

# CONTEMPORARY ANTISEMITISM



## About Photo

Graffiti scrawled on a fence behind a Jewish-owned plumbing business in Van Nuys, California, May 2014.

*“Once I thought that anti-Semitism had ended; today it is clear to me that it will probably never end.”*

—Elie Wiesel, Jewish Holocaust Survivor



## Preparing to Use This Lesson

Below is information to keep in mind when using this lesson. In some cases, the points elaborate on general suggestions listed in the “[Teaching about the Holocaust](#)” section in the [Introduction](#) of the *Echoes and Reflections Teacher’s Resource Guide*, and are specific to the content of the lesson. This material is intended to help teachers consider the complexities of teaching the Holocaust and its aftermath and to deliver accurate and sensitive instruction.

- When teaching about the Holocaust, it is essential to introduce students to the concept of antisemitism. The Teacher’s Resource Guide explores this topic in “Lesson Two: Antisemitism,” which provides important context to understanding how the Holocaust could happen and delves into related concepts of propaganda, stereotypes, and scapegoating.
- Because antisemitism did not end after the Holocaust, teachers can help make this history relevant and meaningful to students’ own lives by connecting past events to the present through the exploration of antisemitism today. It is recommended that teachers introduce students to contemporary expressions of antisemitism after they have an understanding of the traditional forms of antisemitism that have existed for centuries.
- Introducing students to contemporary antisemitism will likely expose them to new and unique themes, including the demonization of Israel and its leaders. It is important to recognize that Israel, as any other democracy, can and should be receptive to fair and legitimate criticism; however, condemnations of Israel can cross the line from valid criticism into expressions of denigration that can be considered antisemitic.
- It is possible that students may witness an antisemitic incident in their own communities or schools, read or hear about an incident in the news or on social media, or may even be a victim of antisemitism themselves, but may not understand the source or impact of the act—they may even think that such words or actions are “no big deal.” This lesson provides teachers and their students with an opportunity to explore the complex phenomenon of contemporary antisemitism as well as options to respond and take action to prevent it as they consider the importance of doing so.
- While this lesson is specific to contemporary antisemitism, the material provides a springboard for discussion about prejudice and bias against other groups and the harm to individuals and society when such attitudes go unchecked. Students should be encouraged to discuss the role and responsibility of individuals to recognize and interrupt bias no matter what group is being targeted.
- It is important that students have a clear understanding of the vocabulary used in this lesson. Teachers may decide to distribute a copy of the [Glossary](#) to each student for reference or point out where students can access the [Glossary](#).
- In advance of discussing the topics covered in this lesson, teachers should think about whether they have any students in their class who are Jewish. Some students might feel relieved to discuss a topic that is relevant to their lives while others might feel awkward or embarrassed. This does not mean that teachers should not discuss the topic; however, be careful not to point out who is Jewish or put specific students on the spot to speak for Jewish people or about antisemitism. Consider talking with the students or their families in advance.

- Teachers are encouraged to review the materials listed below for background information about antisemitism, in general and contemporary antisemitism in particular, prior to introducing this complex topic to students:
  - “Antisemitism,” a 15-minute video which is part of the Echoes and Reflections Educator Video Toolbox, produced by the International School for Holocaust Studies, Yad Vashem.
  - Lesson Two: Antisemitism in the Teacher’s Resource Guide.

[**NOTE:** Throughout this resource, “antisemitism” may appear as “anti-Semitism.” Our editorial style is to write “antisemitism”; however, we have not changed alternate spellings in direct quotations or titles.]

# CONTEMPORARY ANTISEMITISM

## About This Lesson



180–270 minutes

❖ **INTRODUCTION** This lesson provides an opportunity for students to understand that antisemitism did not end after the Holocaust. Students will learn about the persistence of antisemitism worldwide and analyze the different types of contemporary antisemitism that are present in society today. These include classical to newer forms of antisemitism as well as new forms based on old ideas. In addition, students will be introduced to individuals who refuse to be bystanders to antisemitism as they consider the responsibility of all members of society to respond to and prevent antisemitism and all forms of bigotry.

This three-part lesson has material appropriate for history, social studies, civics, English/language arts, ethics, and religion. Instructional strategies used in this lesson include large-group discussion, reading skills, small-group work, understanding chronology of events, interpreting visual history testimony, analyzing political cartoons, maps, and data, critical thinking, and journaling.

❖ **OBJECTIVES** After completing this lesson, students will be able to:

- Define contemporary antisemitism.
- Explain how contemporary manifestations of antisemitism are both different and the same as traditional forms of antisemitism that were present before and during the Holocaust.
- Identify levels of antisemitic attitudes around the world by exploring an interactive map and survey data.
- Identify examples of contemporary antisemitism and the tools that are used to spread its images and messages.
- Distinguish between legitimate criticism of Israel and criticism that is antisemitic.
- Describe, interpret, and reflect upon the content and messages in clips of visual history testimony and apply knowledge to produce new insights and perspectives on various topics.
- Identify ways to actively respond to and prevent antisemitism and other forms of prejudice.

### ❖ **KEY WORDS & PHRASES**

antisemite	blood libel	hate speech
antisemitism	British Mandate	Hamas
Auschwitz	bystander	hate crime
Balfour Declaration	contemporary	Holocaust
Bat Mitzvah	antisemitism	Holocaust denial
BDS Movement	Gaza	Intifada
Bergen-Belsen	gendarme	Israel Defense Forces

### RESOURCES & TESTIMONIES

All of the resources used in this lesson can be found at the end of this lesson and at [echoesandreflections.org](https://echoesandreflections.org).

Visual history testimonies are available on the website.

Teachers are urged to review the lesson procedures to identify other materials and technology needed to implement the lesson.

All underlined text throughout this lesson is hyperlinked.

League of Nations  
nationalism  
“new antisemitism”  
Palestine  
Parliamentary Democracy

*Protocols of the Elders of Zion*  
Roma  
Star of David  
stereotype  
swastika

synagogue  
Treaty of Sèvres  
xenophobia  
Zionism

❖ **ACADEMIC STANDARDS** The materials in this lesson address the following national education standards:

#### Common Core State Standards

- Reading Standards for Informational Text 6–12
- Writing Standards 6–12
- Speaking and Listening Standards 6–12
- Reading Standards for Literacy in History/Social Studies 6–12
- Writing Standards for Literacy in History/Social Studies 6–12

#### National Curriculum Standards for Social Studies

- ① Culture
- ② Time, Continuity, and Change
- ④ Individual Development and Identity
- ⑤ Individuals, Groups, and Institutions
- ⑥ Power, Authority, and Governance
- ⑩ Civic Ideals and Practices

## Procedures

### Part 1: Introduction to Contemporary Antisemitism

1. Begin this lesson by helping students develop a framework for learning about contemporary antisemitism by defining the term “antisemitism.” Display the definition of [antisemitism](#) and read and discuss together.
2. After reviewing the definition, have students share their thoughts about whether antisemitism is primarily a problem of the past or if they think it is also a concern today. Invite students to share examples of antisemitism that they are aware of in their own communities or on a national and/or international level. If students have ever encountered or witnessed words or actions that they would describe as antisemitic, have them explain what happened and how they and/or others responded.
3. Display the photo at the beginning of this lesson and ask students to describe what they see and share their thoughts about the image and its message. Ask students if they are surprised at how recently this act of vandalism took place and whether the incident fits the definition of antisemitism and why.
4. Using the various examples discussed, elicit students’ thoughts on whether they think the antisemitism of today is the same or different from the antisemitism expressed during the Holocaust.

5. Display the [ADL Global 100: An Index of Anti-Semitism](#). Provide the following background information about the survey:
  - This index is one source of data about the depth and breadth of antisemitic attitudes around the world. In May 2014, the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) released the results from its worldwide survey of 53,100 adults in 101 countries plus the West Bank and Gaza to measure the level and intensity of anti-Jewish sentiment across the world.
  - The ADL Global 100 Index scores for each country and region represent the percentage of respondents who answered “probably true” to six or more of 11 negative stereotypes about Jews. An 11-question index has been used by ADL as a key metric in measuring antisemitic attitudes in the United States for the last 50 years.
  - For more information about where and how the survey was conducted, including a list of the 11 questions used, visit the “[About](#)” section of the ADL Global 100 survey.
6. Display and direct students’ attention to the “[Map](#)” section on the ADL 100 Global website and elicit responses to the following questions:
  - What is the first thing you notice when you look at this map?
  - What conclusions can you make about antisemitism today just from looking at this map?
  - What questions do you have after looking at this map?
7. Assign students to go the ADL Global 100 website on their own or in pairs and explore the “[Did You Know](#)” section. Instruct students to answer the questions on the printable [Antisemitism Today: Interpreting Data](#) handout. Remind students to click on the links, which provide important details.
8. After reviewing some or all of the responses to the questions about the survey data, tell students they will now watch two clips of testimony from individuals who experienced antisemitism after the Holocaust. After introducing students to Felix Sparks and Marta Wise, show the two clips of testimony.
9. After students have watched the testimonies, ask them if they heard anything from Felix and Marta that supported or differed from what they know or understand about antisemitism today. Additional questions for discussion might include:
  - What are some possible reasons why both Felix and Marta believe it is important to speak about their experiences during the Holocaust?
  - What is the value of hearing from both a survivor and a liberator?
  - What is meant by “Holocaust denial”? [Review definition in [Glossary](#) and refer to [Holocaust Denial](#) page on website for additional information.]
  - Why is Holocaust denial a form of antisemitism?

#### TESTIMONY VIEWING

##### About the Interviewees

Felix Sparks was born on April 2, 1917, in San Antonio, Texas. As a member of the United States Armed Forces, he, along with his fellow soldiers, liberated the Buchenwald and Dachau concentration camps. His interview was conducted in the United States. When the war began, Felix was twenty-two years old.

Marta Wise was born on October 8, 1934, in Bratislava, Czechoslovakia. She was forced to live in the Sárvár ghetto (Hungary) and was later imprisoned in the Sered concentration camp (Czechoslovakia). Marta was also incarcerated in the Auschwitz-Birkenau extermination camp. Her interview was conducted in Victoria, Australia. When the war began, Marta was five years old.

- What do you learn from Marta’s testimony about how Holocaust denial is spread and perpetuated?
- What evidence does Felix provide in his testimony that refutes the claims of Holocaust deniers?
- Why do you think Felix feels so strongly about combating Holocaust denial?
- Why do you think that Marta says it’s important for young people to hear survivor accounts?
- Soon there will no longer be any direct eyewitnesses to the Holocaust alive to share their stories. What effect, if any, will this have on those who say the Holocaust didn’t happen or try to minimize it?



**NOTE 1.10**

Teachers may want to post the questions below on the board, on chart paper, or create a handout to guide students as they read the informational text.

10. Prepare students to read the *Introduction to Contemporary Antisemitism* handout by reviewing key terms and phrases as necessary. Distribute the text and have students study it as a whole group, in small groups, or individually.
11. After reading the handout, conduct a discussion with students using some or all of the questions below.
  - Why is antisemitism referred to as “the longest hatred”?
  - How did antisemitism change after the Holocaust? What reasons were given for the change?
  - In what ways is contemporary antisemitism different from earlier forms of antisemitism that you have studied?
  - According to the text, what are some classic themes and stereotypes about Jews that continue today?
  - What does the term “new antisemitism” mean?
  - What examples of contemporary antisemitism were discussed in the text?
  - What are some of the ways that antisemitism is spread today? Why do you think these methods might be difficult to counter or combat?
12. Conduct a “3-2-1 Assessment” whereby students respond to the following:
  - List *three* things you learned about contemporary antisemitism by participating in this lesson.
  - Name *two* things that surprised you or that you didn’t understand.
  - Identify *one* question you still have about contemporary antisemitism.

## Part 2: Manifestations of Contemporary Antisemitism

1. Write the statement below on the board and ask a volunteer to read it aloud. Have students share their thoughts on the power of words (e.g., words can influence people; inspire positive change,

have harmful consequences) and give examples of when words have been used with both positive and negative results.

“Words are singularly the most powerful force available to humanity.” —Yehuda Berg, author

2. In addition to words, encourage students to consider how images that we see around us (e.g., magazine covers, posters, advertisements) can influence our perceptions and opinions. Have students share examples of images that they have seen across a variety of outlets (including social media) that they believe are either positive or negative.
3. Have students consider whether in a world where words and images can be conveyed to a large number of people easily and quickly through various media and social networks, if there is a greater responsibility than was needed in the past for people to be cautious with the messages and images they promote.
4. Before moving on to manifestations of contemporary antisemitism, remind students of the antisemitic words and images they studied when learning about propaganda used in Nazi Germany and how it affected the people who saw it (e.g., Esther Clifford’s memories of seeing antisemitic posters on her way to school shared in Lesson 2).
5. Explain to students that in this lesson they will look at how antisemitism manifests itself today and in order to understand the words and images they will study, they need to understand the primary ways that antisemitism is expressed. Display and review *Types of Antisemitism*.
6. Explain to students that one of the complexities of contemporary antisemitism is that there is often a conflation of ideas centered around the denial and distortion of the Holocaust and opposition to Israel—sometimes its policies and sometimes its right to exist at all. Ask students to share what they know about Israel and what have been their sources of information.
7. Distribute *A Brief History of Israel* and review together. Explain that this information will provide the necessary background information about the history and development of Israel and the context to understand some of the examples of contemporary antisemitism they will be asked to analyze.
8. Print and distribute the *Antisemitic Words and Images: Past and Present* handout. Review the directions at the top of the handout with the class. In small groups, have students read the statements and study the images and then answer the questions that follow.
9. Remind students that examples of antisemitism can be found in the news today and that individuals in the United States and around the world are feeling its impact. Before sharing and discussing the examples below, ask students to consider whether antisemitism is an issue that affects Jewish people only or if it is a broader matter that should concern everyone.
10. Distribute the *Examples of Contemporary Antisemitism* handout to students. Read the first example and then follow with the videos



#### NOTE 2.6

Explain to students that not all criticism of Israel is antisemitic, but sometimes it is. Teachers are encouraged to review *When Does Criticism of Israel become Antisemitism?* for their own background on this topic.

and discussion questions below.

- Watch the video *Countering Anti-Semitism in Denmark* by USC Shoah Foundation at <https://sfi.usc.edu/video/countering-anti-semitism-denmark>.
  - Have students share both their reactions to the video as well as any questions they have about what they just watched.
  - Watch the video from the BBC News of Danish Prime Minister Helle Thorning-Schmidt reacting to the attacks in Copenhagen at <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-31485644>.
  - What message does it send the world when Prime Minister Helle Thorning-Schmidt, the leader of Denmark, makes a statement to the international press about a crime in her country?
  - What do you think Prime Minister Thorning-Schmidt meant when she said, “Collectively and united we will remain who we are”?
  - In the *Countering Anti-Semitism in Denmark* video, describe the range of responses that Mette Bentow and her daughter Hannah received after the shooting at the synagogue.
  - How does Niddal El Jabri, leader of the Copenhagen Peace Ring, react to the shooting and what does he do in response? Do you agree with his message of optimism, that things can be made better? Why or why not?
11. Read the second example and have students look closely at the photos. Follow with a discussion using the questions below.
- What specific words and images in this example cross the line between legitimate criticism of Israel and antisemitism?
  - In what ways does this example meet the definition of the “new antisemitism”?
  - Who is hurt by such a display of hateful messages and images?
12. Read the third example and conduct a discussion using the questions below.
- What is a “hate crime”? Do you think that “hate crimes” should carry stiffer sentences than other crimes? Why or why not?
  - In your opinion, why do you think that the judge made a statement to Miller during the sentencing hearing and what was he trying to say?
  - How was Judge Ryan’s statement similar to what Prime Minister Thorning-Schmidt said after her country faced violent antisemitic acts?
13. To close this part of the lesson, circle back to the question posed earlier and have students consider whether they think antisemitism is an issue that affects Jewish people only or if it is a broader matter that concerns everyone. Encourage them to support their position with examples from the material they have just studied.

### Part 3: Taking a Stand against Antisemitism

1. Write the following statement by Jewish Holocaust survivor Elie Wiesel on the board and read it aloud:  
“What hurts the victim most is not the cruelty of the oppressor, but the silence of the bystander.”
2. Have students share what they think Elie Wiesel meant by this statement and how his sentiment might relate to antisemitism today.
3. To begin the conversation about what can be done to stand up to antisemitism, have students consider why it is important for individuals and communities to speak out against this and all forms of prejudice and bias. What are the benefits to a society when individuals and institutions speak out

against unfairness? What are the costs to a society that allows bias and prejudice to go unchecked and uninterrupted?

4. Help bring the discussion to the individual level by asking students what exactly we mean by “society.” Who comprises a society? If we are all part of the society in which we live, what is the role and responsibility of individuals to be vigilant about how people are treated and to speak out when they see injustice? Ask students whether they think individuals have the capacity to make a difference through their words and actions at home, in school, in the community, and beyond.
5. Share with students that ordinary people can inspire others to create positive change. While some actions require moral courage; many only require personal motivation, time, and energy. Tell students that they will be introduced to three young people who, through their words and actions, are confronting antisemitism.
6. Distribute the [\*Profile of Siavosh Derarkhti\*](#) handout and have a volunteer read aloud. Review the term “xenophobia” in the [Glossary](#) prior to the reading.
7. Have students share their thoughts about Siavosh and his efforts to address antisemitism and xenophobia using some or all of the following questions:
  - What experiences did Siavosh have growing up that helped motivate him to start the group Young People Against Anti-Semitism and Xenophobia?
  - What risks do you think Siavosh has to deal with as the leader of his organization?
  - Who was Raoul Wallenberg? What is the significance of Siavosh receiving an award named after Raoul Wallenberg?
8. Distribute the [\*Profile of Izzy Lengua\*](#) handout and have a volunteer read aloud. Follow by having students share their initial reactions to the actions that Izzy decided to take when she witnessed antisemitism. Continue the discussion using the questions below.
  - Why do you think people post hateful posters and messages on social media, like those that Izzy describes? What are their possible motivations?
  - Do you think that the anonymity of social media allows people to come “out of the shadows” and express their racist and antisemitic beliefs in a way that would be much harder to do face to face? Does it help or hurt to know that these attitudes exist? Explain your thinking.
  - What is your opinion about the way in which Izzy responded to the antisemitic tweets she received? Do you think you would have handled this situation differently? If so, explain how you might have responded.
9. Prior to reading the next profile, ask students if they have ever heard of the “BDS Movement,” and if so, what do they understand it to be. Explain to students that the BDS Movement is a campaign



#### NOTE 3.7

For information about Raoul Wallenberg, refer to Lesson 7: Rescue and Non-Jewish Resistance, “[Those Who Dared to Rescue](#)” informational text, and/or the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum article “[Raoul Wallenberg and the Rescue of Jews in Budapest.](#)”



#### NOTE 3.9

Teachers are encouraged to review [The BDS Movement](#) for their own background on this topic.

to support the Palestinian cause by calling on the international community to impose boycotts and implement divestment efforts against Israel. Explain that some supporters of BDS may genuinely believe that these efforts will encourage Israel to change policies with which they disagree; however, the predominant drive of the campaign and its leadership is not criticism of Israel's policies; but an attempt to delegitimize, punish, or isolate Israel unfairly and seek to place the entire onus of the conflict on one side.

10. Distribute the *Profile of Leora Eisenberg* handout and have a volunteer read aloud. Follow with a discussion about the work Leora is doing using the questions below.

- Describing the protesters' rhetoric, Leora says, "Their protest in the name of "free speech" went against the free marketplace of ideas that an educational institution should stand for and seek to enshrine." Do you think that free speech can go too far? How do we balance the right to free speech with the harmful impact it can have on individuals and groups?
- Leora uses a variety of platforms to share her ideas about antisemitism—blogs, articles, and social media. What role does each of these play in both promoting as well as combating antisemitism and other forms of hatred?
- When referring to social media, Leora advises, "Be eloquent and use it as a platform to say something important." What do you think Leora means when she says "be eloquent"?

11. After reading and discussing all three profiles, have students think about what the word "activist" means to them and whether they think Siavosh, Izzy, and Leora are activists, and explain why or why not. Encourage students to share information about activists that they are aware of in their communities.

12. Remind students that there are many ways for individuals to become involved in standing up to antisemitism and other forms of prejudice and hatred today. Elicit from students ideas that they may have, including joining and becoming involved with various organizations.

13. Review the meaning of the term "bystander" from the [Glossary](#). Have students think about whether or not being a bystander is a choice people make. Ask students why they think the individuals that they have learned about so far in this lesson chose NOT to be bystanders?

14. Tell students that they will now watch two clips of testimony from Holocaust survivors. Encourage students to think about what survivors like Barbara Fischman Traub and Henry Oertelt teach us about prejudice, antisemitism, and the dangers of being a bystander as they watch the testimonies.

15. After students have watched the testimony clips, have them discuss the role that bystanders played during the Holocaust in comparison to the role they might play as witnesses to antisemitic acts today. Continue the discussion with some or all of the following questions:

## TESTIMONY VIEWING

### About the Interviewees

Barbara Fischman Traub was born on September 7, 1925, in Sighet, Romania. She was forced to live in the Sighet ghetto and was later imprisoned in the Weisswasser concentration camp (Czechoslovakia). Barbara was also incarcerated in the Auschwitz-Birkenau extermination camp. Her interview was conducted in the United States. When the war began, Barbara was fourteen years old.

Henry Oertelt was born on January 13, 1921, in Berlin, Germany. He was forced to live in the Theresienstadt ghetto and was later imprisoned in the Flossenbürg, Gollerschau, Oranienburg–Heinkelwerke, and Sachsenhausen concentration camps. Henry was also incarcerated in the Auschwitz-Birkenau extermination camp. His interview was conducted in the United States. When the war began, Henry was eighteen years old.

- What specific examples does Barbara share about how she and her family were treated prior to the ghetto period? Contrast to how they were treated when the Jews of Sighet were rounded up and marched to the ghetto.
  - Barbara says that her neighbors “peeked through the windows and turned their faces.” Does this behavior surprise you? In your study about the Holocaust, did you learn about other people who demonstrated similar reactions to seeing their neighbors forced from their homes? What were some of the reasons why people stood by and watched what was happening and did not speak up?
  - How does Barbara remember feeling when her neighbors “turned their faces”? How did her feelings about the event change with time?
  - What message does silence send to individuals who are being targeted by antisemitism and other forms of hate and bias?
  - What can the Holocaust teach us about the impact that bystanders can have on society when individuals or groups are being targeted?
  - Henry says that he sees that some progress has been made, but not a lot, in terms of people learning to respect each other. As someone who survived the Holocaust, how do you think Henry might feel saying that there has been little progress?
  - What does Henry say we need to learn to do in order to fight against prejudice and hatred?
  - Think about your own school and community. Would you describe them as places where people respect each other? What kinds of things could be done to make progress in this area?
16. In this next section, inform students that they will be provided with a scenario that they will discuss in small groups. Distribute the *Taking Action: Scenarios for Discussion* handout and assign each group one of the scenarios to read and discuss using the questions provided.
17. Close this lesson by having students prepare a “Quick Write.” Reflecting on what they have learned about contemporary antisemitism, have students share their thoughts on the words of Samantha Power, US Ambassador to the United Nations:
- “Antisemitism is not just an issue for Jewish groups or Jewish individuals. Antisemitism is a human rights threat, a human rights phenomenon, a human rights problem. And it’s important I think, as a predictor of where society is going.” (Source: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NzLA4A2S1Rs>)

## Reflect and Respond

Either in class or as homework, have students reflect and respond to one or more of the topics below or have them develop a topic that has meaning for them based on the material covered in the lesson.

- Search [IWitness](#) for testimonies from individuals who have stood up to antisemitism and other forms of bigotry in their communities. Reflect on the actions these people have taken, their motivations, and what we can learn from those who have chosen not to be bystanders.
- Today, the amount of antisemitic content and messages being spread across the world via the Internet continues to grow exponentially. A 2016 global report from the Australian-based Online Hate Prevention Institute, “[Measuring the Hate: The State of Antisemitism in Social Media](#),” highlights that not enough is being done to combat antisemitism in social media. The report, based on tracking over 2,000 items of antisemitism posted over the last ten months, found that only 20% of the items were removed. What do you think is the

responsibility of social media companies and media in general to monitor and remove antisemitic content and other forms of hatred and prejudice? What, if anything, do you think can be done so that individuals behave more respectfully and responsibly on these sites? How do we balance our Constitutional Right to free speech with the harm that what can only be described as hateful speech inflicts upon individuals, groups, and society in general?

- In his testimony Henry Oertelt says, “I am the prime example of what can happen to people that are suffering under prejudicial circumstances and biases...and we have to learn to speak up when we see prejudice and hatred.” Why do you think more people don’t speak up when they witness these types of behaviors? How have the individuals you have been introduced to in this lesson, including Henry, helped you think about your role in your own community?

# ANTISEMITISM TODAY: INTERPRETING DATA

**Directions:** Go to the “[Did You Know](#)” section of the ADL Global 100 website and review the information posted on the page and then answer the questions below. Be sure to click on the links which provide important details on such topics as global awareness and denial of the Holocaust.

1. What percentage of people surveyed have not heard about the Holocaust?
2. What percentage of people surveyed have never met a Jew?
3. What percentage of people surveyed indicate they have heard about the Holocaust but think it’s either a myth or has been greatly exaggerated?
4. Which regions have the highest and lowest percentages of people who have never heard about the Holocaust?
5. Which regions have the highest and lowest percentages of people who have heard about the Holocaust but think it is either a myth or greatly exaggerated?
6. Who is less aware of the Holocaust, younger or older people?
7. Of those surveyed, which group was more likely to harbor antisemitic attitudes:
  - Men or women?
  - People who have never met a Jew or people who have met a Jew?
8. Are people living in countries with larger Jewish populations more or less likely to hold antisemitic views than people living in countries with smaller Jewish populations?
9. Which Middle Eastern countries have the lowest and highest antisemitic index?
10. What is the overall global index (percentage) that represents people who harbor antisemitic attitudes?
11. Were you surprised by any of the data this survey revealed? If so, explain why you found the data surprising.

# INTRODUCTION TO CONTEMPORARY ANTISEMITISM

Although more than seventy years have passed since the Holocaust ended, antisemitism is still prevalent. In recent years, expressions of antisemitism have increased around the world. The Anti-Defamation League and Simon Wiesenthal Center—two leading non-profit organizations dedicated to combatting antisemitism and bigotry—report a rise in the number of violent antisemitic assaults taking place in the United States and warn of increased antisemitic attitudes across Europe. Antisemitism continues to be widespread throughout the Arab and Muslim world.

Antisemitism has a very long history. Scholar Robert Wistrich termed it “the longest hatred,” due to its existence for over 2,000 years. Its causes, context, and character have evolved over time and are shaped by local political, religious, economic, and social climates.

## Post-Holocaust Antisemitism

Horrific images from extermination and concentration camps after the Holocaust ended, along with testimony that spoke to the brutality of the Nazi Regime at the Nuremberg Trials that followed shortly thereafter, created a sense of collective shame about what antisemitism could lead to; however, this did not cause hatred toward Jews simply to disappear. Instead antisemitism was transformed—manifesting itself in different ways and from different sources.

While it was less socially acceptable to openly express antisemitic attitudes, there were still many US-based fascist, neo-Nazi, and racist organizations in the 1950s and 60s, even though their efforts did move further into the shadows.

At the same time, the main population sources of antisemitism shifted, initially away from Western Europe to the Soviet Union, which became the center for antisemitic literature all over the world.

Later, as the Soviet Empire crumbled and the Cold War ended, the Islamic world, already largely at war with Israel for decades, became a major source of antisemitism, adopting many of the words and images that had characterized Christian antisemitism for centuries, as well as the antisemitic beliefs expressed through traditional Islamic sources.

On the positive side, three factors changed the framework for antisemitism’s continued existence specifically in the United States:

- The American Jewish community mobilized with a deep sense of purpose to work for the safety of Jews domestically and around the world, including support for a strong Israel, and actively engaged in civil rights and social justice issues.
- There was remarkable progress in Christian attitudes toward Jews, led by the Catholic Church with the landmark 1965 *Nostra Aetate*. In this document, the Roman Catholic Church recanted centuries of teaching that the Jews, as a people, had killed Jesus Christ and as a result were cursed.
- A growing body of literature, film, and historical documentation supported widespread education about the Holocaust. While not a guarantee against antisemitism, it provided continued remembrance, learning, and questioning as new generations emerged.

## Antisemitism Today

As the memories of the Holocaust fade and criticism of Israel has mounted, many inhibitions have weakened. Today, antisemitism has a global reach. It is expressed openly in the form of hate speech, violence, and denial and distortion of the Holocaust. It is also expressed as opposition to Israel's right to exist, which can include demonization of its people and its leaders. The term sometimes used to describe this modern form of antisemitism is the "new antisemitism."

Many of the classic themes and stereotypes from earlier times are reappearing, such as the depiction of Jews as subhuman (e.g., represented as spiders, bloodthirsty vampires, and octopuses), the myth about their quest for world domination, and their control over the media, economy, government, or other societal institutions. The fictional *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, first printed more than a century ago, remains the most widely published piece of antisemitic literature of all time.

In many Middle Eastern countries, antisemitism is promoted in state-controlled media and in educational systems. Militant groups with political power, such as Hamas, use genocidal language regarding Jews and Israel. The former president of Iran, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, repeatedly declared the Holocaust a "myth" and that Israel should be "wiped off the map." In Europe, antisemitism is increasingly espoused among both far-right and far-left political parties. In the United States, Jewish students on some college campuses are confronted by antisemitic hostility while other Jewish individuals and institutions are assaulted, vandalized, and harassed.

With the advances in communication technology, antisemitism is now widely and easily spread through diverse media outlets; with antisemitic groups and individuals using social media platforms at an alarming rate to reach across the world to share their ideology, especially with young people.

# TYPES OF ANTISEMITISM

## **Classic expressions of antisemitism**

Examples include the plot of the Jews to take over the world, blame placed on Jews for the crucifixion of Jesus Christ, the association of Jews to the devil, accusations such as blood libel, and poisoning of wells.

## **New forms of antisemitism based on old idea**

Examples include the reappearance and use of classical expressions including the depiction of Jews as evil and subhuman (e.g., represented as spiders, bloodthirsty vampires, and octopuses), their quest for world domination and control over the media, economy, government, or other societal institutions.

## **New expressions of antisemitism**

Examples include the denial and distortion of the Holocaust. It is also expressed as opposition to the State of Israel's right to exist, which can include demonization of its people and its leaders and drawing comparisons of contemporary Israeli policy to that of the Nazis.

# WHEN DOES CRITICISM OF ISRAEL BECOME ANTISEMITISM?

Israel, as a democracy, can and should be receptive to fair and legitimate criticism whether the criticism is from its own citizens or from members of the larger global community. However, all too often condemnation of Israel crosses the line from valid criticism into denigration that can be considered antisemitic. The generally accepted term for this type of disparagement is the “new antisemitism,” especially when the complaints against Israel and “Zionists” include controlling the government of the United States, conspiring to take over the world, starting world wars, and other similar ideas.

Natan Sharansky, minister in the Israeli government in charge of monitoring antisemitism, has developed what he calls the “Three Ds” test, to help distinguish legitimate criticism of Israel from antisemitism.

**Demonization:** When Israel and its leaders are being demonized; when Israel’s actions are blown out of all sensible proportion; when comparisons are made between Israelis and Nazis and between Palestinian refugee camps and Auschwitz—this is considered antisemitism, not legitimate criticism of Israel.

**Double Standards:** When criticism of Israel is applied selectively; when Israel is singled out by the United Nations for human rights abuses while the behavior of known and major abusers, such as China, Iran, Cuba, and Syria, is ignored—this is considered antisemitism.

**Delegitimization:** When Israel’s fundamental right to exist is denied—this too is considered antisemitism.

# A BRIEF HISTORY OF ISRAEL

The history of the Jewish people, and their roots in the Land of Israel, spans thirty-five centuries. It is here that the culture and religious identity of the Jewish people was formed. Their history and presence in this land has been continuous and unbroken throughout the centuries, even after the majority of Jews were forced into exile almost 2,000 years ago. With the establishment of the State of Israel on May 14, 1948, Jewish independence was renewed.

## Early History

In the first century, when the Jewish civilization in Israel was already over 1,000 years old, Rome destroyed the Holy Temple in Jerusalem and conquered the Jewish nation. At this time, the Romans renamed the region “Palestine” and exiled a portion of the population. However, some Jews remained.

For the two millennia after the Roman conquest, no other state or unique groups developed in the region. Instead, different empires and people came, colonized, ruled, and disappeared. Jews remained in Palestine during these changes. Throughout these 2,000 years, Jews, regardless of their current country of residence, continued to view a return to their ancient homeland as an essential part of their identity and a source of hope.

Between 1517 and 1917, Palestine was part of the Ottoman Empire. The region, initially prospered under the Ottomans, but during the Empire’s decline, it was reduced into a sparsely populated, impoverished, barren area.

Meanwhile, the Zionist movement was emerging in Europe in the late nineteenth century, generated by increasing antisemitism and violence against Jews in Europe as well as the rising nationalism throughout the continent.

The Zionists, whose goal was the return of the Jewish people to a sovereign state in the Land of Israel, fostered increased Jewish immigration

to Palestine and sought international political recognition of the Jewish right to independence in Palestine.

When the Ottoman Empire was defeated in World War I (1914–1918), its lands were ceded to the victorious Allies who carved the land into new nations, which included Iraq, Lebanon, and Syria.

## The British Mandate

Under the Treaty of Sèvres (1920), the League of Nations formally gave control of Palestine to the British government. Britain’s job was to implement the Balfour Declaration, which had been signed five years earlier, stating Britain’s desire to create a homeland in Palestine for the Jews. Even before this declaration, Jews had begun to purchase land and settle in the country. As they continued to do so, the Jewish population grew to some 600,000 on the eve of World War II. Of course, when the modern return of Jews to the Land of Israel began, Arabs were living there. Toward the end of the nineteenth century and more so in the early twentieth century, the national consciousness of these Arabs emerged as Palestinian nationalism and that nationalism aspired to independence. Thus, the Arab desire for independence clashed with the Jewish desire for return.

British control over this territory lasted from 1923 to 1948, during which time the authorities were challenged by the demands by Zionists for Jewish self-government, and a growing Arab

nationalist movement rejecting this Jewish presence and nationalist aspirations. Growing Jewish-Arab violence and attacks on British personnel by some Jewish extremists led Britain to announce that it sought to end its mandate of the area.

During this period, there was also the 1939 “White Paper” that stated that Palestine would be neither a Jewish state nor an Arab state, but an independent state to be established within ten years. The “White Paper” also limited Jewish immigration to Palestine to 75,000 for the first five years, subject to the country’s ability to absorb them economically, and would later be contingent on Arab consent. Stringent restrictions were also placed on how much land Jews could acquire. Despite efforts to rescind the “White Paper” following the end of World War II, it remained in effect until the British departed Palestine in May 1948.

## United Nations Partition Plan

Following Britain’s February 1947 announcement of its intention to terminate its mandate government, the UN General Assembly appointed a special committee—the United Nations Special Committee on Palestine (UNSCOP)—to make recommendations on the land’s future government. UNSCOP recommended the establishment of two separate states, Jewish and Arab, to be joined by economic union, with the Jerusalem-Bethlehem region as an enclave under international administration.

On November 29, 1947, the UN General Assembly voted on the partition plan, adopted by 33 votes to 13 with 10 abstentions. The Jewish side accepted the UN plan for the establishment of two states. The Arab states rejected the plan and almost immediately formed volunteer armies that infiltrated into Palestine against the Jews.

## Founding of the State of Israel 1948

Israel’s establishment as an independent sovereign state was officially declared in Tel Aviv on Friday May 14, 1948, by Zionist leader David Ben-Gurion, the day the British Mandate over Palestine was officially terminated, in

accordance with UN Resolution 181.

## War of Independence (1948–1949)

When the UN voted to partition the Mandate on November 29, 1947, Palestinian Arabs, with the help from Arab states, launched attacks against Israel to seize the entire Mandate. On May 14, 1948, Israel declared independence and was immediately invaded by the armies of five Arab nations: Egypt, Syria, Transjordan, Lebanon, and Iraq. The newly formed Israeli Defense Force (IDF) managed to prevail after fifteen months of war.

## The Six-Day War (1967)

Israel was forced to defend itself when Syria, Egypt, Jordan, and Iraq intensified their attacks and Egypt illegally blocked Israel’s access to international waters and expelled UN peacekeeping forces. Four Arab countries mobilized more than 250,000 troops in preparation for a full-scale invasion. Israel preempted the invasion in a defensive war and managed to capture the West Bank from Jordan; Gaza and the Sinai Peninsula from Egypt; and the Golan Heights from Syria.

## Israel Today

Since 1948, Israel’s population has grown tenfold. Israel was founded with a population of 806,000. Today there are 8.5 million Israelis; about 75% of them Jews. Like other democratic, multi-ethnic countries, Israel struggles with various social and religious issues and economic problems. It is a country of immigrants that often came to the country dispossessed.

On the political front, most Arab and Muslim states continue to deny the Jewish State’s right to exist. Unfortunately, only two of the twenty-two Middle Eastern states have signed peace agreements with Israel—Egypt and Jordan. The ongoing Palestinian-Israeli conflict is complex, with challenges related to borders, settlements, sovereignty, and other contentious issues. There are those on both sides of the conflict who hope one day to achieve a peaceful coexistence.

## Location

Israel is located at the eastern end of the Mediterranean Sea, where Europe, Africa, and Asia meet. The country borders on Lebanon and Syria in the north, Jordan to the east, and Egypt to the south.



## Governing System

Parliamentary Democracy

## Population<sup>1</sup>

- 43% of the world's Jews live in Israel (2014)
- The population of Israel is about 8.5 million
- 74.8% of the population are Jews
- 20.8% are Arabs
- 4.4% are identified as non-Arab Christians, Baha'i, and others

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<sup>1</sup>From Jewish Virtual Library, "Vital Statistics: Last Population Statistics for Israel" (American-Israeli Cooperative Enterprise, 2016), [http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Society\\_&\\_Culture/newpop.html](http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Society_&_Culture/newpop.html)

# ANTISEMITIC WORDS AND IMAGES: PAST AND PRESENT

**Directions:** In this exercise, you will review the three types of antisemitism discussed in this lesson and identify how a variety of words and images have been and continue to be used as a tool to perpetuate antisemitic ideas by completing the following steps:

1. Review the three types of antisemitism.
2. Read the three statements paying particular attention to when the statement was made and by whom, and then answer the questions that follow, using the statement number as a reference.
3. Study the six images paying particular attention to how these pieces build upon long-held stereotypes of Jews and then answer the questions that follow, using the image number as a reference.

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## Types of Antisemitism

**Classic expressions of antisemitism:** Examples include the plot of the Jews to take over the world, blame placed on Jews for the crucifixion of Jesus Christ, the association of Jews to the devil, accusations such as blood libel, and poisoning of wells.

**New forms of antisemitism based on old ideas:** Examples include the reappearance and use of classical expressions including the depiction of Jews as evil and subhuman (e.g., represented as spiders, bloodthirsty vampires, and octopuses), their quest for world domination and control over the media, economy, government, or other societal institutions.

**New expressions of antisemitism:** Examples include the denial and distortion of the Holocaust. It is also expressed as opposition to the State of Israel's right to exist, which can include demonization of its people and its leaders and drawing comparisons of contemporary Israeli policy to that of the Nazis.

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## Statements

1. "I agree wholeheartedly with [Iranian] President Ahmadinejad. There was no such a [sic] thing as the 'Holocaust.' The so-called 'Holocaust' is nothing but Jewish/Zionist propaganda. There is no proof whatsoever that any living Jew was ever gassed or burned in Nazi Germany or in any of the territories that Nazi Germany occupied during World War II. The Holocaust propaganda was started by the Zionist Jews in order to acquire worldwide sympathy for the creation of Israel after World War II."

—Dr. Abdullah Muhammad, Saudi professor, interview with the Iranian Mehr News Agency, December 26, 2005

2. "Some of you think that I'm just somebody who's got something out for the Jewish people. You're stupid. Do you think I would waste my time if I did not think it was important for you to know Satan? My job is to pull the cover off of Satan so that he will never deceive you and the people of the world again."

—Louis Farrakhan, speech on Saviours' Day, Rosemont, Illinois, February 27, 2011

3. “The Jew is contrary to our being. ... He desecrated our people, spit on our ideals, paralyzed the strength of the nation, made our customs rotten, and polluted the morale.”

—Joseph Goebbels, German politician and Reich Minister of Propaganda in Nazi Germany from 1933 to 1945

## Questions

- a. Which statement is an example of a “new expression of antisemitism”? Cite specific words or phrases from the passage to support your choice.
- b. Which statement is an example of a “new expression of antisemitism,” based on old ideas? Cite specific words or phrases from the passage to support your choice.
- c. Which statement is an example of a “classic expression of antisemitism”? Cite specific words or phrases from the passage to support your choice.

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## Images



1. Cartoon from a Jordanian newspaper, *Ad-Dustur*, August 2006



2. Cartoon from *Al-Khalij*, United Arab Emirates, July 2014



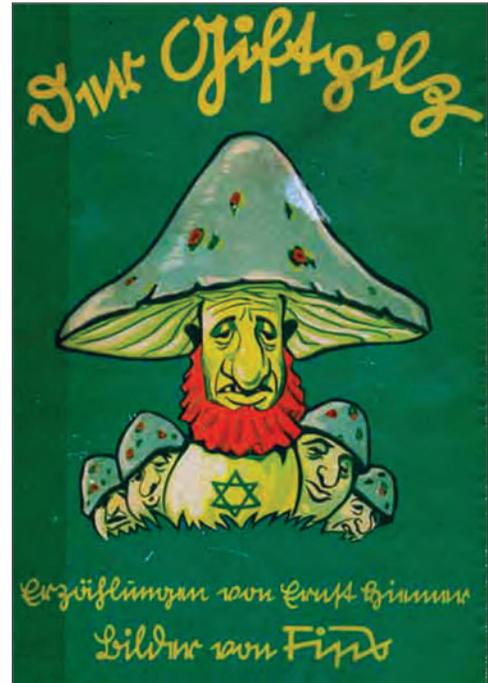
3. Tattoo from a demonstration in Seattle, Washington, January 2009



4. Cartoon from a Qatari newspaper, *Al-Watan*, September 2011



5. Caricature of a Jew with Aryan Children from children's book, *The Poisonous Mushroom*



6. Cover of a children's book, *The Poisonous Mushroom*

## Questions

- a. Choose two images that are examples of “classic expressions of antisemitism,” and identify exactly what is portrayed in the images that led you to your answer.



# EXAMPLES OF CONTEMPORARY ANTISEMITISM

## Example #1

On February 14, 2015, a man with an assault rifle opened fire during a Freedom of Expression event at the Krudttonden Cultural Center in Copenhagen, Denmark. Film director Finn Nordgaard was murdered and three police officers were wounded. The perpetrator fled the scene, resulting in a national manhunt. Later that night, the shooter returned to the Great Synagogue of Copenhagen, down the street where a young girl named Hannah Bentow was having her Bat Mitzvah. The man opened fire on the synagogue. Two Danish Security and Intelligence Service officers were injured and Dan Uzan, volunteer security guard and friend of the community, was killed.

## Example #2

The 2014 war between Israel and Hamas in Gaza spawned international protest against the Jewish state in Europe and North America. Two rallies in downtown Chicago in July witnessed protesters holding signs with the words “Israel You Will Pay, Your Annihilation is On Its Way”<sup>1</sup> and placards with Holocaust and antisemitic imagery. Protesters also demonized all supporters of Israel by distributing pamphlets declaring, “Zionism is the Enemy of Humanity.”

A flyer distributed at the rally depicted a crude caricature of a larger-than-life, hook-nosed figure controlling the world from behind the scenes with the German caption, “The Jew: The inciter of war, the prolonger of war,”<sup>2</sup> a reference to the Hans Schweitzer poster from 1943 or 1944—the height of the Holocaust.

Comparisons between Nazism and Israel were prevalent at both rallies. There was a display of an Israeli flag with blood-stained children’s handprints, calling the Israelis ‘Nazis’ and equating the Star of David with the swastika.



**About Photos:** Photos of protesters and flyer distributed during rally, posted on Twitter by Jonathan Hoenig

### Example #3

On April 13, 2014, a lone gunman named Frazier Glenn Miller, Jr., went to the Jewish Community Center of Greater Kansas City and Village Shalom, a Jewish retirement community, both located in Overland Park, Kansas and shot and killed three people. The gunman, who was 73-years old at the time, was from Aurora, Missouri.

Miller is a Neo-Nazi and former leader of the defunct North Carolina-based White Patriot Party, formerly known as the Carolina Knights of the Ku Klux Klan.

Miller was tried and convicted of murder, and sentenced to death. As Johnson County District Judge Thomas Kelly Ryan imposed the sentence he stated, “Your attempt to bring hate to this community, to bring terror to this community, has failed. You have failed, Mr. Miller.”

Upon Ryan’s announcement, Miller yelled “Heil Hitler” and was removed from the courtroom. Miller said he shot his victims because he wanted to kill Jewish people before he dies.

The victims were a 14-year-old boy, Reat Griffin Underwood, and his 69-year-old grandfather, physician, Dr. William Lewis Corporon, and Terri LaManno, a 53-year-old woman, who was an occupational therapist in Kansas City. All three victims were Christians.

# PROFILE OF SIAVOSH DERAKHTI



Siavosh Derakhti (Sy-av-osh Der-ARK-tee) is a Swedish Muslim in his mid-twenties. At an early age, he emigrated from Iran to Sweden with his parents when his country was at war with Iraq.

Siavosh first became aware of prejudice as a young boy. His two best friends were David, a Jew, and Juliano, a Roma. They bonded because they all felt as members of minority groups that they were excluded in their own country. The Muslim children in school used to bully David saying “Sieg Heil,” “Dirty Jew,” and “Jews to the gas.” Siavosh became David’s bodyguard and defended him when fights would break out. Later, as a teenager, Siavosh’s father took him to Bergen-Belsen and Auschwitz-Birkenau. Siavosh was

deeply moved by these experiences and thought that such a trip could be the catalyst to open up a dialogue with his peers in Sweden.

When he was nineteen, Siavosh founded Young Muslims Against Anti-Semitism, now known as Young People Against Anti-Semitism and Xenophobia. He says that he has taken up this cause because he sees Jews as his brothers and sisters. He works with schools and community groups to bring young Jews and Muslims together to resolve their differences. He lobbied for funding from the education department to take a group of twenty-seven students to Auschwitz.

In 2013, Siavosh was awarded Sweden’s Raoul Wallenberg Award for his voluntary efforts to combat xenophobia. Despite threats from fellow Muslims, Siavosh continues his work because he believes in working toward creating a safe world for everyone.

# PROFILE OF IZZY LENGA



Izzy Lengua, a Jewish student at Birmingham University in the United Kingdom, decided to take action when she encountered pro-Hitler posters plastered across her university campus. She used a National Union of Students (NUS) conference as her platform, a confederation of 600 students’ unions that fights discrimination, isolation, and injustice in the United Kingdom. Izzy posted photos of the poster <sup>1</sup> on Twitter to draw attention to the issue.

“I decided [the NUS conference] was an appropriate time and place to demonstrate how antisemitism is still problematic on our campuses, despite many in the student movement not believing the claims of Jewish students who argue it to be so,” she wrote. “However, the backlash to my tweet has been extremely nasty and deeply upsetting. This sets a worrying precedent. I am worried about the rise of antisemitism across Europe and the world, and at points I am worried for my safety and that of my peers, but I am most concerned for the Jewish student community.”



Despite the onslaught of abuse, Izzy has resolved to stand strong. She has received numerous messages of support, including from Labour MP (Member of Parliament) Luciana Berger. A spokesperson for the Union of Jewish Students said, “It is important that Jewish students follow Izzy’s example and continue to seek representative positions both in the student movement and wider society.”

<sup>1</sup> Lizzy’s tweet of poster posted on campus.

# PROFILE OF LEORA EISENBERG



Leora Eisenberg is more than your typical high school senior. At seventeen, she is also an activist and prolific writer. She shares her thoughts and perspectives about Israel, antisemitism, and Jewish affairs in the blogs and articles she writes for *The Jerusalem Post*, *The Times of Israel*, and other news organizations. She enjoys connecting with people on the grassroots level through social media and “telling the truth” as she sees it.

Leora writes often about the BDS movement. In 2015, she had a firsthand encounter at the University of Minnesota, which left her frightened. At the time, Leora was running late to a lecture given by a visiting Israeli professor. As she approached the lecture hall, she was met with an aggressive and confrontational group of protesters representing the

BDS movement. The protestors disrupted the lecture shouting, “Netanyahu, you will see! Palestine will be free!” and “Hey hey, ho ho, the occupation has got to go!” They also brandished plastic babies “bloodied by Israeli war crimes.” Once inside the lecture, Leora witnessed one protester after another stand up and interrupt the presentation.

In an article Leora later wrote for *The Jerusalem Post*, she shared her ideas about the protesters: “Their protest in the name of “free speech” went against the free marketplace of ideas that an educational institution should stand for and seek to enshrine.” She went on to say, “By screaming and yelling for a solid forty minutes, they [the protesters] prevented any intellectual exchange ... their belief in “human rights” applied only to a certain group of humans, because, clearly, the pro-Israel humans at the University of Minnesota had no right to free speech or security.”

Leora continues to share her views on events and encourages her peers is to use social media to advance their ideas. She advises, “Be eloquent and use it as a platform to say something important. If there is injustice, speak up. If you see antisemitism, talk about it.”

# THE BDS MOVEMENT

Since 2001, organized campaigns around the world have promoted the “boycott, divestment and sanctions” (BDS) of Israel. The campaign intensified following the July 2004 joint statement by the Palestinian Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel (PACBI), and a July 2005 call by Palestinian civil society organizations on the international community “to impose broad boycotts and implement divestment initiatives against Israel similar to those applied to South Africa in the apartheid era.” The campaign was endorsed by pro-Palestinian organizations in Europe and the United States and the call for BDS against Israel has since become a key tactic within the global effort to delegitimize and isolate Israel.

Campaigns have been launched demanding the “divestment” of university, municipal, church, union, and other investment portfolios from companies that advocates claim “aid Israel’s occupation,” as well as the “boycott” of Israeli products, professionals, professional associations and academic institutions, and artistic performances (in Israel and abroad).

Some supporters of BDS may genuinely believe that these efforts will encourage Israel to change policies towards Palestinians in the Gaza Strip and West Bank with which they disagree. However, the predominant drive of the BDS campaign and its leadership is not criticism of policies, but the demonization and delegitimization of Israel. BDS campaigns promote a biased and simplistic approach to the complex Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and present this dispute over territorial and nationalist claims as the fault of only one party—Israel. The BDS campaign does not support Israeli-Palestinian peace efforts and rejects a two-state solution to the conflict.

Despite the best efforts of BDS activists, the campaign has largely failed to have more than a public relations impact, particularly in the United States. For the most part, campaigns have failed to bring major institutions to divest from Israel or to keep companies and institutions from engaging with Israel or Israelis. There have been some gains among church groups and British trade unions. At universities where student governments have passed divestment resolutions, the president, chancellor or board of trustees have refused to implement it. Graduate student unions who voted to support divestment have had the resolution nullified by their international union. Even academic associations who have voted to boycott Israeli academic institutions have not implemented these policies in a discernible way.

BDS campaigns do, however, garner publicity and often have a negative impact on perceptions of Israel. Increasingly, BDS campaigns are used by anti-Israel activists to attract attention to their message, particularly on college campuses where BDS initiatives draw students, faculty, campus organizations, and administrations into a highly politicized and publicized debate.

Many of the founding goals of the BDS movement, including denying the Jewish people the universal right of self-determination along with many of the strategies employed in BDS campaigns and activists are antisemitic. Many individuals involved in BDS campaigns are driven by opposition to Israel’s very existence as a Jewish state. Often time, BDS campaigns give rise to tensions in communities—particularly on college campuses—that can result in harassment or intimidation of Jews and Israel supporters, including overt antisemitic expression and acts. This dynamic can create an environment in which antisemitism can be expressed more freely.

# TAKING ACTION: SCENARIOS FOR DISCUSSION

## Scenario #1

While looking at recent Instagram posts, you notice that a student at your school has posted an image of a Star of David and a raised middle finger with the caption “Damn Jews.” You notice that the post has close to 100 “likes,” some by people you know.

### Discussion questions:

1. If you saw this post from a friend at your school, how might you react?
2. If you saw this post from an acquaintance in your school, how might you react?
3. If you saw this post from someone at your school that you don't know, how might you react?
4. Do you think our relationships (e.g., friend, acquaintance, stranger) influence the way we respond to situations like the one in this scenario? Explain why some relationships may make it more difficult to speak out against certain types of behavior.
5. Who has a responsibility to respond to this post, someone who is Jewish? Does it matter? Explain.

# TAKING ACTION: SCENARIOS FOR DISCUSSION

## Scenario #2

Students at your school decide to form a diversity club to promote mutual respect and offer a safe-haven for all students who want to openly celebrate what makes them diverse. You join the club, which meets weekly to share ideas, plan events, and discuss issues facing the school community. You notice that the group never discusses the concerns that may be affecting Jewish students. You have mentioned that you have heard insensitive and hurtful jokes and comments about people who are Jewish, but the general response has been, “It’s not that big a deal. Other groups have it a lot worse.”

### Discussion questions:

1. In addition to what you have already done, what are some other ways that you might help the group understand that Jewish students should be represented in discussions about “diversity,” and that the club should be open to discussing the concerns of all students, including Jewish students?
2. If you still feel you are not being heard, what else might you do?
3. What message is sent to Jewish students specifically if the issue of antisemitism is not included in the topics to be addressed? What message is sent to students in general if this topic is not included?
4. Who has a responsibility to raise this issue with club members, a Jewish student, a non-Jewish student, or both? Explain.

# TAKING ACTION: SCENARIOS FOR DISCUSSION

## Scenario #3

There have been several recent incidents of anti-Jewish and anti-Muslim graffiti in your community, something that has not occurred before. These displays are appearing near businesses owned by Jews and Muslims and in public recreational areas including playgrounds. While local authorities are working to respond to the incidents and the graffiti is removed as quickly as possible, the problem persists.

### Discussion questions:

1. What are some possible reasons why graffiti like this might suddenly be appearing? Why would it be important to uncover what is behind such displays of bias?
2. What impact do displays like this have on the groups being targeted? What impact does it have on the community at large?
3. Who in the community is responsible for addressing this issue?
4. What are some possible actions that individuals in the community can take to not only address the graffiti but also the underlying anti-Jewish and anti-Muslim sentiment?

# ADDITIONAL RESOURCES FOR EDUCATORS

The resources below provide educators with additional information about contemporary antisemitism. This list is not intended to be comprehensive.

“Antisemitism in Europe: ‘The Devil That Never Dies’” by Lauren Markoe

Scholar Daniel Jonah Goldhagen refers to antisemitism as “the devil that never dies”—it morphs over the millennia, taking different forms in different cultures. (*The Washington Post*, March 1, 2016)

“Contemporary Antisemitism” Dr. Robert Rozett

Dr. Rozett, Director of the Yad Vashem Libraries, explains how traditional forms of antisemitism never died out after the Holocaust and have continued to flourish, especially since the dawn of the twenty-first century. (*Yad Vashem*, 27 min., Podcast)

“Crossing the Line: When Criticism of Israel becomes Anti-Semitism” by Jonathan Greenblatt.

Jonathan Greenblatt, National Director and CEO of the Anti-Defamation League, draws the distinction when expressions against Israel becomes antisemitism. (*The Huffington Post The Blog*, January 28, 2016)

“European Anti-Semitism Has Reached Unprecedented Levels” by Sam Sokol

Israeli Diaspora Affairs Minister reports that antisemitism in Europe has reached an unprecedented level. (*The Jerusalem Post*, January 24, 2016)

“In Iran, Holocaust Denial and Mockery are Alive and Well” by Anti-Defamation League

The Islamic Association of the University of Isfahan in Iran announced a Holocaust cartoon contests with the goal to question the Holocaust. (*Anti-Defamation League Israel & International blog*, March 11, 2016)

*Not Your Father’s Antisemitism, Hatred of the Jews in the 21st Century* by Michael Berenbaum (Editor)

Essays by scholars from diverse backgrounds examine antisemitism in the twenty-first century. (*Paragon House*, 308 pages, 2008)

“The New Antisemitism” by Dr. Michael Berenbaum

Dr. Berenbaum, American scholar specializing in the study of the Holocaust, explains what is meant by the “new antisemitism” and provides a tour of this phenomenon around the world. (*Orange County Community Scholars Program*, 2015, 75 min., Podcast)