

**Rising Concern about Physical Threat,  
Intense Concern about Extremist Islamic Organizations, and  
New Apprehension about Hatefests on Campuses—  
Main Findings from Survey of Canadian Jews for B'nai Brith Canada**



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## 1.0. Introduction

B'nai Brith Canada commissioned COMPAS to undertake a survey of Jewish Canadians to gauge their perceptions of whether anti-Jewish sentiment is rising or falling and the direction it may take in the future.

As detailed below, some concern about physical threat emerged along with a heightened apprehension about hatefests on campus. The greatest single concern was about extremism coming from extremist Islamic organizations, not neo-Nazis or other sources of difficulty in past history.

## 2.0. Rise in Concern about anti-Jewish Hostility, Especially on Campuses<sup>1</sup>

Although most of Canada's major institutions have made solemn commitments to putting an end to antisemitism, there exists some unease in the Jewish community over a possible rise in anti-Jewish animus. In a surprising turn of events, those who believe that anti-Jewish hate has gone up during the past 50 years are at least as numerous as those who believe that it has gone down. Those who believe that anti-Jewish hostility has gone up are 31%<sup>2</sup> more numerous than those who believe that it has gone down—34% up vs. 26% down, as shown in table 2a. Altogether, 60% believe that anti-Jewish sentiment has remained constant or gone up.

An unusually high percentage, 19%, say that they do not know if anti-Jewish sentiment has gone up, down, or stayed the same over the half century. We did not ask respondents about changes in sentiment for each decade over

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<sup>1</sup> This section contains expanded content that was provided after an earlier version went to the Bnai Brith printer.

<sup>2</sup> Calculated as  $(34-26)/26 = 31\%$ .



the past 50 years. We lack such data. The high don't-know response rate is consistent with the possibility that respondents may have perceived a change of direction in attitudes towards Jews, and are not sure if the change of direction is temporary or long-term. Respondents could have perceived anti-Jewish sentiment to have moderated in the late 20th century and then to have risen in recent years. This is a reasonable hypothesis but not one for which we have data.

The data do show that the proportion perceiving anti-Jewish sentiment to have fallen over the half-century is small—26%. The small size of this segment is consistent with respondents' concerns about the future. Almost 9 in 10 believe that there is a chance that anti-semitism could go up in the future, as shown in table 2b.

*Table 2a: Suppose one compared anti-Jewish feeling in Canada today with 50 years ago. Has anti-Jewish hate in Canada...*

	%
Gone up	34
Stayed the same	21
Gone down	26
Don't know	19

*Table 2b: Looking to the future, is there a chance that anti-Jewish hate could go up?*

	%
Definitely a chance	57
Probably a chance	33
Probably not	7
Definitely no chance	1
Don't know	3



A source of unease among Canadian Jews appears to be anti-Israel activities on campuses. The overwhelming majority are more concerned about anti-Israel activity on campuses than they were 5 years ago, as shown in table 2c. Almost half say that Jewish families contemplating higher education for their high school age children are “a lot more concerned” than they were 5 years ago.

Some of this heightened concern may arise from the fact that Canadian Jews are widely aware of the so-called Israel “Apartheid” Week organized by extremists on campuses to delegitimize the right of Israel to exist as a country, as shown in table 2d. At the same time, they are only moderately aware of the degree to which Liberal and Conservative leaders have condemned these events as hatefests, as shown in table 2e.

Whatever the sources of Jewish concern, there exists a desire for greater security protection of synagogues and other Jewish institutions along with a heightened concern about the safety of children attending Jewish schools and about physical threats against the visibly Orthodox, as shown in tables 2f, g, and h.

*Table 2c: From what you have heard or can tell, when Jewish families think about choosing a university program for a member of their family, are they more concerned about whether a given university has lots of anti-Israel activities than they were 5 years ago or less concerned than they used to be?*

	%
A lot more concerned	40
Somewhat more concerned	30
About the same	10
Somewhat less concerned	1
A lot less concerned	2
Don't know	18



*Table 2d: Every March, Canadian campuses have “Israel Apartheid Week.” This consists of demonstrations and events that attack Israel as well as Jews, Christians, and others who support Israel’s right to exist. On a 7 point awareness scale where 7 means very aware and 1, not at all, how aware are you of “Israel Apartheid Week”?*

Mean	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	DNK
5.6	53	14	11	5	4	4	9	2

*Table 2e: Conservative and Liberal politicians have condemned “Israel Apartheid Week” for being a hatefest that should be rejected by all people who believe in honest debate. The Liberal leader condemned it for whipping up such hate that Jewish students “fear for their safety on campus.” On a 7 point awareness scale where 7 means very aware and 1, not at all, how aware are you that Conservatives and Liberals have condemned these activities on campus?*

Mean	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	DNK
4.7	25	17	15	13	7	9	11	4

*Table 2f: Given your estimate of the potential risks or threats of violence, should Jewish institutional buildings have security protection?*

	%
Definitely	58
Probably	32
Probably not	7
Definitely not	1
Don’t know	2



*Table 2g: Parents of school age children—in your estimation do the parents perceive risks related to safety, security, and potential threats affecting Jewish day schools?*

	%
Definitely	25
Probably	41
Probably not	14
Definitely not	1
Don't know	19

*Table 2h: Looking at physical threats or risks affecting the visible Orthodox Jewish community, do you perceive it as...*

	%
Going up a lot over the past five years	18
Going up somewhat	43
Staying the same	23
Going down somewhat	2
Going down a lot over the past five years	*3
Don't know	12

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<sup>3</sup> Denotes a cell that rounds to zero.



### 3.0. Responsibility for anti-Jewish Climate Placed Mainly on Extremist Islamic Organizations and Mid-East Dictatorships

Respondents were asked to identify the likely source of anti-Jewish activity on campuses (table 3a), the likely source of anti-Jewish sentiment in the future (table 3b), and the source of the greatest potential risk of violence (table 3c). Extremist Islamic organizations are identified in each instance as the/a major problem:

- In the case of campuses, brutal Arab governments also get a high share of blame;
- If anti-Jewish hate rose in the future, this would be because of the activity of extremist Islamic organizations and perhaps to a lesser extent some unions, universities, and the media, but not Parliament, business, or schools;
- The greatest risk of violence will come from extremist Islamic organizations, not from neo-Nazis or other organizations.

*Table 3a: The following is a list of people, organizations, or countries that are sometimes said to be the real problem [for anti-Jewish activity].. On a 7 point agreement scale where 7 means agree strongly and 1, disagree strongly, how much do you agree that each is a real problem.*

	Mean	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	DNK
Brutal Arab governments for mistreating their non-Muslim minorities and refusing to accept Israel's right to exist	6.4	70	13	7	3	2	1	3	2
Politicized Islamic organizations for bringing their extreme agendas to Canada	6.4	71	12	7	2	2	1	3	2



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	Mean	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	DNK
Some social science professors for their extremism, like the sociology department that hired a sociology professor wanted by the French police for murder at a Paris synagogue	5.9	54	16	12	5	2	2	4	4
University Presidents for not controlling extremism on campuses	5.7	47	16	14	9	4	4	4	2
Israel because it has no right to exist	1.5	7	*4	1	*5	0	1	87	4

Table 3b: If anti-Jewish hate goes up in the years to come, which of the following institutions in Canada is most likely to spur this on? [RANDOMIZE]

	%
Some extremist Islamic organizations	44
Some unions, for example CUPE	14
Universities	14
Media	13
Some churches, for example the United Church	6
Parliament	1
Schools	1
Small business	*6
Big Corporations	*7
Don't know	7

<sup>4</sup> Denotes a cell that rounds to zero.

<sup>5</sup> Denotes a cell that rounds to zero.

<sup>6</sup> Denotes a cell that rounds to zero.

<sup>7</sup> Denotes a cell that rounds to zero.



*Table 3c: From which of the following do you anticipate the greatest potential risk of violence? RANDOMIZE*

	%
Extremist Islamists	75
The radical left	7
Neo-Nazis	5
The "Christian" right	2
Other	6
Don't know	5

## 4.0. Methodology

The results are from an online survey conducted by COMPAS Research among subscribers to Jewish Canada, a news service sponsored by B'nai Brith Canada. Respondents are a representative sample of the subset who are Jewish and not engaged in politics, journalism, public affairs, or advocacy. Respondents effectively constitute a representative sub-sample of a large online panel. If respondents (n=1560) had participated in a representative telephone survey, by convention the results would have been deemed accurate to within less than 3 percentage points 19 times out of 20. The principal investigator was Conrad Winn, Ph.D.

