



ANTISEMITIC INCIDENTS JANUARY-JUNE 2009



Antisemitic Incidents January-June 2009

Antisemitic Incident Numbers

CST recorded 609 antisemitic incidents in the first six months of 2009. This is more than the 544¹ incidents recorded by CST during the whole of 2008. CST has never before recorded more than 600 antisemitic incidents in a calendar year. The previous annual high was 598 antisemitic incidents recorded in 2006.

The 609 antisemitic incidents reported to CST in the first half of 2009 is more than double the 276 antisemitic incidents reported to CST in the first six months of 2008.

The main reason for this record number of incidents was the unprecedented number of antisemitic incidents recorded in January and February, during and after the war between Israel and Hamas in Gaza. The number of incidents recorded did not return to normal pre-Gaza levels until April, some three months after the fighting in Gaza ended.

CST recorded 286 antisemitic incidents in January 2009, by far the highest number ever recorded in a single month since CST began recording antisemitic incidents in 1984. In January 2008 CST recorded 43 antisemitic incidents. The previous high recorded by CST in a calendar month was 105 in October 2000, the month that the second Palestinian Intifada began. In July and August 2006, during the war between Israel and Hizbollah in Lebanon, CST recorded 134 antisemitic incidents in the UK in a 34-day period.

There were 111 antisemitic incidents recorded by CST in February 2009, compared with 52 in February 2008. This total of 111 also broke the previous monthly high from October 2000. There were 65 antisemitic incidents in March 2009, compared with

40 in March 2008; 51 in April 2009 compared with 39 in April 2008; 51 in May 2009 (62 in May 2008) and 45 in June 2009 (40 in June 2008).

In addition to the 609 antisemitic incidents recorded by CST during this period, a further 236 potential incidents were reported to CST but not classified as antisemitic. This is because, on investigation, there was no evidence of antisemitic motivation, targeting or content. Most of these rejected incidents, representing 28 per cent of the potential incidents reported to CST, involved non-antisemitic crime affecting Jewish property or people. Anti-Israel activity, which does not use antisemitic language or imagery and is directed at pro-Israel campaigners rather than Jewish people or institutions per se, is also not classified by CST as antisemitic.



Swastika daubed outside a synagogue in Manchester, January 2009

¹ The incident totals for 2008 in this document may differ from those previously published by CST, due to the late reporting of incidents to CST by incident victims and witnesses.

Incident Categories²

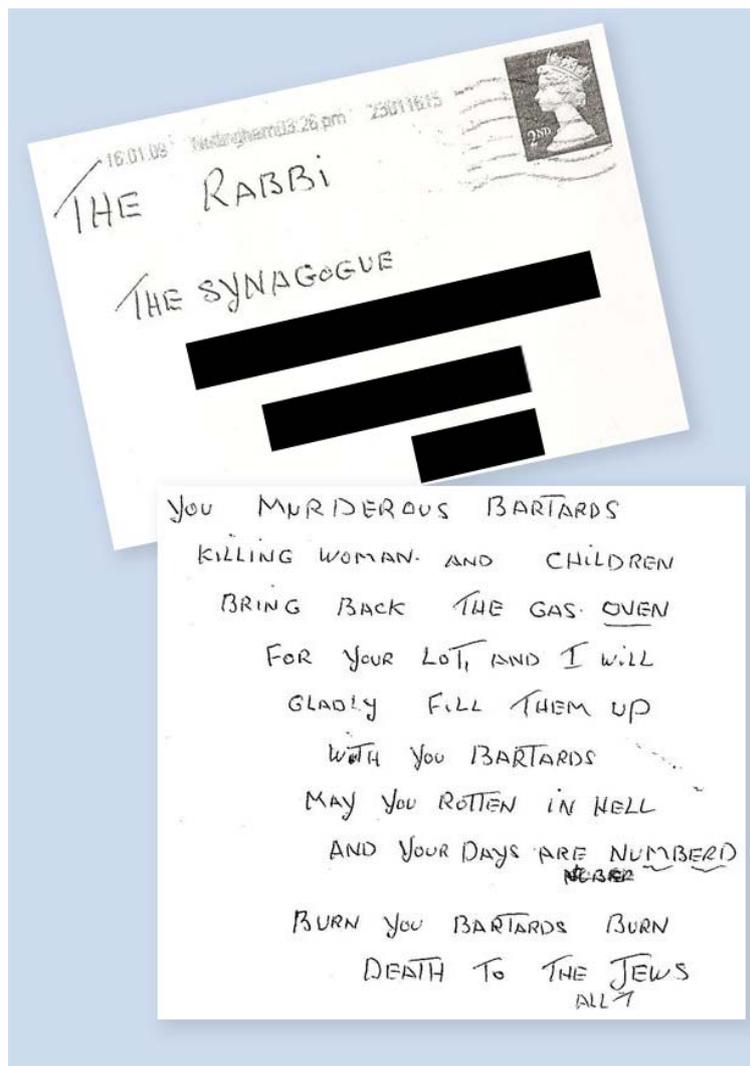
CST recorded 77 violent antisemitic assaults in the first half of 2009, compared with 45 during the first half of 2008. Two of these assaults were so serious that they were classified by CST as Extreme Violence, meaning that they involved a threat to life or Grievous Bodily Harm. Both incidents of Extreme Violence occurred in May.

There were 63 incidents of Damage and Desecration of Jewish property during the first six months of 2009, compared with 32 during the first half of 2008.

CST recorded 34 direct antisemitic threats, compared with 16 during the same period in 2008. There were 28 incidents recorded in this category by CST during the whole of 2008.

CST recorded 391 antisemitic incidents in the category of Abusive Behaviour, more than double the 167 such incidents recorded in the first six months of last year, and more than the 315 incidents in this category recorded during the whole of 2008. This category includes a wide range of types of incident, including antisemitic graffiti on non-Jewish property, hate mail and verbal racist abuse.

There were 44 cases of mass-produced or mass-mailed antisemitic literature (as opposed to one-off cases of hate mail, which are classified as Abusive Behaviour) reported to CST during the first six months of 2009, compared with 17 during the first half of 2008 and 37 during the whole of last year. Of the 44 incidents, 33 were transmitted by email, of which 24 were carried out by a single perpetrator, who sent a total of 38 abusive or threatening emails to a single victim.



Hate mail sent to a synagogue in the Midlands, January 2009

² A full explanation of CST's incident categories can be found in the leaflet "Definitions of Antisemitic Incidents" on CST's website: www.thecst.org.uk

Gaza and its Aftermath

The number of antisemitic incidents reported to CST during January 2009 continued the pattern whereby antisemitic incident levels in the UK can increase sharply in response to events in the Middle East. However, it outstripped by far any previous example of this since CST began recording antisemitic incidents in 1984.

For comparison, the previous worst-ever period was during the Lebanon war of July and August 2006, when CST recorded 134 antisemitic incidents during the 34 days of fighting. Over half the incidents reported to CST during January 2009 (158 out of 286) included some reference to the fighting in Gaza. A further 43 incidents that included a reference to Gaza were recorded by CST after the end of January, making 201 in total, or 33 per cent of all antisemitic incidents recorded across the first six months of 2009.

Previously, whenever antisemitic incident levels have risen in the UK in response to a war in the Middle East, they have tended to fall back down to normal levels soon after the fighting has ended. In August 2006, it took just a few days for this to happen after the end of the fighting. This year, the number of incidents in the UK remained at an abnormally high level for several weeks after the end of the fighting in Gaza. Although it is difficult to identify a precise cause (or causes) for this, it is possible that it may reflect the fact that the fighting and its aftermath remained high on the news agenda, and therefore in the public consciousness, for some weeks after the fighting ended. For example, the number of antisemitic incidents reported to CST did drop from 13 on the last day of fighting (17 January 2009), to 5 the following day and 3 the day after that. However, the daily incident total then rose again, possibly triggered by media coverage of the refusal by some broadcasters to show a film promoting the Disasters Emergency Committee (DEC) charity appeal for Gaza. There were ten antisemitic incidents reported to CST on 22 January 2009, the day that the BBC

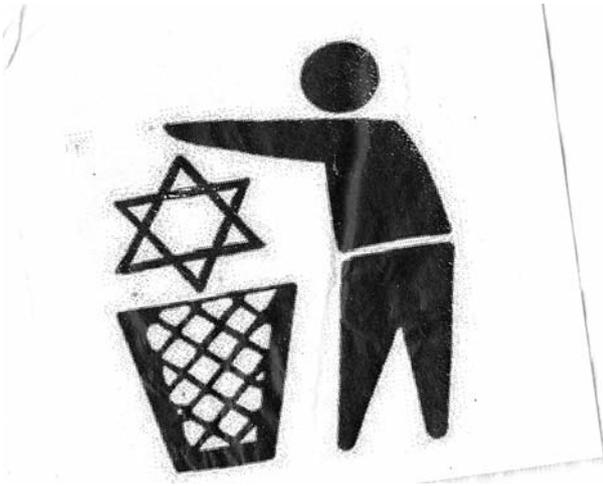
announced their decision not to broadcast the appeal. Alternatively, some peoples' perceptions of events in Gaza may simply have left a deeper and more long-lasting impression on their attitudes towards Jews than previous trigger events. This in turn may have caused the levels of antisemitic incidents to take longer to return to normal than on previous occasions.

The highest daily total of antisemitic incidents during the Gaza fighting was 22 incidents recorded on 16 January, the day after Israeli shells were reported to have struck a UN aid compound in Gaza. Of these, 17 incidents involved similar examples of antisemitic graffiti on or near to Jewish buildings across 11 different London boroughs during the night of 15/16 January, in what appeared to be an orchestrated campaign of intimidation. The graffiti included slogans such as "Kill the Jews", "Jihad 4 Israel", "Jews kill babies and lie", "Slay Jewish pigs", "holocaust was a lie" and "nuke Jews". In total during the first half of 2009, CST recorded 36 cases across the UK of graffiti using the slogan "Kill the Jews" (or a close variation), of which 32 were reported in January. Of the 36 incidents, 22 were in London, two in Manchester and 12 in other locations around Britain.

The type of incident recorded during January 2009 differed from the sort normally reported to CST in several ways. Of the 286 incidents recorded during the month, 120, or 42 per cent, took the form of threatening or abusive hate mail (either paper or email) or phone calls, compared to 197, or 32 per cent, across the first six months of the year as a whole. They were also more likely to target synagogues, Jewish organisations or prominent Jewish individuals (42 per cent in January, compared with 30 per cent across all six months). In January, 66 per cent of incidents showed some evidence of political or ideological motivation, compared with 55 per cent across the first half of the year as a whole. Of the 190 antisemitic incidents during January that showed evidence of political motivation as well as antisemitism, 114

showed evidence of primarily anti-Zionist motivation, 55 showed Islamist motivation and 21 showed far right motivation.

This profile of the type of incidents that made up the large January total – abusive hate mail or phone calls to synagogues or Jewish community organisations, using overtly political language alongside the antisemitism – was also observed during the Lebanon war of 2006. It suggests that they reflect a type of political antisemitism directed at the UK Jewish community, but motivated by political extremism or anger related to Israel, rather than the kind of street-level racism that typifies antisemitic hate crimes during normal periods.



Sticker found in Bournemouth, February 2009

Incident Victims

There were 66 incidents that targeted synagogues during the first half of 2009, and a further 17 incidents that targeted synagogue congregants on their way to or from prayers.

There were 48 incidents involving Jewish schools and schoolchildren, compared with 29 during the first six months of 2008. Of the 48 incidents reported to CST during the first half of 2009, ten took place at Jewish schools, 24 involved Jewish schoolchildren away from school premises, and 14 involved Jewish schoolchildren or staff at non-Jewish schools.

There were 89 antisemitic incidents involving Jewish students or academics on and off campus in the first six months of 2009, an 82 per cent rise from the 49 such incidents recorded during the same period last year. However, of these 89 incidents, 38 involved repeated abusive and threatening emails sent by a single perpetrator to a single academic victim. Discounting this cluster of incidents leaves a more representative figure of 51 incidents involving Jewish students or academics a slight increase from the 49 incidents recorded during the same period last year. 35 of the 51 incidents took place on campus, of which three were assaults and 16 off campus. The campus with the highest individual number of antisemitic incidents was Queen Mary, University of London, with seven; 11 antisemitic incidents took place at campuses where there was an ongoing 'student occupation' in protest against events in Gaza.



Graffiti in Bury, January 2009

Incident Perpetrators

Identifying the ethnicity of the perpetrators of antisemitic incidents is a difficult and imprecise task. Many antisemitic incidents involve brief public encounters; the evidence of victims of, or witnesses to, antisemitic incidents, may be vague and disjointed. In addition, many incidents do not involve face-to-face contact between incident perpetrator and victim, so it is not possible to obtain a physical description. Bearing in mind these limitations, a physical description of the perpetrator was provided to CST³ in 216 of the 609 antisemitic incidents reported during the first six months of 2009. Of these, 98 were described as white (45 per cent); 5 as East European (two per cent); 20 as black (nine per cent); 68 as Asian (31 per cent); one as Far Eastern (1 per cent); and 24 of Arab appearance (11 per cent).

Taking 'white' and 'East European' together, there were white perpetrators in 48 per cent⁴ of incidents where a physical description of the perpetrator was available. This is significantly lower than the 61 per cent of identified incident perpetrators who were described as white during the first half of 2008. For further comparison, five per cent of identified perpetrators were described as black in the first six months of 2008, 22 per cent as Asian and 12 per cent as of Arab appearance.

The relevant figures for January 2009 show an even more marked difference from the first half of 2008. During this month a physical description of the perpetrator was provided in 89 out of 286 incidents. Of these, 32 were described as white (36 per cent); one as East European (one per cent); seven as black (eight per cent); 33 as Asian (37 per cent); one as Far Eastern (one per cent) and 15 as Arab (17 per cent). CST has conducted analysis of antisemitic incident perpetrators by ethnic appearance since 2004. Since then, the only

full year in which the proportion of incident perpetrators identified as white dropped below 50 per cent was 2006, which was also marked by a significant rise in incidents in response to events in the Middle East.

Geographical Locations

There were 303 antisemitic incidents reported to CST in London in the first six months of 2009 and 143 in Manchester, the two biggest Jewish communities in the UK. Both these figures are more than the number of incidents recorded in those two cities during the whole of 2008 (236 and 125 respectively).

CST recorded 163 incidents in 53 different locations outside London and Manchester. This total includes 14 in Scotland, of which eight were in Glasgow and five in Edinburgh; 25 in Hertfordshire, of which 12 were in Borehamwood; 25 in Leeds, of which nine involved students or academics; 16 in Lancashire, including seven in Pendle and five in Preston; ten in Nottingham, of which seven involved students or academics; and seven in Birmingham.

The type of incident reported to CST tends to vary depending on location. For example, in London in the first half of 2009, 38 per cent of incidents involved random Jewish individuals in public being attacked or abused, while 36 per cent involved synagogues, Jewish organisations or prominent community figures; 43 per cent involved abusive or threatening hate mail, emails or phone calls, and 64 per cent showed clear political motivation of one form or another. Meanwhile, in Manchester, 63 per cent involved random Jewish individuals in public while 16 per cent targeted synagogues, Jewish organisations or prominent community figures. Just 14 per cent involved abusive or threatening hate mail, emails or phone calls, while 38 per cent showed clear political motivation.

³ CST uses the 'IC1-6' system, used by the Police, for categorising the ethnic appearance of incident perpetrators. This uses the numerical codes IC1, IC2, IC3 etc, for 'white', 'East or Dark European', 'black', 'Asian', 'Far Eastern' and 'Arab' respectively. These broad terms are obviously not foolproof and can only be used as a rough guide at best; for example, an East European perpetrator could potentially be described as IC1 or IC2, depending on whether an incident victim is capable of identifying their nationality by their appearance, accent, language or some other indicator.

⁴ All percentage figures in this report are rounded to whole numbers.

Antisemitic or Anti-Israel?

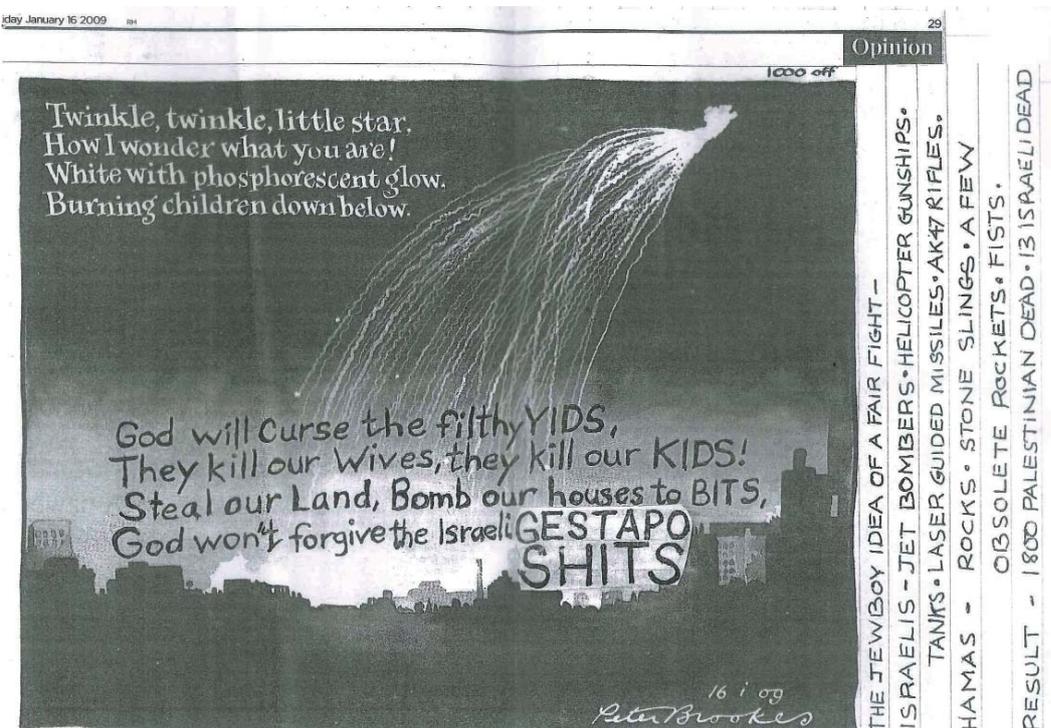
As stated above, CST received reports of 236 potential incidents during the first six months of 2009 that, after investigation, did not appear to be antisemitic and were therefore not included in the total of 609 antisemitic incidents recorded during this period. These included many incidents of anti-Israel activity directed at organisations involved in pro-Israel work, especially during the fighting in Gaza, which did not involve antisemitic language or imagery, and were therefore not classified by CST as antisemitic. Examples of anti-Israel incidents that were not recorded by CST as antisemitic include the following:

- During the fighting in Gaza, a pro-Israel campaigning group received an email that read, "Murderers, thieves, swindlers! You are the bane of this earth, a blot on our landscape. Go to Hell".
- The graffiti "HAMAS + JIHAD = NO ISRAEL" was daubed on a wall in an area of London not known for having a Jewish population.
- A group of anti-Israel activists entered the offices of a pro-Israel lobbying group, damaged property and distributed anti-Israel leaflets. One of the perpetrators was later convicted of aggravated trespass and received a fine and conditional discharge.

Hate Crimes and Political Activity

CST does not record as antisemitic incidents activities such as offensive placards and abusive chants on mass demonstrations, antisemitic comments on extremist Internet sites or in publications of extremist groups. Making statistical sense of such activities would require a level of consistent, widespread monitoring that is beyond CST's capacity and would result in many thousands of incidents being recorded from the Internet alone.

Extremist discourse and violent activism, although not themselves antisemitic incidents, may provide comfort and encouragement to potential perpetrators of antisemitic incidents. For example, during the fighting in Gaza, there were several anti-Israel demonstrations held in the UK at which protestors carried banners equating the Star of David with the Swastika and sometimes chanted antisemitic slogans. Some of the demonstrations were marked by outbreaks of violence against the police and damage to local shops, notably branches of Starbucks. None of these are included in the 609 antisemitic incidents recorded by CST, or in the 236 non-antisemitic incidents recorded. Nevertheless, these activities are relevant to the overall context and environment within which Jewish communities live, and within which actual antisemitic incidents and communal tensions may occur.



Hate mail sent to Jewish organisations in London and Manchester in January, a few days after the fighting in Gaza had ended. Although clearly triggered by anti-Israel feeling, this incident was recorded by CST as antisemitic, due to the language used and the targeting of Jewish organisations rather than pro-Israel groups.



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