



antiremitism

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The main features of antisemitism in 1996

This is the sixth year of publication of the *Antisemitism World Report*. The tracking of trends over almost seven years (taking into account when the work began on the first volume and the time of writing of this introduction) provides a unique opportunity to make judgements, based on documentary evidence, about the way antisemitism has developed over a significant period. As in previous years, because of the very country-specific nature of antisemitism, it is necessary to strike a cautionary note when making general statements about the state of antisemitism throughout the world. (An overall positive assessment can appear to ignore serious problems in certain countries; but too much concentration on those problem countries can distort the picture as a whole.) However, the international nature of much antisemitic propaganda, including (especially) material that denies the facts of the Holocaust, and the growing use of the Internet as a vehicle for disseminating this propaganda, means that certain trends in antisemitism are truly global and can therefore be assessed on a global basis.

The evidence in the *Antisemitism World Report 1997* suggests a further diminution of manifestations and expressions of antisemitism in most of the categories covered, a continuation of the trend highlighted in the Introduction to last year's Report. The Internet is a growth area for the "publication" and dissemination of antisemitism, and neo-Nazis and Holocaust-deniers claim that it presents them with an opportunity to achieve a breakthrough in terms of influencing the wider public. In fact, there is (as yet) no evidence to suggest that Internet antisemitism has the power to mobilize antisemites any more successfully than any other method.

In Switzerland, the government and the Swiss banks came under intense international pressure, from Jewish organizations and other groups, to explain what they did with Jewish assets deposited in the country before the Second World War, and with gold and other

valuables deposited in banks by the Nazis and which belonged to murdered Jews. There was an antisemitic backlash in response to the allegations, stated and implied, that the Swiss connived with the Nazis or were deliberately less than forthcoming about Jewish assets still held in Swiss banks, but it did not go beyond the general level of antisemitism that currently prevails in Switzerland, and was not as severe as some expected. This may change in 1997 in the light of the further revelations that have emerged and which have put greater pressure on the Swiss banking and governmental authorities to explain their past behaviour.

The Swiss banks affair highlights one of the principal features of the context in which antisemitism must be assessed today: the absolute readiness of certain Jewish organizations and prominent Jewish individuals to attack expressions of antisemitism or to reveal the antisemitic pasts of public figures, and to mobilize and demand justice for the almost forgotten wrongs perpetrated against them during the Holocaust—the prosecution of Nazi war criminals, the restitution of Jewish property, for example—in the clear understanding that antisemitism may increase as a result. Not only does this indicate a greater assertiveness among the organized Jewish community to stand up for its human rights, it also shows that those concerned dismiss the impact of their actions on the level of antisemitism as of no significance.

In most countries covered in this year's Report, contemporary antisemitism—despite its occasionally violent form and its deeply unpleasant nature—poses little serious threat to Jewish existence. Nevertheless, it still adversely affects the way many Jews relate to the societies in which they live, especially in Eastern Europe where the memory of state-sponsored and controlled antisemitism is still relatively fresh. And even though Jews may not be seriously threatened in most places, the degree of antisemitism present in a country is a measure of its respect for human rights. It is, after all, a mistake to judge antisemitism

purely on the basis of its impact on Jews. It is no less to be condemned, deplored and combated in countries where there are few, if any, Jews. Fortunately, overall—with some exceptions and fluctuations—Jews feel increasingly secure in the societies in which they live. They are more ready to speak out uninhibitedly about antisemitism and to manage the consequences, whatever they might be.

The salience of antisemitism for the far right

Given the continued electoral progress of the far-right parties that formally eschew antisemitism, and the lack of progress made by the radical, neo-Nazi or extremist groups that are often openly antisemitic, maintaining the distinction between these two types of groups (although the boundaries are occasionally blurred) continues to be crucial.

The success of the far-right's strategy of working through the ballot box was reflected in electoral results for the Front national (FN) in France and the Vlaams Blok in Belgium, but particularly in Austria, where Jörg Haider, leader of the Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs (FPÖ, Freedom Party of Austria), won the endorsement of the traditionally left-wing working class, as well as that of a far-right electorate not usually motivated to vote in mainstream elections.

The main factors involved in the success of the far right are unemployment, economic uncertainty, crime, anti-immigrant feeling and concern at the possible loss of national identity as a result of globalization and European integration. The most militant, in both far-right and neo-Nazi groups, are unemployed young males, and this applies not only in Europe but in North America, Australia and also the Middle East, where those who are attracted to the Palestinian Hamas and its anti-Jewish rhetoric, which goes hand in hand with violent anti-Israel attitudes, are young men rejected by other social and political institutions.

For both the far right and neo-Nazis the key targets of xenophobia and racism are Roma, Turks in Germany, African Americans in the USA, Asians and blacks in Britain,

North Africans in France and dark-skinned people from Russia's Caucasian republics, as well as those categorized as immigrants, asylum-seekers and refugees. For none of the far-right leaders who have been making their way towards mainstream political power—Jean-Marie Le Pen in France, Jörg Haider in Austria, Gianfranco Fini in Italy, Filip Dewinter in Belgium and Vladimir Zhirinovskiy in Russia—are Jews paramount. On the contrary, Jews clearly occupy a low place on the list of propaganda targets, and are simply one element of a xenophobic world view. Antisemitism, it seems, has been displaced by other forms of racism and opportunistic politicians recognize its lack of resonance in the current social climate.

This is not to say, however, that antisemitism has no place on the far right. For example, in Austria in 1996, charges were filed on two separate occasions against the FPÖ leader Haider. The first case followed his praise for members of the Waffen-SS at a 1995 meeting of the Kamaradschaft IV. Although proceedings were later dropped owing to insufficient grounds for a prosecution, his remarks suggest that his veil of new-found "respectability" can slip. A second case in Austria involved Karl Schweitzer, the FPÖ national secretary. Following a legal investigation into the desecration of the Jewish cemetery in Eisenstadt (1992), the two men responsible were identified as officials of the FPÖ youth organization who had been recruited personally by Schweitzer.

Nevertheless, we are firmly in a period when antisemitism is clearly a subsidiary form of racism. The actions of governments in relation to immigrants and asylum-seekers in 1996 continued to reinforce the general anti-immigrant climate that works to the advantage of the far right and draws attention to minority groups that are unable to blend so easily as Jews into the mainstream. Developments in the European Union continue to create an even sharper divide between the privileged EU space, in which there is supposed to be free movement for all, and the space outside of the EU, particularly to the East and the South, from which it will become even harder to enter the EU. Far-right

political resentment is likely to continue to focus on such groups, and antisemitism will not be an effective mobilizing ideology.

The challenge facing those who monitor and combat antisemitism is to understand the role of antisemitism in this political milieu. Exaggerating its influence is counter-productive; ignoring the far right because antisemitism has become more marginal for it is short-sighted. However complex and contingent a phenomenon antisemitism has become, it remains necessary to keep it constantly under review.

Russian antisemitism: a major element in fringe group ideology

The Russian ultra-nationalist leader, Vladimir Zhirinovskiy, is often bracketed with European far-right leaders like Le Pen and Haider. But the Russian political situation is very different from that which prevails in France and Austria. While Zhirinovskiy's star has, in any event, apparently waned, it is still in Russia that the largest concentration of fringe antisemitic groups and publications is to be found. At the present time, the influence of these 100 or so extremist groups on Russian society appears minimal. Yet, it is difficult to feel much confidence that the regime of President Yeltsin could successfully come to grips with the neo-fascist tendency in Russian life were it to coalesce into anything like a concerted movement. Meanwhile, evident lack of will on the part of the authorities—political, police and judicial—to take consistently firm action against those who instigate racial and ethnic hostility is a matter of great concern.

The militias

Antisemitism within organized groups is also evident among the militias. Most prominent in the USA, but present also in Australia, the militia movement is fundamentally opposed to government and bureaucracy, which are seen to be encroaching on the rights of the individual citizen. Conspiracy theories, including anti-Jewish stereotypes, are one of the mainsprings of this movement. The *Turner Diaries*, a very popular book in the militia world, also appears among the reading matter

of antisemites. The *Turner Diaries* clearly inspired Timothy McVeigh, the former soldier convicted of the bombing of the Alfred P. Murrah federal building in Oklahoma. McVeigh and his alleged co-defendant Terry Nichols both had attended some militia meetings and shared their virulent anti-government ideology. Militia groups claimed that the bombing was the handiwork of the government, creating its own "Reichstag fire".

On the fringe: new strategies and tactics emerging

There is evidence that, in order to avoid stronger legislation against racial hatred, far-right groups, particularly the US militias, are devising strategies like "leaderless resistance", or tactical ideological changes in order to avoid arrest. In Spain, for example, neo-Nazi skinheads in Madrid, according to an internal police report, have adopted a new strategy to cope with police surveillance. They have been gradually abandoning traditional skinhead paraphernalia in favour of that of *bakaladeros*—followers of techno and Bakalao music—whose attire provokes a less negative public response than skinhead gear. The metamorphosis has resulted in a decrease in the number of recorded assaults/attacks perpetrated by skinheads by 30 per cent (as compared to 1995), but assaults by other "tribes" have increased by 95 per cent.

Improved communications have led to increased contact between antisemitic groups in different parts of the world. Globe-trotting purveyors of antisemitism noted in 1996 include French Holocaust-denier Roger Garaudy and Nation of Islam leader Louis Farrakhan, both of whom made tours of the Middle East. British Holocaust-denier David Irving was, however, once again frustrated in his attempt to gain an entry visa to Australia.

Neo-Nazi "industry"

In 1996 the rise of the far-right music scene continued. What was new was the success of several neo-Nazi groups in marketing White Power concerts, CDs, videos and neo-Nazi paraphernalia, particularly through mail order companies. White Power CDs are often pressed by mainstream music companies such

as DADC in Austria (owned by Sony), the Taiwanese company Ritek and the American companies Eastern Standard and Nimbus Manufacturing. In Sweden, the success of Nordland and Ragnarock records indicates the way that youth culture is used to promote neo-Nazi ideology. Neo-Nazi symbols cross over into the mainstream. Norway saw the rise of the neo-Nazi mail order company Nord Effekter. It advertises CDs, T-shirts, magazines and other merchandise including antisemitic literature. In France, the most significant mail order distributor of far-right material is Diffusion de la pensée française. It has a mailing list of 40,000 names and a catalogue of 3,000 titles including antisemitic and anti-Masonic material.

Antisemitic manifestations

Continued decline

With one exception, in those countries where antisemitic manifestations are monitored either by national authorities or by Jewish communal defence organizations, a continued drop in the overall number of recorded incidents was registered in 1996. In Germany, the Bundesamt für Verfassungsschutz (BfV, Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution) recorded 846 antisemitic criminal offences in 1996. This figure represents a reduction of 11 per cent on the 1995 figure. In Austria there were only 8 recorded offences, 4 of which were solved ultimately by the police or in court. Those 8 cases represent a considerable drop from the previous year, in which there were 25 antisemitic offences. In France the Commission nationale consultative des droits de l'homme (CNCDH, National Consultative Commission on Human Rights) reported only slight variations in the level of antisemitic violence compared to 1995; the significant increase in the number of violent incidents from 1994 to 1995 did not continue into 1996. In the USA the Anti-Defamation League's annual audit of antisemitic incidents showed a 7 per cent decline from 1995, the third year running in which the total has fallen.

Australia was the only country in 1996 to

register a rise in the number of antisemitic incidents over 1995. The Executive Council of Australian Jewry (ECAJ) received 275 reports of antisemitic violence, intimidation and vandalism between October 1995 and September 1996 (a 12 per cent increase on 1994-5 figure).

The findings on antisemitism are in line with an overall drop in the number of recorded racial offences in Germany, Austria and Australia, but not in France.

We continue to emphasize that, while any overall assessment of the state of antisemitism must take such statistics into account, the shortcomings associated with their compilation render them problematic. The absence of a standard method of monitoring, for example, makes objective comparisons between countries very difficult. In many countries where it might be thought to be particularly important to monitor antisemitic offences, such as Russia, there is no systematic monitoring at all.

Less violence

There is less physical violence in the form of attacks on persons and property and a greater incidence of graffiti and threats. For example, in 1996 in Germany, where the total number of antisemitic incidents counted by the BfV was 846, there were, as in recent years, no recorded murders with an antisemitic motive, and only 10 cases of bodily harm. However, there were 174 cases of antisemitic material being disseminated and graffiti, and 45 cases of damage to Jewish property. In France 65 acts of threatening behaviour or public abuse through propaganda were reported in the first nine months of 1996, as compared to 86 in 1995 and 120 in 1994. Even in Australia, where antisemitism is rising, threats and intimidation rose more quickly than actual violence.

This appears to be a reversal of the situation a few years ago when it seemed that extreme antisemites were increasingly turning to violence. The change must partly be a result of improved policing and intelligence work, which have forestalled potential violent incidents and deterred extremists from undertaking them.

Neo-Nazi gatherings generate offences

The statistics and reported incidents recorded in 1996 suggest that violent neo-Nazi activity, and the arrests that follow, increasingly occur within the framework of fascist and Nazi commemorative events. There are many such anniversaries. For example, the “official” 1996 “Hess march” on 17 August, which commemorates the death of Hitler’s deputy, Rudolf Hess, was held in the small central Swedish town of Trollhättan. The anniversary of Hitler’s birthday, 20 April, is widely celebrated by neo-Nazi groups worldwide. In France, a series of rallies and commemorative events were held throughout the year, which in effect serve to affirm FN ideology. In April, the FN celebrated the 1,500th anniversary of the baptism of Clovis (a Barbarian chieftain who converted to Catholicism and became the first Catholic king of what was then Gaul), holding commemorative events throughout France. Antisemitic literature was distributed at the rally held in Paris. Another French far-right commemorative date is the annual fête of Joan of Arc held on 1 May. In Belgium the neo-fascist calendar is marked by the annual Iron Pilgrimage in Diksmuide, which in 1996, the 69th anniversary, turned into a battlefield. The Iron Pilgrimage officially commemorates Belgian losses during the First World War, but since the 1970s it has become an international neo-Nazi rallying point. In 1996 6,000 neo-Nazis attended the event.

These occasions often contravene the law in some countries since participants invariably wear Nazi regalia, including swastikas, and distribute illegal literature. They turn easily into occasions of minor violence. The police are of course on hand and either make arrests or video proceedings for later use. (At Diksmuide in 1996, police arrested 131 people for possession of weapons and illegal neo-Nazi literature.)

Swiss banks/Nazi gold

Jewish organizations severely embarrassed the Swiss government with revelations over the country’s handling of Jewish assets held in Swiss banks during the war, and gold deposited there by the Nazis that had been expropriated from Jews. The issue is,

effectively, whether or not Swiss banks collaborated with Nazi Germany. Some Jewish organizations and journalists expressed fears—as they did also in connection with the trials of Nazi war criminals and the process of restitution of Jewish communal property to Jewish communities in East-Central Europe (see below)—that the Swiss banks affair might provoke a major outbreak of anti-Jewish hostility. Some antisemitism did emerge but less than was feared.

For the far right, the issue has been a confusing conundrum—how to exploit it? So far, they have not found any answer. No doubt the public’s lack of trust in banks and the banking system has also been a factor in the lack of exploitation of the issue’s antisemitic potential.

Property restitution

In 1996 the issue of property restitution also came to the fore in several European countries. There is no doubt that the response of governments to the restitution issue is bound up with attitudes to Jews. No governments have denied that Jewish claims are legitimate, but some have allowed real or imagined fears of an antisemitic backlash to play a part in the decisions they have taken. Most conspicuous in this regard is Poland, where, since the collapse of Communism, the issue has been on the agenda of successive governments for some years but where progress has been painfully slow largely because those governments feared the reaction of the general population. The year 1996 was when the legislation was debated and finalized, and a law regulating restitution of Jewish communal property was finally adopted by the Sejm, the Polish parliament, in 1997. (There is no law relating to private Jewish property and this remains a bone of contention for some Jews.)

In Hungary, in October, parliament passed the Jewish Restitution Decree, and the Hungarian government has earmarked over \$250 million for restitution. Several committees of inquiry were set up in other countries—for example in Norway and France—and negotiations have been taking place involving the governments concerned,

representatives of the Jewish communities and the World Jewish Restitution Organization.

Like the Swiss banks and gold issue, property restitution has the potential to produce significant negative responses; indeed in Poland, and elsewhere, some negative reaction was noted and recorded. Nevertheless, despite the way that these issues can feed antisemitic stereotypes—by linking Jews with international pressure groups and money—there has, so far, been surprisingly little additional antisemitism generated. Of course, restitution is likely to be an issue for some years and pressures on governments may intensify, creating an even greater potential for an antisemitic reaction.

Holocaust denial

Without a doubt, the most significant event of 1996 relating to Holocaust denial concerned the endorsement by one of France's most popular personalities, Abbé Pierre, of a book by the Holocaust-denier Roger Garaudy entitled *Les mythes fondateurs de la politique israélienne* (Founding Myths of Israeli Politics). It caused a national outcry and dominated the media for several days. On 26 April, judicial proceedings were brought against Garaudy for “having contested crimes against humanity”, on the basis of the Gayssot Law, which makes it an offence “to bring into question one or more crimes against humanity”. Although Abbé Pierre eventually retracted the comments he made about Garaudy's work, the affair re-opened the controversy surrounding the Gayssot Law (passed in 1990 as an amendment to the 1881 laws concerning the freedom of the press).

Legal developments

The trend towards introducing legislation to combat racial hatred continues, and in countries where such legislation already exists, its use is growing, even if results are mixed.

Among countries where new laws are now being tested is Spain. A new Spanish penal code became effective on 25 May. Incorporated into the reformed code are articles that: prohibit overt expressions of antisemitism; punish acts that incite hatred or violence, or deny or justify genocidal crimes;

add “religion” (alongside race, ethnicity, sexual orientation) as a punishable motive for discriminatory acts. Effectively, police and judiciary in Spain are now able to invoke a legal instrument to interfere with or put a halt to the activities of racist and antisemitic groups. Although the law is yet to be tested in court, the December raid on the Spanish Europa bookshop (in which nearly 13,000 books of neo-Nazi propaganda and Holocaust denial written in English, German and Spanish were seized, along with posters, flags, videos and badges), and the arrest of the bookshop owner, referred to above, was made possible by the new law.

Christian antisemitism

Antisemitism in the Catholic Church is increasingly less apparent. The influence of the current Pope has played no small part in this. Elements within the Catholic church (and in the other churches too) which espouse antisemitism are found mostly at the fringes. Incidents in countries where public expressions of Christian antisemitism are unexpected therefore tend to loom larger. In Egypt, for example, the Coptic Patriarch, Baba Shanuda, made antisemitic remarks in an interview published in December in the mainstream periodical *Musawwar*, entitled “The Prophecy by the Jews of the End of Christianity is a Great Mistake”. In it, Shanuda quoted extensively from the tsarist forgery *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, claiming that the Talmud was the source of Zionist conspiracies. He concluded that “the *Protocols* say that the Jews must take control of the world by sowing ideas of heresy in it”.

In the USA, a principal focus of concern is the Religious Right, whose political success raises fears that an intolerant climate will develop in which respect for the civil rights of Jews and other minorities will be deliberately sidelined in favour of the inculcation of exclusively Christian values.

Militant Islam and the Arab World

The two main sources of antisemitism in the Middle East are militant Islam (embodied in parties such as Hamas) and the state-controlled media of the Arab world. There

was certainly no lessening of Islamist antisemitism in 1996, but antisemitism in the Arab media tended to fluctuate. The mix of standard antisemitic images, Holocaust-denial material and antisemitic statements quoted from the Qur'an, as distinct from anti-Zionism and anti-Israelism, tends to reflect the current state of the Middle East peace process at any given time. For example in Turkey, when the first Islamist prime minister in the republic's history came to power, there was a perceptible rise in antisemitic images in the media. However, in recent months this has diminished with an improvement in Turkish-Israeli relations.

Another example is Egypt, where the most common antisemitic image is the hook-nosed, black-robed Jew, sometimes with horns, often conspiring against the Arab world, or the Jew as a Nazi. During the economic summit held in Cairo in November, the government-backed daily *al-Gumhuriyya* published a cartoon of a black-robed Jew entering the conference hall with a briefcase marked "domination plots".

Outside the Middle East, Islamist antisemitism remains a focus of concern in a number of countries, particularly Denmark, South Africa and the United Kingdom.

With no official state-sponsored antisemitism anywhere in the world, the antisemitism that is closest to government circles and often the most blatant emanates from Arab countries. For example, in Egypt in July, newspapers carried reports concerning an incident that illustrated a modern variation on the antisemitic theme of well-poisoning (showing that traditional forms of antisemitism can continually be given fresh life). According to the reports, students at Mansura University claimed that Israeli chewing gum, smuggled into Egypt from Gaza, had been laced by Israeli agents with aphrodisiacs in order to corrupt young women. Despite the fact that the Egyptian minister of health told a press conference that laboratory tests had found nothing wrong with the chewing gum, a member of parliament alleged that it was part of a "huge scheme to ravage the young population of Egypt".

The Internet

The Internet, which has revolutionized communication across national boundaries, presents a new challenge in respect of the dissemination of antisemitic propaganda. The *Antisemitism World Report* was the first to draw public attention to this problem in 1994 and others have now taken up the detailed work of monitoring racism and antisemitism on the Net and trying to map its extent, forms, style and content.

There is as yet no evidence that this medium is more venal than any other; it simply poses different problems. The quantity of racist and antisemitic material to be found on the Internet must be seen in context. There is such a vast amount of words and pages on the World Wide Web alone that racist material must occupy only a very small fraction of it. Also, it is counteracted by the anti-racist material that is increasingly being made available. Projects such as the Canadian site "Nizkor", which provides material about the Holocaust as a counterweight to Holocaust-denial material, appear on the screen as often, if not more often, than racist sites when word searches are conducted. Keying in "White Power", for example, will produce not only skinhead sites but a huge number of "diversionary" anti-racist sites. There are also technical difficulties in finding far-right, neo-Nazi and Holocaust-denial material, sometimes as a result of sophisticated password systems used by Holocaust-deniers and far-right activists.

What is rarely pointed out, however, is the fact that those monitoring racism and antisemitism have a new intelligence source that was simply not there before. The fact that the racists and antisemites have embraced the Internet with such zeal has made the task of keeping up with them easier. Moreover, it has been of very specific use in official action against extremists. Although extremists sometimes attempt to disguise some of their traffic, they do have a marked tendency to expose themselves—after all, they want to be a mass movement and if they are using the Internet for that purpose, they have to make themselves visible.

Racist use of the Internet may well have

other advantages. Although the Internet is seen as free and anarchic and beyond control, nevertheless, the presence of the racists could be seen as an unwitting form of self-imposed social control, both because of the conventions they have to adhere to and the fact that they can be monitored. If “battles” with them are fought out on the Net rather than in the streets, that constitutes an interesting development.

The complexity and vast amount of material to be found on the Internet has made it difficult for governments to introduce legislation that curbs its excesses. One way of dealing with the problem was given publicity in 1996: self-regulation by servers and providers. There were cases of commercial servers prohibiting access to antisemitic web sites or cancelling contracts with neo-Nazis when they were informed of the contents of their pages. This action was taken as a result of a “moral” stance adopted by the servers or after a court injunction had been served.

Country developments

Highlighted below are countries where noteworthy developments—both positive and negative—occurred.

Argentina

Past evidence suggested that antisemitism was in decline, but a clear increase in antisemitism was recorded in 1996. In recent years conditions conducive to the growth and spread of racism, xenophobia and antisemitism were at a low ebb, but in 1996 these had clearly taken a turn for the worse: the combination of peak levels of unemployment, growing inequality of income distribution, the intensified perception of corruption in the government and the discrediting of central institutions, together with the continuing consequences of Argentina’s imperfect transition from military to elected rule, provide a compelling background. Although antisemitic attacks have to be seen in the wider context of general criminal activity, for the first time in many years the Argentine Jewish community felt threatened.

Canada

In 1996 the unfolding political situation in Quebec produced disturbing evidence of antisemitic and anti-minority attitudes among some politicians and in the media. Frustration among nationalists over their failure to win the 1995 referendum often resulted in attempts to blame someone for the defeat—Jews were repeatedly depicted as a, if not the, major opponent of Quebec nationalism. By the end of the year Montreal’s Jews, in particular, felt that this sudden rise of activity, some of which had antisemitic undertones, had not been dealt with convincingly by the mainstream of Quebec’s political, civic, intellectual and religious leadership.

Egypt

Antisemitic books, journals, newspaper articles and cartoons were particularly in evidence in 1996, with the tacit approval of the authorities. There was a marked increase in antisemitic propaganda following the election of Binyamin Netanyahu as Israeli prime minister in May. Also, efforts by mainstream elements and opposition movements to resist the normalization of relations with Israel were often imbued with antisemitic arguments.

Germany

The number of officially-recorded far-right and antisemitic offences continued to fall in 1996—in the latter case by 20 per cent. Antisemitic offences make up approximately 10 per cent of the total number of far-right crimes. While the number of far-right and antisemitic offences in Germany remains by far the highest of any country in the world, this fact must be judged in the context of the country’s rigorous monitoring procedures and especially stringent legislation against such offences.

Russia

The threat posed by Vladimir Zhirinovskiy, the leader of the ultra-nationalist Liberal Democratic Party of Russia, receded further following the June presidential elections, when he won less than 6 per cent of the vote. A diminution in his anti-Jewish utterances

throughout the year was also perceptible. General Aleksandr Lebed, also a defeated candidate in the presidential elections, made anti-Jewish remarks during the campaign, for which he subsequently apologized. There are approximately 100 ultra-nationalist groups, virtually all of them professing an antisemitic ideology, but they remained on the fringe of Russian political life. The level of antisemitic incidents does not appear to have varied from 1995; there was nonetheless much unease among the Russian Jewish community that the police and judicial authorities are not doing enough to apprehend, or prosecute, the perpetrators of antisemitic acts.

Spain

In 1996 action taken against Spain's largest purveyor of antisemitic and Holocaust-denial material, the Europa bookshop in Barcelona, illustrates the variety of methods used to counter racism and antisemitism. The promulgation of the new Spanish penal code in May made possible a raid on the shop, the arrest of its owner and the seizure of thousands of antisemitic and neo-Nazi books, proofs and paraphernalia. But a campaign organized by pressure groups, neighbours of the bookshop and a number of civic associations, the Plataforma Anna Frank (Anne Frank Platform), was also effective when it proposed that the name of the section of the road in which the bookshop was located should be changed to "Anne Frank" so that all the shop's stationery and business cards would carry the name of Anne Frank. A total of 10,000 signatures were collected along with the support of 150 organizations and businesses in favour of changing the street's name.

Turkey

In June, Necmettin Erbakan, leader of the Refah Partisi (RP, Welfare Party), became the first Islamist prime minister in the history of the Turkish republic. Erbakan's appointment raised serious concern since he and his party had, while in opposition, frequently attacked Israel and Jews in vicious terms. Towards the end of the year, however, it became clear that Erbakan intended to maintain the pro-western

policies of the previous government. Thus, despite the initial surge of Islamist antisemitism, which had gone hand in hand with the RP's commitment to carrying out Islamic reforms in the political, social and economic spheres, fears that its propaganda would result in an escalation of antisemitic attacks against Jews were somewhat allayed.

UK

For the third year running, a fall in the number of antisemitic incidents was recorded by the Board of Deputies of British Jews, and traditional sources of antisemitic propaganda appear to be on the decline. These developments must be seen in the context of the steady decline in the numbers of unemployed and the steady improvement in the country's economic position. Where there is cause for concern is in the increase in Islamist antisemitic activity, mainly on college and university campuses. This shows that the racism directed by one minority group against another must also be acknowledged.

To varying degrees, certain manifestations of antisemitism intensified in the following countries: Belgium, Australia, France, Greece, Slovakia and Sweden.

Conclusion

Looking back over six years of the *Antisemitism World Report*, it can be reliably stated that there was an upsurge of antisemitism at the end of the 1980s. How different it was to the previous decade we never know because no systematic global monitoring was taking place of the kind brought together in the *Antisemitism World Report*. But the same historical development—the collapse of Communism—that contributed so greatly to that upsurge by allowing previously suppressed or controlled antisemitism to rise rapidly to the surface in former Communist countries, also led to its decline because it heralded the end of official state-sponsored antisemitism. The other principal long-term development that affected the level of antisemitism was the world recession that began with the oil shock in the early 1970s. This was felt

particularly strongly in Europe where a growing sense of insecurity, rising unemployment and the decision of governments to reverse their policies on immigrants and foreign workers led to the development of an anti-immigrant climate—fertile soil for the growth of racism and the far right. Visible minorities were the target of resentment, but antisemitism was also given a boost in Western Europe.

The anti-immigrant climate remains, although it has been mitigated to some degree by heightened social concern about the racism it engenders. The economic situation in Europe remains difficult for many countries—over 18 million unemployed in the European Union alone—but there have been significant improvements. Governments have also, to some degree at least, learned to manage the social upheavals and have, ultimately, not allowed them to destroy social peace. That these forces remain potent, however, is seen in the permanence of the electorally respectable far right.

But what the *Antisemitism World Report* has found during the last two years is that whilst racist activity has remained at high levels and has increased in some countries, antisemitic activity has not automatically moved at the same pace. On the whole, antisemitism has remained static or has diminished. This “de-coupling” is an interesting development. However, as was stated in the Introduction to last year’s Report, “this must not make Jews (or anyone else) complacent or any less vigilant—even if Jews are not under attack there are numerous very good reasons why they should demonstrate the utmost concern for and become involved in activity against other forms of racism”.

But what is clear from the last six years is that antisemitism does not resonate with significant sections of the public in the way that it once did, that it cannot be used to mobilize anything other than small, extremist, fringe groups, and that one important aspect of the “new” means of packaging and disseminating antisemitism—Holocaust denial, the Internet, antisemitism dressed up as anti-Zionism—is that they have arisen partly

because activist antisemites cannot get their message across in the more traditional forms.

What we see, therefore, is a *transformation* in the presentation of antisemitism and in the vehicles used to disseminate it. It is allotted a subordinate position in the politics and ideology of the electorally successful far right, though is patently present in their ranks and among their leaders nonetheless. It is channelled through the new globalized, technically advanced means of communication, in order to sanitize it and attempt to evade legal restrictions. It is disguised as pseudo-academic debate in the form of Holocaust denial. And it emanates most threateningly from non-traditional sources—Islamists in certain Western countries—rather than from elements who claim to be defending “white” civilization and host cultures. Antisemitism is also given breathing space in Eastern Europe through the continued reclamation of a pre-Communist past that entails the rehabilitation of wartime fascist leaders like Josef Tiso in Slovakia and Marshal Ion Antonescu in Romania. This transformation confirms that, in general, the social climate remains inimical to antisemitism but antisemites continue to struggle to overcome it.

The evidence of the last six years also shows the importance of countervailing forces. That antisemitism remains unacceptable can be seen in the vast number of initiatives taken in education and in the law, by the churches and by international institutions, in new organizations set up to combat racism and antisemitism, conferences and seminars, declarations, commissions of inquiry. Furthermore, as highlighted at the beginning of this Introduction, many Jews and national and international Jewish organizations no longer adopt a softly-softly approach to antisemitism; they increasingly beard the lion in its den, no matter what the consequences.

This year’s *Antisemitism World Report* highlights points of concern—the antisemitic utterances of Louis Farrakhan, which are not taken sufficiently seriously by significant elements in American society; the propensity for even a moderate state like Egypt to

sanction the use of antisemitism in political conflicts with Israel; antisemitism from Islamist sources in western countries; antisemitism on the Internet—some of them quite intractable. But they tend to be specific problems occurring in a climate in which antisemitism remains socially unacceptable. It is conceivable that that climate is changing—there are suggestions that this may be the case in the USA and France, for example—but

whether this is a natural adjustment as the Second World War recedes into history, or something more sinister, remains to be seen. Only continued monitoring, analysis and assessment will determine whether this is the case. Certainly, on the evidence of this year's Report the overall trend suggests that the pressures preventing antisemitism from becoming the main global language of racism remain strong, if not as strong as they should be.

How to use the Report

The new, sixth edition surveys antisemitism in 60 countries throughout the world in the year 1996. It provides:

- Reliable data on the incidence, characteristics and trends of antisemitism
- Information about the conditions under which antisemitism is more likely to surface for use in formulating relevant policy initiatives
- Information on action taken by government and legal authorities to combat antisemitism both in their respective countries and internationally
- Evidence for use by local, national and international organizations and Jewish representative bodies in pressing government and legal authorities to take action to combat antisemitism.

Countries are selected for inclusion on the basis of a prior report or understanding that a level of antisemitism exists there that justifies investigation. The fact that some entries are longer than others does not necessarily mean that antisemitism poses more of a problem in those countries where it is given lengthier treatment; it may simply reflect the amount of data available.

Entries are based on: contributions by specialists; material supplied by Jewish communal organizations, human rights and government monitoring organizations, academics, research institutes and journalists; and the expertise and archives of the Institute for Jewish Policy Research.

How the Report is organized

Country entries are arranged alphabetically by region. Data—covering January to December 1996—are organized in accordance with the categories listed below:

- Demographic data: includes estimated figures on total and Jewish populations, provided by contributors
- General background: political and economic conditions, key political parties

- and issues dominating political life
- Historical legacy: a brief history of antisemitism
- Racism and xenophobia: a brief analysis of the general climate of racism and xenophobia together with figures for racially motivated incidents and comparison with previous years; where appropriate, changes to asylum and immigration legislation are cited
- Parties, organizations, movements: a survey of the far-right, neo-Nazi and Islamist scenes with estimates of membership and influence; an outline of their main activities in 1996; and, where possible, a brief analysis of their ideology; also, international links between members are highlighted
- Mainstream politics: includes antisemitic expressions by governments and mainstream parties; pandering to racist sentiment where such a development could lead to increased antisemitism
- Manifestations: includes violence, cemetery desecrations, arson, graffiti, verbal abuse, harassment and the dissemination of antisemitic literature; where data are available, year-on-year comparisons are made
- Cultural and sporting life: includes antisemitism in popular entertainment
- Business and commerce
- Education
- Publications and media: books, newspapers, magazines, etc. and the broadcast media (television, radio), estimates of circulation, audience, frequency of publications/appearance and political orientation; electronic media and propaganda (via computer networks, CD-Rom, diskettes, etc.)
- Religion: includes Islamic and Christian sources
- Holocaust denial: includes publications and speaking tours
- Effects of anti-Zionism: data on antisemitic manifestations deriving from anti-Zionist activities, publications and politics
- Opinion polls: data primarily concerning

- Jews, but also the overall climate of tolerance towards ethnic minorities and immigrant communities
- Legal matters: anti-racist legislation; details of prosecutions under anti-incitement and anti-discrimination legislation; and cases involving denial of the Holocaust and war crimes prosecutions
- Countering antisemitism: examples of statements by non-Jewish and Jewish political, religious and other leaders; educational initiatives; and demonstrations against racism and xenophobia
- Assessment: summarizes and analyses data in each entry; makes comparisons with previous years and with other forms of racism and discrimination; evaluates the incidence of antisemitism.

Regional maps are included to indicate the location of countries and territories cited in the text. It is not possible on the small scale used to show precise political boundaries. The maps should not be interpreted as indicating any view on the status of disputed territories.

Regional maps appear on the following pages:	
Americas	1
Asia	75
Europe	101
Middle East and North Africa	307
Southern Africa	351

At the beginning of each entry are maps showing the country in geographical context and the main regions, cities and towns mentioned in the text.

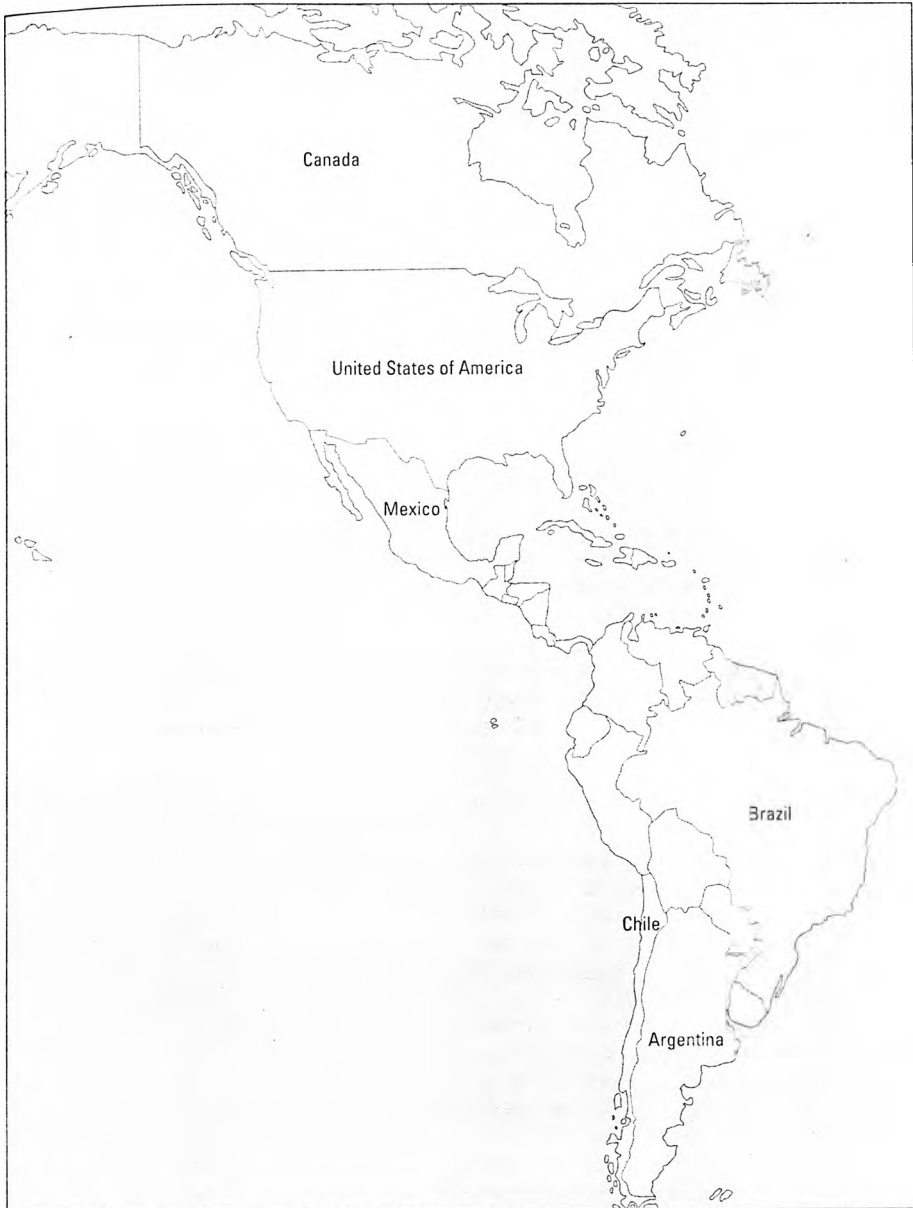
Local currency is cited where it has been provided; otherwise the equivalent in US dollars is given. Abbreviations and acronyms, based on the language of the country, are listed on pages vii-xiv. There is a comprehensive index on pages 357-80.

Availability on the World Wide Web

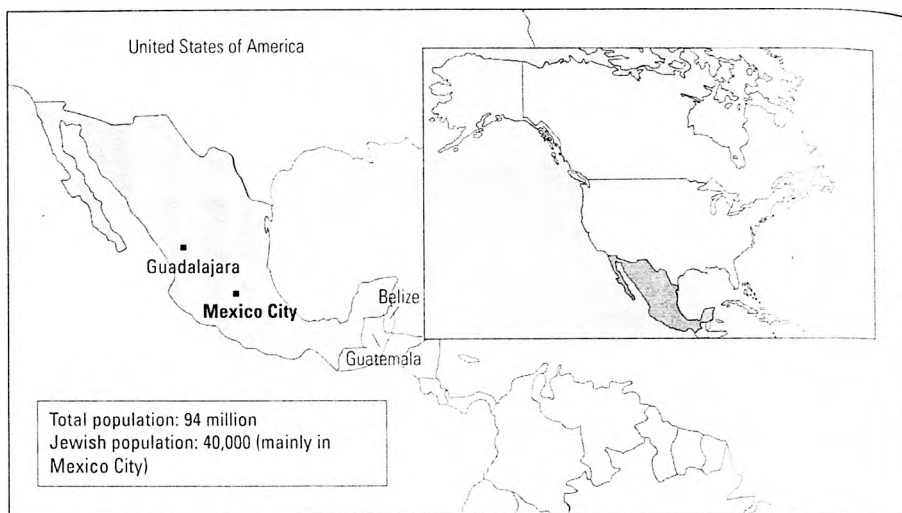
This is the first edition of the Report that is available on the World Wide Web. It can be accessed from:

- AJC's web site: <http://www.ajc.org>
- JPR's web site: <http://www.ort.org/communit/jpr>

Americas



Mexico



General background

The Partido Revolucionario Institucional (PRI, Institutional Revolutionary Party) has controlled the government since the party was founded in 1929. President Ernesto Zedillo Ponce de León was elected head of state in 1994. Other major parties include the Partido Acción Nacional (PAN, National Action Party) and the Partido de la Revolución Democrática (PRD, Party of Democratic Revolution).

On 23 November, after protracted negotiations, new electoral reform was adopted by congress. This reform includes: full autonomy for the Federal Electoral Institute; the first-ever direct popular election of a mayor for Mexico City; tighter financial regulation of election campaigns; and the placing of electoral law violations under the jurisdiction of the supreme court. It is hoped the latter will address the problem of fraud and corruption during elections and previous failures to prosecute those accused of electoral crimes.

Local elections were held in November in the states of Baja California Sur, Quintana Roo, Nayarit, Guerrero, Hidalgo, Coahuila, and Mexico state. The opposition made significant advances and the PRI lost control in Coahuila and Mexico state. By the end of 1996, 47.5 mil-

lion Mexicans were governed by the PRI, 34.5 million by the PAN and 9 million by the PRD, marking an increased political diversity in the country and the possibility for the development of legislative power as the forum for the expression of citizens' demands.

The previous governmental emphasis on economic modernization as the exclusive drive of national transformation took a sharp turn in 1996: politics overshadowed the economy in the national agenda. Nevertheless, these political changes and the growing strength of Mexico's civil society have had little effect in slowing the increase in crime, drug-related violence and corruption in the governmental sphere. Judicial power continued to become increasingly politicized in the year and major political crimes remained unsolved.

In December the attorney general, Antonio Lozano Gracia, was dismissed by President Zedillo and replaced by Jorge Madrazo Cuellar, former head of the National Human Rights Commission. Later in the month, Humberto Roque Villanueva was elected president of the PRI, replacing Santiago Oñate Laborde, who resigned.

Mexico's economy, which had been strained during the previous years by the ef-

fects of crises, stabilized in 1996 and by the end of the year had registered growth. There was a steady improvement in macroeconomic indices such as gross domestic product, external account balance and foreign currency reserves, and some modest recovery in employment. The microeconomic situation did not improve significantly. Consumption, wages and employment remained low, contributing to higher levels of crime and social tension. There are inequalities in income distribution, with large numbers of people living in extreme poverty in rural areas, shanty towns and urban slums.

Historical legacy

Antisemitism in contemporary Mexico was initially prompted by debates surrounding immigration policies during the late 1920s. Groups such as the Anti-Chinese and Anti-Jewish National League, founded in 1930, and the Honorable Traders, Industrialists and Professionals lobbied the government to restrict the immigration of Jews. In May 1931, 250 Jewish pedlars were expelled from the Lagunilla market. The National Day of Commerce was declared on 1 June 1931. On this day Mexicans protested about the Jewish presence in commercial life.

Throughout the 1930s, Mexico experienced outbursts of antisemitism centring on economic and racial themes. Gradually, the racial theme became dominant among far-right groups. Among them was the Mexican Revolutionary Action, which was founded in 1934, and operated through its paramilitary units, the Golden Shirts.

The antisemitic Pro-Race Committee and the Middle-Class Confederation exerted pressure on the government and waged antisemitic campaigns that reached their peak during 1938-9. In the decades that followed, antisemitism was confined to fringe groups with marginal influence.

The financial crisis of 1982 and the social upheaval caused in 1985 by the earthquakes in Mexico City led to the expression of anti-Jewish sentiment in the media. Articles in the influential national daily *Excelsior* accused Jewish factory owners of profiting from the disaster and of letting their workers die while saving themselves and their own property.

Racism and xenophobia

The indigenous population has long been the object of discriminatory treatment. Indigenous people do not live on autonomously governed land, although some communities exercise considerable local control over economic and social issues. They continue to remain largely outside the country's political and economic mainstream, and in many cases they have minimal participation in decisions affecting their land, cultural traditions and the allocation of natural resources.

In the context of Mexico's current political transition and the effect of the 1994 uprising by the Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional (EZLN, Zapatista National Liberation Army) in Chiapas, however, new light has been shed on the nature of collective identity and the relevance of the political demands of the indigenous communities.

Parties, organizations, movements

Throughout modern Mexico's history, with the exception of the 1930s, antisemitism has not been a central issue for political parties and movements. Nonetheless, the far right, however marginal, has always proved to be fertile ground for the growth of antisemitic attitudes.

During 1996 the diversified organizational pattern within the far right diminished, as did the previous intensity of far-right activities. Organizations such as LaRouche-inspired (see page 50) Partido Laboral Mexicano (Mexican Labour Party), Federación Mexicana Anticomunista (Anti-Communist Federation) and Los Tecos were rarely heard of during the year.

The exception to the low-key approach was the Partido de las Aguilas Mexicanas (PAM, Party of the Mexican Eagles), which changed its name to Consejo del Pueblo de las Aguilas Mexicanas (The People's Council of Mexican Eagles) in 1996. The party's ideology, dubbed as "neo-Mexicanism", promotes an idealized image of Mexico's indigenous past and scorns Europe's perceived role in forging contemporary Mexican national identity. From 1995 until May 1996, this group has regularly covered the outer walls of Mexico City's cathedral with anti-Jewish graffiti, claiming that Mexican Jewry controls the politics and finances of the country.

The PAM tried to register as a political party in May, but its application was denied by the Tribunal Federal Electoral (Federal Electoral Tribunal). Subsequently the Instituto Federal Electoral (Federal Electoral Institute) issued an open letter condemning the group's antisemitic, racist and intolerant views.

Later in the year, in December, the leader of the PAM, Alfredo Perez Mata, put in another bid to register as a party. During this campaign he declared that the party "dislike[s] the Jews because they control the finances and politics of the country, thus promoting corruption".

Manifestations

Despite the continuing political and economic changes in Mexico, antisemitism remained at a record low and anti-Jewish manifestations remained as isolated incidents. As was the case in 1995, expressions of aggression tended to be channelled towards the former Salinas administration, especially his inner circle and family. This might account for the absence of antisemitic diatribes in the media, which traditionally have been the outlet through which antisemitism has been directed in the country.

Anti-Jewish graffiti, in particular swastikas, seldom appeared. A few Jewish institutions received threatening calls or bomb threats during the year, all of which turned out to be false alarms.

Publications and media

In contrast to the last decade, the mainstream media were almost devoid of anti-Jewish prejudice during 1996.

The Protocols of the Elders of Zion and *The International Jew* continued to be available in some bookshops, particularly where radical literature is sold (see LEGAL MATTERS). However, works such as Hanna Gossler's *Heroes o Traldores* (Heroes or Traitors) and *La Farsa Judia* (The Jewish Hoax), and David Irving's *Hitler's War*, were apparently no longer for sale.

Periodicals published by LaRouche's Ibero-American Solidarity Movement (EIR, *Resumen Ejecutivo*) and by far-right groups from Guadalajara, such as the magazine *Surge*, published several articles on "international Zionism", "British-Zionist conspiracy", and the

relationship between the Anti-Defamation League (ADL), the Cuban dictator Fidel Castro and "Israeli terrorism".

Although a Holocaust-denial movement has not developed in Mexico, during 1996 the books of Salvador Borrego, the country's most prolific antisemitic writer, could be found in many bookshops. They were also publicized in Salvador Abascal's *La Hoja del Combate* (Combat Newsletter).

No other regular periodicals were published by the far right in 1996, and no antisemitic articles appeared in the Catholic press.

Legal matters

Mexico has laws protecting the fundamental rights of citizens regardless of their gender, creed or race, and has signed various international human rights treaties such as the International Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination. However, Mexico lacks specific legislation on this issue. During 1996, the Jewish dialogue organization Tribuna Israelita and the National Commission of Human Rights both continued to promote legislation to define racism and antisemitism as crimes punishable by law.

In May a case brought against Editorial Epoca, a publishing house and major Mexican purveyor of antisemitic literature, by the German government was successfully concluded with an out-of-court settlement. Editorial Epoca undertook no longer to publish or advertise Adolf Hitler's *Mein Kampf*. It also offered to cease publication of two other antisemitic works, *The International Jew* and *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion* (see PUBLICATIONS AND MEDIA). The case has its roots in successful action taken in 1989 by Tribuna Israelita and the German government to prevent the publication and circulation of *Mein Kampf* in Mexico. However, it became apparent during 1996 that the ban was being ignored by Editorial Epoca and the work was once again being published and sold (sometimes in bulk) around the country.

Assessment

During 1996 Mexican society continued its genuine attempt to change its profile and build

a diversified, pluralistic and more tolerant civic culture and national image.

The effect of the political and economic transformations and the ongoing profound changes that have taken place in the relation-

ship between church and state did not generate an increase in antisemitic expressions in the year. Where they do occur, antisemitic incidents should be seen in the context of the conservative forces' opposition to change.