

**EUROPE AND THE JEWS 2012: DRAMATIC RISE IN ANTI-JEWISH,  
ANTI-ISRAEL PREJUDICE**

**A Simon Wiesenthal Center Special Report  
by  
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**March 22, 2012**

**From Toulouse to Riga:**



A mourner at the **Ozar Hatorah** Jewish school, Toulouse, France

SWC's Dr. Efraim Zuroff, with anti-Nazi activists protesting a Waffen-SS march in Riga, Latvia

## **ACTION ALERT: TIME WARP MARCH 2012**

The year is 2012, but the echoes are of 1933 to 1945:

- Not far from the Holocaust Memorial in Toulouse with an inscription reading, “Where is Your Brother?” - Yonathan Sandler, a teacher from Jerusalem, together with his two children Aryeh, age 6, and Gavriel, age 3, and 8-year-old Miriam Monstango, the daughter of the principal of Ozar Hatorah school, are dead, victims of a moped-driving, masked, black-helmeted assassin, trained by the Taliban and claiming to belong to Al Qaeda, later identified as Muhammad Merah, who used a cell phone to film the attack. Merah previously employed the same weapon to gun down four French soldiers, killing three of North African origin. European Union High Representative for Foreign Affairs Catherine Ashton linked the murder of French Jews in Toulouse to “what is happening in Gaza” before repudiating her remark.
- An incommensurate event, yet not insignificant, occurred weeks before, in Kaiserslautern, Germany, as soccer teams trained for June EURO 2012 in Poland and Ukraine, the Simon Wiesenthal Center protested to the Union of European Football Associations (UEFA) the anti-Semitic outburst—including “Seig Heil” salutes, “Heil Hitler” and chants of “Join the 6 million”—directed at Itay Schechter, the son of Holocaust Survivors from Romania.
- Just days before the Kaiserslautern incident, an exposé by the *Jerusalem Post* and protest by the Wiesenthal Center caused the Dutch VPRO media corporation to remove an anti-Israel, anti-Semitic board game—“Settlers of Catan”—that reflected the resurgence of classic anti-Semitic stereotypes, shunned in polite society since the Shoah, back into mainstream vogue.
- And at the same time, a Swedish Christian Art exhibition depicted Israelis as gun-toting rats devouring the “Holey [sic] Land.” In its protest, the Wiesenthal Center commented: “Depicting Jews as animals was perfected by the Nazi propaganda machine as an effective way to dehumanize Jewish citizens in the eyes of their German neighbors. The propaganda of the 1930s set the stage for the murder of 6 million Jews in the 1940s. Since then, Soviet and Arab and Muslim anti-Jewish propaganda used the very same method. Now it has surfaced in 2012 Sweden. It should come as no surprise that far right extremists should celebrate this art exhibit by Swedish painters depicting Jews as violent noxious animals, but the real question is what do Swedes who are not racists think?”

Europe—the historic civilization from which the Jews emerged into modern world through the crucible of triumph and tragedy—seems to be again approaching, as many prefer to avert

their eyes, the same paroxysm of Jew hatred that plunged the continent into its twenty-century abyss. Is the twenty-first century doomed to repeat with variations the tragedies of the twentieth? The answer may depend whether Europe, this time, repeats the cycle of indifference or instead stands up against evil before it is too late.

## **MORE TROUBLING TRUTHS ABOUT TODAY’S EUROPE**

“[T]he Corfu synagogue, in Greece, was burned. How many Jews live in Corfu today? One hundred and fifty. . . . Two other synagogues were burned in Greece during the past year. Anti-Semitic graffiti on the walls are spreading all over the country. What happened in Greece is happening everywhere across the European continent. During the last decade, synagogues were vandalized or set on fire in Poland, Sweden, Hungary and France. Anti-Semitic inscriptions are being drawn on building walls in Paris, Madrid, Amsterdam, London, Berlin and Rome. Jewish cemeteries are being ransacked. Jews are being attacked on the streets of most major cities on the continent . . . Jewish schools are being placed under police protection everywhere, and are usually equipped with security gates. Jewish children in public high schools are bullied; when parents complain, they are encouraged to choose another place of learning for their children. In some cities such as Malmö, Sweden, or Roubaix, France, the persecution suffered by the Jewish community has reached such a degree that people are selling their homes at any price and leaving.”

———Guy Millière, “The Full-Blown Return of Anti-Semitism in Europe” (2011)<sup>1</sup>

“When Israel, the only country in the world whose very existence is under attack, is consistently singled out for condemnation, I believe we are morally obligated to take a stand. Not just because it is the right thing to do, but because history shows us, and the ideology of the anti-Israel mob tell us all too well, that those who threaten the existence of the Jewish people are in the longer term a threat to us all.”

———Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper, first world leader to sign the Protocol on Combating Anti-Semitism, October 2011<sup>2</sup>

- Almost a third of Europeans show significant levels of anti-Semitism.
- Over half of Europeans view Israel as “the greatest threat to world peace.”
- Traditional anti-Semitic stereotyping of Jews as a money-hungry, power-seeking minority remains strong. The “new anti-Semitism” using “anti-Zionism” as cover for Jew hatred and featuring Holocaust Denial and anti-Israel conspiracy theories is increasingly prevalent:

“In a word, classical or traditional antisemitism is the discrimination against, or denial of, the right of Jews to live as equal members of a free society; the new antisemitism . . . involves the discrimination against, denial of, or assault upon, the right of the Jewish people to live as an equal member of the family of nations.”

———Irwin Cotler, “New Anti-Jewishness”<sup>3</sup>

- Anti-Jewish hate crimes, ranging from verbal harassment to vandalism and arson, and violence have become a fact of life across “the new Europe”:

“Jews in at least six Amsterdam neighborhoods often cannot cross the street wearing a skullcap without being insulted, spat at or even attacked, according to local reports.”

———Bruno Waterfield, Dutch Police Use ‘Decoy Jews’ to Stop Anti-Semitic Attacks”<sup>4</sup>

- Laws against Holocaust Denial have not prevented the emergence of extremist movements on both right and left promoting new anti-Jewish, anti-Israel ideologies and seeking to complete Hitler’s work.
- Positive tolerance education programs are failing to reach enough of Europe’s next generation, even in “enlightened” countries like Sweden where a third of young people doubt that the Holocaust occurred.
- Europe’s growing Muslim minorities are not being assimilated into the socioeconomic mainstream, and increasingly provide a recruiting ground for anti-Jewish, anti-Israel bigotry:

“Worrying is that half of Muslim students can be described as anti-Semitic. . . . Worse, the anti-Jewish feelings have nothing to do with a low educational or social disadvantage, as is the case with racist natives. It is theologically inspired anti-Semitism.”

———Mark Elchardus, “Young in Brussels”<sup>5</sup>

### **Introduction: Europe’s Other Currency**

Europe and the United States each entered modern times facing a terrible moral challenge. For the new world, it was primarily the shame of racism in the form of slavery and then segregation—which America, after prolonged struggle, has largely managed to surmount. For the old world, far from overcoming the historic scourge of anti-Semitism, anti-Jewish animus culminated in Nazi Germany’s “solution” (with the help of enthusiastic enablers in every European country) that eliminated two-thirds of the continent’s Jewish population.

In the twenty-first century, these divergences continue. Anti-Jewish prejudice—50 percent or more in the U.S. before and during World War II—declined by the 1990s to the 12 to 17 percent range where it remains today.<sup>6</sup> In Europe, on the other hand, anti-Semitism, which fell slowly until the Israeli-Arab war of 1967, has subsequently experienced a sharp upward spike, returning to levels not seen since the Hitler era.<sup>7</sup>

The Euro may—or may not—be a thing of the past in a few years. Yet the European Union has another deep-seated common currency that, unfortunately, shows no signs of going away. On the basis of the polling data below, a reasonable estimate of hard-core, Europe-wide anti-Semitism would be 30 percent.

Concentrating on the current scene, this Report uses polling results, hate crimes data, and political analysis to survey European continent-wide and individual-country developments. It explores the persistence of the stereotypes that define “the old anti-Semitism”—a fusion of religious, racial, and rightwing nationalist ideologies—as well as the emergence of “the new anti-Semitism” in the forms of Holocaust Denial, innovative conspiracy mongering about Jews and Israel by left as well as right, Jew-hatred masquerading as “anti-Zionism,” and prejudicial attitudes among Europe’s growing Muslim minority.<sup>8</sup>

### **Anti-Semitism and Israel-Bashing by the Numbers**

Since the turn of the twenty-first century, anti-Jewish and anti-Israel hatreds in Europe have taken off like a four-stage rocket:

- First Stage: Palestinians’ Europe-wide protests during the 2000 Second Intifada.
- Second Stage: Hezbollah’s global orchestrated anti-Israel campaign during and after the 2006 Lebanon War.
- Third Stage: The frenetic search for a familiar scapegoat on which to blame the 2008 Financial Meltdown.
- Fourth Stage: the frenzied anti-Israel campaign by Hamas and its international allies to Operation Cast Lead, Israel’s two-month defensive incursion into Gaza ending in January 2009.

Polls conducted in 2008-2009 reflected the cumulative impact of all four of these developments on attitudes toward Jews. In Spring, 2008—before the September market meltdown but after the major 2000 and 2006 Mideast shocks—a Pew poll showed increasingly high levels of anti-Semitism in six countries across Europe: 46 percent in Spain; 36 percent in Poland; 34 percent in Russia; 20 percent in France and 7 percent in the United Kingdom. Only the UK showed lower levels than four years earlier, and—as we shall see—those low polling numbers underestimate the UK’s current anti-Semitism problem.<sup>9</sup>

In February 2009—after the financial meltdown and the conclusion of Operation Cast Lead—an ADL poll surveyed levels of anti-Semitism in seven countries.<sup>10</sup>

Respondents were asked whether or not they agree that Jews are more loyal to Israel than their own country, have too much power in business world and international finance, “still talk too much about what happened to them in the Holocaust,” and “are responsible for the

death of Christ.” Another question was whether anti-Jewish feelings were the result of anti-Semitism or instead of anti-Israel sentiment.

The results showed that:

- Europeans viewed Jews as more loyal to Israel than their own country by a range of 64 percent in Spain to 53 percent in Germany, to 37 percent in the UK.
- 74 percent of Spaniards believed that Jews have too much power in international finance or the business world—67 percent in Hungary; 33 percent in France and 15 percent in the UK. The percentage of Europeans believing that Jews have too much financial power increased over two years by 7 percent in Hungary, 6 percent in Poland, and 5 percent in France.
- Over half of Poles and Hungarians believed that Jews “still talked too much about what happened to them in the Holocaust”—45 percent of Germans and 20 percent the UK respondents concurred.
- Many Europeans still believed that Jews were responsible for the death of Christ by a range of 48 percent in Hungary and 33 percent in Poland to 19 percent in France and 11 percent in the UK.

Of all Europeans, 23 percent said that their view of Jews was affected by Israel’s actions. Among these, 58 percent said Israel’s actions affected their view of Jews negatively. In other words, there was still a minimal blowback from Israel’s actions on attitudes toward Jews, while most European anti-Semites would have been anti-Semitic even if Israel didn’t exist.

In summary, almost a third agreed of Europeans agreed with at least three of four traditional negative stereotypes about Jews—with the highest levels in Poland, Spain, Hungary, and France—with negative attitudes reinforced particularly by fall from the global economic crisis.

Then came a 2011 poll, which was conducted after Israel interdicted the so-called “Gaza Freedom Flotilla” in May 2010. Commissioned by the European Union, preliminary results of 7,500 respondents in 15 EU countries was released under the headline that Israel was deemed “the greatest threat to world peace”—greater than Iran or North Korea which, in European minds, were viewed in the same class of threats as the U.S.! A thinly-veiled attempt to inflame world public opinion against Israel, the press release about Israel “as the greatest threat to world peace” was rightly castigated by Rabbi Marvin Hier, Dean and Founder of the Simon Wiesenthal Center, as “a racist flight of fancy that only shows that anti-Semitism is deeply embedded within European society.” Stung by the criticism, the European Commission delayed releasing the full poll results.<sup>11</sup>

However, there is no doubt that European xenophobia—directed selectively at some countries but not others—is a real phenomenon. In 2010, 57 per cent of Germans questioned agreed

that “Israel is conducting a war of extermination against the Palestinians,” and 38 per cent added that it was “understandable how Israel’s policies might encourage anti-Jewish feelings.” In a 2003, European-wide poll, 46 percent of respondents in Italy, France, Belgium, Austria, Spain, the Netherlands, Luxembourg, Germany, and Britain felt that Jews were “different” and 40 that “Jews have a particular relationship with money.” Of all poll respondents, 59 percent identified Israel as the world’s most dangerous nation—ahead of Iran, North Korea, and the U.S. that were all tied at 52 percent!<sup>12</sup>

The bottom line on major recent polls through 2011: roughly a third of Europeans stereotype Jews as a dangerous people with too much power—particularly in the financial system—and with an unhealthy loyalty to Israel which a majority of Europeans view as “the greatest threat to world peace.” There is country-to-country variation, but the only significant outlier with consistent lower levels of antipathy toward Jews was the United Kingdom where that country’s comparative tolerance faces an uncertain future.

Now comes a new ADL poll—hot off the presses—taken in January 2012. The results are extremely troubling, especially regarding the trend-line since the last ADL survey of European anti-Semitism in 2009. Respondents embracing at least three of four core anti-Jewish stereotypes jumped significantly not only in such problematic countries as Hungary and Spain, but in France (from 20 to 24 percent) and the UK (from 10 to 17 percent). To put it another way, there is not a surveyed country in Europe that does not now have a significant problem with anti-Jewish prejudice. Europe’s twenty-first century anti-Semitism problem is compounded by the increasing tendency also reflected in the latest ADL poll, to rationalize anti-Jewish violence as a result of the actions of Israel’s government.<sup>13</sup>

### **Acting Out: Anti-Semitic Hate Crimes**

Reports by the Stephen Roth Institute for the Study of Contemporary Racism and Anti-Semitism, the Coordinating Forum for Countering Antisemitism, the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, the OSCE’s Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, and the U.S. State Department (on global human rights and religious freedom), all confirmed that worldwide anti-Semitic incidents exploded during the first decade of the twenty-first century, more than doubling during the single year of 2009 to set a twenty-year record high.<sup>14</sup>

Such acts ranged from vandalism and arson against buildings (including synagogues, cemeteries, and community centers) to harassment (including verbal threats, insults, libels, and abusive language) and violence against persons (including schoolyard attacks and random street violence and rabbis and others wearing skull caps or traditional dress).

Vitriol, vandalism, and violence were everyday realities across Europe. The Federation of Jewish Communities in Spain (FCJE)’s warned of a “‘dangerous’ and ‘extraordinary’ rise in anti-Semitism.” Belgium saw “numerous instances of anti-Semitic and Holocaust denial

statements on the radio and Internet, and in books and newspapers”. In France, a French Jewish girl assaulted after thugs noticed she was carrying Hebrew books. In Norway, Jewish children were taunted by anti-Semitic slurs in schools. An Italian teacher threatened on his Facebook page to commit a synagogue massacre, while in Greece graffiti reading “Happy Holocaust” and “I’ll turn you into a bar of soap” were spray-painted on synagogues. In Poland, fascist symbols and slogans were displayed 56 times in and around football games during an 18-month period. In the Ukraine, there was a Molotov cocktail attack on a synagogue, while in Russia local authorities removed the mention of Jewish victims from a Holocaust memorial.<sup>15</sup>

Globally, then, the most dramatic increases in anti-Semitic incidents were not in the Middle East—but in Europe, especially Western Europe.<sup>16</sup>

It should be noted that during 2010, there was a 46 percent global decline from anti-Semitic incidents reported in 2009. Yet 2010 still registered the third highest number of anti-Jewish hate crimes since the late 1980s—with the UK’s reported 144 incidents and France’s 134 incidents were the highest reported among European nations.<sup>17</sup>

In 2011, according to the Coordinating Forum for Countering Antisemitism, “the high level of the reported anti-Semitic incidents was maintained... including those of a violent nature.” Indeed, the overall statistical decline during 2010 masked some very troubling counter-trends. For example, as the Roth Center points out, within the overall statistical decrease reported by France’s SPCJ (Jewish Community Protection Service) was an actual *increase* in incidents of physical street violence perpetrated against Jews from 37 in 2009 to 57 in 2010.<sup>18</sup>

The Coordinating Forum for Countering Antisemitism attributes the high incidence of anti-Semitic hate crimes in Europe in 2011—and apparently continuing into 2012—to the ongoing global economic crisis. There is no reason to believe that a return to prosperity—if and when it occurs—will automatically defuse sky-high levels of hate, that are fueled by incendiary Internet hate as much as by economic dislocation. Indeed, in Germany there is some evidence that “high income” individuals are *more* prejudiced than the less affluent. A toxic discourse among political and media elites filtering down society as well as the prejudices undereducated masses filtering up from below fuse Diaspora Jewry with Israelis as part of an alleged international “Zio-Nazi” conspiracy. Also legitimized are physical as well as verbal attacks on Jewish individuals and institutions. These trends are unlikely to go away even after a drop in the unemployment rate.<sup>19</sup>

### **Whitewashing Hitler: Holocaust Denial**

Holocaust Denial is among the most important dynamics of “the new anti-Semitism.” While in the United States, Holocaust Denial began as a marginal movement seeking to place libelous advertisements in college newspapers, the Internet, led by Iranian-sponsored websites has given the movement global velocity in Europe as well as the Middle East. It has

not only made Deniers like Ernst Zündel and David Irving into international celebrities and self-styled martyrs for their conviction under Holocaust Denial laws.<sup>20</sup>

Holocaust Denial has also established London—sometimes called “Londonistan” for the proliferation of Arab and Muslim anti-Semitic discourse—as Denial’s global epicenter. It is in London where the Muslim Council of Britain has organized repeated boycotts of international Holocaust Memorial Day.<sup>21</sup>

In the heartland of Europe—the crucible for the emergence of the Nazi genocide and where extreme rightwing and even Neo-Nazi parties are enjoying a resurgence—laws banning Holocaust Denial have accomplished only so much. In Germany, a new poll released by *Stern* magazine shows that most young Germans are vaguely aware that Auschwitz was “a concentration camp,” but that 21 percent of those 18 to 29 years old do not know that Auschwitz was a death camp and nearly a third are unaware that it is located in Poland. A second poll, done by independent experts for the German Parliament, classified a fifth of all Germans as anti-Semitic. Real or feigned ignorance of “The Final Solution” and virulent hostility towards Jews and Israel seem to be not only twins, but kissing cousins of Holocaust Denial.<sup>22</sup>

In Italy, on the eve of the Holocaust Remembrance Day, in the left-wing *Manifesto* newspaper, political candidate Fiamma Nirenstein was portrayed with the Star of David and with the fascist symbol (*Fascio littorio*) on her chest. Reacting to protest, the newspaper began describing Nirenstein as “Frankenstein”—a slur on her “Jewish” name. The film, *Sarah’s Key*, about the mass detention of the Jews of Paris by the French policemen in 1942, had difficulty finding an Italian distributor. Then, the film’s main European distributor complained: “Several users have posted shameful anti-Semitic comments on our *YouTube* channel” defining the Palestinian Nakbah as “the real Holocaust” and the Palestinians as “the real Semites.” Originally dependent on denying and minimizing the Holocaust in Europe and the U.S., Denial in the Muslim and Arab world has now not only made an independent beachhead but is being recycled back to Europe.<sup>23</sup>

In 2009, in the equivalent of “The Style Section” of the *New York Times*, Sweden’s largest newspaper, *Aftonbladet*, revived the age-old blood libel against the Jews under the headline “They Plunder the Organs of Our Sons,” quoting an alleged Palestinian “witness” who, in fact, witnessed nothing. Norwegian Labour Party Sami MP Anders Mathisen declared: “There is no evidence the gas chambers or mass graves existed. Even reputable Holocaust historians have admitted it cannot be established.” Mathisen wrote on his *Facebook* page that he was proud to call himself an anti-Semite if that meant “not accepting lies and nonsense” like *Schindler’s List*. A third of Swedish students a few years before had feigned ignorance that the Holocaust occurred.<sup>24</sup>

In Norway in 2010, school authorities have been caught ignoring Muslim students who boycott Holocaust education.<sup>25</sup>

Croatia held memorial parades honoring Ustasha leader Ante Pavelić, Hitler’s emissary in the Balkans, celebrating him as a Croatian patriot and forgiving his slaughter of Serbs, Jews and other ethnic groups.<sup>26</sup>

In Russia, where Holocaust-denying websites thrive, a Denier, known as Israel Shamir (as well as by other aliases) was revealed as a Russian distributor for WikiLeaks.<sup>27</sup>

In July 2010, Holocaust Deniers again showed their Europe-wide Internet prowess, breaking into the Buchenwald and Dora Mittel-bau Memorial websites, desecrating them with Neo-Nazi slogans including “we’ll be back.”<sup>28</sup>

### **Anti-Zionism/Anti-Semitism**

The most common defense of “the new anti-Semites” is that they are not “anti-Jewish” but only “anti-Zionist.”

Though rooted in ancient yearnings of Jews scattered the world over for nearly 2000 years, the modern Zionist movement’s objective—the Jewish people’s right to a homeland and state of their own—is little more than a century old. Arguably, anti-Zionism—the movement to deny the Jewish people the right of self-determination in their traditional homeland—dates back, not centuries, but millennia to when the Roman Empire crushed the Jewish state, followed by Christian definitions of Jews as a nation of god-killers, divinely cursed to wander without a home until Judgment Day. Islam subsequently generated its own ideology of second-class *dhimmitude* to justify the subordination and statelessness of the Jews.<sup>29</sup>

Until 1948, when the UN General Assembly voted to recognize Jewish statehood, a significant minority of Jews viewed Zionism as incompatible with their aspirations to assimilate into the nation states into which they had been born. After 1948, though an ultra-Orthodox fringe still opposed a secular state in the Holy Land on theological grounds, Jewish fears in Europe and North America of being accused of “dual loyalties” subsided, while the international community except for the Arab and Muslim world embraced the reality of Jewish statehood. But since Israel’s stunning victory in the 1967 Six Day War and subsequent conflicts between Israel and its Arab over Palestinian rights, anti-Zionism has revived with a vengeance not only in the Middle East but in Europe and, to a lesser extent, the United States, particularly on college campuses.<sup>30</sup>

Today, traditional anti-Semitic stereotyping individual Jews for alleged negative characteristics is powerfully reinforced by anti-Zionism singling out Israel as the undesirable “Jew among the nations.” However loudly anti-Zionists talk about Palestinian rights, their real purposes is not to create two states—Israel and Palestine—living side-by-side in peace, but a single Palestinian state built on the ruins of Israel. Anti-Zionism targets Israel for de-legitimation, demonization, and ultimate destruction—with the fate of six million Israeli Jews

to be left in the hands of Islamists with a genocidal agenda committed to a ‘Judenrein Palestine’. Anti-Zionists who deny these intentions are either deluding themselves or deceiving others about anti-Zionism’s primary function as an ideological veneer for a movement whose thinly-camouflaged purpose is to complete Hitler’s work. The BDS—boycott/divestment/sanctions—movement targets, not Israel’s policies, but Israel’s essence as a Jewish state. It seeks the same eliminationist goal of the ultimate destruction of “apartheid” Israel in stages.<sup>31</sup>

In the UK, Liberal Democrat Baroness Tonge told the *Jewish Chronicle* that while IDF forces were “to be commended for their fantastic response to the Haitian earthquake,” an investigation should be made of accusations that the Israeli medical team “harvested” organs of earthquake victims. Party Leader Nick Clegg removed Lady Tonge as Health Spokeswoman for “wrong, distasteful and provocative” remarks. Still in the UK today only 52 percent of British Muslims believe that Israel has a right to exist.<sup>32</sup>

In Belgium, the former Foreign Minister and EU Trade Commissioner Karl de Gucht stated on Flemish public radio VRT that most Jews thought they were right all the time and that it was hard to convince them with rational arguments. Gucht subsequently apologized.<sup>33</sup>

In Germany, anti-Semitic activist Hermann Dierkes was seen in a *YouTube* video in 2010 at a Berlin Conference, entitled “Marx Is a Must,” calling Israel’s demand for the right to exist as “petty” when compared to demands to end the former Apartheid state of South Africa.<sup>34</sup>

In Sweden, Malmö mayor Ilmar Reepalu marked Holocaust Remembrance Day by warning local Jews that they must condemn Israel to avoid harassment. As the Roth Institute points out, “[There] has been a recurring pattern in virtually all debates about antisemitism in Sweden in the last decade, in which leftist politicians, intellectuals, academics, and pundits refuse to acknowledge the existence of antisemitism except among neo-Nazi groups.”<sup>35</sup>

In Norway, the newspaper, *Adresseavisen* published a satiric cartoon—“Antisemitism Is Advancing Disturbingly in Europe”—that depicted Palestinian president Abu Mazen kneeling before a skull-capped Israeli prime minister Netanyahu sitting at a desk with the sign: “The new Jerusalem is Being Built Here.” A construction zone was shown featuring the sign that hung over the entrance to Auschwitz: *Arbeit Macht Frei* (“Work Liberates”).<sup>36</sup>

In Ukraine’s presidential election, two right-wing candidates, Oleg Tyagnibok and Sergeii Ratushniak, used “Jew” and “Zionist” interchangeably in their campaign rhetoric. Ratushniak accused incumbent president Viktor Yushchenko (who lost the election) of being a Jew in disguise. Tyagnibok’s party, Svoboda, ran strongly in western Ukrainian cities.<sup>37</sup>

In Hungary, the increasingly powerful, extreme right party, JOBBIK (Movement for a Better Hungary), uses its website, [kuruc.info](http://kuruc.info), to rail against Jews, Israel, and Gypsies.<sup>38</sup>

Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr.'s words at Harvard in 1968, shortly before he died, ring as true today about anti-Zionism in Europe as they did in the U.S. then:

“It is the denial to the Jewish people of a fundamental right that we justly claim for the people of Africa and freely accord all other nations of the Globe. It is discrimination against Jews, my friend, because they are Jews. In short, it is anti-Semitism. . . . Let my words echo in the depths of your soul: When people criticize Zionism, they mean Jews — make no mistake about it.”<sup>39</sup>

### **Extreme Right and Left Anti-Jewish and Anti-Israel Conspiracies Toxic Convergence**

After World War II, western European “leftist” parties that long had viewed anti-Semitism as “the socialism of fools” and—in the Holocaust’s wake—abandoned or moderated their prior hostility toward “Jewish nationalism” or Zionism. On the other hand, European “rightist” parties generally continued their prewar anti-Jewish stance, and displayed hostility to the fledgling Jewish state. Yet in our time, there has been a gradual blurring of ideological lines on both right and left causing a convergence around negative attitudes toward the Jews and Israel.<sup>40</sup>

Just as the Nazis had sought to coopt former communists, postwar European fascists flailing for political support gradually displayed a tendency to “reach out to the left.” In the 1960s, Jean Theriot’s “Young Europe” movement proclaimed the slogan—“Hitler and Mao united in struggle”—while supporting Palestinian terrorism; then other rightists rallied around Ayatollah Khomeini’s 1979 Revolution. In the 1980s, British fascists advocated environmentally “Greening Nazism”—at the same time as they explored a trans-Atlantic alliance with Louis Farrakhan’s Nation of Islam that believes the hole in the ozone layer is a capitalist-Jewish plot. And since 2000, some leaders of right-wing extremist movements such as the British National Party (BNP) and French Front National (FN)—motivated by the perceived threat posed by “Islam within” western and northern countries—now proclaim, at least rhetorically, that they no longer hate Jews or a Jewish state.<sup>41</sup>

The sincerity of far-right leaders like Nick Griffin of the BNP and Marine Le Pen of the FN in distancing from anti-Semitic pasts and converting to “selective” (i.e., pro-Jewish but anti-Muslim) tolerance is highly suspect. In Paris, far-rightists joined pro-Saddam Muslim street demonstrators shouting “Death to Jews! Death to Israel!” during the buildup to the Iraq War, and Jean Marie Le Pen kept up his anti-Israel vitriol through the Lebanon War of 2006. After the elder Le Pen’s surrender of party leadership, Bruno Gollnisch—a supporter of Holocaust Denier Robert Faurisson—remained the FN’s second-in-command under new leader Marine Le Pen.<sup>42</sup>

In neighboring Belgium, the Flemish separatist New Flemish Alliance (NVA), led by Bart De Wever, has been able to emerge as a powerful force despite De Wever’s outrageous criticism of official apologies by Antwerp’s Mayor Patrick Janssens for the role of Belgians in the

deportation of their Jewish neighbors during the Nazi occupation in World War II. According to De Wever, “those who led Antwerp at the time had to make delicate decisions in difficult circumstances”; he added that, in the occupied Palestinian territories, “some use techniques which recall to me a dark past.”<sup>43</sup>

Furthermore, the closer one moves to fascism’s and Nazism’s historic heartland, the less evidence there is of the extreme right’s supposed abandonment of anti-Jewish, anti-Israel themes. In many central and Eastern Europe countries, far-right-wing parties and movements have generally remained true to their anti-Jewish animus and aversion toward Israel.

In Austria, Jörg Haider became more—not less—overtly anti-Semitic and anti-Israel as he moved from the leadership of the Austrian Freedom Party (FPÖ) to that of Alliance for the Future of Austria before his death in a car accident in 2008. The political beneficiary of Haider’s demise was the ultra-Nationalist Heinz-Christian Strache. To coincide with this year’s International Holocaust Remembrance Day, Vienna’s right-wing student fraternities held a ball—condemned by critics as “dancing on the graves” of the Holocaust’s victims—attended by Strache. He was overheard complaining that: “We are the new Jews,” while the anti-fascist demonstrators picketing the event were “like the *Reichskristallnacht*,” i.e., Nazi thugs’ responsible for the notorious anti-Jewish pogroms in November 1938.<sup>44</sup>

Strache has visited Israel, but his foreign policy passion is cultivating ties to the Jobbik Party—Hungary’s third largest—whose chairman, Gabor Vona (who sometimes dresses in a uniform modeled on the fascist Iron Cross), accused Israel of trying to take over *his* fatherland!<sup>45</sup>

In Germany, the extreme right National Democratic Party (NPD) has kept itself in the headlines in recent years by denouncing in 2008 Barack Obama’s elections as the result of a pernicious “alliance of Jews and Negroes,” holding a “holocaust vigil” in 2009 in solidarity with Gaza’s Palestinians, and successfully fighting a legislative attempt to outlaw it in 2011 following revelation of links between NPD officials and Neo-Nazi “terror cells.”<sup>46</sup>

So while the European right’s ongoing anti-Semitism comes as no surprise, the descent into Jew-baiting as well as Israel-baiting by many on the European left has been particularly shocking because of its break with history. While the Soviet Union spent decades vilifying Israel to further its cynical alliance with Arab nationalist regimes and Palestinian militants, it never quite embraced the goal of annihilating Israel that now has become a leftist commonplace.<sup>47</sup>

Today, perhaps the most significant political forms of new anti-Semitism are “Red-Green alliances” (which have nothing to do with environmentalism!). In Germany, these involve the extreme right-wing and left-wings converging around a shared anti-Semitic agenda under an anti-Israel banner; some German observers have coined a new term—*Querfront*—for political “crossover” phenomenon. A prime example in the UK involves British radicals making

common cause with reactionary Muslims. London's Mayor Ken Livingstone—an ally of Scottish parliamentarian and Saddam Hussein apologist George Galloway—rolled out the red carpet for Egyptian Sheikh Youssef al-Qaradawi—the spiritual godfather of the Muslim Brotherhood. Livingstone compared him to John Paul II, despite Qaradawi's support of suicide attacks on Israel children, female mutilation, and the death sentence for homosexuals. Meanwhile, the British Communist Party and Trotskyist Socialist Workers' Party institutionalized an ongoing alliance with the Muslim Association of Britain (MAB)—a front of Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood—in opposition to the Iraq War. Abandoning the values of secularism, feminism, and gay rights, British leftists appealed to the anti-Jewish, anti-Israel prejudices of Pakistani immigrants and other Muslim Britons in hopes of using them as a tool to topple global capitalism. Such exploitation of anti-Semitism for political gain is not only despicable; it is dangerous, given statistics indicating that Muslims—3 percent of the UK's population—account for over 30 percent of its anti-Jewish hate crimes.<sup>48</sup>

Across the Channel to France, Réseau (Network) Voltaire—a think tank and publishing house—has also betrayed its founding principles by marketing anti-Semitic and anti-American conspiracy theories, including the “thesis” of 9/11 Truthers—highly popular on both sides of the Atlantic—that Israel and the U.S. government were responsible for the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks. In Paris, Revolutionary Communists make common cause with Muslim militants.<sup>49</sup>

Perhaps more than the Euro, conspiracy mongering—tinged with anti-Semitism—has become contemporary Europe's most common currency.

### **Country-Specific Trends: 2011-2012<sup>50</sup>**

#### **Austria:**

Right-wing extremists were responsible for most attacks during 2011, but the Muslim community—particularly, recent Turkish immigrants—played an increasing role.

#### **Belgium:**

Anti-Semitic incidents, including an attack on a girl attending school, increased during 2011. A poll indicated half of Muslim students were anti-Semitic. A right-wing party stepped up anti-Jewish rhetoric. The Belgian daily *Le Soir French* removed Israel from a print map.

#### **Denmark:**

Denmark was a hotbed of anti-Israel sentiment in 2011. On the radio channel “radio24syv” in 2011 Michael Jeppesen, the host of the program “Top 182,” referred to the pro-Israeli movement in USA as “the fucking Jew-lobby.”

**Finland:**

Chairman Gideon Bolotowsky of Finland's Central Council of Jewish Congregations in 2012 accused the chairman of the Left Alliance—presidential candidate and minister of culture, Paavo Arhinmäki—of anti-Semitism for criticizing Israeli “genocide.” Finnish Foreign Minister Erkki Tuomioja condemned Israel for “Apartheid.”

**France:**

French Jewry in 2011 experienced knife attacks, severe beatings, the carving of a Swastika in the hand of a young girl, and three arson attacks, among other violent incidents. Most of the criminals were Muslim. Some government high school textbooks bashed Israel. A law against boycotting Israel was weakened. The French BDS announced in 2012 an escalating attack on Israel as “a racist and Apartheid state.” Former FN leader Jean Marie Le Pen in 2012 refused to recant his description of World War II gas chambers as “an insignificant detail.”

**Germany:**

Contrary to most of the rest of Europe, anti-Semitic incidents increased during 2011, particularly in eastern Germany where neo-Nazis and environmentalist Greens sometimes made common cause. Neo-Nazis were mainly responsible for violence including terrorist-motivated bank robberies and the murder of eight Turks, one Greek, and a policewoman. Hateful rhetoric toward Israel remained prevalent.

**Greece:**

Against the backdrop of Greece's economic implosion and resulting social crisis, anti-Semitic manifestations in 2011 involved both the right and the left. There were widespread claims that the country's economic crisis was the result of a “Zionist conspiracy.” Mikis Theodorakis, winner of the International Music Council-UNESCO International Music Prize, declared: “Everything that happens today in the world has to do with the Zionists ... American Jews are behind the world economic crisis that has hit Greece also.” The cemetery in Thessaloniki was desecrated multiple times. The anti-Semitic, extreme-right LAOS party was included in the government.

**Hungary:**

Traditional anti-Jewish prejudice continued in 2011, stirred up by the virulently extreme rightist Jobbik Party, which cultivated ties with Iran as well as other European far-rightists. A 2012 poll showed increasing levels of anti-Semitism.

**Ireland:**

With levels of anti-Semitism on the increase in 2011, the Dublin City Council sponsored a display presenting IDF soldiers as “Nazi troops” abusing Palestinians.

### **Italy:**

Violent Anti-Semitic incidents remained low in 2011, though five Neo-Fascists were arrested for planning an attack on the President of the Rome Jewish community and others. Anti-Israel propaganda increased—particularly through Internet sites. Actor Roberto Benigni was the victim of anti-Semitic slurs. Cobblestones to a Holocaust Memorial were stolen in Rome in 2012.

### **Kosovo:**

In Pristina in 2011, swastikas were sprayed on dozens of tombstones in a Jewish cemetery that had been recently restored by American and Kosovan students.

### **Lithuania:**

Pig’s heads or drawings of pigs were used in 2011 to desecrate a synagogue in Kovno and a Holocaust Memorial in Vilna. Hitler’s birthday was celebrated across the country. In an opinion piece in the *Wall Street Journal* in December, 2011, EU Ambassador to Afghanistan, Lithuania’s former Foreign Minister Vygaudas Ušackas, categorized the Nazi occupation of Lithuania (1941-1944) during which over 96 percent of the country’s Jewish community was murdered, in many cases by Lithuanian Nazi collaborators, as “a respite from the Communists while the Nazis were in control.” In a statement issued here today by the Simon Wiesenthal Center’s Israel director, Holocaust historian Dr. Efraim Zuroff, termed the comment “a grave insult to the victims of the Holocaust and especially to those murdered in Lithuania.” Lithuania continues to refuse to acknowledge the extent of the complicity by Lithuanians in the murder of their Jewish neighbors. On Lithuanian Independence Day in 2012, 300 Neo-Nazis marched through the center of Kaunas where they were addressed by five Parliament members including three *belonging* to Lithuania’s ruling Homeland Union party. Hundreds of anti-fascist demonstrators were denied a permit to hold a counter-march, while a Klaipeda court has ruled that the swastika is an innocent symbol of the ancient Lithuanian heritage.<sup>51</sup>

### **Netherlands:**

Parliament member Gerta Duisenberg declared: “I am almost proud to be called an anti-Semite.” The Dutch government indirectly funded through an NGO supporting the anti-Israel boycott campaign. Jewish schools faced intimidation. Neo-Nazis targeted the Ajax Football Club—identified as “Jewish.”

### **Norway:**

Anti-Israel propaganda continues to be a media staple during 2011. After Anders Beivik, a right-wing Norwegian, killed 77 people in a terror attack designed to protest Muslim influence, conspiracy theories multiplied blaming Jews and Israel for his act. *NYTT NORSK TIDSSKRIFT* (a new monthly publication) published an article propounding this thesis by Professor Ota Tunander.

### **Poland:**

Anti-Jewish incidents continued at significant levels in 2011. An anti-Jewish poster was found in a 2012 calendar published for promotional purposes by the Warsaw Municipality. Anti-Semitic graffiti were spray-painted in Krakow. The letters “A” and “J” symbolizing Anti żydowskich (anti-Jew) and Star of David Were spray-painted.

### **Russia:**

There was widespread desecration in 2011 by Neo-Nazis and extreme nationalists of synagogues, cemeteries, and community centers. The authorities took little action, while removing the name of Jewish Holocaust victims from a memorial in Rostov.

### **Spain:**

In a country with the highest levels of anti-Semitism in Europe, the *ECD Seguridad* newspaper in 2011 reported two of Spain’s famous clown performers visiting a public pre-school in the Basque city of Navarre and then joining with the toddlers in a local folklore festival. The children were all dressed as Arabs, replete with gowns, keffiyehs and in the case of the little girls, hijab scarves. The children’s costumes were meant to symbolize Arab ownership of homes in Israel to which they will return with the destruction of the Jewish state.

### **Sweden:**

In addition to anti-Semitic incidents, and the continued failure of authorities in Malmö, to protect the Jewish community, the Swedish government in 2011 published an anti-Israel brochure accusing the Jewish state of “ethnic cleansing.” Moshe Kantor, the President of the European Jewish Congress, said in 2012 that Sweden has become the new center of anti-Semitism.

### **Switzerland:**

Contrary to most of the rest of Europe, anti-Semitic incidents increased there during 2011. The most disturbing hate crime was the stabbing of an Orthodox Jew in front of his family.

**UK:**

Great Britain in 2011 experienced a successful campaign to close down the “Ahava” (the renowned Israeli) cosmetics company in Covent Garden, along with an anti-Semitic outburst by fashion designer John Galliano, and attacks on Jews including rabbis in London. Labour member Paul Flynn claimed that Britain’s ambassador to Israel, Matthew Gould, “was serving the interests of the Israeli government.” The BDS Movement in 2012 targeted the Jewish National Fund. A Jewish student at LSE (London School of Economics) suffered a broken nose after he protested a Nazi-themed drinking game involving “saluting the Fuhrer” played by other students during their skiing trip to the continent.

**Ukraine:**

Neo-Nazis and extreme Nationalists were chiefly responsible in 2011 for anti-Semitic attacks. There was a widespread anti-Semitic campaign in Uman (Cherkasskaya oblast) targeting Hasidic pilgrims to the burial place of one of the great Jewish tsaddiks, founder of the Bratslav branch of the Hasidic movement, Rabbi Nachman.

**Conclusion: What Can be Done?**

In today’s Europe, the continent’s oldest disease—Jew hatred—is mutating into new forms. Those who claim that the elimination of Israel would “solve the problem” are not only hateful but wrong: just ask the anti-Semites who tell pollsters they would still be anti-Semites even if the Jewish state ceased to exist. Our best hope for the future is a combination of honest, unafraid tolerance education with anti-bias laws punishing hate criminals who target Jews in word-and-deed.

If only Europe’s democratic leaders would follow the lead of Canada where, last October, Prime Minister Stephen Harper’s government became the first globally to sign the Protocol on Combating Anti-Semitism. Drawn up by international parliamentary experts in series of conferences in Ottawa, these Protocol reaffirms the “commitment to institute tangible measures” to counter “anti-Zionism” as a mask for global scourge of anti-Semitism. “The criticism of Israel similar to that leveled against any other country cannot be anti-Semitic,” the Protocol states. “But singling Israel out for selective condemnation and opprobrium—let alone denying its right to exist or seeking its destruction—is discriminatory and hateful, and not saying so is dishonest.” Leaving it for the rest of the world to fill in the dots, Prime Minister Harper declared: “a hateful ideology with global ambitions” is the “one which targets the Jewish homeland as a scapegoat” and is responsible for Jews being “savagely attacked around the world.”<sup>52</sup>

Would only that Europe’s leaders would heed his warning and counsel!

The European challenge is continent-wide, but history gives it special weight at Europe's center. The exclusive copyright, which the Bavarian state government has used to prevent German publishers from reprinting *Mein Kampf*, is expiring. Of course, the publication ban has had only limited effectiveness, especially in our Internet age when editions of Hitler's genocidal blueprint are instantly available from download, not only in German, but in Arabic, Turkish, and Farsi to Germany's four-million member Muslim minority. The federal government shouldn't be criticized for its inability to deny Hitler's ideas an audience either in Germany or in the Middle East. But Germany needs to do a better job of inoculating new generations against Nazi revivalism on both right and left. The German government also has it within its power to send a message by preventing high tech exports by German companies to Hitler's Iranian heirs.<sup>53</sup>

In 2002, the OSCE set in motion a process designed to make Europe, at long last, safe for its historic Jewish minority. Now, a decade later, the process has made just minimal progress. As the ADL and Human Rights First have noted, the majority of the OSCE's 56 member governments have failed to take even the first vital step—by honoring their collective commitment to collect data on anti-Semitic crimes.<sup>54</sup>

This is not the time for more declarations. We do need to gather more reliable statistics, but we have to move beyond that—now and without further delay. Europe's governments must act to mobilize not only their bureaucratic resources but the moral energies of their people at the grassroots. Extremists—both left and right—must be met with both the force of law and public opinion—but above all, the young, including the growing number of young European Muslims, must be educated about why “Never Again” is a moral commandment and survival imperative for all.

Anti-Semitic prejudice and hate crimes, Holocaust Denial, demonizing Israel and denying its right to exist: all these must be the target of action before they produce a twenty-first century repeat of the collapse of tolerance and decency that permanently darkened the skies of twentieth century Europe.

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<sup>12</sup> Manfred Gerstenfeld, “Anti-Semitism: Integral to European Culture,” <[http://www.jcpa.org/JCPA/Templates/ShowPage.asp?DRIT=3&DBID=1&LNGID=1&TMID=111&FID=624&PID=0&IID=653&TTL=Anti-Semitism:\\_Integral\\_to\\_European\\_Culture](http://www.jcpa.org/JCPA/Templates/ShowPage.asp?DRIT=3&DBID=1&LNGID=1&TMID=111&FID=624&PID=0&IID=653&TTL=Anti-Semitism:_Integral_to_European_Culture)>; Angus Reid Public Opinion, “Europeans See Israel As Threat To World Peace,” <[http://www.angus-reid.com/polls/26337/europeans\\_see\\_israel\\_as\\_threat\\_to\\_world\\_peace/](http://www.angus-reid.com/polls/26337/europeans_see_israel_as_threat_to_world_peace/)>; Coordinating Forum for Countering Antisemitism, “Antisemitic Theories on the Rise,” December 12, 2010, <<http://antisemitism.org.il/article/13081/germany-antisemitic-theories-rise>>.

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