

**ANTI-SEMITIC  
BELIEFS  
IN THE  
UNITED STATES**

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2003

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## MAJOR FINDINGS

### **Younger Americans more anti-Semitic**

A younger generation of Americans, those under thirty-five years of age, holds more anti-Semitic beliefs than the previous generation. This reverses the post-World War II generational trend of declining anti-Semitism. Troubling questions arise from the findings. Are the norms against anti-Semitism weakening? Are younger Americans becoming more prejudiced in general? Is anti-Israelism a new expression of anti-Semitism?

### **Concern About a Jewish President's Fairness vis-à-vis Israel**

Nearly one-third of Americans (32%) were concerned that a Jewish president might not act in this country's best interests if this conflicts with Israel's, and another 12% are not sure or gave some other answer. This concern may or may not have behavioral consequences in the voting booth.

### **Belief that Jews control the media and have too much influence on Wall Street**

Nearly one quarter of the public (24%) believe that Jewish control of the news media explains why "we don't get the whole truth in some stories." This conspiracy suspicion is accompanied by the belief held by 34% of Americans who think "Jews have too much influence on Wall Street," and another 16% who do not know or give some other answer. Levels of current agreement with these two beliefs about undue power—that Jews control the news media and have too much influence in the financial markets—are especially worrisome. These beliefs may be easily manipulated and have facile appeal to those who are

receptive to messages of Jewish conspiracy and control.

### **The belief that Jews killed Jesus**

Thirty-seven percent of Americans agree that Jews were responsible for killing Jesus Christ. Another 16% say they do not know or refuse to answer. Only 47% unquestionably disagreed with the statement that Jews were responsible for killing Christ. These data reveal that the Christ killing belief, ingrained for centuries in Christian teaching, is by no means obsolete. Moreover, the analysis shows that the Christ-killing belief is associated with other anti-Jewish beliefs.

### **Democrats tend to be more anti-Semitic than Republicans**

On nearly all variables, Democrats held more anti-Semitic beliefs than Republicans, reversing a historical trend. These attitudes may reflect the various demographic compositions of these two parties. The finding may come as a surprise to many Jews, who are much more heavily aligned with the Democrats rather than the Republicans. This finding requires research about the reasons for this difference.

### **Jews as moral threat to America**

About 21% of Americans regard Jews as a threat to the moral character of the United States. Most see Jews as a small, rather than a large, threat. Jews are about as likely to be viewed as a threat as those of Mexican background, the other group least likely to be perceived as posing a threat to the U.S., and far less a threat than atheists and Muslims. Americans are most likely to believe that

atheists and Muslims pose the greatest moral threat to the United States. However, no group is seen as a moral threat by the majority of Americans.

**Many Americans see Jews as being like themselves**

Nearly one-half of the American public (49%) perceives Jews as “like themselves” in terms of basic beliefs and values. Jews are viewed as more similar in basic beliefs and values to other Americans than Mormons, Muslims, and atheists. On the other hand, Jews were seen as significantly less similar to other Americans than Catholics, Hispanics and Blacks. In other words, Catholics, Hispanics, and Blacks are recognized as more “American” than Jews, while Mormons, Muslims and atheists are not.

**Many millions of Americans have anti-Semitic beliefs**

The numbers of Americans holding anti-Semitic beliefs can be translated from percentages to actual numbers of people holding such

beliefs. About 36 million Americans believe that Jews care only about themselves, 48 million Americans believe that Jews control the media, and 58 million people believe that Jews have too much influence on Wall Street. About 6 million Americans believe the Holocaust did not occur, and another 8 million are not sure or don’t know that the Holocaust happened. About 65 million Americans believe that Jews killed Jesus Christ. Thirty-eight million Americans hold at least three anti-Semitic stereotypes.

**Many Americans have no anti-Semitic beliefs**

On the other hand, 50 million plus Americans do not hold even one anti-Semitic belief. Even accounting for those who give normative responses, hiding their anti-Jewish attitudes, the numbers of those who hold low anti-Semitic beliefs are quite impressive.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### **Efforts to reduce anti-Semitic beliefs should be increased**

The Jewish community needs to markedly increase its efforts in addressing anti-Semitic prejudices, including focusing on the demonstrated relationship between anti-Semitism and anti-Israelism. This should be done in concert with non-Jewish groups.

### **Improve the quality and quantity of positive education about Judaism and Israel**

Efforts should be undertaken to improve the quality and quantity of education about Jews and Israel at all levels of the educational systems in America. This would include primary, secondary, and higher education in public, as well as private and parochial educational systems. Such efforts would include the development of better curricula about the historical and contemporary Jewish communities, including Israel, a better understanding of Judaism as a religion, and better education about prejudice and bigotry. Curricula should include moral and ethical discussions about prejudice against Jews.

### **Teach teachers about Judaism and Israel**

The Jewish community should also develop workshops, conferences, teacher training manuals, and special publications to help teach the teachers and administrators throughout the educational system of America and to utilize such curricula in the schools.

### **Increase interreligious dialogue**

Increased efforts at interreligious dialogue, including Jews, Christians, Muslims, and

other faiths, need to be made. The best models of such programs should be supported and replicated, and new models created as well. It would be especially important to work with the seminaries and other clergy training institutions, clergy organizations, and individual clergy themselves on increasing the knowledge of Judaism and developing mechanisms to combat the negative stereotypes about Jews. This is especially important in the area of the Christ-killing stereotype, which could be largely perpetuated through the teachings of the clergy and the textbooks that are used.

### **Work more closely with African-American & Latino communities**

Given the high acceptance of the Christ-killing belief among the Latino and African-American communities, it is especially important for the Jewish community to work together with the religious and scholarly leaders of these communities to reduce prejudice.

### **More sophisticated research about Black and Latino beliefs is necessary**

More research about Latino and Black anti-Jewish beliefs is needed. Anti-Semitism is a tradition that is often adopted, going through metamorphosis depending on the culture holding the belief. Some have hypothesized that much of the African-American and Hispanic anti-Semitic beliefs are largely anti-white or anti-majority, or anti-power culture in America. These hypotheses need to be fully explored.



**Further research should be conducted about anti-Semitism among America's religious groups**

More data is required on the anti-Semitic beliefs of various religious groups in America. Looking at the data in more discrete sub-groups would be far more informative than merely the division of Jews and non-Jews as the mode of analysis.

**More research about the relationship between anti-Semitism and anti-Israelism is needed**

The relationship between anti-Semitism and anti-Israelism should be further investigated. To what extent is the expression of anti-Israel beliefs a cover for the expression of anti-Semitic beliefs? Of course for Jews, anti-Israelism is not merely a political debate, but one that strikes at the core of their religious beliefs.

**More study of the rise of anti-Semitic beliefs of young Americans needs to be conducted**

There should be more research exploring the anti-Semitic beliefs of 18 to 35-year-olds. Indeed, these populations should be further broken down by looking at 18 to 24-year-olds, 25 to 29-year-olds, and 30 to 35-year-olds. We will have much more understanding of the

rising levels of anti-Semitism in this age group by a more detailed exploration of different questions and recognizing that "18 to 35-year-olds" covers a variety of sub-segments.

**More coalition building should be conducted with Americans who are not anti-Semitic**

Most of all, these data indicate the need for increased coalition building of all kinds between Jews and the significant proportions of Americans who do not hold anti-Semitic beliefs. These data indicate that Jews may have as many, if not more, potential allies as opposed to potential enemies. How does the Jewish community begin to work more effectively with all of the groups of Americans who view Jews positively and as an asset to American culture? While some Jewish organizations are involved in coalition building, this agenda has not been pursued vigorously by most of the organized Jewish community for some time.

## INTRODUCTION

**A**nti-Semitism ebbs and flows, sometimes more subdued, sometimes more virulent. Regrettably, anti-Semitism is in the news once again. Couched in the controversy over events in the Middle East and by reactions in Europe and elsewhere, a new wave of troubling incidents have been reported, including physical as well as verbal attacks against Jews, vandalism and desecration of synagogues and Jewish cemeteries. Although evidence of a backlash against Jewish individuals and institutions in this country has been less dramatic than in other parts of the world, a recent increase in anti-Semitic activity is noted. Anti-Jewish sentiment simmers below the surface.

### **Jewish Life in America**

Still, Jews enjoy tremendous access to the social, economic, and political systems of America. Being Jewish, for example, does not keep Jews from elected office, although no Jewish president has yet been elected. In 2000, democratic vice presidential candidate Joseph Lieberman was part of the ticket with former Vice President Al Gore that won the popular vote by 500,000 votes. The last decades of the 20th century became a golden political, social, and economic age for Jews in the United States.

Jews sit on boards of hospitals and universities and are well represented in the most prestigious industries and lucrative enterprises. They are visible in the media and the arts. Jews are doing well. Their prosperity and success are expressed in political power, economic power, and social well-being. To be sure,

some Jews are not well off. There are poor Jews, Jews with low occupational status, and Jews who are affected by the same pathologies as other Americans: alcoholism, drug addiction, and family break-up, among others. But as a whole, Jews have settled comfortably into middle- and upper-class modern America.

Although German-Jewish Americans experienced upward mobility and economic success in the mid-19th century, the widespread success of Jews in the United States is a relatively recent phenomenon, occurring primarily after World War II. The removal of anti-Semitic barriers that were widespread well into the 1950s allowed for much of this success. Education was also a method frequently used by Jews as a means of gaining access to business and professional opportunities available in American society. Jews' high educational status facilitated their economic mobility.

The almost 7 million Jews who live in the U.S. have become an integral part of the national culture. Judaism is often considered one of the three major religions in the country, along with Protestantism and Catholicism. In most large cities, for example, Christmas time is also Chanukah time. It is not unusual to see a local television station flashing both "Merry Christmas" and "Happy Chanukah" messages to its viewers. Many large city newspapers will carry a story about Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur and the arrival of the High Holy Days for the Jewish people in their community.

Popular culture continuously reinforces American values of choice and individualism within a broader American way. Since the 1960s, composite groups have become more acceptable: Black Americans, Asian Americans, and of course, Italian, Greek, or Jewish Americans. If Jews abandon their identity in the United States, it is not because they are forced to do so to be part of American society. Jews no longer have to adopt the majority religion or culture to be comfortable as Jews.

### **Anti-Semitism in the United States**

While overt discrimination has decreased dramatically in the past sixty years, some anti-Semitic beliefs and attitudes remain quite strong and are expressed in a variety of ways. The proportion of non-Jews who still hold anti-Jewish perceptions is quite substantial. Furthermore, some groups are increasingly comfortable with expressing their anti-Semitic beliefs, e.g. Muslim extremists and hate groups. Certainly, not all groups are more anti-Semitic than they were a generation ago. But anti-Semitic beliefs among non-Jews remain widespread, even though those beliefs do not inhibit the everyday lives of most Jews.

Most first- and second-generation American Jews carry with them a different set of collective memories. They experienced firsthand systematic discrimination in the United States. Housing, for example, was closed to Jews in many areas through legally enforced restrictive covenants. These laws were not declared unconstitutional until the late 1940s. Universities had quotas on the number of Jews that could be admitted, certain employers would not hire Jews, and positions of leadership were often closed to Jews in the

cultural and political arenas of the local and national scene. While the United States was a hospitable environment, it was by no means a completely open system for Jews. Certainly, the United States offered economic opportunity, even where certain avenues were closed. Jews experienced a social and political freedom that they had rarely known elsewhere. Nevertheless, forms of institutional anti-Semitism were an integral part of the American scene sixty years ago.

The extent of anti-Semitism in the United States until the coming of age of the third generation of American Jews should neither be overstated nor minimized. On the one hand, anti-Semitism in the United States was different from anti-Semitism in Europe. The legitimacy of state-sanctioned or –instigated violence never took root in the United States. Furthermore, Jews found themselves enfranchised into the political system in this country. Here they were able to utilize the electoral process to protect their individual and civil rights.

Anti-Semitism can be classified into two basic components: The first, attitudes and beliefs, is the most studied aspect of anti-Semitism in the United States. The second is expression—actual anti-Semitic behavior. Most research about anti-Semitism in this country since the 1930s has focused on non-Jewish beliefs and attitudes about Jews, although the ADL regularly monitors anti-Semitic incidents and movements. Researchers base their findings about increasing or decreasing levels of anti-Semitism in the United States on the results of studies of anti-Semitic attitudes and beliefs. The expression of anti-Semitism, in terms of behavior, has not been examined as rigorously or systematically.

Ben Halpern, in his essay “What is Anti-Semitism?” defines it as a “hostile attitude toward the Jews (regarded as a threat) that develops into a tradition and becomes institutionalized.”<sup>1</sup> Halpern notes that the threat can be expressed collectively, socially, economically, or politically. This threat, he states, can vary in terms of intensity, and be expressed by minor fringe groups or through major political forces. This represents one concept of anti-Semitism. This paper shifts the focus to negative stereotypes and other sentiments which Jews find distasteful—which carry the potential for, but do not always signify, active hostility.

It is important to acknowledge the distinction between behavior and sentiment. The term “anti-Semitism” has been used to refer to either or both. Anti-Semitism can be manifested in expression by public figures, official reaction to anti-Semitism by public officials, the presence of mass movement hate groups from the right or the left, overt discriminatory hate crimes, and is sometimes embedded in anti-Israelism. While most would agree that anti-Semitic actions are more serious than beliefs or attitudes, the psychological component is important to measure and understand as a possible precursor which can lead to harmful or hurtful behavior—sometimes triggered by specific news events or political agitation. Anti-Semitic actions and views are intertwined in the sense that the latter is a necessary condition for the former.<sup>2</sup>

Negative remarks directed toward a Jew can also express anti-Semitism. Stereotype jokes about Jews may not always be intended as

anti-Semitic but may reveal latent anti-Semitism. The individual making the remark may have had no intention of conveying an anti-Semitic sentiment; instead, it is the recipient who is considered “oversensitive.” A non-Jew may be completely unaware that he carries and conveys certain prejudices. For example, the use of pushy to describe Jews reflects a conscious or unconscious anti-Semitic feeling.

Anti-Semitic remarks increase in significance and impact in accordance with the role of the individual who makes them. An anti-Semitic slur on the part of a fellow employee may be distressing, but it certainly does not have the impact of an anti-Semitic remark or speech by a public figure. Some political leaders, military leaders, church leaders, and other influential individuals harbor anti-Semitic beliefs and attitudes. Their remarks often receive wide media coverage reaching thousands, millions, or tens of millions of listeners. Remarks made by public figures may have substantial impact on the public, helping mold values and establish norms, and may ultimately alter behavior. Furthermore, the response or lack of response by other leaders to either challenge or support these statements also significantly influences the attitudes, beliefs, and actions of their constituencies. Just as important, Jews consider the statements and activities of public figures as possible benchmarks reflecting the feelings of their public constituencies. The anti-Semitic remarks of figures in the public eye may accurately represent the views of thousands or millions of followers.

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1 Halpern, Ben. “What Is Anti-Semitism?” *Modern Judaism* I (December 1981): 251-262.

2 Anti-Semitic incidents are systematically recorded and counted predominately by the Anti-Defamation League of B’nai B’rith (ADL) and by other organizations which monitor hate crimes directed against ethnic, racial and religious minorities.

The most damaging remarks occur through the adoption of anti-Semitic rhetoric or action by the more respectable political middle.

Therefore, the Reverend Billy Graham, who reaches and appeals to much larger groups of people than do extremists, is of major concern to Jews when he makes anti-Semitic statements.

Anti-Semitism is also expressed through discrimination, which may be manifested by the singular action of an individual employer or realtor, or more systematically, as in the collective action of a group of residents on a private street or the official policy of a country club. Discrimination may occur in the housing sector, in employment, or in a variety of social and cultural organizations. Jews and non-Jews sometimes differ in defining what constitutes discriminatory behavior. For example, is the refusal of an employer to accommodate Saturday, the Jewish Sabbath, as a day off a discriminatory action, or an efficiency measure on the part of that particular firm?

Discrimination is difficult to monitor and difficult to prove. Exactly how much discrimination remains against Jews is unknown. Using Jewish success as evidence of the eradication of discrimination, anti-Semitism is certainly not systemic.

Violence, of course, is the most severe and dangerous expression of anti-Semitism, and it is perpetuated against both property and people. Much of the institutional monitoring of anti-Semitism focuses upon acts of violence to property, such as the desecration of synagogues or the painting of anti-Semitic slogans in public places. Although some anti-Semites may desecrate Jewish cemeteries or paint swastikas on a Jewish communal building,

anti-Semitism can also be expressed in violent ways against people.

Organizations such as the Muslim of the Americas (MOA) promulgate anti-Semitic and racist rhetoric and literature, and indicate their intention to commit acts of violence against Jews. Such hate groups, even though they constitute a small part of the population, are representative of the ultimate and most feared expressions of anti-Semitism, especially if they assume legitimacy in American culture or politics.

These organizations are vocal and sometimes swell in numbers, depending on social, economic, or political conditions. They have many sympathizers who are not members. In addition, a large part of the population, while rejecting the groups themselves, remains indifferent to their anti-Semitism. These extremist groups are monitored by law enforcement agencies precisely because they are potentially dangerous. If ever given the opportunity or power, such groups would make Jews among their first and most concentrated targets.

Expressions of anti-Semitism, or even discrimination, should come as no surprise. In 1969 Gertrude Selznick and Stephen Steinberg wrote, "Anti-Semitism is widespread and pervasive, but not in dangerous form." They went on to say that there is "a sizeable reservoir of anti-Semitic beliefs and stereotypes in the population...Even the nominally unprejudiced—that third of the population free or virtually free of traditional stereotypes—cannot be said to constitute a solid nucleus of opposition to anti-Semitism."<sup>3</sup> No body of evidence

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<sup>3</sup> Selznick, Gertrude, and Steinberg, Stephen. *The Tenacity of Prejudice: Anti-Semitism in Contemporary America*. New York: Harper & Row, 1969.

has been produced since that study to indicate any substantial change from their basic summary. Those who do not hold anti-Semitic beliefs themselves are largely indifferent to those who do.

The continued persistence of anti-Semitism is part of a more pervasive strain of prejudice against minorities in the United States. Prejudice against Catholics, Blacks, and Asians has been both widespread and violent in the history of this country. Political parties were organized around anti-Catholicism in the 19th century. The horrible history of American racism is well documented. Wartime hysteria in the 1940s stripped Japanese Americans of their constitutional rights. They were robbed of their property and forced to live in "internment camps" for the duration of the war. Indeed, compared with the way other minorities in the United States were treated, Jews have escaped relatively unscathed. Expression of anti-Jewish beliefs and behavior never reached the point of race riots or internment, as did prejudice against Blacks and Asians.

In the wake of the Holocaust, social norms in the United States and elsewhere in the world prohibited most expressions of overt political anti-Semitism. The constraints from these social norms are weakening. The marginal acceptability of these expressions is worrisome to Jews. As early as the 1980s, Stephen Rosenfield wrote, "Events have demonstrated growing tolerance of specific expressions of anti-Semitism." He goes on to say that the real danger "is that the texture of public life is becoming coarser. This is no trivial concern."<sup>4</sup>

Since then, the public rhetoric about Jews has become more coarse, and sometimes crude. The introduction of anti-Semitism into the political realm is quite dangerous. It is there that expression of anti-Semitism ought to be "off limits." Anti-Semitism in politics is a foreboding step. Extremist groups are most feared for this reason. They introduce anti-Semitism into the political dialogue and violate nearly all norms about the acceptability of anti-Semitic rhetoric. Attacks on Israel can do the same, and not necessarily from extremists, but from the more legitimate liberal left. Attacks on Israel are sometimes thinly veiled anti-Semitism and have entered the political arena, especially among a few members of Congress.

#### **Correlates of Anti-Jewish Sentiment**

Measurement of anti-Semitic beliefs and attitudes has a long history in the academic fields of psychology, sociology, social psychology, and political science. Scholars have attempted to track changes in anti-Jewish views through public opinion polls, particularly in the U.S., but also in Europe and elsewhere. Over the past several decades, research has generally concluded that anti-Semitic views in the U.S. are in long-term steady decline, except perhaps among particular ethnic minority groups. Another common observation is the correlation of anti-Semitism with low levels of education; and also with age: Older individuals have been more likely to express anti-Jewish attitudes. Observed relationships with age and education are often interpreted as optimistic signs. According to this thinking, with the passing of older generations and the trend toward increasing levels of education in the population, key pre-conditions of anti-

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<sup>4</sup> Rosenfield, Stephen S. "Dateline Washington: Anti-Semitism and U.S. Foreign Policy." *Foreign Policy* 47 (Summer 1982): 172-183.

Semitism will gradually diminish—“conventional wisdom” our analysis will address.

Past research also points out that those who are more anti-Semitic are even more likely than others to grossly over-estimate the size of the Jewish population in the U.S., and, somewhat more equivocally, that personal contact appears to diminish levels of anti-Jewish sentiment, as those having more/some contact with Jews are less likely to hold anti-Semitic beliefs than those who have less/none. Research also documents that anti-Jewish sentiment is closely connected with the more general disposition of social intolerance.<sup>5</sup>

While discriminatory barriers against Jews have been broken in almost all areas of Jewish life, prejudices remain among non-Jews. Bigotry includes caricatures of greed and social parasitism, excessive Israel-bashing, or using American Jews and Israel interchangeably while condemning Israel’s “evils.” These are all aspects of anti-Semitism that remain part of American society today. Anti-Semitism may erupt in the form of the desecration of a synagogue or Jewish community center, or the murder of someone because he is a Jew.

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<sup>5</sup> These and other often reported relationships are presented in the ADL’s 1998 survey report, “Highlights From a November 1998 Anti-Defamation League Survey on Anti-Semitism and Prejudice in America,” prepared by the survey firm Martilla Communications/Kiley & Co. A more current survey was conducted for the ADL by Martilla Communications Group and SWA Worldwide (April-May, 2002).

## OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

It is not our purpose to comprehensively review contending theories or empirical results, although some past research will be cited here. Neither is this new survey report an effort to provide a general social scientific explanation of anti-Jewish beliefs and attitudes, as our measures are too sparse and not specifically designed for that function—yet, certain explanatory ideas will emerge from our presentation and discussion in trying to make sense of the survey findings.

Our objective, rather, is to offer a carefully focused snapshot of the prevalence of anti-Jewish stereotypes and other socially relevant negative beliefs about Jews among the general public<sup>6</sup>—using several new measures and methods—and discuss the significance of these beliefs, enriching this discussion through comparisons with views of other minority groups in the U.S. Our survey is not equipped to examine the important issue of change over time in any thorough manner, primarily because we explicitly chose not to replicate previous questions, some of which we felt had become outdated, and previous types of analysis, which we believe can be improved. Nevertheless, the survey does contain a few items closely similar to measures placed on earlier surveys. Those results will be juxtaposed to incorporate the time dimension.

### **The Use of Polls in Analyzing Anti-Semitism**

Polls represent a critical component in the information that currently exists about anti-Semitism. Such polls enable us to gain some understanding of certain trends in anti-Semitic beliefs and attitudes and point us to further research and suggestions for ways to address the problem.

Yet telephone interviews about anti-Semitism may be subject to normative responses. Statements of anti-Semitic beliefs may be less forthcoming because many people know that they are supposed to say that they would vote for any candidate, for example, regardless of race or religion. Positive statements may be hidden under a layer of what the respondent believes he or she ought to believe, and not translate into reported beliefs.<sup>7</sup>

Polling techniques about anti-Semitism, and other forms of prejudice, require the most sophisticated and careful scrutiny. While polls are essential, so is the interpretation. For example, year after year a number of polls show that a substantial proportion of non-Jews say that Jews are more loyal to Israel than to the United States. But what does this mean? Is it a statement that Jews have a strong (and desirable) attachment to their “homeland?” Does it mean that Jews are traitors or potential traitors to the U.S.? Does it

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6 By “general public” we mean average Americans—a cross-section of U.S. adults. The focus here is not on extremist/hate groups on the political fringes of society—neo-Nazis, skinheads, militia groups, black Muslims (Nation of Islam), and others—where anti-Semitism is inherent in their ideology.

7 We are not the first to point this out: See, e.g., William Helmreich, “The Sociological Study of Anti-Semitism in the U.S.,” in Michael Brown, ed., *Approaches to Anti-Semitism* (American Jewish Committee, 1994), p. 139.



merely signify that Jews are fervent supporters of Israel? Just as importantly, how do we interpret the data about those who say they “don’t know.” For sure, the “don’t knows” are not clear rejections of anti-Semitic beliefs.

We have chosen to present the data without creating scales of high or low levels of anti-Semitism. We are concerned about how to properly create such scales. How many anti-Semitic beliefs does an individual have to hold in order to be classified as “high” or “low” on an anti-Semitism scale? Are certain anti-Semitic beliefs more likely to lead to anti-Semitic behavior than others? Are some attitudes stronger than others? These questions need to be explored. Without deeper research into the structure and meaning of component stereotypes and beliefs, such efforts rest upon some degree of subjectivity and can be meaningless or even misleading.

We also explored attitudes about other selected groups in America, primarily to put attitudes about Jews in some context. The purpose is to examine how Jews are regarded compared with other social minorities.

### **Survey Method**

The survey which generated the data analyzed in this report was conducted May 3-7, 2002 by International Communications Research (ICR), a leading public opinion research organization based in Media, Pennsylvania. The questions were included in one wave of their weekly random-digit-dialing (RDD) omnibus survey (N=1,013 interviews) (see Appendix). Within each household reached, one adult was randomly selected as the respondent using the “most recent

birthday” method. Sampling error for total-sample percentage estimates close to 50% is  $\pm 3.1$  percentage points. Estimates increasingly farther from 50% have progressively smaller confidence intervals. Confidence intervals for population subgroup estimates (e.g., college graduates, urban dwellers, Southerners, etc.) are wider and depend on the specific size of the sub-sample.

The survey questions were thoroughly pre-tested in a simulation (N=20 test interviews), and revisions were made to improve data quality after professional review of the recorded interviews. Questions about Jews or of direct relevance to measurement of stereotypes of Jews were embedded within similar questions about other ethnic and other minority groups. The point was to disguise the specific purpose of the survey—to make it appear that the survey was not just about Jews and anti-Semitism—and, thus, encourage honest participation by dampening the potential for socially desirable or politically correct responses.<sup>8</sup>

A corollary worry was that some respondents would refuse to participate by terminating their participation during our section of the omnibus survey due to suspicions of a hidden political agenda or other inappropriate purpose—in the extreme case, that the interviews were being conducted as part of a hate campaign to perpetuate anti-Semitic or racist views. (“Push polling” is the term used in the polling industry for this type of pseudo-survey.) In this regard, the pre-testing and subsequent fine-tuning of the questionnaire, procedures and instructions, and interviewer preparation seemed to work effectively, as

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<sup>8</sup> While there is no direct measure of such contaminating (biasing) effects, we address this methodological problem further later in the paper.

very few respondents dropped out because of a sensitivity to the nature of the questions—some of which presented provocative negative images of Jews and other social groups or required drawing distinctions commonly regarded as prejudicial.

It may be that the actual level of anti-Semitic belief is higher than the self-reported answers of the survey respondents. American culture has increasingly frowned upon bigotry and prejudice. Some respondents, sensing that these questions are intended to explore exactly those beliefs, may have hidden their true feelings. For example, the correlation between higher education and lower anti-Jewish beliefs may be co-mingling two different factors. Prejudice is seen as a function of ignorance. This is the most often cited explanation

of lower rates of anti-Semitic belief among the better educated. The second possibility is rarely discussed: More-educated individuals know better how to answer surveys and say the “right” thing, therefore appearing to be less prejudiced. Much more sophisticated research, both qualitative and quantitative, needs to be completed to better understand how normative responses affect the reported levels of anti-Semitism. Our working hypothesis, to be demonstrated in additional studies, is that anti-Semitic beliefs are higher to some unknown degree than the reported level.

The balance of our paper presents the survey results and discusses the implications.



## DATA ANALYSIS

### NEGATIVE IMAGES OF JEWS

With the exception of present-day Israel (and several brief periods in Biblical times), Jews have typically existed as a social minority with distinctive cultural attributes. In different places at different times, others have exaggerated, distorted, and singled out Jews for censure or ridicule of their distinct culture. Negative beliefs about Jewish appearance, customs, personality, or behavior have been an important element in the long saga of Jewish persecution through the ages. Sadly, many of them persist to the present, especially in much of the Arab/Islamic world and elsewhere, including much of Europe. Even in the U.S., which has experienced an undeniable decline in anti-Semitism since the middle of the 20th century, pernicious images persist among certain segments of society. And, political or economic conditions can bring to the fore milder or more latent anti-Semitic views among broader publics, as some suspect has happened since last Fall's 9/11 attack and the more recent escalation of conflict in the Middle East. European anti-Semitism seems to be on a rapid ascent.

Our survey included eight statements which respondents were asked to agree or disagree with, each representing a different anti-Jewish

stereotype or sentiment heard openly expressed in this country, at least occasionally, in recent years:<sup>9</sup>

- The large number of Jewish executives in the TV and movie industry in Hollywood is one reason why there's so much sex and immorality in our popular culture.
- Jewish lawyers are (a little more / no more)<sup>10</sup> dishonest and unscrupulous than other lawyers.
- Because Jews think they are the chosen people, they care only about themselves.
- I would be concerned about a Jewish president of the U.S. being fair and honest about Israel.
- Jewish control of the news media explains why we don't get the whole truth in some stories.
- There is (some / no) truth to the belief that Jews have too much influence on Wall Street.

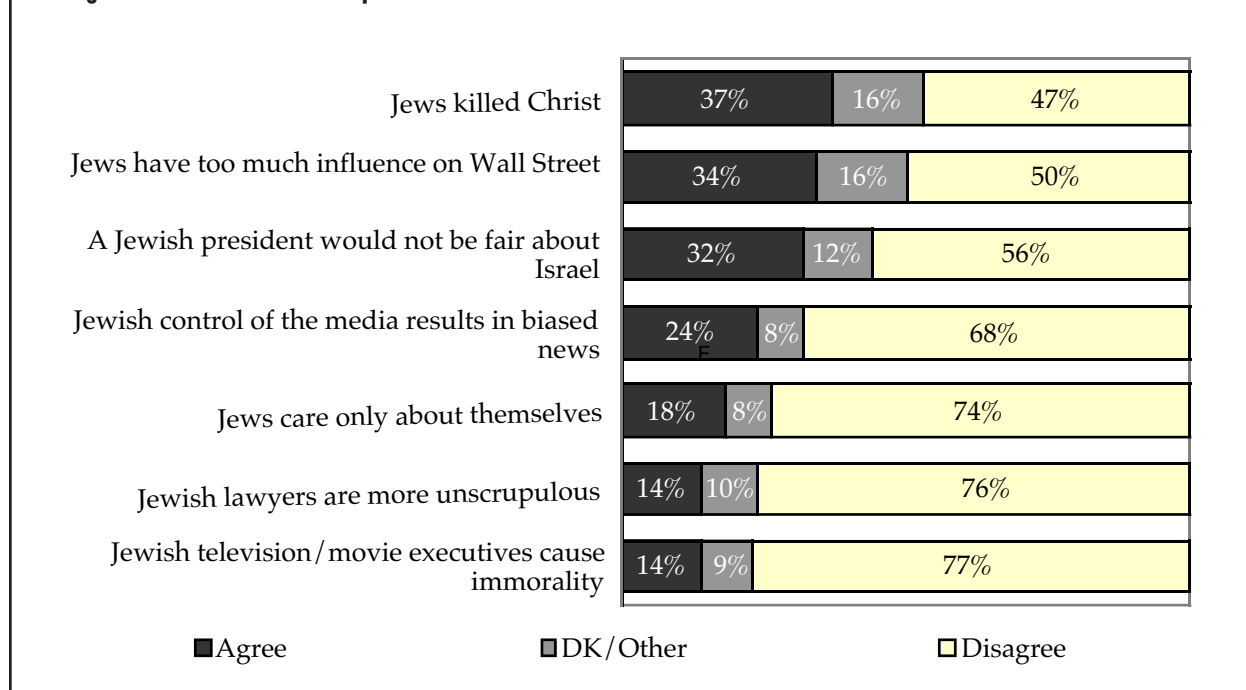
The number of Americans holding the anti-Jewish stereotype ranges from about one in seven (Jewish TV/movie executives perpetu-

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<sup>9</sup> As a way of disguising the specific purpose of the research, these six were intermixed with six statements about other distinctive groups and institutions: Christian fundamentalists, Islam, Asians, gay rights supporters, and Arabs. The statements were read to respondents in the following order: one randomly selected statement about Jews, then one about non-Jews, then one about Jews, etc. until all 12 were presented and responses obtained.

<sup>10</sup> The wording was randomized in this and the next statement so that approximately one-half the sample was administered each version. The presentation in this report combines the negative stereotype response from each version (example: agree, a little more dishonest + disagree, a little less dishonest). Specific question wording does make a difference, as detailed later in the text.

**Figure 1: Americans' responses to statements about Jews**



ating sex and immorality, Jewish lawyers being more dishonest and unscrupulous) to approximately one in three (Jewish influence on Wall Street and concern about a Jewish president of the U.S. being impartial toward Israel) (see Figure 1). By anyone’s reckoning, the prevalence of these views is far from trivial. We discuss each one in turn, beginning with the less commonly held negative beliefs.

**Jewish Executives in Hollywood Perpetuate Sex and Immorality in Popular Culture**

Fourteen percent of Americans cite the heavy representation of Jews in the movie and television industries as a reason “why there’s so much sex and immorality in our popular culture.” This sentiment is stronger among men (17%) than women (12%), among those with lower incomes (18% for the lowest category, under \$25K, 8% for those with incomes \$75K

and over) and those with no college education (19% vs. 10% of those with at least some college), and is especially strong among persons 55 and older: The latter are more than twice as likely as their younger counterparts to blame Jews in Hollywood for polluting popular culture: 24% vs. 10%. Regional differences, though modest, are opposite in direction from what many would expect: 18% in the Northeast and West hold this stereotype compared to 11% in the South and 12% in the North Central regions.

**Unscrupulous Jewish Lawyers**

The same number—fourteen percent—accept the negative image of Jewish lawyers being less honest / more unscrupulous than other lawyers.<sup>11</sup> On this item, subgroup contrasts are minimal—similar percentages of all population segments hold this belief. Those with

<sup>11</sup> The wording of the statement affected the results: While 10% agreed that Jewish lawyers are a little more dishonest and unscrupulous, nearly twice as many (19%) disagreed with the converse of that wording—that Jewish lawyers are no more dishonest or unscrupulous. The results average out to 14%.

the least amount of formal education (high school degree or less) are an exception, being somewhat more inclined to think negatively of Jewish lawyers (17%, compared to 10% of those with at least some college background).

A somewhat similar item was administered in a survey conducted last Fall (late October) by the ADL:

*Jews are more willing than others to use shady practices to get what they want.*

Although the statement does not refer to lawyers, the stereotype of the deceptive, cunning Jew is the same. Sixteen percent answered that the statement is “probably true.” The consistency in response suggests reliability in measurement of this anti-Jewish sentiment.

#### **As the “Chosen People,” Jews Care Only About Themselves**

Despite prominent Jewish contributions to secular philanthropy, eighteen percent of Americans claim this belief about the selfish insularity of Jews. It is more common among certain segments than others: Blacks (34% vs. 16% among whites), residents of the Northeast region of the country (26%, compared to 18% in the West and 19% in the South, but only 10% in the North Central region), persons with the least education (25% vs. 13% of those with some college and 10% of college graduates), and males (21% vs. 15% among females). Broken out by political partisanship, Republicans are less likely to view Jews as selfish (12%) than Democrats or Independents (20% each). The age pattern

shows modest curvilinear pattern, dropping from the youngest group (20% for 18-34 year-olds) through the “boomer” generation (12% among 45-54 year-olds) and then rising to 19% for those 55 and older.

ADL surveys in 1964, 1992, and 1998 contained a similar measure:

*Jews don't care what happens to anyone but their own kind.*

The 1998 poll found 9% saying “probably true,” compared to 16% in 1992 and 26% in 1964 – clear evidence of a meaningful and steady downward trend. If our measure is sufficiently comparable – and we believe it is – then one must conclude that the trend has probably ceased and might have reversed.

#### **Concern About a Jewish President's Fairness vis-à-vis Israel**

Some might not consider this belief as a “stereotype,” strictly speaking. Nevertheless, it recalls the “dual loyalties” stigma sometimes applied to American Jews – that Jewish Americans are at least equally swayed by Israel's interests as by what is best for America. This concern may or may not have behavioral consequences in the voting booth,

Nearly one-third of Americans (32%) were concerned that a Jewish president might not act in this country's best interests if this conflicts with Israel's, and another 12% are not sure or gave some other answer.<sup>12</sup> Population subgroups more likely to feel some concern about the fairness/honesty of a Jewish president in decisions affecting Israel are: those

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12 On the dual loyalties issues, last Fall's ADL survey found 25% responding it's “probably true” to the stronger statement: “Jews are more loyal to Israel than to America.”

with less education (37% vs. 30% for those with some college and 26% for college graduates), males (37%, compared to 29% for females), and the youngest and oldest age groups. Once again, the middle age categories are less anti-Jewish than the extremes: 35% of 18-34 year-olds and 40% of the 65+ segment would be concerned compared to 28-30% of those in between. Residents of the Northeast region are a little less concerned (27%) than those living elsewhere in the country (34%).

### **Jewish Control of the News Media Leads to Biased Reporting**

Nearly one-quarter of the public (24%) believes that Jewish control of the news media explains why we "...don't get the whole truth in some stories." This conspiracy suspicion declines with increasing education (30% with the least education vs. 13% with the most), with increasing income (29% with the lowest vs. 17% with the highest), and is somewhat more prevalent among men than women (27% vs. 21%), and among Blacks compared to whites (31% vs. 21%). Once again, the same curvilinear pattern with age is apparent, as the stereotype declines through the 45-54 segment (from 24% among 18-34 year-olds to 16% for the "boomer" segment) and then increases, jumping to 28% for the 55-64 year-old group and 32% for the retiree segment 65 and older. Politically, Republicans are less likely to hold this stereotype than others: 16% compared to 28% of Democrats and 26% of Independents.

### **Jewish Control of the Financial Markets**

Even more prevalent is the view that Jews control banking and investments. Just over one-third of the public (34%) think "Jews have too much influence on Wall Street;" another 16% do not know or give some other answer.<sup>13</sup> This belief is stronger among Blacks compared to whites (47% vs. 32%), persons with less education (40% of those with no college, 33% of those with some college, and 24% of college graduates), those with annual household incomes less than \$75,000 (38%, compared with 23% in the \$75K bracket), and persons 65 and older (43%, compared to 32% of among those under 65). Baby boomers are again least likely (25%) to express the anti-Jewish stereotype.

In response to an analogous question asked in an ADL survey in 2002, 24% answered that it's "probably true" that "Jews have too much power in the business world." This figure is close to our survey's percentage response to the positively worded version of the question, "There is some truth to the belief..." (22% agree), but falls short of the combined distribution of answers to both wordings. This methodological ambiguity combined with the fact that the ADL's question was somewhat different than ours (even compared to our positively worded version of the question) renders moot any conclusion about the amount of change in this sentiment during this 6-month period.

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13 Answers to this question also differ depending on the wording: 22% agree with "There is some truth to the belief that Jews have too much influence on Wall Street;" while 47% disagree with the statement, "There is no truth to the belief that Jews have too much influence on Wall Street." It is possible that respondents were confused by the negatively worded version. The same point applies to the other version of the item. If true, then our combined results overstate the degree of anti-Jewish feeling.

However, ADL surveys in 1998 and 1992 included a statement that is much closer to ours:

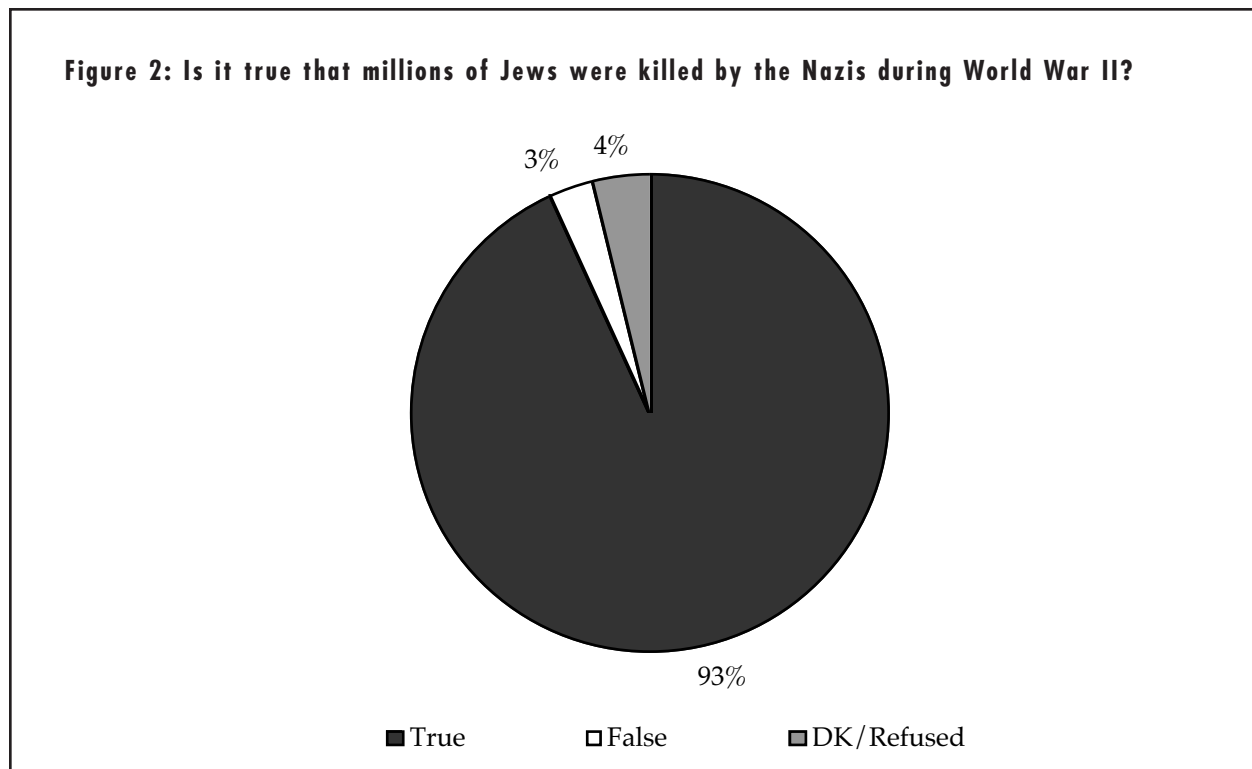
*Jews have too much control and influence on Wall Street.*

One decade ago, 27% responded that the statement is “probably true.” In the 1998 survey, 16% gave that answer—leading the ADL report to conclude, after also taking into account observed declines on other items, that the level of anti-Semitic sentiment had decreased during that period. But our May 2002 result (as well as the more current ADL survey figure) suggests that the declining trend might have reversed on the belief about Jews having too much power in the world of business. Given the 4-year gap between surveys, it is impossible to know when during that period the reversal occurred.

### HOLOCAUST DENIAL & THE BELIEF THAT JEWS WERE RESPONSIBLE FOR KILLING CHRIST

Claims that the Holocaust is a hoax—that millions of Jews were not killed by the Nazis—seem unfathomable and outrageous to anyone with even a shred of knowledge of 20th century history or World War II. Yet, such “revisionist” historical claims are not unknown,<sup>14</sup> and some think these ideas have gained currency in recent years, particularly among segments amenable to anti-Semitic views. Is this dangerous myth solely the province of a small percentage of crackpots on the political extremes, or has it spread more widely?

To address this issue, we posed the simple question:



14 Perhaps the best-known Holocaust denier is David Irving, the discredited British writer, who lost a high-profile lawsuit against award-winning historian Deborah Lipstadt.



*Do you think it is true or false that millions of Jews were killed by the Nazis during World War II?*

Very few (3%) believe that the Holocaust did not occur, and 4% said they do not know (see Figure 2). Since professional pollsters and students of public opinion are well aware that 3% of the public can easily give any type of response in a survey for reasons unrelated to the substance of the question, this level of ignorance/denial should not be worrisome. The pattern across demographic segments is quite constant, with the percent of “false” responses rising to 5% or higher only among those with the lowest incomes (less than \$25,000), 7% of whom believe the Holocaust did not occur, and among the oldest respondents (65+), 5% of who accept the myth that the Holocaust is a fiction. Nearly all Americans (93%) accept the truth that millions of Jews were, in fact, victims of the Nazi genocide.

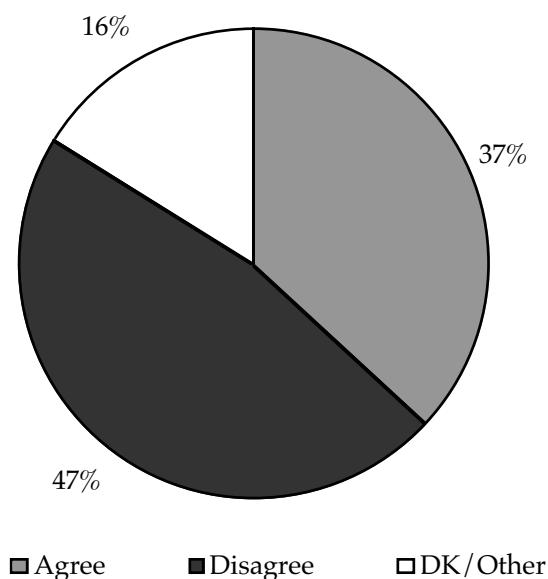
The picture is very different on the question of who was responsible for killing Jesus Christ (see Figure 3):

*Do you agree or disagree that the Jews were primarily responsible for the killing of Jesus Christ?*

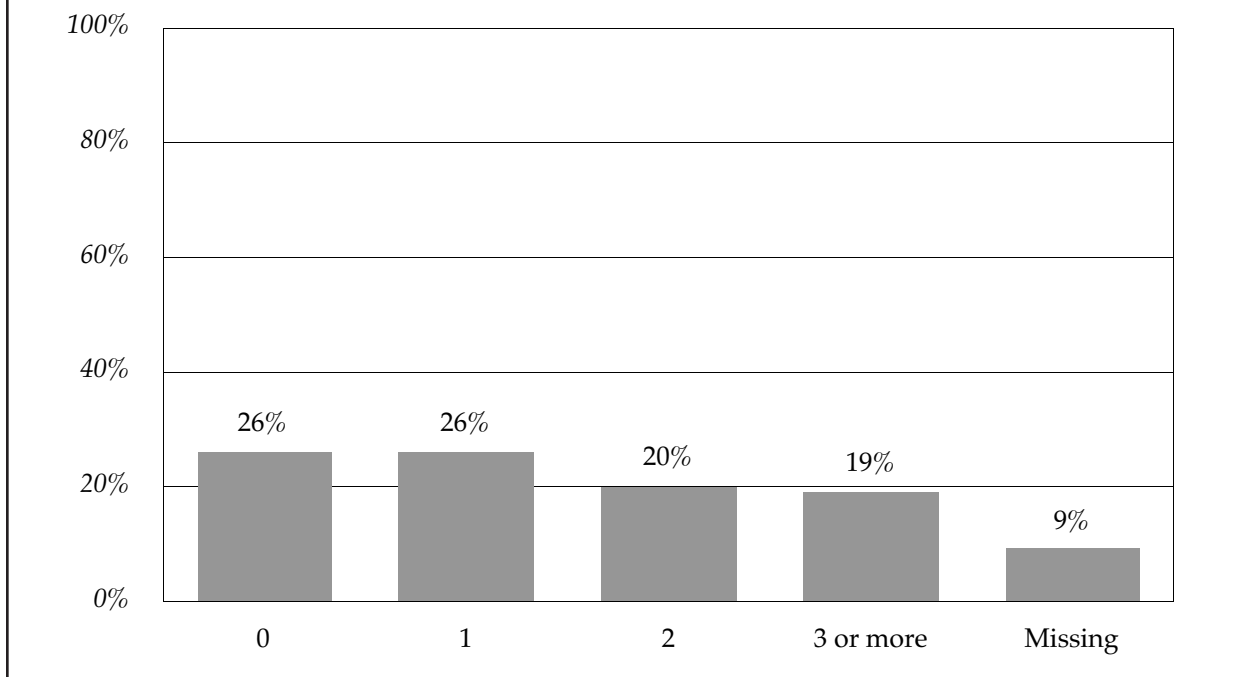
Thirty-seven percent agree that Jews were responsible for killing Christ—the position that has been ingrained in most Christian teaching for centuries. Another 16% of the general public say they do not know or refused to answer. While people may disagree about implications of this belief—that is, whether or not it implies antipathy toward Jews in the contemporary U.S.—historically, Christ-killing had served as the main source of anti-Semitism.

Demographic differences on this issue are few: Blacks (49%) and those in the South region (43%) are especially likely to agree that

**Figure 3: Do you agree or disagree that the Jews were primarily responsible for the killing of Christ?**



**Figure 4: Number of anti-Jewish beliefs held**



the Jews were primarily responsible for killing Christ. To help interpret this finding, it would be useful to know the religious background and identification of respondents, though the pattern suggests a kind of rigid—some would say outdated—fundamentalist acceptance of particular scriptural passages that implicate the Jews, which are prominent in the Bible Belt and especially among Blacks.

**THE NUMBER OF ANTI-JEWISH BELIEFS HELD BY AMERICANS**

If cognitions have cumulative impact, it is important to know the proportion of Americans holding multiple anti-Jewish beliefs. While a single stereotypic or otherwise negative view might not have behavioral consequences or potential, holding several could be more dangerous. The foregoing item-by-item analysis begs the question of how concentrated/diffuse these beliefs are in the population.

Five of the six agree-disagree statements, presented in Section III, express unequivocal anti-Jewish stereotypes. The item tapping concerns about whether a Jewish president would be impartial to Israel is a bit different. One could argue that thoughtful, unprejudiced people might reasonably share this concern without being anti-Semitic. At the very least, agreeing with the presidential fairness statement strikes us as a far milder form of anti-Jewish sentiment than the other items. So, we excluded it from our count. We did include Holocaust denial and the Jews-killed-Christ position in the counting of anti-Jewish beliefs for a maximum of seven.

Fifty-two percent of Americans endorse either none or only one of the seven negative beliefs (not including the belief of Holocaust denial). One-fifth agreed with two of the statements, one-tenth agree with three of them, and nine percent agreed with four or more of them,

that is, with a majority of the seven. Nine percent are excluded because two or more of their answers to the seven statements were neither “agree” nor “disagree.”<sup>15</sup> The mean number of anti-Jewish beliefs held (not shown) is 1.5 (see Figure 4).

Across the population, certain segments hold more anti-Jewish stereotypes than others. These distinctions were largely foreshadowed in the previous section: Blacks hold, on average, 2.0 negative perceptions of Jews, compared to 1.3 among whites; the mean number of negative views declines with increasing education: 1.9 (high school or less) vs. 1.2 (some college) vs. 1.1 (college graduates); also with increasing income: 1.7 (under \$50K) vs. 1.5 (\$50-\$75K) vs. 1.2 (\$75K+); by age, the familiar curvilinear pattern is evident—the least anti-Jewish sentiment in the middle age category: 1.2 (45-54) compared to 1.9 (55 and older) and 1.5 (under 45); Republicans average fewer stereotypes (1.3) than Democrats or Independents (1.6); females express slightly fewer than males (1.4 vs. 1.0); and persons living in metropolitan areas express fewer than non-metro residents (1.1 vs. 1.7).

These survey results indicate that anti-Jewish beliefs and attitudes are far from dead, are probably not dying, and might even be increasing, at least in the short-term.<sup>16</sup> The temporal issue is key but not yet knowable.

Until further surveys are conducted, particularly in calmer times—without the “noise” introduced by 9/11, America’s response abroad, and the escalation of terrorism and fighting in Israel and the Palestinian territories—we will not know how much of the observed levels of anti-Semitic sentiment are blips and how much will endure for more than a brief period. Nor will we be able to divine the direction of the trend, if any.

Levels of current agreement with two of the beliefs about undue power—that Jews control the news media and have too much influence in the financial markets—are especially worrisome as these positions are easily manipulated and have facile appeal to naïve audiences receptive to messages of Jewish conspiracy. The ADL’s April-May 2002 survey also found an increase in the perception that “Jews have too much power in the U.S. today” (20%)—up from the 12% agreeing in their 1998 poll (and up 4 points from 2001).<sup>17</sup>

The Jews-killed-Christ belief is by no means obsolete, as some might have thought following the improved relationship between Jews and the Vatican and many Protestant denominations. Although it’s difficult to discern how much lingering resentment this carries toward current-day American Jews, that fully one-third of U.S. adults continue to adhere to this view cannot be easily dismissed.

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15 We decided that failure to respond to two or more of the seven items with a clear-cut answer one way or the other signifies enough ambiguity to justify not including those respondents in this analysis.

16 During the writing of this paper, the Anti-Defamation League of B’nai B’rith released results from a new anti-Semitism survey, conducted in late April – early May 2002, which included their 10-item scale used in previous polls. One key finding is that anti-Semitism in the U.S. has indeed increased since the previous poll taken in 1998. The percent classified as “strongly anti-Semitic” rose 5 points, from 12% to 17%.

17 S.M. Lipset takes a more benign view of these types of responses—that Americans expressing such sentiments are more “anti-power” than anti-Semitic. He documents similar views about many other groups in American society (cited in Jerome Chanes, “Antisemitism in the United States, 1993: A Contextual Analysis,” in Michael Brown, ed., *Approaches to Antisemitism* (American Jewish Committee, 1994).

Fairly consistent patterns were obtained in levels of anti-Jewish sentiment among demographic subgroups. Much of this is “old news:” the relationships with race, education, and even age to some extent. The observed difference in political party identification, though not evident across all measures, does represent a new phenomenon. In the past, Democrats tended to be less anti-Semitic than Republicans. This is probably changing, or perhaps, has changed—and these partisan contrasts are consistent with much other evidence of greater Republican than Democratic support for Israel among leaders and the mass public.<sup>18</sup>

Another discovery is the unexpected non-linear pattern across age brackets: The least anti-Semitic views in the middle, especially among 45-54 year-olds, and greater anti-Jewish sentiment at the extremes. The greater negativity among older segments is well-documented and not new. In past research, this was often interpreted as an encouraging sign – that the dying off of older cohorts meant less anti-Semitic sentiment in the future. But the pattern in anti-Semitic beliefs observed here is by no means progressively lower among increasingly younger cohorts. If there was a trend, the data presented here implies that it stopped among current middle-age Americans. More potentially troubling, we uncover higher levels—not just a flattening out of the curve—as we move from about age 45 to younger cohorts. This warrants further analysis and discussion, and we revisit the question later.

The next section looks at two different measures which shift the focus away from images of contemporary American Jews and Jewish institutional influence alone in American society to other groups as well.

**THE SIGNIFICANCE OF ANTI-JEWISH SENTIMENT:  
HOW MUCH A “THREAT TO SOCIETY?” &  
“HOW MUCH LIKE ME?”**

Without further information and analysis, it is hard to know exactly what to make of these professed anti-Jewish convictions. Mere description of the distribution of such beliefs and concerns says little about their potential for producing social stigma, inter-personal prejudice, institutional discrimination, desecration of religious objects or symbols, vandalism of property, or worse behavioral manifestations of anti-Semitism. This research does not contain any such measures that might be linked to beliefs and attitudes. Indeed, a systematic study like this would be extremely difficult, if not impossible, to design and implement. However, our survey does have other measures of a different sort to help in the interpretation.

**Perceived Moral Threat to Society**

One series of questions included in our survey asked respondents to rate each of seven minority groups<sup>19</sup> in American life—all of them having been considered sufficiently outside the cultural mainstream to be what sociologists sometimes call “outgroups”—in response to the following question:

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18 Deeper analysis shows that the observed partisan contrasts are largely a function of socio-economic differences—higher education and income of Republicans relative to Democrats. For example, among persons with some college, there is no statistically significant difference in the mean number of anti-Semitic views between Democrats and Republicans (though Independents score higher); among college graduates, the relationship reverses, with Democrats expressing slightly less anti-Semitism than Republicans (Independents again exhibit the highest mean).

19 The groups asked about (in random order), in addition to Jews, were: African-Americans, Hispanics, Catholics, Christian fundamentalists, Mormons, Muslims, and those who do not believe in religion.

*Over the years, some groups in this country have been criticized for having beliefs and values considered “un-American” or different enough to be a threat to society. Please tell me how much of a threat, if any, you feel (INSERT GROUP) present to the moral character of this country. Would you say they are a large threat to the moral character of this country, a small threat, or no threat at all?*

Examining (1) how much Jews are seen as a threat compared to other groups, and (2) correlating the perceived threat of Jews with respondents’ other anti-Jewish beliefs will provide additional perspective on the “seriousness” of anti-Jewish sentiment in the U.S. Adding “large threat” and “small threat,” a total of 21% regard Jews as a threat to the

moral character of the U.S. A miniscule 3% see Jewish beliefs and values as a “large” threat. Jews are about as likely to be viewed as a threat as those of Mexican background (the other group least likely to be perceived as posing any threat)—and far less likely than atheists, Muslims and, to a lesser extent, Christian fundamentalists (see Table 1).<sup>20</sup>

Having one-fifth of Americans viewing Jewish beliefs and values as threatening to the nation’s moral fabric, even if the perceived threat is mostly not large, might strike some as troubling. Nevertheless, the graphic shows that Jews are certainly not unique in this regard compared to a panoply of other ethnic/religious minorities. That is, Jews are not being singled out.

**Table 1: Groups perceived as threat to the moral character of America**

	Large threat	Small threat	No threat	Other /DK
Atheists	17%	28%	46%	9%
Muslims	14%	30%	44%	12%
Christian fundamentalists	7%	24%	60%	9%
Asian background	4%	20%	69%	7%
African-Americans	2%	21%	72%	4%
Mexican background	3%	19%	73%	5%
Jews	3%	18%	72%	7%

*Note: Some rows might not sum to 100% due to rounding*

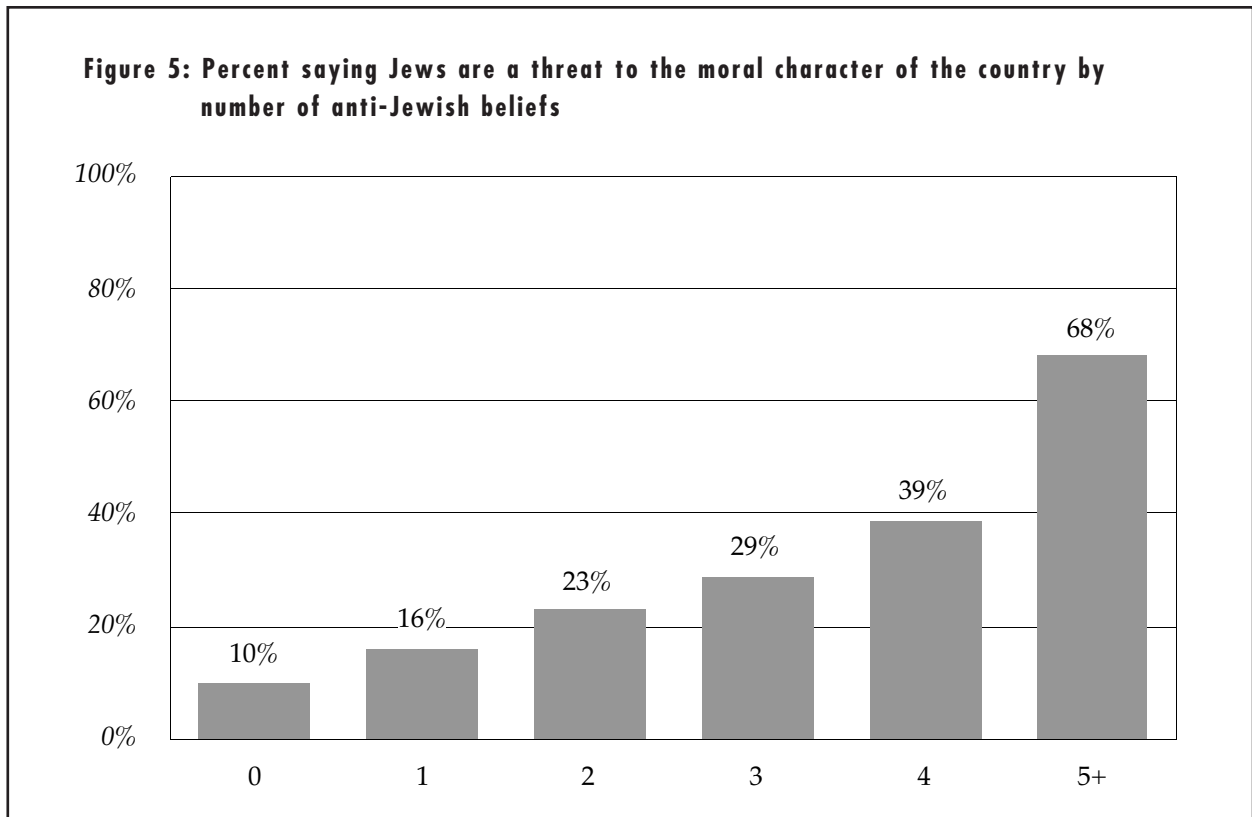
<sup>20</sup> When interpreting these findings, one must keep in mind the relative size of each group in the country and, hence, their representation in the sample: Jews (about 2% of the population) are a smaller group than blacks (about 12% of the U.S.), and a far smaller segment than Fundamentalists. The numbers would likely change, though probably not dramatically, if members of each respective group being rated could be excluded from the base for calculating the percentages. Because of the small number of Jews, the impact of excluding them from the base for calculating the percentages would be minuscule.

Subgroups vary in the extent to which they regard Jews as a threat to the moral character of the country. Blacks are more likely than whites to see Jews as posing some threat (33% vs. 19%). The same is true, to a lesser degree, for those with the least education compared to persons with some college exposure or college graduates (24% vs. 18%). Perceived threat is lowest in the West region (13%) and, interestingly, highest where Jews are most prevalent, in the Northeast (28%). Once again, we notice declining perceptions of threat with increasing age (23% among 18-34 year-olds, 21% among 35-44 year-olds) through the boomer cohort (45-54 year-olds), where it bottoms out at 15%, and then reverses among 55-64 year-olds (26%). The retirement age group (65 and older) does not continue the reversal but instead drops back in their threat perceptions of Jews (19%).

Those agreeing with the statement about Jewish responsibility for killing Christ are more likely than those who do not agree with it to regard Jews as a threat to the country's moral character—30% vs. 13%, though only 5% of them see Jews as a “large threat.” Sixty-four percent of them do not see Jews' core beliefs and values as any threat, compared to 84% of the people who do not hold the Jews responsible for killing Christ.

We also explored the relationship between the number of anti-Jewish stereotypes held and perceiving that Jews present a threat to the moral character of the country (see [Figure 5](#)).

The graph indicates a clear connection: Those who see Jewish beliefs and values as threatening average twice as many anti-Jewish beliefs



as those who do not. The likelihood of saying Jews pose a moral threat increases steadily the higher the number of anti-Jewish beliefs held.<sup>21</sup>

Although it is unclear what causes what—or, alternatively, if perceived threat and anti-Jewish beliefs are part of a unified cognitive system at the same developmental level—there is no doubt that they are interrelated. This “moral threat” analysis implies that anti-Jewish beliefs, such as it is measured in our survey and in others preceding it, carry a degree of seriousness which moves beyond the trivial and benign.

**How much are Jews like me?**

Another series of questions asked respondents to rate each of eight ethnic/religious groups in American life, including Jews, on another dimension – how much each group’s core beliefs and values are like their own:

*Next I have some questions about different groups of people. Please tell me how much you think people in the following groups tend to be like yourself in terms of basic **beliefs and values**. Let’s start with (INSERT GROUP). Would you say they are just like you, mostly like you, mostly UNlike you, or completely UNlike you?*

**Table 2: Percent saying each group is like me**

	Completely unlike	Mostly unlike	Mostly like	Completely like	Other/ DK
Non-believers	40%	28%	19%	4%	9%
Muslims	27%	29%	19%	3%	22%
Mormons	25%	31%	25%	5%	14%
Christian fundamentalists	11%	23%	38%	10%	18%
Jews	13%	21%	40%	9%	17%
Hispanics/Latinos	7%	18%	46%	11%	18%
Catholics	9%	19%	48%	14%	10%
African-Americans	5%	11%	55%	16%	13%

*Note: Some rows might not sum to 100% due to rounding*

21 Perceptions of large vs. small threat are not shown in the table because only 29 respondents answered “large threat.” But the mean number of anti-Jewish beliefs among this small subsample is 3.5, nearly triple the number of the “no threat” group.

22 Respondents could also say they “don’t know,” they could refuse to answer, they could volunteer that the group’s values are in between “mostly like” and “mostly unlike,” or they could refuse to generalize about the group—that is, be unwilling or unable to construct a mental average, indicating that people belonging to the group are too different from one another, etc.

Along with Christian fundamentalists, Jews fall in the middle of the pack on this measure.<sup>22</sup> About one-third of the public see Jews as having different basic beliefs and values than they themselves hold (about one in eight Americans regard Jews as completely unlike themselves in this respect). Almost one-half of the public (49%) perceive Jews as mostly or just like them in terms of core beliefs and values. And the remaining 21% are split among those who “don’t know” (9%), were unwilling to generalize about Jews (5%), volunteered a response in between “mostly like” and “mostly unlike” (2%), or refused to answer (1%) (see Table 2).<sup>23</sup>

Jews are viewed as more similar in basic beliefs and values to Americans polled than Mormons, Muslims, and especially those who do not believe in religion. Jews were seen as less similar to Americans than Catholics and, surprisingly, less similar than Hispanics or Blacks.<sup>24</sup>

Many of the same demographic variables discriminate responses to this question as have been significant elsewhere in this analysis (race, education, age, and, to a lesser degree, income), plus a new one: urban vs. rural residence. Whites are considerably more likely than Blacks to see Jews as like themselves in terms of basic beliefs and values (51% vs. 32%), as are college graduates relative to non-

graduates (61% vs. 45%), as are persons in the highest (\$75K+) income category—60% vs. 45% for those with lower incomes. As for age, we notice the same non-linear pattern observed earlier: Those in the baby-boomer generation (45-54) are most likely to see Jews as similar to themselves (60%), with a steady drop-off in both directions away from that cohort: 55-64 (58%), 65+ (50%); and, going in the opposite direction, 35-44 (48%) and 18-34 (40%).

Persons saying the Jews are responsible for killing Christ are more likely than those who disagree with that position to see Jews as unlike themselves, 41% vs. 29%. Nevertheless, 45% of those holding the Jews-were-Christ-killers view regard Jews today as essentially LIKE themselves in terms of basic beliefs and values (compared to 58% among the segment disagreeing with that premise).

While the foregoing might be interesting in and of itself, the critical question once again is how closely related are perceptions of personal similarity or difference to anti-Jewish stereotypes.<sup>25</sup> The extent to which they covary will help delineate how consequential the negative sentiments are.

The number of anti-Jewish views held is, in fact, related to whether Jews are seen as sharing the same core values: Persons holding

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23 It is possible that this question wording caused some ambiguity, as some people might have interpreted the question as referring to specifically religious beliefs and values (doctrinal or theological content)—which was not our intent.

24 As with the previous measure, when interpreting these findings, one must keep in mind the relative size of each group in the country and, hence, their representation in the sample: Jews (about 2% of the population) are a smaller group than blacks or Hispanics (each about 12% of the U.S.), and a far smaller segment than Catholics (about 24% of the U.S.). The numbers would likely change, though probably not dramatically, if members of each respective group being rated could be excluded from the base for calculating the percentages.

25 The anti-Jewish stereotype statements were presented several questions later in the interview, i.e., after the personal similarity/difference question.



more anti-Semitic views are less likely to regard Jews as like themselves in terms of basic values. The contrast is sharpest when comparing persons holding 3 or more such views (29-34% see Jews as like themselves) vs. two or fewer (52-66% see Jews as like themselves).

The unsurprising fact remains: Anti-Jewish sentiment is statistically associated with per-

ceptions of essential interpersonal differences. Those regarded as different than oneself are more likely to be stereotyped. The foregoing analysis of perceived moral threat and of similarity/difference in core values offers further evidence that anti-Semitic stereotypes are not trivial.

## SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

Our detailed presentation documents several points about anti-Jewish sentiment in the contemporary U.S.:

- Negative stereotypes of Jews still abound
- Introduction of evidence from previous surveys suggests that anti-Jewish sentiment in the U.S. might have increased, at least in the short-term
- Belief in Jewish control/manipulation of the news and undue influence in the financial world is quite extensive
- As found repeatedly in previous research, anti-Jewish perceptions are more prevalent among certain population groups: those with lower levels of formal education and those without high incomes and older age segments, for example
- Our analysis discovered unexpected and new distinctions related to age cohort and political party affiliation: (1) higher levels of anti-Jewish sentiment among younger respondents than among the “boomer” generation, contradicting the theory that anti-Semitism is on a long-term path of steady decline; and (2) somewhat less likelihood of negative views among Republican identifiers compared to Democrats and Independents—a reversal of past findings
- Acceptance of the Holocaust denial lie is minimal, extant among only a tiny fraction of the population
- The survey documents endorsement of the Jews-were-Christ-killers position by a substantial proportion of the public; those holding this view are more likely than those who do not to accept anti-Jewish stereotypes, see Jews as different, and see Jews as a moral threat—even after controlling for differences in education
- One-fifth of Americans regard Jews as a threat to the country’s moral character, though most see them as a small threat—and Jews are seen as no more “un-American” or otherwise threatening than the seven other ethnic/religious minorities asked about in the survey
- About one-third of Americans regard Jews as more different than similar to themselves in terms of core beliefs and values—putting them in rough equivalence in this respect with how Christian fundamentalists are regarded, and significantly closer to most Americans than Mormons, Muslims, and non-believers, but numerically trailing larger U.S. minority groups (African-Americans, Hispanics, and Catholics) on this measure of “cultural distance”
- The correlation of anti-Jewish sentiment with perceived cultural distinctiveness and moral threat adds consequence to the anti-Jewish sentiment found to exist among the public.

The questions about Wall Street and the media are indicators of beliefs that Jews have inordinate power, are good with money, and control America’s economy. The myths of Jewish power and money are medieval and even older. The anti-Semitic beliefs about Wall Street are not very different from Shylock the

moneylender or other such references in popular culture. Wall Street and the media represent two of the strongest centers of power in the United States. Yet it is important to distinguish between anti-Semitic beliefs and reality. Indeed, Jews are disproportionately represented in Hollywood and in certain financial fields. But those who think that Jews have “too much” influence or intentionally distort the news are expressing a clearly hostile attitude.

The blood libel against Jews, that they killed the Christian deity Jesus Christ, is one of the oldest and most sinister anti-Semitic beliefs. While some may argue that it is an old belief and no longer relevant, the data show otherwise. The Christ-killing belief is the most widely held belief of our survey questions. This stereotype may lay the basis for viewing of Jews as fundamentally evil and destructive. How can a people who kill God be anything other than the perpetrators of great wrongs? While some Christians may believe that Jews were picked as part of a great plan to kill Christ and therefore they are absolved from their own participation in doing so, these levels of theological sophistication have little effect on the everyday teaching and belief that Jews killed the Christian God. Furthermore, in the last 40 years, many Christian denominations represented in the United States have revisited in some way the accusation that Jews killed Christ. Why do these beliefs still persist? Are old textbooks still being used that claim that the Jews killed Christ? Are Bibles still being used that say the same? Are individual priests, ministers, preachers, and others still teaching in their sermons and their classrooms that Jews killed Jesus Christ? These questions are all worth exploring to have a better understanding of this phenomenon as it continues to persist in the United

States. It will be especially important to look at the anti-Semitic beliefs of Christ-killing in further research among particular subgroups: racial, ethnic, and religious.

Percentages do not always fully express the magnitude of a particular belief or behavior. What do 5% or 20% or 40% really mean in terms of true numbers of people living in the United States? For example, the 37% of Americans who believe that Jews killed Jesus Christ translates into over 65 million people. Thirty-six million people believe that Jews care only about themselves. Over 48 million people believe that Jews control the media, which leads to biased reporting. More than 58 million people believe that Jews control the financial markets. Six million Americans believe the Holocaust did not occur. Another eight million are not sure or don't know if the Holocaust happened. Thirty-eight million Americans hold at least three anti-Semitic stereotypes. While the percentages may be relatively low in some cases, all of them add up to large numbers who hold anti-Jewish stereotypes.

Studies have shown that being a religious person is a key part of American identity. Choosing a religion, and nearly any religion, practicing it, believing in God, and belonging to a congregation are all positive attributes in American culture. Jews as a religious group, especially those who are more observant, are more legitimate, accepted, and respected than ever before. Such beliefs are not inconsistent with anti-Jewish and anti-Semitic stereotypes. Since the end of the Second World War, there has been a growing acceptance of the Judeo-Christian culture in America. These religions are seen as linked in a fundamental way and signify some level of acceptance of Jews.

On the other hand, Americans are most likely to see atheists, Muslims, and Mormons as foreign and unacceptable. Atheists, the “Godless,” are the most threatening and most disliked among Americans. Islam is not far behind. Increasingly over the years, it may be that Islam has been associated with oil embargoes, rich sheiks, hostage-taking in Iran, dictators in Iraq, suicide bombers, and those who declared war on the United States on 9/11. The radical Islam movement, a combination of theology and revolution, may be the way that Americans emotionally, if not intellectually, associate with Muslims. Therefore, Muslims and atheists, along with Mormons, rank at the bottom of groups who Americans see being like themselves. Jews are somewhere in the middle, representing their new status as accepted Americans and their old status as “outsiders,” “Christ-killers,” and the unsavory religious ethnic group that most of Christendom has scorned for centuries on end.

It is hard for some to comprehend that a proportion of Americans like, appreciate, and respect Jews. Indeed, it is not insignificant that about 50 million plus Americans, or 24% of the adult population, do not hold even one anti-Semitic belief. Even accounting for those who give normative responses hiding their anti-Jewish attitudes, the numbers are still impressive. Given the majority of Americans who hold none or only one anti-Semitic belief, we cannot ignore the flip side of this story: Jews are accepted in America by large numbers. This part of the data cannot be dismissed. We hypothesize that further research on philo-Semitism—the term used to represent the opposite of anti-Semitism—will reveal higher levels of respect and admiration for Jews than ever before.

The levels of negative and positive sentiment may not be contradictory at all. Specific groups often have multiple, often contradictory, feelings about individuals in other groups. Indeed, husbands and wives, brothers and sisters, parents and children, the closest of all relationships, are not unequivocal. There are conflicting views, characteristics that people like about each other and do not like. So it is with large groups of people. These data show both positive and negative attitudes about Jews. They also reveal an essential aspect of the human heart and soul—sometimes you like and dislike a person at the same time, or you like certain things about that person but not others. Therefore, even those who hold certain prejudices about Jews may like them in other ways. Or, conversely, those who largely accept and admire Jews may still hold some negative stereotypes.

We need much more data on the anti-Semitic beliefs of various religious groups in America. Looking at the data as a whole is less informative than it may be with a more detailed list of religious groups.

This study showed higher levels of anti-Jewish beliefs among African-Americans. Other studies show the same, as well as higher levels of anti-Semitism among Hispanics. These beliefs need much more study in order to understand their meaning. Anti-Semitism is a tradition that is often adopted, going through metamorphosis depending on the culture holding the belief. For example, the Jewish population in Japan is virtually nonexistent and yet studies have found that anti-Semitism in Japan is quite high. It is clear that these beliefs are anti-Western, and they take the form of anti-Semitism. Similarly, some of the anti-Semitism around the world may be

currently linked to anti-Americanism, especially in third-world countries. Some have hypothesized that much of the African-American and Hispanic anti-Semitic beliefs are largely anti-white or anti-majority culture in America. A much deeper exploration of the beliefs of these two subgroups needs to be made to fully understand their meaning.

Black and Hispanic anti-Semitism is most likely grounded in the politics of race in America. The divisions between whites and Blacks, while lessening all the time, are still wide and deep. Jews, along with Italians, Greeks, and other Mediterranean people, used to be considered non-white. During the 1950s, as one author describes it, Jews became “white folks”<sup>26</sup> and an increasing integration of Jews into the white majority and separation of Jews from the Black minority occurred. It is not surprising then, that the possibility exists that some proportion of Black and Hispanic (also listed as non-white) anti-Semitism may be imbedded in the racial politics of America.

Although not presented in this report, other data from the survey reveal a connection between anti-Israelism and anti-Semitism—consistent with findings from the ADL survey taken this past Spring. For some, expressing anti-Israel beliefs may be a cover for the expression of their anti-Semitic beliefs. Others may be genuinely questioning some particular policies of the Israeli government (along with many Jews in both the U.S. and Israel). Israel is at the heart and soul of the large majority of American Jews. To most Jews, anti-Israelism is not merely a political debate, but one that strikes to the core of the Jewish

religion. This area of inquiry needs much more research.

The foregoing analysis reveals that Jews are perceived in negative way by a significant proportion of the American public. On the other hand, many Americans consider Jews to be like themselves and do not see Jews as a moral threat to the country as much as they see Muslims, atheists, and other groups as a threat to the country. While this indicates that Jews have potential enemies, it also indicates that Jews have potential allies. A significant number of Americans, it seems, lacking any serious anti-Jewish belief, could be called upon as allies for fighting religious bigotry. It would be wrong to interpret these data as alarming only. However, such an assessment does not diminish the danger revealed by the unexpected reversal in declining anti-Jewish sentiment among younger age groups. Nor does it diminish the large number of Americans of all ages who hold anti-Semitic stereotypes. Nevertheless, the data also reveal some cause for optimism. These data indicate that the battle against anti-Jewish beliefs, and consequently anti-Jewish behavior, does not have to be the battle of Jews alone.

#### **The Meaning of the Differences by Age Group**

Possibly the most interesting finding of all from our research—and one pregnant with implications for the future—is the unexpected age pattern for most of the measures of anti-Jewish sentiment (see Figure 6). Until now, education (directly) and age (inversely) had been key linear determinants of lower levels of anti-Semitic beliefs. Yet these data reveal younger Americans hold more anti-Semitic

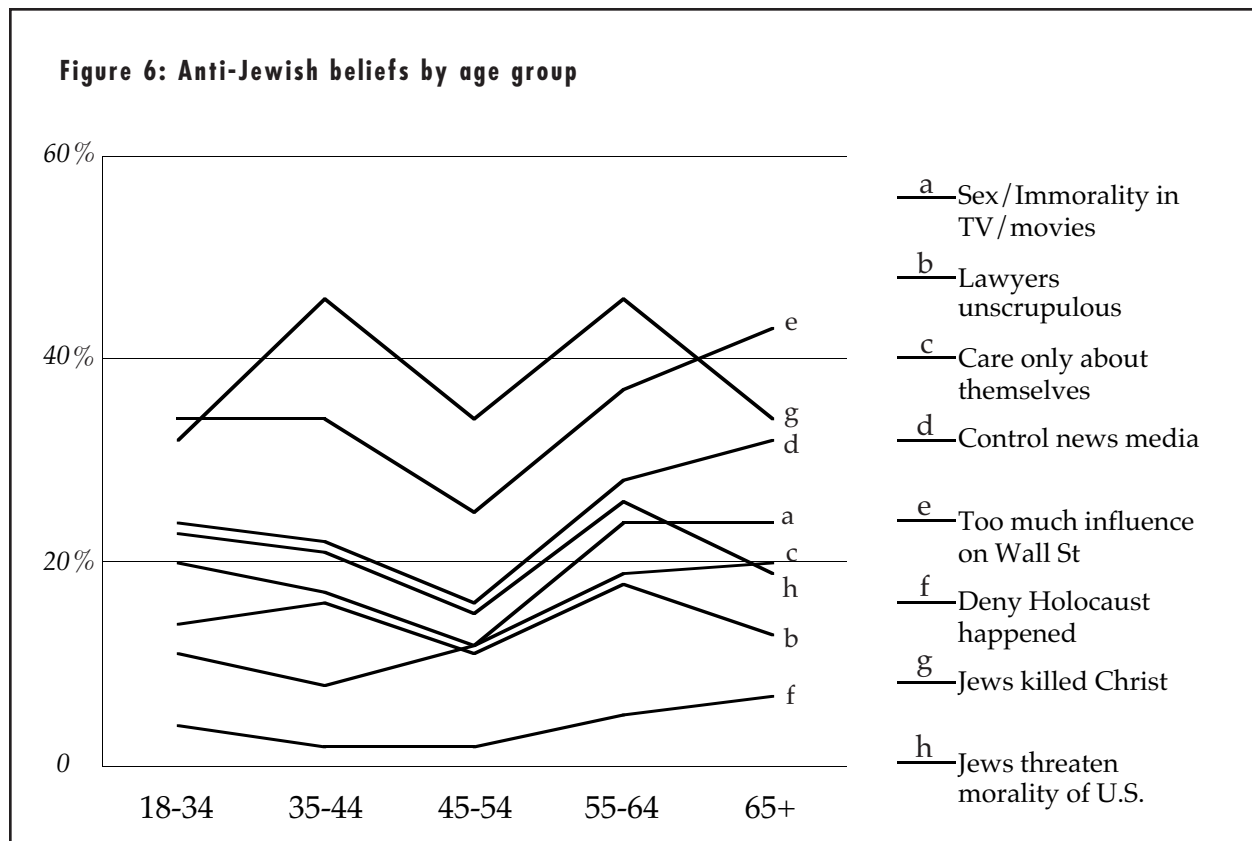
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26 Brodtkin, Karen. *How Jews Became White Folks & What That Says About Race in America*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1998.

beliefs than those between the ages of 45 and 55. This reversal takes place even though more Americans are attending college than ever before. In contrast to the prevailing optimistic view that anti-Jewish feelings in the overall population are gradually but steadily declining with the passage of time as less enlightened older Americans are replaced by younger, more educated and progressive cohorts, our research suggests this might not be the case. The optimistic view gained credence—and might have been exaggerated—during the past several decades by the sheer number of baby-boomers, who indeed express less anti-Semitic sentiment in our survey than earlier studies.

It could be the case that “Generation X” and younger cohorts will begin to resemble their older, boomer counterparts as they mature and acquire more education. In other words,

their higher levels of anti-Jewish feeling might be temporary. However, if this counter-theory is true, it implies a different, more complex model of social change pointing to an interaction between formal education and individual maturation—rather than progressive linear trending toward greater tolerance and acceptance of differences with more years spent in school regardless of formative experiences. No matter whether younger generations will eventually “grow out of” their negative views or not, the data call into question the continuation of the historical trend toward diminished anti-Semitism as well as the intolerance-reducing effects of education per se, as traditionally conceived. The standard wisdom of scholarship on anti-Semitism, and therefore the most common recommendation, is that education lowers the level of prejudice. These findings shake the very strategy of combating anti-Semitism and other forms of prejudice.



The data imply that we must look more carefully at the types of education being received, not just the quantity, and should question whether conventional liberal arts classroom education is sufficient by itself.

It seems plausible to speculate that recent changes in the political environment have fostered more negative sentiment toward Jews among the post-boomers. This explanation points to the emergence of a different climate of acceptable opinion—one which might be weakening the norms prohibiting intolerance against Jews. For example, as in Europe, are some of the observed anti-Semitic views connected to the growing ideology of anti-Israelism as it is being expressed on American college campuses, some in the news media and by other spokespersons? Perhaps the glorification of Palestinians as underdogs and Israelis as oppressors helps remove some of the constraints on beliefs about Jews, especially among the more impressionable.

In any case, the heightened levels of anti-Jewish belief among younger people compared to the immediately previous generation is the most troubling trend revealed in this analysis. It is incumbent upon further research to help us understand the nature of this phenomenon.

#### **A Caveat and Call for Additional Research**

Readers may differ over the meaning of these results. Some will interpret the analysis as mostly positive news for American Jewry; others will draw the opposite conclusion: Is the cup half full or half empty? Before definitive answers can be achieved, one nagging cloud of uncertainty hangs over this research: Are the levels of anti-Jewish sentiment

observed here underestimated due to the methodological problem of “social desirability” or “political correctness?” The authors were well aware of this complication from the outset but, in the absence of any sure-fire remedies, decided nevertheless to proceed with the study. Although we made all reasonable efforts in question testing and development, and in interviewer training and interviewing procedures, to minimize the amount of bias that would result, it is unlikely that we succeeded in eliminating the problem. Therefore, true levels of anti-Jewish sentiment are probably greater than presented here. The consistent correlation with less education supports this line of thinking. Though additional education probably works to reduce anti-Semitism in a genuine way through its humanizing, broadening, and liberalizing impact, it also teaches that the expression of prejudice or drawing of invidious distinctions among social groups is “improper,” even if it exists in one’s mind or heart.

We conclude by issuing a call for creative new research on anti-Semitism that addresses this concern, possibly in-depth interviewing rather than large-scale structured surveys. For example, we need to learn how the belief about an event that occurred two thousand years ago—the circumstances surrounding Christ’s crucifixion—relate to feelings toward Jews today. The research also needs to focus on behavior, and the connection between anti-Jewish sentiment and prejudicial actions. This will be challenging work to carry off effectively, but such research is necessary to achieve a fuller understanding of the changing climate of anti-Semitism.

**APPENDIX**



## ANTI-SEMITISM STUDY

**1. Now I have a question about the current conflict in the Middle East. In the Middle East situation, are your sympathies more with Israel or more with the Arab Nations?**

- Israel
- Arab Nations
- (DO NOT READ) Neither
- (DO NOT READ) Both
- (DO NOT READ) Don't know
- (DO NOT READ)

**2. Next I have some questions about different groups of people. Please tell me how much you think people in the following groups tend to be like yourself in terms of basic beliefs and values. Let's start with (INSERT GROUP). Would you say they are...? (READ LIST; ENTER ONE RESPONSE)**

(CLARIFY IF NECESSARY: Think of the average or typical person in that group.)

(INTERVIEWER NOTE: If, after clarification, respondent says, "It depends on the person," "They're not all the same," "They're too different from one another," "I can't generalize," "There's too much variation," "There is no typical person," etc. USE CODE 6)

- 1. Just like you in terms of beliefs and values
- 2. Mostly like you
- 3. Mostly unlike you, or
- 4. Completely unlike you
- 5. (DO NOT READ) Neither / somewhere in between Mostly like me and Mostly unlike me
- 6. (DO NOT READ) Unable / unwilling to generalize
- D (DO NOT READ) Don't know
- R (DO NOT READ) Refused

(ROTATE SCRAMBLED)

- a. Hispanics or Latinos
- b. Jews
- c. Muslims
- d. Christian fundamentalists
- e. People who do not believe in religion
- f. Catholics
- g. African-Americans
- h. Mormons

**3. Over the years, some groups in this country have been criticized for having beliefs and values considered "un-American" or different enough to be a threat to society. Please tell me how much of a threat, if any, you feel (INSERT GROUP) present to the moral character of this country. Would you say they are...? (READ LIST; ENTER ONE RESPONSE)**

1. A large threat to the moral character
  2. A small threat, or
  3. No threat at all
  4. (DO NOT READ) Group's beliefs / values have a positive effect, are beneficial
- D (DO NOT READ) Don't know  
R (DO NOT READ) Refused

(ROTATE)

- a. Jews
- b. Muslims
- c. People of Mexican background
- d. People of Asian background
- e. Atheists
- f. Christian fundamentalists (IF NECESSARY: "Born-again Christians – those who believe in the absolute truth of the Bible)
- g. Blacks or African-Americans

**4. I am now going to read you several statements reflecting views that various people have expressed. Please tell me if you agree or disagree with each of the statements. Let's start with...(ALTERNATE VERSIONS OF EACH QUESTION IN PARENTHESES SO THAT HALF THE SAMPLE GETS EACH WORDING.)**

(IF NECESSARY: These statements are not meant to offend anyone, and the purpose of the study is NOT to support particular beliefs. The purpose is to find out how much people in the U.S. AGREE or DISAGREE with these positions. IF NECESSARY: Remember that your responses are confidential.)

1. Agree
  2. Disagree
  3. (DO NOT READ) Neither / somewhere in between
- D (DO NOT READ) Don't know  
R (DO NOT READ) Refused

(RANDOMIZE SELECTION WITHIN a. – g. AND h. – m. ALTERNATE SELECTION FROM a. – g. AND h. – m.)

- a. The U.S. would be (better off / worse off) if there were more Christian influence in the public schools.
- b. From what I've heard and read, Islam (is / is not) a religion that promotes peace.
- c. Asian business people tend to be (a little less honest / no less honest) than other business people.
- d. Support for "gay rights" is a way of promoting homosexual lifestyles.

e. Compared to other religious groups in the U.S., Christian fundamentalists are generally (as tolerant/not as tolerant) of different viewpoints.

f. The fact that there are few free elections in the Arab world demonstrates that Arabic people are incapable of democratic government.

g. It is often the case that Arabs cannot be trusted to keep their word.

h. I would be concerned about a Jewish president of the U.S. being fair and honest about Israel.

i. Jewish control of the news media explains why we don't get the whole truth in some stories.

j. The large number of Jewish executives in the TV and movie industry in Hollywood is one reason why there's so much sex and immorality in our popular culture.

k. Jewish lawyers are (a little more/no more) dishonest and unscrupulous than other lawyers.

l. There is (some/no) truth to the belief that Jews have too much influence on Wall Street.

m. Because Jews think they are the chosen people, they care only about themselves.

**5. Do you think it is true or false that millions of Jews were killed by the Nazis during World War II?**

**6. Do you agree or disagree that the Jews were primarily responsible for the killing of Jesus Christ?**

## DR. GARY A. TOBIN

Gary A. Tobin, Ph.D. is president of the Institute for Jewish & Community Research in San Francisco. He is also Director of the Leonard and Madlyn Abramson Program in Jewish Policy Research at the University of Judaism in Los Angeles. He earned his Ph.D. in City and Regional Planning from the University of California, Berkeley. He was the Director for eleven years of the Maurice and Marilyn Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies at Brandeis University. Prior to joining Brandeis, Dr. Tobin spent eleven years at Washington University in St. Louis.

Dr. Tobin has worked extensively in the area of patterns of racial segregation in schools and housing. He is the editor of two volumes about the effects of the racial schism in America, *What Happened to the Urban Crisis?* and *Divided Neighborhoods*.

Gary Tobin is the author of numerous books, articles, and planning reports on a broad range of subjects about the Jewish community. He has published widely in the areas of Jewish organizational planning, foundations, and philanthropy. His books include *Jewish Perceptions of Antisemitism*, *Rabbis Talk About Inter-marriage* and *Opening The Gates: How Proactive Conversion Can Revitalize The Jewish Community*. Dr. Tobin is now working on a book entitled, *Philanthropy in the Modern Jewish Community*.

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Prior to launching his own firm in 2000, he was a survey project manager with the Washington DC office of Market Facts, where he directed more than 120 research studies for government agencies, corporate clients, and non-profit organizations.

His main areas of interest and expertise are public opinion, consumer research, and survey methodology. He received his Ph.D. in Political Science from the University of Minnesota.

## THE INSTITUTE FOR JEWISH & COMMUNITY RESEARCH

Dr. Gary A. Tobin, *President*

### **The Institute**

The Institute for Jewish & Community Research, San Francisco, is an independent research institute devoted to the study of contemporary American Jewish life. The Institute serves as a national and international think tank providing policy-oriented research findings to the Jewish and other communities.

The Institute for Jewish & Community Research collects, analyzes, and disseminates information that will transform and improve the quality of Jewish life. The Institute conducts research; holds conferences, and publishes books, articles, monographs and reports.

### **Current Research**

The Institute engages in research in areas that are often unexplored. For example, we are currently conducting research about:

- Jewish philanthropy, including patterns of giving, motivations for giving, and the growth and character of foundations.
  - Racial and ethnic diversity in the Jewish community. Asian, African-American and Latino Jews are a growing segment of the Jewish population through adoption, intermarriage, and conversion.
  - The American public's attitudes about Israel, U.S. support for Israel, and the attitudes of American Jews about Israel.
  - Ethnic heritage and religion in the United States. Our studies focus on Americans in general and Jews specifically switching their religions, practicing more than one religion, and creating new religious forms.
- Changing aspects of anti-Semitism in the United States, looking at age, political affiliation and other factors. We are also studying anti-Semitism and anti-Israelism on college campuses.

Amid the terrifying wave of anti-Semitism in the United States of late, I have thought of that scene and wondered what has stirred up such anger against Jews now. How do we explain Jews being shot to death at Shabbat prayer in their synagogue by hate-filled white nationalists in Pittsburgh and Poway, California; and visibly Orthodox men and women violently attacked in Brooklyn and Monsey, New York, and shot down next door to a synagogue in Jersey City, New Jersey? These headline-grabbing incidents are part of a broader pattern. The Anti-Defamation League (ADL) began tracking anti-Semitic hate Hummel described the deep-rooted anti-Semitic beliefs among some evangelicals as both cultural and theological, with the cultural beliefs coming from their conservative neighbours and the theological beliefs dating back to early Christianity, when Christians first started casting themselves as the new chosen people replacing the Jews. "Some associations in certain conservative areas, with Jews being liberal, cosmopolitan, international and that being a threat to American Christian identity: You're going to find those views, weirdly, right alongside expressing support for Israel," Hummel said. "This class lives in the United States, but they identify as 'citizens of the world.' Anti-Semitism has no place in the Congress of the United States of America or anywhere in this nation. And anyone who slanders the historic alliance between the United States and Israel should not be sitting on the Foreign Affairs committee in the House of Representatives, All over the world anti-Semitism is on the rise. The BDS movement is rooted in the anti-Semitic belief that the only Jewish state in the world doesn't have a right to exist. There is a clear difference between political speech critical of any government's policies, and advocacy for a policy that results in the end of the Jewish state. Efforts to delegitimize Israel or treat Israel differently than every other country in the world cross that line into anti-Semitism. A 2009 study entitled "Modern Anti-Semitism and Anti-Israeli Attitudes", published in the Journal of Personality and Social Psychology in 2009, tested new theoretical model of antisemitism among Americans in the Greater New York area with three experiments. The research team's theoretical model proposed that mortality salience (reminding people that they will someday die) increases antisemitism and that antisemitism is often expressed as anti-Israel attitudes. There are a number of antisemitic organizations in the United States, some of them violent, which emphasize white supremacy. ^ "ADL Audit: Anti-Semitic Incidents Declined 19 Percent Across the United States in 2013". ADL. Retrieved 17 May 2014. Anti-Semitism (or antisemitism) is discrimination against, hatred against, or criticism of Jews, Jewish culture, or the state of Israel, or Semitic ethnic groups such as Arabs, Assyrians, and Samaritans. As a word it is first recorded in the English language in 1882, but as an idea and argument of hatred examples exist from much earlier times. It was Wilhelm Marr (1819-1904), a German agitator who coined the term "anti-semitism" in 1879.