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Antisemitism and Racism**

# Antisemitism Worldwide 2008/9

## General Analysis

(Draft)



**European Jewish Congress**



**World Jewish Congress**

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## PREFACE

The beginning of the year 2009 witnessed a sharp rise in antisemitic manifestations. In light of this worrying development, Mr. Moshe (Vyacheslav) Kantor, recently re-elected president of the European Jewish Congress, initiated a number of international activities, including strategic support of the Stephen Roth Institute. The Institute team would like to thank Mr. Kantor for this support and looks forward to fruitful cooperation that will benefit all concerned.

In May 2008, during the annual meeting of the Tel Aviv University Board of Governors, the Stephen Roth Institute inaugurated its public council. Prof. Elie Wiesel, who graciously agreed to be its honorary chairperson, lectured to a full house on "The Memory of the Holocaust on Israel's 60th Anniversary." The first meeting of council members will be held in the House of Lords, London, on May 21, 2009, under the auspices of Baroness Ruth Deech, a member of the Institute Board, who kindly offered to host the event. Another key activity will be a conference, on April 21-22, 2009, to mark the 10th anniversary of the Alfred P. Slaner Chair in Antisemitism and Racism endowed by Ruta and Dr. Felix Zandman. The meeting will be dedicated to the 90th birthday of Primp Levi.

The Institute wishes to express its deep gratitude to all its partners, supporters, and friends, who have been so instrumental in making its achievements possible.

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## 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 of 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 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 emerged in the Land of Canaan. 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 55 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 migrant 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 as “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 Grunen) 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...the 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 CUPEOntario, 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 – or 10 percent of all cases in this category – contained such threats.

The ethnic origin of perpetrators was documented only where relevant information was available. This is generally the case in only 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” held 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. Incidents of 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 might harbor 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 potential 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 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 *Nepszabadsag*, and the weeklies *168 Ora* and *Elet es Irodalom*. In the case of 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 of 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's 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, the 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 existence 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 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 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 stating, "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 marked 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 the 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 (*zawal*). “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,” wrote Saleh al-Naami in *al-Ahram 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-Ahram 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-Ahram 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 was 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 can give the lie to 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 the 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 against 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 Velkommir*); 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, for example, 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](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](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 e-mails 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 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 Yahud, Jaysh Muhammad sawfa 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 Authority 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 one-sided 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. Kopyshchev, 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 the 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](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 that 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, iman 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 members 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 in 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 Moldova or the Republic of 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 tensions 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 his 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 changed with the outbreak of the war in Gaza. The most conspicuous expression of antisemitism was graffiti in Montevideo, as well as in other cities such as Maldonado and Rivera, principally, equation of the Star of David with the swastika and slogans branding Israel a genocidal state.

There were also several open letters and other protests containing antisemitic content, mainly organized 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 re-printed 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 programmatic 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 non-Zionist Jewish left-wing organization, causing damage in 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-Ahram* 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-Ahram 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 order calling for 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’s 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, seemed 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](http://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 *Palästinsenser-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-Ahram 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."

## APPENDICES

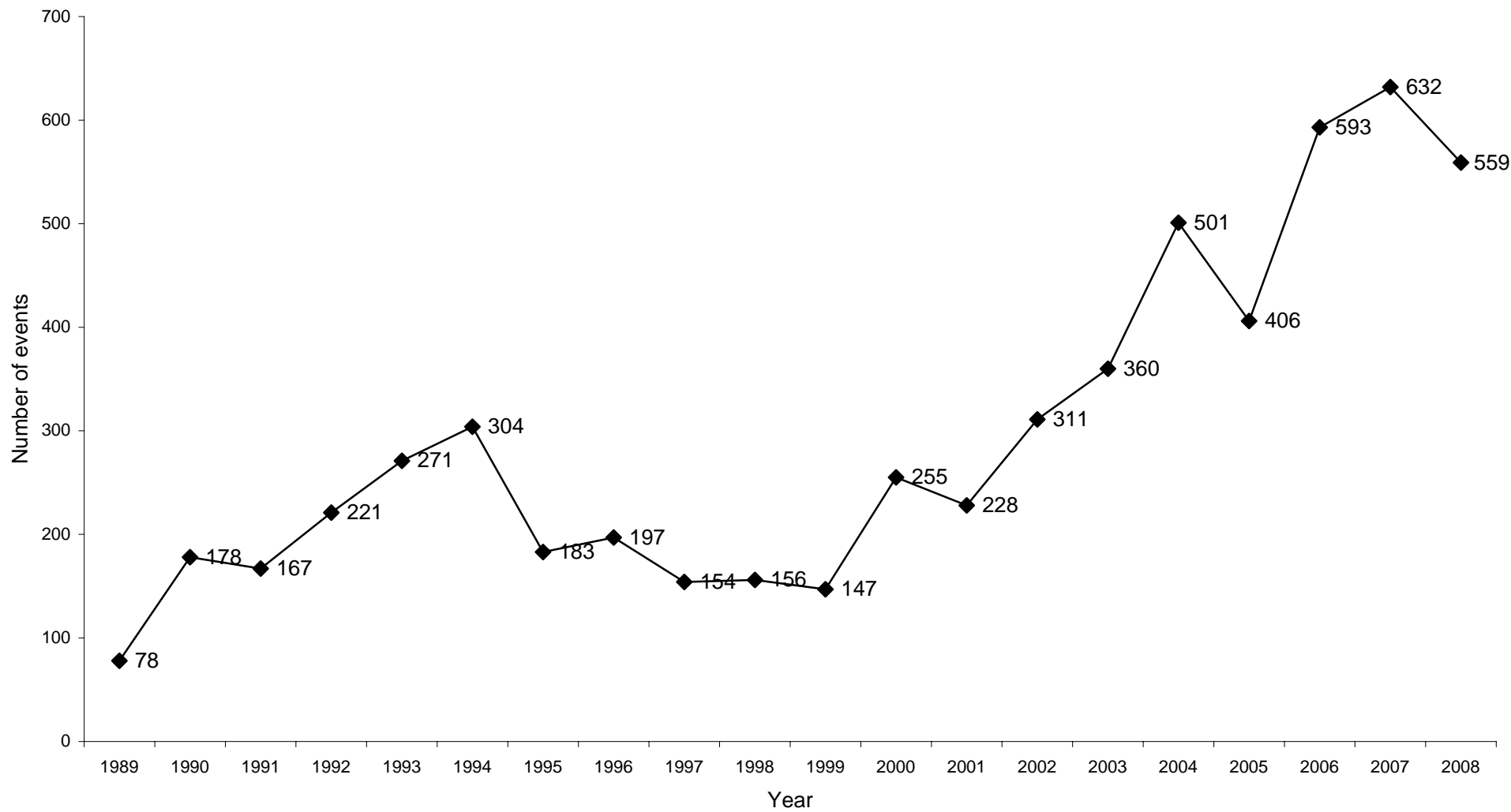
The graphs in this section refer to major violent manifestations perpetrated against Jewish targets worldwide during 2008. The figures are based on information from many sources, primarily, the database of the Stephen Roth Institute, as well as reports of the Coordination Forum for Countering Antisemitism.

The graphs are divided into two main categories:

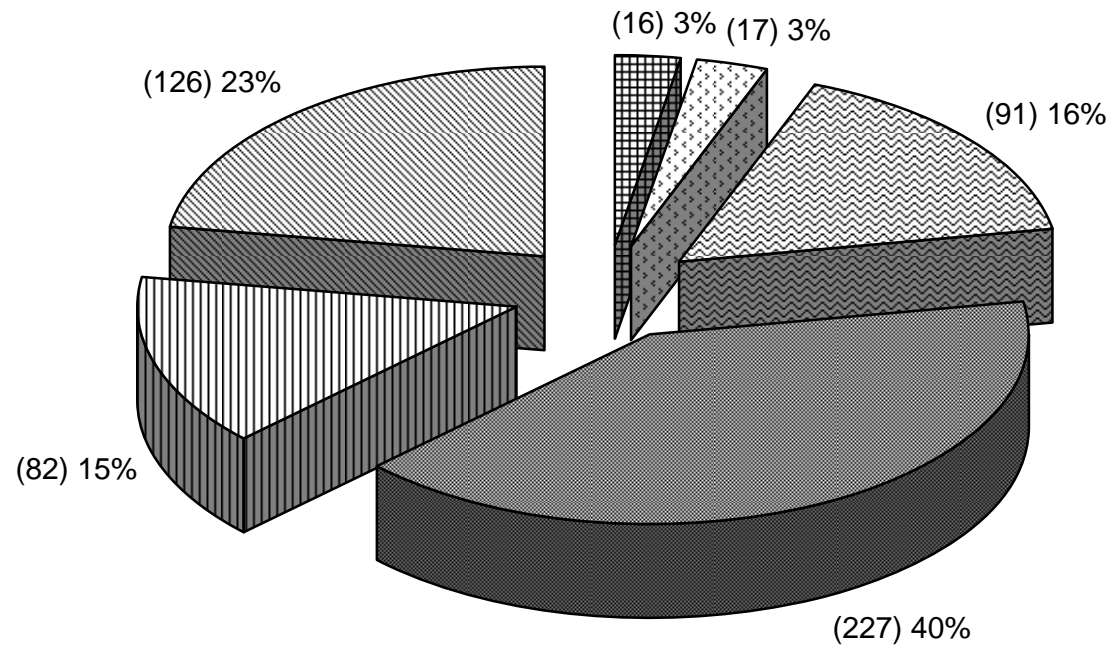
- 1) Modus Operandi. Includes attacks and attempted attacks with weapons, such as arson, firebombing, shooting, and assaults with cold weaponry, as well as physical and verbal harassment and vandalism of Jewish property and sites.
- 2) Targets, such as Jews or persons identified as Jewish, Jewish community centers, synagogues, education centers, cemeteries and Holocaust memorial sites, and private Jewish property.

It should be stressed that the graphs reflect only serious acts of antisemitic violence.

**Antisemitism - Major Violent Manifestations Worldwide 1989-2008**

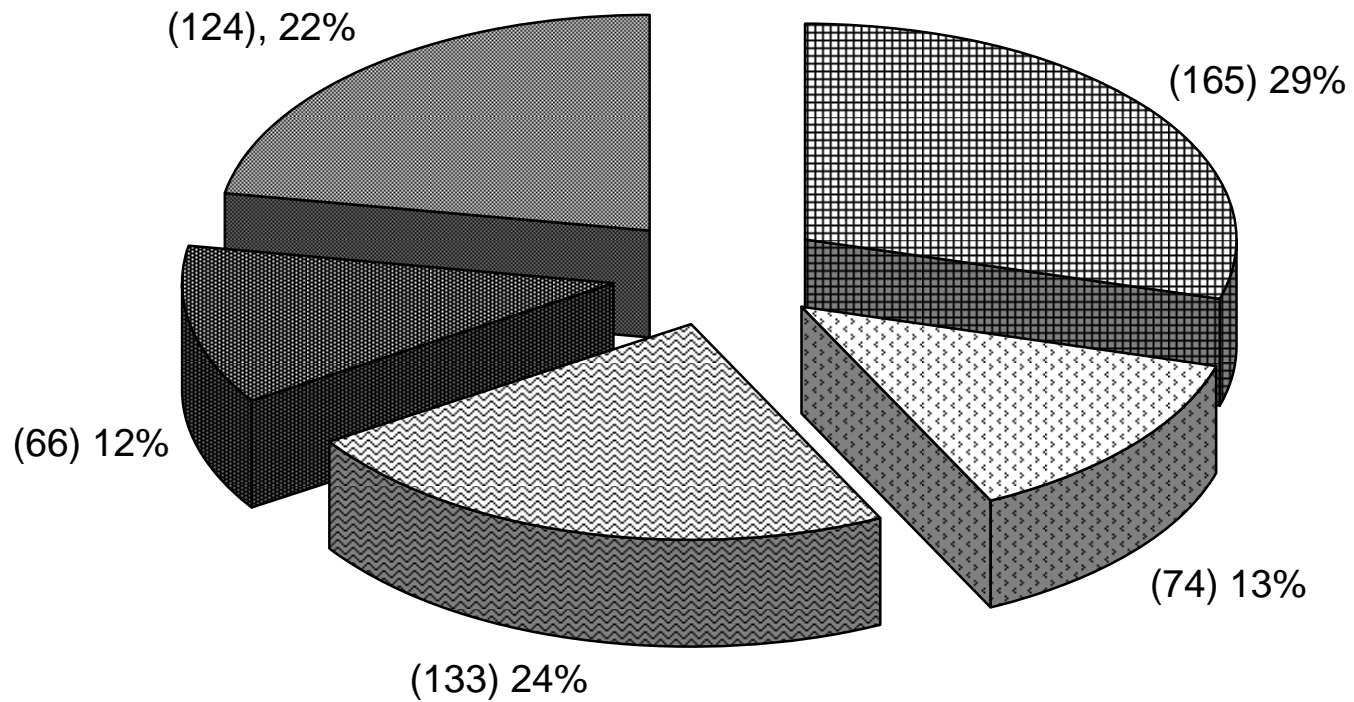


## Violent Manifestations Worldwide in 2008 - Breakdown by Modus Operandi



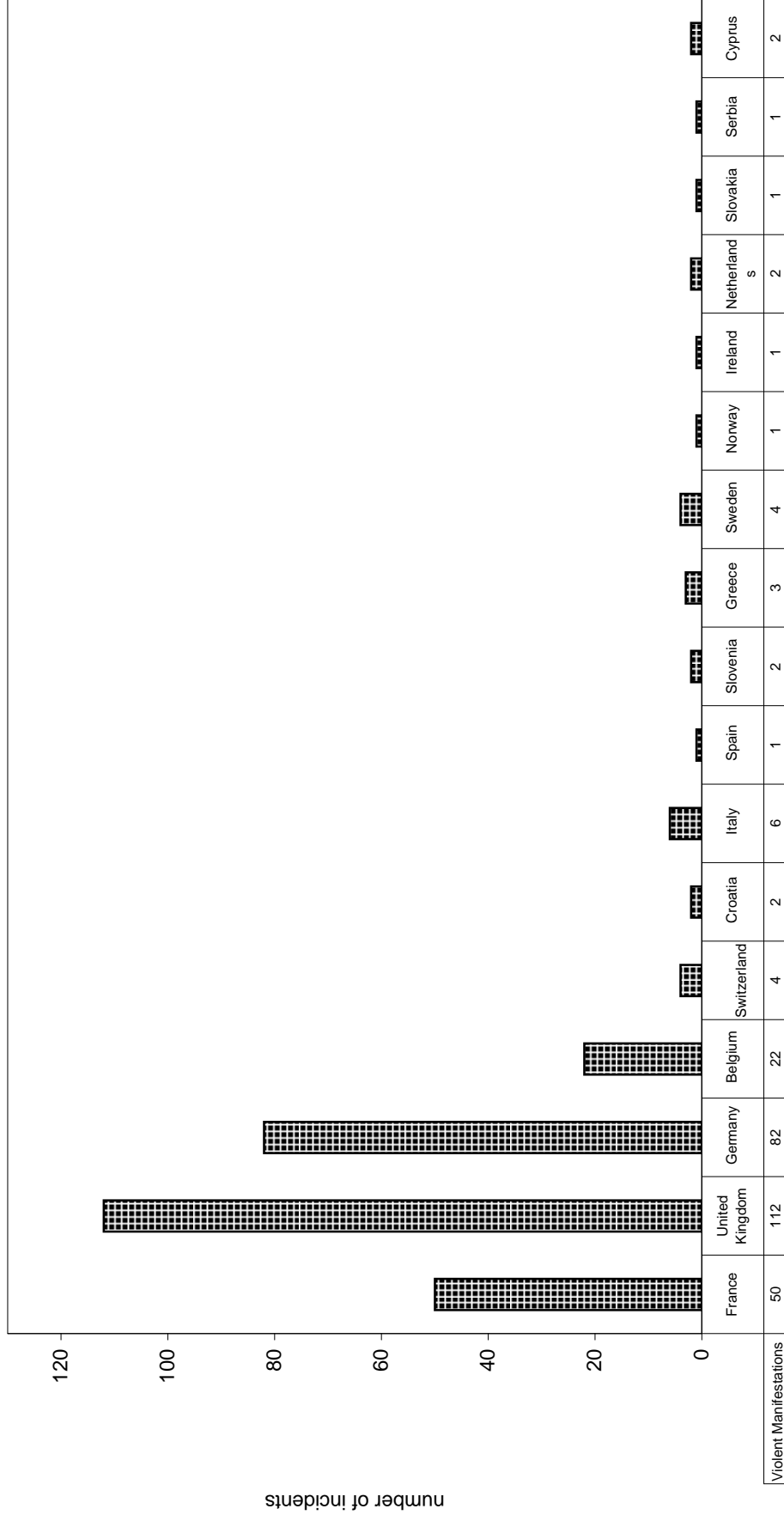
■ Arson ■ Weapons ■ Violence ■ Graffiti & Slogans ■ Threats & Insults ■ Vandalism

## Violent Manifestations Worldwide in 2008 - Breakdown by Target

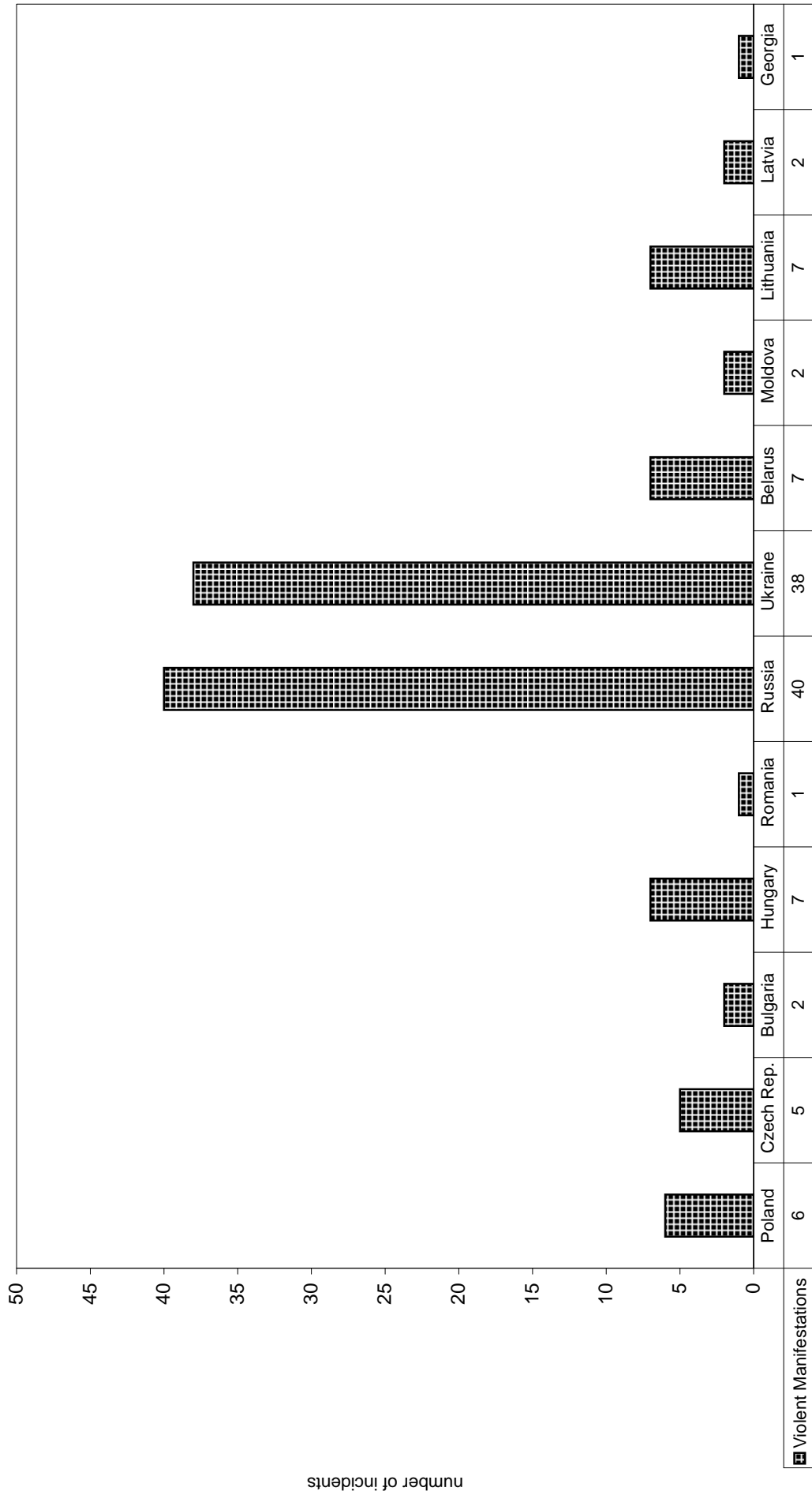


■ Persons ■ Schools & Community Centers ■ Cemeteries & Memorials ■ Synagogues ■ Private Property

## Violent Manifestations in 2008 - Breakdown by Country

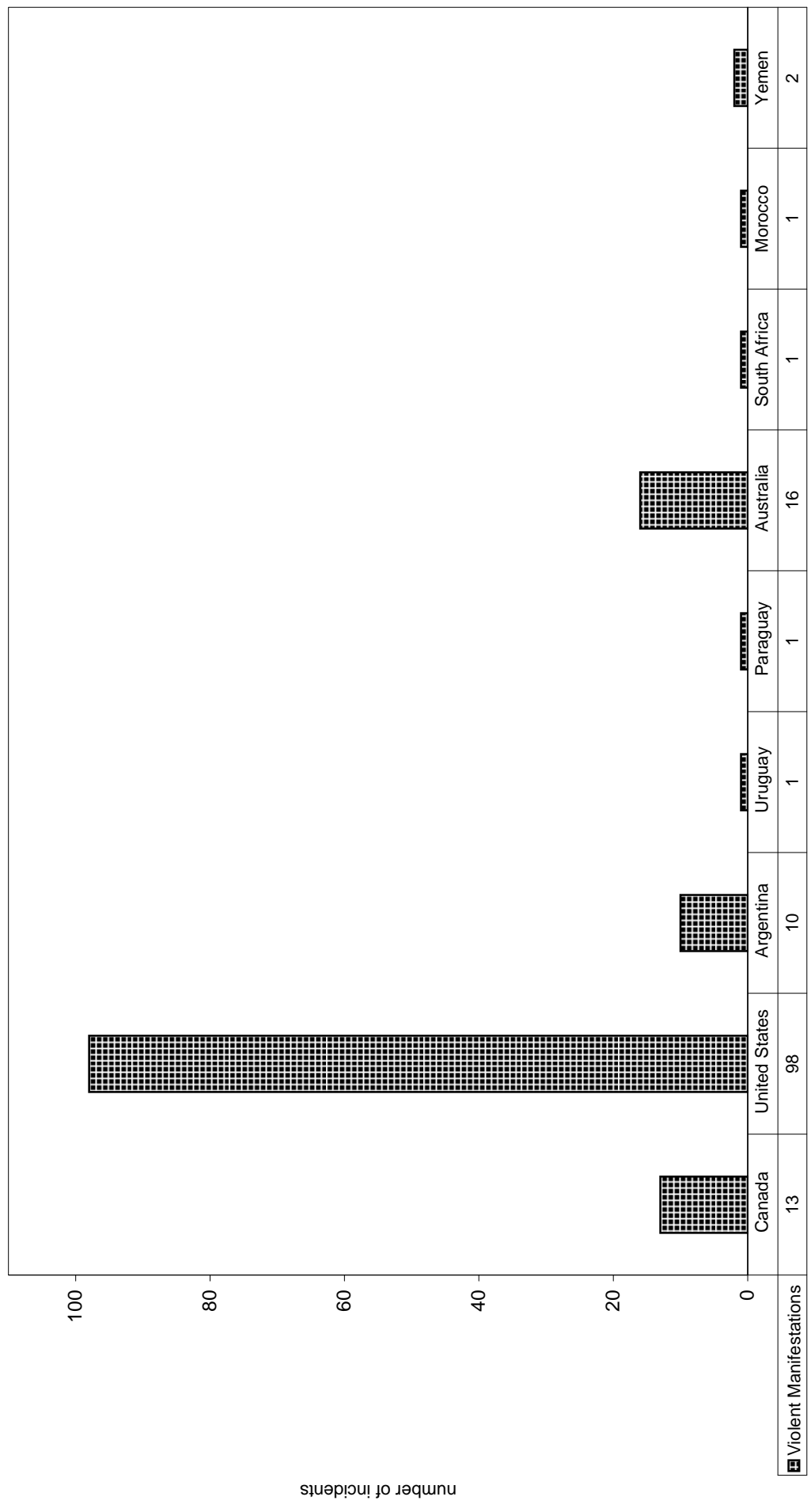


**Violent Manifestations in 2008 - Breakdown by Country (2)**



number of incidents

### Violent Manifestations in 2008 - Breakdown by Country (3)



## סיכום

בשנת 2008 נמשכו מגמות קודמות של יציבות מסוימת באנטישמיות האלימה, ואפילו ירידה של אחוזים ספורים לעומת 2007 (פרט לגרמניה, בלגיה, שווייץ, קנדה וארצות-הברית, שבהן נרשמה עלייה בשנת 2008). המשבר הכלכלי שהחל בקיץ עורר תגובות אנטי-יהודיות, במיוחד במזרח אירופה ובעולם הערבי, אך לא גרם לעלייה באלימות (ראו להלן ניתוח של אירועי 2008).

צוות המכון, שניתח את התפתחות האירועים האנטישמיים בשני העשורים האחרונים, מדגיש שלמרות שמספר האירועים האנטישמיים האלימים הגיע ליציבות מסוימת בין 2005 ל-2008, ולעתים גם ירד (כמו למשל ב-2005 לעומת 2004 וב-2008 לעומת 2007), המספרים בשנות האלפיים עדיין גבוהים בהרבה משהיו בשנות ה-90 של המאה הקודמת, כך שהמגמה הכללית היא של עלייה. בבריטניה ובאוסטרליה, למשל, הייתה שנת 2008 השלישית במספר האירועים האנטישמיים במהלך יותר מעשור.

חודש ינואר של שנת 2009 היה חודש יוצא דופן. מייד עם תחילת מבצע "עופרת יצוקה" ברצועת עזה ב-27 בדצמבר 2008, החל גל של פעילות אנטישמית ברחבי העולם. גל זה היה מורכב הן מאירועים אלימים (עמו התקפות פיזיות של צעירים ומבוגרים, הצתת בתי-כנסת, חילול בתי קברות, השחתת רכוש ומצבות לזכר השואה) והן מביטויים מילוליים וחזותיים (כמו עלבונות, איומים, קריקטורות והפגנות סוערות). רוב האירועים והתגובות שיקפו מוטיבים אנטישמיים קודמים וידועים, אך הם היו קיצוניים, אינטנסיביים וקולניים יותר מאשר עד כה. פעילים וארגונים מוסלמיים בעולם, ובמיוחד הרדיקלים שביניהם, הפגינו רמה גבוהה של ארגון עצמי, והיו הרוח החיה מאחורי ההפגנות, שנערכו בעיקר יחד עם אנשי שמאל ופעילי זכויות אדם, ובמידה פחותה עם חוגי ימין קיצוני. גם יהודים וישראלים לשעבר נטלו חלק בהפגנות אלה, במיוחד בארצות הברית.

יש להדגיש שהמספרים המדויקים של הפעילות האלימה עדיין לא נאספו וסוכמו, אך קהילות יהודיות וגופי מעקב וניתוח כבר הצביעו על עלייה חדה בכל סוגי האלימות. באנגליה, למשל, נרשמו על ידי הקהילה במהלך ינואר מעל 250 אירועים מכל הסוגים, בהשוואה ל-35 בתקופה המקבילה בשנת 2008. אפשר להניח שכאלף ביטויים ואירועים אנטישמיים מכל הסוגים נשמעו והתרחשו בינואר 2008 בעולם כולו. מספרם של המקרים האלימים (כולל חילול בתי קברות

הנושא העובר כחוט השני בביטויים האנטישמיים מתחילת 2009 אינו האנטישמיות הקלאסית, כלומר, הוקעה של תכונותיהם השליליות כביכול של היהודים, וישראלים כיהודים, כיחידים וכציבור, כפי שצוירו במהלך הדורות, אלא השימוש בשואה ככלי פוליטי נגד ישראל והיהודים. השוואה חדה וחלקה בין ישראל והציונות והיהודים התומכים בהן לבין הנאצים הפכה לסיסמה החוזרת ומופיעה בקביעות בהפגנות ובהתבטאויות ולמשוואה שהפכה לאקסיומה ממש: מגן דוד = צלב קרס, ונעלמו העכבות שהרתיעו מפניה קודם לכן. המשוואה מצביעה על התגלמות הרוע האולטימטיבי, על אכזריות חסרת פשר ועל העדר כל יחס לערכים אנושיים, והיא גם בבחינת אמירה שהנאציזם, שהוא המפלצת של העת החדשה, אין לו זכות להתקיים, ומכאן ברור שגם המדינה היהודית ותומכיה אינם זכאים לכך.

השאלות המטרידות בהקשר זה הן מדוע החל גל זה של אנטישמיות באופן מיידי כל-כך, כאילו חיכו להזדמנות להפעיל הכנות קודמות, ומדוע תפסה המשוואה הנתעבת לנאצים באופן כולל כל-כך, כשהיא מלווה לעתים בזעקות "מוות ליהודים" ו"יהודים לגז". ראשית, יש אמנם עניין רב וגובר בין לא-יהודים בעיקר במערב, בשואה, בגורמיה ובהשלכותיה, אך תהליך זה מתרחש במקביל ולא בניגוד לזיכרונה המעיק של השואה כפשע שבוצע על פני כל אירופה, פשע במימדים קולוסאליים. זיכרון מעיק זה גורם לאחרונה לעייפות מן העם היהודי המקרין תמיד את דמות הקרבן הנצחי, וזה למרות שטרגדיות אחרות רבות התרחשו גם במלחמת העולם השנייה וגם לאחריה. ההשוואה מאפשרת לפרוק את האשמה מעל צווארה של אירופה ולתלות אותה על זה של ישראל והקהילות היהודיות, והתחושה שנותנים ההפגנות והשלטים של היום היא שזה נעשה בהרגשה של הקלה רבתי, בייחוד באירופה שעברה את מלחמת העולם השנייה. על כך יש להוסיף בורות בקרב הדורות הצעירים יותר שאינם יודעים מה הייתה השואה ובמה היא מתייחדת, ויש להם ידיעה מעורפלת בלבד עליה, כעל רצח שהתרחש לפני עשורים רבים, והוא דומה למקרי רצח אחרים שאירעו מאז. מכאן קצרה הדרך להסכמה ולהזדהות עם המשוואה. הבורות גדולה גם

כ-20 מיליון מוסלמים חיים היום במרכז ובמערב אירופה, וההשוואה שהם מפיצים בין יהודים לנאצים משרתת את הרדיקלים שביניהם ככלי פוליטי נגד קיומה של המדינה ולשם החלשת תומכיה, וכאמצעי נוסף לחיזוק זהות מוסלמית סביב מטרה משותפת. קולות המחאה נגד ההשוואה או נגד הקריאות להרוג יהודים היו חלשים ומעטים: הדמוקרטיה המערבית נקרעת בין ערכיה הליברליים, הכוללים גם תקינות פוליטית, לבין דאגה גוברת שנוכחותם הגוברת של מהגרים בכל שטחי החיים תצא מכלל שליטה. בני נוער, במיוחד בשמאל, המחפשים כיוון ואידיאל, רצוי אנטי-ממסדיים, צועדים ברחובות, כפייה לצווארם, צועקים "אנחנו חמאס", מזדהים עם הפלסטינים שהם הקורבן של ימינו, ומגיבים באופן שונה מזה שנהגו ביחס לכל יתר הטרגדיות והעימותים, סודאן ודארפור וטיבט וצ'צ'ניה וקוסובו, שלא הצליחו להוציא אותם כך לרחובות. הייתה כאן ככל הנראה נקודת מפגש בין אינטרסים מוסלמיים, נוער ופעילים מחפשי דרך ואנטישמיות קלאסית, שהחלה את הגל בראשית 2009.

הגל הנוכחי ביטל סופית את ההבחנה ששררה בעשורים הראשונים למדינה בין ישראלים ליהודים, שנחשבו אז לציבורים שונים, כל אחד בעל תכונות משלו, הבחנה שהתמוססה בהדרגה גם מצד ישראל, עם התחזקות הקשרים בינה לבין קהילות יהודיות. הביטול מאפשר העברת תכונותיהם כביכול של היהודים אל מדינתם. העלילה של רצח ישו התגלגלה בעלילת הדם של ימי הביניים שהציגה ילדים על צלב, והיא מתורגמת בימינו בהצלחה על-ידי התעמולה הערבית לפגיעה מכוונת של ישראל בילדים. דמויות של ילדים פלסטינים על צלב הן דימוי הנקלט מייד בעיניים נוצריות. בקריקטורות מופיע הישראלי לרוב בדמותו של יהודי אורתודוקסי עבדקן, חמדן וצמא דם, וגם דימוי זה קושר את ימינו לעבר, ומראה המשכיות דתית היסטורית. כבר במלחמת לבנון השנייה הועלתה הטענה כי האלימות טבועה ביהודים עוד מימי התנ"ך, ואלוהים, אל קנא ונוקם, הוא שהטביע אותה בהם. דמות זו ותכונותיה, כביכול, גורמת לאנשים הרואים עצמם כהגונים, וחפצים בתקינות פוליטית ואקדמית, לראות בהוקעה של יהודים וישראלים מעשה מוסרי. רבים מן המוקיעים והמפגינים מתקוממים כאשר מאשימים אותם באנטישמיות, וטוענים שהם אינם אלא אנטי-ציונים. ברצוננו להזכיר את "ההגדרה המעשית" הבינלאומית של אנטישמיות,

אין ספק אפוא, שאנטי-ציונות נוסח 2009 המתבטאת בשנאה ובמינון מפחידים, ומשמשת גורם מלכד לקבוצות מגוונות, משקפת אנטישמיות, וביטוייה שונים באופיים ממחאות אחרות נגד ארצות ועמים אחרים הנמצאים במצב של עימות או מלחמה.

## הקדמה

שנת 2009 החלה בעלייה תלולה ומדאיגה בהתבטאויות ובפעילות אנטישמית. מר משה (ויאצ'סלב) קנטור, שנבחר לאחרונה לכהונה נוספת כנשיא הקונגרס היהודי האירופי, יזם לנוכח המצב שורה של צעדים בזירה הבינלאומית, וביניהם שיתוף פעולה עם המכון לחקר האנטישמיות והגזענות ע"ש סטפן רוט באוניברסיטת תל אביב. צוות המכון מודה למר קנטור על יוזמתו, ומקווה לשיתוף פעולה פורה שיהיה לתועלת הכלל.

המכון, שציינ עשר שנים לפעילותו ב-2008, השיק במאי במסגרת חבר הנאמנים של אוניברסיטת תל אביב מועצה ציבורית. פרופ' אלי ויזל, שנאות לשמש כנשיא כבוד של המועצה, הרצה בפני אולם מלא על "זיכרון השואה בימינו". פגישתה הראשונה של המועצה תתקיים ב-21 במאי 2009 בבית הלורדים, בחסותה הנדיבה של הברונית רות דיטש, שהיא חברת הוועד המנהל של המכון. גם הקתדרה לחקר האנטישמיות והגזענות ע"ש אלפרד פ. סליינר, תרומת רותה וד"ר פליקס זנדמן, תציינ עשר שנים להקמתה בכנס שייערך במלאת 90 שנה להולדתו של פרימו לוי. צוות המכון מבקש להביע את תודתו העמוקה לכל שותפיו, חבריו ותומכיו, שתרמו ותורמים להצלחת עבודתו.

הפקולטה למדעי הרוח ע"ש לסטר וסאלי אנטיין

המכון לחקר האנטישמיות והגזענות בימינו

ע"ש סטפן רוט

## אנטישמיות בעולם 2008/9

נתונים והערכות

(טיוטה)



הקונגרס היהודי האירופי

europa  
jewish congress

הקונגרס היהודי העולמי

