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THE SNIDER INSTITUTE FOR SOCIAL ACTION

Antisemitism in Western Europe 2001-2002 (including a Focus on France and Belgium)

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To

The United States Commission on
Security and Cooperation in Europe (Helsinki Commission)
United States Congress
Washington D.C.

Hearing on “Escalating Antisemitic Violence in Europe”
10 a.m., Wednesday, 22 May 2002

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Introduction

Ladies and Gentlemen,

In 1997; I had the honour to address this Commission on the state of antisemitism in the OSCE member-states at that time. Prominent among the potential dangers to the Jewish condition that I then highlighted were:

- Holocaust denial and its relativization
- Technology in the service of hate, especially via the Internet
- The spread of fundamentalist Islamic influence

Yet, by the Millennium, only two years ago, peace processes and the bubble of global economic boom implied a new stage in the 2000-year precariousness of Jewish history. There were no more “Jews of oppression” and our destiny and destination had become a matter of choice.

The OSCE was vindicated, as the Jewish condition seemed to be normalized both within its member states as also, apparently, the Jewish state was becoming accepted into the family of nations.

Then came the Intifada, Durban and 9/11, each releasing the old demons awaiting beneath the surface.

The World Conference Against Racism held in Durban last fall hijacked United Nations agencies (especially the Human Rights Commission and UNESCO) into a campaign for the demonization of the Jewish state and, through it, of the Jewish people.

The Friday evening march against racism did not end at the Durban City Hall, but at the Jewish Club and synagogue where Hitler flyers (asking “what if I would have won”) and the Protocols of Zion were distributed. That night, I, as Chair of the Jewish Caucus in Durban, together with our Centre’s Associate Dean, Rabbi Abraham Cooper, saw anti-Israel and anti-Zionist pretexts die at the gates of a synagogue, endorsing a new antisemitism under the guise of a human rights solidarity campaign.

Last 11 November, at the UN High Commission for Human Rights Madrid Conference on Religious Intolerance, I heard no protest at the Syrian Ambassador’s call for the exclusion of “a certain arrogant religion that claims itself as chosen.”

Similarly, UNESCO, a propaganda mouthpiece for tyrannies and collaborator in covering up the worst human rights offences, systematically singled out Israel for abuse. I enter into the record an outrageous report to be delivered by Director-General Koichiro Matsuura to the UNESCO Executive Board on 28 May. It condemns Israel for crimes against the Palestinian cultural heritage and deliberate destruction of its educational structure. There is no mention of the devastation of Jewish holy sites or incitement to Jew-hatred in school-texts, media and mosques.

There is neither reference to Jewish victims of terror in Israel, nor of violence against synagogues, not twenty minutes away from UNESCO’s Paris headquarters.

The critical mass of UN and media pillorying of Israel is validating a slippage to anti-Jewish assaults.

The outbreak of the “Intifada” on 28 September 2000 unleashed a wave of Middle East-related antisemitic incidents worldwide.

Among OSCE countries, in the single month of October 2000, the highest numbers of such attacks were perpetrated in France (70), followed by Canada (29), the United States (22), Great Britain (20) and others...

The trend continued throughout 2001 with some 320 reported incidents in France i.e. targeting Jewish institutions (synagogues, schools, cemeteries) and individuals almost daily.

To make matters worse, official French Police statistics have reported over 400 such incidents in the first three months of 2002, rising to a dozen incidents per day in April (i.e. 380 in France topping 127 in Germany and 57 in the United Kingdom). The Wiesenthal Centre therefore decided, for the first time ever, to place a Travel Advisory on its website (www.wiesenthal.com) suggesting that Jewish visitors to France and Belgium, at this time, proceed with extreme caution.

We are thus making available to you a twenty page analysis, which includes a list of 108 incidents (assaults, violent acts and threats) focussing upon France and Belgium.

Most of these have occurred in neighbourhoods where Jews and Moslems live in close propinquity. Indeed, Moslem anti-Jewish activity has increased *pari passim* with the increasing intensity of the Intifada represented through the extreme imagery and anti-Israel hostility of the media.

The post-11 September US-led “war against terror” has merged the traditional anti-Americanism of the left, and the nationalism of the extreme right with an immediate sympathy for Al-Qa’eda among young socially marginalised Moslems in France.

Much of the antisemitic graffiti and mail used such expressions as “Vive Bin-Laden”.

The volume of violent incidents against Jewish targets reached a peak immediately after the attacks on New York and Washington, especially around the New Year and “Yom Kippur” festivals, with a new resurgence following Passover this year.

The climate of threat and hatemongering against Jews in Durban is now replicated in pro-Palestinian demonstrations across Europe, that serve to rally extreme-left, extreme-right and anti-globalization violent elements together with Islamic fundamentalists.

In June 2001, French Foreign Minister, Hubert Vedrine, told a Wiesenthal Centre delegation that assaults on Jewish institutions were “only acts of suburban hooliganism.” He rejected any aggravating implications of French policy on the Middle East conflict being interpreted as consistently pro-Arab.

Yet, the Minister for the Interior and for Religions, Daniel Vaillant, on 5 December 2001, reported “a net diminution of antisemitic threats and aggressions in the course of 2001, after a peak in 2000 coinciding with the beginning of the Intifada.”

I would call this the black box of denial.

A Jewish school-bus is attacked in suburban Paris. A bullet penetrates the window shield, wounding an 8 year old girl. The Police register the act as “broken windshield.” A Rabbi complains that his wrecked car is scrawled with “Death to the Jews.” The Police note it as “vandalism.” Thus the Interior Ministry reports that hate crimes against Jews “are down” and the media will not touch the issue. But the Wiesenthal Centre gets daily calls from victims and, in March this year, we organised hearings at Paris City Hall under the auspices of Mayor Bertrand Delanoë.

We cracked open the black box.

On 7 April, we co-sponsored the 200,000 demonstrator march against antisemitism in Paris and the media began to make it an issue.

To understand this black box, we must flashback twenty years: from the 3 October 1980 bombing of the Rue Copernic synagogue (when the then Prime Minister’s reaction was “a bomb at a synagogue killed innocent Frenchmen”) until the 9 August 1982 Rue des Rosiers massacre at Goldenberg’s Restaurant, there were 73 shootings and bombings of Jewish targets in Western Europe – of which 29 in France.

They ended with the Israeli 1982 entry into Lebanon and the consequent repatriation of European terrorists from Palestinian training camps in the Southern Lebanon. The French Action Directe, German Baader Meinhoff and Italian Red Brigades now focussed their attacks on banks, embassies and NATO installations. European governments finally took action, for what had started with the Jews had become a scourge for general society.

Also today, the authorities fear the Intifada’s arrival in Europe, irregardless of the Arab-Israel conflict. Already in Béziers, France, young fundamentalists shot the Deputy-Mayor, several policemen and then themselves, screaming “Allahu Akhbar.” Prime Minister Jospin belatedly pleaded that the Middle East be kept out of France.

The Al Qa’eda network was spread across Germany, France, Spain, Italy and the UK. We have shared with the authorities *bona fide* accounts of radical Imams from Algeria, financed by Iran, preaching hatred of Jews and Christians to young alienated Moslem youth in suburban prayer-halls. We know of week-end cross-Channel excursions of “Jihadist” students between Britain and the Continent.

On another level, Europeans, still battling with World War Two collective myths of resistance and collaboration with the Nazi occupier, seek absolution by projecting their guilt upon the victim.

Thus, the growth of Holocaust language used to Nazify the Israeli and Judaize the Palestinian.

Notoriously simplistic was a cartoon rendering of the famous photo of the child, under German guns at the fall of the Warsaw Ghetto. By role-reversal, a “keffiyah” headdress was placed on the child and Stars of David upon the Nazis’ helmets. This month, Le Monde

banalized the Warsaw Ghetto ruins by lampooning it in juxtaposition with a mock scene of Jenin.

The slippery slope from hate-speech to hate-crime is clear. 72 hours after the close of the Durban hate-fest, its virulence struck at the strategic and financial centers of the United States.

If Durban was “Mein-Kampf,” then 9/11 was “Kristalnacht,” a warning.

What starts with the Jews is a measure, an alarm signalling impending danger for global stability. The new antisemitic alliance is bound up with anti-Americanism, under the cover of so-called “anti-globalization.”

The Holocaust, for thirty years, acted as a protective “Teflon” against blatant antisemitic expression. That “Teflon” has eroded, and what was considered distasteful and politically incorrect is becoming simply an opinion. But cocktail chatter at fine English dinners can end as cocktail Molotovs against synagogues.

“Political correctness” is also ending for others, as tolerance for multiculturalism gives way to populist voices in France, Italy, Austria, Denmark, Portugal and, last week, in the Netherlands. These countries’ Jewish communities can be caught between the rock of radical Islamic violence and the hard-place of a revitalized Holocaust-denying extreme right. Common cause must be sought between the victimized minorities against extremism and fanaticism.

The OSCE Bucharest Declaration of 2001 called for fighting, *inter alia*, antisemitism in the media and to pay it increased attention. Since 1990, our Centre has participated as an NGO at ODIHR Reviews and is familiar with the Copenhagen, Moscow, Lisbon and Istanbul Concluding Documents that propose legal, educational, monitoring and reporting measures, to effectively protect victims of racism, including antisemitism, in OSCE member-states.

In that spirit, the Wiesenthal Centre has, last week, co-launched a grass-roots project in the Paris suburbs, “SOS Truth and Security.” Attached is a synthesis of the 39 complaints from victims of antisemitism reaching already our hotline.

Volunteer lawyers will accompany each victim to the Police and the local Town Hall. Social workers will address their trauma. The data generated will be analyzed by our Centre and we would be happy to share the findings with this Commission and the OSCE.

Thereby, we urge your constant involvement in cracking open the black box of myopia and prejudice and exposing the consequent dangers that threaten us all.

One scintilla of light broke through the darkness in Durban when a South African black Moslem friend asked me a Jewish riddle:

A Rabbi and his students were discussing when does night end and day begin?

One student said: “When you can distinguish between a lamb and a goat.”

The second said: “When you can distinguish between a fig-tree and an olive-tree.”

The Rabbi responded: “No, when you see a black woman and a white woman, when you see a rich man and a poor man and you cannot distinguish between them, then you will know that day has begun!”

A Focus on France and Belgium

A demonstration on 13 January 2002 of Jewish leadership assembled in the assaulted Créteil synagogue, was marked by the sparseness of non-Jewish sympathizers. Indeed, the town's Deputy Mayor used the occasion to publicly revile the Sharon government and was met by jeers from the audience.

There was talk among the crowd of Dreyfus and Vichy, though they were well aware that the antisemitism of the Church and the neo-Nazis has been eclipsed by the new mutations that gnaw at the fabric of France.

The disease of the body politic has endured, though the symptoms may differ: media Jew-baiting, intellectual Judeophobia, Islamic Jew-hatred. For the victim in the Paris suburbs, the nuances are totally irrelevant.

The Jewish community was beginning to feel that its government lacked political will to take the problem seriously, interpreted by some as due to a heightened perception of the Arab constituency's voting power in forthcoming elections. Banalization of antisemitic incidents compounded the community's sense of isolation.

One of the Créteil worshippers, whose synagogue was twice hit this year, asked, "Why are only synagogues targeted? How come no mosques, nor churches? And still the authorities call it general violence and claim that we are over-sensitive. The policy of silence regarding Islamic Judeophobia must end!"

In a Le Monde article of 16 January, entitled "A New Antisemitism?", University of Paris Professor of French Literature, Eric Marty, suggested that the Jews of Paris are once again "Dhimmi" (the protected second-class citizens under Islam)... "They are tolerated subjects... but mistreated as perpetual hostages to the political necessities of the moment."

Marty continued, "...there has been no voice of political authority ready to say simply that... irregardless of the policy of Israel, there is nothing that can justify a policy of terror against Jews... Individual or group violence against the Jews of France could never have gone so far without the perception that, even if not authorized, there has at least been a certain indulgence or understanding... This violence enjoys a double impunity:

- Practical impunity: there have been few arrests;
- Moral impunity: media banalization and euphemism."

His conclusion: "Every Jewish building in Paris requires protection, every Jewish festival is an occasion for concern and anguish, anyone walking in Paris or its suburbs wearing a "kippa" is imprudent and any child leaving school may be beaten because he is Jewish, only because he is a Jew."

The Jospin Socialist Government missed a golden opportunity. Had it seriously addressed the antisemitism issue, it might have demonstrated an example of strategic planning in regard to the key issue of the Presidential election campaign: insecurity and violence. By failing to do so, Le Pen's National Front stepped into the breach. Many in the Jewish community consider the June Parliamentary elections as a test for their future in France.

**PRINCIPAL ANTISEMITIC ATTACKS in FRANCE and BELGIUM
1 JANUARY -12 MAY 2002**

Latest incident as we go to print:

12 May 2002 Arsonval (Paris suburb)	Jewish teenagers again attacked on a soccer field.
<p>Sunday 12 May 2002, 15:00: five Jewish teenagers were insulted and physically attacked by 15 young Arab men aged 20-25 on the soccer field of Arsonval (Saint Maur des Fossés), a Paris suburb in Val de Marne (94). Antisemitic remarks were reported, such as: “Dirty Jews, go home, this is not your territory.” The assault was carried out with deliberate violence, causing a dislocated jawbone, bruised eyebrows, cuts and other injuries, and included the theft of personal belongings and damage to a car. The aggressors were put off by the intervention of a dog-handler, who testified on the assault at the police court and stated: “The worse was avoided, but I was very scared for them.” The Jewish community denounced this “inadmissible act of antisemitism” and demanded the protection of France’s Jewish citizens and institutions and severe punishment for perpetrators of such crimes.</p>	

From 1 January to 9 May 2002

1 January 2002 Créteil (Paris suburb)	A classroom of the Jewish “Ozar Ha’Torah” school was destroyed by a fire started by a Molotov cocktail.
6 January 2002 Goussainville (Paris suburb)	Rocks and firebombs were thrown at the oratory; no one was injured.
23 January 2002 Sarcelles (Paris suburb)	Rocks were thrown at a bus from the “Sinai” school, shattering windows.
25 January 2002 Aubervilliers (Paris suburb)	The “Chné Or” school bus was attacked.
30 January 2002 Montreuil (Paris suburb)	Students leaving the “ORT Jewish high school” were ambushed and attacked.
5 February 2002 Paris	The statue of Captain Dreyfus was profaned.
7 February 2002 Toulouse	Antisemitic graffiti on a store front.
22 February 2002 Paris	Yellow David stars were thickly painted on the windows of two stores on the Rue de la Croix Nivert in the 15 th Arrondissement.
14 March 2002 Paris	In the 20 th Arrondissement, the “Benjamins of the 11 th ” day-care center was vandalized with antisemitic inscriptions on the walls.
16 March 2002 Pierrefitte (Paris suburb):	A gang of young Arabs insulted, and then physically attacked two young (16-year-old) members of the Jewish community and one's father. No serious injuries, no counterattack. An hour later, youths (the same ones?) threw stones at the synagogue, breaking the windows on the street side.
29 March 2002 Lyon	A fire was set in the 9 th Arrondissement “La Duchère” synagogue.

30 March 2002 Union (near Toulouse):	Drive-by shooting at the show window of a kosher butcher shop by hooded individuals.
31 March 2002 Strasbourg	The doors of the “Cronenbourg” neighborhood synagogue were burnt Saturday near midnight; no victims.
1 April 2002 Marseille	A synagogue in the 11 th Arrondissement was burnt to the ground near midnight. No victims, but some Torah scrolls were destroyed in the fire.
1 April 2002 Anderlecht (Brussels, Belgium)	Midnight attack against the synagogue in rue de la Clinique. Five Molotov cocktails were thrown causing an extensive fire.
1 April 2002 Sarcelles (Paris suburb):	The doors of a Jewish school were broken during the night.
3 April 2002 Marseille	Two men threw two Molotov cocktails at the 14 th Arrondissement synagogue, despite the policemen on guard.
3 April 2002 Saint Denis (Paris suburb):	A Jewish journalist was manhandled at the local University campus.
4 April 2002 Aubervilliers (Paris suburb)	A school bus and a car from the local Jewish school were burnt during the night in a parking lot only 100 yards away from the school, despite the reinforced police surveillance around Jewish sites in the town.
4 April 2002 Montpellier	Several Molotov cocktails were thrown against one of the three local synagogues.
4 April 2002 Anvers (Belgium)	Two Molotov cocktails thrown at a small synagogue in Sint-Vincentiusstraat.
4 April 2002 Kremlin-Bicêtre (Paris suburb)	Several firebombs were thrown against the local synagogue.
4 April 2002 Brussels (Belgium)	Bricks were thrown against the Belgian “IsBel” travel agency, which regularly organizes trips to Israel and supports the local Jewish community.
4 April 2002 Garges-les-Gonesse (Paris suburb)	Several Molotov cocktails were thrown against the local synagogue during the night.
5 April 2002 Toulouse	Several Molotov cocktails were thrown in the night against the local “Maccabi” Jewish athletics association.
6 April 2002 Marseille	Four Molotov cocktails were thrown against the local synagogue.
6 April 2002 La Courneuve (Paris suburb)	Four Molotov cocktails were thrown against the local synagogue during Shabbat services; no casualties.
7 April 2002 Marseille	The cellar of the “Gan Pardess” nursery school in the 13 th Arrondissement was set on fire.
8 April 2002 Strasbourg	A bomb exploded in a Jewish cemetery; no casualties.
9 April 2002 Paris	Three Molotov cocktails were thrown at a local Union of French Jewish Students (UEJF) office inside the Jussieu University, causing a fire in the building.

10 April 2002 Paris	A school bus was stoned in the 20th Arrondissement.
19 April 2002 Paris	A councillor of the 19th Arrondissement, Ms. Jocelyne Malai, was hit in the face on a bus by a woman screaming “dirty Jew!”
19 April 2002 Paris	Antisemitic graffiti were found on the “Wall of Peace” on the Champ de Mars, close to the Eiffel Tower.
21 April 2002 Montpellier	Three Jewish lawyers received antisemitic threats by mail, stating “we will gas you.”
24 April 2002 Yerres (Essonne)	A school bus full of local Jewish students was stoned while taking the children back to their homes in the Saules estate near Orly. Twelve impacts were reported, no injuries.
1 May 2002 Lyon	Release of four suspects of arson against a synagogue.
1 May 2002 Charleroi (Belgium)	Gun shots fired against the local synagogue.
9 May 2002 Ivry (Paris suburb):	Rocks were thrown against a kosher butcher shop.

PRINCIPAL ANTISEMITIC ATTACKS in FRANCE throughout 2001

31 January 2001 Strasbourg	While jogging, a young Jew in a skullcap was slashed in the arm by a gang of knife-wielding Arabs.
25 February 2001 Sarcelles (Paris suburb)	Burning objects were thrown into the “Tiferet Israel” school. The building was totally destroyed.
8 March 2001 Julien La Croix (Paris)	On the eve of Purim, young men broke into the synagogue throwing firebombs.
1 April 2001 Garges les Goneses (Paris northern suburb)	Burning objects thrown into the local synagogue.
5 August 2001 Saint Augustin (Suburb of Nice)	On Shabbat, petrol was poured through a broken window of the synagogue, which is situated in a neighbourhood predominantly populated by Arabs.
1 September 2001 Paris	Orly Airport, swastika on door of El Al Israeli airlines office.
1 September 2001 Meudon (Paris suburb)	Arabs on motorbikes threw rocks at a Rabbi’s son, injuring him lightly.
5 September 2001 Paris	Antisemitic mail sent to “La Victoire” synagogue.
7 September 2001 Paris	Antisemitic mail sent to “La Courneuve” synagogue.
9 September 2001 Paris	Arab youths chase Jews into a restaurant, resulting in a brawl.
10 September 2001 Paris	A gang of Arabs attack worshippers leaving the “Henri Murger” synagogue.
10 September 2001 Drancy (Paris suburb)	Antisemitic threats sent to a local synagogue.

11 September 2001 Paris	A window is smashed at “Beit Eliahou” synagogue.
11 September 2001 Aubervilliers (Paris suburb)	A 13-year-old pupil is beaten up on leaving the “Shneour” school; his eye-glasses are smashed.
12 September 2001 Paris	Antisemitic slogans on the wall of the “Turgot” secondary school.
12 September 2001 Villeneuve la Garenne (Paris suburb)	The synagogue received a bomb threat and the police discovered an explosive gas canister without a detonator in front of the building.
13 September 2001 Villepinte	Antisemitic graffiti on wall of the synagogue.
14 September 2001 Paris	Antisemitic letter sent to the CRIF.
15 September 2001 Clichy (Paris suburb)	8 Arabs throw rocks at a local synagogue.
15 September Massy (Paris suburb)	Synagogue windows smashed by rocks.
15 September 2001 Villepinte (Paris suburb)	A group of 15 Arabs threw stones at synagogue during services.
15 September 2001 Garges les Gonesses (Paris suburb)	Beer cans thrown at the local synagogue and Rabbi threatened.
17 September 2001 Paris	Antisemitic graffiti scrawled on “Ohel Baruch” school.
18 September 2001 Sarcelles (Paris suburb)	Arab throws knife at Jewish passer-by.
18 September 2001 Villepinte (Paris suburb)	Synagogue stoned again in drive-by attack by Arabs screaming, “We will burn you!”
21 September 2001 Villepinte (Paris suburb)	15 Arabs harass and threaten the local Rabbi.
22 September 2001 Paris	Glass bottle thrown at worshippers at the “MJLF” (Reform) synagogue.
22 September 2001 Paris	Knife-wielding Arabs threaten worshippers at the “Henri Murger” synagogue again (see 10 September).
22 September 2001 Sarcelles (Paris suburb)	Stones thrown at women on their way to Torah classes at the synagogue.
22 September 2001 Les Lilas (Paris suburb)	Youth attacked at “Les Epinettes” synagogue.
23 September 2001 Sarcelles (Paris suburb)	Antisemitic graffiti reported to have been scrawled overnight on city buildings.
27 September 2001	Eggs thrown into synagogue.

Issy les Moulineaux (Paris suburb)	
27 September 2001 Vitry (Paris suburb)	During Yom Kippur, a gun was pointed from the window of a flat upon worshippers in the synagogue opposite.
27 September 2001 Paris	Arabs drove past Yom Kippur worshippers at the “Yavneh” school, screaming threats.
3 October 2001 Paris	The Simon Wiesenthal Centre, France-Israel Association and the ACIP received antisemitic mail.
6 October 2001 Paris	“Death to the Jews,” “Vive Bin Laden” scrawled on walls around Place Robert Desnos.
6 October 2001 Stains (northern Paris)	A firebomb was thrown at the synagogue’s outside wall.
13 October 2001 Asnières (Paris suburb)	Arabs attack worshippers entering the synagogue.
17 October 2001 Paris	Swastikas and graffiti desecration of “Trois Luc” Jewish cemetery.
17 October 2001 Marseilles	Arson at Jewish school.
24 October 2001 Paris	CRIF (Representative Council of French Jewry) received an envelope, postmarked Nîmes, which contained white powder and a message: “the biological war against the Jewish lobby has begun,” signed “friends of Bin Laden.” A similar letter was sent on the same date to the BBYO of Paris.
28 October 2001 Marseille	The “Gan Pardes” school in a northern suburb was firebombed, and pro-Bin Laden and antisemitic graffiti were scrawled on the walls.
2 November 2001 Julien La Croix (Paris)	For the second time (see 8 March), the local synagogue was firebombed. Arab youths were seen fleeing the scene, leaving behind unexploded Molotov cocktails.
4 November 2001 Nice	A central city synagogue was firebombed.
9 November 2001 Toulouse	A gang of Moslem youth stood in front of the Jewish school harassing the pupils with antisemitic slurs and threats.
30 November 2001 Rouen	Leaving the synagogue service, the Rabbi, community Vice-President and her husband were attacked by an Arab wielding a truncheon. The husband was hospitalised and was incapacitated for several weeks.
1 December 2001 Nantes	Arabs threaten the Rabbi’s son.
1 December 2001 Nantes	Antisemitic graffiti, “Death to the Jews” at the cathedral.
14 December 2001	French Ambassador to Britain, Daniel Bernard, called Israel “that shitty little State” at a dinner given by the editor of the <i>Sunday Telegraph</i> . The ambassador refused to apologise.
16 December 2001 Paris	A Hanukkah screening of “Harry Potter”, reserved by the Jewish National Fund for Jewish children, was cancelled by the cinema management following Palestinian pressure and threats. The JNF organised a demonstration against this discrimination outside the cinema.

18 December 2001 Marseilles	A knife-wielding Arab threatened Jewish children in a schoolyard.
30 December 2001 Créteil (Paris suburb)	Two youths were arrested while throwing stones at the “Fredj Halimi” synagogue and attempting to break in carrying incendiary devices.
30 December 2001 Créteil (Paris suburb)	The “Otzar Ha Torah” school was firebombed, destroying a classroom and leaving further structural damage.

PRINCIPAL ANTISEMITIC ATTACKS in BELGIUM throughout 2001

1 May 2001 Antwerp	A Jewish child was attacked in the street by a knife-yielding Arab
8 May 2001 Antwerp	A Jewish youth was badly beaten by an Arab screaming antisemitic epithets
9 May 2001 Antwerp	Two 14-year old boys were attacked by an Arab gang on their way to the synagogue. They were hospitalized
9 May 2001 Antwerp	A young Belzer Chassid was attacked by an Arab gang
18 May 2001 Antwerp	A car with Arab passengers tried to run over an elderly Jewish man
Each Shabbat in May Antwerp	The Rabbi and worshippers of the Chabad synagogue received curses and threats from an Arab crowd, screaming “Heil Hitler,” “Dirty Jews” and “Yitbach Al-Yahud” (“Kill the Jews”)
22 June 2001 Brussels	The Rabbi and two worshippers of the Chabad synagogue were stoned by three Arabs in the city’s Duden Park
23 June 2001 Antwerp	Two Arabs cursed and threatened three Jewish teenage girls, hitting one in the face
26 June 2001 Antwerp	Two Arabs, shouting antisemitic epithets, threw stones through the window of a Torah class at the Mordechai Sanz synagogue
27 June 2001 Anderlecht (Brussels suburb)	Five young Jews, leaving their youth club, were attacked by a gang of Arabs
2 September 2001 Brussels Airport	Passengers arriving on a joint El-Al/Sabena flight, were obliged to wait one and a half hours for their baggage. When delivered, the suitcases were covered with swastikas and antisemitic daubings
15 September 2001 Antwerp	An armed hand-grenade was left outside a Jewish youth club
29 September 2001 Anderlecht	Worshippers met verbal and physical assault from Arab gangs while leaving Shabbat services at the synagogue
29 September 2001 Brussels	Chabad synagogue worshippers again (see 22 June) harassed by Arab youths screaming “we will kill you”
2-3 October 2001 Brussels	In three separate incidents, the Rabbi and worshippers of synagogues (Rochefort Square in the Forest neighbourhood, the synagogue in Rue du Roi, etc.) were stoned and threatened by Arab gangs screaming “death to the Jews,” “filthy Jews, we will send you Bin Laden”
3 October 2001 Brussels	A Jew walking in the Duden Park with his ten-year-old son was stoned by Arabs who threatened to kill them

30 November 2001 Antwerp	In two separate incidents, the same Arab gang attacked an American Jewish tourist, kicking him in the face. They also attacked a twelve-year-old Jewish boy
5 December 2001 Anderlecht	Belgian Chief Rabbi Albert Guigui, together with a friend from Montreal, was set upon by an Arab gang on leaving a kosher restaurant. They managed to get to the subway, but the Arabs followed them into their carriage. Though defended by his Canadian friend, the Chief Rabbi received a blow in the face that broke his glasses.

These twenty incidents are only the most visible of a much greater number of reported acts and threats against Jews in Belgium.

BACKGROUND TO THE ATTACKS AGAINST JEWS IN FRANCE **(period 1990-2000)**

1) Numbers of threats against Jews in France 1990 / 2000

The recent report by the National Consultative Commission of Human Rights (NCCHR) submitted to the French Prime Minister in 2000 makes telling reading. It traces the pattern of antisemitic threats against Jews in France over the past decade.

That pattern shows a sharp rise in the number of antisemitic incidents recorded in the wake of the desecration of the Jewish cemetery at Carpentras in May 1990:

- 372 reported acts of antisemitism in **1990**
- 143 in **1991**
- 94 in **1992**
- 156 in **1993**
- 120 in **1994**
- 86 in **1995**
- 90 in **1996**
- 85 in **1997**
- 74 in **1998**
- 60 in **1999**, but then
- 603 in **2000**, an unprecedented level, **85%** of which concentrated in the last quarter of the year.

2) Acts of violence 1991-2000

The NCCHR report also lists antisemitic acts of violence reported over ten years.

- From 1991 (24) onwards, the pattern of the number and gravity of such acts of violence aimed at members of the Jewish community gradually dwindled
- 20 in 1992
- 14 in 1993
- 11 in 1994
- 2 in 1995
- 1 in 1996
- 3 in 1997
- 1 in 1998
- 9 in 1999, until
- 116 in 2000. The last quarter of 2000, the reports notes, shows a veritable eruption in terms of the number of incidents (111), due to events in the Middle East.

3) Overall Antisemitism in 2000

The political commentators Mayer and Michelat writing the report paint a fairly alarming picture of the situation. Clearly there were not necessarily more anti-Semites in French society in 2000 / 2001 than in 1990, but there are fewer unashamed anti-Semites, note the

researchers at the French politics study centre: *"The rise in overt anti-Semitism is to be found in all sectors of the population: men and women, young and old, workers and executives, left and right (p.100)"*.

4) Breakdown of recorded acts of violence in 2000

116 antisemitic acts of violence were recorded:

- 44 attempted arson attacks
- 33 acts of damage by shots, stone-throwing or breaking of windows
- 33 attacks injuring 11 persons
- Synagogues and other places of worship targeted on 43 occasions
- 3 Jewish cemeteries desecrated
- 39 acts of violence targeting Jews leaving places of worship
- Teachers, pupils or coaches transporting pupils attacked on 9 occasions.

5) Sensitive period - October 2000

For 1-25 October, we can point to 50 and 80 acts of aggression in Paris and the Paris area respectively. The first set of indicators shows the breakdown of acts of violence committed over this period:

Type		%
Arson	6	12
Molotov cocktails	18	36
Physical attack	7	14
Objects thrown	12	24
Attempted arson	1	2
Vandalism	6	12
Total	50	

Most common was the throwing of cocktails and other missiles at schools or synagogues. The second set of figures below shows the breakdown by target.

Attacks on buildings

Synagogues, schools	37
Private property	5
Cemetery	1

It is alarming to note that private property, in the form of apartments or business premises was targeted during this period. As for acts of aggression against the person, the attacks spare no one:

Assaults on individuals

Community leaders	5
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Jews at home	11
Jews outside	13
<u>Acts in public</u>	<u>11</u>
<u>Total</u>	<u>40</u>

The geographical distribution of these antisemitic attacks and assaults on Jews is provided in a third set of figures. It shows more precisely that it is notably in East Paris - i.e. the 19th and 20th arrondissements, which have high concentrations of multiethnic populations and the highest numbers of immigrants and Jews - that the most attacks took place. Of the 14 acts perpetrated over this period in just one such arrondissement, 3 involved threats, 3 insults, 3 throwing of objects, 3 Molotov cocktails, 1 physical attack, 1 act of vandalism and 1 arson attack.

6) Attacks on Jews in October 2000 in France / abroad

70 perpetrated in France, 29 in Canada, 22 in the US and 20 in the UK.

7) Profile of the perpetrators

A detailed report on these attacks – an extract of which was published in the weekly *Marianne* (17 – 23 September 2001) – was prepared at the Interior Ministry. It is based on the questioning of 42 suspects interviewed by the police. It specifies their profile: *"Most are individuals largely involved in delinquency and claiming adherence to no particular ideology. They nevertheless seem driven by a fairly general feeling of hostility towards Israel, exacerbated by the exaggerated media coverage of the clashes in the Middle East. This facilitates their identification with a conflict which, from their viewpoint, reflects the patterns of exclusion and failure of which they themselves feel victim in France."*

As the second Intifada is also a war of images and symbols, the force of the images has its effect. It is the images that impress on people's minds and demonise. It is with these images - and the reality they portray, imbued with violence - which the young identify with.

The analysis carried out by sociologist Laacher at a school of advanced social science studies of the profile of the youngsters having carried out such acts deserves to be underlined: it is the force of the images seen on TV that has pushed those most inclined to delinquency. For many observers, the impact of TV pictures is the main explanation for the escalation into violence. For Lallaoui, a community leader, these young people see very violent clashes on TV. They feel a sense of solidarity and, in empathy, attack Jewish symbols for lack of Israeli targets. The impact of the pictures is also the explanation given by Muslim youth leaders like Ali Rahmi, who runs a 'meet and discuss' group at Roubaix. He firmly condemns these *"unpardonable"* acts.

Lallaoui, a film director active in suburban movements for over twenty years, does not split hairs. *"We have been fighting for years against racism (...). We hear unacceptable things said in certain associations. The emotion stirred by certain pictures does not justify any of the violence. We have to say things as they are. Clearly these acts of violence are a tiny minority, but if we activists stay silent, that is a message we send to the most organised"*

groups, who will understand that they can go ahead. I do not want to hear "Death to the Jews" chanted every time there is a demo. And even if things calm down, we are obliged to tackle this issue. We should be careful not to let a trend set in. A certain form of intellectual reasoning consists in not facing matters head on. During the Gulf War, we did not see such excesses. We had succeeded in channelling the anger. We need to do that again now ...".

In a recent interview (December 2001), the French political commentator Mayer argues that there is within a disadvantaged population of Magreb immigrants a feeling of resentment towards society and towards the Jews, who are perceived, rightly or wrongly, as faring better than the Arabs in France. There is on the part of these youngsters a knee-jerk reaction of solidarity prompted by the TV pictures and an identification with what is happening in the Middle East.

8) Numbers questioned and arrested

On 22 October 2000, the Interior Ministry announced that its authorities had questioned 55 suspects since the start of the attacks, 38 who were subject to ongoing legal proceedings.

In all cases, the suspects were youths from the suburbs some of which had already been in trouble with the authorities. Six were to answer for the arson attack on the synagogue at Trappes, Les Yvelines. Twelve were charged with arson attacks on shops belonging to Jewish businesses and four for violence against the person. According to the information at our disposal, it seems that the bulk of those questioned were interviewed in October and to a lesser extent in November 2000. At that time, the pressure was high. The authorities were sensitive to the requests emanating from the various communities. But the pressure seems to have died down subsequently, with the numbers questioned tailing off significantly.

One wonders what impact (if any) this questioning of suspects might have had, since the acts and repression are continuing to this day.

The CNCDH report also states concerning the hundreds of acts of intimidation of an antisemitic nature, of sixty-odd persons questioned by the police, only five were subject to legal proceedings, being far Right. As if the others were not really antisemitic and their exactions not just as serious.

9) Silence in political circles

The silence of the political class in the face of these attacks against Jews has been deafening. During the past year, few politicians have reacted, as they seemed embarrassed or disinclined to do so. It is interesting however to contrast this surely troubling silence with the increasing numbers of public pronouncements that have been made by French politicians following the 11 September terrorist attacks on the United States, warning that the Republic could not accept Muslims being subjected to racism or discrimination and that Islam on the one hand and the Islamic extremism on the other should not be tarred with the same brush.

10) Jewish community figures

During the period October 2000 to December 2001, the Jewish community authorities recorded over 350 antisemitic incidents. The list can be consulted and verified.

11) Interior Ministry figures

For 2001, the Interior Ministry, which suddenly rushed to release figures and comment, announced it had recorded, up to 15 November 2001, in all 26 acts of violence - but only those acts causing the victim to be laid off work for a week were included - and 111 acts of intimidation or threats. Its conclusion was that the levels of violence had been exaggerated and it thus played down the figures provided by Jewish institutions. However,

- The Ministry experts admit that their statistics are far from complete
- Unreported incidents are excluded from their figures, whereas the Jewish institutions record all such acts
- Complaints had to have been registered.

The hurried and sudden reaction of the Ministry was designed to appease and silence the criticism emanating from the French Jewish community. The statistics and position taken by Ministry advisers seek to provide reassurance that the acts of violence are decreasing and that the Ministry is in control of the situation.

Conclusion

The continuing attacks on Jews in France – which have been more numerous than in any other Western country – are being carried out against the background of an alarming indifference, with public opinion and the political class preferring to appear ideologically blind. This indifference, coupled with the threat of anti-Semitism and the verifiably documented acts of violence, are prompting a feeling of utter abandonment within France's Jewish community.

“SOS Truth & Security” in cooperation with the Simon Wiesenthal Centre

39 complaints were received since the project's informal opening in April, without having given any publicity for this service. Below are 24 sample incidents:

- **Nathalie Wahnich, 29, shop assistant, 3 April 2002:** "North Africans in the market asked me if I am a Jew. I said, yes. They responded that the clementine oranges I bought will be bitter in the mouth of any Jew. They called me 'Dirty Jew'. Then they attacked the neighbouring stand of Mr. Kadosh, in view of 3 policemen, who did not intervene."
- **Yves Sellam, 55, technician, 3 April 2002:** "As I left synagogue, 3 young North Africans surrounded me screaming 'Dirty Jew, f--- your mother, we'll burn your synagogues'. I didn't answer; they then threw stones at me as I ran away. I went to the Police Station, where I was told that they do not take complaints of this type. They stressed that the community must group all complaints and go together to the Police Station."
- **Joseph Lewin, 3 April, 2002:** "Entering the Sarcelles synagogue for evening prayers, my children and I were stoned by about 20 young Arabs screaming 'Vive la Palestine', 'Dirty Jews'. That same evening, my car, parked outside by house, was brutally vandalised. Shabbat, 6 April 2002, on the way to the synagogue, we were again stoned and insulted, as also was my neighbour, Mr. Altabe, a few moments later. That night a little after midnight, my house was stoned with screaming threats against Jews, Sunday, 7 April 2002, my wife and I, accompanied by our children, were stoned in our car outside our house."
- **Albert Myara, 50, President of suburban Jewish community, 4 April 2002:** cocktail molotovs thrown at his synagogue.
- **Michael Dadoun, 24, optician, 4 April 2002:** "4 Arabs saw my 'kippa' in the subway and threatened to kill me for what the Jews are doing. I ran and thank G-d, they did not catch me... please do not give my address as it could endanger my parents."
- **Charles Boul, retired salesman, 5 April 2002:** "my son and I were attacked by 4 Arabs who beat us badly screaming 'death to the Jews'."
- **Laura Rochel, 17, high school student, 5 April 2002:** "I was waiting for the bus to go to school when 3 young Arab men asked me if I am a Jew. I tried to joke, but they said it showed that I am Jewish and screamed 'dirty Jew', 'dirty race'. I jumped on the bus and they left in their car."
- **Maryvonne Scemama, 65, retired, 5 April 2002:** "In my usual train carriage, cut into the seat was written 'Pleasure – forbidden to Jews' ~~✠~~ "
- **Fabienne Dahan, 45, housewife 6 April 2002:** "My son, Noam, is a member of a municipal sports club. On arrival at the swimming pool, he was refused entry and told by the official that no Jew could enter or practise sport. This was followed by death threats. The child is in shock."

- **Consistoire (Jewish Religious Board of Paris), 7-8 April, 2002:** Antisemitic threats scrawled on the walls.
- **Frédéric Berngron, 44, 9 April, 2002:** "With my two children, 10 and 8, I was thrown out of the municipal gymnasium and told that it was not for 'Dirty Jews' as this was Arab land. My children were traumatised. Two days later, outside my apartment block, my 8-year old son was stoned for wearing a 'kippa' by 3 whites and one North African, who screamed 'we do not leave wounded'. On 28 April at the supermarket, 2 whites and 3 North Africans stoned me, knocked off my 'kippa' and said they would stab me to death."
- **Josiane Friedman, 74, 10 April, 2002:** I took my husband home by taxi from the hospital where he was operated. He got off and I paid the woman driver asking for a receipt (for reimbursement by the Social security). The driver called me 'Dirty Jew' and drove off fast with me in the car, leaving my husband in the street. Screaming in Arabic, she said in French 'I am taking you to my son who will kill you'. At a traffic light, I called police and opened the door. A young man jumped in, held back the car and took me out. He took the license number and accompanied me to the police. All my family perished in Auschwitz, I survived."
- **Yair Derhy, 12, schoolboy, 10 April, 2002:** "On the train to school, I was attacked by a gang of Arabs between 12 and 20 years old, screaming 'dirty Jew' and other curses. It is not acceptable that 12-year olds be beaten up in this way going to or coming from school and I count on your organisation to react urgently...it is useless to go to the Police Station, as they do nothing."
- **Martine Cohen-Solal, 56, Civil and Military Aeronautics, European Sales Manager, 11 April 2002:** "Physical attack with antisemitic insults by two French women, a mother and a daughter, living in my building. Claiming that I did not say 'thank-you' when they held the door open for me – a lie used as an excuse to please a group of watching North Africans – they set on me injuring my arms and legs, bruising my face and head. I cannot move my right side."
- **Alliance Jewish High School, 15 April, 2002:** "two of the schools officials ere attacked by Arabs, while shopping for the school in a nearby supermarket. One tried to calm them in Arabic. This infuriated them further and they screamed 'Vive Hitler....Death to the Jews...To the (gas) showers'."
- **Francine Benayoun, 55, housewife, 15 April, 2002:** Provided photo of threats scrawled on her door. "Islam will destroy you... f--- the Jews."
- **Charles Hazan, 81:** retired accountant, "my fourth floor neighbours daily call me 'filthy Jew' and other insults and block me from using the elevator to my fifth floor apartment, forcing me to use the steps, so I must pass by them. They continue this behaviour, despite my complaints to the police."