cultural and religious institutions, including a Hebrew and a Yiddish press, publishing houses and an educational system from kindergarten through university. The leading Jewish organization is the DAIA (Delegación de Asociaciones Israelitas Argentinas), which represents communities and organizations to the authorities and is responsible for safeguarding the rights of members. AMIA (Asociación Mutual Israelita Argentina) is the main community organization. The Vaad ha-Kehilot is the umbrella organization of all the communities in the provinces.

The organized Jewish community, such as the DAIA and AMIA, maintain good relations with the Muslim community in Argentina, with both sides trying to play down the Middle East conflict as an issue for dispute in the public arena. Nevertheless, Muslims were active participants among the groups demonstrating outside the Israeli embassy in January 2009 (see below).

ANTISEMITIC ACTIVITY

Neither the local political situation nor the 2008 global economic crisis had a major impact on antisemitism in Argentina in 2008/early 2009, but the conflict in the Middle East was a major trigger for antisemitic events.

A relatively low incidence of antisemitic was reported in 2008 compared to previous years – about 310 – until the start of the war in Gaza. Most – 190 – were graffiti sightings on street walls; 6 were desecrations of Jewish cemeteries. Two incidents caused material damage; 70 were verbal antisemitic insults directed at individuals,

including 10 at the work place; 20 were threats; and there were 2 reports of the sale of Nazi literature.

Vandalism

The Jewish cemeteries of Algarrobos and Berazategui (Province of Buenos Aires), Ubajau (province of Entre Rios) and Ceres (province of Santa Fe) were desecrated. In addition, on July 6, plaques from 28 tombs were removed from the cemetery of La Tablada, Buenos Aires city. Seven of them belonged to the victims of the attack on the AMIA community building in July 1994.

Other incidents of vandalism included red paint sprayed on a synagogue in November and the desecration of a mezuzah on the house of a Jewish citizen, both in Buenos Aires.

Verbal and Physical Attacks

Arguments between neighbors sometimes developed into antisemitic incidents. For example, on February 13, a Jewish woman was physically and verbally attacked by her neighbor, who shouted: "I will kill you, you dirty Jewess."

Phone calls and mail threatening Jewish citizens were also common. For example, on February 19, a Jewish resident of Buenos Aires claimed he received a call telling him: "Dirty Jew... we will break you. We will silence you for ever. We don't want any more dirty Jews here."

Buenos Aires University was the site of several antisemitic threats. On May 8, a notice appeared in the Faculty of Exact and Natural Sciences saying: "Leave because we're blowing this place up. Let all Jews be killed in the name of Allah!"

There were also several complaints of in-your-face abuse. When the director of police security at Ezeiza International Airport in the province of Buenos Aires checked the identification of a person who had complained, on April 3, of bad service, and saw his Jewish name, he shouted: "Dirty Jew, why don't you go to a kibbutz!"

There were ten complaints of antisemitic insults in the work place. On April 14, for instance, a teacher at a municipal school in Buenos Aires was accused by one of the mothers that she was not doing her job properly because she was a Jewess.

In general, the DAIA deals with cases in schools providing information from its reports on antisemitism to staff and pupils.

The Gaza War

The impact of the Gaza war was strongly felt in Argentina, with many virulently antisemitic expressions, mostly emanating from extreme left

groups. During the two months of January and February, 240 complaints were received by the DAIA, equivalent to the average amount received over eight months in other years. These included 72 verbal antisemitic expressions, ten threat incidents, one physical attack and one antisemitic incident in the workplace.

There were many cases of individual citizens and groups blaming Jewish individuals, neighbors or workplace colleagues for Israel's actions. A demonstration was held in January at the Intercontinental Hotel, owned by Jewish businessman Eduardo Elsztain. Elsztain was accused of financing Zionism and being responsible for the deaths in Gaza. Among the participant groups were the Workers Party (Partido Obrero), Coalition of the Left (Convergencia de Izquierda) and Federation of Earth, Home and Habitat (Federacion de tierra, vivienda, y habitat).

During January and February, the Workers Party posted virulently anti-Israel material. In a proclamation read in front of the Israeli embassy on January 22, they claimed: "The Palestinian Holocaust in Gaza [was perpetrated] during 20 days of bombing by the military forces of the genocidal state of Israel, and their governors who maintained that there is nothing immoral in the massacre of an entire people because of the immorality of a few... The perpetrators want to be seen as victims."

The Coalition of the Left published a communication on January 29, stating: "We support the Palestinian people against the Nazi-Zionist state of Israel... we are against using the Holocaust perpetrated by the Nazis to perpetrate another Holocaust against the Palestinians and using the suffering of the Jewish people to imitate the methods of the Nazis and fascists against the Palestinians." Coalition leader Juan Carlos Beica repudiated the State of Israel and all those who supported it.

Luis D'Elia of the Federation of Earth, Home and Habitat used menacing language against Israel and the Jewish community in Argentina in January and February. He described Israel as a Nazi state and accused the local Jewish community of employing "the methodology of war propaganda used by Goebbels."

There were 160 cases of graffiti in various cities. Much of it featured the Star of David equated with the swastika, accusations that Israel was a "genocidal state," denial of the Holocaust and the hope that Israel would be wiped off the face of the map. With the end of the conflict, antisemitic manifestations diminished gradually in quantity and tone."

BRAZIL

The internet remains the most popular means of disseminating defamation against Israel and the Jewish people in Brazil. Occasionally, left wing intellectuals and public figures who embrace radical anti-Zionist views resort to antisemitic allegations. Antisemitic manifestations increased significantly during Israel's war in Gaza, due in part to intensive TV screening of scenes showing dead children.

THE JEWISH COMMUNITY

Brazil, the largest country in Latin America, has a Jewish population of about 100,000, out of a total population of over 185 million. Most Jews live in Brazil's major cities – São Paulo (São Paulo), Rio de Janeiro (Rio de Janeiro), and Porto Alegre (Rio Grande do Sul); the remainder are scattered among the cities of Salvador (Bahia), Fortaleza (Ceará), Belém (Pará) and Manaus (Amazonas).

The Jewish community of São Paulo is represented by the Federação Israelita do Estado de São Paulo (FISESP, <http://www.fisesp.org.br>), and the Jewish community of Rio de Janeiro by the Federação Israelita do Estado do Rio de Janeiro (FIERJ, <http://www.fierj.org.br>). The umbrella institution embracing the Jewish communities of Brazil is the Confederação Israelita do Brasil (CONIB, <http://www.conib.org.br>), which coordinates 13 Jewish organizations from the states of Amazonas, Bahia, Goiás, Ceará, Minas Gerais, Pará, Paraná, Pernambuco, Rio de Janeiro, Rio Grande do Norte, Rio Grande do Sul, Santa Catarina and São Paulo.

There are many Jewish schools in Brazil and two academic centers of Jewish studies: the Centro de Estudos Judaicos, at the University of São Paulo (CEJ-USP) and the Núcleo de Estudos Judaicos, at the Federal University of Minas Gerais – NEJ-UFMG (<http://www.ufmg.br/nej>), in Minas Gerais.

The São Paulo community publishes the journals *Revista 18* (Centro da Cultura Judaica) and *Revista Shalom*, as well as the traditional newspaper *Jornal Tribuna Judaica* and the magazine *Revista Morsabá*. Another important publication is the community of Paraná's newspaper *Visão Judaica*. Online Jewish sources include *Jornal Alef* (<http://www.jornalalef.com.br/>); *BBPress* (<http://www.bnai-brith.com.br>); and *Noticias da Rua Judaica* (<http://www.owurman.com/blog/>).

ANTISEMITIC ACTIVITY AND EXTREMIST GROUPS

While the number of neo-Nazis groups operating in Brazil is unknown (about 150, according to some journalists), there are some 20 groups in São Paulo (according to the Institution of Racial Crimes and Intolerance

Offenses – Delegacia de crimes raciais e delitos de intolerancia, DECRADI). All of them express intolerance toward homosexuals, poor migrants from the north of the country (*Nordestinos*), foreigners, blacks and Jews. Several homosexuals and transvestites were attacked in recent years in the streets of the big cities.

Defamation, Insults and Threats

In Brazil antisemitic expressions emanate from both the extreme right and the extreme left. Occasionally, left-wing intellectuals and public figures who embrace radical anti-Zionism also resort to antisemitic allegations or insinuations. For example, sociologist Gilson Marques Gondim, a consultant of the Legislative Assembly of Paraíba who holds several state jobs and teaches in the Master's program in the Federal University of Paraíba (UFPB), was suspected in March of using the university provider to send messages discussing the Nazi-fascist character of the State of Israel and the ideology of those who support it in his blog "Múltiplos Universos." He also quoted the Holocaust denial writer Siegfried Elwanger, known as S.E. Castan (see, for example, *ASW* 2004).

The columnist Gabriel Bolaffi aroused controversy and numerous responses following an article entitled "Zionism – a Sad Irony of History" (*Sionismo – Triste ironia da História*) he published in the liberal newspaper *O Estado de São Paulo* (January 2008). Bolaffi stated, *inter alia*, that the Iranian president was "right about several things he said [about Israel and the Jews]." Several leading Jewish community members were very critical of the newspaper for publishing the article.

Law professor Antonio Sebastiao de Lima wrote a virulently antisemitic article entitled "Einstein and Religion" (May 22) in the opinion page of the leftist paper *Tribuna de Imprensa* (Rio de Janeiro). He referred to the "perverse character of the Jewish people," and to the Jews' god as, "genocidal, cruel, exclusivist."

The internet remains the most popular means of disseminating defamation against Israel and the Jewish people. There is no specific punitive law against defamation on the internet. Anthropologist Adriana Dias from UNICAMP (Campinas University) in Campinas, São Paulo, estimated that 20,000 neo-Nazi sites were active on the Worldwide Web in 2008, at least four of which he identified as being of Brazilian origin. There were some 150,000 entries to these sites by Brazilian users, 35-55 years of age who had a high school or college education.

According to Thiago Tavares, president of SAFERNET, a NGO of scientists and other academics involved in human rights advancement in Brazilian society, the number of complaints of hate on the web was

growing rapidly. Most concerned the Google-operated social networking site Orkut, which hosts more than 200 Brazilian neo-Nazi communities. Some of the complaints mentioned two well known Brazilian neo-Nazi groups, Front88 and Vahalla88. According to historian Alexandre de Almeida, author of the book *Skinheads: The Myth of White Power in São Paulo*, most groups arise and disappear very fast. Since the government regards their activities as a threat to the state, it employs police agents that specialize in cybernetic crime to track them down and disband them.

Some 150,000 Brazilians visit local neo-Nazi sites (one-third in the state of Santa Catarina, and the others in the states of Rio Grande do Sul, São Paulo, Paraná, Distrito Federal, Rio de Janeiro and Minas Gerais). They "learn" there how the Jews are "responsible" for all the maladies of the world – pedophilia, homosexuality, prostitution, Masonry, capitalism and communism – and believe their mission is to defend the white race which is under threat from other inferior races. "Ziopedia" a virtual encyclopedia of hate against Jews and Israel produced in Australia is very popular in Brazil.

Several new Holocaust denial blogs and racist sites appeared in Brazil in 2008. Diego Silvio Santos created a page in Orkut, "This Is Hitler's Way" (*Sou Fa do Hitler*). Holocaust denial author Norberto Toedter, who wrote the pro-German *Continuing War* (E a Guerra continua, 2001), launched the "Blog do Toedte" (<http://2a.guerra.zip.net/>), which discusses World War II from a revisionist point of view.

A number of Brazilian academics were involved in antisemitic activity. Holocaust denier Alfredo Braga created the cultural "Blog Alfredo Braga." During Israel's war in Gaza he wrote of the "Jewish-Israeli beast" that had corrupted the world and the "lies about the Holocaust" (see <http://www.alfredo-braga.pro.br/discussoes/>); he is also a propagandist of "classic" antisemitic literature.

Many Jewish members of Orkut complained to FIERJ about receiving antisemitic messages, such as "The Messiah came to my room tonight... Death to all Jews! The Jews are the dirtiest thing in the world" (www.israelixo.jeeran.com/israelixo.htm; see also http://www.pletz.com/novo_noticias/291010.html). The message was sent by someone named "Anuar Baja," who runs Israelixo, perhaps the most virulently antisemitic site operated from Brazil.

Responses to Operation Cast Lead

In Brazil, as in other Latin American countries, antisemitic manifestations increased significantly during the war, due in part to intensive TV screening of scenes showing dead children and other civilians. Criticism of Israel, which in the past appeared mostly in left-

wing newspapers and journals with limited circulation, became much more common in the liberal press after the war. In major journals such as *Isto E* and *Veja*, for example, the operation was depicted as "a total war" of destruction.

In January, anti-Israel, pro-Palestinian rallies took place in the cities of Sao Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, Belo Horizonte, Recife, Brasilia, Curitiba, Porto Alegre and Foz do Iguacu (on the Triple Frontier between Brazil, Paraguay and Argentina). Members of the Arab-Palestinian community together with left-wing militants carrying Palestinian flags were the principal demonstrators. In Sao Paulo, for example, 3,000 people bore placards showing the Star of David equated with the swastika and referring to Israelis as "terrorists" and "assassins." According to a member of the Muslim community in Sao Paulo, Nadia Salem Jabbar, the aim of the rally was to raise Brazilian awareness and mobilize people to support the Palestinian cause. Antisemitic banners were reported at five rallies in Sao Paulo. Participants burned flags with the Star of David equated with the swastika. Graffiti branding Israel "a terrorist state," among other slogans, was daubed on the walls of the Consolation cemetery in the center of Sao Paulo.

Three hundred participants took part in an anti-Israel rally in Rio de Janeiro; most were from left-wing parties and radical left-wing workers organizations. Speakers contended that Israel had been created by the US as a tool of imperialism to help control Middle East oil. Dismissing any religious aspect to the conflict, they considered the Palestinian struggle a progressive battle against imperialism and capitalism. They also labeled the Israeli ambassador an imperialist spy and, as in Venezuela, called for his expulsion from the country. One of the banners proclaimed that Israel had turned Gaza into a Nazi concentration camp. Supporters of the Arab Palestinian Federation of Brazil, the Muslim Society of Paraná and unions and student groups also demanded the expulsion of Israel's diplomatic delegation in Brazil and burnt the Israeli flag at a rally held in the city of Curitiba. In addition, the organizers held a symbolic campaign of blood donations for Palestinians allegedly massacred by Israel. An exhibition in the center of Curitiba highlighted the "Palestinian holocaust."

At the end of a rally held in January in the city of Belo Horizonte, participants threw objects and red paint at the building of the Jewish Federation of the State of Minas Gerais. On the walls of the city of Recife, northern Brazil, graffiti signed by the Communist Party of Recife said, "Israel leave" and "Long live the Palestinian Resistance." The differences between Hamas and Fatah flared up on December 31 at a

rally in front of the Israeli embassy in the capital Brasilia, with sympathizers of both camps fighting each other.

Emphasizing the link between the State of Israel and the Jews of Brazil, the president of the Arab Palestinian Federation of Brazil, Ualid Rabah, speaking in the southern city of Porto Alegre, called on the Jewish community to denounce Israel. Claiming that the silence of the Jews was incomprehensible, he said it was important to ask every Jewish man and woman whether Israel spoke on their behalf when it carried out its crimes.

Also in Porto Alegre, the slogan "Death to the Jewish pigs" and a swastika with the sign of the neo-Nazi Walhalla 99, appeared on the walls of the Jewish Association. The leaders of the Workers Party (Partido dos Trabalhadores – PT), a moderate pro-Palestinian organization, which supports Israel's right to exist, published on January 4, an aggressive statement signed by its national president, Ricardo Berzoini, and its secretary of international relations, Valter Pomar, claiming that Israel was a terrorist, Nazi state. Several PT members criticized the declaration, saying that it contradicted the traditional party position and that it had distorted Nazism as a unique, historical phenomenon. It also censured the organization for not condemning Hamas terrorism and denying Israel's right to exist.

In response to the anti-Israel rallies, the Jewish community of Sao Paulo organized a demonstration in support of Israel under the banner "Demonstrating on behalf of peace," attended by some 3,000 people – Jews, Evangelists, Catholics, Buddhists and others.

RESPONSES TO RACISM AND ANTISEMITISM

There were several trials dealing with the dissemination of neo-Nazi material in 2008. The owners of the publishing house Centauro Editorial, for example were tried for selling *Mein Kampf* and *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion* (FIERJ *Bulletin*, February 29). The Centauro were ordered to desist selling those books.

Following the intervention of B'nai B'rith and DECRADI, an electronic journal that compared Moses to Hitler and Judaism to Nazism, created by the Sao Paulo lawyer Fabio de Oliveira Ribeiro, was ordered removed by Judge Wilson Lima da Silva in September 2008.

MEXICO

Mexico recorded an increase in antisemitic manifestations in 2008, mainly swastikas displayed near Jewish institutions and verbal abuse, even before Israel's Gaza Operation began. The operation itself triggered a wave of virulently anti-Israel articles, many of which crossed the line to antisemitism, mostly in the center or left-wing press.

THE JEWISH COMMUNITY

There are approximately 40,000 Jews in Mexico out of a total population of 104 million. Most live in the capital Mexico City and its environs, while the rest inhabit the cities of Guadalajara, Monterrey, Tijuana and Cancun.

Jewish immigrants who arrived in the country at the end of the 19th /beginning of the 20th century formed communities according to their place of origin, a pattern which has persisted until today. The main communities are Alianza Monte Sinai (formed by descendants of immigrants from Damascus, Syria); the Ashkenazi community (formed by descendants of Eastern and Central European immigrants); the Maguen David Community (formed by descendants of immigrants from Aleppo, Syria); and the Sephardic Community (formed by descendants of immigrants from Greece, Turkey and the Balkans).

The Jewish Central Committee of Mexico (JCCM) represents the Jewish community in relations with the government and with Jewish communities around the world. Tribuna Israelita (www.tribuna.org.mx), its public opinion and analysis agency, promotes an ongoing dialogue with opinion leaders and implements joint programs with national organizations aimed at sensitizing citizens to the phenomena of antisemitism and racism.

High enrolment in Jewish day schools (more than 90 percent) and a very low rate of intermarriage (7 percent) characterize the community, which provides a wide range of welfare, religious and educational services. A variety of periodicals published monthly reflect political, cultural, and ideological views in the communities.

ANTISEMITIC AND ANTI-ZIONIST ACTIVITY

Mexico recorded an increase in antisemitic manifestations, from 36 in 2007 to 47 in 2008. For example, swastikas were detected on walls near Jewish institutions or painted on passing cars. On several occasions, slogans such as "Heil Hitler," "Damn Jews" and "I want soap made out of Jews," were shouted by people passing synagogues and community centers.

Propaganda and Discrimination

In March, peddler stalls selling antisemitic books such as *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion* and *Mein Kampf* were reported in downtown Mexico City. A few weeks later, youngsters dressed as Nazi soldiers handed out leaflets with Nazi propaganda outside the Mexican Cathedral.

During the Guadalajara International Book Fair, financed by the Autonomous University of Guadalajara and held in late November–early December, the Spanish publishing house Ediciones Ojeda sold antisemitic literature, such as Hitler's *Mein Kampf*. The company had also planned to hold a conference featuring speakers such as Salvador Borrego (a leading Holocaust denier in Mexico) and Pedro Varela (a Spaniard who served a prison term in Austria for holding similar views – see *Spain 1997-2007*). Following a meeting between the director of Tribuna Israelita and the fair's director, at which the concerns of the Jewish community were raised and it was stressed that such actions constituted a violation of the federal anti-discrimination law, the conference was cancelled and all copies of *Mein Kampf* were removed. Nevertheless, on December 6, Varela and Salvador, hosted their own meeting, entitled, "First Cycle of Historical Realism," at Guadalajara's Plaza Hotel.

In early December, the job website Folderex (www.folderx.com/bolsa.html) posted an announcement seeking a graphic designer for the Mabe Appliance Company, stipulating that the applicant should be "neither a Jehovah Witness nor a Jew." After Tribuna Israelita contacted the company's human resources office, it was explained that the announcement had been placed by an employee, who had since been fired because he had not complied with company recruiting guidelines, which were non-discriminatory.

Media

Online forums were exploited by some users to express antisemitic and anti-Zionist arguments. Most articles published in the mainstream local press were neutral. As in previous years, negative remarks against Israel and Jews, mainly in the centrist and left-wing press, were based on the following themes:

- Comparisons between Israel and Israeli policy with Nazis and the Holocaust. For example, the columnist Ariel González Jiménez wrote an article in the centrist *Milenio Diario* (January 26), entitled "The Gaza Ghetto," stating that Israel's response was "the worst answer to the Palestinian terrorist attacks" against it, because it "generated more extremism and, above all, because it rests on the savage 'eye for an eye' [principle]." Tomas Mojarro, in the

centrist *Metro* (November 13) wrote: "In 1982, one thousand defenseless Palestinians were massacred in Israeli concentration camps, with the opposition of all the countries of the United Nations..." while the centrist *Milenio Diario* (March 3), stated: "The strategy has always been... exterminate the Palestinians with the same 'final' formula that Hitler applied to a million Jews."

- Relations between Israel and the United States and the UN. This theme was discussed by writers in several newspapers, mainly that Israel carries out its criminal acts with the unconditional support of the US and violates all resolutions of the UN, an organization described as biased when it comes to judging Israel within the context of the Middle East conflict. Hector Delgado, from the left-wing *Unomasuno* (June 20) stated: "The sufferings that the State of Israel – military ally and accomplice of the United States – inflicts upon the Arab people in Palestine, is part of the 'war against terror' that Tel Aviv is supposedly fighting shoulder to shoulder with the US."
- Israeli policies are terrorist, expansionist and colonialist. Some editorials claimed that the goal of Israel's security fence is not protection of citizens, but control and asphyxiation of the Palestinians and that the defensive operations carried by the Israeli government are massacres of the most vulnerable members of the Palestinian population. Pedro Miguel stated in the daily left-wing *La Jornada* (December 18) that: "Israel maintains its military siege against the population of Gaza, something that can be only explained as a plan to starve and kill the civilians that live there."
- The world economic crisis. Alfredo Jalife-Rahme, an editor with *La Jornada*, blamed Israeli banks for the financial crisis in the US (October 12): "The controversial 'Voices of the White House' (thetruthseeker.com.uk) says that 400,000 million dollars were sent" by American businessmen to Israeli banks through Lehman Brothers prior to their bankruptcy." He also accused American banks controlled by the "Israeli mafia" for the terror attacks in Mumbai, India (November 2008): "The Israeli-Anglo-Saxon bank [*sic*] perpetrated the butchery in Mumbai, in order to artificially re-value the dollar" (December 7).

War in Gaza

As in previous Mid-East crises, Israel's operation in Gaza triggered a wave of antisemitic and anti-Zionist expressions, many of which crossed

the line to antisemitism. Most appeared in the center or left-wing press, where Israel was described as a violent, militaristic nation insensitive to the plight of others and interested only in furthering its own expansionist aims. Although most informative articles were relatively impartial, many headlines and photographs were sensationalistic, such as "Israel Celebrates Shabbat, Its Holy Day, with the Worst Massacre of Palestinians in 40 years" (centrist *Crónica*, December 28), and "The Palestinian Holocaust" and "Israel and Nazi Methods" (*La Jornada*, January 12, 18, respectively).

Editorials, cartoons, and readers' letters expressed venomous opposition to Israeli policies. Editorials by Pedro Miguel, Guillermo Almeyra, Alfredo Jalife-Rahme, Jose Steinsleger, and Héctor Delgado argued in defense of the legitimacy of the Palestinian and Hamas cause, criticized the "privileged" US-Israeli relationship, and compared the situation in Gaza to the Holocaust. Juan Gelman in *Milenio*, asserted: "The objective of Israel's Operation Cast Lead is to throw the Palestinians from their land. The 4 million evacuated since 1948, are not enough for Tel Aviv" (January 10), while Jesus Sanchez declared that "the first great genocide of the new century" was going on in the Gaza Strip and no one was doing anything about it... it's an extermination" (center-left *La Prensa*, January 1).

Many journalists with little knowledge of Middle East affairs wrote on the operation, displaying ignorance and prejudice. Moreover, the Electricians Union, the Teachers Union and the Workers of the National Autonomous University of Mexico Union published ads in the press expressing solidarity with Palestinian suffering and accusing Israel of genocide.

Left-wing Jewish intellectuals, mainly Argentineans living in Mexico, expressed opposition to the operation in articles published in *La Jornada*. They also created an organization, "Adopt a Dead Palestinian Child" to "preserve the memory of Palestinian children killed or injured by the Israeli army." A blog denouncing Israel's actions provided information on their project.

During this period NGOs, such as International Amnesty, the Mexican Chapter of Not in Our Name, and Solidarity with the Palestinian People Movement, organized mass demonstrations outside the Israeli and American embassies in Mexico City, as well as in Oaxaca, Puebla, Mérida, Guadalajara, and Monterrey. They carried dolls stained with red paint representing Palestinian children, and placards with antisemitic and anti-Zionist slogans and imagery, such as an Israeli flag with the Star of David evolving into a swastika. Jewish institutions received emails blaming Jews in general for the violence in the Middle

East, accusing Israel of genocide, and transforming Israel the victim into Israel the murderer.

The Mexican government demonstrated impartiality. While its foreign ministry condemned Israel's "excessive" use of force, it also criticized the continued mortar attacks on Israeli territory. A marked reduction in anti-Israel and anti-Zionist articles in the media and a cessation of demonstrations and conferences on the war were noted a few days after Operation Cast Lead ended. (For more details, see *General Analysis*.)

RESPONSES TO RACISM AND ANTISEMITISM

As in previous years, a Jornadas Judaicas (Jewish Days) event was organized in the Iberoamerican University by Tribuna Israelita, together with the Jewish community and Jewish students. The program includes lectures about Judaism, antisemitism and the Middle East, as well as traditional, cultural and gastronomic exhibits.

Two special media supplements commissioned by Tribuna Israelita were published in the conservative newspaper *Reforma*. The first was about Israel's 60th anniversary, and the second – a joint project with the National Human Rights Commission – dealt with the 60th anniversary of the adoption of the UN Universal Human Rights Declaration. To commemorate this event, Tribuna Israelita honored the reputed Mexican jurist Hector Fix Zamudio with the Rene Cassin award.

Tribuna Israelita edited and emailed to approximately 2,700 persons, mainly members of the Jewish community, as well as journalists and non-Jews who requested it, a weekly newsletter *News of Israel, the Jewish World and the Middle East*, with news and information on current Jewish issues.

URUGUAY

The year 2008, like 2007, witnessed a few antisemitic incidents, but there was a rise in antisemitic activity at the end of the year when Israel's war in Gaza began, and this trend continued during the first months of 2009.

THE JEWISH COMMUNITY

The Jewish community of Uruguay is estimated at about 25,000 out of a population of 3.2 million. The majority of Jews live in the capital Montevideo, with a smaller community in the city of Paysandú. Jewish families are scattered throughout other parts of the country but not in organized communities. The Comité Central Israelita del Uruguay (CCIU), embracing some 60 communities and organizations, functions as the national Jewish representative body. There are a number of well-attended Jewish day schools and several publications.

POLITICAL BACKGROUND

There are no significantly racist, xenophobic or antisemitic groups in Uruguay. Up until October 2009, Uruguay was governed by the Frente Amplio, a coalition of center and left parties composed of the Christian Democrats, Socialists, Communists and ex-guerilla fighters from the 1970s (Tupamaros), as well as the liberal Red Party (Partido Colorado) and the conservative White Party (Partido Blanco). President Tabare Vazquez was very popular during his term. The economic situation improved and relations with the Jewish community continued to be good. Many Jewish politicians were part of this coalition.

ANTISEMITIC ACTIVITY

The year 2008, like 2007, witnessed a few antisemitic incidents, but there was a rise in antisemitic activity at the end of the year with the start of Israel's war in Gaza, and this trend continued during early 2009.

Vandalism and Harrasment

Several acts causing damage to Jewish institutions and threatening the Jewish population of Uruguay were recorded in 2008. These included graffiti, reading "The sign of soap," accompanied by a large swastika, drawn on the night of March 13 on the street opposite the Betar Youth Movement building in Montevideo. On March 21, two youths were observed breaking a window of the Hebraica-Maccabi Jewish club in Montevideo. They were not caught. The Holocaust memorial in the city of Montevideo was defaced with three white swastikas in November.

Also in March, a youth entered the grounds of the Jewish Colegio [school] Integral in Montevideo and insulted the security guards with antisemitic abuse. The person is known to have committed similar acts previously. Further, during the Rosh Hashana service in October, two persons made the Nazi salute to Jewish observers standing outside the Sephardic synagogue of Montevideo.

Several members of the Jewish community received insulting messages on their cell phones, such as: "Ask anyone in our society and he will answer this question in this way: do you know what the problem is in Gaza? That Hitler's mother didn't have triplets. Then all the dirty Jews in the universe would have been murdered."

In June a man who noticed a sticker on a Jewish woman's car marking Israel's 60th anniversary began hurling antisemitic abuse at her.

The Muslim community in Uruguay is small and any attacks on the Jewish community are usually unorganized.

The War in Gaza

Uruguay does not have an antisemitic history; however, the situation has changed since the war in Gaza. The most conspicuous expression of antisemitism was graffiti in Montevideo and in other cities, such as Maldonado and Rivera, mostly equation of the Star of David with the swastika and slogans branding Israel a genocidal state.

There were also several open letters and petitions containing antisemitic content, mainly circulated by labor organizations. At the faculty of medicine in Hospital de Clinicas, the leading state hospital in Montevideo, a Power Point presentation shown to students by a professor compared the situation in Gaza to the Holocaust. The daily press also published anti-Israel articles from the European media. Several writers and intellectuals made virulently anti-Israel comments; journalist and novelist Eduardo Galeano, who is well known in Spanish-speaking countries, for instance, accused Israel of systematic genocide of the Palestinian people.

Several protests and rallies against the Gaza attack and supporting the Palestinians also took place, such as one on January 10, in Montevideo, under the slogan "A song of solidarity with Palestine," with the participation of labor, left wing and human rights organizations. Although there was no antisemitic incitement at these events, their frequency, combined with the anti-Israel rhetoric of many mainstream organizations and the media, might be understood as legitimizing attacks on local Jewish organizations. Indeed, on January 12, a bomb was set off at the headquarters of Ziklovsky, a Jewish non-Zionist left-wing organization, causing damage to the front of the building.

VENEZUELA

The year 2008 continued the trend of the previous year. However, Israel's Gaza Operation in late December 2008 triggered a spike in antisemitic manifestations like that experienced during the Second Lebanon War. Antisemitic and anti-Zionist expressions emanated mainly from the philo-Chavez press and circles close to the government.

THE JEWISH COMMUNITY

The Jewish community continues to decline as a result of the insecurity felt by its members under the regime of Hugo Chavez (see below). There are probably no more than 15,000 Jews remaining, down from 20,000 before Chavez came to power, out of a total population of close to 26 million. Most of the Jews live in the capital Caracas, while the second largest community is in Maracaibo. The Confederación de Asociaciones Israelitas de Venezuela (CAIV) embraces five organizations: Asociación Israelita de Venezuela (Sephardi), Unión Israelita de Caracas (Ashkenazi), the Zionist Organization, B'nai Brith and the Organization of Jewish Women. All but one of the 15 synagogues is Orthodox and over 75 percent of school-age children attend Jewish schools. The community publishes the newspaper *Nuevo Mundo Israelita* and operates a website, www.caiv.org. In recent years poverty levels in the country have soared to 80 percent and the middle and upper middle classes that account for the great majority of the Jewish community have been especially hard hit as their assets are eroded.

THE CHAVEZ ADMINISTRATION AND THE JEWS

President Hugo Chavez came to power in 1999. The transformation in official attitudes in the country toward Jews, from being basically positive to suspicious and hostile became gradually more marked from 2004 onward with the regime's increasingly more antagonistic rhetoric toward Israel. This trend, which has been accompanied by a rise in antisemitic manifestations, is the result of various factors, among them the regime's anti-American and pro-Arab position, and its ever expanding political and economic ties with Iran. It reached a peak during the Second Lebanon War against Hizballah in July-August 2006, and again in late December 2008–mid-January 2009, during Israel's war in Gaza.

The year 2008 continued the trend of the previous year, until the start of Operation Cast Lead. Antisemitic and anti-Zionist expressions emanated mainly from the pro-Chavez press and circles close to the government.

Venezuela's ambitions for a leadership position in Latin America are behind its efforts to aid regimes such as Cuba, Bolivia, and Ecuador. Its attempts to woo larger, stronger countries such as Argentina and Brazil have been less successful and these states pursue their own policies. Chavez is very critical of Venezuela's neighbor Colombia, declaring he will not allow another "Israel in South America" (see below) Venezuela's commercial, industrial and political links with Iran were strengthened even further in 2008.

Antisemitic Propaganda

On August 13, Chavez received a delegation of the Jewish World Congress, led by its president Ronald S. Lauder and Jack Terpins, president of the Jewish Latin American Congress, as well as other Jewish leaders, including Abraham Levy, president of CAIV. Chavez promised to cooperate with the presidents of Argentina and Brazil, Cristina Kirchner and Lula da Silva, in combating all forms of antisemitism. He also assured them that he would strengthen links with the Jewish community of Venezuela. Pro-Chavez circles reacted immediately. In an article published in the online daily *Aporrea* on August 14 and entitled "Chavez Speaks with the Representatives of a Military-Zionist-Israeli Foreign State," columnist Maria Linares claimed that Zionists were the world's new Nazis – "Zionazis. They use Goebbels' tactics."

Antisemitism also entered the regional state elections held in November. When it became clear that opposition candidate Capriles Radonski, from the Justice Party, would win the governorship of the state of Miranda, his Jewish origins were highlighted in a campaign to delegitimize him carried out in the pro-Chavez *Aporrea*, *Diario VEA*, *La Hojilla Impresa* and on the state Radio Nacional de Venezuela. For example, the columnist Ivana Cardinales, writing on November 15 in *Aporrea*, determined that Capriles Radonski, was "a genetic fascist." Referring to the crucifixion of Jesus, another article in *Aporrea* (November 11) asserted: "Capriles Randonsonski belongs to an ilk that has nothing in common with the Venezuelan way of life." Further, Chavez declared on Venezuelan State TV on November 27, that there was a rumor that "the governor of Miranda [Randonsonski] will bring Israeli specialists to train local police forces. I will forbid foreign forces. I will throw them out of this country."

Another issue that fomented virulently anti-Israel accusations in 2008 was Israel's alleged involvement in training the Colombian army. On May 3, *La Hojilla Impresa* published a cartoon comparing the swastika and the Star of David. The caption read: "Be careful: Don't be so naïve as to think that Zionism is only a problem of the Middle East. Zionism was

and always is behind the evil actions of Yankee imperialism. The Mossad and the CIA are twin brothers. Let us remember that the prime ally of Israel in this region is the Colombian narco-fascist government of Alvaro Uribe, and let us not forget that the Zionists were training the paramilitary forces [of Colombia]."

Earlier, following the death of FARC (Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia) commander Raul Reyes, Chavez speaking on his weekly program "Alo, President!" (March 2), claimed Israel, together with the United States, was undoubtedly behind the murder. He continued: We will absolutely not accept that Colombia will become the new Israel in this region. Israel invades Lebanon, bombs, kills, and they say that it is in their own legitimate defense. Israel invades the Gaza region, every day they bomb in order to kill a Palestinian leader... and they don't care who is being killed... It is the hand of imperialism against the Arab world, in order to divide it... Uribe, we will not let you install another Israel here in South America."

Continuing this line, in a speech broadcast on all Venezuelan media (as is obligatory with Chavez's speeches) on June 11, Chavez claimed Israelis had come to Latin America in order to intervene in the local politics of states that violated human rights, including Venezuela in the past. Similar accusations, specifically alleging Israeli intervention in Colombia, were made by officials of the Chavez regime, such as the president of the Foreign Policy Commission of the National Assembly, Saul Ortega, who claimed that the tactics used by Colombia against the leftist rebel groups were like those employed by Israel when it invaded "Syrian and the Palestinian territories."

Under the Chavez regime the Jewish community has sometimes been accused of disloyalty and even treachery. For example, blaming both the CIA and the Israeli Mossad for the coup d'état of April 2002 which almost put an end to Chavez' presidency, the Venezuelan ambassador in Russia said, on May 15, 2008 in an interview with the newspaper *Moscow News*, that some of the Mossad fighters involved in the attempt had been Venezuelan Jews."

As Israel's alleged accomplice, the Jewish community was also accused of involvement in the former's "genocide" of the Palestinians. The journalist Vladimir Acosta claimed that the CAIV was defending "the criminal policies of the State of Israel": "[they] not only took their lands but also wants to delete it [Palestine] from the map. They are doing it under the pretext of the Holocaust."

Distortion of the Holocaust is also part of anti-Zionist and antisemitic propaganda on Venezuelan TV and radio programs. On the state Radio Nacional de Venezuela program "En confianza" (In

confidence), which she directs, extreme left journalist Hindu Anderi, who is also coordinator of the "NGO" Foro Itinerante de Participacion Popular (actually financed by the Chavez government) said on May 15 that "In Germany Hitler's partners were Jews... like the Rockefellers, who were Jews. These were not the Jews murdered in the concentration camps. [Those killed] were working-class Jews, Communist Jews, poor Jews, because the rich Jews were the ones behind the plan to occupy Palestine."

The Gaza War

Reactions to Israel's war against Hamas at the end of 2008/beginning of 2009 marked yet another phase in the deterioration of the official Venezuelan stand toward the Jews. For the first time in the history of the country, a synagogue, the Tiferet in Mariperez neighborhood, Caracas, was attacked on January 30; its security guards were tied up and its property was desecrated. Antisemitic slogans such as "Jews out of here" and "Damn the Jews" were scrawled on the walls of the office, Torah scrolls were thrown on the floor, safety boxes broken into, and computers and documents stolen. The attackers, numbering about 15, appeared to be well organized. They disabled security cameras and reportedly spent five hours ransacking the premises. A week earlier the building had been sprayed with graffiti equating the Star of David with the swastika. Although the government issued a statement saying those responsible would be brought to justice and calling on Venezuelans to condemn the attack, a representative of the Venezuelan Israelite Association reported that the Jewish community felt intimidated.

Besides accusations against the Jewish community for supporting Israel, the attack may be seen as an outcome of the virulently anti-Israel statements and speeches of Chavez himself, who, *inter alia*, compared the Israeli government to the Nazis. Despite his condemnation of the attack, he suggested that his adversaries – referring to opponents of his regime within Venezuela – who portrayed it as being antisemitic might be behind the violence. This insinuation could be understood by some as endorsement of the attack.

Australia and South Africa

AUSTRALIA

There were 614 reports of incidents of "racist violence" against Jewish Australians in 2008, two-thirds of which were abusive and threatening emails. An unprecedented 214 reports were received in January 2009 alone, during Israel's Operation Cast Lead.

THE JEWISH COMMUNITY

The 115-120,000 Jews in Australia out of a total population of over 20 million constitute the largest Jewish community in the East Asia and Pacific Region. The great majority of Australian Jews live in Melbourne (50,000) and Sydney (45,000), but there are also significant communities in Perth, Brisbane, the Gold Coast and Adelaide.

The elected representative organization of the Jewish community is the Executive Council of Australian Jewry (ECAJ) and the leading professional advocacy organization is the Australia/Israel & Jewish Affairs Council. The community is served by two Jewish weeklies and several other periodicals. High enrolment in Jewish day schools and a comparatively low rate of intermarriage characterize Australian Jewry.

ANTISEMITIC ORGANIZATIONS AND GROUPS

Radically anti-Israel individuals and organizations on the political left, which sometimes use offensive anti-Jewish imagery, are keen to assert that they are not antisemitic; even some far right and neo-Nazi groups publicly profess to be "anti-Zionist" rather than anti-Jewish, although the material they distribute belies such a distinction.

The theme of an international Jewish conspiracy is central to the world view of overtly antisemitic organizations. Extremist elements within some migrant communities also promote this mythology as a means of explaining circumstances in their countries of birth. One of the sources antisemitic organizations use to support this myth is *The Protocols of the Learned Elders of Zion*, which is advertised in many extreme right-wing and New Age publications. A subset of the above is the promotion of the claim that there was neither a Nazi genocide of Jews nor an attempt at one. The thesis presented, either explicitly or implicitly, is that Jews, sometimes with the help of sympathizers and sycophants, use popular belief in the Nazi Holocaust as a means of extorting sympathy, money and political gain.

The Far Right

A plethora of groups promote antisemitism in Australia, most of them tiny, but for many it is their *raison d'être*. Among them are conspiracy theorists identified with quasi New Age, Libyan-inspired "Third Way" and political Islamist philosophies. The Australian far right fringe is internally dynamic and in a constant state of flux. Those that promote, for example, a return to policies that actively disadvantage Indigenous Australians tend to oscillate between overtly antisemitic groups, populist movements and pseudo-militia organizations. Extremist elements of the anti-immigration movement also swing between these groups and neo-Nazi or quasi-nationalist movements. In some cases, antisemitic material published on the internet or in the mainstream media is the work of individuals acting in the name of a group in which they are the only active member. The various antisemitic groups, such as the Australian League of Rights, the Adelaide Institute (prominent activists: Peter Hartung, also of Australia Free Press; Anthony Grigor-Scott, also of the Bible Believers; and Fredrick Toben), Southern Cross Soldiers, Volksfront Australia, Stormfront Downunder and Creativity South Australia (prominent activist: Cailen Cambeul), have a growing number of internet sites that post views and newsletters, some of which are also available at news stands.

The Left Wing

For a number of years, extreme anti-Israel propaganda, including articles disputing Israel's right to exist and blaming "Zionists" for many world problems, have been produced by left-wing groups, which have sometimes aligned themselves with anti-progressive, racist groups to further anti-Israel agendas. The Socialist Alliance and Democratic Socialist Perspective, for example, share with the far right a vigorous opposition to the "establishment" and what they perceive to be those with power. Anti-Americanism and contempt for liberal democracies is interlaced with conspiracy theories and by simplistic divisions of political forces into friends and enemies. Although there are some differences in the approach to Israel taken by these groups, the general attitude is that Israel is clearly in the camp of the enemy and is therefore a fair target for defamation and delegitimation.

The Arab and Muslim Community

Australia's Arabic-speaking community is large and vibrant. Jews are not a major concern or pre-occupation, but discussion of the Middle East can slip into the realm of religious and racial stereotyping. Despite public criticism, including some from prominent Islamic groups, such as the

Australian Federation of Islamic Councils and the Bosnian Muslim Association, some Muslim bookshops, such as the Islamic Bookstore in Lakemba, Sydney, continue to stock antisemitic books and videos, such as copies of *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*. In addition, there is concern that some imams and religious teachers propagate anti-Jewish myths, that some Muslims have contacts with elements in other countries known to be actively anti-Jewish, and that anti-Jewish propaganda is circulated among the Muslim population. While books overtly promoting terrorism are subject to official censorship, anti-Jewish material can be dealt with only under the various state and territory anti-racism legislation, which is generally not well-framed to deal with this type of situation. A paper delivered by Benjamin Kunde at the independent Australian Association of Jewish Studies Conference (February 2008), based on a survey of teenage Muslims in 2007, claimed many "modern Muslim Australian youth" hold strongly antisemitic views, with the swastika seen as a reminder of "good things" and belief in Jewish control of Australian government. Hizballah-type anti-Jewish slogans are also common. Discussions on Islamic and Arabic internet forums such as Islamic Sydney Forums and Muslim Australia and the content of postings to newsgroups testify to a vigorous anti-Jewish sub-culture.

Over the years, there has been a cross-pollination of ideology and material between some sections of the Australian Muslim community and extreme right political groups. Sharing the perception that Jews and/or Israel are a serious enemy, racist groups such as the Australian League of Rights have hosted speakers such as Keysar Trad of the Islamic Friendship Association.

Despite the above, the Jewish and Islamic communities in Australia enjoy a generally positive relationship and there is little evidence that anti-Jewish sentiment is widespread. At the public, leadership level, Muslim and Jewish Australians meet regularly, and promote understanding and tolerance. Joint declarations supplement condemnations of racism and discrimination. However, in December 2008–January 2009, a number of Muslim groups such as the Australian Intercultural Society, the Australian Federation of Islamic Councils and Affinity, which were involved in long-term ties with the Jewish community distributed offensive and/or misleading material which precipitated a re-evaluation of the nature of the relationship.

The Church

The way in which Church representatives discuss Israel and Middle East issues is sometimes a cause of considerable concern. The rhetoric emanating from the Palestinian Sabeel Ecumenical Liberation Theology

Center in Jerusalem, which has an active following in the Anglican Church, has included supercessionist language and tendentious discussions of events in Israel and the Middle East conflict that has carried over into Australian Church debate. Some Church leaders have leftist political agendas which can result in seepage of antisemitic language and material into religious discourse. For example, Churches of Christ minister Kevin Bray referred to Israel's security barrier as an "apartheid wall," and both he and Baptist minister Reverend Rod Benson compared Israel to Nazi Germany. It is important to emphasize that the attitude of mainstream Australian churches toward antisemitism is overwhelmingly hostile and that the most vocal condemnations of anti-Jewish prejudice in Australia often come from Church leaders or public figures connected to mainstream churches.

ANTISEMITIC ACTIVITY

Violence, Vandalism, Harassment and Intimidation

There were 614 reports of incidents defined by the Australian Human Rights Commission as "racist violence" against Jewish Australians in 2008. These included physical assault, arson attacks, vandalism, threatening telephone calls, hate mail, graffiti, leaflets, posters and abusive electronic mail. This was the third highest total on record, well below the 2007 figure and just below the 2002 one.

Most of the reports were of threats, rather than physical attacks on persons or property, but hundreds of Jewish individuals and organizations were targeted, some repeatedly, by persons seeking to intimidate or harass them.

The ability of a person to remain anonymous and to send messages cheaply has made email the favored means of communicating hate messages; over two-thirds of all incidents reported in 2008 were abusive and/or threatening emails.

An unprecedented 214 reports were received in the month of January 2009 alone, during Israel's Operation Cast Lead; over 180 of these were abusive antisemitic emails. As in December 2008, this month witnessed a number of public demonstrations at which virulently antisemitic placards were displayed and anti-Jewish slogans chanted, in both English and Arabic. The Jews were accused of being "Nazi-like," of committing "holocausts" and/or genocide, or of supporting "concentration camps" (see *General Analysis*).

Antisemitism in the Media and the Community

Over the past decade, representatives of the major parties have vigorously exposed any electoral contact between their opponents and

political extremists, leading to the latter's complete marginalization and electoral failure. However, anecdotal evidence suggests a weakening of social and cultural sanctions against overt racism. Reports from a number of schools revealed instances of anti-Jewish prejudice coming from both far right and religious sources. There were also reports of anti-Jewish abuse on the sports field. Antisemitic stereotyping and insults are common on internet forums linked to mainstream commercial enterprises.

Considerable evidence gathered over that past two decades supports the contention that when Australian racists believe their activities are tolerated or even rationalized by seemingly authoritative sources such as the mainstream media, they are more likely to act on any antisemitism they already harbor. This is particularly the case when antisemitic views are broadcast on the governmental ABC (Australian Broadcasting Commission).

Coverage of issues related to the Australian Jewish community by the mainstream media is extensive and out of all proportion to the community's size. Reporting is generally responsible and does not play unduly on the "Jewishness" of individuals or the issues. Israel receives wide but generally superficial coverage in the Australian mass media. The line presenting those responsible for the initiation of violence, as if they were the victims of unprovoked brutality, was taken by some representatives of the Australian media, often without reasoned analysis. Those who have broad antisemitic agendas have found this situation a useful pretext for voicing their anti-Jewish prejudices and incitement. Others who in other circumstances might oppose racism sometimes attributed racial characteristics to Jews.

Commentators and letter writers to the editor in the mainstream press occasionally crossed the line from political analysis to anti-Jewish slander in discussions of the alleged strength of "Jewish lobbies" in both the US and Australia, as well as in some discussions of Israel. This paralleled the strong, if sometimes critical, support for Israel from political leaders of both government and opposition, and in the bipartisan vote celebrating Israel's 60th anniversary.

Matters of specific concern to Australian Jewry, such as the extradition request by Hungary to Australia for alleged Nazi war criminal Charles Zentai, suspected of having murdered a young Jew in Budapest in 1944; the Federal Court contempt hearing process under the Racial Hatred Act concerning Holocaust denier Fredrick Toben; and the Australian Parliament's motion congratulating Israel on its 60th anniversary, were discussed publicly in a manner that was generally free of prejudice.

Attempts to delegitimize Israel and Zionism, conducted by public advocates of the Palestinians, included extreme allegations against Israel and Judaism. In addition, supporters of the former regime of Saddam Husayn in Iraq and the Islamist regime in Iran used whatever opportunities that were presented to them to level such charges against Israel, Zionism and, on occasion, Jewry. For example, after being quoted by a number of journalists as having said that the antisemitic blood libel was a legitimate part of the Middle East debate, Roland Jabbour of the high-profile Australian Arabic Council claimed in August that, "The false charge of antisemitism by some is used to silence and blackmail those who dare to criticize the Zionist self-righteous and lawless child, the state of Israel. It is designed to frighten those who dare to engage in and encourage honest debate about these important matters... Israel continues its aggression while claiming self-defense: a right usually reserved for the victims of aggression – and the same right Israel denies its own victims."

The most common theme in contemporary Australian antisemitic rhetoric is that Jews in Australia and/or internationally, individually and/or collaboratively, exercise disproportionate power and influence against the interests of non-Jews. However, while Australian Jews have historically been blamed by extremist organizations and their followers for contentious federal and state policies on social matters, financial programs and the weakening of establishment institutions, there were few attempts to blame Jews for the 2008-9 global financial crisis.

The staging of a re-enactment of the Stations of the Cross, during the 2008 papal visit to Sydney, raised issues regarding anti-Jewish stereotypes and prejudice, but the Catholic Church and the Jewish community were successful in minimizing this potential harm.

RESPONSES TO RACISM AND ANTISEMITISM

Over the past six years, most state and territory legislatures have passed motions condemning racism, calling for reconciliation and affirming the values of tolerance and diversity. National Harmony Day, instituted by the federal government on UN Day for the Elimination of Racism, is generally used to honor individuals and organizations that have been active in promoting Australian multiculturalism.

A law enacted in 1995 and administered by the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission seeks to conciliate complaints of racial harassment and vilification. If conciliation is not achieved, hearings take place and penalties can be ordered. While details are not made public, at least seven formal complaints regarding antisemitism were lodged with the Commission during the first years of the new law, and the

determinations are beginning to provide indications of the usefulness of the law in dealing with antisemitism (Holocaust denial as a form of racism; the internet covered by Australian law; religious and political freedom of expression not a license for pseudo-religious or quasi-political hate speech).

All Australian states and the Australian Capital Territory have legislation supplementary to the federal anti-racism act. The success and utility of these laws is a matter of ongoing debate. The Australian Broadcasting Authority sets and enforces broad community standards. The complexities of applying the various procedures to the real-time world of electronic media, however, renders it problematic as an agency for combating racism and antisemitism. In most cases of antisemitism in the print media, the newspapers and magazines involved have published letters of protest by readers, although they themselves rarely acknowledge any fault on their part. Individuals who are victims of more extreme acts of antisemitic intimidation have recourse to laws other than those specified above. A variety of sporting bodies have introduced anti-racism codes of conduct during recent years.

The federal government has been active in international forums opposing antisemitism and promoting education against racism. The government has taken part in all the Stockholm International Forums since their inception in 2000. Both the federal and state governments have supported a range of projects of Jewish communal organizations designed to reduce prejudice. Politicians from the major political parties have repeatedly condemned antisemitism and chastised their political opponents for not being sufficiently pro-active in combating antisemitism.

Together with the government of Indonesia, Australia initiated Asia/Pacific Regional Interfaith Dialogues, with the inaugural dialogue taking place in Yogyakarta, Indonesia, in December 2004. They have proven to be excellent opportunities for the promotion of programs designed to break down inter-religious stereotyping and to promote cooperation in the cause of communal harmony. The 2008 session was held in Cambodia.

During 2008, the Senate of Australia commenced a general inquiry into academic freedom, as a result of which Jewish students began to relate negative and hostile experiences they had on campus. These included the introduction into classrooms of extraneous and tendentious material critical of the Jewish community of Australia and/or Israel, disparaging remarks regarding names of students thought to indicate they were Jewish, teaching on Israel which distorted Jewish history and beliefs, and blogs maintained by academics which promoted and hosted

extreme anti-Israel and often anti-Jewish material. In most cases, the individuals responsible for creating such an atmosphere were oriented towards the political left, with a minority from Muslim or Arab backgrounds. Despite anti-racist policies in place on most campuses, there have also been reports of perpetrators of overt antisemitic acts not facing any negative consequences for their activities.

SOUTH AFRICA

Mounting instances of anti-Jewish rhetoric, including open threats against the Jewish community and its leaders, on Muslim community radio stations were a source of great concern to the Jewish community. Nevertheless, antisemitism levels in South Africa remained virtually unchanged from the previous year, with the sixty incidents recorded representing only a marginal rise. Most antisemitic activity took the form of verbal abuse and derogatory comments, with acts of outright violence being extremely rare.

THE JEWISH COMMUNITY

The Jewish population is estimated at 70,000 out of a total population of 46 million. The main Jewish centers are Johannesburg (48,000) and Cape Town (16,000), while smaller ones are Durban (2,500) and Pretoria (1,500). Communities of 100–500 in Port Elizabeth, Bloemfontein, East London and along the Southern Cape coastal belt make up the balance.

South African Jewry boasts an impressive network of religious, educational, cultural and welfare institutions. Over 80 percent of Jewish children are enrolled in Jewish day schools and a similar proportion is affiliated with one or another religious congregation (85 percent of which are Orthodox).

The SA Jewish Board of Deputies (SAJBD) is the central representative organization and civil rights lobby of the Jewish community, with most of the country's Jewish communal organizations being affiliated to it. The SAJBD meets regularly with key political leaders from across the political spectrum and has been successful in forging a strong relationship with the ruling party at all levels of government. The Community Security Organization (CSO) ensures security at Jewish communal functions and at Jewish installations, and has expanded its operations into the area of crime prevention, where it works closely with the police and private security companies. The SAJBD and the CSO cooperate in monitoring antisemitism and taking appropriate action, such as formally laying criminal charges, as well as official complaints with relevant institutions (such as the SA Human Rights Commission).

Jews remain prominently represented at most levels of civil society, including local government, the civil service and the judiciary. However, unlike during the Apartheid era and in the decade immediately following the transition to democracy, there has been comparatively little Jewish representation in Parliament and at the provincial government level.

POLITICAL PARTIES AND EXTRA-PARLIAMENTARY GROUPS

Parliamentary Parties

The ruling party in South Africa is the African National Congress (ANC), which controls eight of the country's nine provinces and holds 70 percent of the 400 seats in the House of Assembly. The Democratic Alliance (DA), which holds fifty seats, is the Official Opposition.

The ANC was riven by internal dissent during 2008, culminating in the emergence of a significant breakaway group that subsequently formed a rival party, the Congress of the People. On September 22, Thabo Mbeki, the country's president since 1999, was forced to resign after losing the support of the ANC National Executive. He was replaced by Kgalema Motlanthe.

Extremist Groups

Antisemitic rhetoric and propaganda in South Africa today emanates mainly from radical groupings within the country's 800,000-strong Muslim community. Far right white organizations pose almost no threat to the Jewish community since they are largely inactive.

The Muslim Judicial Council (MJC), based in Cape Town, openly backs extremist organizations such as Hamas and Hizballah and brands the Fatah of Palestinian President Mahmud Abbas collaborators. Its leaders have made antisemitic/anti-Zionist statements on a number of occasions (see, for example, *ASW 2005*). The MJC continued to make allegations in the Muslim media and at public gatherings about supposed Israeli/Jewish plots to destroy Jerusalem's al-Aqsa Mosque. The radical Israeli Muslim cleric Shaykh Ra'id Salah, a leading exponent of this allegation, was brought to South Africa by the MJC for a two-week speaking visit early in the year.

By far the most consistent source of antisemitic propaganda was Channel Islam International (CII), a 24 hour digital radio station broadcast from Lenasia, Johannesburg, to over 55 countries (see also below). As in the past, Radio 786, a Muslim community radio station under the auspices of the Islamic Unity Convention, also provided a platform for members of the public to espouse antisemitic rhetoric without being challenged. On December 29, for example, one listener asked, "Why is the Jewish community of South Africa so quiet? They send all our money, our hard sweat money out of South Africa to Israel, to arm Israel. Beware the Zionists."

Qibla, founded in Cape Town in 1979 in the wake of the Iranian Revolution, remains active in organizing anti-Israel rallies and in campaigning for South Africa to cut all ties with Israel. The Pretoria-based Media Review Network, a Muslim media advocacy group which

promotes the ideologies of Muslim extremist organizations the world over, continues to be a vociferous presence in the South African media, disseminating antisemitic propaganda, including Holocaust denial, anti-Jewish conspiracy theories and offensive cartoons, on its website.

While it eschews overt antisemitism, the Palestinian Solidarity Committee (PSC) is a strident anti-Israel voice that calls for the dissolution of the State of Israel. The PSC was active on the University of the Witwatersrand campus, *inter alia*, in October when it mounted provocative demonstrations of Palestinians being "tortured" by Israel. The powerful Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) has strongly endorsed the PSC agenda on numerous occasions, including a call to South Africa to sever all diplomatic and economic relations with Israel.

ANTISEMITIC ACTIVITY

Of the sixty incidents recorded in 2008, more than half took the form of verbal abuse. These were often random, such as insults directed from passing vehicles at Jews walking to and from the synagogue. Others arose in the course of disputes between Jewish and non-Jewish parties, such as between residents of the same housing complex. Other forms of antisemitism included graffiti (e.g., "Jews must die" and "The Holocaust is exaggerated by 5 million," daubed on the walls at Wits University campus), anonymous hate mail, and the dissemination of offensive literature. Only rarely did antisemitic abuse involve any physical violence.

The relatively low rate of anti-Jewish incidents in the country does not necessarily indicate favorable or neutral opinions of Jews. In September, the highly regarded Pew Global Attitudes Project released a report on attitudes toward Jews and Muslims around the world (see <http://pewglobal.org/>). A relevant survey question in this regard was, "Please tell me if you have a very favorable, somewhat favorable, somewhat unfavorable or very unfavorable opinion of Jews." In South Africa, 46 percent of respondents (based on a cross-racial sample of 1001) regarded Jews in a "very unfavorable" or "somewhat unfavorable" light, and only 26 percent of responses fell into the "favorable" category. In fact, South Africa had one of the highest levels of negative sentiment toward Jews of all the non-Muslim countries included in the survey. (Similarly, Mexico's largely negative attitude towards Jews is belied by antisemitism rates which, if anything, are even lower than South Africa's).

On January 14, 2009, in the midst of Israel's Cast Lead Operation in Gaza, Deputy Foreign Minister Fatima Hajaig spoke at a pro-Palestinian rally in Lenasia, Johannesburg, where she accused the United States and

most western countries of being in the thrall of Jewish money power. The SAJBD lodged a complaint of hate speech with the South African Human Rights Commission.

Earlier, on December 29, at the conclusion of an acrimonious meeting with newly appointed Israel Ambassador to South Africa Dov Segev-Steinberg, Hajaig provoked an official complaint by Israel to the South African embassy in Tel Aviv for her clear intimation that a senior member of the local Israeli embassy staff was no more than a token black whose appointment was due only to his race.

The main concern of the SAJBD during 2008 was the persistent broadcasting of overt antisemitism by the above-mentioned CII. Depictions of Jews as inherently evil and as treacherous plotters against the human race responsible for all the world's most serious problems featured continuously, with explicit threats to attack Jews beginning to surface toward the end of the year. On at least a weekly basis, from August through November, the station broadcast programs hosted by Daryl Bradford Smith, an arch-antisemitic conspiracy theorist originally from the US and today based in Paris, from where the programs were broadcast live. A sample of Smith's inflammatory rhetoric, broadcast on October 21, was as follows: "Islam is not behind crimes of terrorism except for the people from the Arab community or from the Persian community that they can purchase – and they do – they purchase their stooges, their criminals – they get them to do terrible things, but the people ordering these attacks are not from the family of Islam, or they are not Muslims. They are Jews, ladies and gentlemen, and they are Zionists.

One of the talk show hosts on CII who consistently propagated antisemitic theories, while endorsing those made by callers-in to his show, was Jon Qwelane (see also, for example, *ASW* 1999/2000). In June, he claimed that *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion* was an authentic document, saying: "The Zionists was so embarrassed when [the Protocols] came to light, they denied, they tried this, they tried that. Then you had Zionist controlled-courts in Switzerland and somewhere else declaring the book a fake. And outlawing it. But Henry Ford would take none of that nonsense [*sic*]." Qwelane later reiterated this belief at length, while launching a furious tirade at the SAJBD for challenging him on the issue.

Qwelane's hostility took a more dangerous turn during Israel's Operation Cast Lead in Gaza, when he explicitly supported targeting Jews anywhere in the world in retaliation for what Israel was doing. On January 6, 2009, he said: "I do agree totally with the theory that what the

Jews are doing to the Palestinians right now renders Jews everywhere wherever they may be to be legitimate targets..."

The SAJBD was investigating various options through which this matter might best be addressed.

RESPONSES TO RACISM AND ANTISEMITISM

The SAJBD and CSO, usually working in tandem, have a policy of following up every incident reported to them, no matter how minor, and taking appropriate action whenever possible. Through these efforts, a number of individuals guilty of anti-Jewish abuse were punished through the laying of *crimen injuria* charges followed by court action, with the culprits being fined and ordered to apologize.

One such incident in February 2008 involved a Jewish family in Three Anchor Bay, Cape Town, and their Shabbat guests, who were subjected to lengthy antisemitic abuse by a neighboring couple, including taunts such as "You f---g Jews, you f---g kikes, you Jews should all go to the gas chambers and burn, burn." The SAJBD Cape Council took the matter to the Human Rights Commission, and later successfully represented the family in the case before the Equality Court. The incident and court proceedings received prominent coverage in the local media.

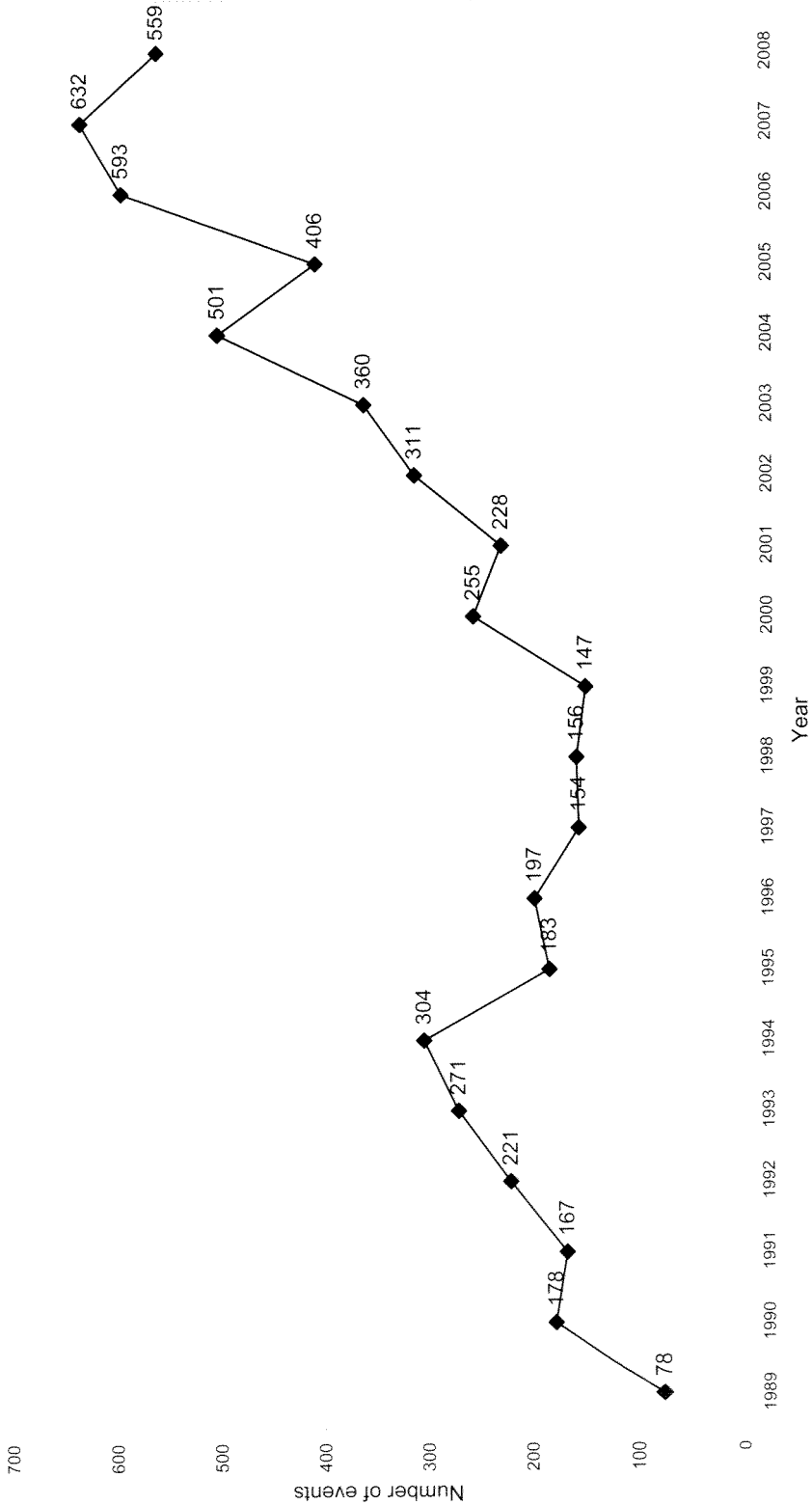
The SA Union of Jewish Students, supported by the SAJBD, launched several well-supported counter campaigns on Wits University campus in response to the activities of the Palestinian Solidarity Committee. They also met with the university administration to discuss and address the appearance of antisemitic graffiti on campus.

At the behest of the SAJBD, a book store in Sandton removed antisemitic literature, including *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, from its shelves. In addition, the SAJBD intervened on several occasions to prevent the dissemination of antisemitic and anti-Israel material by employees making unauthorized use of company email facilities. Meetings were also held with the staff of certain schools where antisemitic manifestations were reported to ensure that appropriate action was taken.

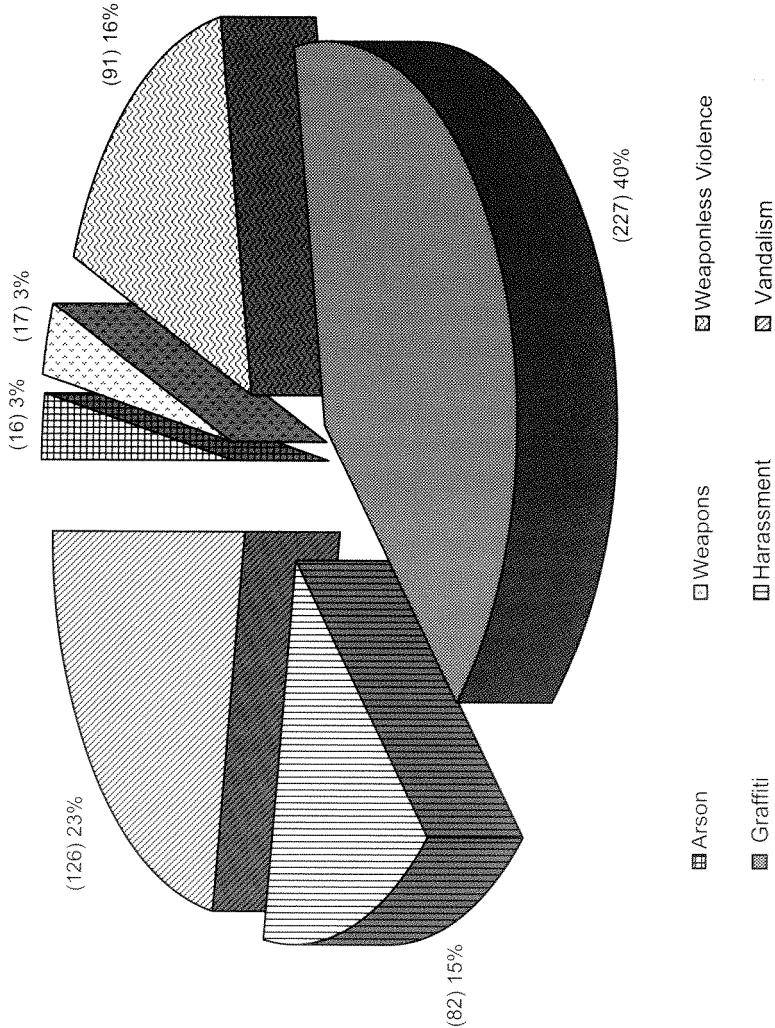
Appendices

The graphs in this section refer to acts of violence and vandalism perpetrated against Jewish individuals and Jewish private and community property worldwide during 2008. 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).

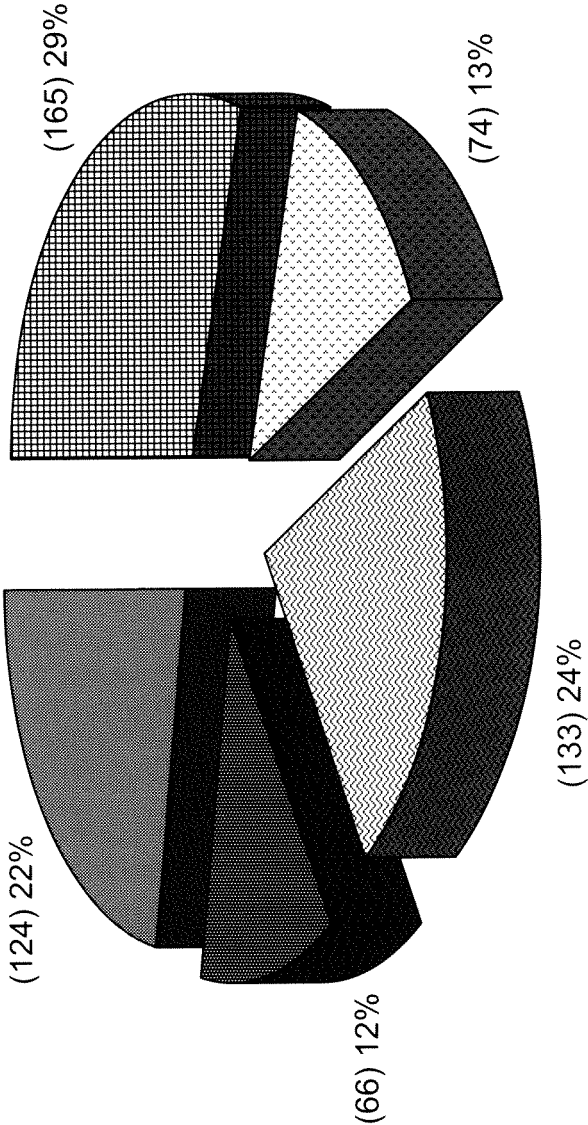
Antisemitism - Major Violent Manifestations Worldwide 1989-2008



Violent Manifestations in 2008 - Breakdown by Modus Operandi

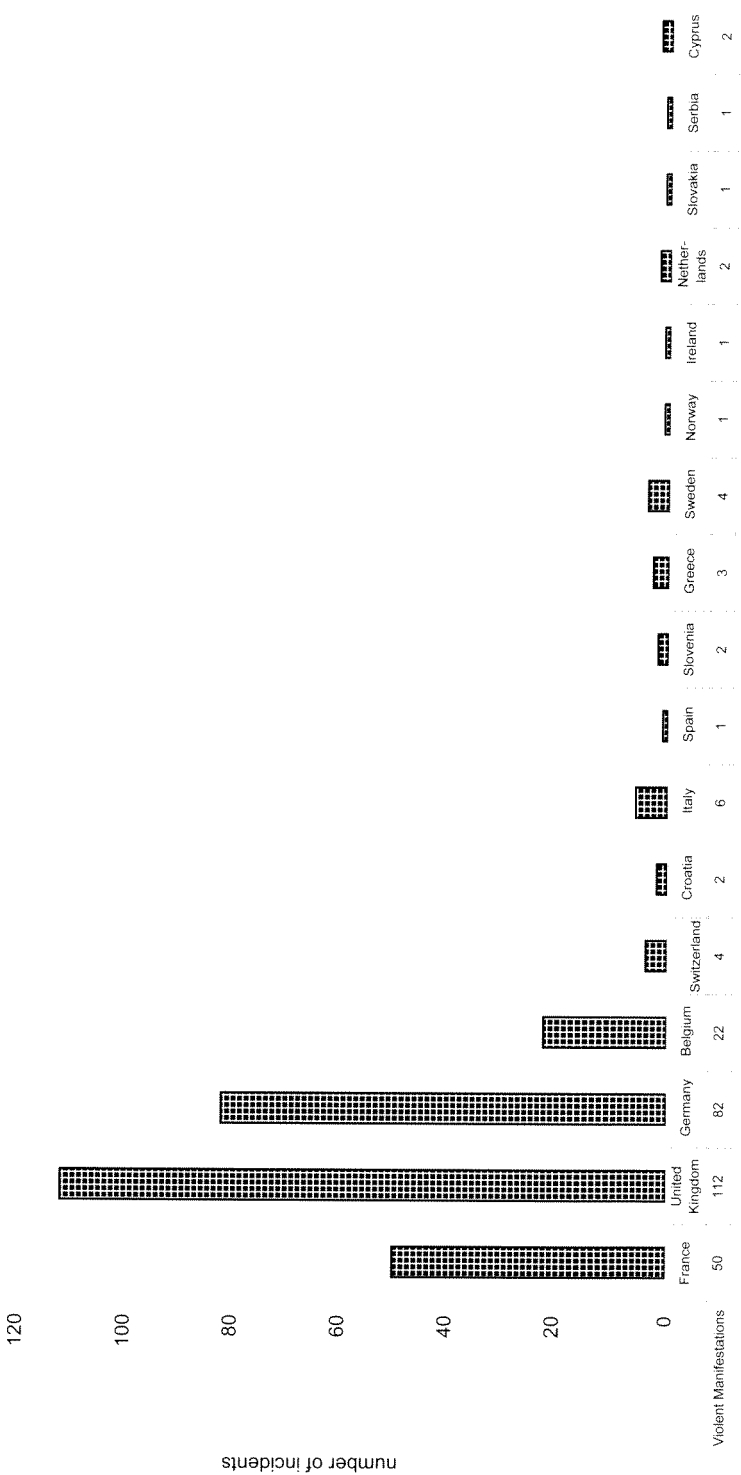


Violent Manifestations Worldwide in 2008 - Breakdown by Target

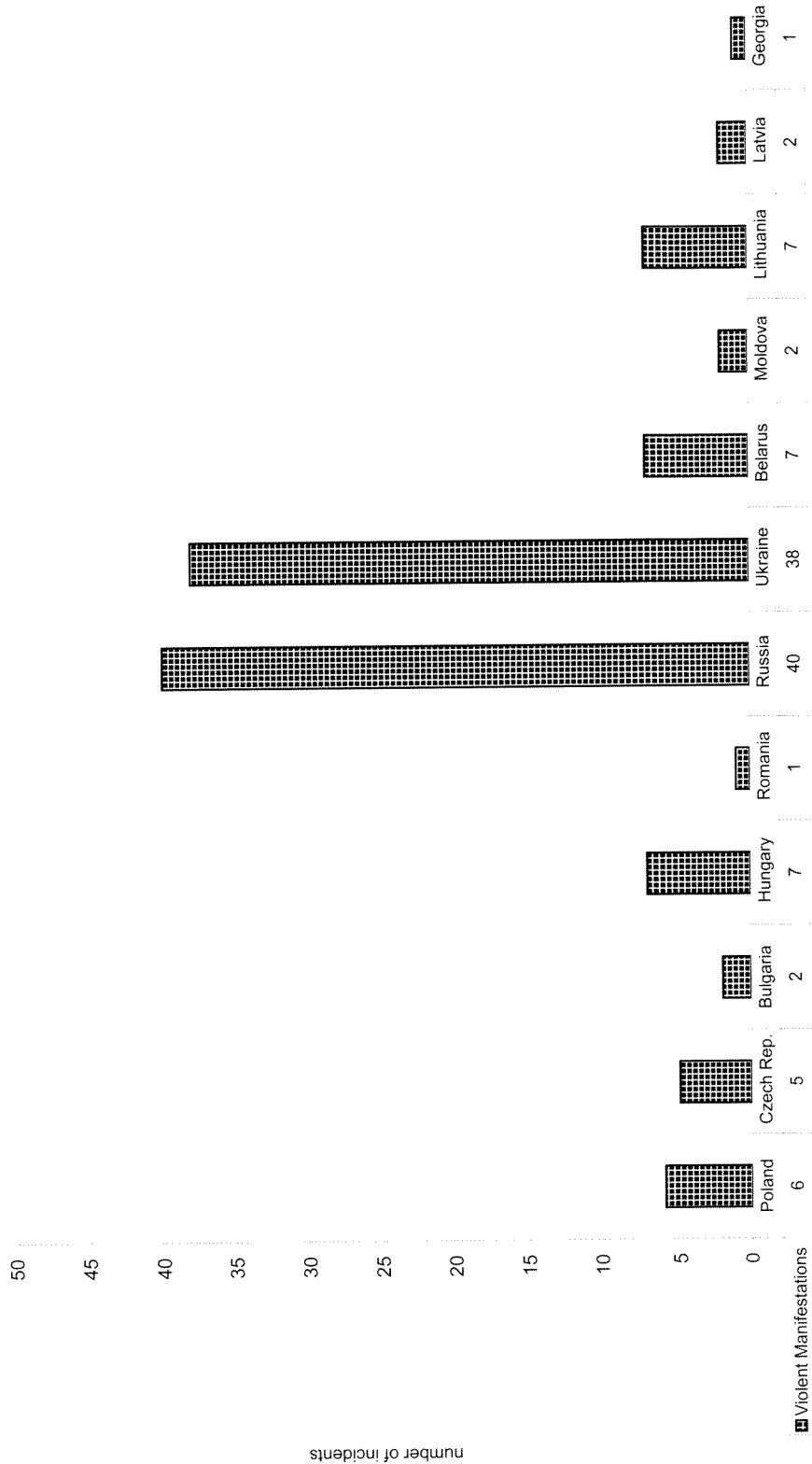


Persons Schools & Community Centers Cemeteries & Memorials Synagogues Private Property

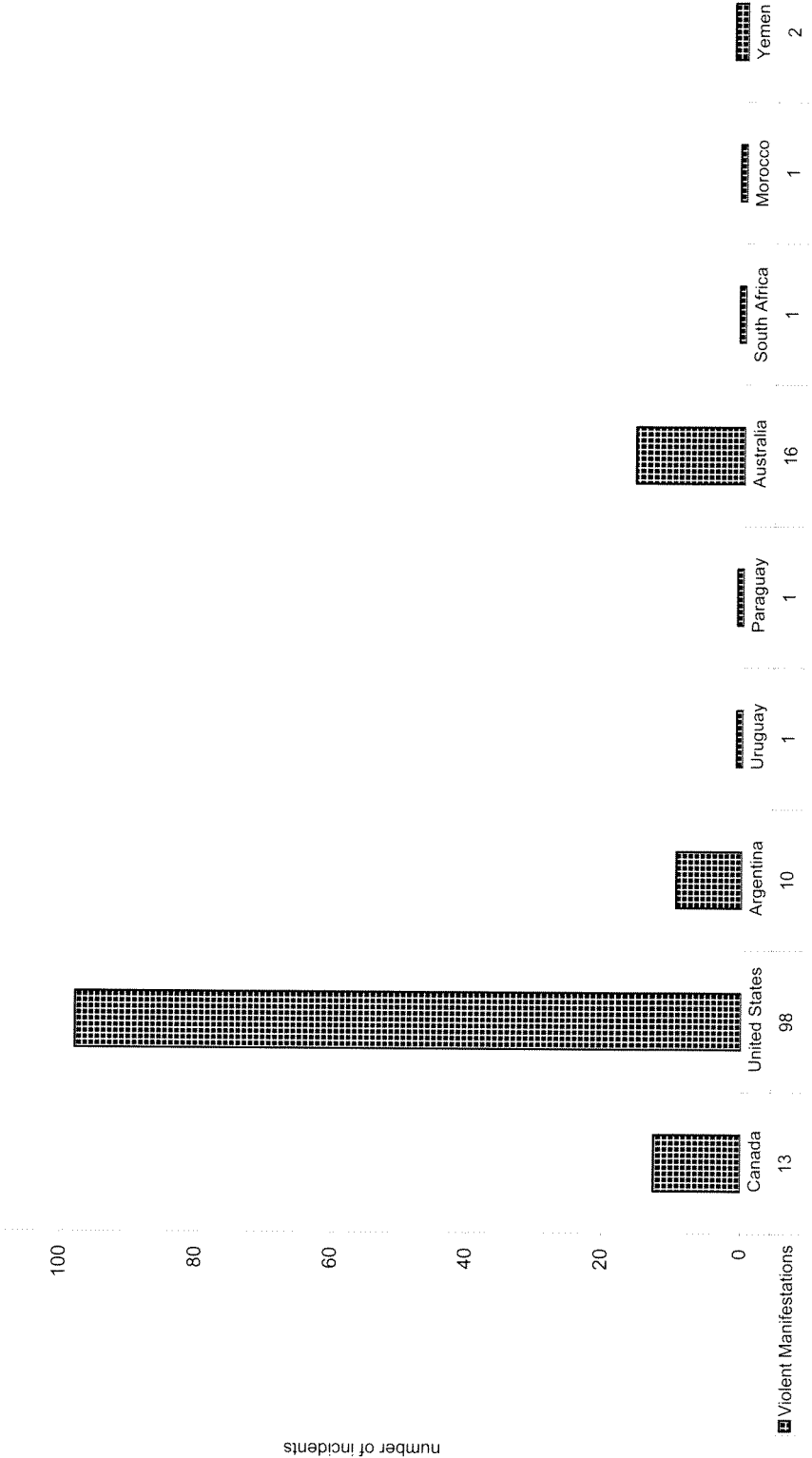
Violent Manifestations in 2008 - Breakdown by Country (1)



Violent Manifestations in 2008 - Breakdown by Country (2)



Violent Manifestations in 2008 - Breakdown by Country (3)



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