

Is Anti-Semitism Really Declining in the US?

Continuing a decade-long drop, anti-Semitic incidents in the U.S. declined by 19 percent, according to the Anti-Defamation League's most recent annual audit.

"The falling number of incidents targeting Jews is another indication of just how far we have come in finding full acceptance in society, and it is a reflection of how much progress our country has made shunning bigotry and hatred," said Abraham Foxman, national director of the ADL.

In 2013, the ADL counted 751 anti-Semitic incidents, a decline from the 927 incidents in 2012. Compiled since 1979, the ADL annual report includes assaults, vandalism and harassment targeting Jews. Anti-Israel incidents are only counted when they cross the line into anti-Semitism.

Overall, anti-Semitic incidents related to anti-Israel activity fell markedly in the past year, a change the audit's authors attributed to fewer anti-Israel demonstrations. That, in turn, may be because Israel was involved in fewer major military actions in 2013.

The ADL noted one "dark spot" in its survey: a significant increase in anti-Semitic assaults—31 incidents, up from 17 in 2012. The audit offers the example of a 12-year-old Jewish girl in Brooklyn who had a bottle thrown at her by a group of girls, including one who called her a "dirty Jew."

"The high number of violent in-your-face assaults is a sobering reminder that, despite the overall decline in anti-Semitic incidents, there is still a subset of Americans who are deeply infected with anti-Semitism and who feel emboldened enough to act out their bigotry," said Foxman.

Incidents of anti-Semitic vandalism in 2013 dropped to 315 from 440 in 2012. They included an incident in which someone scrawled a swastika and "Death to Jews" in a service hallway of a Long Island mall, and another in which the word "Jew" in foot-high letters was cut into the trunk of a car with a Jewish day school bumper sticker in Natick, Mass.