



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY MANITOBA

### 2008 Audit of Antisemitic Incidents

The League for Human Rights of B'nai Brith Canada has monitored and reported on hate-motivated incidents directed at the Jewish community in Canada for twenty-seven years. This annual Audit of Antisemitic Incidents provides an examination of racism and bigotry in this country, as expressed in attacks of harassment, vandalism or violence against individual Jews or the community's institutions. It is cited by Statistics Canada, government and research agencies, and authoritative sources around the world and is the single most credible study of the phenomenon of antisemitism and patterns of occurrence and prejudice in Canada.

## THE NATIONAL SCENE

- According to the 2006 Census released by Statistics Canada, the Jewish community makes up barely 1% of the total population, both of Canada and of Manitoba.
- 1,135 Antisemitic incidents were reported in 2008, the highest figure ever recorded in the history of the Audit and an increase of 8.9% from 2007. The 1,042 figure for 2007 broke through a ceiling of 1000 that would have seemed unthinkable just a few short years ago.
- A five-year view shows that the number of Antisemitic incidents has almost doubled since 2003 when 584 incidents were reported.
- A 10-year view shows that incidents have jumped more than four-fold since 1999 when there were 267 cases. When the League released its first Audit 27 years ago, the number of reported incidents was only 63.
- The majority of incidents across Canada consistently occur in Ontario. In 2008, 682 incidents (60.1% of the total) took place in Ontario. Of these, 538 incidents took place in the Greater Toronto Area and 62 in Ottawa. In Regional Ontario outside these cities, there were 82 incidents reported.
- Incidents in Quebec decreased by 15.8% to 245 compared to 291 in 2007, representing 21.6% of Canadian incidents. Of these, 201 incidents took place in Montreal. Particularly dramatic is the four fold increase in areas outside Montreal, from 11 incidents in 2007 to 44 in 2008. As noted in Ontario, incidents are increasingly taking place in rural settings.
- Incidents were up by 31.1% in British Columbia (80 cases from 61 in 2007), in Alberta up by 78.6% (50 from 28 in 2007), and by 56.3% in Saskatchewan (25 from 16 in 2007). Incidents dropped by 17.1% in Manitoba (to 34 cases from 41 in 2007), and 17.4% in the Atlantic Region (19 from 23 in 2007). There were no incidents reported in 2008 in the Northern Region.

The 1,135 incidents across Canada break down as follows:

803 cases of harassment (70.7 %),  
318 of vandalism (28%) and  
14 incidents of violence (1.2%).

As in previous years, harassment continues to comprise the majority of cases.

In 2008 there were 50 incidents against synagogues, 17 against community centres. Incidents in the workplace accounted for 40 cases. 105 incidents targeted Jews in their own homes, 57 cases took place in educational settings, - in nine of those cases Jewish day schools or their students were targeted; and there were 76 incidents on university campuses, more than double the 2006 figure of 36, maintaining the levels of tension set in 2007 when 78 incidents were reported at Canadian universities.

There were 42 cases of Holocaust denial reported in 2008, down from 55 reported incidents in 2007 but significantly up from 17 cases in ten years earlier in 1999. This indicates a continuing presence of this pernicious propaganda in Canada notwithstanding strong official condemnation.

Reflecting the expanding use of new technologies that advance the dissemination of hate, there were 405 reports of web-based hate activity, a 30.6% increase from the 310 cases in 2007, more than a ten-fold increase from the 32 cases in 2003.

The ethnic origin of the perpetrators of reported incidents was documented only where relevant information was available. This was the case in face-to-face encounters where there was self-identification by a particularly strident perpetrator. Given that those carrying out hate-motivated activities prefer a cloak of anonymity, identifying the perpetrator can only be attempted where the facts are clear. In 2008 there were 31 cases where the perpetrator self-identified as of Arab origin, up from the 24 such cases in 2007. Other perpetrators who self-identified in 2008's total incidents were: Aboriginal (7 incidents), Chinese (2), German (3), Greek (2), Hungarian (3), Iranian (1), Polish (2), and Russian (5).

Bearing in mind the many emerging variants of antisemitism, we note its continued burgeoning into new venues, including union settings, service industries, retail outlets and other usually benign places where one would not normally expect antisemitism to manifest.

In the absence of the type of significant Middle East triggers that have traditionally set off spikes in antisemitic incidents in Canada, 547 incidents, almost half the total incidents for the year in all of Canada, occurred in the last four months of 2008. Linkage is indicated to fallout from the developing economic recession, and the Madoff fiasco/ scandal. Historically antisemitism has increased in this type of climate, as disgruntled citizens seek a scapegoat to blame for personal, corporate and/ or national difficulties and troubles, the web has indeed been vigorously active with conspiracy theories and accusations linking Jews to the global financial crisis, with Canadian opportunists being just as active as bigots elsewhere.

Although the war in Gaza did not begin until the final days of 2008, tensions in the Middle East were present in explicit form in 211 incidents for the year compared to 90 in 2007. Given the nuances of anti- Jewish sentiment in much of the rhetoric against the Jewish State, it's likely that anti- Israel agitators using innuendos, distortions and falsifications may have prompted other 2008 incidents that did not have a clearly apparent connection to the Middle East. In this context, in order to understand what is included and what is not represented in the *Audit's* findings, only incidents that are consistent with the definitions of antisemitism used by the League are included. Anti- Israel incidents, therefore, are not included unless they are clearly anti- Jewish.

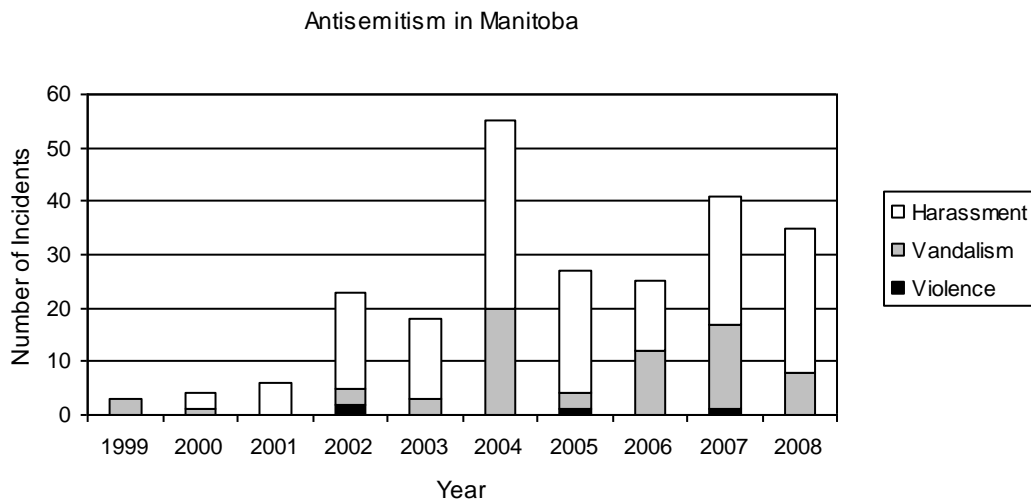
At a time when there is growing assault on the protections enshrined in human rights legislation in this country, and a growing public acceptance of a certain level of hate activity as 'tolerable to society, the *Audit* reminds us of the ugliness of racism and highlights its distressing impact on ordinary people.

## MANITOBA

- There were 34 cases in 2008, compared to 41 in 2007, an overall decrease of 17.1%. All incidents reported to the League in 2008 took place in Winnipeg.
- Incidents of harassment rose by 8.3%, to 26 from 24 in 2007. Winnipeg's Mayor was the target of 3 of those incidents of harassment.
- On 6 occasions individuals were targeted by email and there were 2 incidents of hate messaging transmitted via texting. There were 2 incidents of discrimination/antisemitism in the workplace, and 4 incidents of antisemitism were reported at Winnipeg schools.
- Incidents of vandalism dropped by 1/2 with 8 cases reported in 2008 compared to 16 in 2007. It must be noted that the 2008 number indicates that incidents of vandalism are occurring in areas throughout Winnipeg, and not limited to Jewish institutions or Jewish neighborhoods. A 16 year old youth was charged with inciting hatred in St. Boniface.
- There were no cases of violence reported in 2008 whereas there was one case, of violence reported in Winnipeg in 2007. There were, however, 4 incidents of threats of violence against an individual, two families and a call to violent action against the Jewish community.

## EXAMPLES OF INCIDENTS IN MANITOBA

- One of the 'Bears on Broadway', currently located on Provincial Government property downtown, was defaced with antisemitic symbols.
- A Jewish mother and her two visibly Jewish young sons were harassed on a Winnipeg transit bus.
- A couple were subjected to ongoing harassment and threats of violence by a neighbor.
- An individual showed up at a budget protest at City Hall with a sign depicting Winnipeg's Jewish mayor as a fascist dictator with Hitler characteristics.
- Graffiti including swastikas, binladin (sic) and white power on public and private property in St. Boniface.
- A seven year old girl was sent to school with swastikas drawn on her body.
- Antisemitic slurs directed to a teenaged Jewish hockey player during a game.
- A billboard promoting the Museum for Human Rights at The Forks was defaced with swastikas and hate messaging, including 'kill all Jews.'



Despite such a small demographic profile, the *Audit* findings once again reflect those of police reports, illustrating a disproportionate targeting of the Jewish community compared to other ethnic and religious groups, a pattern that has been steadily intensifying in the past decade.

In November 2007 the Winnipeg Police Service implemented a tracking system for hate crimes based on Statistics Canada requirements. Therefore, as of 2008, information collection on hate crimes will also be readily accessed from the Records Compilation Unit or the Crime Analysis Unit.

The Hate Crimes Unit of the Winnipeg Police Service responded to 63 complaints of hate-motivated activity in Winnipeg during 2008. Of those tracked, approximately 20% were antisemitic- more than any other targetted group.

## **RESPONSE**

In response to this evidence of an increase in hate-motivated activity in Canada, the League has written a Victim's Bill of Rights and urges government, law enforcement and the community at large to work towards its full implementation across Canadian society.

**VICTIM'S BILL OF RIGHTS**  
**FOR THOSE WHO HAVE SUFFERED ANTISEMITISM AND OTHER HATE**  
**ACTIVITY**

*When one person is singled out for hate, the entire community this person represents is also targeted. For every one of the 1042 antisemitic incidents documented this year in Canada, a mother, father, child, grandparent, sister, brother, spouse, friend, neighbour, or colleague was impacted as well. Victims of hate-motivated acts are entitled to be treated with compassion and dignity so that their suffering will not be compounded when they speak out. They are entitled to the following protections in their pursuit for justice:*

Prompt, dedicated service from local police and other law enforcement agencies, that have specialized training and expertise in the area of hate crimes;

Hate crime legislation designed specifically with the victim in mind, recognizing that modern-day manifestations of hate take on many forms;

A *Criminal Code* that counters the activities of those who deny the murder of six million Jews in the Holocaust and denigrate its victims, with measures to combat the neo-Nazi and white supremacist propaganda that targets many different minority communities;

A speedy and efficient trial that brings the perpetrators to justice, and offers closure to the victims, ensuring their voices are heard;

An expectation that perpetrators will be punished through consistent sentencing guidelines that reflect the impact of hate-filled crimes, and will serve as a meaningful deterrent;

Harassment-free, zero-tolerance environments for hate-based activity, whether at school or in the workplace, where individuals can practice their sincerely-held religious beliefs, without fear of compromising their academic or professional standing;

A concerted, dedicated effort by community, legal, law enforcement, educational, and corporate sectors to jointly advance programs aimed at countering the explosion of hate-motivated activity, including hate on the Internet;

A government that fully implements international agreements against hatred and demands the same from its global partners;

A demonstrated resolve by all levels of government to implement policies that advance multiculturalism in a way that actively promotes core Canadian ideals of tolerance and respect.

**WE CALL ON ALL CANADIANS TO SHOW THEIR EMPATHY FOR VICTIMS OF HATE BY SIGNING THIS BILL OF RIGHTS AND WORKING TOWARDS ITS FULL IMPLEMENTATION ACROSS CANADIAN SOCIETY**

The full text of the *Audit* can be accessed at: [www.bnaibrith.ca](http://www.bnaibrith.ca)



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