

Antisemitism Worldwide 2004

DENMARK

The Danish Jewish community recorded 37 antisemitic incidents in 2004, including five acts of physical aggression. The Danish chapter of the fundamentalist Hizb ut-Tahrir reprinted a call on its homepage for the murder of Jews “wherever you find them.” The annual Reichskristallnacht commemoration marches in several Danish locations were turned by left-wing organizations into anti-Israel demonstrations.

THE JEWISH COMMUNITY

Denmark was the first Scandinavian country to permit Jews to settle when they arrived there in the 17th century. Jews have enjoyed civic equality since 1814 and citizenship since 1849. Today there are 7,000 Jews in Denmark, out of a total population of 5.25 million. Most of the community is concentrated in Copenhagen, but smaller communities exist in Odense and Aarhus. The central communal organization is the Mosaiske Troessamfund. The community operates only one synagogue, the Great Synagogue completed in 1833, as well as the Caroline Jewish Day School (established in 1805). *Joedisk Orientering* is the leading Jewish publication.

POLITICAL ORGANIZATIONS AND GROUPS

Islamic Extremists

The Danish chapter of the transnational fundamentalist **Hizb ut-Tahrir** made headlines on several occasions in 2004. In May the group advocated killing Muslims who turned away from their faith. In November it encouraged young Muslims to join jihad in Iraq. In December a call for the murder of Jews “wherever you find them,” reappeared on their home page. It should be noted that in 2002 the leader of Hizb ut-Tahrir in Denmark received a suspended sentence for disseminating this slogan (see [ASW 2003/4](#)).

A mosque near the provincial town of Aarhus has been under police observation for several years. According to a leading Danish newspaper *Politiken* (27 Feb.), an Algerian held at Guantanamo has close connections to the mosque as well as

to Algerians living in Denmark. Several Algerians have been convicted in Denmark and France of robbing banks in order to procure \$5 million for the outlawed FIS (Islamic Salvation Front) in Algeria.

The mainstream newspaper *Berlingske Tidende* (28 March) reported that the leader of the Spanish al-Qa'ida cell Imad Eddoim Barakat Yarkas has close links to Abu Rashid, a man of Arab origin living in Denmark. Abu Rashid and an associate, also of Arab origin and living in Denmark, are reported to have received \$100,000 to be used to produce false passports and to facilitate the recruitment of jihad warriors. The Spanish authorities have determined that Yarkas visited Denmark in an attempt to build an Islamic network

The mainstream newspaper *Jyllands-Posten* (29 Nov.) reported that the house of Said Mansour, a Danish citizen of Moroccan origin, was again raided by the police, who searched for video tapes used in the recruitment of jihad warriors. Said Mansour, who does not hide his extremist views, has been under observation since the early 1990s, after Omar Abdel Rahman, the blind cleric who was allegedly behind the 1993 World Trade Center bombing, visited him at his home. In 2003 Mansour was convicted of possession of an illegal weapon.

According to the annual report published by the Police Intelligence Division (PET) on 18 December, sleeper cells of Islamic terrorists in Denmark are awaiting orders to perform small terrorist acts locally or to assist foreign terrorists in larger attacks. Moroccan and Algerian cells in particular are under observation. The report also warns of a likely increase in the terrorist threat locally since Denmark joined the war in Iraq.

Danish-Muslim reaction to the murder of Dutch filmmaker Theo Van Gogh sent shock waves throughout Danish society. A group of young Muslim women, among them the daughter of fundamentalist Imam Abu Laban (see [ASW 2002/3](#)), was shown on television laughing. The women stated that Van Gogh had gotten what he deserved since he ought to have known what sort of response his provocation would receive. Other spokesmen for Danish Muslims agreed and a debate ensued on whether freedom of speech should be limited by law so that statements offensive to Muslims would become illegal.

Right-Wing Groups

The annual government grant of \$13,500 to the local neo-Nazi radio station Radio Oasis was cancelled, following a change in regulations for local radio stations. Neo-Nazis organized in the **Danish National Socialist Movement** (DNSB), under leader Jonni Hansen, expressed the hope of receiving alternate funding. DNSB also took advantage during the year of increasing anti-Muslim sentiment among the population to try to influence school children and recruit new members.

The right-wing anti-Muslim **Danish Peoples' Party** began to collect signatures in February for a petition opposing ritual animal slaughter. The document will be handed to the minister of justice prior to the submission of a bill in Parliament that would make ritual slaughter unlawful.

In January an organization was formed to oppose the circumcision of boys, a practice which it deems does not belong in modern society. The object is to forbid circumcision by law.

Left-Wing

The Danish left wing group **Revolt** (Oproer) held an event in August to raise money for the PFLP (Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine) and the Marxist FARC (Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia). Raising money for terrorist organizations is unlawful in Denmark but Revolt claimed that their action was a protest against the so-called anti-democratic nature of the anti-terrorism law. Members of the group include Member of Parliament for the left wing Unity Party, Pernille Frahm, as well as a former member of the Danish terrorist group Bleking Street Gang, Torkil Lauesen. Revolt claims to have 100 members. The Colombian foreign ministry asked the Danish government to explain why a Danish organization was raising money to support FARC.

ANTISEMITIC ACTIVITY

Violence, Vandalism, Threats and Harassment

The Jewish community recorded 37 incidents in 2004: 5 involved physical aggression, 7 vandalism of property and 5 were threats. For example, lighted firecrackers were pushed through the letter slot of the door to the apartment of a Jewish man in the provincial town of Tingbjerg in February. Earlier, a Star of David had been drawn next to his name by the intercom at the entrance to the building. In April, an 80-year-

old Jewish woman was hit on the back with a pair of shoes in a department store in Copenhagen by a 60 year old man identified as being of Arab origin. In October, a Jewish teaching assistant at the Theological Faculty of Copenhagen University was beaten and kicked in broad daylight by unknown Muslim assailants in the middle of Copenhagen. The reason given for the assault was that he had read from the Qur‘an as part of his teaching duties. He was informed by the assailants that non-Muslims are forbidden to read aloud from the Qur‘an.

In November, an official of the Jewish community, who is known in his neighborhood to be Jewish, avoided a kick from a Somali man as he passed by. The official’s wife had twice received threats over the telephone. His car was also vandalized on several occasions.

The car of a former president of the Jewish community was also vandalized twice in 2004. It should be noted that he had taken part in the ongoing debate on ritual animal slaughter in Denmark which might be the background for the vandalism.

Other threatening incidents included a telephone call in February to a synagogue guard who was informed he would be “cut up from stomach to throat,” and an e-mail message to the Danish Zionist Federation office in May which stated: “You have no right to security and peace because we will kill every one of you.” Seven e-mails sent during September–October to the youth coordinator of the Jewish community from Palestinians living in Denmark warned Jews in Denmark to cease all their activities “within 72 hours or else to expect warm days [*sic*] the likes of which you have never seen.”

Antisemitic/Anti-Israel Propaganda

The chairman of the Danish Social Democrats in the European Parliament, Torben Lund, wrote an article in *Politiken* (3 May), which included antisemitic statements. Proposing a complete economic boycott of Israel, he stressed the responsibility of the Jews for the policies of the Israeli government and argued that if criticism of murder was antisemitism, “then call me an antisemite.” Chief Rabbi Emeritus Bent Melchior responded with an article in *Politiken* (8 May), entitled “Congratulations Lund, You Are an Antisemite.”

According to *Jyllands-Posten* (16 Aug.), a moderator on the local Copenhagen radio station Karen broadcast antisemitic statements. He referred to Jews as

“monkeys” and accused them of “building a wall around themselves just as they did in Warsaw.”

The annual *Reichskristallnacht* (9 Nov.) commemoration march in Copenhagen, in Svendborg and on the island of Fynen was hijacked by left-wing groups and political parties (Socialist Youth Front, Radical Left, Unity List and Socialist People’s Party) and turned into anti-Israel demonstrations. Instead of speaking of the Nazi oppression of Jews, speakers compared Israeli treatment of the Palestinians with that of the Nazis toward the Jews.

RESPONSES TO ANTISEMITISM

Inspired by a report published in October 2003 by Lund University, Sweden, which found widespread antisemitism among Muslim students in Sweden, the Danish Holocaust Center suggested, in February, that a similar survey be conducted for Denmark.

The Danish historian Sofie Lene Bak published a book at the beginning of November entitled *Danish Antisemitism 1930–1945*.

A Jewish musician, Henrik Goldsmith, attempted to organize a musical peace project including both Jewish and Muslim musicians. However, he had to import Muslim musicians from the United States since neither Danish nor Swedish Muslims would cooperate with him.