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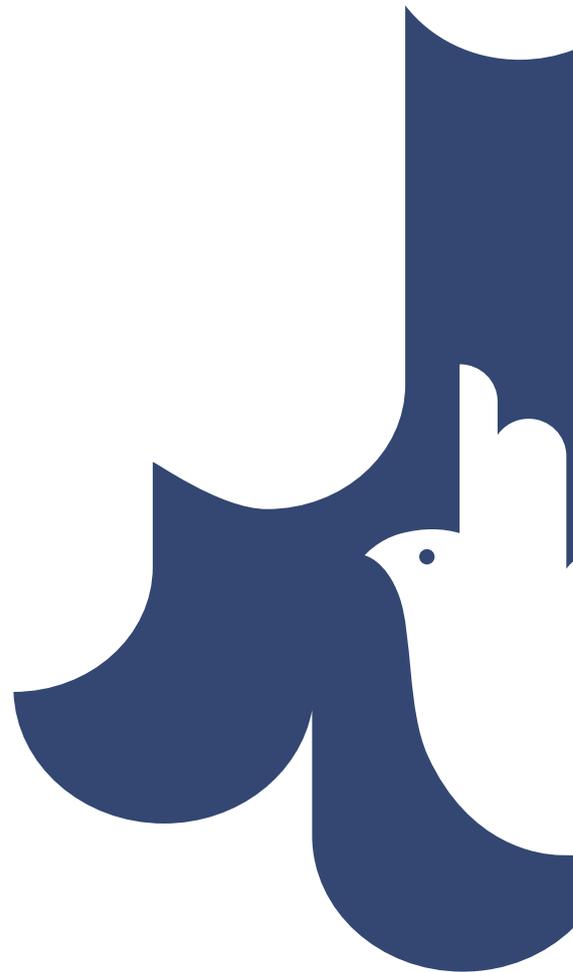


SOVA CENTER FOR
INFORMATION
AND ANALYSIS

INCIDENTS OF ANTI-SEMITISM IN RUSSIA

FROM APRIL THROUGH JUNE

2019



MOST EXTREME MANIFESTATIONS OF ANTISEMITISM

We know of one assault with an anti-Semitic motive: in May, the Petersburg musician Aleksandr Zaslavsky was beaten up by a taxi driver that was driving him. First, he stated that he was not happy that the musician was in his car with a bottle of beer, and when the musician got rid of the bottle, the driver started yelling anti-Semitic insults, locked the taxi doors and beat him up.

We are aware of two acts of vandalism with anti-Semitic motives. Vandals set fire to one of the buildings of the Yeshiva Torat Haim – a kosher meat warehouse - in the Ramensky District of the Moscow Oblast in April, on the eve of Passover. They also painted a swastika and the numbers 88 and 130 (presumably a reference to the 130th anniversary of Hitler's birth) on the wall. And on at least two occasions in June, a woman spray-painted a red star of David and the word MOSSAD on the side streets around the Moscow Choral Synagogue.

PUBLIC ANTI-SEMITIC COMMENTS

Anti-Semitic comments are not frequently heard in the mass media, but they happen just as they have in the past, including on programming from federal networks. In April, Vladimir Solovyov ejected the Polish expert Jakub Korejba from the set of his show "Evening with Vladimir Solovyov" for anti-Semitism when he suggested that some people in Poland pretend to be descendants of Jews that suffered in the war so that they can receive compensation. Solovyov also mentioned his own Jewish descent again.

In the same month, an anti-Semitic comment was made on another programme that Solovyov was part of: "Who's Against It?". On the programme, Vesti FM moderator Anna Shafran observed that she thought it was a "strange phenomenon" for a Jew to swear on the Gospels, and mentioned that the Ukrainian president and prime minister were both Jews. She made a similar comment on Twitter the day before.

In May, Sergey Glazyev, President Putin's advisor on regional economic integration issues, made an anti-Semitic comment in the newspaper *Zavtra*, where anti-Semitic items are hardly a rarity. In an article on Ukraine entitled "Occupation", he suggested that the victory of Volodymyr Zelensky in the presidential elections was "related to the general shift of the Trump administration to the side of the far right in Israel", and the administration plans to populate the Eastern Ukrainian territories, "cleansed of its Russian population", with settlers from "the Promised Land".

¹ S. Glazyev, "Occupation" // *Zavtra*. 6 May. 2019. [http://zavtra.ru/blogs/glaz_ev_raskol/]

In situations such as this, when anti-Semitic comments have been made in the official media, the persons making them normally extended an apology, or demonstrated their acknowledgement that such comments are unacceptable. For example, the actor Ivan Okhlobystin published an anti-Semitic post on his VKontakte page in April. This was following the release of the video clip supporting the then-presidential candidate for Ukraine Volodymyr Zelensky that Okhlobytsin made together with Mikhail Porechenkov. Zelensky didn't care for the support, calling both actors idiots. Then Okhlobystin wrote that Zelensky is in danger because he is a Jew, and *"he has to do what they say, or else they'll kill him": "How the hell did a Jew crawl into our shouting match? Of course, we've got plenty of Jews here, but they're our Jews... If I were a member of the secret Zionist league, I'd put all my efforts into ridding ourselves of a brother like that"*. There was a negative reaction to the post, including from figures in the entertainment business, and Okhlobystin quickly deleted the post.

Also in April, in the course of her duties as mayor of Lipetsk, at a public hearing on the construction of nurseries Evgeniya Uvarkina asked a participant to give his last name. On hearing the response, she was surprised: *"I thought it would be a Jewish name"*, because in her opinion the man was asking too many questions. Uvarkina later apologized for her comment, acknowledging that the comment was *"totally inappropriate"* and may have hurt some people's feelings.

We also note that the lawsuit regarding Maksim Shevchenko's as much as calling Russian Jewish Congress president Yuri Kanner a fascist in one of his publications from 2016 concluded with Shevchenko publicly apologizing. The president of the RJC accepted his apology, withdrew the suit and deleted his post about the insulting comments of Shevchenko because, as he put it, his purpose was *"to attract attention to this unconscionable event, to show that in today's Russia public expressions of impatience mixed up in national and regional factors are unacceptable and - what is particularly important - subject to judgment. That's what needed to be proved"*².



² How to put a stop to it // Blog of Yuri Kanner in Echo of Moscow (Russian radio station). 6 May. 2019. [https://echo.msk.ru/blog/y_kanner/2410183-echo/]

LAW ENFORCEMENT

We know of three rulings on anti-Semitic propaganda in criminal cases. A resident of Kurgan Oblast received the stiffest sentence: in June, he was sentenced to 2.5 years in a prison camp for putting slogans on two walls calling for violence against Jews, under part 1 of article 280 of the Criminal Code (Public Incitement to Extremism).

Two men received suspended sentences under part 1, article 280 of the Criminal Code (Public Incitement to Extremism on the Internet): a resident of Syktyvkar for incitement to anti-Semitic violence in April was sentenced to 1.5 years' imprisonment with an equal probation period, and a resident of Smolensk in May for publications inciting violence against Belarusians, Jews and Ukrainians to one year and eight months' imprisonment and three years' probation.

In Perm, journalist Roman Yushkov and homeowners' association manager Dmitry Razzhivin were fined under art. 203.1 of the RF Administrative Code (Incitement of Hatred or Enmity and Abasement of Human Dignity) for 20,000 and 10,000 rubles respectively. They hung notices at the entrance to an apartment building on the day before a public hearing on the construction of a Jewish cultural centre and synagogue by the Chabad-Lubavitch organization, which the judge ruled were anti-Semitic. The district court upheld the decision against Yushkov in June. It is not currently known whether an appeal is being considered for Razzhivin.

At a minimum, one case of anti-Semitic propaganda was dismissed in relation to the partial decriminalization of art. 282 of the Criminal Code (Incitement to National Hatred): the case of Anton Angel, a resident of Zarinsk in the Altaysky District, accused under this article of publication of anti-Semitic images.

As previously, we note that we do not know the exact number of rulings regarding xenophobic statements, and information regarding specifically for what activities a sentence was rendered are often not published. It cannot be ruled out that more individuals were cited for anti-Semitism.

