MEASURING ANTI-SEMITISM:

USES AND ABUSES OF POLLS 1937-1962

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INTRODUCTION

> What we need today is to understand American anti-Semitism on its own terms. If the country has not been utter heaven for Jews, it has been as far from hell as Jews in the Diaspora have ever known. Broadly speaking, the American Jewish experience is unique. Determining precisely how, is one of the many tasks that lie ahead.[1]

In almost every book on American anti-Semitism or Jewish American history published after 1966, there is some reference, footnote or bibliographical citation to Jews in the Mind of America.[2] Most historians cite the book's use of public opinion polls which attempt to gauge anti-Semitism in America. Scholars often footnote these surveys and Stember's analysis to serve as primary evidence to substantiate their own assumptions and conclusions. Although these polls have been consistently cited, there has never been an investigation of the accuracy of these polls as a measure of anti-Semitism in the United States. The persistent use of Stember's materials compels the student of American anti-Semitism to determine not only whether these polls are reliable and thus a valid source but also how much anti-Semitism is measurable.

A 1944 public opinion poll indicated that Americans considered Jews to be the greatest menace to the United States. At the time, America was fighting to defeat Nazi Germany, the

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[1] Jonathon Sarna, "Anti-Semitism and American History," Commentary, March 1981, vol. 71, no. 3, p. 47.

[2] Charles Stember and Others, Jews in the Mind of America (Basic Books, Inc., New York, 1966).

archenemy of Jews. Despite the anti-German and anti-Japanese propaganda that pervaded the media, Americans still regarded Jews as a greater threat to their nation than their wartime enemies. The irrationality of the survey results has consistently provoked astonishment among historians. This seemingly illogical statistic appears to substantiate some historians' claims that American anti-Semitism was not only pervasive but extreme in the period preceding and during the Second World War.

Numerous polls taken from the late 1930s until 1962 attempted to gauge the anti-Semitic sentiment of the American public. According to these polls, anti-Semitism in the late 1930s soared to new levels. It continued to rise in the early 1940s, reaching a peak in 1944. It declined slightly in the years immediately following World War II, but did not subside significantly until the late 1940s and early 1950s. A number of questions must be posed about the polls: How were they worded, how many people were surveyed, and what was the geographical area, gender, age, race, religious preference, and socio-economic background of those surveyed?

By November 1942, reports of the systematic extermination of Jews in Europe had been confirmed by the American government. As the war progressed, stories of the tragedies befalling European Jews continued to arrive but never gained substantial press coverage. After receiving confirmed reports of Nazi actions against the Jews, Franklin Delano Roosevelt and Congress took no

decisive or concerted action for fourteen months. The American public was no more energetic in its response. Despite reading and hearing accounts of the horrors taking place in the Nazi concentration camps, Americans still supported the maintenance of immigration quotas and restrictions during and after the war.

These factors, linked to the surge of anti-Semitism in the interwar years, have led some historians to describe American anti-Semitism as "virulent."[3] But was hatred of Jews during the first half of the twentieth century as intense as this information suggests? Some historians have gone so far as to claim that a Holocaust in America was possible in the foreseeable future. One critical observer states, "Influenced by the current obsession with the Holocaust, they ask only one question: could it happen here? And to this question they have only one answer: yes."[4] Other scholars contend that Jewish existence in America has represented a "golden age" for Jews in the Diaspora. The success of Jews in America and the existence of a mild form of anti-Semitism have persuaded historians to argue that the American Jewish experience has been uniquely positive. This difference in opinion stems from contrasting interpretations of the meaning and manifestations of anti-Semitism.

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[3] Edward Shapiro, A Time for Healing: American Jewry since World War II (Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, 1992). Henry Feingold, A Time for Searching: Entering the Mainstream 1920-1945 (Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, 1992).

[4] Sarna, p. 45.

Most accounts of Jewish history, and especially that of the Holocaust, tend to provide a litany of persecutions against the Jews. These histories often fail, however, to examine the causes behind the innumerable transgressions or to provide a sense of the texture and dimension. Instead of discussing causal factors, many historians present "victimization accounts." Although the persecution of Jews has been graphically depicted in these works, the motives behind the attacks have often not been addressed. To acquire a deeper understanding of Jew-hatred, it is necessary to scrutinize the causes behind manifestations of anti-Semitism.

Hatred of Jews has existed since ancient times. One historian has termed it "the longest hatred."[5] Defining this antipathy is a difficult task due to the emotions surrounding it. Many interpreters of anti-Semitism argue that Jew-hatred is a baseless animosity. It exists independent of the actions of Jews and their presence. According to these interpretations, anti-Semitism is not a product of its environment, but rather of mythical stereotypes, not factual realities.

Many Jewish observers would vehemently contest the notion that anti-Semitism derives from real factors. "Indeed, to focus on Jews and Jewish character defects in a generic way is itself considered prima facie evidence of anti-Semitic intent--or...committing the crime of 'blaming the victim.'"[6] Yet to

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[5] Robert Wistrich, Antisemitism: The Longest Hatred (Thames Metheun, London, 1991).

[6] Albert Lindemann, Through Esau's Eyes (unpublished manuscript, Santa Barbara, 1993), 4.

place all blame for anti-Semitism on Gentiles constitutes a narrow conviction. There are various Jewish scholars who argue that Jews as well as Gentiles are responsible for anti-Semitism. The Jewish philosopher, Baruch Spinoza, wrote that Jewish separatism and sense of superiority, linked to Jewish religious rituals that insult, denigrate and threaten other religions, have been the fundamental factors in evoking anti-Semitism.[7]

Hatred of Jews in America represents a unique strain of anti-Semitism. American history does not contain a prominent tradition of Gentile-Jew conflict. The persistent myths and stereotypes in Europe regarding Jews were weak or missing in the United States. Racism and social conflict has primarily been focused on Black versus White, rather than Jew versus Gentile. Yet, as a nation of immigrants, the United States inevitably received the cultural baggage of foreigners. Stereotypes and mythical images of Jews comprised a piece of their luggage. Like their European predecessors, Americans targeted Jews as scapegoats when tensions in society reached a crisis point. Fantasies about Jews fused with frustrations in daily life, provoking conflict. By providing historical background, Jewish stereotypes can be juxtaposed with the actual lives of Jewish-Americans. Through a comparison of American perceptions of Jews and the actual lives of Jews in America, the reality can be distinguished from the myth.

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[7] Lindemann, p. 4.

Many writers of Jewish history have designated the United States as a country in which Jews have found a hospitable and prosperous niche in the Diaspora. In America, Jews have never faced the destruction of their communities as exemplified by *Kristallnacht* in Germany and pogroms in Russia. Jewish immigrants' rapid ascent to middle class status surpassed that of other immigrant minorities in America. The number of Jews in higher education was unparalleled among American immigrants in the first half of the twentieth century. Although American Jews appeared to represent the ideal beneficiaries of the American Dream, life in the United States was not as dream-like as many Jewish immigrants had expected. The melting pot of the world also harbored anti-Semitism.

Comparing anti-Semitism in America to the persecution Jews faced in other nations is necessary to measure the degree of Jew-hatred. Looking at anti-Jewish sentiment relative to other racial hostilities in the United States adds another dimension to the understanding of this phenomenon. Equipped with this more expansive comprehension, the actual level of Jew-hatred can be discerned. The polls indicate that anti-Semitism was pervasive in the United States in the interwar years as well as during the Second World War. Charles Stember compiled, analyzed and drew distinct conclusions from these polls dating from 1937 to 1962. It remains to be determined, however, whether the polls accurately reflect the level of anti-Semitism in America and if Stember's analysis deserves citation or criticism.

AN OVERVIEW OF THE SURVEY

In the late 1930s "with Nazi influence beginning to be felt even in the United States and making disturbances in the streets of New York a commonplace occurrence," the American Jewish Committee (AJC) decided to adopt public opinion polling as a means of both gauging and combatting the spread of anti-Semitism. Surveys began in 1937 and continued for more than a quarter of a century. The findings have been periodically compiled and analyzed. In the 1960s, the AJC began a comprehensive reanalysis of the accumulated survey data which was obtained under its own sponsorship and others. "With overt anti-Semitism steadily and unmistakably declining, the 1960s seemed an appropriate time to reexamine the entire body of survey findings in depth--to interpret, in the broadest sense, exactly how the Jews had appeared in the mind of America during the quarter-century just past."[9]

Charles Stember was commissioned by the American Jewish Committee to undertake a compilation and analysis of the vast public opinion data available. His findings were submitted in September 1964 to a conference of social scientists specializing in the fields of sociology, social psychology, demography, and Jewish and American history. The participants studied Stember's

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[8] Charles Stember and Others, Jews in the Mind of America (Basic Books, Inc., New York, 1966), ix (preface).

[9] Stember, p. x (preface).

Jewish and American history. The participants studied Stember's work from the vantage point of their respective disciplines, subsequently producing papers which placed the short-term trend of anti-Semitism into historic perspective. The papers were presented at a 1964 symposium which focused on the alleged decline of overt anti-Semitism exemplified in poll responses, as well as the problem of latent hostility.

Jews in the Mind of America incorporates these studies of American anti-Semitism in two parts. The first part of the book documents Stember's compilation, analyses and conclusions of the public opinion surveys from 1937 to 1962. The eight papers presented at the conference are printed in the second half of the book providing a commentary on and application of Stember's work. Six agencies supplied the poll data which is assembled and interpreted in Part One: the American Institute of Public Opinion (AIPO); the National Opinion Research Center of the University of Chicago (NORC); the Office of Public Opinion Research (OPOR); the Opinion Research Corporation (ORC); the Psychological Corporation; and Elmo Roper and Associates. The majority of the surveys were conducted by the agencies under the auspices of the American Jewish Committee, although some polls included in the book were conducted independently. The AJC was the first intergroup-relations agency to employ public opinion polling, acknowledging the advantages and disadvantages of the survey process.

Opinion polling from its inception has been criticized for its questionable accuracy. John Slawson of the American Jewish Committee prefaces Jews in the Mind of America with numerous qualifications regarding the use of public surveys. The polling procedure was selected in complete awareness of its inherent limitations. The AJC recognized that survey replies would not necessarily reveal the respondents' underlying motivations. There were sufficient indications, however, that overt responses reflected inner attitudes with reasonable fidelity when they were authentically obtained. The advantages of opinion polling appeared to far outweigh the limitations according to Slawson. The findings could be compared from year to year, indicating a rise or decline in hostility toward Jews. "Opinion polling quickly became invaluable both as a measure of the fluctuations of prejudice in the United States and as a basis for programs of counteraction."[10]

The validity of data collected by opinion-research agencies, however, has been seriously questioned by workers in the field, as well as other critics.[11] Stember and the American Jewish Committee acknowledged these imperfections, yet still plausibly argued that public opinion data provides the most effective if

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[10] Stember, p. ix (preface).

[11] Lindsey Rogers, The Pollsters (Alfred A. Knopf, New York, 1949).

not only means of discerning the elusive sentiment of the American society. The guidelines established by Hadley Cantril, a respected researcher at the Office of Public Opinion Research (OPOR), have in part been adopted by Stember in his analysis of the polls on anti-Semitism.

Cantril published his book, Gauging Public Opinion, in 1944 to serve as a guide to future surveyors of public sentiment. Cantril argues that statistical comparisons based on survey data provide many insights and interpretations of substantial practical and theoretical usefulness.

> But the limitations of even the most exhaustive analyses of the most intensive interviews made of representative samples of the population still leave the psychologist dissatisfied in his answer to the question of why a person's opinion is what it is. Strictly speaking, statistics on sample populations cannot tell anything final as to why people really think this or that.[12]

It is not Cantril's purpose in his book, however, to discern what public opinion is, how it can best be guided, or what its determinants are, but to assess the advantages and liabilities of the public opinion polling process itself. He critically analyzes various aspects of the survey method, illuminating problematic areas, and instructs how to avoid these fallacies in future studies.

Opening with a discussion of the meaning of questions, Cantril expresses the difficulty confronting public opinion surveyors. Attempting to present a singular meaning to diverse

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[12] Hadley Cantril, Gauging Public Opinion (Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1944).

groups of people separated by background, experience, education and occupation is a difficult task. The meaning of questions can also change over the years and thus diminish the comparability of data spanning extended time periods. Questions can be obscure in meaning, implying different things to various people. For many respondents, their perception of the question was not the same as that intended by the interviewer. A lack of focus in questions can often lead to generalizations. Frequently, issues are posed to respondents in such general terms that their answers are meaningless. In contrast, a lack of alternatives or choices can prompt a forced decision which can also skew the results. Some questions are directed toward a circumspect portion of the population which also produces unrepresentative results. Inconsistencies may occur where unusually high social value is associated with a given choice or where answers reflect accepted stereotypes. "In such instances an individual may hypocritically give an answer following an accepted stereotype knowing full well that he does not believe it."[13]

The recognition of the importance of question wording caused some polling agencies to adopt the split-ballot technique. This technique incorporates the preparation of each questionnaire in two alternative forms which alter the wording and/or order of the issues presented. Although this method was used to minimize polling limitations, Cantril asserts that it actually proved

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[13] Cantril, p. 21.

ineffective. As anticipated, the two alternative questionnaires yielded different response distributions. Yet, there is seldom any way to determine which distribution provides the more accurate gauge of opinion. This problem is indicative of the unsystematic means by which poll administrators gather data. These inconsistencies produce results which are scattered and often inconclusive, thereby making it difficult to discern any conclusions or generalizations.

Determining which type of questions (dichotomous, multiple-choice, or free-answer) should be used can also be problematic. Cantril argues that there is not one type of question which is consistently superior. All three offer various advantages and disadvantages often determined by the degree of restriction the poll places on the respondent. When opinion tends to be vague and unstructured on difficult questions, a choice which suggests a definitive answer will most often be selected, illustrating the power of suggestion. A free-answer questionnaire in some instances could combat this bias. According to Cantril, reaction to stereotypes, symbols, and "prestige associations" is an integral aspect of the process of popular judgment. The presence of a particular name can be unfairly biasing. To overcome this inconsistency, Cantril advocates the use of a split ballot which incorporates one ballot with the name and one without. He also states that on issues where people are uncertain, it is possible

to skew the results by biasing the issue. Where opinion is definitive, however, biasing statements has relatively little effect on the results.

Cantril claims that the ability to measure intensity and direction of opinion provides the most accurate gauge of public sentiment. "To interpret poll results adequately it is necessary to know whether an expressed attitude represents a superficially held view which may be discarded the next moment or whether it reflects a cherished conviction which will change only under unusual pressure."[14] There is also the distinct influence of the interviewer on the respondent and thus the result. Discrepancies between interviewers and respondents on the grounds of class or race definitely hamper rapport and create a distortion of true opinion. Some surveyors seek out only candidates who are accessible to them or those with which they can form a cooperative, working relationship. Selectivity obviously produces data which is far from representative of the population. An unrepresentative sampling often results from the reluctance of middle-class interviewers to approach members of the lowest income groups who they perceive as being inarticulate and suspicious.

The question which directly follows then is how representative are "representative samplings." The standard practice of polling agencies is to stratify the selectees with

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[14] Cantril, p. 51.

respect to geographic and rural-urban distribution, race and economic status. Other determinants include religious preference, educational level attained, nationality, and occupation. The goal is to make the proportions of the sample representative of the population. "Poll samples are often referred to as accurate miniatures of the national population. Such a statement carries the implication that the elements of the total population are present in the poll sample in the same proportions as they occur in the country as a whole."[15]

Determining to what degree of accuracy this can be achieved, however, is questionable. Bias seems to be the most integral impediment. Education provides the most serious bias with its ties to economic position and interviewer bias, while incomplete returns present a less overt slant. Small samples are also recognized as an inadequate substitute for regular national samples used by polling agencies. Cantril acknowledges the American Institute of Public Opinion (AIPO) and the National Opinion Research Center (NORC) as two reputable polling agencies which generally provide representative samplings.

Cantril concludes Gauging Public Opinion with "some laws of public opinion." He asserts that public sentiment is highly sensitive to important events which subsequently produce variations in the results. Events of "unusual magnitude" can swing public opinion temporarily from one extreme to another.

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[15] Cantril, p. 143.

psychologically, opinion is essentially determined by self-interest. Events or other stimuli influence opinion relative to the extent of their relationship with self-interest. According to Cantril, unless people feel their self-interest is acutely involved or unless opinion is sustained by events, public sentiment does not remain aroused for any substantial duration of time. Like individual opinion, public opinion is influenced by desire. When sentiment is based predominantly on desire rather than on facts, particular events often provoke a shift in response patterns.

As a concluding thought, Cantril states, "Although public opinion is by no means always consistent, many of the inconsistencies are more apparent...when general frames of reference are discerned and when the basic standards of judgment are discovered from which specific opinions derive."[16] Considering the multitude of factors which are incorporated in the process of opinion polling, it is not surprising that there are inherent flaws in the system. These imperfections can skew the results at almost every stage of the process. If the apparent liabilities are recognized and subsequently avoided, however, acquiring a degree of accuracy in polling is feasible. Regardless of the limitations of public opinion surveys, the scholar and student alike must acknowledge that polling, despite its numerous shortcomings, affords the only means of gauging the opinion of the public.

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[16] Cantril, p. 230.

STEMBER: AN ADHERENT TO POLLING GUIDELINES?

Stember's first chapter, "Anti-Semitism and the Study of Public Opinion", provides a brief sketch of the origins of the polls and a discussion of their validity and relevance. He states that the realization that the world had remained blind to the menace of Nazi anti-Semitism until it was too late prompted broad studies of public attitudes toward Jews in the late 1930s. The social psychologists involved in these studies adopted the controlled experiment and attitude survey as their chief tools in conjunction with quantitative measurement.

Initially, the surveys were sharply limited by the select character of available subjects. Academic researchers often utilized the nearest and most accessible source--college students. Others, recognizing the apparent limitations, ventured beyond the campus, but a lack of funding impeded large-scale research. The innovation of nationwide polls, introduced in the late 1930s to predict election results, presented an optimal means of gauging the public's attitudes toward Jews. These surveys were subsequently adopted to measure the fluctuating status of anti-Semitism in America.

The historical context in which these "periodic assessments" were made should not be ignored, argues Stember. They began under the mounting threat of Nazism and continued through the period of the Second World War and its aftermath, through the early days of the Cold War and the era of McCarthyism, and into

the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s. Specific events during this time period (the emergence of Israel in 1948, for example) were explicitly reflected in the survey questions. The lines of inquiry have varied over time concurrent with this historical background. The public's image of the Jew has been surveyed since the late 1930s. Stember asserts that plainly, hostile images and perceptions were a crucial element in sanctioning aggressively anti-Semitic behavior.[17]

The assessment of beliefs concerning the position and treatment of Jews in American society comprises a second line of inquiry. It was hoped the measure of these beliefs would help explain the existence of unfavorable images. Surveyors also expected to illuminate the public's apathy toward the problems of minority groups. Early surveys also focused on the measurement of possible violence against American Jews. During Hitler's regime approximately a fourth of all poll questions were designed to gauge the potential of anti-Semitic violence or approval of Nazi policies among the American public. This line of questioning was discontinued after the war as the levels of anti-Semitism declined and the manifestation of violence appeared unlikely.

Following the Second World War, focus was placed on issues which had hitherto only been lightly explored (discrimination and acceptance). These issues were studied to determine whether

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[17] Stember, p.35.

discrimination against minority groups could be dismantled. The modifications in the lines of inquiry indicate an evolution from defensive to offensive concerns. Surveys have also attempted to determine the prevalence of anti-Semitic talk in normal social life as a rough indicator of anti-Jewish feeling and of preoccupation with Jews. The measure of potential support for non-discriminatory practices in general represents another issue which has been measured with the idea that this backing derives in part from a popular willingness to respect the rights of all groups in society.[18]

Stember continues his introductory chapter with a discussion of the relevance of attitudes. Essentially, he is providing an argument for "the working assumptions on which this study rests."[19] He contends that attitudes play a key role in reactions to Jews. Formerly it was believed that anti-Semitism was determined predominantly by attitudes and could best be eliminated through methods designed to alter them. Social scientists subsequently developed the view that attitudes of groups toward one another were the natural outcome of social and historical forces. They specify intergroup relations, which often resisted change unless the underlying social structure was altered. Stember believes this approach to be one-sided, arguing in contrast that attitudes may exercise a force of their own.

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[18] An analysis of these lines of inquiry will be provided in the following section.

[19] Stember, p. 36.

He does not believe that attitudes between groups will change only if the social structure or the groups' relations alter. Education and indoctrination exemplify two sources that can alter perceptions. The impact of general social tension or economic frustration can also effect an increase in prejudice against a minority group regardless of an alteration of the social structure. The connection between changes in intergroup relations and changes in intergroup attitudes is reciprocal according to Stember. Only when attitudes and actions move in parallel fashion can a change in social norms be confirmed. It is with these considerations in mind that he undertakes his study.

Stember essentially hopes to determine whether the changes in Jews' position and their relations with the majority have been accompanied with a modification of the attitudes of the non-Jewish majority toward Jews. If an alteration in attitudes has occurred, he argues, Jews have truly begun to integrate into the society at large. Yet, if this modification has not transpired, the position of Jews in America remains "insecure and subject to change without notice."

Stember qualifies his defense of the relevance of attitudes by admitting that the existence of general public attitudes toward Jews is a mere hypothesis, not a proven fact. He contends that the evidence assembled in the following chapters is "diversified enough to guarantee" that the generalized attitudes toward Jews in America will be measured. The data cover a wide

variety of specific responses with over 250 questions, some asked more than a dozen times. The wide variety of questions allow for a measurement of different intensities as well as different dimensions of prejudice. Like all attitudes, anti-Semitism varies in intensity and salience among individuals. The quantitative shifts from more to less extreme positions or vice versa provide Stember's principal indices of change.

In addition to defending the relevance of attitudes, Stember attempts to validate the use of opinion-research. "We are convinced that public-opinion data, for all their imperfections, afford the most effective if not the only way of attacking the problem we have set for ourselves."[20] He claims it is obvious that attitudes cannot be measured directly, but must be inferred from either overt or verbal behavior. Yet, overt behavior is unobtainable under controlled conditions on a nation-wide scale. The measurement of societal attitudes must therefore rely entirely on the verbal expression of beliefs, opinions and feelings. This limitation is rationalized by the assertion that actions distort or conceal "true" attitudes as extensively as verbal behavior.

Due to the anonymity of polls, he argues, there is no reason to doubt that respondents are not expressing their "true" feelings about the issue. Yet, Stember quickly qualifies this statement by asserting that poll results are of course not entirely accurate. "All inquiries are subject to error, and

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[20] Stember, p. 39.

opinion research, with its large numbers of investigators working, more often than not, under minimal supervision, may well yield less precise data than other methods."[21] His interpretations will therefore follow a "conservative course."

This caution entails taking percentage distributions of responses as approximations, not absolutes, and treating only compelling differences between groups as firm data. Stember also addresses the issue of the poll questions themselves. He admits that his data is derived from questions of the most varied types none of which possess "inherent virtues denied to others." The many formulations employed over the years are not equally meaningful; some are relevant while others are tangential or vague. In these instances, the interpretation of the results from such questions will be qualified.

Another limitation which concerns Stember is the comparability of samples over time. The data used in the study was collected for short-term practical use. This poses difficulties when trying to arrive at an undistorted picture of attitude trends which must be derived from similar successive population samples. Stember admits, "in fact, they [the samples] are less uniform than we might wish."[22] Halfway through the time period under study, sampling procedures underwent two major improvements which altered the composition of the respondents.

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[21] Stember, p.39.

[22] Stember, p. 41.

Until 1948, quota sampling was used by opinion-research agencies. The selection of individual respondents was left to the interviewers, who randomly filled the specified quotas in various demographic categories. Quota sampling tends to over-select the more accessible households and persons, thereby excluding the very rich, the very poor, and reluctant or socially isolated individuals. Stember contends that these groups are likely to contain relatively high numbers of anti-Semites. In turn, he argues, the prevalence of anti-Semitism in the nation as a whole may have been understated in the surveys up to 1948. Subsequently, increases in anti-Semitism after 1948 look larger in the statistics than they really were, and decreases look smaller.[23]

After 1948, probability sampling was employed as a general method providing a much more representative selection of respondents. Yet it was not until 1950 that an even more representative sampling was obtained. Prior to 1950 respondents had been taken from among voters (particularly, those who had voted in the last election before the specific survey). Surveys in the following years selected people from the entire adult population. Where attitudes toward Jews are concerned, voters as a group are not necessarily representative of the nation as a whole. Voters tend to be "more sophisticated, better informed and less isolated than others." Stember assumes that given these qualities, they are less likely to be hostile toward minority

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[23] Stember, p. 42.

groups. The voting population is also not representative in demographic respects containing a disproportionate number of women, Blacks, and uneducated persons. Regardless of these discrepancies, Stember claims that a careful analysis of the polls indicates that they are not seriously unrepresentative.[24]

The comparability of Stember's study is also challenged by the variation in the choice of issues and the formulation of survey questions during the period being studied. Even the slightest changes in a question may create a shift in responses. A change in phrasing of successive surveys confronts the surveyor with the determination of whether discrepancies in the results represent a real change or one which is provoked by the alteration. "Indeed, in many cases, the phrasing or substance of questions on a given topic has been so decisively altered from one survey to the next that we cannot safely draw any general conclusions from differences in the results."[25] Regardless of this discrepancy, Stember asserts this "lack of uniformity" is balanced by the "impressive degree" of consistency in the test settings. He claims that although the data was gathered by different agencies whose practices varied somewhat, the similarities in the over-all psychological situation far outweigh the procedural discrepancies enumerated above.

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[24] This point will be contested below in a discussion of this "analysis."

[25] Stember, p. 43.

In his concluding remarks, Stember states, "as long as we remain mindful of the limitations under which we work we are in no danger of claiming too much for our measurements of change."[26] Although Stember delineates the apparent discrepancies in his study, he relegates these fallacies to an almost inconsequential status. In one sentence he will discuss the significant problems that challenge the accuracy of the study. Then in the next, he will state that this inadequacy is rationalized by the alleged consistency in other areas of the study. This denigrates the significance of one aspect of the survey in relation to others. Stember's propensity to focus on the invariable aspects of the surveys while de-emphasizing the discordant factors demands an evaluation of the accuracy of his study.

Specifically, Stember states that the lack of uniformity in the survey questions is offset by the continuity in the settings in which the surveys were administered. Irrefutably, standardized conditions provide a necessary gauge as to the validity of the polls. This consistency, however, cannot reasonably displace the discrepancies apparent in the questions themselves. Stember does account for this imperfection by acknowledging that incongruities in the substance of questions have been modified from one survey to the next. These alterations restrict him from drawing any definitive conclusions

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[26] Stember, p.44.

from the variations in the results. In the following analysis of his compilations and deductions, it will be determined whether he adheres to these constraints.

The alleged "impressive degree of consistency" in the survey conditions also requires qualification. Initially, Stember states the data has been gathered under general conditions which conform to carefully controlled psychological situations. He then appears to temper this assertion. Although the polls were elicited by different agencies with varying practices of polling, in Stember's opinion the over-all psychological situation far outweighs these procedural discrepancies. Once again he states that he will indicate where differences in method may have distorted the results.

The comparability of samples over time and whether the polls are representative samplings pose the two most controversial aspects of Stember's study. As stated above, the sampling process underwent two procedural changes halfway through the period under study (in 1948 and 1950). Opinion-research agencies discarded the haphazard nature of quota sampling. After 1948, they began to employ the more representative probability sampling as a more accurate method of acquiring respondents. As Stember readily admits, the surveys prior to 1948 were notably unrepresentative of the population as a whole. He contends this lack of representation of certain groups (especially, the very

rich and very poor) skewed the survey results causing an understatement of the prevalence of anti-Semitism in the nation as a whole.

Until 1950, the samples were even more circumspect due to the limited pool from which respondents were drawn. This pool was comprised primarily of voters, specifically those who had voted in the most recent election prior to the respective survey. As noted above, Stember argues that although the voting population differs demographically from the general public, the surveys are still representative of the public's attitude toward Jews. He cites a "careful analysis prepared in 1940" for the American Jewish Committee which deems the polls neither overrepresentative or underrepresentative. This study, limited to the years 1938-39, asserts that the lack of substantial variation in the samples regarding attitudes toward Jews indicates that the disproportionate representation did not distort the overall picture.

Yet, if the population was not demographically represented, it appears obvious that a lack of variation would occur. According to the study, the response to questions did not vary appreciably by locality, age, sex, religion, nationality, income, employment, politics, or section of the country. If the polls were "not truly representative of the total population of the United States," it follows that these subgroups were unrepresented as well and thus the polls cannot be considered

indicative of the public's attitude. Naturally a sampling that tends to be more homogenous rather than heterogenous will result in a lack of variation.

This contrived consistency in no way justifies the contradictory assertion that an unrepresentative sample is representative. Stember appears to concede to this point by stating in a footnote, "the exclusive use of voters as respondents in the older polls creates certain distortions when early and recent attitudes within a given population subgroup are compared."[27] He then directs the reader to Appendix I.

Appendix I deals with the differential change among population subgroups. Stember provides this section to delineate the change of attitudes among specific groups of the population. Apparently he hopes to present a more extensive inspection of public attitudes. His focus on these subgroups accomplishes this goal, while also illuminating the underrepresentation of these areas of the population. Stember warns that the statistics should be considered as no more than estimates because the older and recent subgroups are not precisely comparable in all cases. This is in part due to the 'voters-only' respondents prior to 1950.

Yet, he claims this probably does not significantly affect the accuracy of the data. In 1962, voters and non-voters had no consistent differences in their attitudes. According to Stember, it can be construed that there were also few discrepancies

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[27] Stember, p. 46.

between voters and non-voters before 1950 as well. This logic is inherently presumptuous and faulty. The exact opposite of what Stember assumes can also be argued. The era of the 1960s vastly differs from that of the 1930s, 1940s and 1950s. The assumption that voters and non-voters would vary little between these time periods is highly debatable.

The method of quota sampling and the limited pool of voter-only respondents caused the underrepresentation of various areas of the population. Women are less accurately represented as a whole than men in earlier polls. Their low numbers among the voting population explain one source of their scarcity. The voting limitation also resulted in the underrepresentation of the younger population (30 years old and under), minorities and uneducated people. Regionally speaking, the samples of the South were highly selective in the early surveys with very few Black respondents. Stember suggests that there may be a higher level of anti-Semitism among Blacks, but he has no statistical evidence to substantiate this assertion.[28] Rural areas were also slightly underrepresented in the polls. The polling agencies tended to be closer in proximity to urban and suburban regions, magnifying the accessibility of this population in relation to the more distant rural areas.

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[28] "...a number of informal investigators have reported fairly widespread anti-Semitism among Negroes in recent years." (Stember, p. 225)

The distribution of socio-economic respondents provides another source of discrepancies. The selective nature of the early polls limited the number of lower-class and upper-class respondents and overrepresented the middle-class. The division of income brackets also varied over the period under study, further challenging the accuracy of these polls. The subgroup of religion is also "flawed by imperfect comparability of data." Catholics were often underrepresented numbering less than half of the Protestant respondents. Some surveys were limited solely to "White Christians." Upon closer inspection, the appendix on population subgroups provides a more in-depth view of public attitudes, but more importantly, it glaringly illustrates the misrepresentation of these subgroups in the survey samples. This selectivity challenges, more than any other discrepancy, the accuracy of these polls.

Does Stember's study adhere to Cantril's proscribed polling guidelines? Stember readily acknowledges the endemic flaws in the polls he has compiled and analyzed. Where these imperfections are highly visible, he will accordingly qualify his analysis and abstain from making immutable conclusions. The following discussion of the polls themselves will determine whether Stember complies with his projected guidelines or whether he actually strays from his self-appointed path.

ANALYSIS OF THE POLLS

Before embarking on an analysis of the surveys, one qualification should be made. Although this study is aimed at illuminating the inherent discrepancies existing in these series of polls, it is not attempting to denigrate the value of Stember's work or to discredit it altogether. The study incorporated in Jews in the Mind of America is a valuable resource, yet as with all sources, its validity and accuracy needs to be scrutinized.

Stember grouped the polls he compiled and analyzed into eight chapters with various headings. For the purposes of this work, these chapters have been divided into two groups. The first section deals with general perceptions of Jews in America, incorporating images, attitudes and beliefs of Jews. The second section looks at various events and their impact on the perception of Jews and anti-Semitism. These events are specifically: the Second World War; the Holocaust; the formation of Israel as a nation; and the Desegregation Crisis.

Images, Beliefs and Attitudes of Jews in America

Regarding the images of Jews, Stember correctly states that there is a difference between the publicly perceived Jew and the real Jew. "There have been more or less unstructured attempts to

determine in what ways Jews seemed "different" as well as examinations of specific, highly charged images--some of them entrenched in Western culture for hundreds or even thousands of years, others transient in nature, deriving from the happenings and conditions of the moment."[29] In his chapters on the images, beliefs and attitudes toward Jews, Stember plans to focus on the relatively timeless, underlying concepts. The first concept he introduces is the perception of Jews as a race, religion or nationality. The polls regarding this issue were take in the years 1944, 1945, 1946, and 1962.

From 1944-45, Jews were considered to be a nationality. In 1946 this perception appears to have changed, but the discrepancies between the polls does not afford a clear response. In one poll of 1946, one-third to two-fifths of the respondents designated Jews as a race. Yet, when the order of the choices was altered in another 1946 poll, a slightly higher percentage discerned Jews as a religious group.[30] In 1962, the question in the two variations was used again. Thirty-eight to forty-five percent consistently chose religious group. Race received the fewest responses at twenty-one to twenty-three percent of respondents.

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[29] Stember, p. 49.

[30] The first question listed the choices, "as a race, as a nationality or as a religious group" whereas the second question listed, "as a religious group, as a nationality or as a race." It is possible that if nationality were listed first, this choice may also have received a higher response percentage.

From these results, Stember concludes that the perception of Jews as a race has declined from 1946 to 1962. The figures in 1946, however, were inconsistent and do not warrant such a definitive conclusion. He does not acknowledge the possibility that nationality could have also been a high-ranking response if it had been the first choice in the 1946 survey. Although this is a blatant inconsistency, Stember does not cite it as such except by saying, "It is quite possible that the survey question did not carry exactly the same import in 1946 as in 1962."[31] He projects that the public was probably more familiar with Jews and their ways in 1962. Thus, Americans were not as dependent on the proffered choices of "race, nationality and religion" in 1962 as they were in 1946.

The next set of polls attempted to determine the alleged objectionable traits of Jews. These polls were taken in 1938 (two), 1940 and 1946 and proved to be essentially incomparable. Generally, the respondents found a similar percentage of objectionable and admirable traits. The data was unreliable and fluctuating, but with this in mind, some clear parallels were drawn. The admirable and objectionable qualities were very closely related in that the opposite of the admirable traits represented the negative qualities. Stember claims these character traits are very traditional.

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[31] Stember, p. 52.

> In short, the common twentieth-century prejudice concerning the nature of Jews are only superficially specific to their time and place; they are essentially incarnations of beliefs that have always been present beneath the surface of Western culture and have periodically come into the open, with plausible modifications according to the conditions of the moment.[32]

common characteristics of Jews were their economic orientation and success, their persistence, assertiveness and aggressiveness and their loyalty and clannishness. According to Stember, the perception of Jews as a race gives their image biologically fixed components which are independent of cultural factors. Their alleged propensity for clannishness and inbreeding would therefore indicate an impasse to integration and assimilation.

Stember attempts to present a compilation of pre-war and post-war images of Jews, admitting there are "limitations" with the comparison of these surveys. There are definite inconsistencies in the polling methods due to the alteration in polling stations and administration in 1948 and 1950. Regardless of these flaws, static perceptions earlier discerned continued. By 1962, the polls indicate a decline in both objectionable and admirable qualities. Stember subsequently concludes that Jews in the 1960s are viewed less stereotypically than before. Although he presents this analysis with numerous qualifications, he fails to note apparent flaws. Surveys in 1962 indicate the emergence of 'philo-semitism'. Stember claims a more positive image of Jews represents greater acceptance. Yet, he easily disregards the possibility that some people answered in a manner which they

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[32] Stember, p. 56.

considered 'correct' (or politically correct as people say today). It would be more understandable if acceptance was rationalized by ambivalent feelings rather than recently acquired praise.

A discussion of beliefs about the position of Jews in America begins with a disclaimer regarding the "rather fragmentary data concerning popular beliefs about the status and treatment of Jews in the United States."[33] Stember first presents beliefs about the size of the Jewish population. He claims these perceptions serve as an indicator of how large the "Jewish problem" looks to the American public. Only one poll from 1946 is used in his analysis and the survey question is inherently flawed.[34] "Because of an ambiguous clause in the question, the response is not easy to interpret, but there can be little doubt that the size of the Jewish group was not well known."[35] The majority of the respondents overestimated the number of Jews. Stember explains this result by stating their small population (3.5%) allows little room for underestimation and early surveys tended to over-select areas in which there was a higher Jewish population.

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[33] Stember, p. 76.

[34] The question asks: "Out of every hundred people in the United States, how many would you guess are Jewish? Would you say that one out of every hundred people is Jewish, 4 out of every hundred, 8, 25, 50, or how many, roughly?" Stember footnotes that the percentages were meant as an example, but were apparently understood as multiple choices. (Stember, p. 86)

[35] Stember, p. 76.

The flaws in this survey are readily acknowledged by Stember and he appears to follow his "conservative course." Yet, he then proceeds to make what can be construed as an overgeneralized statement. He claims the misconceptions regarding the number of Jews in some instances are "undoubtedly" caused by anti-Semitic anxieties. By extrapolation, he then asserts that individuals who are prone to significant overestimation are "presumably...more susceptible to anti-Semitic ideas than someone better informed." Although there may be some justification for his conclusions, the data provided does not substantiate these deductions.

Previously he stated that in certain areas there are higher populations of Jews than in others. It is natural, therefore, that these people would overestimate the national population because they are determining it from their own area. This factor, however, is not incorporated into his subsequent conclusions. A person may overestimate the number out of fear or anxiety, but they may also overestimate due to the reality of the situation. The overrepresentation of Jews in universities and professional schools was a concern of America's elite.[36] The high numbers of Jews led some admission officials to introduce quotas to limit the number of Jews entering their university.

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[36] By "overrepresentation," I mean the percentage of Jews in universities and professional schools exceeded the percentage of Jews in the population at large.

In a discussion regarding facts versus beliefs about the prevalence of anti-Semitism, the limitations of the polls as a gauge of anti-Semitism were revealed. It was presumed that the polls could distinguish a correlation between those who believed that anti-Semitism was rising and those who maintained a willingness to support anti-Semitic campaigns. No clear connection through cross tabulation, however, could be discerned. A correspondence between the pervasiveness of anti-Jewish talk and/or stereotyping and support of organized hate movements was also unsubstantiated.

Although it seemed logical that there would be a distinct correlation between an activist anti-Semitic mood and the prevalence of anti-Jewish talk, this was not the case. Stember concluded that these results revealed the illogical nature of anti-Semitism as a phenomenon and the need to investigate the potential force of bigoted movements separately. The results more importantly illuminated the persistent inconsistencies which occur when assumptions are not substantiated by the poll data.

Polls taken in 1938, 1942, 1946 and 1950 measured the beliefs about the reasons for anti-Semitism. The respondents blamed anti-Semitism primarily on inherent Jewish traits. These innate characteristics did maintain a direct correlation with popular images of Jews. The reasons cited such as greed, dishonesty, and excessive power coincided directly with Jewish stereotypes. Stember also notes that from 1942 to 1946, there was a steady decrease in the number of respondents who believed

that anti-Semitism was declining due to sympathy invoked by revelations of Nazi atrocities. A higher number of respondents believed the reduction to be due to a rising tolerance induced by the war, not just the disclosures themselves. Stember concludes that the wartime revelations concerning Nazi persecution of the Jews had no lasting effect on public attitudes toward Jews. He is unable to provide any substantial reasons as to the cause of this result, but maintains that it may be due to a link between "anti-democratic sentiments and general tensions and frustrations in society."

Few respondents named propaganda as a cause of either increased bigotry or declining hostility. Stember appears disturbed by this result. He claims that the low numbers do not indicate that anti-Semitic propaganda was ineffective, but that the persons most affected by it were unaware of its influence. Through further rationalization, Stember argues that many people do not associate propaganda with fact and "therefore, the general disinclination to name propaganda as a cause of anti-Semitism may mean that many respondents thought hostility to Jews had some rational base."[37]

Stember's discussion provides excuses for the polls rather than letting them speak for themselves. Rather than presenting an analysis, he rationalizes the responses which deviate from his expectations. His conclusions are based on pure conjecture derived from the discrepancy between the survey responses and his

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[37] Stember, p. 84.

expectations. This discussion is problematic in its manipulation of the polls which propagates distortion rather than clarification.

The last section probes beliefs about discrimination against Jews. A 1938 poll revealed that the prevalence of job discrimination was not particularly well-known by the respondents. College students surveyed in 1949 were more aware of job discrimination but still underestimated its extent. From these two surveys, Stember states, "Inconclusive as these data are, they strongly hint that as recently as the late 1930s and the 1940s discrimination against Jews was not seen in its true dimensions by the general public."[38]

There are two distinct flaws in this conclusion. Inconclusive data does not provide a "strong" indication of attitudes and the use of only two polls weakens the conclusion even further. More importantly, although Stember notes the public's ignorance, he fails to discuss the causes or the ramifications of this inaccuracy. He does note that the public's misconceptions may be due to "a certain naive, wishful optimism," but how does this relate to anti-Semitism? If the public believes Jews are not discriminated against, what does this imply? Is the public anti-Semitic in its ignorance? These are the questions that Stember fails to answer. In discussing these polls, he fails to explain how they relate to the measure of anti-Semitism. This deficiency warrants criticism.

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[38] Stember, p. 86.

Ambiguity regarding the relevance of survey questions persists in Stember's discussion of attitudes toward association with Jews. Polls in 1948, 1949, 1950 and 1952 attempted to determine the public's opinions regarding fair-employment legislation and policies. How these polls are to serve as a gauge of anti-Semitism is highly questionable. The legislation which was being introduced during these years was specifically directed at discrimination against Blacks rather than Jews. The fact that few people realized that Jewish discrimination existed (as stated above) further discredits the pertinence of this survey.

Surveys in 1940, 1942, 1945 and 1950 reveal more opposition to Jews as hypothetical employees than co-workers. In his discussion of Jews as employees and fellow workers, Stember notes a marked decline in opposition by 1950. The reasons for employer discrimination stem from stereotypes of Jews, depicting them as less than ideal employees. These characteristics, in contrast, would not concern a co-worker to the same extent. Stember plausibly distinguishes a correlation between the prevalence of stereotypes and discriminatory tendencies. As stereotypes declined so did the tendency toward discrimination.

Attitudes toward Jews as employees and co-workers is followed by an analysis of opinions toward Jews as neighbors. Stember found a difference between moving into a house with a Jewish neighbor and having a Jew move in next door. Respondents appeared to be less concerned with the former rather than the

latter. The postwar period indicated Jews as individuals and families moving into neighborhoods was less threatening than an influx of large numbers of Jews. The tables of the polls which Stember provides note that the polls from 1950 to 1962 (comprising 'the postwar period') surveyed "Christians only" and some "White Christians only." Yet, Stember fails to acknowledge the selectivity in his discussion. He ignores this limitation and does not incorporate it into his conclusions. The fact that the respondents were all Christians could have a serious effect on the results, but this factor is not recognized.

Stember does discuss the lack of upper class representation in these polls. The top bracket of society is "barely represented in population samples," making it difficult to determine their attitudes. In contrast to the middle and lower classes, the upper echelons of society tend to surround their neighborhoods with anti-Jewish barriers, according to Stember. The lack of upper class representation in surveys makes it difficult to determine the causes. Although the erection of barriers differentiates the upper class from the lower and middle classes, Stember fails to acknowledge this point. He states that "there are no indications that the reasons differ materially from those cited by the hostile minority among the population at large."

One could argue that there is a distinction between the discrimination of the upper and lower and middle classes. Their respective interactions with Jews is bound to be different.

These interactions along with their variegated backgrounds, subsequently foster divergent attitudes. Stember also describes the sample as "the population at large," implying the surveys were representative. In fact, they were comprised of Christians only and failed to represent the attitudes of the upper classes.

According to Stember opposition toward association with Jews has declined in the areas of work, residence and education. He does admit that systematically collected data covering the same situation over a period of years is not available; that which does exist is contradictory. Conclusions were drawn, therefore, in a skeptical context. The one area which experienced only a minor decline was intermarriage. A significant number of respondents were still opposed to marriage with a Jew in the early 1960s. Stember asserts that as prejudice declines, so will opposition to intermarriage.

Whether resistance to intermarriage is a plausible indication of anti-Semitism is questionable. Reluctance may not stem from prejudice but from a religious or moral restriction. Catholics cannot marry Jews according to the laws of the Catholic church. Does this make them prejudiced? If an atheist opposes marriage with a Jew because it challenges their moral integrity does that make the person a bigot? Opposition to intermarriage represents a controversial and dubious means of gauging anti-Semitism.

Stember devotes one chapter to a specific image of Jews--as radicals and spies. This caricature of Jews provides one of the most compelling and contradictory aspects of Jewish stereotypes. The conception of Jews as radicals has co-existed with the diametrically opposed image of Jews as ruthless capitalists. The simultaneous presence of these two contradictory images may seem to underline the complexity of the Jewish image in American society.[39]

The linkage of Judaism to political radicalism became a persistent element in anti-Semitic propaganda. "As early as July 1917, Elihu Root attributed the failure of his mission to Russia to Jews who had returned there from New York's Lower East Side and were now, he insisted, in charge of managing the revolution."[40] Between 1918 and 1920, the Jewish population of New York City stood at approximately twenty-percent.[41] Many of these Jews tended to live and congregate in the Lower East Side, often associating primarily with their own people. During the 1919-1920 Red Scare, these seemingly exclusive areas were naturally suspect. The "Judeobolshevism" rallying cry of anti-Semitic publicists only added to these suspicions.

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[39] Stember, p. 156.

[40] Henry Feingold, A Time for Searching: Entering the Mainstream 1920-1945 (Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, 1992), 6.

[41] Feingold, p. 37.

Despite many forms of discrimination, Jews were amazingly able to circumvent the obstacles in their path and rise to prominence. The interwar period witnessed the second-generation Jews' departure from the working class and rise to the middle class and above. The Jewish entrance into the economic mainstream of America challenged the image of Jews as Bolshevists. Their prominent economic success persuaded Americans to view Jews as capitalists rather than communists. "As the American anti-Semites discovered, American culture retained a deep respect for those who had 'made it', no matter who they were."[42]

In 1944 and 1945, survey questions concerning popular ideas of Jewish radicalism were asked to ascertain whether such notions were still contributing to anti-Semitism. It was determined that Jewish radicalism did not generally contribute to hatred of Jews. Even in the McCarthy era and the anti-Communist 1950s, the image of the Jewish communist did not spread. The majority of Americans refused to associate Jews as a group with communism. Although only a small proportion of American Jews were communists, this tiny portion was actually a disproportionately large part of the Communist party in the United States.

The chapter also illustrates the inherent limitations of polls regarding ambiguous question wording and lack of choices. Both contribute to skewed results. The use of the word "radical"

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[42] Ernest Volkman, A Legacy of Hate: Anti-Semitism in America (Franklin Watts, New York, 1982), 35.

invited discrepancies in the polls. The definition of radical has varied tremendously over the years, rendering the comparability of data useless. The connotations of the word evoke vastly different images in the minds of respondents. Along with this semantic problem, choosing between the alternatives of conservative and radical demands a value judgment which automatically biases the response. Supplying only the two choices of radical and conservative also restricts the result. "The false juxtaposition offered in the question thus left the best-informed respondents, those aware of the liberal inclination of Jews, without a meaningful answer."[43] This chapter is instructive in its illustration of the inherent problems in survey questions and as an example of the complexity of the Jewish image in American society.

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[43] Stember, p. 157.

Events and Their Impact on Perceptions

After delineating the images, attitudes and beliefs of Jews that the American public maintains, Stember embarks on a discussion of specific events and their impact on these perceptions. He first examines reactions to anti-Semitic appeals before and during the Second World War. Prior to America's entrance into World War II, the United States supported the Allied forces morally and materially. As tensions between Germany and the West were exacerbated by aggressive Nazi actions, American opinion was slowly consolidated on the side of the Allies.

There were various groups who attempted to impede this consolidation. Small bands of pro-Nazis and organized anti-Semites, German-Americans, and isolationists all opposed the pro-Allied consensus which was forming in America prior to December 1941. Regardless of the differences in their group ideologies, each organization consciously or unconsciously echoed Nazi propaganda to sustain American neutrality. This propaganda was at times blatantly anti-Semitic. Following Pearl Harbor and America's entrance into the war, these groups were aggressively suppressed by the government. Yet Stember argues that despite suppression, "anti-Semitism continued to lead a vigorous life in the unofficial minds of many Americans."[44]

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[44] Stember, p. 111.

Both before and during the war, public-opinion research focused on discerning the American public's knowledge of anti-Semitic spokesmen or organizations. The surveys also measured their response to openly anti-Jewish appeals as a means of gauging anti-Semitism. The accuracy of this measure is questionable. Polls from 1940 to 1942 assessed "awareness of anti-Semitic groups and individuals." Familiarity varied over the years with the German American Bund named as the best-known promoter of anti-Semitism. The group which received the highest awareness percentage often directly related to the publicity it received at a given time. It is difficult to comprehend how familiarity with anti-Jewish groups or figures represents a manifestation of anti-Semitism. The public's awareness is more likely to indicate how well informed the American society is rather than how anti-Semitic it is.

In an October 1941 poll the percentage familiar with the America First Committee and Charles Lindbergh rose from zero to twenty and thirty-two percent respectively.[45] The dramatic increase is easily explained. A celebrated popular figure and member of the America First Committee, Lindbergh delivered a controversial speech in September 1941 in Des Moines criticizing various groups for trying to entangle the U.S. in a European war. He named Jews specifically as one of these groups. It is only

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[45] The percentages for America First Committee and Charles Lindbergh were both zero for the August 1940 and February 1941 surveys. In October 1941, they registered twenty and thirty-two percent respectively and in February 1942, they received eight and seven percent respectively.

natural, therefore, that the public became aware of the America First Committee and Charles Lindbergh as anti-Jewish instigators with the publicity his speech received.

Stember specifically focuses on the public's familiarity with Father Coughlin. Father Coughlin was a Catholic, right-wing agitator who became openly anti-Semitic in the late 1930s and early 1940s. A 1940 survey asked: "In general, do you approve or disapprove of what he [Father Coughlin] says?" The majority of respondents either had no opinion (fifty-four percent) or disapproved (twenty-nine percent). Only a fraction of those who disapproved recognized Coughlin as an anti-Semite. Stember fails to note that the fifty-four percent that had no opinion probably had no knowledge of Coughlin.

Stember then moves on to discuss surveys which determine how many people listen to Coughlin's radio show and of those how many agree with his pronouncements. A very small proportion of the respondents listen to him regularly and a little over forty percent occasionally. He continues by stating that thirty-seven percent of the two surveys (1939 and 1940) generally approved of what Father Coughlin said. Stember fails to define whether this is thirty-seven percent of the respondents who listened to Coughlin's show or of the total sample. The lack of clarification exemplifies the ambiguity of his analysis.

The second set of figures also contradicts the first. Initially the figures indicate that the majority of the respondents either disapproved or had no opinion of Coughlin's

show. From the second set of figures he concludes that "substantial numbers" did not need to listen to Father Coughlin's show to agree with him. According to Stember, Coughlin "gave voice to the ideas and prejudices of large numbers outside his immediate following."[46] Although twenty-nine percent of respondents disapproved of Father Coughlin and fifty-four percent had no opinion (most likely due to lack of familiarity), Stember claims that Coughlin echoed the ideas and preconceptions of large numbers outside his immediate following. These two surveys appear contradictory and misleading.

The power of suggestion in public-opinion research is exemplified in Stember's discussion of beliefs about the power and influence of Jews. Surveys from 1938 to 1962 attempted to determine whether the public believed that Jews had too much power. One-third to one-half of the respondents replied in the affirmative from 1938 to 1946. There was a decline in 1938, then beginning in 1939, affirmative responses began to steadily increase reaching a peak in 1945 and then dropping off sharply by 1962.

A poll from 1943 to 1945 asked if "any racial or religious groups...have too much power in this country."[47] A consistent thirteen percent named Jews in response to this open query; Catholics were named approximately ten percent. In 1953, a similar survey revealed that only one percent of respondents

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[46] Stember, p. 113.

[47] Stember, p. 120.

mentioned Jews when asked whether "any one racial or religious group" maintained "too much power and influence."[48] Another 1945 open-end survey question queried: "Are there any groups of people or organizations that you think have more to say about running this country than they should have?" Only four percent of respondents named Jews spontaneously. This figure sharply contrasts with results in which Jews were explicitly mentioned.

Stember reconciles this discrepancy by asserting that the incongruity "illustrates the extent of latent or potential anti-Semitism."[49] He claims the lower figure indicates that Americans are not overly preoccupied with Jewish power and influence. The higher number, in contrast, represents the propensity of numerous people to readily accept the myth of the all-powerful Jew when offered. His conclusions are undeniably plausible, yet the significance of this discrepancy cannot be overlooked. Although the glaring inconsistency may illuminate the degree of latent anti-Semitism, it also represents the power of suggestion in public-opinion polling and the discordant effects it may generate.

In this section, the statistic most cited by other historians and authors of anti-Semitism is included. Ironically, Stember affords this statistic little discussion. Due to the incredulity it provokes, the figure is consistently cited. The

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[48] Blacks were named twice as often as Jews and Catholics were cited by eleven percent of respondents. Stember, p. 121.

[49] Stember, p. 122.

survey from which this statistic derives was designed to determine the idea of a Jewish menace to America. From 1940 to 1962, the poll asked: "In your opinion, what nationality, religious or racial groups in this country are a menace to America?" Beginning in June 1944 and continuing until February 1946, Jews were perceived as the greatest threat to America. 1944 was the year in which the Jewish menace reached a peak, surpassing that of the Germans and the Japanese with whom the United States was at war. The irrationality of these results provokes its consistent citation in books on American anti-Semitism.

Most people would expect a decline in anti-Semitism during World War II. The United States was fighting to eradicate the Nazis and their pernicious anti-Semitic propaganda. Stember claims the atmosphere in America became increasingly unfavorable to overt anti-Jewish agitation. Animosity towards Jews became irreconcilable with the growing national consensus which supported American involvement in the war. "In the end, the United States' entry into the war placed the nation squarely on the side of Hitler's victims and among the avowed opponents of anti-Semitism."[50] Stember then proceeds to state that anti-Semitism continued to lead a robust existence in the minds of many Americans, apparently ignoring his preceding incongruous declarations. First he claims that a national consensus of Americans were the avowed opponents of anti-Semitism, then he

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[50] Stember, p. 110-111.

states that they in turn were latently anti-Semitic. This discrepancy is indicative of the lack of consistency in Stember's conclusions.

It is assumed that humane people should naturally respond to the extermination of the Jews with sympathy, but this assumption fails to look at the reality of the situation. The war years were a highly charged and stressful time. Jews were readily available scapegoats on which people could vent their frustrations and anxieties. Stember attributes the rise in anti-Semitism to the "general fear, insecurity and economic frustration of wartime."[51] Anti-Jewish feelings were at their highest during the Allied invasion of Normandy according to Stember. He contends the invasion was perhaps the most precarious phase of the war. The irrationality of an anti-Semitic peak during the war can be ascribed to a wave of general intolerance induced by wartime frustrations and anxieties.

Although anti-Semitism reached a peak during the war years, many historians fail to note that there were actually very few outbreaks of anti-Jewish hostilities. Jews may have been perceived as the greatest menace, but none of them were placed in concentration camps in the United States or deported from the country. There is no extant correlation between high anti-Semitic feeling and actual manifestations of it. This reality is consistently ignored and fails to be discussed by Stember and other authors of anti-Semitism. Their persistent citation of the

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[51] Stember, p. 120.

statistic without qualification exemplifies the skepticism which should be maintained when reading accounts of anti-Semitism that cite Stember's work.

In Stember's analysis of the effect of the Holocaust on perceptions of Jews, he continues to make conclusions which fail to recognize the contextual environment. He appears surprised at the meager effect the Holocaust had on the American public as indicated by the polls. In January 1943, Stember claims it was a known fact that two million Jews had been killed or deported in Europe since the beginning of the war. Less than half of those surveyed believed this report and the rest thought it was a rumor or had no opinion.

By December 1944, three-fourths of respondents believed the extermination reports, but they grossly underestimated the number of Jews killed. Eighty-four percent believed the reports in a May 1945 survey, yet the estimated number dead continued to be depreciated to one million Jews. Stember admits that an inability to grasp the magnitude of the Nazi extermination program may partially account for the low numbers of recognition. Regardless, Stember contends that the substantial number of respondents who failed to grasp the full scope of the Holocaust or were unmoved by it is very disturbing.

Although the public's failure to "be moved" by the death of six million Jews is disturbing, why the public was not affected should be studied. Reports of the German annihilation program actually had been published in the Yiddish press and other Jewish

publications since 1941.[52] David Wyman argues that both the government and the press can be held accountable for the public's lack of response to news of Hitler's "final solution." After the reports of systematic Jewish extermination reached the American government in November 1942, FDR failed to take action for fourteen months until he could no longer remain inactive without reprobation. The media is also criticized for its notable dearth of coverage on the extermination of the Jews during the Second World War. The press was reluctant to bring attention to the destruction of Jewish lives.

Within this context, the public's failure to acknowledge reports of the Jewish extermination in Europe and their propensity toward underestimation is more comprehensible. The government's refusal to accept the reports as valid and their subsequent inaction after verification provides one influence. The considerable influence of the media must also be regarded. Not only did the media fail to publish reports of the extermination program, when it did, these stories were placed on inner pages with low-profile headlines. The legacy of the Yellow Press of World War One must also be considered. After the sensational reporting during the "Great War", people were reluctant to accept the media's publications as accurate reports.

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[52] David Wyman, The Abandonment of the Jews: America and the Holocaust 1941-1945 (Pantheon Books, New York, 1984).

Americans were also at war. They were primarily concerned with their loved ones who were fighting, those who had been lost, and surviving the war. When the war was over, people were more absorbed in their own problems, focusing on recovery. Fathoming the systematic slaughter of six million people is understandably difficult. The inability to acknowledge the actual number killed persists to this day. Stember finds the respondents failure to recognize the scope of the Nazi annihilation program disturbing. When the context from which these results were derived is elucidated, however, the public's response is not necessarily disturbing, but actually comprehensible. As the title of Deborah Lipstadt's book attests, the magnitude of the Holocaust to many people is "beyond belief."[53]

Stember's failure to consider the reality of the American environment persists in his discussion of Jewish refugees. Polls indicate undeniably that respondents supported restrictions. An overwhelming majority would not alter quotas to accept more refugees. A 1938 poll measured the public's opinions on admission of refugees. The majority of respondents were opposed to altering immigration quotas. A 1943 survey asked people whether they thought allowing more immigrants in after the war was a good or bad idea. Seventy-eight percent stated that they thought it was a bad idea.

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[53] Deborah Lipstadt, Beyond Belief (The Free Press, New York, 1986).

It should be noted that in both of these surveys, Jews were not specifically named. When Jews were mentioned by name, respondents were often more accepting in polls issued after the war. Stember attributes this empathy to sympathetic wording and parenthetical mention of Jews. A 1948 poll found that although a majority (fifty-three percent) were willing to admit refugees, they placed certain restrictions on those that should be admitted. The bulk of the respondents would accept "our share" of refugees, insisting that other countries do the same. Of those willing to admit some refugees, many advocated the limitation of Germans and Jews when these two groups were specifically mentioned.

As before, when the context in which these responses were made is considered, the results become conceivable. Following the large influx of immigrants over the turn of the century, the tradition of xenophobia became a well-entrenched characteristic of the American psyche. Fear of the 'immigrant invasion' provoked calls for 100% Americanism and spawned America First and Nativism movements. Immigration quotas were enacted and became increasingly restrictive in the first two decades of the twentieth century. During the prosperous twenties immigrant fears subsided. When the Depression plagued the country in the 1930s, however, xenophobia resurfaced and restrictionist sentiments pervasively emerged.

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During and after the war, polls indicate that respondents favored deflecting immigration to countries other than the United States. Although the U.S. did not suffer from fighting on its territory, Americans still felt burdened by wartime anxieties, frustrations and concerns. Many were unsure of the economic stability of the United States. This uncertainty derived from still tangible memories of the Depression and apprehension regarding the outcome of the war. In lieu of these concerns, respondents' reluctance to support the entrance of refugees is understandable. As the United States became more economically stable, surveys showed respondents more willing to accept refugees. Opposition that lingered consistently focused on immigrants as an economic threat.

One significantly problematic feature of Stember's analysis of opinions toward refugees entails his conclusion that xenophobia constitutes anti-Semitism. He persistently attributes opposition to the entrance of refugees and immigrants to anti-Semitism. This supposition is doubtful. A 1939 poll measured opinions on the admission of refugee children. The survey consisted of a split-ballot question which asked whether respondents favored the entrance of 10,000 refugee children from Germany into the United States. One question mentioned that most of these children were Jewish, the other did not. The majority

of responses favored restriction of their admission, with a higher percentage of negative responses from the question which did not specify "Jewish."[54]

The standard objection to immigrants as an economic threat was not applicable to this group of refugees. Children did not represent a threat to job competition or low living standards. At a loss to explain why children could be so unwelcome, Stember refused to accept that Jewish and non-Jewish children were unwanted in approximately the same degree. He instead deduced his own conclusions. "We believe, rather, that a majority of the respondents thought of the children as mostly Jewish whether so described or not, and rejected them for that reason--a reaction that is at least psychologically intelligible, if not thoroughly inhumane."[55] This conclusion is unwarranted. His inability to reconcile the irrationality of these results does not permit him to attribute the responses to anti-Semitism.

He also contends that refugees fleeing Communism were extended more sympathy than Jewish refugees. Once again, Stember fails to consider the underlying factors which may contribute to these results. The influx of refugees from Communist countries was sanctioned at a time when the United States was economically stable and prosperous. Jewish refugees were seeking asylum during and directly following the war. At this time, Americans

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[54] The percentages were sixty-six percent responding negatively when "Jewish" was not specified and sixty-one percent when "Jewish" was specified.

[55] Stember, p. 149.

were concerned with the economic future of their country and were not disposed to accepting added burdens. Refugees fleeing Communism desired admission at a time when America had established itself as one of the geopolitical superpowers and the dominant economic force in the world.

The greater public sympathy for refugees from behind the 'iron curtain' also stems from propaganda issued by the government and the media. The specter of Communism pervaded the press as conflict between the Soviet Union and the Allies persisted following the war. The blatantly anti-Communist stance of the American government established a sentiment to which the public adhered. At its inception, the Cold War faced far less organized opposition than that of the Second World War. Refugees seeking asylum in the U.S. from their Communist homelands were evidence of America's ideological superiority in the postwar bi-polar world. They were often welcomed as symbols of victory.

The circumstances were drastically different for Jewish refugees. Undeniably, some opposition to the admission of Jewish refugees stemmed from anti-Semitism, but to say that this was the primary cause of restriction is an exaggeration. There were real factors which contributed to the advocacy of limitations. Stember concludes, "In refusing to assume responsibility for the masses uprooted by Hitler, many seem to have been influenced in some degree by the realization that these masses were largely

Jewish."[86] This statement is indicative of Stember's tendency to rationalize the results and make conclusions without corroborating documentation.

According to the polls, anti-Semitism declined considerably in the postwar years. Many Jewish observers expected certain events to provoke a resurgence of Jew-hatred in the years after the late 1940s. Yet, their fears did not materialize. The impact of Israel and the "Desegregation Crisis" on American attitudes toward Jews is negligible. Some Jews initially feared that Israeli aggression would cause an anti-Semitic backlash in America. This did not happen. According to surveys directly following the war, the American public was supportive of the formation of Israel as an independent state. The establishment of Israel was perceived in part as a solution to the refugee problem. Although the U.S. was supportive of Israeli independence, they would not accept responsibility for its defense against Arab opposition. The public attributed this responsibility to Britain and was not willing to involve U.S. military troops.

The polls show that American opinion tended to follow the government's foreign policy and that they sympathized with Jews over Arabs. Many Americans felt Jews were entitled to the creation of a homeland. "In the aggregate, the data we have reviewed reveal little evidence that the establishment of Israel

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[86] Stember, p. 154.

worsened the public's attitude toward American Jewry."[57] Polls also revealed that Israel's invasion of the Sinai peninsula in 1956 did not provoke a reaction against American Jews. Unfavorable responses to Israeli policy did not exert an impact on U.S. public opinion toward Jews.

During the 1950s, public-opinion researchers became concerned that the domestic struggle over desegregation would heighten social tension. They feared that this tension would in turn manifest itself in anti-Semitism. These fears were found to be unnecessary. There were some indications of the contrary, however. Racial hate literature in the South increased in conjunction with the rise of anti-Black and anti-Semitic figures such as Asa Carter and John Kasper. There were also bombings of synagogues and Jewish centers in Southern cities during the spring of 1958.[58]

Surveyors subsequently attempted to discern what role was being attributed to Jews in the Civil Rights struggle. The data Stember utilizes for his analysis is limited, deriving from a single survey conducted in 1959 which focused on school desegregation. Very few respondents viewed religious groups as avid promoters of desegregation. Catholics were mentioned more often than Jews. Although Jews were ardent participants and advocates of the Civil Rights Movement, few respondents at the time perceived them as such. Few non-Jews knew the stance of

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[57] Stember, p. 182.

[58] Stember, p. 198.

Jews on desegregation and only Black leaders recognized Jews as promoters of civil rights. Cognizant of the data limitations, Stember concluded that desegregation did not appear likely to increase anti-Semitism.

Stember's Summary and Conclusions

According to Stember the compilation of polls constitutes a "reasonably comprehensive representation" of the American public's feelings toward Jews from the late 1930s to the early 1960s. "We are therefore in a position to assess the trends of attitudes during the last quarter century with some degree of assurance."[59] His qualifier of "some degree" is appropriately included. It indicates adherence to his self-appointed conservative course which he apparently ignored throughout much of his study. Anti-Semitism in all its forms declined from 1938 to 1962, according to Stember. Stereotypes ceased to function as significant focuses of anti-Jewish sentiment. The decline was by no means consistent. Hostility toward Jews began to escalate in the late 1930s, reaching a peak in 1944 and turning sharply downward in the late 1940s.

When the postwar tensions were considered, Stember was surprised with the decline in anti-Semitism. He would have expected the commencement of the Cold War, the birth of Israel,

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[59] Stember, p. 208.

the Civil Rights Movement and a rising preoccupation with communist espionage and subversion to exacerbate anti-Semitic tendencies; but this did not happen. Although the events may have heightened social tensions, increased pressure did not manifest itself in a surge of anti-Semitic disturbances. "In sum, whatever forces caused anti-Semitism to wane during the postwar years remained virtually unaffected by this as other seemingly ominous developments."[60]

Traditional images of Jews declined and some nearly disappeared from the late 1930s to the early 1960s. Fewer people thought of Jews as having distinct characteristics whether good or bad. Jews were increasingly viewed as individuals rather than members of a particular group. The prejudice that did persist was derived from traditional stereotypes and images of Jews. Stember contends that new ideas about groups only survive if they are consistent with former stereotypes. His hypothesis was confirmed by the reluctance to categorize Jews as radicals or communists which challenged their former stereotypes as capitalists and wealthy financiers. These contradictory images negated one another, eliciting the demise of the new stereotype.

Stember presents a conclusion in his last chapter that he had not formerly voiced. He claims that hostility toward Jews increased in conjunction with animosity toward other minorities. Throughout his whole study, Stember does not mention universal racial antagonism; he focuses on anti-Semitism and occasionally

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[60] Stember, p. 210.

mentions anti-Black sentiment. In his concluding chapter he discusses the possible existence of racism that was directed not only at Jews, but at other minorities. "Our evidence suggests that hostile attitudes arising out of general social tensions like those of war are likely to encompass a variety of target groups rather than to focus on one."[61] Although Stember alludes to the existence of racism directed at other minorities besides Jews, he does not examine this possibility or its potential effects on his study.

He does acknowledge that other groups were targets along with Jews. Such groups as big business, labor unions and racial minorities served as scapegoats on which the public could vent their mounting aggressive feelings fostered by wartime tensions and deprivations. The lack of anti-Semitic manifestations is also recognized by Stember. He rationalizes this by claiming anti-Semitism was latent rather than overt. "Wartime antagonism against Jews, it must be noted, did not as a rule express itself in openly aggressive attitudes. Though widespread, it appears to have had little salience remaining latent rather than becoming active."[62]

The existence of even latent hostility was paradoxical to Stember considering America's fight against Hitler, the Jew's "archenemy." This conclusion, however, fails to consider the "tensions" which he formerly attributed to anti-Semitism and

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[61] Stember, p. 215.

[62] Stember, p. 215.

hostilities directed at other racial minorities and groups. Stember maintains the misconception that a primary cause of the United States' entrance into the war symbolized its ardent opposition to anti-Semitism. Although the U.S. may have opposed the Nazis' anti-Jewish agitation, this was not a primary determinant of America's entrance into World War Two. Stember at one point notes the formidable anti-Semitic opposition which existed prior to American involvement and then asks why anti-Semitism was extant during the war. He appears to answer his own question but ignores the solution.

According to Stember, wartime prejudices against Jews disappeared quickly along with support for anti-Semitic movements when combat ceased. He also controversially concludes that the Holocaust exerted little effect on American attitudes toward Jews. The public's lack of sympathy rendered it insensitive to Jewish refugee and immigrant needs. In his concluding remarks he continues to make exaggerations. While discussing future relations between Jews and Gentiles, he claims that in the 1940s "it seemed conceivable that anti-Semitism might engulf a majority of the American public."[63] As a concluding remark, this declaration is grossly overstated.

The inherent discrepancies in the polls and their fluctuating results do not permit such a distortion of the actual environment in America at the time. Anti-Semitism was undoubtedly evident, but not to the degree that it could have

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[63] Stember, p. 217.

"engulfed" a majority of the populace. Stember concludes his study by plausibly arguing that acceptance of Jews will continue to increase unless it is reversed by "anything short of a catastrophic crisis in American society."[64] This disaster has yet to emerge.

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[64] Stember, p. 217.

ANALYSIS OF STEMBER'S STUDY AND CONCLUSIONS

Inherent discrepancies in the polls themselves hinder the validity of Stember's study as a gauge of anti-Semitism in America. It is debatable whether the survey questions can be construed as measures of anti-Jewish sentiment. One question which surveyed the potential support for non-discriminatory employment legislation may have represented a feasible gauge of anti-Semitism. Yet, if Jews are not perceived as a discriminated minority, how can attitudes toward Jews be measured through this line of inquiry? The irrelevance of the question as an assessment of anti-Semitism is indicative of many other questions included in Stember's compilation of surveys. The wide variety of questions incorporated in the survey promotes diversity, but also limits consistency. The quantitative and comparative data repetitive questions generate could arguably have provided a more expedient measure of anti-Semitism.

Comparability over time poses the greatest challenge to the validity of the polls and Stember's study. The modifications in polling methods in 1948 and 1950 altered the survey sample considerably. Polls prior to 1950 were not representative of the population. Stember fails to acknowledge this prominent discrepancy as do other scholars who cite these polls in their works. This one flaw provides the most arresting challenge to the accuracy of the polls as a measure of anti-Jewish sentiment in America.

As an adherent to Cantril's polling guidelines and his own self-appointed stipulations, Stember simultaneously succeeds and fails. His performance directly affects the accuracy of the polls. The limitations of public-opinion research are readily acknowledged by Stember. Aware of these constraints, he vows to qualify his conclusions when the data may be inconsistent, problematic or vague. The meaning of questions comprises one of many challenges to the validity of Stember's analysis. The meaning of words in questions as well as the questions themselves can vary considerably over time skewing the comparability of data. The variation of word or question connotations among various groups in society can also hinder the accuracy of results. The use of the word "radical" in the surveys exemplifies this challenge. "Radical" not only maintained variegated definitions among contemporaneous respondents, but also among respondents throughout the period under study.

How a lack of choices or alternatives can influence or force a response can also be witnessed in the surveys. The difference in results between open-end and multiple choice questions provides a striking illustration of the power of suggestion. When comparing questions which supply "Jews" as one of the choices and open-end questions, the contrast in results is stark. A considerably smaller number of people will write in "Jews" as an answer in comparison to the number that selects the choice "Jews" in multiple choice questions. The split-ballot survey

also created discrepancies. When the order of the choices in questions were altered, the difference in results was significant.

Although incongruities are apparent in the survey results, Stember constantly ignores these shortcomings. He claims he will qualify interpretations where data is variable or ambiguous, but he consistently fails to adhere to this stipulation. He makes conclusions without corroborating evidence and essentially fails to follow his "conservative course." As an advocate of recognizing the historical context in which the polls were taken, Stember fails to heed his own advice. Although the survey questions themselves reflected current events, Stember's analysis of the polls refused to consider the historical context. The polls must be viewed in the reality of Jewish existence in America to discern whether there was any logical basis for the responses as indications of public opinion.

The limited scope of the study also warrants criticism. Stember's analysis constitutes a comprehensive study of American anti-Semitism from the late 1930s to the early 1960s. He looks at anti-Semitism, however, from a very isolated perspective. A comparison of anti-Semitism with hostilities toward other American minorities could be exceedingly instructive. In his review of Jews in the Mind of America, Bertram Korn agrees with this criticism. "It is yet to be demonstrated how widespread or serious anti-Semitism ever has been in American life in contrast

to the violent hatred of Catholics, Mormons, and Negroes, and in relation to the almost inevitable American hostility to immigrant aliens."[65]

Abraham Duker in his review of Stember's analysis similarly complained of the "isolationism" in the volume and its emphasis on "Only in America." He suggests a comparison between the situation of the Jews in times and areas of crisis and that of other minorities such as the Copts in Egypt, the Chinese in the Far East, the Hindus in Africa and the Arabs in Zanzibar."[66] The lack of comparison to other minority experiences in America and other countries in the world limits the magnitude of the study as well as its implications.

Stember's compilation and analysis of polls from 1938 to 1962 constitutes a noteworthy contribution to the study of American anti-Semitism. The significance of his study is exemplified by the consistent citations it receives from other scholars of anti-Semitism. His analysis must be recognized as a subjective work, however. Contrasting with the manner in which many authors appear to refer to it, his study does not represent an objective compilation of polls. Public-opinion research has been consistently criticized for its questionable accuracy. Yet, it still remains one of the only means of gauging public

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[65] Bertram W. Korn, The Journal of American History, June 1967, vol. 54, p. 164.

[66] Abraham Duker, American Sociological Review, October 1967, vol. 32, p. 847.

sentiment. The dubious nature of polls necessitates that they be regarded with a degree of skepticism. It is far too easy to accept opinion surveys as representative and accurate measures of public sentiment when in actuality they may be far from these characteristics.

Stember readily acknowledges the limitations inherent in public-opinion research itself as well as his own compilation. Although he pledges to temper his conclusions when the data is problematic, Stember fails to honor his self-ascribed stipulation. This shortcoming diminishes the credibility of his analysis and the study itself.

CONCLUSION

Scholars who have cited Stember's study without qualifications have presented an inaccurate portrayal of anti-semitism in the United States. Accepting conclusions without investigation has perpetuated skewed interpretations of public opinion surveys measuring hatred of Jews. Poor analysis has long contributed to a failure to interpret polls in a manner useful to the Jewish-American community. Surveyors tend to focus primarily on the negative results rather than the positive. They emphasize the continued existence of negative images of Jews rather than encouraging the propagation of positive attitudes. As a result, the tactics devised to combat anti-Jewish sentiment are ineffective, probably even counterproductive. "This method results in an overestimation of the coherence of anti-Semitism, an underestimation of its breadth and ineffective efforts to defend Jewish interests."[67]

According to recent polls, anti-Semitism has steadily declined in America since the early 1950s. Although this decline might logically elicit relief, many perceive a new threat to Jewish-Americans. A fear pervasive in the Jewish community today is that "Jewishness" is declining at an alarming rate. Through

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[67] Gary Rubin, "A No-Nonsense Look at Anti-Semitism," Tikkun, May/June 1993, vol. 8, no. 3, p. 46.

their assimilation to the American way of life, Jews achieved a remarkable degree of success in the United States. Many Jewish observers say that Jewish-Americans have acculturated too well.

Although Jewish achievements are gratifying, they argue that these accomplishments have fostered the gradual decline of Judaism and Jewish identity in America. Jews have become predominantly secular and often lack even a superficial knowledge of their religion, history, and ethnic identity. Obtaining a deeper understanding of their culture requires years of studying Jewish texts and observances. Many Jews are not willing to devote this time to acquiring a sense of their Jewishness. Yet, they are also not willing to lose their Jewish identity.

How are the two reconciled? "The one thing Jews believe they can understand on a deep level even in the absence of Jewish skills is anti-Semitism. Hatred is an emotion known to all."[68] Hostility and discrimination hold many minority groups together, including Jews. By focusing on the suffering Jews have experienced, the history of anti-Semitism is a force which can bring Jews together. The Holocaust represents one such cohesive element. Over the past decades, the number of Holocaust memorials, books, and courses taught on university campuses has increased tremendously. This proliferation is undoubtedly aimed at encouraging education of anti-Semitism, and not allowing the Holocaust to fade into the annals of history.

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[68] Rubin, p. 80.

It also reflects an issue around which Jews can unite despite their variegated beliefs. Although anti-Semitism may unite Jews, the benefit of focusing on persecution--and exaggerating hatred--is questionable. It is not likely that focusing on hatred will engender the demise of Jewish suffering. Gary Rubin of the American Jewish Committee advocates focusing on positive attitudes of Jews more than negative. Placing more emphasis on communication between groups can also be helpful. Learning how to work together rather than target and blame one another will produce mutually beneficial interaction.

Pressure from the Jewish community is an important factor influencing the interpretation of polls measuring anti-Semitism. "There exists an unspoken, but nonetheless real, expectation that any study of attitudes toward Jews will produce evidence of hostility."[69] This expectation is evident in Stember's analysis. His conclusions were consistently negative in nature, attributing survey results to anti-Semitism rather than other feasible factors. A 1939 survey indicated that Americans did not favor the entrance of 10,000 refugee children whether Jewish or not. Unable to rationalize this "inhumanity," Stember concluded that the survey results were due to anti-Semitism.

Recent polls display the same tendency to focus on negative results in public opinion polls. The Roper Organization surveyed the American populace to determine the extent of knowledge about the Holocaust. The survey results indicated that, "Depressingly,

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[69] Rubin, p. 80.

it turns out that people know very little. Even for the most basic information, there is a serious knowledge gap."[70] Only aspects of the poll indicating American's ignorance of the Holocaust are discussed. There is no discussion of the small sampling (992 adults, 506 high school students) and its possible lack of representation of the American populace.

What is the purpose of publishing these and other statistics? The Jewish community hopes to increase awareness and education through the publication of these results. Yet by stressing the most alarming or disturbing of responses, survey analysts present a simplified and inaccurate portrait of the polling results.[71] Focusing on the negative tends to perpetuate this unfavorable attitude rather than restrain it. By formulating more effective means of responding to negative and positive survey results, the Jewish community can efficiently combat the continued existence of anti-Semitism.

The fundamental problem which Jews face is a concern for all minorities in America. Can peaceful racial co-existence occur without losing ethnic identity? One historian contends, "Though America's pluralism promised space for ethnic cultures to develop, its seductive solvent ultimately threatened to melt down

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[70] Dr. David Singer as quoted in "Poll Finds 1 Out of 3 Americans Open to Doubt There Was a Holocaust," Los Angeles Times, April 20, 1993, p. A17.

[71] Rubin, p. 80.

all ethnic cultures."[72] Others argue that pluralism in the United States has evolved from a melting pot to a mixed salad. The diversity of America's ethnic background is acknowledged by most people in the United States. Yet, very few people can formulate a plan to achieve racial harmony in this nation of many faces. American minorities face the dilemma of relinquishing their ethnic identity for an American identity. By sacrificing their ethnicity, they hope to blend in and contribute to a racial harmony rather than an ethnic dissonance.

Through assimilation to the American culture, Jews become less conspicuous to non-Jews. The decline in visibility removes Jews as distinguishable targets of anti-Semitic attacks. Yet acculturation often entails losing their sense of Jewishness. Determining which loss proves more advantageous is difficult. It seems unfair that Jews must choose between losing their identity or suffering from anti-Jewish hostility. Inevitably, this argument returns to the fundamental question today: Can multi-ethnic nations achieve racial harmony or at least ethnic tolerance?

Although many would disagree, it is arguable that an unparalleled tolerance has been achieved in America. In comparison to the ethnic wars raging in the former Yugoslavia and Soviet Union, and the immigrant problems plaguing Germany and France, racial strife in America obviously appears less volatile.

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[72] Henry Feingold, A Time for Searching: Entering the Mainstream 1920-1945 (Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, 1992), 75.

ethnic conflict is indisputably widespread in the United States. Yet how effective is focusing on this strife? It is necessary to devise strategies to combat hostility rather than dwell on its divisive effects. By emphasizing the suffering of Jews, their notable success is easily overlooked. Interpretations of public opinion polls measuring anti-Semitism provide one example of this preoccupation. With most concern focused on negative attitudes in polls, the positive images are subsequently ignored. It is these constructive conceptions which should be highlighted. Targeting groups which maintain negative perceptions of Jews is also counterproductive. Accusations rarely resolve animosity between groups.

Through productive discussion, interaction and education, a more cohesive community can evolve. Conflict is an inherent aspect of the human condition. Implementing positive responses to dissipate hostility will ultimately provide the best results for all involved. "Societal racial and ethnic attitudes are never abandoned completely, hard as we may try. They remain with us for as long as we live; we need to struggle with them constantly. This truth about our prejudices applies as much to Jews as it does to others."[73]

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[73] Rubin, p. 79.

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