

July, 1981

## THE FIGHT AGAINST ANTI-SEMITISM

Something is going on. One day, you're talking with a neighbor whom you've known for many years and he suddenly starts talking about "Jewish control of the media." Or you pick up your newspaper and read about a synagogue being spray-painted with swastikas. Or the Ku Klux Klan announces they're going to hold a public rally in your community.

Is there suddenly a marked increase in anti-semitism or has this been going on for some time? Are our antennae just more finely tuned? Have the media made the problem seem much worse than it is?

Whether it's new or been around for awhile, whether it's growing or static, what's going to be done about it? *What can be done to fight anti-semitism today?*

When people talk about anti-semitism, they often assume that everyone shares the same understanding of what anti-semitism is. But it is important to define anti-semitism, because there are different *types* of anti-semitism -- and they require different responses.

### TWO KINDS OF ANTI-SEMITE

It is initially important to make the distinction between anti-semitism based on anti-semitic *beliefs* ("ideological anti-semitism"); and anti-semitic acts committed for *other* reasons ("situational anti-semitism").

The "ideological" anti-semites may or may not act on their anti-semitic beliefs, notably the belief that Jews have too much power, control the media, are characteristically rich and dishonest. But the very existence of such beliefs provide a "reservoir of anti-semitism" that can be manipulated in times of social tension.

The "situational" anti-semite uses anti-semitism as a tool for achieving some other goal. A situational anti-semite may be a young tough who joins a Nazi group for social reasons; a former employee who uses anti-semitic insults to hurt his Jewish boss; or a politician who uses anti-semitism in order to get votes.

The ranks of organized anti-semitic movements, when they become *mass* movements, are usually swelled by situational anti-semites, who didn't particularly hold anti-semitic beliefs *before* they joined, or didn't join for that reason. And random anti-semitic acts have often been known to be committed by those who didn't hold anti-semitic beliefs when they committed the acts, and didn't commit them for that reason. Even many acts of discrimination have been committed by situational anti-semites, rather than by those who held anti-semitic beliefs.

This distinction does not provide comfort. Situational anti-semitism is dangerous in itself. Perhaps it is even more dangerous than ideological anti-semitism, because it is the basis for building the kinds of political movements which Jews fear the most. It is the triumph of amoral pragmatism over morality.

That problem of "indifference" is widespread. When the American people were asked whether they would support a Congressional candidate running on an anti-Jewish platform the overwhelming majority said "no." But about a third of all Americans said it "wouldn't make any difference." In other words, if the candidate promised them better jobs or lower taxes, or whatever, they would go along with his or her anti-semitism. These people are not committed to anti-semitic belief; it is just that they are not committed *against* anti-semitism. Thus, they are able to be manipulated in times of social tension.

#### FOUR KINDS OF ANTI-SEMITIC BEHAVIOR

There are four major manifestations of anti-semitic *action* today. They are different phenomena. They have different symptoms. They call for different remedies. They are not necessarily connected with one another.

1) Organized anti-semitic movements. Movements which are organized in the public arena with a built-in anti-semitic platform. The chief purpose of these groups is to gain political power -- and they use anti-semitism as a tool towards that end. Some of these groups such as the Nazis or the Ku Klux Klan openly proclaim

their anti-semitism. Others may be more subtle about their anti-Jewish feelings, may even deny it, but nonetheless have anti-semitism as one of their implicit components, using code words like "Zionist influence."

2) Covert acts of anti-semitism. Physical acts of anti-semitism which are illegal and are covertly and anonymously done. Such acts include arson, defacement, vandalism, etc. They can be directed against Jewish institutions or private property owned by Jews. To a much lesser extent, there are also covert physical attacks on Jewish persons motivated by anti-semitism.

3) Acts of discrimination against Jews. While most Jews do not encounter illegal discrimination, some are still the victims of such discrimination in employment, housing, education, etc. Discrimination against Jews in social clubs continues to present problems.

4) Public expression of anti-semitism.

a) In personal encounter. This is the type of anti-semitism that most Jews encounter at least once in their lives. It is the open expression of negative, hostile and prejudicial feelings and beliefs towards Jews, as communicated by a neighbor, co-worker or passing stranger.

b) In the public arena. This is the expression of anti-semitic attitudes in a public forum, in print, or as reported in the media. This would include negative statements by a teacher, or the repetition of stereotypes, such as "the Jews have too much power" by a public figure such as General George Brown. And, of course, the expression of anti-semitism in the public arena, by word or print, is a chief instrument of organized anti-semitic political movements.

#### THE PERPETRATORS: WHO COMMITS ANTI SEMITIC ACTS?

Statistically, education is the factor most clearly related to the holding of anti-semitic *beliefs*. In one typical survey, 51 per cent of those who had only an 8th grade education measured "high" in anti-semitic beliefs -- as against 32 per

cent of those who had only a high school education and 16 per cent of those who were college graduates.

Statistically, age is the factor most closely related to the *acting-out* of anti-semitism. The ADL reports that 85 per cent of those apprehended in 1980 for committing anti-semitic acts were below 20 years of age. The ADL also reports that about three quarters of Ku Klux Klan members in 1979 were teenagers or below the mid-thirties.

However, younger people tend to have had more education than older people, and more educated people tend to have fewer anti-semitic beliefs. And, in fact, in a typical survey, 18 per cent of those under 34 years measured "high" in anti-semitic belief, as against 37 per cent of those 54 years or over. Therefore, the young normally tend to be more involved in anti-semitic behavior, not because they hold more anti-semitic beliefs, but because they are more likely to get involved in situational anti-semitism; and also more likely to *act out* whatever anti-semitic beliefs they have.

#### WHAT IS THE CURRENT STATE OF ANTI-SEMITISM?

Privately held anti-semitic beliefs. Opinion polls have shown that negative and hostile beliefs about Jews have considerably diminished. In 1938, for example, the surveys reported that almost half of the American people believed that Jewish businessmen were less honest than other businessmen. By 1964, about a quarter of the public held such a belief, and in the 1970s, less than a fifth of the public.

In the 1930s, about 40 per cent of the American people thought that the Jews had "too much power," and that figure actually rose during World War II. But by the 1960s only about a fifth of the American public believed that the Jews had "too much power;" and the proportion has now dropped to a tenth.

In 1937, only 2 out of 5 Americans said they would vote for a Jewish Presidential candidate; now 4 out of 5 Americans say they would do so. The percentage of Americans who are "highly favorable" towards Jews has risen to 40 per cent (from 33 per cent in 1975) as compared with 2 per cent who say they are highly unfavorable. (Gallup, April, 1981). In short, there seem to be fewer ideological anti-semites than in either the remote or recent past.

However, because of *indifference* to the *use* of anti-semitism, which itself stimulates anti-semitic beliefs, the number of anti-semitic believers could increase quickly. Economic conditions, the rise of organized anti-semitic movements, the political climate can all affect the growth and expression of anti-semitic attitudes.

#### Anti-semitic Action

1) Organized anti-semitic movements. There has been no *massive* anti-semitic political movement in America since the 1930s when the Coughlinite movement had millions of followers. There is still none. The KKK is the closest candidate today, but, while experiencing moderate growth, the KKK is overwhelmingly rejected by the American people. The ADL estimates that there are about 11,000 members of all the various Klans in the U.S. and perhaps ten times that many active supporters. The Nazis have had no appreciable growth in the U.S. in decades, and some of those are now defecting to the KKK.

While organized political anti-semitic movements are fragmented and do not represent significant numbers, they are clearly more vocal and demonstrative than several years ago. They have become more adept at gathering media coverage, and they are making some noteworthy excursions into the political arena. Candidacies of Klan and Nazi leaders were able to gather significant votes in recent elections. In San Diego, California, a multiple-candidate race resulted in a state Klan leader capturing the Congressional nomination of the Democratic Party. In North

Carolina, the leader of the Nazi party received over 40% in a statewide Republican primary election. The failure of other candidates, and the party itself, to take these candidacies seriously and to make an issue of racism and anti-semitism shows disturbing naiveté or indifference. The ability of such candidates to take legitimate issues of debate and twist them to their own benefit is a real clue to how "situational anti-semitism" could work. People voted for these candidates not *because* of their anti-semitic program, but as a protest on *other* issues; and those voters were "indifferent" to the implicit racism, one way or another.

While there is currently no massive anti-semitic political movement, that is no reason for complacency as long as the conditions for political extremism remain possible; and as long as a significant part of the population remains "indifferent" about the political use of anti-semitism. Economic difficulties, a breakdown of law and order, a bitterly divided society are some of the conditions that allow political extremism to grow.

Note on Israel-connected anti-semitism, and anti-semitism abroad: When talking about "organized anti-semitism," one cannot overlook influences from abroad. There are three major sources of anti-semitism abroad: a) the Soviet Union, which actually produces more anti-semitic material than any other country; b) the Arab propaganda machine; c) European Neo-Nazism with its special link to the past.

There is a direct link between the two most powerful of those sources: the Soviet Union and Arab propaganda. They are politically connected and use each other's material. They both concentrate on the thinly disguised code word "Zionism." The notorious United National General Assembly resolution equating Zionism with racism was a joint maneuver and product of the Soviet Union and the Arab nations.

Aside from the frightening effect of this propaganda on Soviet Jews, and its irritations for Israel, there is a spill-over to America. The ultimate target of this "anti-Zionist" propaganda is the United States, and the more direct

target for that purpose is American Jewry. The official Soviet definition of Zionism is: "the political practice of the big Jewish bourgeoisie which has merged with the monopolistic circles of the United States and other imperialist powers."

Right-wing neo-Nazi groups are stronger in continental Europe than they are in the United States, and have clearly engaged in anti-semitic actions in countries like France and Germany -- but they are not nearly the force that is represented by the anti-semitic left-wing coalition of the Soviet Union, the PLO and their adherents. Indeed, West German security officials and Lebanese Christians have reported that the PLO has been giving training to West German neo-Nazi paramilitary organizations.

There have been instances of European neo-Nazis training American anti-semites. These same individuals have possible connections to the PLO. There are other indications of Arab connections to American anti-semites, the most notable being the fact that William Grimstad, a former editor of the American Nazi paper and a former Klan leader, has become a registered lobbyist for Saudi Arabia.

Recent polls show that the American public is overwhelmingly more favorable to Israel than to the Arabs -- and especially more favorable to Israel than to the PLO -- and that, in the beginning of 1981, the American public was becoming increasingly more pro-Israel. However, if a *situation* developed in which Israel could be put in a less favorable light in America, there is little doubt but that organized anti-semitism in America would lean heavily on the propaganda lines produced by the Soviet/PLO axis.

2) Covert acts of anti-semitism. According to the Anti-Defamation League's 1980 audit of illegal, physical acts of anti-semitism, including vandalism, arson, defacement, etc., these types of occurrences increased by nearly 200% over 1979. Early reports for 1981 show an even greater increase. While some of this increase may be accounted for by improved reporting techniques, the actual number is

certainly greater than in 1979. Thus, while considerably fewer physical acts of anti-semitism are being committed than in the 1930s -- a "high" point in American anti-semitism -- the current *direction* is towards more frequency.

The increase in covert acts of anti-semitism would indicate that there are either more anti-semites, or there is more license for anti-semites. Since the prevalence of ideological anti-semitism is down rather than up, the indication is that increased covert, illegal acts of anti-semitism result from *more license* for anti-semites and for those who are willing to use anti-semitism.

That increase in license seems to spring from two sources. First, there is generally decreasing constraint with respect to violence and illegal behavior in our society. A general climate of unconstrained behavior tends to become contagious. Jews and Jewish institutions have not been exempted from serving as targets of such behavior. Second, there is decreasing constraint with respect to expressing anti-semitism publicly. For almost two decades after World War II, anti-semitic beliefs were largely unfashionable and underground. They have now come out of the closet.

3) Acts of discrimination against Jews. In almost all areas, illegal discrimination against Jews has diminished. In housing, discrimination has decreased significantly and steadily over the years, although there are still pockets of resistance, particularly in the area of expensive cooperatives. In school or college admissions, formal discrimination has all but disappeared except in some church-sponsored institutions. Jews are now rarely denied access to any public accommodations.

In employment opportunities, however, Jews still often face discrimination, particularly at the uppermost levels of business. As Jews climb the corporate ladder, they frequently reach levels above which they are not permitted to rise. Job discrimination against Jews still exists at other levels as well. Employment discrimination has been tenacious.

The problem of social club discrimination also remains somewhat prevalent, with the effect of limiting certain social contacts that are necessary in some areas of employment success.

4) Publicly-expressed anti-semitism. The multiple sources of printed anti-semitic literature in America have diminished since the 1950s. In the 50s there were more anti-semitic splinter groups, each producing its own brand of anti-semitica. Today the pattern tends to be reproduction of the same material by many groups, rather than the creation of new material. But the actual number of copies of such items may only have decreased slightly.

The possibility of spreading anti-semitic expressions through the electronic media is much greater today than it was in the 1930s, when Coughlin used radio to build America's last mass anti-semitic movement. There is no Coughlin on the scene today, but the potential is always there.

Anti-semitic statements by public officials or quasi-public officers (such as teachers) have certainly not disappeared from the scene. There appears to be decreasing constraint with respect to expressing anti-semitism privately and this may well lead to increased public expressions of such beliefs.

#### WHAT CAN BE DONE TO COUNTER ANTI-SEMITISM?

It is often a source of frustration that the fight against anti-semitism, *in all its forms*, requires an *organized* effort. Individual action can only accomplish so much. Working with the organized Jewish community and the Jewish groups specializing in countering anti-semitism, is the most effective way to combat the growth and existence of anti-semitism. However, there are some areas in which individual effort can be productive.

WHAT AN INDIVIDUAL CAN DO

## Personal Action

KINDS OF ANTI-SEMITISM	Personal Attitudes	Countering / Expressions	Reporting Problems	Political Involvement	Supporting & Working with Jewish Agencies
Organized Anti-semitic Movements	✓		✓	✓	✓
Covert Acts	✓		✓	✓	✓
Discriminatory Acts	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Public Expressions	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Ideological	✓	✓			✓

INDIVIDUAL ACTION CHECKLIST

1. Personal attitudes. Help to create an atmosphere of general tolerance. Just as charity begins at home, so does tolerance. Anti-semitism does not exist in a vacuum. When dealing with one's family, neighbors and co-workers, those who are indifferent to the expression of bigotry against *any* other group, increase the likelihood of bigotry against Jews.
2. Countering private expressions of anti-semitism. Some Jews choose to remain silent in the face of a private expression of anti-semitism. They feel incapable of saying anything effective. But silence only fosters more indifference. Such incidents can be used, at the least, to make people aware that such expressions of bigotry are offensive, serious and socially unacceptable.
3. Supporting and working with an organized Jewish group. Organizations such as the Anti-Defamation League hire professionals and conduct programs around the country to combat anti-semitism and to educate the public about prejudice. Local Jewish federations support the work of the A.D.L. and fund local Jewish Community Relations Councils, of which the A.D.L. is always an important part. Other Jewish organizations, such as the American Jewish Committee and the American

Jewish Congress, have programs addressed to anti-semitism and its causes. Your financial aid to the Federations and to such groups as the A.D.L. can enable them to continue their work. In addition, there are many important ways these agencies can use volunteer assistance. This includes much of the activity which is listed below in the Community Action Checklist. Contact these groups to see how you can become involved.

4. Reporting problems. If you hear of an incident or have information, contact the A.D.L., JCRC, Federation or any agency that is linked to the Jewish community. Jews must always be attuned to the possibility of the growth of anti-semitism -- without overreacting in any given situation (see "Guidelines for Response" below).

5. Getting involved politically. The Jewish community depends on the laws and general health of this country for protection. It is therefore imperative that Jews be involved in the political process and in the general community, from involvement with candidates to involvement with general community causes and agencies.

WHAT THE JEWISH COMMUNITY AND ITS AGENCIES CAN DO ACTION

Anti-Semitism	Law Enforcement	Civic Organization	Legislation	Schools	Media
Organized Anti-Semitism	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Covert Acts	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Discriminatory Acts	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Ideological Anti-Semitism		✓		✓	✓
Public Expressions		✓		✓	✓

COMMUNITY ACTION CHECKLIST

1. Law enforcement. Contacts with law enforcement agencies, particularly the offices of the sheriff and the chief of police, need to be developed and maintained. It is important that community members feel that they have support from within the "system." A liaison should be set up with law enforcement agencies; it is important that members of the community know to whom to talk and how to share information with the police. If the need arises, one officer should become the primary contact for the Jewish community and his assignment known throughout the force.

It is vital that contact with law enforcement agencies be coordinated in an organized fashion.

2. Involvement in the civic establishment. A network of civic leaders can be brought into place to react publicly, vigorously and quickly when any serious incident takes place -- in order to create a climate of disapproval. The network should include public officials, religious leaders, media leaders and leaders of ethnic and labor groups. This committee may issue appropriate statements or call press conferences to educate the community to the unacceptability of anti-semitic behavior.

Church leaders have a particularly important role to play in this regard. Local churches, through sermons and educational programs, can teach about the moral and religious evils of prejudice. Church-run radio or television programs, including evangelical ones, can play a large role.

3. Legislation. Legislation limiting the activity of anti-semitic groups and penalizing those who engage in anti-semitic acts should be pursued. These laws should further inhibit groups from engaging in violence and harassment, training in violence and guns, etc., as long as the proposed laws do not weaken the democratic and constitutional procedures which remain our strongest protection against such groups.

4. School programs. Working with schools is vital in both a preventative and responsive manner. "Positive" programs need to be introduced into the public school system. These programs should deal both with the broad problem of prejudice in general and with the history of Jews and anti-semitism in particular.

Since the main danger finally comes from "indifference to" rather than commitment to anti-semitism, the main educational thrust should be not towards getting people to "like" Jews but towards developing the values which would help constrain people from violating the rights of others, even if they don't like them.

Programs to teach school children the history of the Holocaust can be important in showing the dangers of anti-semitism to everybody and the extreme results of totalitarianism and bigotry. "Positive" programs that emphasize Jews' contributions to this country can be introduced.

Reactive programs can also be developed as necessary. Programs on high school or college campuses pointing out the dangers of groups such as the Ku Klux Klan or the harm of anti-semitic vandalism may be advisable in areas where there have been problems. School administrators can be asked to be part of a "monitoring" network in these instances.

Development of "human relations clubs" at schools, with prestigious student leaders, can be an effective method of promoting good will.



5. Media. Groups that are tied into the organized agencies of the community can "monitor" the media, both print and electronic, for information about groups or individuals that are anti-semitic. Moreover, the media can be "monitored" for stereotypes or distortions, either of commission or omission. If glaring or repeated problems exist, visits of concern can be made to the offending source.

Ongoing communication with the media is also important to share concerns. These programs can "sensitize" the media to their role in stemming the growth of anti-semitic activities. Such programs can be developed in a number of ways: 1) an annual brunch program; 2) media-liaison committee; 3) development of individual media sources.

It is unrealistic to expect the media to ignore anti-semitic groups or incidents, but they must be made aware that sensationalizing such incidents may foster others. Moreover, bringing minor, isolated incidents to the attention of the media may only spread these activities. Extreme discretion must be used when choosing which incidents to bring to the attention of the community at large. (See "Guidelines" below.)

#### GUIDELINES FOR RESPONSE

---Credibility ("Cry Wolf") Factor: Every attack on a Jewish institution or individual should be examined, but should not be publicly labelled "anti-semitic" unless there are accompanying signals of anti-semitism such as statements, telephone calls, graffiti, etc.; *or* unless there develops a disproportionate pattern of attack on Jewish institutions and individuals. To do otherwise is to *downgrade* the seriousness of anti-semitic acts for the police, the public, the media and even the Jewish community.

---Popularity ("self-fulfilling") Factor: *Over-emphasizing* the extent of anti-semitic behavior will have the effect of making it seem more popular than it is; and some people are attracted to doing what seems popular. *Over-publicizing* the details of every covert act of anti-semitism has often proved to have a contagious effect, producing additional acts. *The emphasis should be on the general condemnation of an act rather than simply its description.*

---Disclosure ("spotlight") Factor: Neither of the above criteria should be allowed to dilute a basic principle: *If there is a significant episode or outbreak of anti-semitic acts, the public should know about it.* It is an outmoded and dangerous idea that we can "quarantine" serious anti-semitism with silence. The objective is not to hope that anti-semitism will go away, but that we can marshal society against it; for that purpose, we need to publicly spotlight anti-semitic acts when they are serious or seem to be connected in some design. And again, the rule is to emphasize the condemnation of acts rather than the sensational description of them.

#### When Organized Anti-Semitic Groups Meet

The days are gone when we could hope to "quarantine" a Klan or Nazi rally, to lessen their self-serving publicity. The competitive requirements of TV have apparently served to guarantee some coverage of most of these events. Therefore, it is imperative that responses be prepared by responsible forces in the community.

This requires an appropriate application of the items in the "Community Action Checklist" above:

1--Law Enforcement: Through the contacts indicated above, the police should be prepared to handle public rallies or meetings so that the interests of public safety are served. The police should be asked to consider denying permits for, or shifting the location of, any rally where public safety factors cannot be met.

2--Involvement of Civic Establishment: The network of civic leaders indicated above should be prepared to make an appropriate response publicly, indicating the unacceptability of the Klan or Nazi point of view. Furthermore, *alternate rallies* or meetings, under the sponsorship of such a cross-sectional leadership, should be considered.

Such alternate rallies should be positive, visible and non-confrontational. Rallies which involve physical confrontation tend to: a) attract irresponsible and equally anti-Jewish elements from the extreme left; b) result in violence, confrontation between Jews and police, and physical harm.

3--Legislation and Law: Nazi and KKK groups should not be given gratuitous court victories by attempts to enjoin them from meeting in general public places. However, attempts should be made to prevent them from meeting at times and places which are specifically designed to bring them attention rather than their exercise of free speech (e.g., a scheduled Nazi meeting in front of a synagogue). And the police concerns with public safety, mentioned above, should be considered.

4--School Programs: The occasion of such meetings should be used to accelerate anti-bigotry programs in the schools, as indicated above.

5--Media: The occasion of such meetings should be used to mount special educational programs, interviews, "free speech" messages, etc., on the media, using the contacts indicated above, and the involvement of the civic establishment.

SUMMARY

At the same time that the level of anti-semitic beliefs among Americans is *dropping*, the number of anti-semitic incidents seems to be *increasing*. That suggests a general drop in the climate of restraint, which makes it easier for those who do have anti-semitic beliefs to *act out* those beliefs on the public scene.

That general loss of restraint (which has increased levels of vandalism and assault against all segments of American society) raises concern about what has always been the main problem in anti-semitism: indifference. Most serious anti-semitic movements gain their mass base from among those who are indifferent to anti-semitism and racism. In pursuit of other social and economic goals, too many people are not restrained from joining movements which are also anti-semitic. There is today no mass anti-semitic movement on the American scene, but in any future period of serious social and economic dislocation, a general climate of *non-restraint* would be disturbing.

Therefore, every manifestation of anti-semitism and racism must be met with counter-measures designed to *restrain* those manifestations. Most of those counter-measures are most effectively taken by united Jewish communities working with those agencies created for the purpose. Every individual can be involved in following the action-checklist for individuals; and in making sure that their agencies and communities are following the action check-list for communities.