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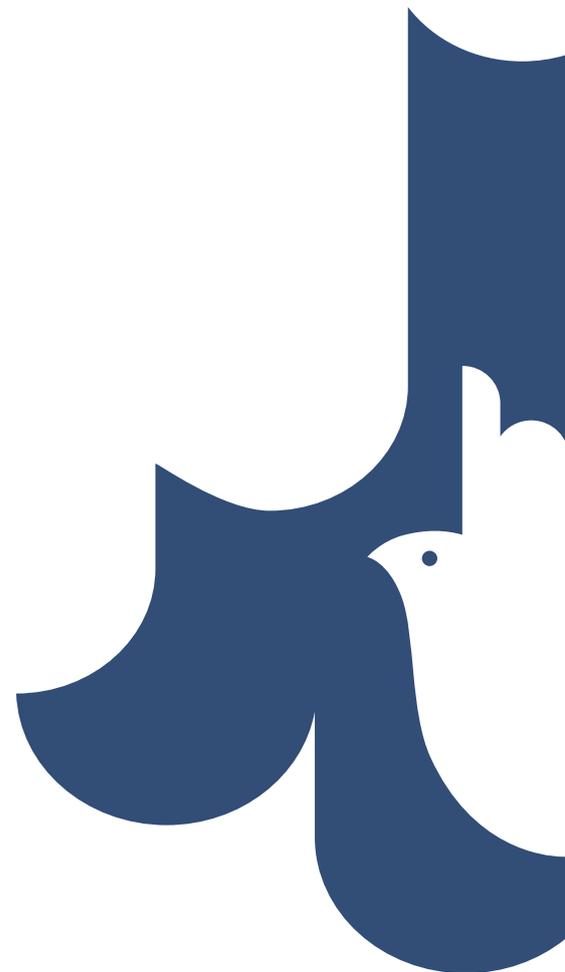
CENTER FOR
INFORMATION
AND ANALYSIS

INCIDENTS

OF ANTISEMITISM IN RUSSIA

I QUARTER (JANUARY — MARCH)

2020



THE MOST EXTREME MANIFESTATIONS OF ANTISEMITISM

We are unaware of any acts of violence committed for reasons of antisemitism during the time period in question. However, we can't exclude the possibilities that the attack on rabbi Izgyaga Pashaev — chairman of the Buynaksk Jewish community — had antisemitic motives. On March 18, the rabbi was brutally assaulted by the local citizen Arthur Abdulayev. The rabbi passed away at the hospital several days later. The reason for the assault was a conflict caused by the fact that the rabbi sheltered Abdulayev's relative who had nowhere to live. It's possible that this was an "honor" murder, though police is not considering religious reasons at this time. The attacker is charged under part 4, article 11 of the Russian Criminal Code—intentional infliction of grave harm to health leading to the death of the attacked. Abdulayev already had a record for committing a violent crime.

PUBLIC ANTISEMITIC COMMENTS

At the beginning of the year, there was the typical New Year's informational lull, and then the coronavirus pandemic had quickly taken over the mass media. It's possible that the virus was the reason for low coverage of antisemitic attacks. Nevertheless, there are still seen cases of antisemitic comments in the local mass media and popular blogs.

In the middle of February, several publications have released materials that had antisemitic undertones. The reason was the incident that happened at the Moscow temple of St. Nicolas that was attacked by a hooligan armed with a knife. One of such was APN-North-West that published an editorial in which this incident was compared with the attack of Alexander Koptsev on the synagogue located on Bolshaya Bronnaya street in 2006. The publication expressed dissatisfaction with the fact that the attack on the Orthodox church did not cause the same level of a public outcry and was qualified as an act less serious than Koptsev's crime: law enforcement authorities charged the attacker under article 116 (beatings) and article 213 (hooliganism), which involves punishment of up to 5 years in prison, while Koptsev was sentenced to 16 years in a maximum security colony under article 282 of the Criminal Code (incitement to hatred). "Both of the culprits are lowlifes of the society and there's no pity for them, but the Russian Themis works in strange ways and it seems that the people who were injured at the synagogue are more valuable," says the APN-North-West article. We'll note that Koptsev's main accusation was attempted murder. It seems that the author ignored this in order to reinforce his thesis by means of the incredible assertion that according to article 282 of the Criminal Code, which is called "Russian" in nationalist circles, you can send someone to prison for 16 years.



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Natalia Kholmogorova, in her article in “Vzglyad” (The View) wasn’t quite as straightforward, but spoke in the same spirit. According to her, it’s unfair that Koptsev “a man who didn’t actually kill anyone” was sentenced to 16 years in prison, while the attacker of an Orthodox temple wasn’t even accused of insulting religious feelings. With that, she mentioned the upcoming conference on the fight against antisemitism, racism and xenophobia: “It’s nice to know that in Russia, representatives of national or religious minorities don’t have to be afraid. But how protected is the religious majority?”

In March, in his Live Journal, the journalist Maxim Sokolov linked some features of the economist Mikhail Khazin’s facial expressions with his ethnic origin, while discussing the latter’s appearance on one of the local TV programs. According to Sokolov, Khazin “was talking about it all going to hell, while there appeared a broken smile on his face. This is the well-known facial feature of God’s chosen people.” The post’s author noted that “not all Jews (including the unpleasant and stupid ones) have this physiological peculiarity”, but “the representatives of other ethnic groups don’t display this physiological anomaly.” Sokolov has around 700 followers on his Live Journal, but considering the man’s popularity, this antisemitic post could have been seen by many more people.

We only know of one antisemitic case outside of mass media. In January, the dispatcher of the Tver taxi service, “Poyehali” (Let’s Go!) refused to accept an order from a resident of Tver Olga Kozlova, when he found out that she had visited a photo exhibition dedicated to the Holocaust. Learning that the exhibition was “about the Jews”, he said that “everything was done right to them” and hung up the phone. The woman complained to the taxi service’s administration and the man was fired in February. Kozlova received legal council in the matter from the Russian Jewish Congress.

LAW ENFORCEMENT

During the period in question, we know of two sentences in criminal cases related to antisemitism. One of them was given in February to Vyacheslav Kotenko, a resident of the Oktyabrsky district of the Volgograd Region, who desecrated a monument to the victims of the Holocaust in the village of Aksay in September 2019. The world court of the judicial section No. 42 of Oktyabrsky judicial district found him guilty under part 1 of article 214 of the Criminal Code (vandalism) and sentenced him to 280 hours of compulsory work. As such, the hatred motif was not admitted to in the sentence. If it would have been, it would have assumed the application of part 2 of the same article.

Another sentence was related to promoting antisemitism on the Internet. In January, a resident of Kirov, handyman Dmitry Gordin was given a suspended sentence of one year for sending newsletters on social networks with videos directed against Jews. He was sentenced under article 280 of the Criminal Code (public calls for extremism).



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At least two more administrative sentences were given out for promoting antisemitism. In February, a resident of the Beloretsky district of Bashkiria was fined five thousand rubles under article 20.3.1 of the Administrative Code (incitement of hatred or enmity, as well as humiliation of human dignity) for posting on VKontakte an antisemitic video “V.I. Dal on Jewish fascism.” In March, a resident of St. Petersburg was fined 15 thousand rubles under the same article for several antisemitic comments and approval of Hitler’s actions on the same social network.

As before, information on such cases is published very sparingly, and in reality there could have been more sentences for promoting antisemitism.



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THANK YOU
FOR YOUR ATTENTION!

WE WILL BE HAPPY
TO ANSWER ANY QUESTIONS

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