CHAPTER 7

Prejudice

Anti-Semitism and Islamophobia

A review of the similarities between observant Jews and Muslims in America would be incomplete without looking at the prejudice directed at both of these minorities and in particular the impact it has on those who visibly stand out precisely because of their religious observance. We offer a brief overview even though the subject deserves a volume of its own.

ANTI-SEMITISM AND AMERICA

Attacks on Jews are as old as the Bible. So long as they were confined to ghettos and not allowed among the general population and remained a barely tolerated minority, those who sought to attack them had no difficulty in identifying their targets. However, once they entered into the general society and moved toward assimilation, they became harder to identify. This was the subtext many understood upon hearing the advice poet and champion of Jewish enlightenment Yehudah Leib Gordon gave to nineteenth century Russian Jewry to be "a man in the street and a Jew at home." Although Gordon wanted to encourage "Russian Jews to abandon their isolation from Russian and European culture and partake of the great civilization around them while remaining committed Jews," many concluded that if they assimilated in public, dressed like the others around them, spoke the lingua franca fluently, took on the names of those around them, and generally made themselves culturally

indistinguishable from the dominant culture, Jews would not stand out and might avoid the bitter consequences of anti-Semitism.[1] Throughout their history as a minority, Jews were expected to wear special items that helped others identify them—whether this was a unique hat, the notorious yellow badge or six-pointed star with the word Jew emblazoned on it, or something else. The practice of forcing Jews to wear some sign first appeared in the eighth century under the Muslim caliphate and later in parts of Western Europe during the thirteenth century.[2] All this was necessary since, racial theories notwithstanding, Jews could easily disappear into the population if they were not conspicuous. In America, if Jews wanted to identify themselves, however, it was generally by choice.

In a historical review of anti-Semitism in America, Jonathan Sarna reminds readers that although anti-Jewish laws were not enshrined in American law, Jews faced "episodes of rejection, prejudice, and even occasional violence in the colonial era, while anti-Jewish literary stereotypes abounded."[3] In spite of the absence of nationwide anti-Jewish laws, incidents of Jew-baiting and negative stereotypes abounded, along with a lack of understanding about the real circumstances of Jewish life. No less a figure than Thomas Jefferson, "in spite of the liberal sentiments he expressed in correspondence with individual Jews, continued to maintain in other letters that Jews as a people were morally depraved."[4] Nevertheless, there was never nationwide legally sanctioned anti-Semitism in the United States, as there was in many other countries.[5]

American prejudice expanded exponentially in the nineteenth century, when Jews arrived in large numbers and the "word 'anti-Semitism' entered the American lexicon."[6] This sentiment had its most notorious expression in Atlanta where, in 1913, Leo Frank, a twenty-nine-year-old Jewish factory superintendent and local B'nai B'rith leader was convicted of molesting and murdering one of his employees and dumping her body in the basement of the pencil factory where they both worked.

> The case attracted a frenzy of publicity, and much attention centered on Frank's religion—the mark of his being an outsider in the South, a symbol of otherness. Crowds around the courthouse chanted, "Hang the Jew!" When Georgia governor John Slaton, unpersuaded that Frank was the murderer, commuted his sentence in 1915 from death to life in prison, a mob including many leading local citizens broke into the jail, kidnapped Frank, and lynched him: the first known lynching of a Jew in American history. Years later an eyewitness confirmed what Frank's defenders long believed: that Mary Phagan was murdered by the janitor of the pencil factory, the "star witness" against Frank. Frank himself was innocent.[7]

Other well-known anti-Semitic sentiments were expressed by Henry Ford in widely read articles in the *Dearborn Independent* during the 1920s alleging international Jewish conspiracies. Pro-Nazi radio priest Father Charles Coughlin in the 1930s and '40s became well known for his anti-Semitic views and messages. Even after the horrors of the Holocaust became widely publicized and anti-Jewish rhetoric briefly declined, "some 10 percent of the bombs planted by extremists between 1954 and 1959 targeted Jewish institutions—synagogues, rabbis' homes, and community centers."[8]

Ironically, American Jewish liberalism, a reaction to bias, which became a hallmark of most Jews' political outlook, also marked them as targets for anti-Semitism. Jewish liberal engagement in the struggle for Black civil rights, including the Jewish contribution to the founding of the N.A.A.C.P. and later their role in the 1960s civil rights protests and voter registration drives, moved anti-Semites in the American South to revile and target them, which reached its symbolic apex with the 1964 murders of the New York Jews Andrew Goodman and Michael Schwerner, volunteers at the Freedom School in Mississippi, along with African-American James Chaney. In the North, American Blacks "turned on Jews for not supporting civil rights enough."[9]

As African Americans took up residence in Jewish neighborhoods in northern cities and some suburbs, redlining by federal agencies and unscrupulous real estate agents led to white flight. Orthodox Jews, many of them Holocaust refugees and new immigrants, became among the last whites to leave these neighborhoods and, in the Northeast especially, experienced the brunt of the racial resentment of the Blacks who encountered them as white neighbors, shopkeepers, landlords, and competitors for services and space.[10] Often these Jews were expected to atone for the sins of all the white people who had fled when African-Americans moved in. The tension between these poorest of Jews and Blacks grew and expressed itself on the one side as Black anti-Semitism and on the other side as Jewish racism. Perhaps the most dramatic expression of the former came in 1991 with the Crown Heights riots (local Jews called it a "pogrom"), during which a Lubavitcher Hasid was slain and the Jewish community of largely Hasidic Jews was attacked, mostly by African Americans.[11]

Although animosity to Jews in America never totally disappeared and there have been dramatic incidents of anti-Jewish activity and violence, a number of sociological studies demonstrate that, "Americans are positively disposed toward Jews," even as the incidents of anti-Semitism

continue and now "have hit an all-time high."[12] Antony Lerman characterizes this development with the perhaps overly histrionic declaration: "Warnings about the threat posed by anti-Semitism today are as dramatic, extreme, apocalyptic and frightening as they have ever been since the end of the Second World War."[13] In a more measured report, the 2020 Pew Research Center Report on Jewish Americans noted that among Jews there has been a rising perception that American anti-Semitism has persisted; fully three-quarters perceive than in the last five years it has increased. The report noted that, "among Jews who see anti-Semitism as having increased, the more common explanation is that people who hold anti-Semitic views now feel more free to express them, rather than that the number of Americans who hold anti-Semitic views is rising—although many Jews think that both of those things are happening."[14] In perhaps one of the most high profile cases, in 2017 at a white nationalist protest in Charlottesville, Virginia, over the removal of a statue of Confederate General Robert E. Lee, as demonstrators began marching through the streets, attacking a Black man, killing a counter-protester and wounding nineteen others, some began shouting, "Jews will not replace us," and others "chant[ed] the Nazi-associated phrase 'blood and soil'."[15] This gratuitous attack on Jews—coupled with the fact that then President Trump called the protesters "fine people"—was seen by many Jews as one more, especially important example of a new willingness to condone public displays of anti-Semitism.

Pew reported that, "About six-in-ten Jews report having had a direct, personal experience with anti-Semitism in the past 12 months, such as seeing anti-Semitic graffiti or vandalism, experiencing online harassment, or hearing someone repeat an anti-Semitic trope. Just over half also say they feel less safe as Jews in America than they did five years ago, while very few feel safer."[16] The Anti-Defamation League reported that in all fifty states anti-Semitism "reached an all-time high in the United States in 2021, with a total of 2,717 reported anti-Semitic incidents," including attacks against synagogues and Jewish community centers, where the increase was 61 percent.[17] Of course, we were writing these words before October 7, 2023 and the massive anti-Semitism that has emerged since then and on the eve of this book's publication)—about which we shall briefly write at the end of this chapter.

Following 9/11, the Jewish Federations of North America created the Secure Community Network, the closest thing to an official security agency for American Jewish institutions. It has grown exponentially over the past five years, from a small office with a staff of five to a national

organization with seventy-five employees stationed around the country.[18] In twenty-first-century America, Jews are now less surprised by anti-Semitism, but "they have become, by grim necessity, far more vigilant."[19] Using federal grants and privately collected community money, they seek to "secure every Jewish community" in America.[20] And in many synagogues, particularly Orthodox ones, entry is limited to those who know the code that unlocks the door or are recognized by security guards. This is a far cry from the days that anyone could walk into a shul.

We wanted to look more closely at how the observant and Orthodox Jews experience this anti-Semitism. To explore this question, one of us (SH), along with Mark Trencher of Nishma Research, designed and carried out a survey polling them. Conducted March 10–31, 2022, we reached 768 Orthodox Jews.[21] Our sample may not be representative of the total US Orthodox population but for comparison purposes we draw upon the American Jewish Committee (AJC) data. Among the 669 American Orthodox respondents 355 self-identified as Modern/Centrist Orthodox, 179 as Yeshivish/Litvish/Agudah [Haredim], and 91 as Hasidic, including the outreach-oriented Chabad-Lubavitchers, who identified as Orthodox. We also created a Yiddish language version of our survey, posted to several Yiddish forums visited mainly by more insular Hasidic Jews for whom Yiddish is the language of everyday life (a practice that helps keep them from assimilating into American culture and society). We hoped thus to tap the most extreme Orthodox views on the matter of anti-Semitism in America. Yiddish is always used, prominently by Hasidic Jews, as a lingua franca distinct from the local languages (English, Hebrew, Russian, etc.) where these Jews find themselves—both a symbol and a practice that effectively sets the speakers apart socially and culturally from the general population. The fact that we could now reach such Yiddish speakers via the internet demonstrates that its efficacy as a social and cultural separator may be waning, as some of the responses we received from this population hint. We received 97 responses, almost all from men. Reaching Yiddish-speaking Hasidic women remains a challenge and we do not report data for the handful of Yiddish-speaking women respondents.

The observant Jewish population is flourishing, its growth rate and fertility the highest among all American Jews. Its institutional growth is exponential, and unlike other American Jews, the Orthodox retain their young to a great extent. We have seen that their engagement in matters Jewish is as intense if not more so than their parents and certainly greater than most of the rest of American Jews. Pew notes that 98 per-

cent of married Orthodox Jews claim their spouse is Jewish—in contrast to non-Orthodox Jews who married since 2010, 72 percent of whom are intermarried.[22] Our findings make up the bulk of the Jewish material in this chapter.

ISLAMOPHOBIA AND AMERICA

Compared to anti-Semitism, Islamophobia is in many ways younger. This is true in terms both of the use of the epithet and the birth of the phenomenon. Islamophobia was coined as a name for a new reality and gained currency only in 1997 with the publication of a report by a British think tank, the Runnymede Trust.[23] In the first decade of the twenty-first century, the name "Islamophobia" came to be preferred over alternatives such as "anti-Muslim bigotry," "anti-Muslimism," and "demonization of Islam."

Although there is a tendency to extend the history of both phenomena back into antiquity, it seems more prudent to make a distinction between premodern anti-Jewish and anti-Muslim animosities and the anti-Semitism and Islamophobia of modern times, as it is only against the backdrop of modern ideals of human rights and equal citizenship that both anti-Semitism and Islamophobia become meaningful moral and civil crimes.

European enmity against Islam and Muslims traces back centuries to various cultural, military, and political encounters—from the Crusades to colonialism. In the seventh and eighth centuries Muslims were simply foes. The real turning point was during the eleventh-century Crusades. Under the leadership of Pope Urban II, Muslims (like Jews) became the "other" of European Christendom.[24]

The United States, primarily Christian in origins, of course lacks this early anti-Muslim prejudice because of the recentness of its history and its geographical distance. Americans, however, "inherited many of the negative theological stereotypes circulating among European Christians for centuries."[25] Contemporary conflicts and crises including the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the Iranian Revolution, the Rushdie Affair, the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, and the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001, all contributed to the growth of Islamophobia in American culture, government policy, and international relations. Some scholars believe Islamophobia must primarily be seen as a form of structural racism.[26] Regardless of how you theorize it, Islamophobia, as Andrew Shryock points out, negates the possibility of true citizenship for Muslims in

Western societies.[27] Normalizing the mistreatment of Muslims in one country in the name of "national security" or "terrorism" creates a demonstration effect for other countries: Islamophobia today is indeed a global problem.

One of the drivers of global Islamophobia—like anti-Semitism—is white nationalism, which has transnational appeal. "The Great Replacement," a white nationalist far-right conspiracy theory aimed at Muslim North Africans in France, surfaced at the "Unite the Right" rally in Charlottesville, Virginia, but also found strong resonance across the Pacific, where it led to the live-broadcast mass shooting of Muslims in New Zealand. The recent increasing structural equivalence of Jews and Muslims in the white nationalist imagination has caught the attention of Muslim and Jewish observers, who now explicitly call for greater solidarity against the common enemy of racism in Europe and America.[28] The paths traced by the problems of Islamophobia and anti-Semitism in Western democracies are increasingly converging.

While many associate the relationship between American Jews and Muslims with the conflict over Israel, in fact as a recent study noted, "despite understandable tensions between American Jews and American Muslims over Middle East policy, both communities face the same domestic detractors. American nativists dislike them both and believe that Jewish and Muslim rights are relatively unimportant."[29]

Islamophobia is not merely hostility to individuals.[30] The Runnymede Report, mentioned earlier, identifies eight views going beyond such animosity against individuals: 1) a conviction that Islam is monolithic and static, 2) defining Islam as foreign and other, 3) considering Islam as inferior, 4) seeing the religion of Islam as the enemy, 5) believing Islam is manipulative, 6) justifying racial discrimination against Muslims, 7) invalidating Muslim criticism of the West, and 8) looking upon Anti-Muslim discourse as natural.[31]

Islamophobia inherits a familiar ideological template from anti-Semitism: for example, accusing Muslims of infiltrating the US government, President Obama of being a secret Muslim, or Islamists of carrying out a stealth jihad to take over the government and institute "sharia law."[32] There is now a considerable scholarly literature that analyzes the large network of organizations and discourses that target Muslims and deliberately demonize them: the "Islamophobia industry."[33]

This industry is sustained by an "Islamophobia network,"[34] a vast right-wing conspiracy that funnels millions of dollars into the hands of fringe organizations, which, according to Christopher Bail, "exploit the

emotional bias of the media"[35] as it responds to the crosscurrents of moral panic, white nationalism, and Trump-era populism. The infamous documentary film, *Obsession: Radical Islam's War Against the West*, illustrates the reach of this network. The film was made at the behest of the Clarion Project, a nonprofit whose board was populated by well-known Islamophobes, among them Frank Gaffney and Daniel Pipes. Listed by the Southern Poverty Law Center as an "anti-Muslim hate group," Clarion spent around 17 million dollars on the project. Twenty-eight million copies of *Obsession* were distributed on DVD before the 2008 elections.[36] The exploitation of Islamophobia in domestic politics would, of course, find its full realization during Donald Trump's 2016 election campaign and subsequent presidency.[37]

An example of Islamophobia seeping into policy and government behavior is an incident that hit close to us, concerning the senior colleges of the City University of New York (CUNY), where we both teach. The intensified surveillance of Muslims since 9/11 gave various security agencies a free hand to target observant Muslims whose religious commitments were often taken as a sign of "radicalism." Such innocent ways of exercising one's religious freedom as sporting a beard or attending the mosque regularly were used to classify observant Muslims as suspects in terrorism investigations. The pernicious domestic security policies targeting Muslims were not limited to surveillance. Government agencies installed spies and recruited informants in mosques, charities, and even the campus organizations of Muslim students. The New York Police Department launched an intense surveillance operation focusing on Muslims in New York City and beyond, using undercover officers and "mosque crawlers" (informants). "They eavesdropped on conversations in restaurants and cafes, catalogued membership in mosques and student organizations, and, it was later said, even tried to bait people into making inflammatory statements."[38] According to news reports, the operation was run by a secret "demographics unit" led by a former high-ranking CIA member. CUNY was one such target; the NYPD used informants to follow and report every activity of the Muslim Student Association (MSA). The Associated Press, which broke the story, won a Pulitzer Prize.

The aggressive government surveillance of Muslim communities and their institutions, coupled with persistent misrepresentations of Muslims, is merely one form of institutional Islamophobia, but its effects can be brutal when it becomes a motive for the actions of vigilante citizens who target their Muslim neighbors or coworkers.[39] The Chapel

Hill (North Carolina) shootings on February 10, 2015, in which three young Muslim students were killed execution-style by a gunman in their apartment provides an example of Islamophobia-inspired violence. The perpetrator was a gun-obsessed neighbor whose hatred for Muslims, religion in general, and Black people was well known by other residents of the apartment complex, several of whom he had previously harassed. News of the senseless tragedy rattled the American Muslim community and immediately raised questions about the killer's motive. Muslims nationwide saw it as an obvious hate crime, but others were not so sure.[40] The coverage of the story is in itself a testament to the complexity of the fight to define and identify Islamophobia.

As we have seen, American Muslims have been subjected to electronic surveillance and compulsory interviews with law enforcement and have easily been victimized by an enraged public. Muslim charities and institutions were raided. Hijabs or Muslim appearance, traditional Muslim names, perceived signifiers of Muslim identity, all became heavy psychological and social burdens for their bearers. Muslim Americans in recent years endured unprecedented levels of racism, differential treatment, and an intensified sense of exclusion: from pastors trying to burn the Qur'an to Sharia ban campaigns in various American states; from campaigns against mosque construction (including the so-called Ground Zero mosque) to vandalism and arson of Muslim places of worship; from politicians utilizing anti-Muslim rhetoric to government no-fly lists for Muslims; from watchlists, the Patriot Act, Muslim travel bans, and FBI investigations to workplace discrimination and bullying in schools.[41]

Although comparative studies of Muslim and Jewish attitudes toward each other are very rare, even in European countries, we wanted to focus on our target group of observant Jews and Muslims in the US.[42] While our surveys are modest in their scope and claims, they are the first to pose parallel questions to these two communities at around the same time.

Apart from rudimentary community-generated reports here and there, survey data on the American Muslim community has been sparse for a long time, even into the early 2000s. With the professionalization of Muslim organizations and the rise of a few research-focused think tanks such as the Institute for Social Policy and Understanding (ISPU), the Muslim community began to engage more systematically in generating data about itself and mapping Muslim lives beyond the records of victimization kept by a few advocacy groups. This post-9/11 change

was coupled with greater interest from non-Muslim research institutions, who increasingly turned their attention to Muslims. Pew Research Center has been generating invaluable data about religion and public life in general.[43] The Muslim experience is increasingly being captured via survey research. Similarly, ISPU, in recent years, has been exceptionally productive in generating data about the Muslim community. Annual civil rights reports by Muslim advocacy groups such as Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) and Muslim Public Affairs Council (MPAC) are also valuable resources for mapping Muslim life in the US.

There are today about 3.85 million Muslims living in the US, accounting for 1.1 percent of the total population. In order to explore Muslims' own experience and perceptions of Islamophobia, one of us (MB) in collaboration with Zahra Institute designed and conducted a survey of observant American Muslims. This survey (henceforth, the Zahra survey) was conducted April 15–30, 2022. Using the snowball method, we reached 208 Muslims living in the United States. Forty-four percent of our respondents were "born outside the US" while 49 percent were American born to Muslim parents. Together with 7 percent converts, as a sample they reflect the larger population fairly well. Similarly, 74 percent identified as Sunni, while 12.6 percent were Shia. Our respondents were reached through Muslim organizations, local mosques, networks of Muslim chaplains on college campuses, and Muslim student organizations. Though perhaps not fully representative of the entire community (due to relatively small sample size and some geographic imbalance as respondents were concentrated on the East Coast and Midwest), the Zahra survey is employed here in conjunction with our own qualitative research and prior surveys by Pew and ISPU, which collectively give a persuasive picture of today's American Muslims. For the sake of comparing our two groups, we structured our two surveys to ask parallel questions where possible, but there are important differences between our subject communities. Unlike the Jewish community, the Muslims have not crystallized into widely recognized subgroups. American Jews will easily self-identify as Reform, Conservative, Orthodox, and so on, while American Muslims, unaccustomed to having their internal distinctions recognized, use a broader and more discursive set of labels. Nevertheless, the Zahra survey sought to map various aspects of the Muslim experience and perceptions of Islamophobia that speak to the Nishma survey in a comparative manner.

EXPERIENCING ANTI-SEMITISM

Other surveys of anti-Semitism have probed incidents and attitudes toward anti-Semitism in the American Jewish community and released detailed findings for the overall US Jewish community.[44] Because religiously observant Jews go to synagogue often, are frequently in Jewish settings, and are more easily identifiable in public, we supposed this makes them targets of opportunity for anti-Semites. To compare the particular experience of American Orthodox Jews with anti-Semitism, the AJC survey looked at Orthodox and non-Orthodox answers to the question of whether, over the past twelve months, the respondent had been the target of an anti-Semitic remark in person. Comparing the reported experiences, we discover that about 50 percent more of the Orthodox Jews said this had happened to them. Clearly, the identifiably Orthodox are experiencing more American anti-Semitism.

Paradoxically, when we look more closely at our research and how these perceptions of anti-Semitism are distributed among various subgroups of Orthodoxy, we discover that those who are most convinced that anti-Semitism is on the increase are those who actually experienced it less. Looking at the numbers, we see that those more engaged with the outside world are most concerned about it while those who are more often the victims of it are less convinced it has grown. Our Nishma survey found that "variations in appearance mean that some of Orthodox Jews are more obviously Jewish than others; on the other hand, those groups that are the most obviously Jewish are also the most insulated, and do not interact as much with the outside community," and therefore as a group are less anxious about it.[45] This is most obvious with Yiddish-speaking Hasidim. Protected by their extreme linguistic and geographic insularity (that's how they have been able to keep Yiddish as their everyday language), they reported a small number of experiences of threat or violence and the least concern about it. If one lives in an enclave culture and does not leave it often—even if one is visibly Jewish—American anti-Semitism does not seem as imminent.

Synagogues and other Jewish institutions in America remain a focus of anti-Semitic attacks. The most notorious were the murderous assaults at the Tree of Life synagogue in Pittsburgh in October 2018 (the deadliest anti-Semitic attack in American history); the shooting at a Chabad synagogue of Poway, California, in April 2019; the murders at a kosher grocery store in Jersey City, New Jersey, in December 2019; and a hostage situation at a synagogue in Texas in 2022. The fact that two of

these targeted the Orthodox community and the others occurred at synagogues demonstrates the greater risk the religiously observant face.

In our survey an average of about 15 percent reported that communal Jewish organizations they attend (shul, school, community center, etc.) experienced anti-Jewish vandalism, broken windows, graffiti, a break-in, and other attacks during the past year. Asked to describe the nature of their anti-Semitic experiences, Orthodox Jews described a variety. Though none involved death or near-death experiences like the four listed above, they included reports such as: a "yarmulka was stolen off [my] son's head [while he was] walking with me through [the] University." Another respondent described the following: "our shul had swastikas sprayed on it, also our Jewish girl's high school had the same, [while] . . . our little ones at a Jewish elementary school were continuously yelled at by a man . . . [who said] that he wanted to kill Jews." The *New York Times* reported in 2022 that anti-Semitic attacks in New York were at their highest level in decade, rising by 24 percent.[46]

Among the modern Orthodox men, who often blend into America visually, 38 percent often or sometimes hid their identities as Jews on the street or removed any outward signs of being Jewish when in public. The women of this group, who are even less recognizable, reported a slightly lower incidence of self-concealment (35%), but they do not have to do much to camouflage their identities. A somewhat greater proportion—43 percent—of the haredi men, whose appearance, with their black hats and coats, white shirts, and (in many cases) beards, visually stands out much more, cannot hide who they are, which may account for this number.

Paradoxically, however, the most insular and most visually distinct Hasidim who tried to hide their identities did so at only about 25 percent and the Yiddish-speaking Hasidic men at 14 percent. It is simply too hard for bearded and earlocked Hasidim to hide their identity temporarily. But of course, because of their almost universal location within their closed ghettos and cultural bubbles, when they venture forth from those enclaves, their street is an overwhelmingly Jewish one and their public Hasidic, and so they are protected by their community norms and standards, and they do not share the same sense of exposure to anti-Semitism—even though those who venture beyond the boundaries of their enclaves are among the most vulnerable. Hasidic and haredi men in our survey reported more anti-Semitic incidents—between 17 percent and 33 percent. Yet the modern Orthodox, who reported fewer (only about 5 percent), worried more about it. Worrying is a state of

mind: those who live in their insular environment may more often be the targets of attacks (probably when they go beyond their boundaries), but inside their ghettos they still feel secure.

Our Orthodox respondents reported feeling less safe attending synagogues, but this did not lead them to avoid going as they regularly do. For them concerns about growing American anti-Semitism did not offset their religious and ritual obligations regarding their communal prayer.

One of the more surprising reactions to anti-Semitism was the proportion and identity of these Jews who reported arming themselves. The modern Orthodox, the most liberal and yet most concerned of our respondents about increased anti-Semitism were nevertheless the fewest who reported arming themselves—18 percent of the men and 14 percent of the women. Their liberalism (or their trust in God's protection) offset any thoughts of being armed.

Equally remarkable, between 30 and 40 percent of both haredi and Hasidic men and women—who did not express so much concern about anti-Semitism—reported arming themselves. That observant Jews with the most traditional outlook have embraced the gun is counterintuitive for those who know their history. Reputed to be the sector that is Jewishly studious, spiritual, and pious, we find their acquiring guns surprising. In looking for an explanation, we note that not only are they religiously conservative but they have increasingly moved to the political right as well. No less a figure than Meir Y. Soloveitchik, "a leading Modern Orthodox rabbi who received his PhD from Princeton's religion department—and who became known in conservative circles for leading the 2012 Republican National Convention in prayer—has argued . . . for an alliance between conservative Jews and Christians as a bulwark against rising secularism and emerging challenges to patriarchal family life." He has "positioned American Orthodox Jewry as a leader in the contemporary struggle to voice 'a conservative vision of the American idea.'"[47] In their slide to the right, many Orthodox embraced right-wing party policies, including apparently a bias toward owning guns. Almost half of those identifying as Republican reported having a gun in their house compared to about half that proportion who are Democrats.

As one of our haredi respondents wrote, the Republicans are "currently the better party for the Jews and Israel." Support for the Republicans among the haredim is approaching a majority. Even the comparatively more liberal modern Orthodox were 45 percent Democrats

and 23 percent Republicans—to the right of most American Jews who Pew found were 71 percent Democrats or Independents leaning Democratic. Whatever their Jewish orientation, their gun behavior showed how Republican they were.

Again, the Yiddish-speakers, who clearly are so insulated that most of the time they are surrounded by folks like themselves and do not imagine encountering people they might conceive of shooting, were outliers; only 7 percent of them were armed.

As we have noted, the expenditure on security has exploded among American Jews—paradoxically in reverse proportion to their level of religious observance. While the Orthodox are not going to be passive or unprepared in the face of rising American anti-Semitism, they are not the leaders among American Jews focusing on security programs. When it came to getting security training, about 30 percent on average of all our Orthodox groups did so, excluding the Yiddish-speakers who as the insular outliers they are came in at 14 percent.

The latter are also not looking to being vigilantes; on average 50 percent preferred to give the police more support, and none more than the Hasidic men at 61 percent (here even the Yiddish-speakers came in at 27%—even in their enclaves the police are a presence whose authority they generally respect). Interestingly, concerns about anti-Semitism among the most observant group of Jewish Americans have not eroded confidence in police; this is in contrast to other minorities who have suffered prejudice and often see the police as adversarial. The increased police presence at large synagogues in the United States since the uptick in anti-Semitic attacks will test this relationship, especially for those who worship in the many small shuls that do not necessarily warrant police guards.

Whatever sympathies observant Jews once had for liberal and Democratic politics are clearly now fading, except among a portion of modern Orthodox Democrats. If our survey results are to be trusted, increasingly, observant Jews are deciding that their safety and religious welfare is better off when they identify with conservative political groups.

EXPERIENCES OF ISLAMOPHOBIA

The 2017 Pew Survey found that 75 percent of American Muslims believe "there is a lot of discrimination against Muslims in the U.S." Our survey asked Muslims "how much Islamophobia do you think there is today in the United States?" Eighty-eight percent said there was

a lot or some. When we asked if they thought there was more or less Islamophobia compared with three years ago, 22 percent said there was more while 43 percent said less, and 35 percent thought it was about the same. Regardless of whether Islamophobia is or is not increasing, Muslims may be feeling its pressure slightly less due to the end of the Trump presidency and its replacement by a more Muslim-friendly Democratic administration, as well as to a fading memory of the alienation and fear they felt following 9/11 and a growing recognition by the non-Muslim public of Muslim victimization. This is corroborated by our survey respondents, 56 percent of whom thought that compared with three years ago, Muslims are doing better in combating Islamophobia.

Nevertheless, American Muslims remain concerned about extremism in the name of Islam: 66 percent were very concerned. In contrast, only 49 percent of the general public expressed such extreme concern. Muslim communities have developed a hypersensitivity to the risks of being blamed for the crimes of other Muslims.

Matters of perception can be complicated by the subtlety of Islamophobia, fear, and the expectation of discrimination. As one respondent wrote: "It's hard to determine what is 'Islamophobic' and not. Since I am routinely dressed in a way recognized to be Muslim, I do tend to receive certain comments that are rude. Whether it is triggered by my dress or not is uncertain." Islamophobic violence is frequently directed at those visually identifiable as Muslims, especially women in hijab, but for those with multiple identities (Black and Muslim, non-native speaker and Muslim, etc.), it can be hard to pin down the exact source of hostility.

A Pew study from 2017 shows that roughly half of Muslims say they have experienced a specific instance of discrimination over the past year and an equal percentage says that someone expressed support for them because they are Muslim in the past twelve months.[48] In contrast, only about 18 percent in our survey reported that a communal Muslim institution that they attended (masjid, Islamic school, Muslim business, etc.) had experienced anti-Muslim vandalism, broken windows, graffiti, a break-in, or the like. One of the respondents wrote: "Our masjid was attacked by a white man and vandalized. Damages were over $15,000. Yet the real damage was to us feeling unsafe, unwanted and hated."

What do Muslims do in response to such situations? According to our Zahra survey, about one third stated that they experienced situations in which they hid their identity as a Muslim when on the street

(14% often, 25% sometimes). A similar percentage reported that they try to remove any outward signs of being Muslim when in public (15% often, 21% sometimes).

About 19 percent of Muslims in our survey reported arming themselves for protection against Islamophobic attacks. In recent years, in parts of the American heartland, various militia groups regularly convened outside Muslim places of worship to intimidate mosque-goers.[49] In places like Florida and Texas where Muslim presence is significant and gun culture is also strong, we observe a new and growing interest among American-born Muslims in embracing the exercise of Second Amendment rights as part of their American citizenship. For a long time (and still today for many immigrant Muslims), the idea of Muslims with guns has called to mind only fears of terrorism. However, as Muslims feel the heat of American violence, they participate in its civic culture by what one of us has described elsewhere as a maturation from the First Amendment to the Second in their search for equal citizenship and participation in American sovereignty.[50]

On their list of responses to Islamophobia, Muslims responded that they make a point of voting for candidates who condemn Islamophobia and that they donate to organizations that combat it (60% and 46%, respectively). Not unconnected to this is our finding that only 29 percent of American Muslims think that the federal government is helping to fight Islamophobia. It is probably true that the government is doing less than it could given that a considerable amount of Islamophobia is grounded in government-sponsored policies and regulations mentioned earlier that target Muslims. Muslims are increasingly eager to engage in American political behavior as citizens. Their expectations are higher than before, and they see a significant gap in this one-sided interest. While politically American Muslims might feel that they are participating more as citizens, they may be frustrated by the lag between changing political attitudes and bureaucratic obstinacy when it comes to undoing anti-Muslim policies and regulations such as terrorism laws, no-fly lists, and widespread surveillance of Muslims and their institutions.

In their political party orientation, American Muslims are strongly Democratic. According to Pew, two thirds are either Democratic (38%) or lean Democratic (28%).[51] Only 14 percent say they are either Republican or leaning Republican. Our survey results largely confirm this, with 49 percent Democratic and 16 percent Republican, along with 20 percent Independent. While Democrats are increasingly becoming more sympathetic to Muslims, Republicans are moving in the other

direction.[52] Whether this is because anti-Muslim sentiment is used as a political instrument in right-wing politics or because Muslims overwhelmingly identify with and support one party over the other, is not clear. Not unlike what is happening among conservative American Jews, some American Muslims are attracted to the Republican party because of its association with conservative values and its stance on social policies such as same-sex marriage. The germinal gun-ownership trend among Muslims can arguably be interpreted as a slide among American-born Muslims towards the libertarian right. As Muslims participate in politics as voters and more directly as politicians, they are increasingly forced to choose one side between the two political parties and be treated as an adversary by the other party. Unlike the first moderate cohort of Muslim congressmen (Keith Ellison and Andre Carson and their "social reform" platform), the new cohort of Muslim congresswomen (Ilhan Omar and Rashida Tlaib) are new-generation activist politicians with more partisan and polarizing politics.

For all their concern about Islamophobia, 89 percent of American Muslims are "proud to be American."[53] The Muslim community was optimistic about their American identity in 2022. According to our survey, 60 percent of Muslims believe that, despite Islamophobia, Muslims living in the US are doing better than Muslims in most Muslim countries.[54] They are optimistic as well about the future of Islamophobia. Sixty-one percent believe that there will always be some Islamophobia but it will get better, compared to only 26 percent who said it will get worse.[55]

JEWISH SYMPATHIES TOWARD OTHER AMERICAN GROUPS SUFFERING PREJUDICE

The Orthodox community, and especially its most observant sectors, as is undoubtedly clear to readers by now, is "close-knit," sometimes insular, and driven by restrictive codes of behavior that keep them highly interdependent, inward-looking, and often ambivalent, if not anxious, about contact with cultures outside their own.[56] Even some of those who call themselves modern Orthodox show such tendencies.[57] We wanted to see if their perception of rising anti-Semitism would move them to sympathize with other groups facing increased bigotry in American life in spite of this tendency to focus on themselves. Listing a variety of such groups, we asked about the degree of sympathy for each group compared to three years ago. The groups were: Asian Americans,

Blacks, Christian Evangelicals, LGBTQ, Hispanics, immigrants in general, and Muslims.

While there were both expressions of more and less sympathy, the largest percentages were among those who said their feelings remained unchanged. We then took the proportion of those who claimed they now had "more sympathy" for each group and deducted from that number those who thought they now had "less sympathy" toward them. The resulting percentage we define as the "net shift in perceived sympathy." A positive number means a net shift of increased sympathy and a negative one the opposite. Analyzing the results we *combined all seven groups* and found a notable +7 percent net shift in sympathy among Orthodox respondents as a whole. Breaking down the latter by where they were on the spectrum of Orthodoxy, we discover a more positive shift of +10 percent in sympathy among modern Orthodox in contrast to the other more haredi ones (the combined Hasidic, Yeshivish, and Yiddish-speakers), who in the aggregate had only half as much, a net shift in sympathy of +5 percent. We explain the outcome for the modern Orthodox as reflecting their relatively more liberal and open attitudes compared to the haredi sector. Admittedly, *reports* of changes in feelings are not as reliable as measuring people's feelings at two points in time—an approach beyond the capacity of our research.

When it came to specific groups named in our list, however, even the modern Orthodox, like all our other respondents, largely remained with their feelings toward others unchanged. The various groups were not viewed identically by our Jews, and only because Asian Americans and immigrants had relatively high net shifts did the average net shift for the groups as a whole come out positive, as table 1 illustrates.

Why this shift in sympathy for Asian Americans? One of our modern Orthodox survey subjects explained that he thought people like himself tend "to view them in some respect as kindred spirits. They work hard, study hard, and are awarded in a meritocracy . . . at least, they should be. When I read of them getting sidestepped in places like Ivy League colleges, it does remind me of the experiences of Jews a couple of generations back." In New York City, where many Orthodox Jews and Asian Americans are located (often in adjacent neighborhoods), there has also been political cooperation. The adoption of increasing numbers of Asian children into Jewish families and even intermarriages between Asian Americans and Jews, including in the Orthodox community, have also had an impact.[58] Given that background, our respondents' greater sympathy for this group, who had in the last three years,

TABLE 1 SHIFT IN ORTHODOX JEWISH SYMPATHY FOR OTHER GROUPS FACING BIGOTRY OR HATE

	More sympathy	Unchanged	Less sympathy	Net shift in sympathy
Asian Americans	42%	46%	12%	+30%
African Americans	26%	46%	28%	–2%
Christian Evangelicals	17%	59%	24%	–7%
LGBTQ	23%	53%	24%	–1%
Hispanics	22%	64%	14%	+8%
Immigrants in General	33%	54%	13%	+20%
Muslims	22%	58%	20%	+2%

like the Jews, become a common target of bias and attacks, is not surprising.

As for the positive attitude toward immigrants, many Orthodox Jews, large numbers of whom descend from Holocaust victims or refugees who came to this country relatively recently and others even more recently from the former Soviet Union or Israel, can easily identify with immigrants. Both the more liberal modern Orthodox and the haredim felt empathy, especially at a time when many Americans have expressed a prejudice against newcomers.

According to Pew, Asians (mostly from China) and Hispanics (primarily from Mexico) were the two top immigrant groups during the last three years.[59] These two are frequently neighbors of inner-city Orthodox Jews, and both are beneficiaries of a positive net shift of sympathy, as our table shows. Admittedly, at 8 percent, the Hispanic number is far smaller than for Asian Americans and immigrants, perhaps because these relations are more fraught, and sometimes these Jews may associate them with African Americans.

The negative net shift in sympathy towards African Americans is also not surprising. We have already discussed the complicated relationship between these Jews and African Americans and Hispanics who shared inner-city neighborhoods.[60] Add to this the well-known hostility by some members of the Black Nation of Islam (NOI), followers most recently of Louis Farrakhan, who has "referred to Jews collectively as 'Satan' and the 'enemy of God,'" encouraged listeners to "end the civilization of the Jews," and has been described by the Anti-Defamation League as "the most popular antisemite in America."[61] All this likely affects the Jewish attitude.

The negative sympathy towards LGBTQ people is predictable too. "Despite its diversity, Orthodoxy collectively views itself as the authentic expression of Jewish faith," an opinion not shared by most Jews but central to Orthodox Judaism. Its "policies related to LGBTQ inclusion are grounded in the Torah and subsequent rabbinic teachings, which prohibit sexual relationships between individuals of the same gender, and base gender roles on birth biology. Sex between men and particularly anal intercourse is deemed a violation of biblical weight. Lesbian relations are not mentioned in the Bible and are prohibited explicitly only by later rabbinic authorities."[62] Hence, our respondents begin with a built-in attitude that their commitments to halacha and an Orthodox way of life are not subject to compromise because of personal preference, which in this case they understand as making impossible sympathy toward LGBTQ individuals. The increasing assertiveness of the gay and transgender rights movement—generally an element of the politically liberal forces in America—has, if anything, buttressed Orthodox antipathy by merging their politically right-wing and religiously conservative views when it comes to sympathy for this group.[63] Given all this, even the rise of anti-Semitism does not seem in the aggregate to increase sympathy.

Nevertheless, when we look closer, we see that 23 percent of modern Orthodox men and 30 percent of women *did* claim to have more sympathy. Similarly, 21 percent of the yeshivish men and 29 percent of their women expressed more sympathy, while among the English-speaking Hasidim, 23 percent of both men and women expressed more sympathy—even 10 percent of the Yiddish speakers expressed more sympathy. The recognition that being LGBTQ is not a choice but biological has undoubtedly had an impact. Still, the greater proportion of all those who claimed less sympathy than before led to the net negative shift, another artifact of the Orthodox gradual "slide to the right."

The complicated Jewish relationship with Christianity is well known and has by now probably permeated into each group's collective memory. Persecutions of Jews under Christian regimes are a fact of history, often (not altogether accurately) articulated in Jewish tradition as "Esau Hates Jacob."[64] Ironically, Evangelical Christians, with their increasing support for Israel, are often seen as allies and friends because of their support for the Jewish return to the Holy Land (in spite of the fact that the support is rooted in their own messianic belief that at the second coming of Christ all Jews will be present in Jerusalem and repent of their lack of faith in his gospel or go to hell).[65] Not surprisingly only

17 percent of Evangelicals were judged to have anti-Semitic sentiments by our respondents, in spite of their theology.

On the other hand, supporters of the "Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions" (BDS) movement launched in 2005, which in its own words "works to end international support for Israel's oppression of Palestinians," were considered anti-Semitic by 64 percent of our respondents.[66] This contrast suggests that even if anti-Semitism is embedded in a group's collective memory, it is still subject to shifting feelings based upon more contemporary alliances and actions.

Perhaps the most interesting finding in our survey was the net shift of Jewish sympathy toward Muslims. Despite the fact that, as we have argued, these Jews and a parallel population of Muslims are "following similar paths," the complicated history between Jews and Muslims undoubtedly intrudes on their relationship in America. Yet, given that American Muslims are multinational and multiethnic, "all studies agree that there is heterogeneity in Western Muslim attitudes toward Jews."[67] The Muslims that most Jews think of when it comes to anti-Semitism are those from Middle Eastern and North African (MENA) nations.[68] While these Muslims constitute a large group, in America, "in terms of regional origins," they represent only 14 percent of all Muslim Americans. South Asians account for about one third of first-generation immigrants, or 20 percent of all US Muslims, with the remainder from sub-Saharan Africa, Europe and elsewhere. The single largest segment, 42 percent, are American born.[69] Given this variety, it is not inconceivable that some of the Muslims that our Jews encounter may not express the same degree of animosity toward them and therefore the relationship is less fraught.

So whence the hostility? The ongoing conflict over Zionism, in which MENA Muslims are involved, as well as the enmity of some in the Nation of Islam are powerful influences on Jewish antipathy. The growth of Islamophobia among Americans in general, exacerbated by the events of 9/11 as well as the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, surely also infected those on the political right-wing, which has steadily attracted Orthodox Jews (even though American anti-Semitic attacks come mostly from those on the political and religious right, which is largely Christian and where white supremacism, hypernationalism, and rising anti-Semitism flourish).

In summary, when asked to select from the listed groups in the Nishma survey who they believed showed anti-Semitic tendencies, our respondents listed Muslims (39%) behind BDS supporters (64%), white nationalists (59%), and left-wing progressives (44%). (Data are the

weighted averages across all Orthodox respondents.) The net shift in sympathy toward Muslims was positive, albeit low, at 2 percent, a number likely not statistically significant given the size of our sample. The majority of our respondents have simply not changed their feelings toward Muslims.

AMERICAN MUSLIM SYMPATHIES TOWARD OTHER AMERICAN GROUPS

The American Muslim community's attitudes towards various minority groups are shaped by different factors. As a relatively younger participant in American multiculturalism and a community that is still majority non–American born, the Muslim community is in the process of fully positioning itself within America's ethnic-religious tapestry. The community is still cultivating skills for diversity and religious toleration. This is clearly reflected in Muslim organizations' increasing interest in and care for the suffering of other minorities (like Sikhs, Japanese Americans, African Americans, Jews, and more recently Native Americans).

American Muslims show a strong increase in sympathy for Asian Americans as a vulnerable community. The dramatic upsurge of anti-Asian hate crimes in recent years coincided with Muslim Americans' rising interest in fellow minority groups. As a result, the highest net shift in sympathy among Muslims has been for Asian Americans (a 33% increase). In this Muslims and Jews have similarly high levels of sympathy.

African Americans are a constitutive element of American Islam and represent a demographic group in which Islam is not seen as foreign. African Americans make up one of the three major ethno-racial groups of American Islam. Muslim views of African Americans in general are also shaped by the legacies of Black Muslim communities and leaders such as Malcolm X and Muhammad Ali. In addition, awareness of anti-Black racism, which has been highlighted repeatedly in recent years, and the prominence of the Black Lives Matter movement may both help to explain the 15 percent net increase in Muslim sympathy for African Americans.

Perceived by Muslims as virulently Islamophobic, Christian Evangelicals are the group with the largest negative net shift in sympathy. Only 11 percent of the respondents feel "more sympathy" while 37 percent feel less, for a 26 percent net decline in sympathy. This reflects Muslims' overall experience with this particular group. Past surveys have shown that "white evangelical Protestants tend to express more reservations

about Muslims and Islam than do those in other religious groups. For example, nearly three quarters of white evangelicals say there is a natural conflict between Islam and democracy, while roughly half or fewer of those in other major religious groups express this view."[70] That the religious group that American Muslims perceive as most Islamophobic should be Christian Evangelicals comes as no surprise.

When it comes to LGBTQ issues, the research shows that Muslim Americans hold more conservative views than the general public. However, like the population at large, "Muslims have become noticeably more accepting of homosexuality over the last ten years."[71] For the religiously more observant set of American Muslims, that change may be much smaller: the Zahra survey shows a 9 percent negative net sympathy for the LGBTQ group. This does not reflect the general trend of increasing sympathy but is consistent with the negative theological position held by observant Muslim populations.

Muslim attitudes towards fellow newcomers, both Hispanics and "immigrants in general" is positive, +4 percent and +15 percent, respectively. Muslims find a cultural affinity with Latin Americans, the "brown" people of the Western hemisphere and fellow sufferers under the Trump presidency, with its twin rhetoric of the Mexico border wall and Muslim ban. The perception that they have a strong sense of family values and that they work hard to succeed makes them a sympathetic community in the eyes of Muslims. Similarly, many Hispanics find Islam attractive in the American context for its sense of community, beliefs, and traditional authenticity.[72] No wonder, then, that a growing demographic among converts to Islam in America are Latinos.[73]

When it comes to sympathy toward Jews, the survey results show a negative net shift in sympathy of 9 percent. This, however, seems to go against the latest literature on the subject and may not reflect the whole picture. Generally speaking, responses can vary depending on how the question is posed. In this case, the question does not distinguish between Zionists and Jews in general. Muslims might have strong negative opinions about one and not the other. The key findings of a recent comprehensive study on American Muslim attitudes toward Jews done by Jeffrey Cohen suggests that "we should recognize that American Muslims are not decidedly antisemitic and there is a great heterogeneity in American Muslim attitudes toward Jews."[74] Cohen's point is supported by another question in the Zahra survey, which asks about the perceived levels of Islamophobia among various groups. In this question, the survey asks separately about "Zionists" and "Jews in general." The results

strongly support the two prongs of Cohen's conclusion: Muslims are not decidedly anti-Semitic and there is a great heterogeneity in American Muslim attitudes toward Jews. How so?

The common wisdom in matters of Jewish-Muslim relations is that the two groups tend to strongly dislike each other. Even the two parties themselves have come to believe in this scenario. It is true that Muslims and Jews are alienated children of Abraham, but it is also true that they are seeking commonalities in order to establish a new kinship, fellowship, and civility, especially in the American context. The perspectives that imply essentializing antinomy between the two communities are open to being challenged.

The Islamophobia survey asked the American Muslim respondents, "in your view, how many members of the following groups in the United States have Islamophobic tendencies?" Let us pause for a moment to consider those who chose "many," ranked from the highest to the lowest. The list that emerges from the survey presents us with a five-tier ranking.

The top Islamophobic groups are ideological: White nationalists (52%), Zionists (50%), and Right-wing conservatives (46%). Keep in mind that, even in these "worst offender" groups, Muslim survey respondents are saying that only about half of the groups' members are likely to be Islamophobic. Even Zionists, a group that might be expected to rank the highest, are in second place.

The second layer of groups with high levels of Islamophobia are mostly political; only one is religious: Republican politicians (45%), Republican voters (45%), the Media (44%), and Evangelical Christians (37%). The groups in this tier cluster around 40 percent. From these high percentages, we see a downward shift in the third tier, which is occupied by mainline religious groups: Mainstream Protestants (20%), Jews in general (18%), and Roman Catholics (17%). What is most interesting from the point of view of Muslim perceptions of Jews is the fact that Jewish religious identity is not singled out as especially anti-Muslim. Conforming to the "triple melting-pot" concept, a designation made famous by Will Herberg, in this list Jews occupy a spot somewhere between Protestants and Catholics and are perceived not unlike other faith groups. This is surprising only because of the stereotypical expectation that Muslim perceptions of Jews ought to be inevitably exceptional or exceptionally negative. From the perspective of this finding, one can argue that, though Muslims have strong reservations about Zionism as an ideology, they see Jews in general as fellow citizens and as a faith community that is not necessarily or inherently prone to

Islamophobia. We believe that this is more important than the negative score in net shift in sympathy that Muslims have for Jews. For in that calculation (and this is true for the slight change in Jewish sympathy for Muslims as well), we do not know whether the very large percentage of "no change in sympathy" choices reflect a steady poor opinion or a steady positive. It is worth noting that as of 2019, ISPU found that, at 18 percent, "Jews have lowest levels of Islamophobia," while "white Evangelicals have the highest," at 35 percent.[75]

The dramatic drop in terms of percentages from the second tier (Republican political camp, media, and Evangelical Christians) to the third tier (Protestant-Jew-Catholic mainstream faith belt) is worth highlighting. The next, fourth, tier covers Left-wing Progressives (14%), Democratic voters (12%), and Democratic politicians (10%). In the eyes of the Muslim Americans who responded to the Zahra survey, the least Islamophobically inclined groups are non-Muslim African Americans (9%) and Hispanics (8%).

According to the Pew study, in 2017, most Muslim Americans (60%) believed that media coverage of Islam and Muslims is biased, with US-born Muslims more likely than their foreign-born counterparts to say the way the media treats Islam and Muslims is unfair (74% and 49%, respectively).[76] The Zahra survey results reflect a changing balance between American-born and immigrant Muslim perspectives on media bias. Twenty-five percent of Muslims now see very little or no bias in the media, while those who think that many (44%) or some (31%) members of the media are Islamophobic together add up to 75 percent. One can argue that the long-standing strong opinion among American Muslims that the media is heavily biased against Muslims is no longer as true as it was but is still a well-entrenched assumption among American Muslims—though that perception may lag behind the reality, given the stronger presence of Muslim media personalities in the last three years.

Is it possible, we wonder, that a reminder about all that these two groups have in common, as we have sought to show in these pages, might lead to a time when both groups will share more mutual sympathy? After all, "the Muslim community in the U.S. by and large, is not antisemitic. Interaction of recent immigrants with the larger Muslim community, as well as the larger society and polity, may socialize them into greater tolerance of others, including Jews."[77] As Jeffrey Cohen speculates, "although American Muslims are less positive toward Jews than non-Muslims, the difference is not great, and, on average, American Muslims have positive views of Jews." As recent immigrants become

more economically secure and educated, their anti-Semitism should moderate as well, leading to both groups having greater sympathy and even empathy towards one another.[78]

We know that "people who express negative opinions about Muslims are more likely than others to also express negative views of Jews [and] people who say they are unwilling to accept Muslims as members of their family are also more likely than others to say they are unwilling to accept Jews in their family."[79] Whether in the matter of anti-Semitism and Islamophobia our American Jews and Muslims will once more share a similar path is an open question. Much depends upon the future trajectory of these two prejudices in America.

THE IMPACT OF OCTOBER 7, 2023, AND ITS AFTERMATH

Anti-Semitism after October 7

As we were in the last stages of the preparation of this book, the tragic war between Israelis and the Palestinian group Hamas and its supporters once again exploded. As of this writing, this has resulted not only in death and destruction on both sides but, relevant to our concerns in this book, in a significant explosion of expressions of anti-Semitism and Islamophobia in America, as well as throughout the world.

With regards to anti-Semitism, the word does not simply refer to a criticism of Israel, which on its face is not necessarily equivalent to an attack on Jews. According to the widely adopted definition used by the Anti-Defamation League, which we have been using throughout this chapter, "anti-Semitism is a form of prejudice or discrimination directed toward Jews as individuals or as a group." Furthermore, "legitimate criticism of Israel seems to cross the line into anti-Semitism when 'all Jews are held responsible for the actions of Israel, Israel is denied the right to exist as a Jewish state and equal member of the global community, and traditional anti-Semitic symbols, images or theories are used' as part of that criticism."[80] To this the American Jewish Committee added that it is anti-Semitism "when Jews are targeted and attacked and Jewish institutions are vandalized for Israeli policies and actions." In addition, the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) Working Definition of Antisemitism suggests that "calling for, aiding, or justifying the killing or harming of Jews in the name of a radical ideology or an extremist view of religion, making mendacious, dehumanizing, demonizing, or stereotypical allegations about Jews, and accusing

the Jews as a people, or Israel as a state, of inventing or exaggerating the Holocaust" are all manifestations of anti-Semitism.[81]

Measured by these definitions, anti-Semitism in America (and elsewhere in the world) appears to have surged in the last quarter of 2023. According to ADL statistics, anti-Semitic incidents in the US hit an unprecedented record in the two months since Hamas's shock attack on Israel on October 7, 2023. The organization recorded 2,031 incidents between October 7 and December 7, the highest ever two-month number since the League began tracking anti-Semitism in the country. Having polled 1,484 adults living in the United States between October 31 and November 1, 2023,[82] the research found that "in total, 71% of 2023 participants agreed that Jew-hatred is a serious problem in the U.S., compared to 53% of 2022 participants in a similar study."

To be sure, the increased manifestation of anti-Semitism since October 7, 2023, comes on the tails of an already unprecedented rise by an order of magnitude during the previous three years. At least since the 2020 Pew Report there has been an American Jewish perception of rising anti-Semitism among an overwhelming majority of those polled. But what seems to have changed in this most recent expression is the perception that this is coming at a time both when Israel faces an existential crisis and when a significant number of American Jews have a sense that, regardless of their connections to and feelings about Israel, they are being held responsible for Israel's actions and are being subjected to a virulent and, for many, new experience of anti-Semitism, especially on university campuses and other places where it had seemed limited to a fringe element, if not altogether dormant. Moreover, as National Public Radio reported, "public officials, famous artists and social media stars have been instrumental in normalizing longstanding antisemitic tropes."[83] This was a fear expressed already in 2022 when leaders of the Jewish community in the US and extremism experts became "alarmed to see celebrities with massive followings spew antisemitic tropes in a way that has been taboo for decades."[84] The sight of Americans tearing down posters depicting and calling for the return of the kidnapped hostages including the wounded, women, children, senior citizens, and even infants abducted on October 7, 2023, from Israel into Gaza added to the anxieties about the normalization of anti-Semitic actions. The combination of all these manifestations appears to have shaken American Jewry more than at any time in this century, including those not used to being the targets of such prejudice—especially in mass media and social media or at public events.

The growing expression of anti-Semitism on campus, including at some of the most elite universities in the nation, has catapulted the subject of the American Jewish anxiety about this prejudice into the headlines and into the political debate in Congress. Once anti-Semitism becomes a subject of debate, positions both for and against it become normalized and multiply in the public square. People can then believe that being for or against it is a legitimate stance or, as several university presidents testifying in Congress suggested, that it is a matter of "context."[85]

An online survey of 300 Jewish university students carried out by the ADL and Hillel International, the Jewish organization on many university campuses, found that "more than half of Jewish Students Feel Scared on U.S. College Campuses," since the October 7 attacks.[86] Moreover, "prior to Oct. 7, 67 percent of Jewish students said they felt physically safe on campus; after Oct. 7, only 46 percent felt physically safe. And prior to Oct. 7, 66 percent of Jewish students felt emotionally safe; after, only 33 percent felt emotionally safe."

As reported in a December 2023 research study by the Cohen Center for Jewish Studies at Brandeis University, which measured what it called "a hostile climate toward Jews and Israel on their campus," researchers found that "at the schools with the highest perceived levels of antisemitic hostility, Jewish students were more likely to report experiencing insults or harassment in person and on social media, seeing antisemitic images, slogans, or graffiti, and being blamed for the actions of the Israeli government because they were Jewish."[87] While there were clear differences among schools measured, the variation between schools with respect to these experiences was significantly smaller compared to the variation in overall perceptions of hostility. "At the most hostile schools, about 80% of Jewish students reported encountering hostility toward Israel from other students "sometimes" or "often." At these schools, 30% also reported encountering hostility toward Israel from faculty. The study also found that "concern about antisemitism from the political left was not limited to politically moderate or conservative Jewish students: 41% of liberal Jewish respondents were very concerned about antisemitism from the political left (54% of the respondents were liberal)." The Cohen Center study also found that "at the schools with the highest perceived levels of antisemitic hostility, Jewish students were more likely to report experiencing insult or harassment in person and on social media, seeing antisemitic images, slogans, or graffiti, and being blamed for the actions of the Israeli government because they were Jewish." Perhaps most striking was the fact that, in an environment which has for Jews become a

destination of promise, a gateway to many of the advantages that America offers to college graduates has become a place where they feel afraid. "Jewish students at campuses with higher levels of antisemitic hostility were much less likely to feel fully safe or comfortable on their campus and much less likely to feel that they 'very much' belonged."

Although anti-Semitism comes from both the political right and the left, in schools with the highest level of hostility, concern among Jewish students was far greater (56%) about its expression from the liberal left than from the conservative right (16%). This pattern was repeated across all the schools polled. The great promise of a liberal arts education appears to have become infected with anti-Semitism, a phenomenon that adds to the anxieties observant Jews already had about university attendance. While the misgivings discussed above were about the consequences of cultural assimilation that liberal education might create, now they come from uncertainties of putting themselves in an environment rife with anti-Semitic hostility.

Islamophobia after October 7

The relative independence from overseas events that was developing for both the American Jewish and American Muslim identities has now sharply diminished. The recent developments in Gaza are no doubt going to change the landscape of American Muslim and American Jewish relations, as the two groups must now respond to a newly heightened climate of Islamophobia and anti-Semitism, respectively.

The signs of such a shift became visible in the immediate aftermath of October 7. On October 15, Wadea Al-Fayoume, a six-year-old Palestinian-American boy, was brutally murdered in his home by a neighbor (who was also his landlord) in an Islamophobic rage. Joseph Czuba, 71, entered Al-Fayoume's home in Plainfield, Illinois, screaming "you Muslims must die." He attacked and critically wounded Wadea's mother before stabbing the boy twenty-six times.[88]

Heightened tensions created by the Israel-Hamas war led to a flurry of other anti-Muslim hate crimes in which Arab- and Muslim-looking individuals were targeted. In Burlington, Vermont, three college students home for Thanksgiving break were out for a walk on a Saturday, chatting in Arabic, when a man shouted at and harassed them before shooting them, leaving one of them paralyzed.[89]

This unprecedented surge in anti-Muslim and anti-Arab bigotry is particularly unfortunate because CAIR's most recent annual civil rights

report on incidents of Islamophobia had been optimistic: In 2022, CAIR received a total of 5,156 complaints nationwide, a 23 percent decrease compared to 2021, when there were 6,720.[90] The optimism expressed in the title of the report, "Progress in the Shadow of Prejudice," was, however, shattered in the aftermath of October 7, 2023. In the month following the flare-up of the conflict, CAIR reports that it has received 1,283 calls for help and reports of bias incidents. That, according to CNN, is a 216 percent increase compared to the average monthly number of 406 in 2022.[91] As CAIR's Corey Saylor noted in the report, this data represents "the largest wave of Islamophobic bias" that CAIR has recorded since Donald Trump's infamous Muslim Ban of 2015.

The overall backlash as Muslims face this new wave of anti-Muslim sentiment has felt broader and more culturally significant. Muslim hosts and media personalities at mainstream news networks, such as Mehdi Hasan of MSNBC, have been removed from the networks. Muslim students and faculty on college campuses report a growing sense of exclusion and fear to exercise their First Amendment rights in matters of pro-Palestinian activism.

Whether this most recent outbreak of anti-Semitism and Islamophobia will have a permanent impact on the relationship between the two populations we have considered in these pages, we cannot say, especially while hostilities still rage in the Middle East. What we can say for certain is that prejudice, whether in the form of anti-Semitism or Islamophobia, continues to rear its frightening head as we near the end of the first quarter of the twenty-first century.

The current conflict in Israel/Palestine certainly casts a long shadow on the American sphere of encounter between Jews and Muslims. But we hope that a peaceful resolution may yet alter the course of events in a more positive direction.