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# Jewish Responses to anti-Semitism in Canada: Lessons for anti-Muslim Hatred

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### **About the Author**

Nakita Valerio is an award-winning writer, academic and advocate. She recently finished Islamic-Jewish graduate studies in History at the University of Alberta. As the VP External Affairs with Alberta Muslim Public Affairs Council, Nakita is an intercultural community bridge-builder and public speaker on racism and violence de-escalation. Nakita also serves her community through the Chester Ronning Center for the Study of Religion & Public Life and the Young Indigenous Women's Circle of Leadership Executive Board.

**ABSTRACT**

In this paper, I argue that Canadian Muslim community members and organizations stand to learn valuable lessons by examining contemporary Jewish responses to anti-Semitism across Canada for the purposes of developing better strategies for countering anti-Muslim hatred. I further argue that the strategies derived from these lessons cross a wide spectrum of methodologies and initiatives, from the individual, to grassroots, to institutional work. The implementation of these strategies must be multi-faceted, shared, and both internally and outwardly focused.

## Introduction and Background

The presence of Jewish people and communities in Canada dates back to the 18<sup>th</sup> century and has consistently remained at approximately 1% of the Canadian population, proportionate with the growth of the rest of the country.<sup>1</sup> Throughout the duration of their presence in Canada, Jewish communities and individuals have experienced acts of hatred, violence and systemic oppression that can be classified as anti-Semitism.<sup>2</sup> These incidents continue in varying capacities to the present day,<sup>3</sup> and thus remain an on-going (and increasing) concern which requires vigilance and attention.<sup>4</sup> This study does not proceed from the assumption that Canadian Jews have succeeded in the struggle against anti-Semitism;<sup>5</sup> furthermore, it should also be noted that the parameters of this study do not permit a historical analysis of the forms and expressions of anti-Semitism, nor responses to them. The study will primarily focus on the present moment, including the last ten years.

With it being understood that Jewish responses to anti-Semitism cannot be deemed entirely successful, the study of these responses is, nevertheless, a worthwhile venture for Muslim advocacy groups seeking to derive lessons applicable to countering anti-Muslim hatred,<sup>6</sup> especially considering the commonalities of experiences, the Jewish communities' long history in Canada, and their well-established community organizations.

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<sup>1</sup> Manuel Prutschi, "Anti-Semitism in Canada," in *Jewish Political Studies Review*. Vol 16: 3-4. Fall 2004: pp. 105-117.

<sup>2</sup> My definition of anti-Semitic incidents or beliefs and behaviours will be elaborated in the next section.

<sup>3</sup> According to the 2016 Audit of Anti-Semitic Incidents published by B'nai Brith Canada, 2016 was a record-breaking year for anti-Semitism in Canada, with an increase of over 26% in incidents from 2015.

<sup>4</sup> This perspective is based on statistical evidence from Stats Canada and B'nai Brith Canada regarding the ever-increasing number of anti-Semitic hate crimes and incidents since at least 1982, as well as anecdotal evidence from interviewees working in the realm of countering anti-Semitism. It is noted, however, that there is much further to go by way of accounting for statistical and anecdotal increases by cross-examining whether or not these are due to an increase in reporting or online awareness, or an increase in actual crimes/incidents themselves. While this cross-examination is beyond the scope of this study, I recognize that there is a strong psychological impact of rising numbers and awareness in affected communities regardless of whether or not those increases are due to more thorough reporting/awareness or actual incidents.

<sup>5</sup> An example of an author who argues this is Randal. F Schnoor, "The Contours of Canadian Jewish Life" in *Cont Jewry*. Vol 31. 2011: pp 179-197.

<sup>6</sup> Further justification for this comparison will be provided in the next section.

This study begins by offering a literature review, which provides background on the issue of anti-Semitism in Canadian communities and explores the spectrum of what constitutes (and does not constitute) anti-Semitism and its various manifestations.

The second section offers examples of Jewish individual and community responses to anti-Semitism across Canada. These responses are derived from newspaper and police reports, meta-studies by academics, and statistical reports, as well as organic interviews conducted specifically for this study among Jewish advocates across the country. The data also highlights several case studies which illuminate typical contemporary responses to particular incidents, examining how they are similar or different from one another and how the Canadian approaches compare to other global responses to anti-Semitism.

Lastly, the final analysis section of this study offers key lessons derived from the available curated data. It is my hope that these lessons will offer inspiration for Muslim advocacy groups either to continue or begin to implement certain strategies when countering anti-Muslim hatred. It is a secondary hope that this study itself will serve as an example of interfaith solidarity and knowledge-sharing that will foster similar undertakings in the future.

## Methodology

The data acquired for analysis in this study comes from a diverse pool of sources, including meta-studies by academics in both English and French, newspaper and public police reports, statistical reports, and organic interviews conducted specifically for this study. Analyses of the textual sources are presented in the subsections exploring Jewish Community and Organizational Responses to Anti-Semitism. While an ethnography of Jewish responses to anti-Semitism is not the purpose of this study, personal interviews can illuminate trends identified in the textual sources. Therefore, in order to get a sense of how Jewish individuals might feel about (and respond to) anti-Semitism, I conducted 15 interviews. Interviewees were selected through existing warm-community connections as well as through cold-

calling Jewish organizations and religious facilities across the country. Individuals were contacted in the ten Canadian municipalities with the largest Jewish populations; ultimately, those interviewed were located in Vancouver, Edmonton, Calgary, Saskatoon, Winnipeg, Hamilton, Ottawa, and Toronto. All interviews were conducted in the English language and included a demographic survey as well as a 25-75 minute conversation revolving around 10 demographic questions and 20 open-ended questions.<sup>7</sup> In some cases, questions of clarification were also asked. The demographic breakdown for those interviewed is as follows:

- 8 women and 7 men;
- the earliest year of birth was 1947 and the latest was 1992;
- all interviewees except one identified their ethnic origins as some variety of Jewish with 8 specifying Ashkenazim;<sup>8</sup>
- 9 interviewees were born in Canada, 2 were born in the United States, 1 was born in Israel and 2 were unspecified;
- all respondents except for one had lived in multiple places throughout their lives, either within Canada or abroad;
- over half of the respondents had obtained a Master's degree, others had some college or university, a Bachelor's degree, a Bachelor's of law or Rabbinic ordination;
- 4 respondents did not have a denominational affiliation, 4 respondents identified as Reform, 1 respondent was Hassidic, 1 respondent was Conservative, 1 respondent was an atheist and the rest were unspecified;
- most of the respondents work in education or law, work or volunteer for Jewish organizations or religious institutions, or support in some way the various organizations working to counter anti-Semitism and other forms of discrimination.

It should be noted that the seeming lack of dissenting viewpoints among Jews interviewed for this article may be due to the nature of the subject matter eliciting

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<sup>7</sup> See Appendix for interview questions. All interviews were conducted through an online survey and over the phone.

<sup>8</sup> The one non-ethnic Jew is a convert to Judaism who identifies as a "White Canadian."

an existing self-selecting sample bias. Individuals who hold narrative preferences around cooperation, coexistence, and even historical “*convivencia*” (an imagined idyllic Muslim-Jewish belle epoch in al-Andalus<sup>9</sup>) are predisposed to want to answer questions about Jewish responses to anti-Semitism in order to assist Muslims with lessons in facing anti-Muslim hatred. On the other hand, Jews who find the comparison between anti-Semitism and anti-Muslim hatred unsubstantiated would decline participation in these interviews. It should be noted that some of the textual sources used in this article exhibit Jewish responses to anti-Semitism that are beneficial for instructing Muslims countering anti-Muslim hatred in spite of those sources coming from individuals or organizations who do not view these two forms of discrimination as comparable.

## Anti-Semitism in Canada: Definitions

### *Terms*

In order to ascertain what Jewish responses to anti-Semitism exist, we must first understand what Jews and Jewish organizations mean by anti-Semitism, whether or not we find that definition personally satisfying. For the purposes of this study, the working definition of anti-Semitism I will use is adapted from the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA), based on the most recent definition adopted at their plenary meeting in Bucharest, Romania on May 26, 2016. It should be noted that multiple definitions of anti-Semitism exist, many of which are variations of the one cited below. I employ this definition primarily because, consciously or unconsciously, this is the definition employed by my respondents and reflected in the source materials exhibiting Jewish responses.

The IHRA defines anti-Semitism as “a certain perception of Jews, which may be expressed as anything [from mere irritation to raging] hatred toward Jews. Rhetorical and physical manifestations of anti-Semitism are directed toward Jewish or non-

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<sup>9</sup> For a full exploration of the myth of interfaith coexistence and its pervasiveness in medieval and contemporary discourse, see: Mark Cohen, *Under Crescent and Cross: The Jews in the Middle Ages*. Princeton University Press: Princeton & Oxford, 1994. While it was better comparatively (especially to circumstances under Christian polities), the historical tallying game of comparison is never really fruitful for writing nuanced histories and is usually grounded in the politics of the present.

Jewish individuals and/or their property, toward Jewish community institutions and religious facilities.”<sup>10</sup> The manifestations of anti-Semitism that are covered by this definition include: calling for, or justifying, the killing or harming of Jews; making stereotypical or demonizing allegations about Jews as a collective; accusing Jews of wrongdoing that was committed by a single Jewish person or non-Jews; denying or distorting the Holocaust; accusing Jews of having loyalty only to Israel; denying Jewish people the right to self-determination; using symbols and images associated with anti-Semitism to characterize Israel; comparing Israeli policy to that of Nazis; and holding Jews collectively responsible for the actions of the state of Israel.<sup>11</sup>

It should be noted that this definition is careful to distinguish that criticism of Israel “similar to that leveled against any other country cannot be regarded as anti-Semitic.” Rather, it is when anti-Zionism takes on the nature of conceiving of Israel as a homogenously-representative Jewish collectivity that it becomes anti-Semitic in nature. This definition, along with the majority of this study’s interviewees, does not reflect the assertions of many authors that all criticism of Israeli policy or state governance are anti-Semitic.<sup>12</sup> While it should be recognized that this fine line is very

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<sup>10</sup> The terms in square brackets have been added to help demonstrate the spectrum of anti-Semitic acts and sentiments. The added terms were taken from Luca and Cosma Orsi Fiorito, “Anti-Semitism and Progressive Era Social Science: The Case of John R. Commons” in *Journal of History of Economic Thought*. Vol. 38:1, March 2016: pp. 55 - 81 (p 57). The rest of the definition appears, as is, from “Romanian Chairmanship” plenary notes, *International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance*. May 26, 2016. Accessed December 8 2017  
[https://www.holocaustremembrance.com/sites/default/files/press\\_release\\_document\\_antisemitism.pdf](https://www.holocaustremembrance.com/sites/default/files/press_release_document_antisemitism.pdf);

<sup>11</sup> One might ask why I used this particular definition rather than the one provided by B’nai Brith Canada in their annual audits of anti-Semitic Incidents. The reason for this is that B’nai Brith tends to be a polarizing organization among Canadian Jews. Interviewees reported being uncomfortable with every incident the organization reports being classified as anti-Semitic, particularly those in the grey area of the critique of Israeli policies or concerns about human rights violations in Israel. More than one respondent also felt that B’nai Brith Canada makes a bigger deal than is warranted about anti-Semitic incidents in Canada - generating more fear and creating a climate that does not reflect reality for them. In neglecting to use the B’nai Brith definition, I do not intend to agree or disagree with these assessments of B’nai Brith; rather, since the organization uses the European Monitoring Center on Racism and Xenophobia (EUMC) definition and that the definition is nearly identical to that of the IHRA (being infinitely less controversial as a body), it makes sense to offer the one which resonates more readily with the lived experiences of Canadian Jews and how they define anti-Semitism in order to respond to it.

<sup>12</sup> A selection of articles where such erroneous claims (and the occlusion of Palestinian suffering) have been made include: Prutschi, pp. 105-117; Robert Wistrich, “Anti-Zionism and Anti-Semitism” in *Jewish Political Studies Review*. Vol 16: 3-4. Fall 2004: pp. 27 - 34; Michael Whine, “International

easily transgressed by groups who are critical of Israel as a state or political Zionism as a project, the opposite should be acknowledged as equally possible: that classifying all critique of Israel as anti-Semitic can be, in itself, a conflation of Israel with all Jews.<sup>13</sup> Finally, it goes without saying that I do not accept definitions of anti-Semitism which are thinly-veiled or explicitly anti-Muslim or anti-Arab, as such definitions are not only contentious but counterproductive to the end goal of determining beneficial lessons for Muslims.<sup>14</sup>

## Manifestations

Typical manifestations of anti-Semitism follow consistent patterns and tropes. These manifestations result in a variety of anti-Semitic actions and attitudes that are also consistently reported across Canada.<sup>15</sup>

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Organizations: Combating Anti-Semitism in Europe,” in *Jewish Political Studies Review*. Vol 16: 3-4. Fall 2004: pp. 73 - 88;

<sup>13</sup> See: Larry Haiven, “Anti-Semitism in Context: Its Use and Abuse. An IJV Report.” *Independent Jewish Voices Canada*. December 1, 2016. Accessed November 1, 2017. <http://ijvcanada.org/defend-free-speech/antisemitism-its-use-and-abuse/> For the most nuanced discussion of when and how these transgressions into anti-Semitism occur, see: Pnina Werbner, “Folk Devils and Racist Imaginaries in a Global Prism: Islamophobia and Anti-Semitism in the Twenty-first Century” in *Ethnic and Racial Studies*. Vol 36:3, 2013: pp 450 - 467. It should also be noted that this study exclusively uses the term anti-Semitism, rather than other terms such as Judeophobia or anti-Judaism. Anti-Semitism is the most common term to refer to anti-Jewish hatred and discrimination globally and for which international legislation exists. (See: Brian Klug, “The Limits of Analogy: Comparing Islamophobia and Anti-Semitism” in *Patterns of Prejudice*. Vol. 48:5. 2014: pp 442 - 459.) It is understood, in the sense of its common usage, to refer only to Jews, despite having an etymological connection to other Semites. As such, anti-Semitism here will not refer to prejudice or hatred directed at non-Jewish Arabs. Additionally, the other terms of Judeophobia and anti-Judaism have marked deficiencies in their implications: for instance, Judeophobia implies an irrational fear (rather than a purposeful or calculated hatred) and centers the one who fears rather than the individuals or groups who face the hatred. Similarly, anti-Judaism as a term is insufficient largely due to the fact that most anti-Semitism is heavily racialized as a form of discrimination and is based primarily on mythologies about Jews as a race, rather than engaging in any meaningful way (or at all) with Judaism as a way of life. It is recognized, however, that the experiences of Ashkenazi Jews versus Jews of colour is significantly different due to compounded racializations.

<sup>14</sup> Definitions of anti-Semitism that are inherently anti-Muslim or anti-Arab tend to revolve around *accusations* of anti-Semitism around the expression of solidarity with Palestinian liberation or human rights, or in arguing that anti-Semitism is somehow an essential part of Islam, Islamic discourse, and in discussions among Muslims, or among Arabs.

<sup>15</sup> It should be noted that in naming anti-Semitic incidents, not a single respondent named online hate speech as a manifestation outright. When asked about the presence of anti-Semitism online, respondents acknowledged that it was there, and even that it is increasing in prevalence, but seemed at a loss with how to respond to it, even seeming to find that whole realm hopeless. For information about online hate speech and research on how to counter it, see: Nadia Naffi, “The Trump Effect in Canada: A 600 percent increase in online hate speech” *The Conversation*. November 1, 2017. Accessed

According to Nora Gold, anti-Semitism manifests in a variety of forms, including invisibility, adherence to myths or stereotypes about Jews, and anti-Zionism (of the variety mentioned above, which goes beyond basic criticism of Israeli policies).<sup>16</sup> In terms of invisibility, “Jewish uniqueness, vulnerability, oppression and ‘diversity’ are simply not seen, or if seen, are denied.”<sup>17</sup> Gold is basing this assessment of anti-Semitism on the near-total absence of content on Jews and anti-Semitism in schools of social work across Canada, but educational erasure is not the only place where invisibility remains an issue.<sup>18</sup> Multiple interviewees for this study considered a lack of social recognition or accommodation of Jewish holidays and customs to be an implicit form of anti-Semitism. Issues with this social erasure range from being disadvantaged in one’s career or education because of lost networking opportunities when events are scheduled on the Sabbath, or major awards ceremonies and crucial professional celebrations being scheduled during Yom Kippur, as examples. The regular feeling of being at odds with mainstream society and a tension about requesting accommodation seems to be a constant reality. Additionally, Carole Reed has written extensively on the omission of anti-Semitism in anti-racism discourses because of the centrality of the history of slavery and skin color as a primary marker of race in said discourses.<sup>19</sup> The result is a view of anti-Semitism among racial justice activists which characterizes it as a lesser ethnic or religious prejudice, leading to silences around anti-Semitism as a racial issue in these advocacy communities. One interviewee, for instance, expressed frustration with anti-Semitism seemingly being downplayed in its prevalence and severity because Jews are perceived to be “white-passing.” An even more sinister result of this exclusion from racial discourse is the perception that anti-Semitism is no longer an issue of real concern (despite consistent statistical evidence to the contrary), that the Holocaust was “bad” but does not compare to the

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November 2, 2017. <https://theconversation.com/the-trump-effect-in-canada-a-600-per-cent-increase-in-online-hate-speech-86026>

<sup>16</sup> Nora Gold, “Putting Anti-Semitism on the Anti-Racism Agenda in North American Schools of Social Work” in *Journal of Social Work Education*. Vol 32:1, Winter 1996.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid. Gold notes that, other than in the *Journal of Jewish Communal Service*, “There was not one single article on anti-Semitism published in a social work journal during the 25 years between 1965 and 1990...”

<sup>19</sup> Carole Reed, “The Omission of Anti-Semitism in Anti-racism,” in *Canadian Woman Studies*. Vol 14:2, Spring 1994, pp 68-71.

magnitude of trauma from African slavery (comparative victimology) and, perhaps worst of all, that Jews cannot be oppressed because they “all” have access to wealth and power - a reaffirming of anti-Semitic stereotypes sometimes found in leftist justice groups we will outline below.<sup>20</sup>

Brian Klug points out that myths and stereotypes about Jews are first reliant on a foundational form of “the Jew” as *a priori* - “a frozen image projected onto the screen of a living person; the fact that the image might on occasion fit the reality does not affect its status as an image.”<sup>21</sup> The content of these stereotypes follows two parts of a tri-fold formula, laid-out by Pnina Werbner: the slave, the witch, and the Grand Inquisitor - three archetypal demonic figures conjured up by the racist imagination.<sup>22</sup> The “slave” represents “the physically powerful, wild, out-of-control...threaten[er] of the law and order of society.”<sup>23</sup> The subordinate but unruly figure of the “slave” tends to characterize people of colour in North American and British social consciousness and cultural representations, and is not necessarily associated with the global Jewish community as a whole, except in racial hierarchies amongst white Jews and Jews of colour - an internal dynamic beyond the scope of this work.

It is the “witch” figure that often encompasses many of the anti-Semitic stereotypes that individuals are colloquially familiar with- the “highly assimilated, cultured, successful and wealthy...[figure which] crystallizes fears of the hidden, disguised, malevolent stranger, of a general breakdown of trust, of a nation divided against itself.”<sup>24</sup> Gold notes that these stereotypes involve characterizations of Jews as being major wealth holders, beliefs that Jews are prone to secret rituals that

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid. See also: G. Short, “Combatting Anti-Semitism: A Dilemma for Anti-Racist Education” in *British Journal of Educational Studies*. Vol 39:1, 1991; For more information on justifying the inclusion of anti-Semitism in racial discourse, see: Nasar Meer, “Racialization and Religion: Race, Culture and Difference in the Study of Antisemitism and Islamophobia,” in *Ethnic and Racial Studies*. Vol 36:3, 2013: pp 385 - 398; J. Thomas, “The Racial Formation of Medieval Jews: a Challenge in the Field,” in *Ethnic and Racial Studies*. Vol 33:10, 2010: pp 1737-55; Jacob Katz, *From Prejudice to Destruction: Anti-Semitism 1700-1933*. Harvard University Press: Cambridge, MA. 1980.

<sup>21</sup> Klug, p. 449

<sup>22</sup> Werbner, p. 455.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

target the wider population, such as blood libel (the murder of Christian children)<sup>25</sup> and, perhaps most insidiously, the anti-Semitic myth that Jews killed Christ and are generally untrustworthy traitors.<sup>26</sup>

The “Grand Inquisitor” figure is a racist globalised European archetype which is representative of an all-encompassing, all-powerful institutionalized conspiracy—a concept readily found in stereotypes about Jews, particularly the ever-persistent fears of Jews controlling media, government, and global capital (while simultaneously being the propagandists of communism).<sup>27</sup> While these myths are traceable to before the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, they persist to this day through the continuing popularity and circulation of *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*—a fabricated Russian publication perceived and promoted by anti-Semites as a real historical document.<sup>28</sup>

An evolved cornerstone of anti-Semitic conspiracy theories that comes out of the notion of Jewish world domination is Holocaust denial or distortion, something which only one interviewee in this study mentioned on their own, but which all interviewees agreed was a prevalent form of anti-Semitism when asked specifically. Anti-Semites claim that Jews invented or exaggerated the Holocaust in order to exploit global sympathies, consolidate power, and justify questionable or illegal Israeli policies.<sup>29</sup> An offshoot of this trope includes the theory that 9/11 was an Israeli-Jewish conspiracy to justify the invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq, further destabilizing the Middle East;<sup>30</sup> in fact, only two weeks after the World Trade Center attacks, leaflets promoting this theory were being distributed in downtown Calgary.<sup>31</sup> All interviewees in this study considered anti-Semitism to be an on-going issue that is unlikely to be eradicated and that therefore requires vigilance and action to counter; this was case even if they did not personally feel that they were living in fear, or saw

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<sup>25</sup> Gold.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid. See also: Heiko Oberman, *The Roots of Anti-Semitism: In the Age of the Renaissance and Reformation*. James Porter, trans. Fortress Press: USA. 1984.

<sup>27</sup> Prutschi, p. 109. See also: Jeremy Jones, “Confronting Reality: Anti-Semitism in Australia Today” in *Jewish Political Studies Review*. Vol: 16-3-4. Fall 2004: pp 89 -103.

<sup>28</sup> Gold.

<sup>29</sup> Prutschi.

<sup>30</sup> Anti-Defamation League, *Unraveling Anti-Semitic 9/11 Conspiracy Theories*. Gorowitz Institute: New York. 2003; cited in Alex Alvarez, “Making Enemies: The Uses and Abuses of Tainted Identities” in *Cross Currents*. Association for Religion and Intellectual Life. September 2015: pp 311 - 320.

<sup>31</sup> Prutschi, p. 108.

themselves as the right people to undertake any corrective actions. Most of the interviewees also considered the political climate at any given moment to dictate whether anti-Semites feel comfortable expressing their hateful views (*not* whether such beliefs and attitudes about Jews continue to exist). This sentiment is echoed in the research of Lipset and Raab, as well as Laura Leets of Stanford University: that, given the correct circumstances, “latent anti-Semitism could activate” anywhere, at any time.<sup>32</sup>

Examples of anti-Semitic incidents as defined by the League for Human Rights are consistent with incidents reported by interviewees in this study: harassment, violence, and vandalism, taking place online, in-person, and on-property.<sup>33</sup> Harassment refers to verbal or written actions, including: the promotion of hate propaganda; verbal slurs or statements of hate/bias; stereotyping of Jews or commenting on Jewish “characteristics;” systematic discrimination in the workplace, school, or on campus; and threats of violence where no application of force seems imminent. Hate propaganda includes not only the promotion of conspiracies and stereotypes about Jews, but also the distortion or denial of the Holocaust. Violence refers to the use of physical force against a person or group of people, including: bodily assault; assault with a weapon or accompanied threat of the imminent use of a weapon; and threats of violence directed against a particular person or group where there is reasonable cause to believe bodily harm is imminent. Lastly, vandalism refers to physical damage to property, including: posting of graffiti, swastikas, or similar racist emblems and slogans; accompanying thefts or break-in; damage to religious objects; the desecration of cemeteries and synagogues; and fire-bombing or arson.

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<sup>32</sup> Laura Leets, “Experiencing Hate Speech: Perceptions and Responses to Anti-Semitism and Antigay Speech” in *Journal of Social Issues*. Vol 58:2. 2002: pp 343; S. Lipset and E. Raab, *Jews and the New American Scene*. Harvard University Press: Cambridge, MA. 1995.

<sup>33</sup> Hohmann and Fishman, p. 8.

## I. Jewish Responses to Anti-Semitism in Canada

### *Personal Responses*

#### 1. Reaching out for support

One immediate avenue of personal response appears to be reaching out to friends and family in order to process these occurrences. In all cases where a criminal act was committed, respondents felt comfortable enough to notify law enforcement and trusted that those officials would follow through on the necessary actions. Whether as victims themselves or while lending support to someone else who had endured abuse or assault, interviewees often confided in spouses, immediate family members, or friends (not always Jewish) to “talk through” what had happened before moving on.

While some respondents considered seeking the help of mental health professionals in dealing with the effects of anti-Semitism in their lives, the vast majority of respondents *did not*; in fact, they were surprised at the suggestion that it would be something reasonable to do. They consistently attributed this attitude to the fact that their experience was not, comparatively, worse than that of other racialized people, Jews of times past, or Jews living elsewhere in the world.

Reliance on law enforcement was a recurring theme with interviewees, who demonstrated awareness of the strategies for security employed within their synagogues (for example, on the high holidays, it has been standard procedure to hire security—usually off-duty police officers—to be present). Many major municipal police forces have established ongoing relationships with local Jewish community centers and leaders, in order to accommodate and understand the unique needs of Jews facing acts of hatred in Canada today. To that effect, advisory committees have been set up—surprisingly recently—in some urban centers (including Montreal, which saw the establishment of stronger police-Jewish ties beginning only in 2011).<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> Janice Arnold, “Police Chief Wants ‘Partnership’ with Jewish Community,” *The Canadian Jewish News*. February 17, 2011. Accessed October 15, 2017. <http://www.cjnews.com/news/canada/police-chief-wants-partnership-jewish-community>

## 2. Ignore or downplay the hatred

On more than one occasion, interviewees reported that it was important to ignore or downplay the hatred directed at their community. Downplaying, for them, does not imply pretending that anti-Semitism does not exist; rather, it means keeping such incidents in perspective and not letting them cause Jews to live in a state of fear. In cases of anti-Semitic vandalism, the main approach appears to be an immediate removal of the graffiti for the purpose of diminishing any attention given to it. In many cases, respondents did not inform media (particularly when the incidents occurred on private property) and even requested that law enforcement officials (if informed) refrain from doing so as well. Even in high-profile media cases—such as the Woodbridge College graffiti case from July 2017—attempts were made to ensure few images were published, and the vandalism was removed immediately after law enforcement was informed.<sup>35</sup>

Respondents and other sources were also clear in pointing out that anti-Semitism is only one of many forms of hatred, some of which (like anti-Muslim racism, anti-Black racism, and LGBTQ2+ hatred) are not only worthy of attention and concern, but perhaps are more so than anti-Semitism, due to the visibility of their potential victims and the tendency for those hateful incidents to be more violent.

## 3. Assimilation

Self-definition and self-expression is a recurring theme in contemplating responses to anti-Semitism. Multiple interviewees noted that the visibility of a Jew likely increased their chances of experiencing anti-Semitism. Not only did respondents who wore markers of their Jewishness report higher incidences of harassment throughout their lives, but respondents who *did not* wear any also attributed their avoidance of harassment to their own lack of visibility as Jews. As a result, some Jews are reluctant to wear identifying articles of clothing—such as a kippah or a Star of David—in certain public spaces, or are otherwise selective about whom they reveal

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<sup>35</sup> Liz Braun, “Cops Investigate anti-Semitic Graffiti at School” <http://torontosun.com/2017/06/30/cops-investigate-anti-semitic-graffiti-at-school/wcm/ca9edfac-6c8f-43a4-b47c-f865d7b9bd27ic> Graffiti at School.” *Toronto Sun*. June 30, 2017. Accessed October 1, 2017.

their Jewishness to if it is not already apparent.

#### **4. Unapologetic Jewishness/Diversity Education/Support**

On the other hand, there are individuals ((both interviewees and Jews more broadly) who argue that precisely because anti-Semitism will exist wherever Jews go and regardless of what Jews do or do not wear, it makes little sense to assimilate. For some respondents, rejecting assimilation meant continuing to participate in Jewish holidays and traditions, and being heavily involved in synagogue life. For others, this meant participating, as Jewish members, in interfaith dialogue groups, or financially supporting organizations which counter anti-Semitism through similar means. Finally, some respondents took stronger personal initiatives, such as using their community positions as educators to teach about diversity, Jewish traditions, and Judaism to their non-Jewish audiences or classrooms.

Similarly, placing an emphasis on Jewishness and the importance of embracing social diversity (rather than a reactive approach to anti-Semitism and anti-Semitic incidents) seemed to be a constant choice for most interviewed respondents. Several interviewees were members of Salam-Shalom Sisterhood chapters in their cities, or else participated as individuals in other interfaith events. Respondents were careful to note that they participated with the intention of educating others about Judaism, building bridges with other communities and meeting allies, rather than spending too much time talking and thinking about anti-Semitism or related contentious issues directly. It should also be noted that even some individuals who advocated for outward assimilative measures (in terms of Jewish expression and dress) still took the steps to represent “Jewishness” or “Judaism” at inter-communal events. It seems that the emphasis on a safe, sharing atmosphere with a focus on learning and solidarity makes such participation possible.

## Jewish Community and Organizational Responses to Anti-Semitism

### 1. Awareness and Data Collection

The organization primarily associated with building awareness about anti-Semitism and related data collection is B'nai Brith Canada. Through their agency, The League of Human Rights, B'nai Brith has published the annual audit of anti-Semitic incidents in Canada since 1982, combining data from Statistics Canada, national police reports, and their own data collection methods (the most notable of which is the 24/7 Hate Hotline (1-800-892-BNAI), which also offers assistance to individuals experiencing anti-Semitism and hate-motivated acts). A large part of the League's mandate is awareness-building through publications, as well as the advancement of B'nai Brith's human rights agenda to media outlets, government, and the public at large. To this effect, they use social media, email lists, petitions, online campaigns, and channels of governmental advocacy.<sup>36</sup>

### 2. Community Bridge-Building, Diversity Training, Solidarity

Community bridge-building is an area that the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs (CIJA) works on through their local partner councils and participation in the Canadian Interfaith Conversation,<sup>37</sup> among other multi-faith gatherings. The local partner councils are grassroots groups of community volunteers who access resources and support from their local Federation and CIJA to strengthen relationships with

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<sup>36</sup> <http://www.bnaibrith.ca/league>; The organization is not without its controversies, being accused of exaggerating the prevalence of anti-Semitism in Canada in particular instances and more generally. Some of the criticism about B'nai Brith include their equation of critiquing Israel with anti-Semitism bears no fruit and that their awareness-building campaigns verge on fear-mongering. Other Jewish and human rights organizations such as the Canadian Jewish Congress (CJC - prior to its subsuming into CIJA in 2011) and Canadians for Justice and Peace in the Middle East (CJPME) have voiced their concerns in public campaigns to reign in what they perceive to be B'nai Brith's controversial tendencies. See: Jonathan Kay, "Jonathan Kay on B'nai Brith's latest attempt to conjure anti-Semitism out of thin air," *The National Post*. September 22, 2010. Accessed November 2, 2017. <http://nationalpost.com/opinion/jonathan-kay-on-bnai-briths-latest-attempt-to-conjure-anti-semitism-out-of-thin-air>; For an example of the public battle about B'nai Brith's claims, see: Guy Badeaux (Bado), "My brush with B'nai Brith (a controversy in 4 acts)" *Bado's Blog*. May 7, 2011. Accessed November 2, 2017. <http://bado-badosblog.blogspot.ca/2011/05/my-brush-with-bnai-brith-act-3.html>; For CJPME's statement and petition on B'nai Brith's condemnation of federal NDP leadership candidate, Niki Ashton, see: [http://www.cjpme.org/tags/niki\\_ashton](http://www.cjpme.org/tags/niki_ashton)

<sup>37</sup> <https://www.interfaithconversation.ca/>

church groups, religious institutions, and ethno-cultural organizations.<sup>38</sup>

Several Muslim-Jewish interfaith groups have been established across Canada in order to counter anti-Semitism as well as anti-Muslim racism. The Canadian Association of Jews and Muslims (CAJM) was established in June 1996 and has been meeting regularly in the Greater Toronto Area since 9/11.<sup>39</sup> Similarly, multiple interfaith text-study sessions have been held through the University of Toronto's Multi-Faith Centre in the last decade.<sup>40</sup> The Sisterhood of Salaam-Shalom established their first Canadian chapter in Toronto in 2016,<sup>41</sup> and has since opened chapters in Markham, Montreal and Edmonton. The sisterhoods are established for the purpose of countering anti-Semitism and anti-Muslim racism by building strong relationships between women while sharing traditions, food and culture. There are also other previously-established Muslim-Jewish women's interfaith groups, many developed by grassroots women's groups and operating with a similar mandate, despite being separate from, the official Sisterhood. The Muslim-Jewish Women's Collective, organized by the Alberta Muslim Public Affairs Council and Beth Shalom Synagogue, has been meeting monthly in Edmonton since January 2016 and, unlike the official Sisterhood, boasts dozens of members and is consistently open to allies and members of the public. It should be noted that while facilitators of these groups may initiate them with the intention of countering anti-Muslim hatred and anti-Semitism among Jews and Muslims respectively, participants do not necessarily join with the awareness of this basic premise. Such gatherings may also do little to address either overt anti-Muslim hatred amongst many self-proclaimed "pro-Israel" groups or overt anti-Semitism amongst many "anti-Israel" groups.

The Christian-Jewish Dialogue group exists in Toronto with a mandate similar to the Sisterhood, and involves engagement from the Catholic Archdiocese, the United

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<sup>38</sup> <http://cija.ca/about-us/community-relations/>

<sup>39</sup> <https://cajmcanada.wordpress.com/about/>

<sup>40</sup> See: Shari Golberg, "Knowing Their Rites: The Formation of "Textual Confidence" among Jewish and Muslim Women in Academic and Community-Based Settings," in Mara Brecht and Reid Locklin (eds), *Comparative Theology in the Millennial Classroom: Hybrid Identities, Negotiated Boundaries*, London: Routledge. 2018: pp.190-204.

<sup>41</sup> Lisa Sarick, "Muslim-Jewish Sisterhood Group Canadian Chapter." *Canadian Jewish News*. September 1, 2017. Accessed October 15, 2017. <http://www.cjnews.com/news/canada/muslim-jewish-sisterhood-launches-canadian-chapter>

Church, the Lutheran Church, CIJA and the Toronto Board of Rabbis. Many other groups which facilitate Christian-Jewish dialogue across Canada tend to be more general interfaith groups that are not necessarily initiated by Jewish community leaders or organizations.

### 3. Jewish Identity Projects

Organizations like the Jewish Federations of Canada, UIA, B'nai Brith Canada, and the Canadian Jewish Political Affairs Committee (CJPAC) have undertaken a number of programs that are advertised as Jewish identity projects. The Federations in particular invest in programs designed to make Judaism and Israel accessible for Canadian Jewish youth, with the purpose of building an unapologetic personal Jewish identity. Programming falls under the mandate of the following committees: Canada-Israel Experience (responsible for the Taglit Birthright Israel, Marah of the Living Canada, and Masa Israel Journey programs), National Young Leadership, and Hillel Canada (a Jewish undergraduate student support network).<sup>42</sup> B'nai Brith Canada's programming that would fall under a Jewish identity-building project is primarily their organization of Jewish sports teams as a way to give Jewish athletes in Canada sporting contexts where they can feel comfortable. CJPAC's work tends to be involved around political and civic engagement, especially on university campuses through their Fellowship Program.<sup>43</sup> There are also a number of summer camps that have been established for Jewish youth across Canada as a means of building a strong sense of Jewishness and a connection to both community and Judaism as a religion.

One particularly controversial program for how it characterizes pro-Palestinian movements, that could be considered as a Jewish identity project is CIJA's BUYcott campaign, developed in response to the perceived anti-Semitism of the BDS (Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions) movement in Canada and globally. By using various social media applications and platforms, the program allows "members of the BUYcott network [to] call for a BUYcott to support a store being targeted for anti-Israel

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<sup>42</sup> <https://www.jewishcanada.org/jewish-identity>

<sup>43</sup> <http://cjpac.ca/category/programs/>

boycott action.”<sup>44</sup> The program is controversial both inside and outside the Jewish community, primarily due to its political nature and its characterization of the tenets of the BDS movement.

Ceremonial events, particularly related to Jewish holidays or events of importance, are another way that Jewish organizations facilitate public understanding of Jewish traditions. Such initiatives include public menorah lighting ceremonies during Hanukkah, and requests that regular statements be made by provincial and municipal authorities to acknowledge and celebrate Jewish holidays.

#### 4. Holocaust Education, Museums, and Memorialization

For many Jewish organizations in Canada and globally,<sup>45</sup> Holocaust education seems to be a natural place to start addressing anti-Semitism, primarily through historical inoculation; there is some evidence, however, that greater Holocaust knowledge in Canada does not correlate with reduced anti-Semitism or openness to diversity.<sup>46</sup>

Canadian Society for Yad Vashem (CSYV) has been a key organizational partner in encouraging the Government of Canada to support educational and commemorative initiatives about the Holocaust.<sup>47</sup> Their programming includes a robust scholarship program aimed at providing Canadian educators with the opportunity to visit the Yad Vashem museum in Israel and take part in a three-week seminar for teaching Holocaust studies. CSYV is also responsible for facilitating the annual public ceremony for National Holocaust Remembrance Day on behalf of the Government of Canada. The organization facilitates the bringing together of high school students and Holocaust survivors in order to conduct guided group study sessions about the Holocaust; it also runs a unique Bar/Bat Mitzvah Twinning program, under which a young Jewish child is given an opportunity to learn about the Holocaust through the

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<sup>44</sup> <http://cija.ca/services/campaigns/buycott-israel/>

<sup>45</sup> For global undertakings, see: Whine, pp 73-88; Jones, *Australia*, 2004; Esther Romeyn, “Liberal Tolerance and its Hauntings: Moral Compasses, anti-Semitism and Islamophobia” in *European Journal of Cultural Studies*. Vol. 20:2, 2017: pp 215-232; Yehuda Stolov, “On Overcoming anti-Semitism and Islamophobia” in *Palestine-Israel Journal of Politics, Economics and Culture*. Vol. 12 (2&3): pp 73-77.

<sup>46</sup> Jack Jedwab, “Measuring Holocaust Knowledge and its Impact: A Canadian Case Study,” in *Prospects*, Vol. 40. 2010: pp 273 -287.

<sup>47</sup> <https://yadvashem.ca/>

life of a child who perished. Lastly, CSYV erected and maintains a physical Holocaust Memorial Site with a monument in Toronto, and was a key member of the Development Council for the National Monument.

There is a long list of Holocaust Education Centers across the country, including such major centers as the Montreal Holocaust Memorial Centre, the Sarah and Chaim Neuberger Education Center in Toronto, the Freeman Family Foundation Holocaust Education Centre in Winnipeg, and the Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre. Each of these centres features museums with permanent or traveling exhibits, vast library and artifact collections, as well as highly developed educational programs meant to support teachers of primary and secondary students. While these centres exclusively focus on Holocaust exhibitions and memorials, there are also a number of other organizations across the country which offer teaching and tools about the Holocaust.

## **5. Strategic Alliances - Government**

For nearly 100 years, the CJC was the primary Jewish government lobby group that aimed at developing strategic alliances in order to advocate for Canadian Jewish communities. It was subsumed into the mandate and operations of CIJA in 2011. The mission of the Council and its programming understandably changed over the decades, and over time included campaigns for Jewish emigration from the Soviet Union, the prosecution of Nazi war criminals living in Canada, and the enactment of hate crime legislation around anti-Semitism. In the last years prior to absorption by CIJA, the CJC was regularly accused of losing contact with the diversity of the Canadian Jewish communities it claimed to represent and placing too much emphasis on advocating with the Canadian government solely for the state of Israel.

Other lobby groups that went into the creation of CIJA at the same time as CJC include the Canada-Israel Committee (under the parentage of the Canadian Council for Israel), the Quebec-Israel Committee, and the University Outreach Committee. CIJA's primary objective as a political advocacy committee is to establish governmental relations at all levels to work on domestic and foreign-policy issues that

they believe affect Jewish Canadians.<sup>48</sup> Their role is primarily an advisory role, offering information to parliamentarians and members of legislative assemblies as needed. The vast majority of their priorities seem to be focused on Canada's Middle Eastern diplomatic policies as well as increasing Canadian and Israeli trade. Much of CIJA's rhetoric around foreign policy issues seems to promote the notion that the legitimate critique of Israeli policy or crimes against humanity are inherently anti-Semitic—a position which, as I discussed above, is not reflective of how most Jews, organizations, and authors of literature reviewed for this study (along with many other human rights organizations) define anti-Semitism. Given that I am primarily focused on countering racism in Canada, I would like to note that domestically, CIJA does advocate for protecting schools, community centers, and places of worship against anti-Semitic speech. CIJA also advocates for the prevention of terrorism and genetic discrimination. Lastly, they continue the CJC tradition of pushing for accountability for Nazi war crimes and genocide.

Another Jewish national human rights organization, Independent Jewish Voices (IJV), advocates for Canada and Canadian businesses to play a role in a just and peaceful resolution to the conflict in Israel and Palestine, while supporting the rights of all Canadians to criticize Israeli state policies through movements such as BDS.<sup>49</sup> Beyond their foreign and domestic campaigns, IJV also has a specific mandate for countering domestic anti-Semitism, primarily through the issuing of statements, media relations, and the preparation of reports for public use.

## II. Lessons for Muslims Countering Anti-Muslim Racism

There are multiple lessons for Muslim advocates and community organizers to glean from this study of anti-Semitism in countering anti-Muslim racism. Some of these lessons aim inwards at the community, while others aim outwards, at inter-communal relationship building.

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<sup>48</sup> <http://cija.ca/about-us/government-relations/>

<sup>49</sup> <http://ijvcanada.org/>

## *Inward Focus*

### **1. Unapologetically Muslim**

When the interviewees for this study were asked what direct advice they had for Muslim communities, one of the most consistent answers was to continue being unapologetically Muslim—a sentiment that, surprisingly, was expressed even by individuals who practiced, or advocated for, their own assimilation. They repeatedly iterated notions of being true to one’s self, embracing intra-communal diversity, and inviting other people in to appreciate Islam, Muslim peoples, and Muslim communities. Being unapologetically Muslim means being unafraid to appear as a visible Muslim in public spaces or to request reasonable accommodation for Islamic needs, but it also implies the continued creation of Muslim spaces (schools, mosques, community centers, butchers and grocery stores, etc.) while keeping these spaces open to non-Muslims as well. It further implies a knowledge of Muslim traditions, heritage and history (both locally and globally) in order to retain aspects of our identity associated with these inheritances, as well as being able to share them with others. Facilitating the following of Islamic traditions through dissemination of sound Islamic knowledge seems to be the first step in this process, one from which many benefits will follow, including greater participation in wider society, charity and service work, and political and social engagement, all of which are intrinsic parts of basic Islamic practice.

### **2. Traditions, Heritage and History**

A big part of what helps challenge homogenizing stereotypes about both Jews and Muslims is the sharing of the diversity of our traditions, heritages and histories as practitioners of those traditions. This strategy is placed in the inward category because it first requires Muslim community’s acknowledgement and knowledge-building about themselves—something which Jewish identity projects have executed well. Only once Muslims begin to learn about themselves can they begin to accurately share the richness of their faith, cultures, and history with others. Thus, the facilitation of education (formal and informal) for Muslim communities about themselves is crucial.

Sharing their knowledge of themselves with others is an approach Muslims can take to countering anti-Muslim racism and negative associations perpetuated about Islam and Muslims through cultural transmission. One of the most effective ways to disrupt these continuous transmissions (often happening through artifacts and media) is to be the living embodiment of that which contradicts them. And one of the best ways to exhibit the diversity of Muslim communities is to maintain contact with other identity groups, whether through informal conversation (as lecturers or community dialogue facilitators) or more formally (in the context of educational institutions and programs).<sup>50</sup>

### 3. Data Collection

An important point of emphasis in Canadian Jewish communities is the knowledge about data collection around anti-Semitic incidents and crimes. This is an area where Muslims have made significant progress, the National Council of Canadian Muslims (NCCM) being one example; however, more accessible means of reporting at the local level, as well as data sharing between collectors, are still needed. This imperative is part of the need for Muslim communities to educate themselves—not only about themselves, but about those who hold unfavourable views of Muslims and Islam.

### 4. Mental Health Access and Resources

While the lack of mental health access or resources was not directly mentioned by Jewish respondents, it was certainly a factor that they reconsidered as important after it was brought to their attention. Cultivating resiliency alongside a strong sense of Muslim identity and community is essential, lest Muslim communities operate from a fractured foundation and find themselves unable to carry out the necessary work of

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<sup>50</sup> Norman Miller, “Personalization and the Promise of Contact Theory.” *Journal of Social Issues*. Vol. 58:2, Summer 2002: pp 387 - 410; Thomas Pettigrew, “Future Directions for Intergroup Contact Theory and Research” in *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*. Vol. 32:3, May 2008: pp. 187-199; Thomas Pettigrew, Linda Tropp, Ulrich Wagner, and Oliver Christ, “Recent Advances in Intergroup Contact Theory,” in *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*. Vol. 35: 3, May 2011: pp 271-280; Thomas Pettigrew, and Linda Tropp, “A Meta-analytic Test of Intergroup Contact Theory” in *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*. Vol. 90:5, 2006: pp. 751-783.

collecting data and countering anti-Muslim racism in the long-term. Providing culturally-sensitive, financially accessible psychological care—in the form of professional spiritual care practitioners and psycho-spiritual therapists, in individual or group settings—is thus an essential part of an effective community organizing strategy. It should be noted that these services should not only be available to Muslim community members after a major incident occurs, but should be promoted as a preventative measure for building resiliency. Such initiatives are all the more essential since many newcomer Muslims have also endured war, trauma, or colonization prior to entering the fabric of Canadian society.

## 5. Muslim Engagement

In looking at the scope of Jewish engagement in ventures dealing with anti-Semitism, an important point to note is Canadian Jews' relatively larger extent of participation considering their small population size. Muslims may have a much more significant presence in Canada in terms of population numbers than Jews, but they are comparatively less involved in the fight against anti-Muslim racism. Not only is the number of organizations which cite countering anti-Muslim racism as a major part of their mandate significantly lower than those dedicated to countering anti-Semitism, but the number of Muslims involved in those organizations is also relatively low. There could be several reasons for this lack of participation in the Muslim community. The tendency for Muslims to cultivate their active populations from within mosque settings alone, for instance, poses difficulties due to the vast majority of mosques in Canada not having formal membership, having transient populations, and not being well attended.<sup>51</sup> Meanwhile, the engagement of Jewish individuals (including those with little to no affiliation with Jewish houses of worship) in organizations countering anti-Semitism is one area where Canadian Jewish communities have really succeeded. Ideally, improvements in the mosque setting could lead to improved participation, but as it currently stands, finding ways to access and engage Canadian Muslims in the fight

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<sup>51</sup> Environics' survey of national Canadian Muslims found that only 48% of respondents reported attending mosque once a week; one in six visit occasionally, one-quarter (24%) only at special times of the year, and one in ten (9%) never or almost never. "Survey of Muslims in Canada 2016," <http://tessellateinstitute.com/projects/national-survey/>

against anti-Muslim racism through alternative channels is an essential takeaway from the Jewish community's experience.

## Outward Focus

### 1. Multi-faceted, Proactive Approach

In examining Jewish approaches for this study, one thing becomes abundantly clear: despite certain claims of centralization of representation and mandates in particular organizations, the reality on the ground is that Jews have spread out the work of countering anti-Semitism throughout multiple organizations, using multi-faceted strategies and taking proactive approaches, especially around education. Muslims would do well to accept that no one or two organizations across Canada or in particular localities can accomplish, on their own, all that is needed by way of strategies listed above. The work must be shared in order to be comprehensive and effective in the long-term.

### 2. Cooperative, Focused Organizations

One way to ensure that the work of countering anti-Muslim hatred is shared effectively is to encourage both new and existing organizations which undertake this work to not only cooperate with one another, but to choose and focus on precise approaches without spreading themselves too thin. This may look like one organization focusing on data collection and governmental relations, while another organization develops resiliency programs within the community, and still another organization does community bridge-building with other faith groups. The replication of similar approaches across organizations, on the contrary, wastes valuable time, resources and energy that could otherwise be put to better use.

### 3. Dialogue and Solidarity

As mentioned in the discussion of internal approaches above, the continued proactive facilitation of dialogue with non-Muslims about Islam, Muslim traditions and history is essential. In the Jewish examples, there are public ceremonies dedicated to Jewish holidays, commemorations and monuments dedicated to dark histories,

education (formal or not) on Jewish history and the Holocaust - all of which demand to be shared in order to improve understanding. Muslim organizations that emphasize education as a tactic of countering hatred need to take a similar approach in terms of the wide breadth of subjects that can be covered, and the variety of contexts where this knowledge-sharing can take place. Offering public lectures, panels, seminars and workshops, as well as facilitating intercultural discussions is important. Equally important is lobbying for units on Muslim history and diversity to be included in formal curricula across the country. At the same time, it is essential to recognize (as many respondents from this study have) that anti-Muslim hatred and anti-Semitism exist alongside other interconnected hatreds that fall under the umbrella of racism. Muslims are ethically bound (and even religiously mandated) to address and counter racism in all its forms. Therefore, it is essential for Muslims to develop alliances in which they are not only stood up for, but where they also stand in as allies for other marginalized groups. This reciprocity serves two main purposes: it indirectly educates other marginalized groups on the social justice ethics in Islam (thereby mitigating lateral violence), and it builds sustainable long-term partnerships through contact and dialogue.

#### **4. Difficult Conversations**

One area of dialogue that was somewhat dismissed by Jewish respondents, and remains a rather neglected part of the literature on countering anti-Semitism, is the effectiveness of having difficult conversations with hate groups. The mediation of dialogue between oppressed individuals and neo-Nazis (or other “white power” groups which foster oppression and hate propaganda) is a tactic of which there is little to no evidence among Jewish individuals or organizations in the Canadian context. It is worth examining, in future research, how other racialized groups have dealt with the lack of mediated interactions between oppressed and oppressing groups, and contemplating whether or not such difficult conversations have any effect on pre-existing hatred and prejudice.

## 5. Media Relations

Another area of little direct mention by respondents or in the literature on anti-Semitism is the importance of building strong media relations with the hopes of diversifying stories about marginalized groups in order to counter static, stereotypical narratives about them. One Jewish respondent noted that this approach can be difficult to pursue for Jewish groups, because hateful members of the public could interpret such efforts in the light of conspiracy theories about Jewish-dominated media, thus reinforcing anti-Semitic tropes. Muslims, however, are not necessarily subject to the same suspicion, as anti-Muslim conspiracy theories tend to revolve around fears of Muslims out-populating non-Muslim, or “creeping Shari’ah law” as a threat to democratic order, rather than narratives of media takeover.<sup>52</sup> Thus, it might be a worthwhile education strategy for Muslim groups to help disseminate proactive, positive Muslim stories, especially local ones, through established media outlets. One avenue to accomplish this could be the building of close positive relationships with non-Muslim journalists, or even the sponsorship of Muslim individuals to enter the journalistic field themselves.

## 6. Government and Law Enforcement

Lastly, a point which many respondents (and much of the literature) mentioned was the importance of cultivating strong governmental and law enforcement alliances, which are maintained even in periods when the occurrence of hate incidents and crimes is low. Jewish lobby groups have demonstrated persistence in making the problem of anti-Semitism a priority for elected officials, and the policing of anti-Semitic actions a priority with law enforcement. Maintaining direct lines of communication with elected officials and law enforcement, as well as promoting Muslim candidates for governmental office or police services (although not explicitly mentioned by Jewish respondents or the literature), is an essential strategy for countering anti-Muslim hatred.

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<sup>52</sup> It is worth noting that such conspiracy-theory responses have arisen in specific situations of Muslim-led media portrayals such as *Little Mosque on the Prairie* but such occurrences are not the rule and tend to be isolated incidents, perhaps due to how few Muslim-led media projects are actually out there.

**Appendix: Interview Questions<sup>53</sup>****Demographics:**

1. What year were you born?
2. How would you describe your ethnic origins?
3. Where were you born? Where have you lived? How long have you lived in Canada?
4. How would you describe your gender?
5. What is the highest degree or level of school you have completed?
6. What is your current employment status?
7. How would you describe your employment or former employment?
8. What is your annual household income?
9. In which ways do you consider yourself to be Jewish? (religion, culture, upbringing, ethnicity, parentage, or other)
10. How would you describe your relationship to the Jewish religion? Do you belong to particular synagogue and/or identify with a particular religious denomination? (Reform, Conservative, Orthodox, Secular, other)

**Questions:**

1. In your opinion, how big of a problem is anti-Semitism in your community and Canada today? What gives you that impression? (Scale of 1 to 7, 1 being not a big problem, 7 being a very big problem)
2. Do you feel that anti-Semitism has increased in your community and/or Canada in the last five years? Why or why not?
3. In your opinion, what kinds of actions constitute anti-Semitism?
4. Have you ever personally experienced any of the following incidents:  
Verbally insulted or harassed; physically attacked; both; property destruction
5. If yes, did any of these incidents happen to you because you are Jewish?
6. What steps have you taken, if any, to process that/those incident(s)?
7. Have you been witness to other incidents that are anti-Semitic in nature?  
8. If yes, what steps have you taken, if any, to process those?
9. If yes to 4 or 7: Did any of those incident influence you to take broader steps

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<sup>53</sup> This does not include follow up questions asked during the interview for the purposes of clarification.

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towards combatting anti-Semitism? If yes, what did you do? If not, why not?

10. Whether or not you have experienced or witnessed an anti-Semitic incident, how worried are you that one could happen to you, your family or other members of the Jewish community?

11. Whether or not you have experienced or witness an anti-Semitic incident, do you consider anti-Semitism to be an ever-present threat?

12. Whether or not you have experienced or witness an anti-Semitic incident, have you taken steps or done work to combat anti-Semitism?

13. If yes, what have you done?

14. If no, for which reasons have you not?

15. In your opinion, what has the Canadian or provincial governments done to address anti-Semitism?

16. What should the government do more or less of?

17. In your view or experience, how does wider society respond to Jewish community or government attempts to address anti-Semitism?

18. What initiatives to combat anti-Semitism are you aware of, from Jewish groups, organizations, individuals or other human rights groups?

19. Do you see any relationship between anti-Semitism and anti-Muslim racism or hatred?

20. Do you have any advice you would offer to the Muslim community in combatting anti-Muslim sentiment in various communities across Canada?

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