Jewish Defense League Encyclopedia Article

Jewish Defense League

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Jewish Defense League

In 1968, Rabbi Meir Kahane started the Jewish Defense League (JDL) in the Orthodox Jewish neighborhoods of Brooklyn, New York. The JDL was initially a vigilante organization dedicated to the protection of Jews but, fueled by the fanaticism of its founder, it swiftly grew to become one of America's most high profile terrorist organizations. Between 1968 and 1987, members of the JDL committed 50 terrorist acts directed at the Palestine Liberation Organization, Soviet officials, and one Nazi war criminal. The organization forged close links to the conservative extremist Kach party in Israel. Rabbi Kahane was murdered by an Egyptian fundamentalist on November 5, 1990, and on February 24, 1995, Baruch Goldstein, a former JDL member, opened fire on Palestinians at prayer, killing 35 people. This massacre resulted in the banning of the Kach party by the Israeli government.

Further Reading:

Dolgin, Janet *Jewish Identity and the JDL.* Princeton, New Jersey, Princeton University Press, 1977.

Kahane, Meir, *The Story of the Jewish Defense League.* Radnor, Pennsylvania, Chilton Book Co., 1975.