



ADL AUDIT OF ANTI-SEMITIC INCIDENTS

Methodology

Overt and obvious expressions of anti-Jewish animosity are easiest to categorize as anti-Semitic incidents, and the vast majority of incidents in the ADL Audit of Anti-Semitic Incidents do reveal such overt expressions of anti-Semitism. Swastikas spray-painted on synagogues or on tombstones in Jewish cemeteries, and epithets like "dirty Jew" directed against people wearing identifiable Jewish clothing (such as kippot), are all clear evidence of anti-Semitism.

More difficult to classify are situations in which, for example, a Jewish institution is vandalized without any specific anti-Semitic graffiti. For the purposes of this report, any deliberate and gratuitous destruction of a Jewish institution (such as broken windows or display cases), are included in the Audit. Therefore, a stone thrown at a synagogue window, even without any markings of definitive anti-Semitic intent, is considered anti-Jewish hostility.

Continuing an adjustment made in 2009, the Audit does not include in its totals swastikas that do not target Jews, such as those that explicitly target other minorities or those that are used out of context simply for shock value. Despite its strong association with Nazi Germany, the swastika is no longer exclusively used to express hate against Jews, but rather has become a universal symbol of hate.

While anti-Semitism that occurs online is a matter of great concern to ADL, the Audit has never included, and does not now include, general expressions of hate that occur regularly on thousands of websites, comments sections and other online forums. Such instances, while very troubling, are virtually impossible to quantify. ADL does, however, receive and address reports from community members who have seen anti-Semitic content online. In addition, when an individual is targeted personally in an online environment and feels threatened, such an incident would be included in the Audit.

ADL generally counts as anti-Semitic harassment the distribution of neo-Nazi and anti-Semitic materials to individual Jews, or the placing of such items on their property. This also holds true if the material is sent to a Jewish institution or posted in a public area.

While the Audit does not generally include criticisms of Israel or Zionism, it does include them if they cross the line from political expression to anti-Semitism by invoking classic anti-Jewish stereotypes or inappropriate Nazi imagery or analogies. Public expressions of anti-Israel sentiment that are so extreme as to demonize Jews or create an atmosphere of fear or intimidation for U.S. Jews are counted.

A series of apparently related incidents, such as similar anti-Semitic graffiti painted on several neighboring Jewish properties in one night, or a mass mailing of anti-Semitic material to many recipients in a particular neighborhood, counts as one incident, even though many people may be affected.

ADL also receives complaints of anti-Semitism directed at non-Jews. Such anti-Semitic slurs, threats or vandalism "mistakenly" carried out against targets perceived to be Jewish, or purposefully directed against non-Jews believed to be sympathetic to Jewish causes, are signs of anti-Semitic behavior and are included in the Audit.

Incidents that are reported anonymously represent an obstacle to maintaining the Audit's integrity. ADL has intensified its efforts to corroborate reports of anti-Semitic activity to assure accuracy, and to respond effectively to such acts. While it is relatively easy to authenticate acts of vandalism against Jewish institutions or in public areas, verifying incidents of verbal harassment and slurs is more challenging.

ADL does not include in the Audit cases of alleged employment discrimination in hiring, firing or promotion, unless the situation includes evidence of overt anti-Semitism. A claim of discrimination in and of itself, based on inferences of anti-Semitism because of alleged unequal treatment in work assignments or denial of time off for holiday observance, is not considered an incident for the purposes of the Audit.

The Audit encompasses criminal acts such as vandalism, violence, and threats of violence, as well as non-criminal incidences of written and verbal harassment and intimidation that occur in the U.S. While such anti-Semitic incidents are certainly not limited to the U.S.—and are at times reported to ADL from Americans living abroad—such incidents are not counted for the purposes of ADL's Audit, which is meant as a barometer of domestic anti-Semitic activity.