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Modern Antisemitism: A Psychological Understanding of the BDS Movement

Recently, prejudice, bigotry, and intolerance have been a topic of great concern. Antisemitism in particular is notably visible in the US and Europe stemming from both the alt-right and the liberal left. Globally, the specter of ongoing violence in the Middle East accompanied by repeated failed peace talks have ignited anti-Israel demonstrations and the BDS (Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions) movement. However, until the last decade, the resurgence of antisemitism accompanying the Middle East turmoil may not have been so readily apparent. In Europe, Jewish Day schools, supermarkets, and pedestrians have been violently attacked; in the US, Jewish cemeteries and synagogues have been defaced, and in Israel innocent, Jewish civilians have been brutally beaten and bludgeoned to death. Antisemitism is indeed increasing. What may account for the uptick in antisemitism? And what if any is the connection to Middle East turbulence?

Recent research demonstrates that the psychological underpinnings of both may be one in the same. A new theoretical model of antisemitism is presented and tested in five experiments. The model proposes that mortality salience increases antisemitism and that antisemitism often manifests as hostility toward Israel. Study 1 showed that mortality salience led to greater levels of antisemitism and lowered support for Israel. This effect occurred only in a bogus pipeline condition, indicating that social desirability masks hostility toward Jews and Israel. Study 2 showed that mortality salience caused Israel, but no other country, to perceptually loom large. Study 3 showed that mortality salience increased punitiveness toward Israel's human rights violations more than it increased hostility toward the identical human rights violations committed by India or Russia. Study 4 showed that mortality salience increased people's agreement with support for political cartoons demonizing Israel but not China. Study 5 showed that mortality salience increased support of BDS for Israel's human rights violations committed against Palestinians more than it increased support of BDS for Russia's identical human rights violations committed against the Ukraine. Collectively, results suggest that Jews constitute a unique cultural threat to many people's worldviews, that antisemitism causes hostility to Israel, and that hostility to Israel may feed back to increase antisemitism.

A few years ago, a close friend and colleague of mine at Columbia University walked into her office to find her walls covered in swastikas; a month earlier, congregants at a synagogue in Pennsylvania were gunned down during Sabbath services. According to new FBI data, hate crimes targeting Jews rose in 2016 immediately following the Trump presidential election with increased social media harassment targeting Jews during the 2018 midterm elections (U.S. Department of Justice, 2018). Globally, the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) movement has become an issue of contention across college campuses. What began as a non-violent movement in 2005 by Palestinian non-governmental organizations to end Israel's occupation of the Gaza and West Bank territories has turned

into a referendum on the legitimacy of Israel. Recent research found that after World War II, anti-Jewish prejudices went underground and were expressed through socially acceptable channels referred to as modern antisemitism,¹ and thus antisemitism research took a back seat to more and timely concerns such as racial tensions and women's movements. Unfortunately, antisemitism or prejudice against Jews has once again become a topic of concern. The current paper reviews the theory and research examining the psychology of antisemitism and presents a new study reflecting the modern antisemitism underlying the BDS movement.

Modern Antisemitism Research

Currently, there is little disagreement that the specter of ongoing violence in the Middle East is of great concern throughout much of the world. It is at the heart of international peace processes and continues to interfere with global economies.² Despite President Trump's negotiated peace treaties between Israel, the United Arab Emirates, and Bahrain, the resurgence of antisemitism accompanying the Middle East turmoil has become apparent. Antisemitism is increasing, so much so that it has hit an all-time high.³ This is true not only in the Middle East, where animosity toward Jews has customarily been linked to hostility toward Israel,⁴ but also in the liberal West,⁵ with politicians currently blaming the surge in Covid-19 cases on the Jewish clusters.⁶

1 Cf. F. Cohen et al., "Modern Anti-Semitism and Anti-Israeli Attitudes," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 97, no. 2 (2009): 290–306.

2 Cf. J. Aita, "Doha Meeting Critical to Mideast Peace, Economic Growth, U.S. Says," U.S. Embassy in Israel, issued 1997, accessed June 8, 2012, <http://www.usembassyisrael.org.il/publish/peace/archives/1997/me1028c.html> [no longer available]; F. Cohen et al., "The Modern Anti-Semitism Israel Model: An Empirical Relationship between Modern Anti-Semitism and Opposition to Israel," *Conflict and Communication Online* 10 (2011): 1–16; T. Pyszczynski et al., "Mortality Salience, Martyrdom, and Military Might: The Great Satan Versus the Axis of Evil," *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 32 (2006): 525–37.

3 "Antisemitic Incidents Hit All-Time High in 2019," Anti-Defamation League, issued May 12, 2020, accessed October 2, 2020, <https://www.adl.org/news/press-releases/antisemitic-incidents-hit-all-time-high-in-2019>.

4 Cf. D. Matas, *Aftershock: Anti-Zionism and Anti-Semitism* (Toronto: Dundurn, 2005).

5 Cf. S. K. Baum, "Christian and Muslim Antisemitism," *Journal of Contemporary Religion* 24 (2009): 137–55; Cohen et al., "The Modern Anti-Semitism Israel Model"; E. H. Kaplan and C. A. Small, "Anti-Israel Sentiment Predicts Anti-Semitism in Europe," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 50, no. 4 (2006): 548–61.

Terrible double standards have been imposed by the international community as far as Israel as a Jewish state is concerned. While many insist that Israel and the Zionists are responsible for horrific genocidal crimes against the Palestinians in the Occupied Territories, the numbers tell a different story. Over the past twenty years, the Israeli Center for Human Rights in the Occupied Territories put the Palestinian death toll at 10,012.⁷ This number accounts for militants and civilians. The international answer has been to boycott over fifty Israeli products, academics, and artistic venues. In contrast, in a twelve-month period the UN estimated that the Syrian regime (still in power) was responsible for over 10,000 civilian deaths, 20,000 displaced persons, and 40,000 detained prisoners; the death toll in the Ukraine is estimated to be approximately 13,000 civilians since the war broke out in 2014;⁸ and in 2015 the estimated death toll in Darfur stood at approximately 400,000 lives with 3,000,000 displaced persons.⁹ The international response—zero boycotts. Despite the inconsistency of the international community regarding human rights violations, many major works on stereotypes, prejudice, and discrimination have paid relatively little attention to antisemitism and its relationship to anti-Israel sentiment.¹⁰

This lack of attention reflects the inconsistency of public opinions as well. A personal story may serve to demonstrate the point. Several years ago, I subscribed to a local New York newspaper, both print and online. On March 25, 2009, I opened my e-paper to reveal the vilest of syndicated cartoons by American cartoonist Pat Oliphant (see image 1). The cartoon (published by *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, Slate, and Yahoo! News, among others) depicted a headless soldier wielding a sword and pushing a shark-like toothy monster shaped like the star of David with its sights set on a fleeing Gazan woman carry-

6 Cf. C. Campanile, “Cuomo Calls COVID-19 Resurgence an ‘Ultra-Orthodox’ Jewish Problem,” *New York Post*, October 9, 2020, <https://nypost.com/2020/10/09/gov-cuomo-ny-covid-19-spike-an-ultra-orthodox-jewish-problem/>.

7 Cf. “Israel-Palestine Timeline: The Human Cost of the Conflict,” Israel-Palestine Timeline, last updated October 25, 2020, accessed October 28, 2020, <https://israelpalestinetimeline.org/charts/>.

8 “Death Toll up to 13,000 in Ukraine Conflict Says UN Rights Office,” Radio Free Europe, February 26, 2019, <https://www.rferl.org/a/death-toll-up-to-13-000-in-ukraine-conflict-says-un-rights-office/29791647.html>.

9 Cf. S. Straus, *Making and Unmaking Nations: War, Leadership, and Genocide in Modern Africa* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2015).

10 E.g., one can find little or no mention of antisemitism in S. T. Fiske, “Stereotyping, Prejudice, and Discrimination,” in *The Handbook of Social Psychology*, ed. D. T. Gilbert, S. T. Fiske, and G. Lindzey (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1998), 357–411; J. T. Jost and M. R. Banaji, “The Role of Stereotyping in System-Justification and the Production of False Consciousness,” *British Journal of Social Psychology* 33 (1994): 1–27, or many other recent reviews.

Image 1: Cartoon by Pat Oliphant.

Syndicated cartoon of Israeli flag depicting a headless soldier wielding a sword and pushing a shark-like toothy monster shaped like the star of David with its sights set on a fleeing Gazan woman carrying a baby. Source: <http://www.eyeonthepost.org/Oliphant-Anti-Semite.html>, accessed November 13, 2020.

ing a baby, all within the confines of the Israeli flag. The media outlets eventually removed the cartoon from their sites, but little fuss was made over the cartoon.¹¹

In contrast, Kurt Westergaard's cartoon depicting the prophet Mohammed wearing a bomb in his turban (image 2) triggered violent riots around the world. The cartoon, printed in the Danish *Jyllands-Posten* newspaper in September 2005, was considered "offensive" and sent Westergaard into hiding for fear of his life.¹²

There seems to be a double standard with regard to Israel and public opinion—the question is why? Why is it acceptable to demonize Israel? Is demonization of Israel a form of antisemitism? How can we know? To answer these questions, we must first understand the psychology of antisemitism and the methods used by social psychologists to test hypotheses based on these questions.

¹¹ Cf. "Washington Post Continues Steady Drum Beat of Attacks On Israel and Its Jewish Supporters," *Eye on the Post*, issued March 28, 2009, accessed November 13, 2020, <https://www.eyeonthepost.org/>.

¹² Cf. "Kurt Westergaard and the Danish Cartoons in the Open," *No Dhimmitude*, issued February 13, 2008, accessed November 13, 2020, <https://nodhimmitude.blogspot.com/2008/02/kurt-westergaard-and-danish-cartoons-in.html>.

Image 2: Cartoon by Kurt Westergaard. Danish cartoon depicting the Prophet Mohammed wearing a bomb in his turban. Source: <https://nodhimitude.blogspot.com/2008/02/kurt-westergaard-and-danish-cartoons-in.html>, accessed November 13, 2020.

Psychology of Antisemitism

Antisemitism is a peculiar social phenomenon in that many of the stereotypes associated with it are mutually exclusive and shift radically across time and space. Jews have been condemned for being radical communists, and for being avaricious capitalists. Fascists in Nazi Germany and in 1980s Argentina accused their nations' Jews of having hidden loyalties to socialist regimes,¹³ whereas the Soviet Union regularly persecuted its Jews for harboring secret sympathies for the West.¹⁴ Jews have been chastised as corruptly cosmopolitan and as insular traditionalists, as heretical free-thinkers and as mystical obscurantists, as weak, ineffectual, and effete, and as stealthily advancing toward worldwide domination.¹⁵

Some scholars of antisemitism see a method in these contradictions. Antisemitism may serve to create a tangible target upon which non-Jews project their own fears, especially fears that arise during times of social disruption.¹⁶ Indeed, attacks against Jews spiked during the Crusades, the Black Plague, in France following the Franco-Prussian War, in Russia in the years preceding the Bolshevik revolution, in Germany following World War I, in the United States during the Depression, in the Soviet Union during the Cold War, and in South America dur-

¹³ Cf. R. Rein, *Argentina, Israel and the Jews: Peron, the Eichmann Capture and After* (Bethesda: University Press of Maryland, 2003).

¹⁴ Cf. E. D. Weitz, "Stalin's Secret Pogrom: The Postwar Inquisition of the Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee," *Holocaust and Genocide Studies* 17, no. 2 (2003): 368–70.

¹⁵ Cf. B. Lewis, "The New Anti-Semitism: First Religion, then Race, then What?," *American Scholar* 75, no. 1 (2006): 25–36; P. Johnson, *A History of the Jews* (New York: Harper & Row, 1987), 310.

¹⁶ Cf. D. Cohn-Sherbok, *Anti-Semitism* (Charleston: History Press, 2009).

ing the transition from dictatorships to democracy. Currently, anti-Jewish sentiment is spreading rapidly throughout the Muslim Middle East, which is itself undergoing massive social change.¹⁷

Why this correspondence between antisemitism and social transition? Tolerance for others' opinions, especially those that challenge one's own deeply held personal values, are tied to people's own feelings of certainty or worth.¹⁸ When people feel less secure, they become less tolerant of those whose views, perspectives, or beliefs are different from their own. Yet these findings themselves beg the question of why insecurity leads to intolerance toward Jews.

The current line of research examines the psychological underpinnings of prejudice and ethnic discord in the context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict based on the Modern Antisemitism-Israel Model (MASIM).¹⁹ The MASIM was designed based on a juxtaposition of Terror Management Theory (TMT),²⁰ and modern prejudice theory.²¹ Specifically, the present study tested the hypotheses that uniquely human fears of death serve to perpetuate expressions of antisemitism and anti-Israeli sentiment as expressed in the BDS (Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions) movement against Israel.

17 Cf. E. L. Glaeser, "The Political Economy of Hatred," *Quarterly Journal of Economics* 120, no. 1 (2005): 45–86.

18 Cf. G. L. Cohen, J. Aronson, and C. M. Steele, "When Beliefs Yield to Evidence: Reducing Biased Evaluation by Affirming the Self," *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin* 26, no. 9 (2000): 1151–64.

19 Cf. F. Cohen et al., "The Modern Anti-Semitism Israel Model: An Empirical Relationship between Modern Anti-Semitism and Opposition to Israel," *Conflict and Communication Online* 10 (2011): 1–16.

20 Cf. J. Greenberg, T. Pyszczynski, and S. Solomon, "The Causes and Consequences of a Need for Self-Esteem: A Terror Management Theory," in *Public Self and Private Self*, ed. R. F. Baumeister (New York: Springer, 1986), 189–212.

21 Cf. D. O. Sears and D. R. Kinder, "Racial Tensions and Voting in Los Angeles," in *Los Angeles: Viability and Prospects for Metropolitan Leadership*, ed. W. Z. Hirsch (New York: Praeger, 1971), 51–88.

Terror Management Theory

Death Denial

According to terror management theory, human beings, like all other animals, are driven to survive. However, because of their complex cognitive capabilities—specifically, the ability to think abstractly and symbolically, culminating in explicit self-consciousness—humans are uniquely aware of the inevitability of death and the ever-present potential for lethal experiences, which creates the potential for paralyzing terror. Terror is the emotional manifestation of the self-preservation instinct in an animal intelligent enough to know that it will someday die.²²

TMT posits that to “manage” this potentially debilitating terror, humans created cultural worldviews: symbolic conceptions of reality shared by individuals in a group. Cultural worldviews minimize death anxiety by imbuing the world with order, meaning, and permanence, and by providing a set of standards of valued behavior that, if satisfied, confers self-esteem and ultimately death transcendence through symbolic and/or literal immortality. Thus, from the perspective of TMT, individuals manage their terror by maintaining faith in the cultural worldview and living up to the standards of value that are part of that worldview.

Cultural Worldview

Though the cultural worldview is treated as absolute reality by those who subscribe to it, it is actually a fragile social construction²³ requiring continual validation from others in order to be sustained, especially when confronted with reminders of mortality. This validation occurs mainly through the process of social consensus.²⁴ Thus, the mere existence of people with similar worldviews bolsters individuals’ faith in the validity of their own worldview, thereby increasing its effectiveness as an anxiety buffer. Likewise, the mere existence of people with

²² Cf. G. Zilboorg, “Fear of Death,” *Psychoanalytic Quarterly* 12 (1943): 465–75.

²³ Cf. P. L. Berger and T. Luckman, *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1967); G. J. McCall and J. L. Simmons, *Identities and Interactions* (New York: Free Press, 1966).

²⁴ Cf. L. Festinger, “A Theory of Social Comparison Processes,” *Human Relations* 7 (1954): 117–40; H. H. Kelley, “Attribution Theory in Social Psychology,” *Nebraska Symposium on Motivation* 15 (1967): 192–238.

dissimilar worldviews threatens individuals' faith in their own worldview, thereby undermining its effectiveness as an anxiety buffer. As such, people generally prefer ideas and people that conform to their worldviews and derogue ideas and people that deviate from them.

Cultural Worldview and Antisemitism

TMT may be particularly useful for understanding antisemitism because outbreaks of antisemitism have often occurred following major social disruptions—military defeats, epidemic lethal disease, and massive economic deterioration. In all cases, either death, or some threat to people's most cherished beliefs, or both become salient. TMT suggests that under such circumstances, many people will attempt to protect themselves by affirming their core values. Jews' survival, their financial success, and their unique moral and religious beliefs threaten the worldview of others. This threat is parried by denigrating Jews (i.e., expressing antisemitic attitudes).

The basis for predicting cultural hostility toward Jews includes all the well-established reasons for outgroup hostility, in addition to some singular ones. Outgroups might not share the same attitudes and beliefs as in-groups; outgroups compete for resources; outgroups are perceived as more different from in-groups than they really are; outgroups are often seen as less deserving of trust than in-groups; and so forth.²⁵ Indeed, many of the classic stereotypes of Jews fit these phenomena like a glove ("Jews are clannish, grasping," if a common example). This generic outgroup hostility begins to explain why they are potentially threatening.

In support of this view, Greenberg et al. (Study 1)²⁶ demonstrated that, consistent with TMT predictions, when Christians thought about their own death (mortality salience) their trait ratings of fellow Christians became more positive and their trait ratings of Jews became more negative. Across all measures, the

25 Cf. the classic work by G. W. Allport, *The Nature of Prejudice* (Cambridge: Addison-Wesley, 1954); M. B. Brewer, "In-Group Bias in the Minimal Intergroup Situation: A Cognitive-Motivational Analysis," *Psychological Bulletin* 86, no. 2 (1979): 307–24; M. Rokeach, "Prejudice, Concreteness of Thinking, and Reification of Thinking," *Journal of Abnormal & Social Psychology* 46, no. 1 (1951): 83–91; H. Tajfel, "Cognitive Aspects of Prejudice," *Journal of Social Issues* 25, no. 4 (1969): 79–97, and many others all attest to these processes.

26 Cf. J. Greenberg et al., "Evidence for Terror Management Theory II: The Effects of Mortality Salience on Reactions to Those Who Threaten or Bolster the Cultural Worldview," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 58 (1990): 308–18.

Christian was rated more positively than the Jew only in the mortality salient condition. Similarly, mortality salience led American college students to increase their agreement with the statement that “the holocaust in Nazi Germany was God’s punishment for the Jews.”²⁷

While TMT paints a grim picture of people in general, it cannot completely explain the history of pervasive victimization suffered by Jews from antiquity to the modern day. From a TMT perspective, the straightforward explanation for antisemitism is simple—when focused on their own mortality and in need of the protections that their worldviews provide, non-Jews may become more hostile toward Jews, because Jews represent a challenge to their worldviews by being out-group members. There are quite a large number of religious and historical reasons, however, to believe that Jews are potentially more threatening than other outgroups and may indeed constitute a unique cultural threat. The suggestion that Jews pose a unique threat remains true today to the point that it caused the American delegates at last year’s OSCE (Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe) meeting on contemporary antisemitism to insist that antisemitism be recognized as a unique form of prejudice.²⁸

Subtle Modern Prejudices

The tenor of most TMT research suggests that reminders of death will increase prejudice and hostility toward different others. However, although blatant forms of antisemitism do exist, prejudice in general is often stigmatized. As such, people may often try to deny or hide their prejudices. Although a person may appear friendly and tolerant, hostility may be lurking not far from the surface. The terms *modern* or *symbolic racism* were developed because people stopped saying “Blacks are despicable and should not be allowed in our schools or restaurants.” Instead, they simply opposed government policies to promote racial equality, and they opposed candidates supporting those policies.²⁹

27 R. Kunzendorf et al., “Repressed Self-Consciousness of Death and Insensitivity to Religious Genocide,” unpublished manuscript, (1992, typescript), as cited in J. Schimel et al., “Stereotypes and Terror Management: Evidence That Mortality Salience Enhances Stereotypic Thinking and Preferences,” *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 77 (1999): 907.

28 For a complete review, see Cohen et al., “Modern Anti-Semitism and Anti-Israeli Attitudes”; idem., “The Modern Anti-Semitism Israel Model”; and R. S. Wistrich, “Waging War on Judeophobia Old and New,” *Haaretz*, July 31, 2003, <https://www.haaretz.com/1.5354050>.

29 Cf. D. R. Kinder and T. Mendelberg, “Cracks in American Apartheid: The Political Impact of Prejudice among Desegregated Whites,” *Journal of Politics* 57 (1995): 402–24; J. B. McConahay,

Just as people veil their racism and anti-Black prejudice (e.g., by opposing busing and affirmative action), people may similarly veil their antisemitism by opposing Jews' national aspirations. If one is a racist, opposing affirmative action is a safe way to express it; if one is an antisemite, opposing Israel is a safe way to express it. For example, Israel has been involved with numerous wars over the last sixty years. Some of them have been offensive, while others have been defensive. Unfortunately, though, even Israeli wars of self-defense may be twisted into evidence of Israeli imperialism and oppression and the "racist" nature of Zionism.³⁰

The Modern Antisemitism-Israel Model (MASIM)

The Modern Antisemitism-Israel Model is a juxtaposition of TMT and modern prejudice theory. The MASIM predicts that when mortality is salient, Jews are commonly perceived as threatening to one's worldview because they are different from non-Jews in their beliefs and behaviors, thus leading to an increase in antisemitism, which can manifest itself in two ways. It can develop into expressions of antisemitism such as verbal slurs, defamation of property, or bodily harm; or, because prejudice (antisemitism) is stigmatized, it can manifest itself through the application of double standards, demonization, and delegitimization (a product of double standards and demonization) of Israel, the Jewish state. As such, those who harbor antisemitic attitudes may increase hostility to Israel.

The model predicts that mortality salience leads to increased antisemitism, and that increased antisemitism leads to decreased support for Israel. Thus, the model also predicts that antisemitism may partially mediate effects of mortality salience on attitudes toward Israel. Such mediation, however, is predicted to be only partial because the model also predicts that mortality salience can increase opposition to Israel for reasons having nothing to do with antisemitism. This is because Israel, as a combatant for over sixty years, may be regarded as perpetrating human rights violations. Mortality salience activates worldview defenses, and worldviews typically include moral codes. For these reasons, mortality fears

"Modern Racism, Ambivalence, and the Modern Racism Scale," in *Prejudice, Discrimination, and Racism*, ed. J. F. Dovidio and S. L. Gaertner (San Diego: Academic Press, 1986), 91–125; J. B. McConahay and J. C. Hough, "Symbolic Racism," *Journal of Social Issues* 32 (1976): 23–45; Sears and Kinder, "Racial Tensions."

³⁰ Cf. J. Kotek, "Anti-Semitic Motifs in Belgian Anti-Israel Propaganda," in *Anti-Semitism Worldwide* 2001/2 (Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv University, 2003), https://en-humanities.tau.ac.il/sites/humanities_en.tau.ac.il/files/media_server/humanities/kantor/2001.pdf, 26–36.

lead to more punitive attitudes toward those committing moral transgressions.³¹ Mortality salience, therefore, may decrease support for Israel due to heightened moral sensibilities, rather than to the arousal of latent antisemitism.

The model also posits that a reverse causal path exists. Although concern for human rights violations may lead to reduced support for Israel for reasons having nothing to do with antisemitism, it may then actually trigger an increase in antisemitic prejudices (see image 3).

Image 3:Theoretical Model of Antisemitism.

Experimental Studies of Antisemitism

Three experiments conducted by Cohen, Jussim, Harber, and Bhasin³² demonstrated that: (1) participants expressed significantly greater levels of antisemitism and lower levels of pro-Israeli sentiment when reminded of their mortality and when told that they would be caught in the act of lying; (2) antisemitism partially mediated the effects of mortality salience X bogus pipeline manipulation on opposition to Israel; (3) mortality salience increased the perceived size of Israel but not of other countries; and (4) mortality salience increased opposition to Israeli oppression more than it increased opposition to Russian or Indian oppression.

Study 1 included 151 participants from a Rutgers University psychology class (99 females, 52 males; 9 African American, 30 Asian American, 18 Latino, 77

³¹ Cf. Greenberg, "Evidence for Terror Management Theory II."

³² Cf. Cohen et al., "Modern Anti-Semitism and Anti-Israeli Attitudes."

White, 26 “other,”; 96 Christian, 3 Muslim, 2 Buddhist, 19 Hindu, 28 “other”) all of which were given extra credit for their participation. A mortality salience (MS) manipulation was crossed with a “prejudice obvious/bogus pipeline” manipulation. In the MS condition, participants responded to two open-ended questions relating to their own mortality, which read as follows: “Please describe the emotions (in writing) that the thought of your own death arouses in you.” And, “Write down as specifically as you can, what you think will happen to you physically when you die.”

Exam salience (control) participants responded to parallel questions regarding taking an upcoming exam, as follows: “Please describe the emotions that the thought of your next important exam arouses in you.” And, “Write down as specifically as you can, what you think will happen to you physically as you take your next important exam and when it’s over.” Exam salience provided an apt control condition among college students because, as demonstrated in previous TMT studies, exams are an unpleasant as well as anxiety-provoking yet non-lethal event.

The instructions provided to participants in the prejudice obvious condition explicitly stated on the cover page that prejudice toward various groups was being measured. The bogus pipeline condition led participants to believe that any deception on their part (“lying to appear unprejudiced”) would be detected by sophisticated methods developed by psychologists.

Three questionnaires were used to assess blatant expressions of antisemitism, anti-Israeli sentiment, and anti-Palestinian sentiment. The antisemitism (A-S) scale was an updated version of Levinson and Sanford’s *Anti-Semitism Scale* (1944), modified to sample anti-Jewish attitudes with 23 contemporary, and less blatant, attitude items such as, “Jews still think of themselves as God’s Chosen People,” “Jews are more willing than others to use shady practices to get what they want,” and “Jews are just as honest as other businesspeople” (reverse coded). The attitudes toward Israel scale consisted of 10 questions assessing participants’ levels of pro-Israeli sentiment such as, “I strongly support the Israeli cause.” The attitudes toward the Palestinians scale consisted of 10 questions assessing participants’ levels of pro-Palestinian sentiment. Most items were highly similar to the attitudes toward Israel scale items, such as: “The Palestinians have been oppressed by Israelis for decades,” “I strongly support the Palestinian cause, and “The Palestinians deserve a homeland.” Questions for each scale were scored on a five-point Likert scale. Responses were combined and averaged to create a composite score for each of the three scales.³³

33 Cf. *ibid* for full scales.

Results revealed that antisemitism was negatively correlated with support for Israel ($r = -.42$) and that mortality salience significantly increased self-reported antisemitism but only in the bogus pipeline condition (MS had no effect on support for Palestinians, $p > .1$). One implication of this pattern was that people recognize that hostility to Israel stems from antisemitism (if not, why the need to hide it?). Mediational analyses then revealed that antisemitism partially mediated the effects of MS on attitudes toward Israel. Additionally, reverse mediation demonstrated that opposition to Israel also partially mediated the effects of MS on antisemitism.³⁴

Study 2 employed 161 participants from a Rutgers introductory psychology class (99 female, 62 male; 8 African American, 34 Asian American, 15 Latino, 81 White, 23 “other”; 98 Christian, 13 Hindu, 7 Muslim, 1 Buddhist, 39 “other”) and tested the prediction that mortality salience would increase a subtle measure of antisemitism. Prior research had shown that fear and prejudice often leads people to overestimate the size and power of minority groups.³⁵ More recent evidence showed that a European Union poll found that nearly 60% of those surveyed believed that Israel was the greatest threat to world peace, worse than Iran, North Korea, Syria, and Sudan. Furthermore, caricatures of Israel often present it or its leaders as looming giants.³⁶

Therefore, in Study 2 the dependent variable was the perceived size of Israel and six other countries. Following a reminder of death or of an important exam, people were given seven maps and asked to estimate the size of Israel and each of these six other countries. As predicted, mortality salience significantly increased the perceived size of Israel but had no significant effect on the perceived size of any other country.

Study 3 ruled out (1) the alternative explanation that mortality salience increased hostility toward Israel because mortality salience provokes hostility to any nation perceived as committing obvious human rights violations, and (2) the alternative interpretation that prejudice against Jews has something to do with the fact that the principal experimenter was Jewish, that the study was

³⁴ All participants in all studies completed a self-report mood scale (PANAS-X; cf. D. Watson and A. Clark, “Affects Separable and Inseparable: On the Hierarchical Arrangement of the Negative Affects,” *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 62, no. 3 [1992]: 489–505) to assess the affective consequences of the MS induction. No significant effects for affect due to MS manipulations were found in any of the present studies.

³⁵ Cf. Allport, *The Nature of Prejudice*; J. H. Robb, *Working-Class Anti-Semite* (London: Tavistock, 1954).

³⁶ Cf. J. Kotek, “Major Anti-Semitic Motifs in Arab Cartoons,” Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs, issued June 1, 2004, accessed October 28, 2020, <http://www.jcpa.org/phas/phas-21.htm>.

done in a Jewish professor's lab and that the obvious aim of the studies was in assessing feeling against Jews.

In order to increase the generalizability of this research, this study did not examine college students. Rather, an Indian research assistant surveyed 235 patients (and those accompanying them; average age 45; 155 female, 80 male; 6 African American, 6 Asian American, 19 Latino, 196 White, 8 "other"; 200 Christian, 3 Muslim, 4 Buddhist, 26 "other") of a local non-Jewish, Indian physician while in the waiting area of either of her two offices. Participants were randomly assigned to either a mortality salience or an aversive pain control induction and were asked to recommend punishments of Russia, India, or Israel for (identical) human rights violations. Mortality salience increased willingness to punish Israeli moral transgressions more than it increased willingness to punish Russian or Indian transgressions. Furthermore, despite the fact that an Indian ran the study in an Indian doctor's office and assessed attitudes toward India, post hoc analyses showed that mortality salience had no effect on India. Taken together, these studies provided preliminary empirical support of the MASIM.

Demonization, Double Standards, and Delegitimization

Based on the finding of Cohen et al., it seems likely that hostility toward Jews and Israel in response to reminders of death will often be expressed in subtle and indirect ways that are plausibly interpretable as something other than prejudice. One way to unveil modern antisemitism has come to be known as the "3D" test—double standards, demonization, and delegitimization.³⁷ The results of the Cohen et al. study showed that mortality salience increases the application of double standards to Israel by showing it increased support for punishing Israeli transgressions more than those of other countries.

A follow-up study³⁸ tested the model by examining demonization and delegitimization. Demonization is the classification of a person or group as evil, thereby justifying or legitimizing either verbal slurs or physical violence. Once demonized, the individual or group is denied humane behavior and human respect. Types of demonization include dehumanization (e.g., depiction of the group as savages, insects, beasts, or monsters), negative trait characterization

37 Cf. N. Sharansky, "3D Test of Anti-Semitism: Demonization, Double Standards, Delegitimization," *Jewish Political Studies Review* 16, no. 3–4 (Fall 2004), <https://www.jcpa.org/phas/phas-sharansky-f04.htm>.

38 Cf. F. Cohen, "Do Political Cartoons Reflect Antisemitism?" *Journal for the Study of Antisemitism* 4 (2012): 141–64.

(e.g., aggressors, idiots, lazy); out-casting (i.e., violators of social norms, murderers or terrorists) and rejected political labels (i.e., Nazis, communists, socialists).³⁹ Throughout history, demonization has been used by groups and nations as a tool of exploitation and to justify aggression. For example, the perpetrators of genocide often (e.g., Cambodia, Darfur, Germany, Rwanda, and Turkey) created a political atmosphere supportive of mass murder by demonizing their intended victims.

Delegitimization means causing something to appear illegitimate or invalid. Borrowing from Bar-Tal's definition,⁴⁰ delegitimization is the denial of some entity's right to exist because that entity is inherently immoral. Delegitimized groups are seen as transgressors of basic human norms or values and are therefore characterized as bad and ultimately evil. Demonization is often used in the service of delegitimization—if "they" are merely beasts or insects, or if "their" behavior is sufficiently revolting or immoral, then "they" do not deserve the right to exist.

Empirical Findings

Cohen⁴¹ tested the MASIM through the hypothesis that expressions of hostility toward Israel will be magnified by a mortality salience induction even in the absence of bogus pipeline conditions. Therefore, demonization of Israel was assessed through obtaining participants' impressions of two political cartoons. Political cartoons typically use visual metaphors and caricatures to draw attention to important social and political issues with a humorous or emotional picture.

Political cartoonists in the Arab media often depict non-Arab countries and their leaders as exterminators of the Muslim world.⁴² And in a Western media outlet, a popular British cartoon that depicts former Prime Minister Ariel Sharon eating babies is a form of demonization. This cartoon draws heavily on the medieval Jewish blood libels in which Jews were accused of murdering non-Jewish

³⁹ Cf. D. Bar-Tal and A. W. Kruglanski, *The Social Psychology of Knowledge* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988); D. Bar-Tal, "Causes and Consequences of Delegitimization: Models of Conflict and Ethnocentrism," *Journal of Social Issues* 46, no. 1 (1990): 65–81; idem, *Group Beliefs: A Conception for Analyzing Group Structure, Processes and Behavior* (New York: Springer, 1990).

⁴⁰ Cf. Bar-Tal and Kruglanski, *The Social Psychology of Knowledge*.

⁴¹ Cf. Cohen, "Do Political Cartoons Reflect Antisemitism?"

⁴² Cf. I. Marcus and B. Crook, "US Soldier Is Rapist and Rice Is 'Exterminator,' US committing 'Ethnic Cleansing,'" *Palestinian Media Watch*, issued November 22, 2004, accessed June 8, 2012.

children in order to use their blood to prepare Passover matzos. There are many other examples of modern political cartoons portraying Israel and Israelis as Nazis, animals, insects, or cannibals.⁴³

These cartoons are striking in several regards. First, on the surface, they seem to reflect the virulent type of loathing that often characterizes deep-seated bigotries. Second, they were obtained from mainstream presses from a variety of countries (American, British, Egyptian). Third, many have a haunting similarity in substance, style, and motif to Nazi-era cartoons depicting Jews in a manner widely recognized as reflecting the most virulent form of antisemitism.

The vile nature of these cartoons may suggest that antisemitic attitudes may run wide and deep, and they raise the possibility that these cartoons reflect more than mere opposition to Israel. While it is possible that other countries, cultures, or peoples are similarly depicted as widely and as frequently in such a revolting manner, these real-world examples are also consistent with the perspective suggesting that hostility to Israel may be expressed with such virulence that it is most likely powered, at least in part, by antisemitism. Thus, one purpose of this study was to assess whether mortality salience increases support for the anti-Israeli political cartoons more than for those of another country (Path 1 X 2 of the image 3 model).

Study 3 therefore tested the hypothesis that expressions of hostility toward the Jewish state would be magnified by a mortality salience induction even in the absence of bogus pipeline conditions.

One-hundred and fifty-two Rutgers University students assessed a subtle expression of antisemitism and anti-Israel sentiment and opposition to Israel in the form of demonization. Participants included 97 females and 54 males. Ten identified themselves as African American, 26 as (non-Chinese) Asian American, 17 as Latino, 82 as White, and 12 as belonging to other ethnic groups. One hundred and four identified themselves as belonging to one of the many Christian faiths, 12 as Hindu, 5 as Muslim, 1 as (non-Chinese) Buddhist, and 29 as “other.”

Participants were randomly assigned to either a mortality salience or an aversive pain control induction and were then asked to read a short vignette discussing either Israeli brutality toward Palestinians or Chinese brutality toward a group of monks. Participants were then shown impressions of two offensive political cartoons depicting the Israeli leader eating Palestinian babies (see image 4) and a Jew atop the world with a bleeding Arab surrendering beneath (see image 5).

43 Cf. Kotek, “Major Anti-Semitic Motifs in Arab Cartoons.”

Image 4: Cartoon depicting PM Sharon eating Palestinian children. Al-Hayat al-Jadida, March 22, 2004. Source: Cohen et al., “The Modern Anti-Semitism Israel Model,” 8.

Image 5: Cartoon depicting Chinese president eating Tibetan children. Source: Cohen et al., “The Modern Anti-Semitism Israel Model,” 9.

Two parallel cartoons of the Chinese leader eating Tibetan babies (see image 6) and a Chinese man atop the world with a bleeding Tibetan surrendering beneath served as the control conditions (see image 7).

Image 6: Cartoon depicting victorious Jew atop bleeding world with a surrendering Arab beneath. Al-Hayat al-Jadida, May 14, 2005. Source: Cohen et al., “The Modern Anti-Semitism Israel Model,” 8.

Image 7: Cartoon depicting victorious Chinese man atop bleeding world with a surrendering Tibetan beneath. Source: Cohen et al., “The Modern Anti-Semitism Israel Model,” 9.

Participants were asked to indicate on a scale of 1 to 5 how “justified” they thought each cartoon was. Results showed that mortality salience in conjunction

with a bogus pipeline manipulation increased perceived justification for offensive political cartoons of Israel but not China (effects were significant for both the leadership cartoon and the world cartoon). That the bogus pipeline was needed to reveal this effect suggests that, in fact, a cartoon of Ariel Sharon eating babies is a relatively obvious assessment of antisemitism.

Anti-Israel Demonstrations on College Campuses

The BDS movement was designed as a peaceful campaign that attempts to put economic and political pressure on Israel to comply with Palestinian demands for an end to occupation and the rights of Palestinian return as stipulated in UN resolution 194,⁴⁴ but for Jewish students the movement has proven to be anything but peaceful. Based on the findings of Cohen et al., it seems likely that hostility toward Jews and Israel in response to reminders of death will often be expressed in subtle and indirect ways that are plausibly interpretable as something other than prejudice. Wars, civil unrest, police shootings, riots, and pandemics have served to remind people on a daily basis of the finitude of their lives.

The past decade has seen an unprecedented rise in the BDS movement. In the early part of the decade, anti-Israel faculty members at the University of California, Santa Cruz supported the Muslim Student Association (MSA) campaigns boycotting and harassing Jewish and pro-Israel students, thus creating a threatening environment for many Jewish students at the university.⁴⁵ In response to the need to protect Jewish students from antisemitic harassment, the Department of Education's Office of Civil Rights (OCR) instituted new policies of protecting Jewish students from antisemitic harassment to ensure that university programs and activities are free from discrimination of race, color, or national origin. The incident at UC Santa Cruz was only one of many. This situation has become so dire that just this month in response to harassment complaints by a Jewish graduate, New York University was forced to reaffirm these policies. By executive order from President Donald Trump, universities must consider the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) definition of antisemitism. Universities

⁴⁴ Cf. "Palestinian Civil Society Call for BDS," issued July 9, 2005, accessed December 15, 2020, <https://bdsmovement.net/call>.

⁴⁵ Cf. T. Rossman-Benjamin, "Fighting on the Front Lines: Anti-Semitism at the University of California and Efforts to Combat it," *Israel Affairs* 18 (2021): 485–501.

must be able to recognize and define all forms of antisemitism, including harassment of pro-Israel groups, considered a contemporary form of antisemitism.⁴⁶

The most recent study⁴⁷ is an extended conceptual replication of Cohen et al., Study 3 which tested the MASIM through the hypothesis that expressions of hostility toward Israel will be magnified by a mortality salience induction even in the absence of bogus pipeline conditions. Prejudice is more likely to be expressed when it is “safe” to do so—when one has plausible reasons other than prejudice for acting in a prejudicial manner.⁴⁸ One such manifestation is punishing transgressors. “Why are we punishing them? Not because we are prejudiced, but because they have committed an immoral act.”

If the BDS movement is a manifestation of our morals leading us to oppose human rights violations, then we should punish any transgressor nation through sanctions, boycotts, economic embargoes/divestments, and even war. Thus, one purpose of this study was to test the hypothesis that when we encounter reminders of death, we reaffirm our sense of belief in a moral world order by more strongly demanding that human rights violators be punished. Thus mortality salience should lead people to more strongly supporting a BDS movement against any country committing human rights violations.

Hypotheses

- H1: If mortality salience increases our sense of belief in a moral world order, then mortality salience should increase people’s support for the BDS movement (imposing sanctions, boycotts, economic embargoes/divestments, and even war) against all countries committing transgressions.
- H2: If BDS is indeed an expression of prejudice then mortality salience should disproportionately increase support for punishing Israel. This is because there are two separate routes by which mortality salience may in-

⁴⁶ Cf. U.S. Department of Education’s Office for Civil Rights (OCR)’s letter to the New York University, issued September 25, 2020, accessed December 15, 2020, <https://mesana.org/pdf/NYU-OCR-Resolution-Agreement-9-25-20-With-Watermark.pdf>.

⁴⁷ Presented here in its entirety; cf. F. Cohen, and G. Ritorto, “A Psychological Understanding of the BDS Movement on College Campuses,” unpublished manuscript (2018, typescript). This study was originally conducted for the purposes of an undergraduate honors thesis. Participants constituted a sample of convenience recruited from various clubs and classes and thus is limited. The results however are compelling enough that they are worthy of discussion with the acknowledgement that further research is needed.

⁴⁸ Cf. e.g. McConahay and Hough, “Symbolic Racism”; T. D. Nelson, *The Psychology of Prejudice* (Needham Heights: Allyn & Bacon, 2002).

crease opposition to Israel: the desire to reaffirm the world as a moral place *and* an increase in antisemitism. Therefore, our model predicts that the increase in support for punishing Israel in response to mortality salience should exceed the increase in support for punishing other countries that commit the same moral transgressions.

Methods

One hundred and forty participants were recruited from the CUNY College of Staten Island, 4 were dropped for missing data. Participants received no credit for their participation, which lasted about 15 minutes. Participants included 80 females and 53 males (3 unidentified). Nine identified themselves as African American, 12 as Asian American, 31 as Latino, 68 as White, and 15 as belonging to other ethnic groups (1 unidentified). Eighty-seven identified themselves as belonging to one of the many Christian faiths, 8 as Hindu, 13 as Muslim, 5 as Buddhist, and 23 as “other.”

Design and Procedure

Participants were approached on campus and randomly assigned to one of the four experimental conditions in this study’s 2 (mortality salience: Death v. Pain) X 2 (target country: Russia v. Israel) independent groups design.

- *Mortality salience.* In the mortality salience (MS) condition, participants responded to two open-ended questions relating to their own mortality, which read as follows: “Please describe the emotions that the thought of your own death arouses in you.” And, “Write down as specifically as you can what you think will happen to you physically when you die.”
- *Pain salience.* In the pain salience (PS) condition (control), participants responded to parallel questions regarding thoughts of pain as follows: “Please describe the emotions that the thought of intense physical pain arouses in you.” And, “Write down as specifically as you can what you think will happen to you as you experience pain and when it’s over.” Pain salience provided an apt control condition because, as demonstrated in previous TMT studies, thoughts of physical pain are an unpleasant as well as anxiety-provoking, yet non-lethal, event.

- *PANAS-X*. Given that previous TMT research demonstrated that MS manipulations emerge after a short delay and distraction,⁴⁹ following the MS manipulation participants completed the PANAS-X⁵⁰ to assess the affective consequences (or lack thereof) of the MS manipulation, and a short literary passage used in previous studies to provide the delay and distraction.
- *Readings and questions*. Participants read one of two versions of an article concerning human rights abuses based on one published by Amnesty International (Amnesty International, 2002). Both versions of the article were identical, except for our alterations locating the event to Palestine, or the Ukraine and the perpetrator nation as Israel, or Russia, respectively (see Appendix A for the Israel/Russian version of the article).

After reading the article, participants were presented with six scenarios describing possible punishments or actions to take against the human rights violator (see Appendix A). Participants were then asked to indicate how much they agreed with the punishment on a five-point Likert scale (1 = “disagree” and 5 = “agree”). These items demonstrated good internal reliability ($\alpha = .81$). In order to keep participants’ score on the original 1–5 point scale, we summed participants’ responses to the 6 sanctions questions and divided by 6. The average constituted each participant’s score on this scale. Higher scores indicated stronger support for BDS of the described country committing the human rights transgressions. Participants then completed a demographics questionnaire and were then debriefed, thanked, and dismissed.

Results and Discussion

To determine if mortality salience affected mood, we performed analyses of variance on an abridged version of the PANAS-X (Watson and Clark, 1992) including Positive Affect and Negative Affect. There were no significant effects of mortality salience on any affect scale or subscale (all p values $> .1$). Additionally, we conducted a test for outliers. We did not find any.

The main analyses consisted of a 2 (mortality vs. pain salience) $\times$ 2 (country: Israel vs. Russia) ANOVA, with support for BDS as the outcome.⁵¹ The fundamen-

⁴⁹ Cf. J. Greenberg et al., “Role of Consciousness and Accessibility of Death-Related Thoughts in Mortality Salience Effects,” *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 67, no. 4 (1994): 627–37.

⁵⁰ Cf. Watson and Clark, “Affects Separable and Inseparable.”

⁵¹ Preliminary analyses indicated no effects by gender or ethnicity.

tal predictions of this study were that: (1) mortality salience will increase BDS attitudes toward any country committing human rights violations; and (2) mortality salience will selectively amplify BDS support for punishing of Israel. These predictions were optimally tested by a one degree of freedom a priori contrast.⁵² Reflecting the mortality salience increases support for sanctions hypothesis, Russia pain salience, Russia mortality and Israel pain salience each received contrast coefficients of -1. Reflecting the mortality salience selectively amplifies support for punishing Israel hypothesis, Israel mortality salience received a contrast coefficient of 3.

The ANOVA produced a significant main effect for country, $F(1, 132) = 9.36$, $p = .003$, which was qualified by a significant interaction between mortality salience and country, $F(1, 132) = 14.72$, $p < .001$ (there was no significant mortality salience main effect). Cell means are presented in Table 1.

	Pain Salience				Mortality salience			
Country	N	M	SD	CC	N	M	SD	CC
Israel	33	2.92	.90	-1	37	3.61	.53	3
Russia	33	3.03	.68	-1	33	2.75	.87	-1

Table 1: Cell Means, Standard Deviations, and Contrast Coefficients (CC) for testing Study 5 Predictions. Numbers in each cell are, respectively, participants (N), cell mean (M), standard deviation (SD), and a priori contrast coefficient (CC). Higher means reflect support for stronger sanctions.

More important, the a priori contrast was significant, $t(132) = 5.12$, $p < .001$, effect size, $r = .39$.⁵³ This contrast, therefore, strongly supported the hypotheses that mortality salience generally increases support for punishing transgressors but that it also increased support for punishing Israel more than it increased support for punishing the other countries.

Post hoc contrasts further supported this conclusion. The effect of mortality salience on increasing support for punishing countries committing human rights violations was most strongly apparent in the Israel condition. Within this condition, those who considered their own mortality expressed greater support for punishing Israel ($M = 3.64$, $SD = .55$) than did those who considered thoughts

⁵² Cf. R. L. Rosenthal and R. Rosnow, *Essentials of Behavioral Research: Methods and Data Analysis* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1991).

⁵³ Levene's tests for homogeneity of variance were significant $p < .05$ as such analyses adjusting for unequal variances were conducted and remained significant $t(99) = -6.24$, $p < .001$. Cf. also A. Lenhard and W. Lenhard, "Calculation of Effect Sizes," *Psychometrika*, issued 2016, accessed October 28, 2020, https://www.psychometrika.de/effect_size.html.

of pain ($M = 2.92$, $SD = .90$), $t(68) = -4.15$, $p < .001$).⁵⁴ Mortality salience did not significantly increase support for sanctioning Russia, $t(64) = 1.41$, $p > .10$.⁵⁵

This pattern is particularly valuable for revealing the role of antisemitism in anti-Israeli sentiment. If antisemitic prejudice did not increase support for BDS attitudes toward Israel, the mortality salience manipulation would likely have led to an increase in support for BDS for both transgressors equally. In the mortality salience condition, antisemitism selectively increased support for punishing Israel.

Conclusion

The main purpose of this research has been to understand the nature of antisemitism (i.e., why it endures, is so widespread, and takes so many different and even contradictory forms), and to link antisemitism to opposition to Israel. The research assumes that Jews represent a worldview threat, and hostility toward Jews and toward Israel arises from this threat. If Jews represent such a threat, then hostility toward Jews and toward Israel should be greater when worldviews are more valued and more needed—that is, in the shadow of mortality fears. All five of the presented studies confirmed this formula by testing the hypothesis that expressions of hostility toward the Jewish state would be magnified by a mortality salience induction.

According to the Modern Israel Anti-Semitism Model (MASIM), mortality salience increases antisemitism and that antisemitism often manifests as hostility toward Israel. Study 1 showed that mortality salience led to greater levels of antisemitism and lowered support for Israel. This effect occurred only in a bogus pipeline condition, indicating that social desirability masks hostility toward Jews and Israel. Study 2 showed that mortality salience caused Israel, but no other country, to perceptually loom large. Study 3 showed that mortality salience increased punitiveness toward Israel's human rights violations more than it increased hostility toward the identical human rights violations committed by India or Russia. Study 4 showed that mortality salience increased people's agreement with support for political cartoons demonizing Israel but not China. Study 5 showed that mortality salience increased support of BDS for Israel's human rights violations committed against Palestinians more than it increased support

⁵⁴ Levene's tests for homogeneity of variance were significant $p < .05$ as such analyses adjusting for unequal variances were conducted and remained significant $t(50) = -4.03$, $p < .001$.

⁵⁵ Levene's tests for homogeneity of variance were significant $p < .05$ as such analyses adjusting for unequal variances were conducted and remained significant $t(60) = 1.41$, $p > .10$.

of BDS for Russia's identical human rights violations committed against the Ukraine.⁵⁶ Collectively, results suggest that Jews constitute a unique cultural threat to many people's worldviews, that antisemitism causes hostility to Israel, and that hostility to Israel may feed back to increase antisemitism.

Even with media reports of antisemitism on the rise, social psychological research has yet to resume its once prominent emphasis on understanding antisemitism.⁵⁷ This is, however, an unfortunate state of affairs, which the present paper begins to rectify. The research presented extended the findings of Cohen et al.⁵⁸ and Cohen⁵⁹ and provided insight into the psychological underpinnings of the BDS movement. First, it demonstrated that under the right (wrong) conditions, antisemitism readily emerges. Denials of antisemitism, therefore, cannot necessarily be taken at face value. Opposition to Israel is a good/convenient method for expressing antisemitism without seeming to do so.

Second, the hypotheses derived from the MASIM model were built on the original tenets of terror management theory and presented preliminary experimental evidence to support the model. Given the recent rise in the salience of a deadly pandemic coupled with violent acts against civilians in the West (e.g., World Trade Center, Spanish train attacks, London bus bombings, police shootings, riots, etc.), it seems likely that mortality salience has been chronically raised. If so, then the current model provides a strong explanation for recent acts of antisemitism.⁶⁰

The MASIM contributes one explanation toward establishing the relationship between antisemitism and opposition to Israel. Because war, conflict, and extreme economic conditions (unprecedented since the Great Depression)⁶¹ raise mortality salience concerns, antisemitic attitudes may be triggered. Higher levels of antisemitism, in turn, increase hostility toward Israel. And bitter public condemnation directed at Israel may feed back to increase antisemitism. The

⁵⁶ Study 5 is limited due to unequal variances, however these limitations were taken into account when conducting statistical analyses and adjusted for.

⁵⁷ Cf. H. Bachner, "Anti-Jewish Motifs in the Public Debate on Israel, Sweden: A Case Study," in *Anti-Semitism Worldwide 2001/2* (Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv University, 2003), https://en-humanities.tau.ac.il/sites/humanities_en.tau.ac.il/files/media_server/humanities/kantor/2001.pdf, 5–25.

⁵⁸ Cf. Cohen et al., "Modern Anti-Semitism and Anti-Israeli Attitudes."

⁵⁹ Cf. Cohen, "Do Political Cartoons Reflect Antisemitism?"

⁶⁰ Cf. M. Kunzelman, "Report: Anti-Semitic Incidents in US Hit Record High in 2019," *ABC News*, May 12, 2020, <https://abcnews.go.com/US/wireStory/report-anti-semitic-incidents-us-hit-record-high-70629134>.

⁶¹ Cf. B. Wills, "US Recession Worst Since Great Depression, Revised Data Show," *Bloomberg News*, August 1, 2009, <http://www.bloomberg.com/apps/news?pid=newsarchive&sid=aNivTjr852TI> [no longer available].

major advances within social psychology over the last 50 years (i.e., since the last major wave of antisemitism research) provide an extraordinary opportunity to understand the sources and consequences of antisemitism. They also will undoubtedly help detect the sometimes veiled manner in which antisemitism is expressed and the conditions under which opposition to Israel reflects and does not reflect antisemitism.

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Appendix A

Please read the following excerpt from Amnesty International's web site and answer the questions on the following page:

The last [GAZA] war in the in the Israeli-Palestinian/ Russian—Ukrainian territories had lasting effects on the status of world peace and humanitarian decisions. The violence and killings in the region over the past four and a half years has brought untold suffering to the Palestinian/Ukrainian and Israeli/Russian civilian populations. More than 3,200 Palestinians/Ukrainians, including more than 600 children and more than 150 women have been killed by Israeli/Russian forces. Most of the victims were unarmed civilians who were not taking part in any armed confrontations. Thousands more have been injured, many of them maimed for life. Amnesty International has repeatedly condemned and campaigned against the killings of civilians.

Since the beginning of the Palestinian/Ukrainian uprising against Israeli/Russian occupation, there has been an increased militarization of the conflict. From the first days of the uprising, the Israeli/Russian army abandoned policing and law enforcement tactics and adopted military measures, generally used in armed conflict. Israelis/Russians routinely used excessive and disproportionate force against civilians, including frequent air-strikes and tank shelling in densely populated Palestinian/Ukrainian residential areas. Large-scale destruction of Palestinian/Ukrainian homes, land and infrastructure, and imposition of military blockades and prolonged curfews kept the Palestinian/Ukrainian population imprisoned in their homes. Armed Palestinian/Ukrainian attacks against Israeli/Russian civilians, which were sporadic before the uprising, became a frequent occurrence. Suicide bombings, shootings, and other attacks on buses, cafes and public places became commonplace.

However, the endless cycle of killings is not the only human rights scandal. The increased militarization of the conflict has resulted in a dramatic deterioration of the human rights situation in the West Bank and Gaza Strip/Ukraine, with unprecedented levels of poverty, unemployment, and health problems. Palestinian/Ukrainian women have borne the brunt of the suffering but their plight has been largely ignored. The multiple violations committed by Israeli/Russian forces in the Occupied/Ukrainian Territories have had grave and long-term consequences for the Palestinian/Ukrainian population and a particularly negative impact on women (as well as children and other vulnerable sectors of Palestinian/Ukrainian society), compounding the pressures and constraints to which Pal-

estinian/Ukrainian women are subject in the traditional Palestinian/Ukrainian patriarchal society.

What types of actions should be taken against Israel/Russia to prevent the human rights violations that have repeatedly occurred in the Palestinian/Ukrainian territories?

1. **Form a National Campaign against Israel/Russia** – American Citizens should rally to demonstrate their opposition towards Israeli/Russian actions.

1	2	3	4	5
Disagree				Agree

2. **Citizens’ Boycott** – US citizens band together to boycott all Israeli/Russian products.

1	2	3	4	5
Disagree				Agree

3. **Citizens’ Boycott** – US citizens band together to boycott all Israeli/Russian products.

1	2	3	4	5
Disagree				Agree

4. **Withdrawal of Aid** – The US government should conduct a total military and economic aid withdrawal from Israel/Russia until these human violations are no longer occurring.

1	2	3	4	5
Disagree				Agree

5. **Governmental Economic Bans** – The US government should ban all Israeli/Russian products and goods.

1	2	3	4	5
Disagree				Agree

6. *Installation of a New Government* – The US and the United Nations should remove the current Israeli/Russian government and replace it with a government that cares about the welfare of **all** of its citizens.

1	2	3	4	5
Disagree				Agree