Antisemitism in North America

New World, Old Hate

Edited by

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CHAPTER 6


Florette Cohen-Abady, Daniel Kaplin, Lee Jussim and Rachel Rubinstein

Antisemitism is perhaps the most enduring form of religious or ethnic prejudice in human history. No single, well-defined reason can explain its strength in the past or present. At times hatred of Jews has derived from territorial concerns, social group rivalries, superstition, legend and fantasy. As we shall see, the reasons antisemites offer as justification for their enmity are far-reaching, illogical and contradictory.1

This chapter defines antisemitism, taking care to differentiate it in the present day form from principled opposition to the state of Israel. Next, the chapter reviews major polls addressing antisemitism in recent years as well as various contemporary reports of antisemitism and opposition to Israel. Finally, the chapter applies the Modern Antisemitism-Israel Model (MASIM) in order to investigate the discrepancy between levels of antisemitism observed in United States and Canada and those observed in much of the rest of the world.

The term, “antisemitism” was coined in 1879 by German antisemitic Wilhelm Marr in order to provide a more intellectually acceptable alternative to the crude, blunt and religiously-based “hatred of Jews.” Marr and other late-nineteenth-century antisemites sought a term that lent legitimacy to their belief that the Jews needed to be opposed because of their so-called racial characteristics. Nowadays, few social scientists see much explanatory value in the concept of a Semitic grouping of peoples, although they still speak of Semitic languages. In common parlance, “antisemitism” continues to be used to describe Jew-hatred of all varieties. Some Arab nationalists spuriously argue that the term antisemitism cannot apply to Arabs although both groups share a common Semitic ethnicity. We will employ the well-established term antisemitism referring it solely to prejudice against Jews.2

2 As new forms of antisemitism emerge, so do definitional problems. For the latest skirmish in the ongoing semantic and political war, see Kenneth L. Marcus, The Definition of Anti-Semitism (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015).
The justifications for Jew-hatred shift radically from era to era and from location to location. They have at times experienced a double-bind: “damned if they do and damned if they don’t.” They have been criticized for being aloof, and for trying to assimilate. Jews have been condemned for being radical Communists, and for being avaricious capitalists. Fascists in Nazi Germany and 1980s Argentina accused their nations’ Jews of having hidden loyalties to socialist regimes, the Soviet Union, on the other hand, regularly persecuted its Jews for harboring secret sympathies for the capitalist West. Jews have been chastised as corrupt cosmopolitans and as insular traditionalists, as heretical free-thinkers and as mystical obscurantists. They are portrayed as being weak, inefffectual, and effete, but also plotting, tyrannical, and seeking global domination.

Jews have been seen as inherently evil throughout much of history in many parts of the world—the hate defying logic or explanation with periodic rises to mass killing and genocide. From the time the Romans expelled most Jews from Israel in 135 CE until the formation of Israel in 1948, Jews experienced expulsions, forced conversions, property confiscations, pogroms, humiliations, and mass executions across dozens of countries.

In recent decades, antisemitism has been joined by disturbing and overt expressions of hostility towards Israel that go beyond mere opposition to specific Israeli policies. The frequency of attacks on Jews in Europe seems to vary based on the presence and intensity of fighting in Gaza. Muslim clerics and Islamic heads of state regularly call for the killing Jews and destroying the Jewish state. Hamas and Iranian leaders have called for the elimination of Israel;

7 Steven K. Baum Antisemitism Explained. (Lanham MD: UPA, 2012).
this reflects well-established principles in the Hamas Charter. Perception of economic tensions has been linked to hostility of Israel, suggesting that this perception provides an "emotional trigger for the scapegoating of Jews."12

Opposition to Israel may reflect antisemitism, at least in correlational studies.13 Yet one cannot infer antisemitism from all opposition to Israel. One can oppose or condemn particular Israeli actions on the basis of moral principles that one applies to all groups equally. If one does so—or even attempts in good faith to do so—then one is not an antisemitic. On the other hand, if one is antisemitic, it seems likely that one would tend to oppose, criticize, and attempt to erode support for Israel. Opposition to Israel, whatever its motivation, may be disguised in the language of rights, liberation, oppression, etc. And legitimate criticism of Israel may also on occasion invoke such language. Thus, in practice, it often is difficult to distinguish moral opposition to Israeli actions and policies from antisemitism masquerading as moral concern for victims of oppression. How, then, can antisemitism that has little connection to Israel, antisemitism resulting from Israel, and opposition to Israel that has nothing to do with antisemitism be distinguished?14

The answer to this question may have political implications, but it also involves fundamental psychological issues. All prejudices, including antisemitism are, after all, social and psychological phenomena. And social psychologists have spent decades attempting both to understand the nature of prejudice, and to distinguish honest and fair views of minority groups or individuals from views steeped in prejudice. Therefore, the next sections draw heavily on the social psychological principles and findings.

Polls, News Reports and Incident Data

Blatant antisemitism is easily recognizable. Physical attacks on persons and property, verbal slurs, and discrimination reveal obvious prejudice. Although

14 Rusi Jaspal Antisemitism and Anti-Zionism (Burlington VT: Ashgate, 2014).
it is well known that Jews have long been subject to such forms of discrimination, what may be less well-known is that Jews continue to be victimized by relatively high levels of blatant antisemitism in much of the world.

In most parts of the democratic West, Jews enjoy the religious and political freedoms and equality granted other citizens. Nonetheless, evidence over the last fifteen years or so suggests that antisemitism is not only alive and “well,” but that it is experiencing resurgence even in parts of North America. For example, rates of antisemitic incidents in nearby Canada have jumped from approximately 300 at the turn of the millennium to 829 antisemitic incidents in 2005. Two years later, the annual number of incidents jumped to 1,042 and two years later to 1,264. Since that time the annual antisemitic incident rates are hovering at or about 1,300.15

By contrast, there has been a recent downward trend (or at least fluctuation) in the number of antisemitic events in the United States In 2005, there were 1,757 documented antisemitic incidents. The figures were 1,460 for 2007, 1,211 for 2009, and 1,080 for 2011, dropping to the low 900’s by 2015.16

The Anti-Defamation League also administers polls that examine attitudes toward, and beliefs about, Jews in the United States. The polls include an eleven-item antisemitism index of respondents who agreed with 6 or more stereotyped versions of Jews of the 11 items. By 2007, 15% of Americans were classified as antisemitic. In 2009, the rate of antisemitism in the United States was 12%. In the 2011 ADL poll, findings indicated that 15% of Americans were antisemitic. The current rates of antisemitism in Canada are similar to those in the United States ranging between 12–13%.17

Cultural or ethnic differences occur within North American samples. French Canadians report more unfavorable opinions than English Canadians (2007: 7% vs. 23%) though Catholics generally evince greater antisemitism. Of greater concern were the earlier ADL polls showing elevated antisemitism rates for African-Americans, rates that did not did not decline with more education, and for Hispanic-American immigrants.

Respondents have agreed with stereotypes at approximately the same rate in many polls. This is also the case regarding the stereotype of dual loyalties,

17 See ADL Audit and Annual Audit of Antisemitic Incidents B’nai Brith Canada.
that Jews are more loyal to Jewish than to national interests, e.g., those of the United States.\textsuperscript{18}

Since 1964, the ADL polls have found that about 30\% of Americans believe this stereotype. In addition, the percentage of respondents who agreed with each of the stereotypes was about constant across the 2007, 2009, and 2011 polls. One characteristic of these findings was that many people in the United States who were classified as antisemitic agreed with the stereotypes that Jews hold too much financial and other power in the United States. For example, in 2011, 78\% of these respondents answered, “probably true,” to the statement that “Jews have too much power in the business world,” in contrast to 20\% of all Americans. In addition, the 2007 and 2009 polls found that more men than women were antisemitic, people who were 65 or older were more likely to be antisemitic than were younger Americans, and less education was associated with more antisemitism.\textsuperscript{19}

The European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights/FRA reviewed antisemitic incidents in 27 European countries. For example, in 2011 a local Flemish newspaper published an article with antisemitic content, referring to the “yiddos of Belgium.” The article compared Jews and Israelis to Nazis. Related Polls by Human Rights First and Pew all paint the same picture of intolerance.\textsuperscript{20}

France is seething with Muslim hatred to the point where the 500,000 citizens are leaving. French antisemitic incidents occur almost daily and are comparatively the most violent. In 2001, there were 219 antisemitic actions and threats reported in France. Incidents have more than doubled in 2005, 2007, 2008, and 2010, tripled in 2003 and 2006, and quadrupled in 2002, 2004, and 2009. These range from the Muslim perpetrated arson at Paris HaTorah Jewish school in Paris in November 2003 to the looting pogroms in the Summer of 2014 to Charlie Hebdo—Kosher Market assassinations in January 2015. It is not limited to France, In Turkey, synagogues were bombed; in Belgium the Jewish Gan Hai day-care center was ransacked, and visiting Israelis killed in a museum; in Russia, a grenade was thrown at a synagogue. In Austria, a Jew was beaten


with his abuser shouting, “Hitler should have finished the Jews off; Israelis are child-murderers. Antisemites justify their acts through making no distinction between military—civilian, Middle-East-West and Jews—Israelis.”

The 2009 ADL poll found that 15% of respondents in seven European countries agreed with all four of the following statements: Jews are more loyal to Israel than to this country; Jews have too much power in the business world; Jews have too much power in international financial markets; Jews still talk too much about what happened to them in the Holocaust with 32% endorsement of 3 items. By 2012, 14% of respondents in ten European countries agreed with all of the statements, and 31% agreed with three of the statements. When ADL’s massive telephone survey of 53,100 people in one hundred nations were completed, an estimated 26% Global 100 had backed six of eleven negative beliefs about Jews.

- have too much business—financial power
- have too much global affairs power
- have too much media power
- have too much control power
- care only about Jews
- think they are better than others
- talk about the Holocaust too much
- are more loyal to Israel,
- they are hated because of their behavior.21

Prevailing economic tension is always involved in antisemitic surges. In studies that examine the rate of antisemitic responses to statements about financial blame—e.g., “Jews have too much power in the international financial markets”—results were similar to overall rates of antisemitism, while rates of antisemitic responses to other items, e.g., “Jews still talk too much about what happened to them in the Holocaust,” were higher than rates of antisemitic responses to items related to Jews’ financial influence and to overall rates of antisemitism.

Methodology may factor into different findings for different settings. In the North American surveys, stereotype agreement on six out of eleven items constitutes antisemitism; in Europe, respondents were labeled antisemitic after agreeing with three out of four stereotypes. It is possible that the greater proportion of antisemitic stereotypes that had to be agreed with on the European

survey for the respondent to be classified as antisemitic had the potential to require that the participant be more strongly antisemitic, for them to meet the threshold for antisemitism in Europe (75%), than in the United States (55%). Alternatively, the fact that respondents had to agree with a greater number of antisemitic stereotypes on the survey that was used in the United States (six items) for them to be classified as antisemitic may have made it less likely that respondents in the United States would be categorized as antisemitic relative to the European survey (3 items). This ambiguity decreases the ability to compare of the results of the European surveys and those of the surveys conducted in the United States.

The situation in the Middle East is altogether different, where the lack of antisemitism is unique. The results of a 2009 poll of residents of Middle Eastern countries indicated that 98% of Lebanese respondents, 97% of Jordanian respondents, 97% of respondents from the Palestinian territories, 95% of Egyptian respondents, 78% of Pakistani respondents, 74% of Indonesian respondents, 73% of Turkish respondents, and 44% of Nigerian respondents held unfavorable opinions of Jews. One exception to this trend were Israeli Arabs, where 56% of respondents reported favorable opinions towards Jews compared with 35% who held unfavorable opinions towards Jews.22

Additionally, Middle Eastern newspapers regularly run antisemitic and anti-Israeli cartoons. Many of these cartoons are reminiscent of the pre-Holocaust era in central Europe. In many of them, Jews are frequently depicted as beasts and insects or as cannibalistic. Jews are depicted as seeking world domination: both Nazi-era and modern Arab cartoons show Jews and Israel, respectively, as an octopus whose tentacles are encircling the entire globe. Despite the fact that many of the Nazi-era cartoons were presented at the Nuremberg trials as evidence of the extent to which Nazi-propagandists inspired Jew-hatred among the citizenry, the blatantly antisemitic cartoons common to the modern Arab press have, so far, evoked neither protest, nor even much response, from Western journalists and intellectuals.

One rarely sees this type of blatant antisemitic rhetoric in the democratic West. Instead, we argue that one finds something far more subtle: attempts to stigmatize, censure, and sanction Israel for acts and policies that cause far less harm than those of other countries. For example, British academic unions have periodically voted or considered voting to boycott Israel; and both British and American churches have voted or considered votes to divest resources from Israel. Given the at least comparable, and often far greater suffering

and oppression perpetrated by regimes such as China, North Korea, Saudi Arabia, and Burma; the “occupations” in places such as Kashmir, Northern Ireland, and Tibet; and the vastly greater death perpetrated in conflicts occurring in Chechnya, the Congo, Sri Lanka, and Sudan than in the Arab-Israeli conflicts, the failure of these same unions and churches to advocate for similar sanctions against other, non-Jewish countries, at least raises the specter that the desire to punish Israel might spring from something other than sincere concern for human rights.

Even with its history as one of the least antisemitic countries in the world, American Jews are proportionately subject to more hate crimes than are other ethnic and religious minorities, including African-Americans, Latinos, and Muslims. This pattern is based on data collected by the FBI, the US Census, and a variety of private polling agencies. Jews are the only group victimized more than once for every ten thousand members of the population. African-Americans are proportionately the next most frequent target of hate crimes, subject to hate crimes at about half the rate of Jews in the United States.23

The above findings were consistent with the conclusions reached by the State Department’s “Contemporary Global Antisemitism”.

Over the last decade, U.S. embassies and consulates have reported an upsurge in antisemitism. Antisemitic crimes range from acts of violence, including terrorist attacks against Jews, to the desecration and destruction of Jewish property such as synagogues and cemeteries. Antisemitic rhetoric, conspiracy theories, and other propaganda circulate widely and rapidly by satellite television, radio, and the Internet. Classic antisemitic screeds, such as The Protocols of the Learned Elders of Zion and Mein Kampf, remain commonplace. Jews continue to be accused of blood libel, dual loyalty, and undue influence on government policy and the media, and the symbols and images associated with age-old forms of antisemitism endure. Antisemitism has proven to be an adaptive phenomenon. New forms of antisemitism have evolved. They often incorporate elements of traditional antisemitism. However, the distinguishing feature of the new antisemitism is criticism of Zionism or Israeli policy that—whether intentionally or unintentionally—Israel’s perceived faults to its Jewish character.24


Human Rights First’s brochure had headings that were always foretelling. The section headings serve as a wake-up call to anyone who has interpreted Jewish economic success as a reason for complacency:

Extreme Violence—including incidents in Russia, France, and the United States; Everyday Harassment and Intimidation—violence and discrimination, a routine of often low-level threats and abuse, continues to be the norm for many European Jewish communities; Attacks on Jewish Institutions and Property—including incidents in Canada, the Ukraine, the United Kingdom, the United States and Austria. Consistent with all the above Pew’s 2015 poll documenting the apogee with rates of global antisemitism at a seven-year high.

Expanding Antisemitic Discourse

Antisemitism was also promoted throughout much of Europe through Internet and other media connected to Middle Eastern and other Muslim countries that promoted hatred of Jews as a part of a political message intended to delegitimize Israel. An example is Antisemitism as Public Policy, e.g., Iran’s Holocaust denial conferences and Resurgent Antisemitism in Central and Eastern Europe.

One well-known statement by a major political leader is, of course, former Iranian President Ahmadinejad’s genocidal call for Israel to be “wiped off the map.” Lesser known are a variety of other events, statements, declarations, etc. that reflect a similar virulent and irrational hostility to things Jewish including, but not restricted to, the state of Israel. For example, a major Egyptian newspaper, Al-Usbu, speculated that Israeli nuclear testing may have caused the 2004 tsunami that led to massive death and destruction in Indonesia, and conspiracy theories suggesting that Israel was responsible for the Sept 11, 2001 attacks abound in the Arab world.

If one believed, however, that such claims and rhetoric were restricted to Arab countries on the frontlines of the conflict with Israel, one would be woefully misinformed. For example, ranking with Ahmadinejad’s statement is the speech by a former prime minister of Malaysia that included (among many other antisemitic statements) the following:

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The Jews...invented and successfully promoted Socialism, Communism, human rights and democracy so that persecuting them would appear to be wrong, so they may enjoy equal rights with others. With these they have now gained control of the most powerful countries...27

In addition, supporters of Israel have long claimed that the United Nation subjects Israel to standards and scrutiny that it rarely applies to other countries. Of course, partisans often see the world as biased against them which raises the possibility that such complaints reflect the bias of those complaining rather than any real disproportion in the UN’s treatment of Israel versus other countries. Therefore, we performed an archival study of UN records to examine whether the UN really does pay disproportionate attention to Israel.28

We needed to operationalize the terms “attention” and “disproportionate.” Attention was relatively easy. The United Nations website has an easy search mechanism which anyone can use to locate all human rights documents pertaining to any member country. Therefore, we operationally defined “attention” quantitatively as the total number of UN documents on Israel for the period 1990–2007. Next, we needed to define “proportionate”. How does one compare, e.g., Israeli constructing a security fence that unjustifiably cuts through Palestinian homes and communities with Saudi Arabia’s denial of women the right to vote or drive? How does one compare, e.g., the human rights violations that occurred during Israel’s 2006 war with Lebanon to Russia’s 2008 war with Georgia? The answers to these questions are not obvious, and reasonable people may disagree. Therefore, we opted to use as quantitative and objective a standard as possible: Number of civilian deaths inflicted as a result of war or government policy. Civilian death, especially when intentional, as it is in many conflicts, is the ultimate human rights violation. Furthermore, numbers of dead are quantitative, objective and readily comparable across countries, ethnicities, religions, and cultures. Although in some conflicts, the exact number of civilians killed may not be knowable, we purposely chose conflicts where estimates have converged within a fairly narrow range, and we generally took


the midpoint of those estimates. For comparison to Israel, we purposely chose a diverse group of conflicts occurring on five different continents, and conflicts with widely varying degrees of civilian death in order to obtain a broad view of the relationship between civilian death and UN scrutiny. The countries included Rwanda, North Korea, Sudan, Serbia, Colombia, and Israel.

Several results are quite striking. First, the civilian death toll in this period is, in absolute terms, the lowest for Israel—and the figure for Israel includes Israeli civilian deaths as well as Arab civilian deaths. Second, the UN scrutiny is actually highest in absolute terms; on average, across the five comparison countries; the UN produced about four documents for every 10,000 civilian deaths (726 documents for 1,639,000 deaths). For Israel, the ratio is about one document for every nine deaths (752 documents for 7100 deaths). Put differently, the UN produced more documents regarding Israel than for all five of the comparison countries combined. Also, the UN is about 239 times more likely to produce a document resulting from a civilian death involving Israel than it is to produce one for the other five countries we examined.29

These data, therefore, do not support the claim that supporters of Israel overstate or exaggerate the extent to which the UN disproportionately scrutinizes Israel. Instead, they support the claim that, in fact, the UN does indeed scrutinize the Israeli human rights situation far more than it does other countries. This data highlights one of the more subtle ways that antisemitism can manifest in Western, democratic countries.

Numerous real world events seem to reflect the uniquely hostile reactions people often have towards Israel. One disturbing example may be found in modern political cartoons in which Israel and Israelis are depicted as animals, insects, or cannibals. On their face, such cartoons seem to reflect the virulent type of loathing that often characterizes deep-seated bigotries. Vicious anti-Israel imagery appears in mainstream presses from a variety of countries. Many such cartoons have a haunting similarity in substance, style, and motif to Nazi-era cartoons depicting Jews in a manner widely recognized as reflecting the most virulent form of antisemitism. We are not claiming that the authors of the modern cartoons are Nazi-sympathizers. The vile nature of these cartoons, however, does suggest that antisemitic attitudes may run wide and deep, and they raise the possibility that these cartoons reflect more than mere opposition to Israel. Because we have not performed a full-scale international scientific survey of political cartoons, it is of course possible that other countries, cultures, or peoples are similarly depicted as widely and as frequently in such a

revolting manner. Nonetheless, these real world examples are also consistent with our perspective suggesting that hostility to Israel may be expressed with such virulence that it is most likely powered, at least in part, by antisemitism.

When taken together—hate crimes in North America, rising international antisemitism, harsh and disproportionate bigoted rhetoric by some political leaders, churches and unions considering sanctioning Israel, and the UN’s bizarre record of attention to Israel—these factors strongly suggest that, after lying mostly dormant for a few decades immediately after World War II, antisemitism is on the march once again. On the other hand, however, it is very difficult to pin down causality using real-world data. That is, perhaps things other than antisemitism caused some or all of the social phenomena discussed so far. For example, perhaps Jews report hate crimes more than do others. Perhaps issues of power, oil, and alliances, as much or more than antisemitism, underlie the UN’s record on Israel. Although the real world is where the bigotry really counts, to gain more insights into the causal mechanisms underlying some of these phenomena, we have performed a series of experiments, which are discussed next.

The Psychology of Antisemitism

Over the last several years, we have been engaged in a program of research based on the Modern Antisemitism-Israel Model (MASIM), formerly called the New Antisemitism-Israel Model. The MASIM combines elements of Terror Management Theory and modern prejudice theory to better understand antisemitism. Specifically, the present set of studies tested the hypothesis that uniquely human fears of death serve to perpetuate expressions of antisemitism and anti-Israeli sentiment.30

According to Terror Management Theory, human beings, like all other animals, are driven to survive. However, because of their complex cognitive capabilities, specifically the ability to think abstractly and symbolically, culminating in explicit self-consciousness, humans are uniquely aware of the inevitability of death and the ever-present potential for lethal experiences. This awareness creates the potential for paralyzing terror. Terror is the emotional manifestation of the self-preservation instinct in an animal intelligent enough to know that it will someday die.

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Terror management theory posits that to ‘manage’ this potentially debilitating terror, humans created cultural worldviews: symbolic conceptions of reality shared by individuals in a group. Cultural worldviews minimize death anxiety by imbuing the world with order, meaning, and permanence. They provide a set of standards of valued behavior that, if satisfied, confers self-esteem and ultimately, death transcendence through symbolic and/or literal immortality. Thus, from the perspective of terror management theory, individuals manage their terror by maintaining faith in the cultural worldview and living up to the standards of value that are part of that worldview.

Though the cultural worldview is treated as absolute reality by those who subscribe to it, it is actually a fragile social construction requiring continual validation from others in order to be sustained, especially when confronted with reminders of mortality.\(^{31}\)

This validation occurs mainly through the process of social consensus. Thus, the mere existence of people with similar worldviews bolsters the individual’s faith in the validity of his or her own worldview, thereby increasing its effectiveness as an anxiety-buffer. Likewise, the mere existence of people with dissimilar worldviews threatens the individual’s faith in his or her own worldview, thereby undermining its effectiveness as an anxiety-buffer. As such, people generally prefer ideas and people that conform to their worldviews and derogate ideas and people that deviate from them.\(^{32}\)

To date, hundreds of experiments around the world have established the link between death fear and increasing punishment of those who transgress morally as well as those who criticize the national identity; there is also increasing positivity toward upholders and valuators of the worldview. Mortality reminders have induced a heightened tendency in participants to endorse false positive feedback, to demonstrate the self-serving attribution bias, and to extend extra effort in domains relevant to their self-worth.

Threats to participants’ cultural belief systems, including their religion, have increased the accessibility of death-related cognitions on a word-completion task. These studies strongly suggest that investment in a cultural worldview, and obtaining a strong sense of self-esteem by meeting standards of value within that worldview, shelters people from death concerns; and, conversely,


that mortality salience motivates people to bolster self-esteem and defend their worldviews.

Mortality salience effects are driven by heightened accessibility of death-related cognitions outside of focal awareness, which signals the potential for death-related anxiety.

Furthermore, these effects have been replicated using numerous different inductions designed to increase the accessibility of death-related thought, and those effects compared to a variety of aversive and non-aversive control conditions ranging from dental pain to social exclusion; suggesting convergent and discriminant validity for mortality salience effects.33

Terror management theory may be particularly useful for understanding antisemitism because outbreaks have often occurred following major social disruptions—military defeats, epidemic lethal disease, and massive economic deterioration. Either death, or some threat to people’s most cherished beliefs, or both have become salient. Terror management theory suggests that, under such circumstances, many people will attempt to protect themselves by affirming their core values. Jews’ survival, their financial success and their unique religious beliefs threaten the worldview of others. This threat can be parried by denigrating Jews.

The basis for predicting cultural hostility towards Jews, therefore, includes all the well-established reasons for outgroup hostility; there are also some unique reasons, over and above the usual laws of culturally determined behavior. Outgroups might not share the same attitudes and beliefs as ingroups. They compete for resources and are perceived as more different from ingroups than they really are. Also, outgroups are often seen as less deserving of trust than are ingroups. Much research over decades attests to these processes. Generic outgroup hostility begins to explain why Jews are potentially threatening.34

In support of this view, Greenberg et al. demonstrated that, consistent with terror management theory predictions, when Christians thought about their


own death (mortality salience) their trait ratings of fellow Christians became more positive and their trait ratings of Jews became more negative.\textsuperscript{35}

Across all measures, the Christian was rated more positively than the Jew only in the mortality salient condition. Similarly, mortality salience led American college students to increase their agreement with the statement that “the Holocaust in Nazi Germany was God’s punishment for the Jews”.\textsuperscript{36}

Additionally, subtle reminders of death have been shown to generate physical aggression toward those who threaten cultural worldviews.\textsuperscript{37}

After a mortality salience or control induction, liberal or conservative college students were given an opportunity to administer a quantity of their choosing of very hot salsa to a student who wrote an essay condemning either liberals or conservatives, and who claimed to dislike spicy foods. Hot sauce administration in this study was used as a direct measure of physical aggression. Results indicated no differences in hot sauce allocation for similar and dissimilar others in the control condition; however, following mortality salience, participants administered twice the amount of hot sauce to different others than they did to similar others.

Such defensive reactions to mortality salience are not limited to non-Jews. Studies conducted by researchers at Bar Ilan University three months before the Israeli pullout from the Gaza Strip and the Northern West Bank examined whether reminders of death would lead right-wing Israeli Jews to endorse violent resistance against the disengagement plan. Reminders and invocations of death led to greater support for violent resistance, particularly among participants high in denial. It would appear that when the threat of death is manifest, people are often prone to violent defenses. From a terror management theory perspective, the straightforward explanation for antisemitism is simple—when focused on their own mortality and in need of the protections that their worldviews provide, non-Jews may become more hostile towards Jews; this is because Jews represent a challenge to their worldviews by being outgroup members.\textsuperscript{38}


\textsuperscript{36} Greenberg, Sullivan and Arndt, “A Basic but Uniquely Human Motivation,” 114.

\textsuperscript{37} Cohen et al., “Modern Antisemitism and Anti-Israeli Attitudes,” 290.

The tenor of most terror management theory research suggests that reminders of death will increase prejudice and hostility toward different others. However, although blatant forms of antisemitism do exist, prejudice in general is often stigmatized. As such, people may often try to deny or hide their prejudices. Although a person may appear friendly and tolerant, hostility may be lurking not far from the surface. The terms “modern” or “symbolic” racism were developed because people stopped saying, “Blacks are despicable and should not be allowed in our schools or restaurants.” Instead, they simply opposed government policies to promote racial equality, and they opposed candidates supporting those policies.\(^39\)

Just as some people veil their racism and anti-Black prejudice (e.g., by opposing busing and affirmative action), people may similarly veil their antisemitism by opposing Jews’ national aspirations. If one is a racist, opposing affirmative action is a safe way to express it; if one is an antisemitic, opposing Israel is a safe way to express it. That is, even when criticisms of Israel do stem from antisemitism (and not all do), one can rhetorically attempt to claim the “high road” by hiding behind: “I am not an antisemitic; I just oppose Israeli violence and oppression.”\(^40\)

The Modern Antisemitism–Israel Model (MASIM)

Cohen’s Modern Antisemitism–Israel Model (MASIM) combines key elements of terror management and modern prejudice theories. The model predicts that when mortality is salient, Jews may be more commonly perceived as threatening to one’s worldview because they are different than non-Jews in their beliefs and behaviors. This, in turn, leads to antisemitism which can manifest overtly in verbal slurs, defamation, or harm. Alternatively, because prejudice (antisemitism) is stigmatized, the manifestation may be covert through the application of double standards, demonization and delegitimization of Israel,


the Jewish state. As such, those who harbor antisemitic attitudes may show increased hostility to Israel. The model predicts that mortality salience leads to increased antisemitism, and that increased antisemitism leads to decreased support for Israel. In addition, however, data suggests that hostility to Israel can feed back to increase antisemitism. Thus, the model also predicts that antisemitism may partially mediate effects of mortality salience on attitudes towards Israel.

Such mediation, however, is predicted to be only partial because the model also predicts that mortality salience can increase opposition to Israel for reasons having nothing to do with antisemitism, that is, via a different path. This is because Israel, as a combatant for over sixty years, may be regarded as perpetrating human rights violations. Mortality salience activates worldview defenses, and worldviews typically include moral codes. For these reasons, mortality fears lead to more punitive attitudes towards those committing moral transgressions. Mortality salience, therefore, may decrease support for Israel due to heightened moral sensibilities, rather than to the arousal of latent antisemitism.

The model also posits that a reverse causal path exists. Although concern for human rights violations may lead to reduced support for Israel for reasons having nothing to do with antisemitism, it may then actually trigger an increase in antisemitic prejudices via yet another path. Three experiments conducted by Cohen et al. demonstrated that:

- participants expressed significantly greater levels of antisemitism and lower levels of pro-Israeli sentiment, when reminded of their mortality and when told that they would be caught in the act of lying;
- antisemitism partially mediated the effects of mortality salience crossed with bogus pipeline manipulation on opposition to Israel;
- mortality salience increased the perceived size of Israel, but not that of other countries, and;
- mortality salience increased opposition to Israeli oppression more than it increased opposition to Russian or Indian oppression.

The first study included 151 participants from a Rutgers University psychology class (99 females, 52 males; 9 African-American, 30 Asian-American, 18 Latino, 77 White, 26 “other”; 96 Christian, 3 Muslim, 2 Buddhist, 19 Hindu, 28 “other” all of whom were given extra credit for their participation. A mortality salience

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41 Ibid., 277.
(MS) manipulation was crossed with a “prejudice obvious/bogus pipeline” manipulation. In the MS condition, participants responded to two open-ended questions relating to their own mortality, which read as follows: “Please describe the emotions (in writing) that the thought of your own death arouses in you.” And, “Write down as specifically as you can, what you think will happen to you physically when you die.”

Exam salience (control) participants responded to parallel questions regarding taking an upcoming exam, as follows: “Please describe the emotions that the thought of your next important exam arouses in you.” And, “Write down as specifically as you can, what you think will happen to you physically as you take your next important exam and when it’s over.” Exam salience provided an apt control condition among college students because, as demonstrated in previous terror management theory studies, exams are an unpleasant as well as anxiety-provoking yet non-lethal event.

The instructions provided to participants in the Prejudice Obvious condition explicitly stated on the cover page that prejudice towards various groups was being measured. The Bogus Pipeline Condition led participants to believe that any deception on their part (“lying to appear unprejudiced”) would be detected by sophisticated methods developed by psychologists.

Three questionnaires were used to assess blatant expressions of antisemitism, anti-Israeli sentiment and anti-Palestinian sentiment. The antisemitism (A-S) scale was a revised version of Levinson and Sanford’s original measure modified to sample anti-Jewish attitudes with 23 contemporary, and less blatant, attitude items such as, “Jews still think of themselves as God’s Chosen People,” “Jews are more willing than others to use shady practices to get what they want,” and “Jews are just as honest as other businesspeople” (reverse coded). The attitudes towards Israel scale consisted of 10 questions assessing participants’ levels of pro-Israeli sentiment such as, “I strongly support the Israeli cause”. The attitudes towards the Palestinians scale consisted of 10 questions assessing participants’ levels of pro-Palestinian sentiment. Most items were highly similar to the Attitudes towards Israel scale items, such as “The Palestinians have been oppressed by Israelis for decades,” “I strongly support the Palestinian cause, and “The Palestinians deserve a homeland.” Questions for each scale were scored on a five-point Likert scale. Responses were combined and averaged to create a composite score for each of the three scales.43

Results revealed that antisemitism was negatively correlated with support for Israel ($r = -0.42$), and that mortality salience significantly increased

self-reported antisemitism but only in the bogus pipeline condition. Mortality salience had no effect on support for Palestinians (p > .1). One implication of this pattern was that people recognize that hostility to Israel stems from antisemitism. If not, why the need to hide it?

The second study employed 161 participants from a Rutgers introductory psychology class (99 female, 62 male; 8 African-American, 34 Asian-American, 15 Latino, 81 White, 23 “other”; 98 Christian, 13 Hindu, 7 Muslim, 1 Buddhist, 39 “other”), and tested the prediction that mortality salience would increase a subtle measure of antisemitism. Prior research had shown that fear and prejudice leads people to overestimate the size and power of minority groups.44

More recent evidence showed that a Gallup poll found that after the US and Pakistan, Israel was named the greatest threat to world peace, alongside Afghanistan, Iran, North Korea.45

Therefore, we investigated determinants of the perceived size of Israel and six other countries. Following a reminder of death or of an important exam, people were given seven maps and asked to estimate the size of Israel and each of these six other countries. As predicted, mortality salience significantly increased the perceived size of Israel, but had no significant effect on the perceived size of any other country.

The third study was designed to rule out some alternative explanations that remained after the earlier research, namely that mortality salience increased hostility towards Israel because it provokes hostility to any nation perceived as committing obvious human rights violations, and that prejudice against Jews has something to do with the fact that the principal experimenter was Jewish, the study was done in a Jewish professor’s lab, and the research obviously assessed feelings about Jews.

In order to increase the generalizability of this research, this study did not examine college students. Rather, an Indian research assistant surveyed 235 patients—and those accompanying them; average age 45; 155 female, 80 male; 6 African-American, 6 Asian American, 19 Latino, 196 White, 8 “other”; 200 Christian, 3 Muslim, 4 Buddhist, 26 “other” of a local non-Jewish Indian

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45 See “Happy new year? The world’s getting slowly more cheerful,” BBC NEWS December 30, 2013, http://www.bbc.com/news/world-25496299 (accessed 1 June 2015). Gallup International Association surveyed 66,000+ people across 65 nations and found 24% of all respondents say the United States “…is the greatest threat to peace in the world today followed by Pakistan (8%); China (6%); and at 5% At 5% all are tied for third place—Afghanistan, Iran, North Korea, Israel.
physician, while they were in a waiting area of her two offices. Participants were randomly assigned to either a mortality salience or an aversive pain control induction condition and were asked to recommend punishments of Russia, India or Israel for (identical) human rights violations. Mortality salience increased willingness to punish Israeli moral transgressions more than it increased willingness to punish Russian or Indian transgressions. Furthermore, despite the fact that an Indian ran the study in an Indian doctor’s office and assessed attitudes towards India, post hoc analyses showed that mortality salience had no effect on India. Taken together, these studies provided preliminary empirical support of the model.

Based on the finding of Cohen, it seems likely that hostility towards Jews and Israel in response to reminders of death will often be expressed in subtle and indirect ways that are plausibly interpretable as something other than prejudice.46

One way to unveil modern antisemitism has come to be known as the “3D” test—double standards, demonization, and delegitimization.47 The results of the Cohen et al. study showed that mortality salience increases the application of double standards to Israel by showing it increases support for punishing Israeli transgressions more than those of other countries. Three follow-up studies tested the model by examining demonization and delegitimization. Demonization is the classification of a person or group as evil, thereby justifying or legitimizing either verbal slurs or physical violence. Once demonized, the individual or group is denied humane behavior and human respect. Types of demonization include dehumanization, (e.g., depiction of the group as savages, insects, beasts, or monsters), negative trait characterization (e.g., aggressors, idiots, lazy); out-casting (e.g. violators of social norms, murderers or terrorists) and use of rejected political labels such as Nazis, communists, socialists.

Throughout history, demonization has been used by groups and nations as a tool of exploitation and to justify aggression. For example, the perpetrators of genocide often created a political atmosphere supportive of mass murder by demonizing their intended victims.48

The 2009 Cohen studies specifically examined whether mortality salience increased support for demonizing Israel. Borrowing from Bar-Tal’s definition, delegitimization is the denial of some entity’s right to exist because that entity

Delegitimized groups are seen as transgressors of basic human norms or values, and are therefore characterized as bad and ultimately evil. Demonization is often used in the service of delegitimization—if “they” are merely beasts or insects, or if “their” behavior is sufficiently revolting or immoral, then “they” do not deserve the right to exist. Mortality salience was examined with regard to delegitimization.49

In the first study, a mortality salience (MS) manipulation was again crossed with a “bogus pipeline” manipulation. Study 1 replicated Cohen et al.’s findings using 171 college participants (86 females; 85 males; 15 African-American, 48 Asian-American, 14 Latino, 77 White, 16 “other”; 100 Christian, 20 Hindu, 12 Muslim, 7 Buddhist, 32 “other”): mortality salience increased explicit forms of antisemitism, but only when participants believed they would be detected if they misrepresented their responses.50

As a direct measure of delegitimization, participants answered four questions on a 7-point Likert scale assessing the degree to which people believed that Israel should cease to exist. Questions included: “How much do you believe Israel to be a threat to world peace?” “Israel has been accused of violations against humanity. Given the severity of Israel’s transgressions how strongly do you believe they should lose their status as a United Nations member?” “How strongly do you believe that the world would be a better place if Israel ceased to exist?” and “How strongly do you believe that it is in the United States best interest to ensure that Israel continues to exist?”

Mortality salience increased support for delegitimizing Israel, an effect that occurred regardless of whether there was also a bogus pipeline. Consistent with the hypothesis, those who were more antisemitic also demonstrated higher levels of delegitimization towards Israel, \( r (147) = -.42, \ p < .001 \). The strength of this correlation is worth noting in its own right. It places the relationship between antisemitism and levels of delegitimization toward Israel among the largest 25% of effects found in social psychology and are nearly double the average effect size obtained in work on social cognition, attitudes, and intergroup relations and is consistent with recent findings obtained in several European countries in which antisemitism and anti-Israeli attitudes have been shown to be related.51

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Cohen speculated that the bogus pipeline was not needed to reveal delegitimization of Israel in this study because such delegitimization is not readily recognized as blatant antisemitism. The second study tested the model through the hypothesis that expressions of hostility towards Israel will be magnified by a mortality salience induction even in the absence of bogus pipeline conditions. Therefore, demonization of Israel was assessed through obtaining participants’ impressions of two political cartoons. Political cartoons typically use visual metaphors and caricatures to draw attention to important social and political issues with a humorous or emotional picture.

Political cartoonists in the Arab media sometimes depict non-Arab countries and their leaders as exterminators of the Muslim world. And in a Western media outlet, a popular British cartoon that depicts former Prime Minister Ariel Sharon eating babies is a form of demonization. This cartoon draws heavily on the medieval Jewish blood libels in which Jews were accused of murdering non-Jewish children in order to use their blood to prepare Passover matzos. There are many other examples of modern political cartoons portraying Israel and Israelis as Nazis, animals, insects, or cannibals.52

While it is possible that other countries, cultures, or peoples are similarly depicted as widely and as frequently in such a revolting manner, these real world examples are also consistent with the perspective suggesting that hostility to Israel may be expressed with such virulence that it is most likely powered, at least in part, by antisemitism. Thus, one purpose of this study was to assess whether mortality salience increases support for the anti-Israeli political cartoons more than for those of another country. The third study therefore tested the hypothesis that expressions of hostility towards the Jewish state would be magnified by a mortality salience induction even in the absence of bogus pipeline conditions.

One-hundred and fifty-two Rutgers University students (97 females, 54 males; 10 African-American, 26 (non-Chinese) Asian-American; 17 Latino, 82 White, 12 “other”; 104 Christian, 12 Hindu, 5 Muslim, 1 (non-Chinese) Buddhist, 29 “other”) assessed a subtle expression of antisemitism and anti-Israel sentiment and opposition to Israel in the form of demonization. Participants first read a short vignette discussing either Israeli brutality towards Palestinians or Chinese brutality towards a group of monks. Vignettes read as follows:

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Violence against Palestinians/Tibetan by Israeli/Chinese security forces is not new; it has accompanied the occupation for many years. Recently, however, a significant increase in the number of beatings and instances of abuse has occurred, in part because of increased friction between Palestinians/Tibetan and Israeli/Chinese security forces. According to many testimonies given to human rights organizations, the security forces use violence, at times gross violence against Palestinians/Tibetans unnecessarily and without justification.

Participants were then shown impressions of two offensive political cartoons depicting the Israeli leader eating Palestinian babies (See Figure 12) and a Jew atop the world with a bleeding Arab surrendering beneath (See Figure 13). Two parallel cartoons of the Chinese leader eating Tibetan babies (See Figure 12) and a Chinese man atop the world with a bleeding Tibetan surrendering beneath served as the control conditions. Participants were asked to indicate on a scale of 1–5 how “justified” they thought each cartoon was. Results showed that mortality salience in conjunction with a bogus pipeline manipulation increased perceived justification for offensive political cartoons of Israel but not China for both the Leadership cartoon and the World cartoon. That the bogus pipeline was needed to reveal this effect suggests that, in fact, a cartoon of Ariel Sharon eating babies is a relatively obvious assessment of antisemitism.

Cohen examined the possibility that Jews may be uniquely threatening to people’s worldviews. In her third study, participants completed scales assessing explicit antisemitic attitudes and prejudicial attitudes towards Blacks and Asians.

Two hundred and ninety-eight Rutgers University students (138 females, 160 males; 12 African-American, 145 Asian-American, 25 Latino, 90 White, 26 “other”; 175 Christian, 49 Hindu, 19 Muslim, 11 Buddhist, 44 “other”) participated in two (Mortality Salience: Death v. Exam) crossed with two (Bogus pipeline: camouflage vs. bogus pipeline) experimental designs.

Questions included:

- Jewish businessmen are so shrewd that other people do not have a fair chance at competition;
- Over the past few years, the government and news media have given more attention to African-Americans than they deserve;
- In order to get ahead of others, Asian Americans can be overly competitive.

Mortality salience increased antisemitism scores, but not prejudice scores towards Blacks or Asians. This result contrasts with some previous terror
management theory studies which have shown that mortality salience increases derogation of many out-groups.\textsuperscript{53}

To our knowledge, however, prior research on terror management theory and prejudice has only examined attitudes towards a single group at a time. If, as the MASIM predicts, Jews are more threatening than other ethnicities, then, derogating them is more a priority. It would seem that Jews constitute the most threatening cultural threat for the subjects studied and thus derogation of Jews was enough to assuage death concerns.

The notion of Jews as threat is shared by many others, with ongoing calls for antisemitism to be recognized as a unique form of prejudice. Not surprising to Anne Bayefsky, UN Watch, and other United Nations (UN) monitors who have identified the unbalanced, abusive voting record sanctioning all things Israeli, is the following. When the declaration equating racism with antisemitism was put to a UN vote in January 2015, it did not pass. The UN failure to pass and lack of media coverage is telling.\textsuperscript{54}

\textbf{Conclusion}

As noted above, antisemitism has occurred for several millennia for many different and sometimes contradictory reasons. After the Romans destroyed the second temple, many Jews found refuge by migrating to different geographical regions throughout Europe, Asia, Northern Africa, and so forth. At times, Jews were received. More often than not, they faced discrimination, persecution, and death.

With the creation of the State of Israel in 1948, a new form of antisemitism became possible. As highlighted above, Israel is sanctioned and scrutinized by the United Nations at disproportionately greater rates than any other country and this, in our view, signifies subtle antisemitism. Moreover, the anti-Israel


political cartoons presented in Arab and Western newspapers highlight this newer form of antisemitism. More specifically, criticism of Israel is sometimes used to exhibit antisemitic attitudes in a form that is less obviously reprehensible.

This statement has been supported both on theoretical and empirical bases. The MASIM model has shown a bi-directional relationship between antisemitism and anti-Israel views. That is to say, individuals who possess traditional antisemitic attitudes frequently report anti-Israel views. Additionally, anti-Israel views can develop into traditional antisemitic attitudes. These prejudices increase significantly when faced with or thinking of one’s own death also referred to as mortality salience. Bigotry and intolerance cannot be permitted to exist against any culture, race, ethnic, or religious group.

This chapter highlights the more traditional, modern, subtle, and overt forms of antisemitism. While it is disconcerting to note that antisemitism continues to exist in the 21st century, it is essential to understand the various ways it manifests because awareness is the first step towards promoting a more inclusive environment. In closing, our hope is to fulfill ideas attributed to Rev Martin Luther King, Jr.: “Darkness cannot drive out darkness: only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate: only love can do that.”

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55 Some controversy has arisen about whether Martin Luther King was the originator of several quotes, including this one. See, for example, Megan McArdle, “Anatomy of a Fake Quote,” Atlantic, May 3, 2011, http://www.theatlantic.com/national/archive/2011/05/anatomy-of-a-fake-quotatation/238257/ (accessed 1 June 2015).