

Anti-Semitism in the Former USSR: a General Overview

Anti-Semitism in the Former USSR: a General Overview

Anti-Semitism in post-Soviet territory has a number of significant differences both from the Western and the Eastern situation. If we attempt to characterize the situation as a whole, somewhat simplifying the matter, we can say that anti-Semitism in different countries of the region has a traditional, somewhat archaic and rudimentary character, and has been preserved mostly on the grassroots level as negative stereotypes within the consciousness of the masses. Sometimes these stereotypes are of religious origin, and sometimes they are inherited from Soviet propaganda. There does not seem to be a flexible, easily adaptable ideology with a massive mobilization potential. Unfortunately, as it is well-known, during the last ten years a falsely-understood solidarity with Palestinian Muslims has been becoming, through the efforts of Islamists, the ideological basis for radical anti-Semitic propaganda or even criminal activity for a portion of the population of certain Islamic countries, as well as for many diaspora representatives of Muslim peoples. However, anti-Israeli rhetoric does not mobilize post-Soviet Muslims as effectively as their peers in other countries. This is for a number of reasons, the most important among which is the mentality differences between post-Soviet Muslims and their Near Eastern and Western counterparts. Also important is the absence of any numerous groups hailing from the Near East in the post-Soviet Umma. The Left and liberal-Left anti-Zionism (often inseparable with the so-called new anti-Semitism), which has become widespread among the intellectual elite of the West, has not gained any considerable influence among post-Soviet youth and intellectuals.

So the minimum context for this report is the fact that, in general, post-Soviet anti-Semitism has preserved its unique nature, and has not become a part of either the European new anti-Semitism (when speaking of the European republics of the former USSR) or the zone of anti-Semitic rhetoric typical of Islamic fundamentalist countries neighboring the new states with a predominantly Muslim population.

This factor has strengthened the countries of the former Soviet Union to waves of new anti-Semitism, which have swamped the world starting with the Second Intifada of 2000 and up to the reaction to the events of the so-called "Freedom Flotilla" in May, 2010 (see special report).

Unlike in many other countries, the populace of post-Soviet territories, both elites and the majority of the population tend to sympathize with Israel and support it in the conflict with Islamic radicals. First of all, anti-Israeli stereotypes are often perceived as a hallmark of Communist views, which are seen by the majority of the population as outdated and discredited. Anti-Zionism is rejected as a remnant of Soviet foreign policy and propaganda. Youths mostly do not support the political left, and many phenomena noticeable in the West, such as widespread intellectual anti-Semitism on campuses, anti-Israeli slogans in youth anti-globalist events, and so on, are absent. Second, over a million repatriates to Israel from the Soviet Union, the majority of which had been intellectuals and highly-qualified workers, keep contact with their friends and colleagues in "countries of the Exodus," which influences the sympathies in the media when covering the Arab-Israel conflict. This factor has been gaining in importance because of the widespread use of the Internet and new technologies for transferring information.



Finally, as has been said already, groups of natives from Arabic countries (Palestinians, first and foremost) are not nearly as numerous and influential as they are in the West. The Muslim population of the post-Soviet territory are not Arabs, but Turks, representatives of ethnicities from the Northern Caucasus, and Tajiks, and so the mechanisms of pan-Arabic solidarity do not work in post-Soviet space. Pan-Islamic solidarity works, however, and religious forms of solidarity in the modern secularized world have a far stronger mobilization effect than linguistic and ethnic solidarity.

We should note that the situation might change in the future. In some post-Soviet countries, their international relations context stimulates the development of anti-Israeli tendencies. The search of models for the external realization of interests has been leading some post-Soviet countries to alliances with open opponents of Israel, first and foremost with Iran, and with certain others, from Venezuela to the pseudo-state HAMAS regime in Gaza. This tendency can be seen in certain European countries of the former USSR, as well as in countries with a predominantly Muslim population. Together with internal processes – the “Soviet-light” restoration tendencies in Russia and the gradual integration of the Islamic countries into the worldwide Muslim informational and cultural space – this trend seems to be quite serious.

We should also note that in many post-Soviet countries, the strengthening of authoritarian tendencies in their internal policy leads to the suppression of any oppositional activity, including that of the radical right (ultra-nationalist and religious fundamental), which consequentially leads to a reduction of the volume of anti-Semitic propaganda and of recorded anti-Semitic acts. However, should the situation destabilize, anti-Semitic activity tends to increase again. These tendencies can be seen, at least in part, in last-year's events in Moldova and, especially, in Kyrgyzstan. There is reason to suspect that should the authoritarian regime weaken in Azerbaijan and Uzbekistan, which both have been rather harshly suppressing the Islamist opposition, anti-Semitic incidents might happen there, as well.

In general, the Jewish community is in a safe and stable position. Criminal anti-Semitic acts are the exception to a peaceful norm, and in recent years anti-Semitic rhetoric in the media and public life, which were relatively rare before, have become even rarer. The sympathies of the Armenian population have been moving towards Israel recently, in part because of the recent rapprochement in foreign policy between Turkey and Iran; nonetheless, a certain Iranian influence can also be felt because of the particularities of Armenian-Iranian geopolitical and economic relationship.

The only recent flagrant anti-Semitic act that appalled the Jewish community was the desecration of the Yerevan memorial to the victims of the Armenian Genocide and the Holocaust on October 19, 2010. Unknown anti-Semites used a stencil to write a call for the destruction of Jews in Armenian and to paint a swastika. It is notable that the communal authorities promptly painted the sign over. Proceedings were instigated on the “vandalism” article of the Criminal Code; however, the guilty party had not been found.



The memorial that symbolizes the suffering of the Jewish and Armenian peoples had been erected on October 27, 2006, on the Koltsevy Boulevard in Yerevan. A pedestal in memory of the Holocaust victims, which had occupied that same spot before the erection of the memorial had been desecrated by vandals no less than five times. The culprits had never been found.

Anti-Semitism in Azerbaijan, 2009-2010

Anti-Semitism in Azerbaijan, 2009-2010

The main manifestations of anti-Semitism in the Republic of Azerbaijan in recent years have been connected with Islamist activity in connection with radical displays of solidarity with Palestinian Muslims (first and foremost with those in Gaza), and instigated, on one hand, by the evolution of the internal and foreign policy of the moderate Islamists who are in power in Turkey (and on whom the position of Azerbaijan's leadership depends greatly) and, on the other hand, by the attempts of the Iranian regime to influence the population of Azerbaijan through religious kinship (both Azerbaijani and Iranian Muslims are Shiites) and ethnic ties (there are more Azerbaijanians in Iran than in Azerbaijan itself).

Like in many Muslim countries, the events surrounding the so-called "Freedom Flotilla" became a catalyst for an outburst of anti-Semitic feelings. The culmination of these events were the tragic circumstances of the stop of the flagship Mavi Marmara by the IDF. The Mavi Marmara had been on its way to Gaza, when it had been stopped in the night of May 31st, 2010. As a reaction, anti-Israeli demonstrations took place in Baku and other cities, and they featured radical anti-Israeli and overtly anti-Semitic slogans. A number of these meetings were not authorized by the administration, and the attempt to hold a protest under the Embassy of Israel had been stopped by the police.

Earlier, in 2008, four Azerbaijanians and two citizens of Lebanon (caught with fake Iranian passports) were arrested in Azerbaijan on the suspicion of them being involved in the preparation of a terroristic attack against the Embassy of Israel and a number of other places. In October 2009, they were found guilty of the preparation of a terrorist attack, as well as of spying and treason. The criminals were sentenced to 12 to 15 years in jail.

But in August 2010, the criminals from Lebanon were set free through a contract between Baku and Tehran. Iran set free an Azerbaijani scholar who had been imprisoned earlier. In the fall of 2010, the terrorists returned to Lebanon through Iran, having made a promise that they will not act on the territory of Azerbaijan again.



RSS

new

Even though the tendency towards liberalization in public life that began in Belarus in 2008 and 2009 continued in 2010, Belarus continues to be practically the only country in the region that has almost completely preserved all of the elements of the Soviet regime. In the national sphere, the most important part of this is a policy in which the authorities give very little support to the minority ethnicities to allow them to maintain their national identity and the development of their traditions and culture. This factor becomes extremely important in the conditions of a centralized social and economical life.

There is a fairly visible bias in the Belarusian public life towards Jews. Scholarly works, encyclopedias, reference materials and schoolbooks are often silent on the history of the Jews of Belarus and the tragedy of the Holocaust. A number of cities (Minsk, Mogilev, Brest, Borisov) have Jewish communities which pose the question of returning buildings built on Jewish money and belonging to Jews to the communities. At the moment Jewish public and religious organizations are forced to rent premises.

The local authorities are openly disrespectful towards the preservation of the Jewish national heritage. Former synagogues are being demolished, and the authorities do not believe it necessary to even notify the Jewish community. In 2009, the former Luban synagogue was demolished, where one of the major Talmudists of the twentieth century, Moshe Feinstein, had worked. This tendency also concerns Jewish cemeteries. Many sports complexes had been built on destroyed Jewish cemeteries (the Dynamo stadium in Minsk, the city stadiums of Brest, Grodno, Gomel, and the swimming pool in Pinsk, among others). But recently there has been a necessity to renovate these stadiums and to widen their territory. A significant number of human remains is being exhumed and moved to barren waste grounds. Despite the multitude of requests from Jewish organizations, the reburial of these remains is not done according to Jewish national tradition. The situation is the same when construction work is done on the territory of former cemeteries or mass shootings.

Criminal anti-Semitism in Belarus has been repressed from above. There are no beatings or killings of Jews, nor is there arson towards synagogues. The only criminal anti-Semitic events are acts of vandalism on Jewish cemeteries and memorials to victims of Hitler's genocide. The authorities refuse to qualify these incidents as anti-Semitic (under article 130 of the Criminal Code), but rather believe them to be "vandalism" or simple "hooliganism". For instance, in 2009, a swastika and threats were written on the building of the Slutsk Jewish community. The investigation was instigated on the "hooliganism" article. Anti-Semitic graffiti and acts of vandalism towards memorials of Holocaust victims have also been recorded in Vitebsk and Minsk. Anti-Semites also wrote "Kill Mikhoels" and drew a swastika and a crossed-out Magen David on the former dacha of Lavrentiy Tsanova, in the Stepyanki forest range. The character of the writing suggests that its authors know the hypothesis that it had been there that Solomon Mikhoels had been murdered on January 13, 1948.

To do justice to the situation, it must be nonetheless noted that the policy of the authorities during the last 3 years, supported by the leaders of the Orthodox eparchy and the security services (KGB, prosecutor's office, courts of law) led to a whole group of politicians, Parliament deputies, mass media workers, personas of public importance,



businessmen, and others who were many times shown to be propagating anti-Semitism, spreading anti-Jewish myths and instigating ethnic strife. Among the chauvinists (of the “Great Imperialistic Russia” variety) forced to leave the public arena were: editor-in-chief of the Neman magazine, Nina Chaika; editor of the bulletin for the President of the Republic of Belarus, writer Edward Skobelev; former parliamentarian Sergey Kostyan; journalist of the “Republic” newspaper Vyacheslav Rostikov, and other. Skobelev, however, continues to publish anti-Semitic materials in the Russian chauvinist newspaper “The Russian Herald” (“Russkiy Vestnik”).

Legal proceedings that took place in 2008-2009 led to the divestiture of the publishing and trade license for the ZAO “Christian Initiative,” and to the closing of the “Orthodox Initiative” retail chain, which published and sold anti-Semitic literature.

During the same time period, the republic also held trials over Neo-Nazi RNE groups and skinheads, on the charge of acts of criminal anti-Semitism (vandalism in Jewish cemeteries, threats to Jewish activists and so on).

For the last year and a half media monitoring did not record any cases of instigating hate towards Jews. Judaism is one of the four traditional religions in Belarus.

The Jewish community lives in safety in Kazakhstan, and any anti-Semitic acts are an exception to the norm,

Nonetheless, in March 2010, an act of vandalism had been recorded at the central cemetery of Almaty, when several Jewish tombstones had been desecrated. The tombstones had been restored by the government, and the guard of the cemetery had been strengthened.

The previous such incident had been back in 2008, when unknown malefactors destroyed part of the mausoleum of Rabbi Levi-Yitzhak at the central cemetery, made their way inside, and desecrated the tomb.



Anti-Semitism in Kyrgyzstan,

The situation with anti-Semitism in Kyrgyzstan has become noticeably worse against the backdrop of a destabilization in the political and social life of the republic in the previous year. Even though the number of Jews who live in the republic is relatively small, this country has the most serious anti-Semitic situation of all post-Soviet states.

In April 2010, during the riots which led to the ouster of President Kurmanbek Bakiev, anti-Semitic slogans were one of the effective methods to mobilize the supporters of the opposition (Maxim Bakiev, the son of the deposed president, was considered to be connected with allegedly thievish businessmen of Jewish origin).

Anti-presidential demonstrations were accompanied by anti-Semitic posters and anti-Semitic statements by activists. On April 7th, in the very midst of the bloody clashes, the fence of the "White House" on the central square of Bishkek was 'decorated' by a big poster with the text, "No place for dirty Jews and people like Maxim in Kyrgyzstan."

That same day, unknown criminals threw three Molotov cocktails at the roof and court of the only synagogue in the country. The fire was swiftly put out with the aid of the residents of nearby houses.

The leaders of the Jewish community of Kyrgyzstan sent a letter to the Chairman of the provisional government R. Otunbayeva, in which they listed recent manifestations of anti-Semitism and requested "attention to cases of anti-Semitic manifestation, which have become more frequent recently, and to take measures to secure the Jewish community." The official response from the MIA of Kyrgyzstan notes that the aforementioned poster appeared during mass rioting, "which makes the discernment of the culprits difficult." It also stated that "the slogan was not directed at the Jewish people." The MIA letter does not even mention the arson attempt. Naturally, those who attacked the synagogue were never found.

It should be noted that the anti-Semitic incidents during the revolution were not only caused by a general escalation of violence in connection with street clashes, but by systematic propaganda in Kyrgyzstan in the last year. For instance, the anti-Semitic book "The Asiatic Wild Orchid," the author of which used the pseudonym Eva Ali, had been published a month before the Bishkek revolution.

Anti-Semitic incidents did not end after a new government came to power.

On the evening of September 9, 2010, on the eve of the second day of Rosh-ha-Shana (the Jewish New Year), the synagogue was even more seriously attacked – unidentified criminals threw an explosive over the fence and into the synagogue court, where the tables were already laid out for the holiday. The explosion took place a half an hour before the expected beginning of the feast.

The shell-less homemade explosive device was filled with a destruction agent (bolts, nails, and other similar metal items). It was only due to a lucky coincidence that there was no one nearby and that no one was hurt. The consequences of the terroristic attack were minimal also because the bomb fell into a small pool, built for household needs. The



synagogue building received some damage from the explosion, and the windows in the Rabbi's house were broken. A criminal case was opened on the "terrorism" article.

The leadership of the Jewish community send a new letter to R. Otunbayeva, which contained a strong request to meet with the community leaders, to give an official evaluation of the terroristic attack, and to take the investigation under personal control. After the letter, the head of the Presidential Administration E. Kaptagayev, who a little later gave an official written response to the Jewish community, visited the location of the terroristic attack. Kaptagayev's letter read that according to the analysis of data gathered on the explosion, "direct anti-Semitic attitudes, as well as motives of a possible interfaith conflict, are absent." In the beginning of 2011, a group of suspects was apprehended. According to the law enforcement agencies, the terroristic attack was done by members of the extremist Islamist group Jamat Kyrgyzstan Jaish al-Mahdi (Kyrgyzstan Jamaat Mahdi Army). Members of this "army" are responsible for the explosions near the synagogue and in the Palace of Sports, as well as for several robberies and five murders (including the murders of four policemen). According to one of the arrested, the goal of the synagogue explosion was to "scare the Jews that kill Muslims and act lawlessly all over the world."

The current trial on members of the Special Forces and SWAT teams that opened fire on demonstrators in April is not without anti-Semitic rhetoric. The cause for anti-Semitic slurs is the ethnicity of one of the lawyers defending the accused, M. Zauman.

The Jewish community remains in a difficult situation.

The level of political and interethnic violence is generally high in Kyrgyzstan. The April demonstrations of the opposition were fraught with collisions with law enforcement, as a result of which many participants from both sides were wounded and killed. Earlier, the authorities had been accused of attacks on journalists and activists from the opposition. And, finally, interethnic Kyrgyz-Uzbek collisions led to hundreds of victims in June 2010.

The main anti-Semitic problem of Lithuanian society involves historic memory and crimes during the Holocaust. Quite a few observers believe that official Vilnius does not do enough for learning the identities of and former Nazi criminals and their condemnation. There are many questions connected with the aspiration of the authorities to equal the tragedy of the Holocaust and the crimes against the people of the republic during the Soviet occupation. The attempts to condemn members of the anti-Nazi resistance for war crime, in particular the famous Israeli historian of the Holocaust Yitzhak Arad, have gathered significant international resonance.

In 2010, two anti-Semitic acts were recorded in Lithuania. Both were aimed at synagogues.

On the early morning of April 21, in the city of Sveksna of the Silute District municipality, a flag with a swastika had been found on a non-functioning synagogue. The flag seems to have been put up on the previous day, the 20th of April – Hitler's birthday.

The second incident caused a far greater public response. On the 21st of August, a pig head with a Chasidic hat and side-locks reminiscent of the side-locks of religious Jews had been found near a Kaunas synagogue.

In both cases the anti-Semites were not found.



All
news



RSS
RSS

Anti-Semitism in Moldova,

Because of the destabilization of the political and social situation in the country against the backdrop of a change in power and the strengthening of the National Democratic forces in 2009-2010, which had been accompanied by rioting, acts of anti-Semitism became more prevalent, in particular – acts of vandalism.

Unknown hooligans broke into the Bendery synagogue at night of March 1, 2009, and trashed the premises. The night before, someone drew the number 14 (i.e. “The 14 words of David Lane,” an encoded Neo Nazi slogan) in silvery paint on the gates of the Jewish cemetery. On August 8, 2009, in the “Dacia” microdistrict of Beltsy city, someone painted anti-Semitic slogans on houses and fences. On September 12, 2009, a memorial to Holocaust victims in Bendery was desecrated. On September 18, 2009, several buildings from the Chisinau Ciocana Sector were plastered with posters dedicated to the 110th birthday of the leader of the Iron Guard (a Romanian Fascist organization from the 1920-1930s), Corneliu Zelea Codreanu.

At the end of 2009, the leader of the Jewish community of the cultural and religious center “Agudat Israel der Moldova,” Yisrael Livshitz was beaten in the Panasheshty village of the Straseni district.

On December 13, 2009, in the very center of Chisinau, a group of Orthodox fundamentalists, who congregated around the Orthodox Society of the Blessed Matron of Moscow and were oriented at the most reactionary and marginal wing of Russian Orthodox Church “dissidents” (and, personally, at the excommunicated former Orthodox Church bishop Diomid) overturned and broke the Menorah erected for the holiday, and organized an anti-Semitic rally accompanied by insulting shouts and anti-Semitic slogans. The incident had wide public resonance.

On February 10, 2010, in the Chisinau center’s Pushkin Street, walls next to the memorial to Holocaust victims were covered in anti-Semitic slogans. On February 21st, there was an act of vandalism at the Jewish cemetery, and a number of gravestones was desecrated and destroyed, while the fence of the cemetery had a Fascist swastika drawn on it. .

In March 2010, the website of the Orthodox Society of the Blessed Moscow Matron published materials of an anti-Semitic nature. Later the website was radically reworked, and all relevant materials were removed. Also in March, a group of aggressive youths gathered before the Israeli consulate and shouted slogans against the Jewish charity fund “Dor Le Dor.”

On March 15, 2010, during the forcible takeover of the “Chisinau” hotel, which had been the property of the “First Hotel” company, a creation of several Jewish businessmen, a group had been shouting anti-Semitic insults, calling for an eviction of Jews from Moldova, as well as slogans like “Kikes, leave Gaza!”

In the summer of 2010, as a continuation of the decree of acting President Mihai Ghimpu, which made the 28th of June the day of the Soviet Occupation of Moldova, the mayor of Chisinau Dorin Chirtoaca proposed to create a Holocaust Museum and a



Museum of the Soviet Occupation.. The Jewish Congress of Moldova made an official statement that it does not feel that it is possible to make parallels between a Fascist, misanthropist regime and the social system that is now being charged with an equal responsibility for repressions against its own people.

At the same time as these events took place, M. Ghimpu, the Acting President, said in the parliament of Moldova to deputy Oleg Reidman that he is “a disgrace to the Jewish people,” because he (Ghimpu) “has known smarter Jews.”

The local council of the Codru, a town in the municipality of Chisinau, made a decision on September 29, 2010, to name one of its streets in honor of the Fascist dictator and Hitler's comrade-in-arms Ion Antonescu. It is of note that a similar act is impossible in its neighboring Romania, which has officially recognized the responsibility of the Romanian dictator for the Holocaust.

On September 12, 2010, the facade of the Chisinau synagogue was marred by Fascist symbols and slogans such as “Bessarabia is Romanian land!”

Now, before Chanukah-2010, the Jewish community and the authorities are taking unprecedented joint measures to avoid incidents similar to that of the previous year. Orthodox radicals have already made a statement that they will attempt to interfere with the placing of a chanukiah in the center of Chisinau.

- [Program “Tolerance – Lessons of the Holocaust”](#)
- ["Dialogue of Civilizations" Program](#)

Anti-Semitism in Russia,

The number of attacks on Jews remains low against the backdrop of a huge number of xenophobic crimes in Russia. In 2009, there were 8 specific attacks on Jews, and in the first 8 months of 2010 there were 2 attacks.

This is largely because the Jews are very difficult to single out from the crowd, unlike, for example, migrants from the Caucasus region. There are also comparatively few attacks on the buildings of Jewish organizations — 9 in 2009, and 5 in the first 8 months of 2010. However, those last five events include the Tver synagogue bombing of June 22, 2010.

On the other hand, the amount of recorded acts of anti-Semitic vandalism (cemetery desecrations and especially anti-Semitic graffiti) remains traditionally high, with 57 incidents in 2009, and 38 in the first 8 months of 2010, which is a testament that a strong anti-Semitic component remains in the views of nationalists.

It can also be noted that anti-Semitic propaganda continues an active expansion into the Internet, including its social networks, where there are dozens, if not hundreds of pages that propagate anti-Semitism.

In the second half of 2009, nationalists attempted a campaign titled “Old Testament Extremism,” by making numerous requests to public prosecution offices to declare the Old Testament to be extremist literature. There were no less than 19 such requests filed, but nearly all of them were declined, and the campaign came to a halt.

Unfortunately, anti-Semitic stereotypes seem to have infiltrated leading media. There were at least two screenings of the “Lev Trotsky: Secret of the World Revolution” movie on central TV channels, a movie full of anti-Semitic fabrications.

“Anti-Zionist” phobias are being actively used among Muslim activists. On December 21, 2009, the New Region news agency published a news item on its website that repeated, referencing Arabic Knesset member Ahmad Tibi, the slander that Israelis use dead Palestinian soldiers for organ transplants for their own military.

Anti-Semitic phobias have also been reported in scholarly literature. A two-volume book titled “A History of Russia. XX Century,” edited by MGIMO professor Zubov, was published at the end of 2009. The book practically justifies the pogroms committed by members of the White Guard during the Civil War, and gives high praise to the Nazi collaborators under general Vlasov.

At the end of July, 2010, there was a scandal around the textbook titled “A History of Russia 1917-2009,” by A. Barsenkov and A. Vdovin, which included a number of anti-Semitic stereotypes on the “Jewish proliferation” in the USSR, on the deportation of the Crimean Tatars in 1944 to free up space for a planned Jewish republic, and so on. Anti-Semitic stereotypes are being actively spread among Russia Muslims. In 2009, it became known that adherents of Sufism are making statements reminiscent of old Soviet “anti-Zionist” cliches, which connected any undesirable phenomenon with Zionism. The statements include accusations towards Salafi (more often known as Wahhabi, adherents of radical Islam) of being Anglo-Israeli spies and enemies of Islam. The Salafi

also actively use the stereotypes of Jews and Israel in their propaganda, showing them as enemies of Islam, deny the Holocaust, and so on. After Israeli special forces stopped the so-called "Freedom Flotilla," there were several public rallies in Moscow, in June 2010, that were organized by the left wing and the Islamists.



The question of the extent that anti-Semitic phobias influence the populace remains disputable. On one hand, the June 2009 poll of the All-Russia Public Opinion Research Center (VCIOM) shows that only 2% of the populace view the Jews with antipathy (contrast, for instance, the group in "first place" in this poll - the Caucasians, which were viewed with antipathy by 29% of the populace). On the other side, other polls, which learn a person's position by taking into account circumstantial evidence, show a different situation. According to the research agency "Bashkirova and Partners," who published the results of their poll on May 13, 2010, 25% of Russians refuse to live near Jews, and according to the VCIOM poll published on August 27, 2010, 46% of Russians are against marriages with Jews. This means that, in the June poll, some of the respondents hid their position, answering, for instance, that they treat all peoples equally (but not specifying whether equally well or equally badly) or preferring to note the question as "difficult." A further confirmation to the wide spreading of anti-Semitic stereotypes is a story published in December, which involved a discussion on the "Jewish conspiracy" held in the fall of 2009 by agrarian deputies in the back rooms of the Duma. The participants of the discussion thought that the head of the X5 Retail Group, Lev Khasis was supported by Assistant to the President of the Russian Federation Arkady Dvorovich, and, as a Jew, "went bowing and scraping before his own [people] working at Medvedev's."

There is a growing trend of activity of the public as a whole and the Jewish community in particular to counteract anti-Semitism. This is mostly in speeches and public events, some of which have significance for foreign diplomacy – this is mostly the condemnation of the attempts to exalt collaborators in Ukraine and the Baltic countries. On October 15, 2009, and March 4, 2010, Head Rabbi of Russia Berl Lazar contributed a proposition to make the Auschwitz Liberation Day (January 27) a state memorial day. In March 2010, the Federal Jewish National Cultural Autonomy, supported by the Public Chamber in Moscow, opened a free telephone hotline for victims of national discrimination and anti-Semitism. There were also active hotlines at the Nizhegorod synagogue.

In 2009-2010, a steady growth trend was recorded in anti-Fascist views in Russia. According to a poll done by the Levada Center, the results of which were published on December 3, showed that the number of people who believe that the slogan "Russia for Russians" is actual Fascism has grown from 25% to 32%.

The struggle of law enforcement against anti-Semitism has had both impressive successes and significant problems. The successes include the closing of newspapers which published anti-Semitic materials (3 in 2009 and 1 in 2010), suppressing the pro-Nazi organizations "National-Socialistic Society" and "Slavic Union," inflicting severe penalties for publishing anti-Semitic literature, introducing penalties for stores carrying anti-Semitic material that is in the Federal List of Extremist Materials, and a swift growth of the aforementioned List. The most severe failure is a mass practice of giving nominal sentences to criminals, including large-scale figures caught in the act, which removes any stimulus to stop criminal activity for the convicts.

A great problem remains because the authorities refuse to instigate proceedings over

anti-Semitic vandalism, and making decisions that seem either unprofessional or biased towards radical nationalists. On the other hand, there are incidents where the law enforcement is overzealous, such as the superfluous declaration that the works of Hitler and Mussolini are extremist. At the end of 2009, the public prosecution office of Samara Oblast attempted to claim that the movie "Russia-88," directed by Pavel Bardin as extremist. The movie tells the story of a Neo-Nazi group.

Anti-Semitism in Ukraine,

According to preliminary data, 2010 was the first year of many in which Ukraine has not had any violence with a confirmed anti-Semitic motive. Even though there were certain crimes, including two murders, that were ascribed such motives in the press, the investigations did not confirm these assumptions.

A year without anti-Semitic violence became the logical conclusion to the tendency of recent years towards a reducing number of ideologically-motivated attacks on Jews. 2009 saw one case of anti-Semitic violence, in 2008 there were anti-Semitic attacks on five people, in 2007 – 8 people became victims, in 2006 – nine, and in 2005 – 8.

The more widespread form of criminal anti-Semitism in Ukraine, as in all of post-Soviet space, is anti-Semitic vandalism. This is anti-Semitic graffiti on buildings belonging to Jewish organizations, sometimes broken windows in those same buildings, cemetery vandalism, and desecration of memorials to Holocaust victims. According to preliminary data, 9 acts of anti-Semitic vandalism were recorded in 2010 in Ukraine. This is much less than in previous years, but often information about acts of vandalism becomes widely known after a certain lag time, and there are grounds to make assumptions that the final data will have a larger number of incidents on record.

Before, the number of anti-Semitic vandalism remained more-or-less at one level. In 2009, according to our monitoring, there were 19 incidents of anti-Semitic vandalism, including arson (2 cases in 2009), 13 incidents in 2008, 20 incidents in 2007, 21 incidents in 2006. It seems that the decline of anti-Semitic activity in 2008 was the result of several strict sentences for anti-Semitic vandals (some involving several years of imprisonment) that were carried out in early 2008. Before this (and, unfortunately, in the last few years) criminals usually remained either completely unpunished or their punishment was purely symbolic.

2009 saw the first in many years anti-Semitic terroristic act – a homemade bomb in the Volyn Jewish Community Center in Lutsk. Luckily, there were no such incidents recorded in 2010.

The decline of anti-Semitic propaganda in publications that began over three years ago, in the fall of 2007 (after an increase from 2002-2006), continues.

According to the data of Vladimir Mindlin, who monitors anti-Semitic propaganda in central print media of Ukraine for VAAD Ukraine, the central press published 46 anti-Semitic articles, which is less than in 2008. The main voicers of anti-Semitic views in Ukraine are the following newspapers: “For Free Ukraine Plus” (“Za Vilnu Ukrainu Plus,” Lviv), “Freedom Cell” (“Sota Svobody,” Lviv), “Informational Bulletin” (Kremenchug). According to preliminary data, the tendency to a diminishing of anti-Semitic publications in the press remains.

Naturally, not all titles are monitored, because it is impossible to take into account the entire mass of Ukrainian newspapers, including regional, affiliated with a political party, religious, and agitational editions published during elections. So the results of the poll should not be interpreted as the exact number of anti-Semitic news items published in

Ukrainian media during the review period. But this data still has certain value, because it allows us to compare the situation with similar factors throughout previous years, also as monitored by Mindlin.

Thus, according to Mindlin, there were 54 anti-Semitic publications in 2008, while 2007 saw 542 published news items. 2006 saw 676 anti-Semitic publications, 2005 - 661, in 2004 - 379. In 2003 there were 258, in 2002 - 179, and, finally, 2001 saw a little over a hundred anti-Semitic publications.

The dynamic of the amount of anti-Semitic materials in Ukrainian media for the last ten years can be explained in the following manner: in the very beginning of the 2000s, anti-Semitic materials were published mostly in marginal periodicals, mostly in monthly ultra-nationalist newspapers with print runs of a thousand or so. In 2002, a new stage begins, with a sharp growth in anti-Semitic propaganda, induced by the activity of the Interregional Academy of Personnel Management (MAUP, or IAPM).

The MAUP publications accounted for 90% of anti-Semitic publications in the print media. From 2002 to 2005, the amount of anti-Semitic materials nearly doubled in size each year, and the most important role was played by titles with a press run of tens, or even hundreds of thousands. In 2006 there was a very small increase compared to saw a decrease in the volumes of anti-Semitic propaganda. A more detailed analysis of 2007 shows that there had been a steady decrease throughout the year, and an especially sharp cutoff in the autumn (183 titles with anti-Semitic material published in the first quarter of the year, 137 in the second, 147 in the third, during the parliamentary elections, and 75 in the fourth).

In the autumn of 2007, MAUP stopped its anti-Semitic campaign as abruptly as it had begun it. Accordingly, 2007 saw a sharp decline in the amount of anti-Semitic publications. By 2008, there were ten times less anti-Semitic publications in Ukrainian periodicals. This decline continues to this very day.

In the context of anti-Semitic propaganda, it should be noted that the National Expert Commission on Protection of Public Morality forbid the dissemination of certain anti-Semitic and Nazi books, when earlier it had not been active in this sphere, and the Security Service of Ukraine has, for the first time in its history, as far as it is known, transferred materials for the opening of a criminal case over anti-Semitic propaganda in the Internet; however, there has been no trial as of yet,

Unfortunately, in 2009-2010, anti-Semitism became a noticeable part of the public and political life of the country, because it had received active usage in elections (both the presidential elections in January 2010 and local elections in October 2010), where it played a part in certain political schemes aimed at discrediting candidates or political groups.

The presidential elections campaign had two candidates, famous for their anti-Semitic views - the mayor of Uzhgorod Sergei Ratushnyak and the leader of the Pan-Ukrainian Union Svoboda, Oleg Tyagnybok. It should be noted that while Tyagnybok has left radical rhetoric behind in recent years, and has been attempting to hold up a more respectable facade, Ratushnyak has made anti-Semitism the leitmotif of his campaign. In the first round of the elections, which took place on January 17, 2010, Tyagnybok



received 1,43% of the votes, and Ratushnyak received 0,12% of the votes. It is also notable that there was a criminal case opened against Ratushnyak over his anti-Semitic statements, by article 163 of the Criminal Code (“incitement to ethnic and racial hatred”), but the case was promptly closed after the elections ended, the formal reason being “absence of corpus delicti.”

But the large-scale use of anti-Semitism was not due to the participation of known anti-Semites in the campaign, but due to attempts to use anti-Semitic rhetoric to discredit other candidates by an alleged Jewish origin. Before the first round, such “black PR” technologies were actively used against Arseniy Yatsenyuk, and before the second round – against Yuliya Timoshenko.

On October 31, 2010, all of Ukraine held elections to local (oblast, regional, city, and town) councils, as well as the mayoral elections. The elections were held in the conditions of severe administrative pressure, unequal access of candidates to the mass media, and could in general be described as not conforming to international standards.

The ultra-nationalist All-Ukrainian Union Svoboda has received significant success at the elections. In Western Ukraine, first of all in Lvivska, Ternopil'ska, Ivano-Frankiv'ska regions, Svoboda earned up to 30% of votes. Analysts note that the mean result that Svoboda received in the entire country allow it to count on passing the vote threshold to the next parliamentary elections. In the last (pre-term) parliamentary elections, in 2007, Svoboda had earned only 0,76% of votes, and in 2006 it had earned only 0,36% of votes.

Anti-Semitic rhetoric in October, 2010, was recorded in a number of cities during the mayoral elections. In particular, anti-Semitic statements were recorded in Odessa, made by the victorious candidate Alexei Kostusev (Party of Regions) and members of his campaign headquarters towards former mayor Edward Gurwitz (“Front of Changes” party), as well as in Kharkiv, addressed towards Party of Regions representative Gennadiy Keres, though it did not stop Keres from winning the elections.

It should be noted that nothing of the sort had been recorded in 2010 in many cities where Jews entered the mayoral elections, including those where anti-Semitic rhetoric had been used previously. Vinnitsa is a prime example of this, where the mayoral elections were once again won by a representative of the “Consciousness of Ukraine” party Vadim Groisman, having collected almost 77% percent of the votes. In Kherson, the representative of the Party of Regions, Vladimir Saldo, an ethnic Jew, also won the vote, even though anti-Semitic rhetoric had been actively used against him previously.

It should also be noted that S. Ratushnyak, famous for his anti-Semitism, lost the election to keep the post of Uzhgorod mayor, but earned the votes of almost 30% of the voters' voices.

Thus, the situation in Ukraine in 2009-2010 has both positive and negative tendencies. On the positive side, monitoring shows a decrease in anti-Semitic crimes (attacks and vandalism), while on the negative side, anti-Semitism has been far more prevalent in political struggles, which legitimizes its presence in the public discourse.

Anti-Semitism in Uzbekistan, 2009-2010

In conditions of a strict control over the mass media, it is not customary to express nationalistic views openly. There is an article of the Penal Code for inciting to racial or ethnic hatred, and because of that the internal political situation towards the Jews seems stable. But there are no Jews on important posts, and neither there are any in the parliament of the republic.

The strict control of all spheres of activity and the mass media by the state does not allow to discuss urgent problems, and impedes the solution of problems that truly exist in the national relationships, cultural and religious needs of the peoples of Uzbekistan. Unlike in many post-Soviet republics, Uzbekistan has no state organ on ethnic minorities, though formally this role is taken by the weak community organization "International Cultural Center." Unions of national minorities are weak and helpless, and cannot put their leaders forward to be elected in the legislative organ of the republic.

President Islam Karimov attempts to stop the outside influence of Islamic Fundamentalism, combats manifestations of extremism and terrorism, and in general acts to preserve the secular identity of the state. Certain laws place indirect restrictions on the rights of national minorities and their cultural formations. In particular, laws aimed against the excessive influence of Islam also have a negative impact on religious, cultural, and charity programs in the Jewish community.

As there is no data from state and independent sources on crimes with an ethnic motive, it is hard to make judgments on the level of anti-Semitism in the country. The activities of radical Islamic groups within the country become known only after terroristic attacks (like the explosions in Tashkent before the USA and Israel embassies in 2004), or events like the Andijan Tragedy of 2005. Court processes against the Hizb ut-Tahir are being held behind closed doors. In Tashkent, Islamists spread fliers with false information on the Jewish origins of President Islam Karimov and the malicious activities of JAFI.

In recent years, there seems to be an alienation of Uzbekistan from the USA and Israel on a diplomatic level. This has reflected badly on the Jewish community, as the local authorities believe that it had been under American patronage.

- There is no financial help from the state for the restoration of centers of Jewish culture and religion, and the finances of foreign charity organizations, which legally work within the republic, are strictly controlled by the authorities. The National Bank of Uzbekistan demands a request for any attempt to spend the funds, and holds up actual payments for several months at a times. Thus, the already-scant budget of charity organizations ends up not even half used, and is thus sent to other republics. Any desire to work in these conditions quickly disappears. The Ministry of Justice creates artificial difficulties for the registration of new Jewish organizations, the Committee on Religion does not help in inviting foreign specialists, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs does not give either business visas nor service visas. The following organizations are now being closed: the



World Lubavich Movement, Center of Jewish Education, Jewish National Cultural Center of Uzbekistan, and others. The Tashkent Israeli Cultural and Informational Center and the Jewish Joint Distribution Committee Uzbekistan department had also had problems.

Because of a formal reason (an insufficient number of filial branches), the Jews of Uzbekistan have not yet been able to solve one of their more important problems – they have not been able to establish and register the Religious Administration of Uzbekistan Jews. Two other regions need Jewish communities to fulfill the formal criteria. Even though the republic has 10 active synagogues, and the authorities might have taken into account the many petitions of the community. As the situation stands, the republic has no official rabbis, and the schools and kindergartens fall outside of the laws, because only a central religious organization has the right to educational and publishing activities. Right now, most of them are inactive, and studying the Torah can be punishable by the law according to the current legal system.

A serious problem for the preservation of cultural monuments is the absence of a law on restitution.

There were several murders of Jews in recent years, two of which had a wide resonance in the community. These are the murders of the chairman of the Tashkent synagogue, A. Yagudayev, and the artistic director of the Tashkent theater “Ilkhom” M. Weil.