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Antisemitic Perceptions and Jewish Sense of Belonging

The beginning of 2017 was characterized by a surge of bomb threats to Jewish community centers and synagogues throughout the United States. The count was in the hundreds. “These are regular occurrences now, with a frequency that’s been increased and on a scale that’s been increased,” Elise Jarvis, associate director for law enforcement outreach and communal security at the Anti-Defamation League [ADL], told the Guardian.¹ The Jewish public attitude was that “incidents of hate targeting Jewish Americans have been on the rise since the November election, as have incidents targeting Muslims, Mexicans, black Americans and immigrants. [Even though the ADL still] hesitated to link the recent threats ... to election results.”² But many American Jews were panicked and pointed to the extreme right as responsible, although without any proof, because of their support of the newly elected president, Donald Trump.³

It was not a secret that the majority of American Jews were supporters of the Democratic Party and were in favor of Hillary Clinton for presidency over Trump.⁴ So the burst of threats could only confirm their presumptions that liberal life in the US was fading away under the new administration.⁵ An ADL report claimed of a sharp increase in antisemitic violent manifestations—especially of bomb threats and desecration of cemeteries—since Trump was elected in November 2016, apparently proved their fears. But this report was criticized as leaning on unreliable data that only incurred and caused panic about daily antisem-

1 J. Lartey, “Jewish Community Centers in US Receive nearly 50 Bomb Threats in 2017 so far,” *The Guardian*, February 4, 2017, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/feb/04/us-jewish-community-centers-bomb-threats>.

2 Ibid.

3 Cf. E. Strauss, “The JCC Bomb Threats Confirm That Jewish Parents Are Right to Be Afraid,” *Slate*, January 19, 2017, <https://slate.com/human-interest/2017/01/the-jcc-bomb-threats-confirm-that-jewish-parents-are-right-to-be-afraid.html>.

4 Cf. R. Shimoni Stoil, “American Jews Voted 70%–25% in favor of Clinton over Trump, Poll Shows,” *The Times of Israel*, November 10, 2016, <https://www.timesofisrael.com/american-jews-voted-70-25-in-favor-of-clinton-over-trump-poll-shows/>.

5 Cf. M. Smith, “Anonymous Bomb Threats Rattle Jewish Centers Across Eastern U.S.,” *New York Times*, January 9, 2017, <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/01/09/us/bomb-threats-jewish-centers.html>.

itic threats among Jews.⁶ The American Jewish Committee's (AJC) extensive survey from April 2019 reveals that the vast majority of American Jews feel that antisemitism in the US is in its peak over the last decade, even though most of the participants testified that personally they had not experienced any antisemitic manifestations, neither physically nor online.⁷ The Kantor Center, at Tel Aviv University (TAU), which has analyzed antisemitism worldwide over the last twenty-five years, has not identified any major differences in violent antisemitism in the US over the last few years.⁸ This kind of paradox should be studied in depth, and I have chosen to do so by analyzing the well-documented European Jewry's experience.

Reviewing antisemitic violent incidents worldwide reveals that the aftermath of Jewish hatred is constantly thriving. Whilst studying and comparing contemporary antisemitism in EU Member States, several peculiarities, almost paradoxes, can be identified. One of them hints that the level of violent antisemitism, as shown by the number of violent incidents, does not necessarily indicate the level of antisemitic sentiment. It could be considered as a necessary condition in defining antisemitism but undoubtedly not a sufficient one. This article analyzes the contradictory factors that influence the understanding of antisemitism by individuals, organizations, and states using the latest empirical evidence available.

In late 2012, the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) conducted a survey on antisemitism in eight EU Member States (the United Kingdom, France, Germany, Italy, Belgium, Sweden, Hungary, and Latvia).⁹ An extended follow-up survey and research is taking place in 2018, in which thirteen Member States are taking part, including Austria, who did not partici-

⁶ As an expert on violent antisemitism and the researcher in charge in the Kantor Center, TAU, for analyzing antisemitic violence, I have shown that in the five months following the elections, there was no increase in threats or desecration incidents in comparison to the eight previous years of President Obama's administration. Our yearly reports have shown that there were no dramatic changes in violence over the years. Cf. "Annual Reports on Worldwide Antisemitism," Kantor Center for the Study of Contemporary European Jewry, last updated 2020, accessed October 28, 2020, https://en-humanities.tau.ac.il/kantor/research/annual_reports. In March 2017, it was already clear that the majority of the bomb threats were a hoax.

⁷ Cf. "AJC Survey of American Jews on Antisemitism in America," American Jewish Committee, issued October 2019, accessed October 28, 2020, https://www.ajc.org/sites/default/files/pdf/2019-11/2019AntisemitismSurvey-Book_11.19.pdf.

⁸ For data, see the Kantor Center's "Annual Reports on Worldwide Antisemitism."

⁹ Cf. EU Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA), *Discrimination and Hate Crime against Jews in EU Member States: Experiences and Perceptions of Antisemitism*, issued November 8, 2013, accessed October 28, 2020, https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra-2013-discrimination-hate-crime-against-jews-eu-member-states-0_en.pdf.

pate in the original survey.¹⁰ The survey reached out to 5,847 Jews, and the results were published in November 2013. Sixty-six percent of the participants declared that antisemitism in their countries is “a big problem” or “a fairly big problem.” The most concerned group to see antisemitism as a huge problem were the Hungarian Jews (90%), and almost neck-and-neck were the French Jews (85%). On the other hand, in the UK (52%) and Latvia (54%), most of the respondents agreed that antisemitism is “not a very big problem” or “not a problem at all.”¹¹ The survey has shown that the diversity of antisemitic perceptions are not divided along geographic lines.

Although country differences exist, the bigger picture reveals that more than three-quarters (76%) of the overall participants think that antisemitism “has worsened over the past five years in the country where they live.”¹² France and Hungary lead this perception—Hungary with 91% and France with 88%. But also in the UK, where only a minority believed that antisemitism is a real problem, 66% of participants still agreed that the situation has worsened. In Latvia, only 39% claimed so.¹³

In France and Hungary, where according to the FRA survey antisemitism is a considerable problem, the levels of antisemitic violence based on Tel Aviv University [TAU] publications¹⁴ sharply differ. In France, between the years 2009 and 2015, we recorded a yearly average of 142 violent incidents. In Hungary, on the other hand, the seven-year average was around nine incidents only. It seems that violence alone cannot explain the fact that in both countries the sense of insecurity is a major factor in contemporary Jewish life.

In the UK and Latvia, where the Jewish population estimated almost no problems with antisemitism, TAU data reveal an even more astonishing situation: in sharp contrast to Latvia where the recorded average of violent incidents from 2009 until 2015 was only one, the average yearly amount in the UK was 144. The UK infamously holds the European record.

10 Cf. EU Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA), “Major EU Antisemitism Survey Planned for 2018,” issued December 13, 2017, accessed October 28, 2020, <https://fra.europa.eu/en/news/2017/major-eu-antisemitism-survey-planned-2018>. The countries covered are: Austria, Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, the Netherlands, Poland, Spain, Sweden, and the UK.

11 FRA, *Discrimination and Hate Crime*, 16.

12 *Ibid.*

13 Cf. *ibid.*, 17.

14 Data on violent antisemitic events is based mostly on the TAU annual analyses that have been published yearly for the last 26 years by the Kantor Center for the Study of Contemporary European Jewry.

Violent antisemitism is not a problem in Latvia and matches the FRA survey results. In Hungary, with a large Jewish population (the third largest in Europe after France and Britain), almost all the targets were Jewish facilities and memorial sites and not human beings. Would it be right to assume that neither the total sum of violent cases in Hungary nor their nature should be considered as an explanation to the outcome of the survey; that is, antisemitism in Hungary is flourishing and is “a big problem”?¹⁵

The year 2015 presented a new notorious record in murderous antisemitic violence in Europe. Just to mention three: the attack that occurred in Paris on January 9, where an Islamist killed four Jewish shoppers at a kosher supermarket; the attack on the central synagogue in Copenhagen in February where a security guard was murdered and two others were injured by an Islamist gunman; and in Manchester in September, four Jewish boys were brutally beaten and severely injured in an antisemitic attack. Although the state of violent antisemitism in France and the UK has a lot in common, the survey shows that the people in both countries understand the problem differently.

If it is therefore not the extent of violence that generates the same anxiety toward antisemitism, what could France and Hungary—for instance—have in common that makes the Jews there very concerned with “the problem of antisemitism”?

In January 2015, in the wake of the Paris massacres, the French PM, Manuel Valls, recalled the visions of the French Revolution: “The choice was made by the French Revolution in 1789 to recognize Jews as full citizens. To understand what the idea of the republic is about, you have to understand the central role played by the emancipation of the Jews. It is a founding principle.” Valls did not try to defend the current situation in France; on the contrary, he spoke sharp-

15 *Antisemitism Worldwide 2014: General Analysis Draft*, ed. D. Porat (Tel Aviv: Kantor Center of the Study of Contemporary European Jewry, 2014), <https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/images/kantorfull.pdf>; *Antisemitism Worldwide 2013: General Analysis Draft*, ed. Stephen Roth Institute for the Study of Contemporary Antisemitism and Racism (Tel Aviv: Kantor Center of the Study of Contemporary European Jewry, 2013). In Hungary, 14 violent incidents against Jews were recorded in 2013, and 15 in 2014. In 2013, 116 of violent manifestations were recorded in France; in 47 cases persons had been attacked (41% of the cases). One hundred sixty-four incidents were recorded in 2014, 88 (54%) of them targeted persons. In the UK, 95 violent incidents were recorded in 2013, 63 of which (67%) targeted persons. In 2014, the overall violent incidents were 141, 82 (58%) against persons.

ly and bitterly: “If ... 100,000 Jews leave, France will no longer be France. The French Republic will be judged a failure.”¹⁶

Although Valls was known for his warm attitudes toward French Jews, his decisive words should also be understood in connection with the continuous emotional erosion that many French Jews have about the being French citizens and practicing open Judaism at the same time. For many, it was only the tip of the iceberg; a process lasting almost a decade in which Jews felt that they are not only under attack by vast groups of radical Muslims, but that the main political groups, primarily from the French Left abandoned them. A popular Jewish opinion is that there is an unholy—although undeclared publicly—alliance between French radical Left and Muslim extremists against a common enemy—the Jewish community in France for an alleged unequivocal support of Israel.¹⁷ When such a connection is being made, even casual criticism of Israeli policy toward a two-state solution becomes antisemitic in nature and involves calls to Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions [BDS] on Israel, while it is illegal according to French law.¹⁸

Ron Azogui, a member of the Service de Protection de la Communauté Juive [SPCJ] concluded:

Antisemitism in France cannot be considered anymore as a temporary situation associated with the situation in the Middle East; it is a structural problem that has not been fought as such and has not been halted yet. ... Forty percent of racist violence perpetrated in France in 2013 targeted Jews. However, Jews represent less than 1 percent of the French population. ... [We believe] that antisemitic violence has settled and is anchored in society. But the aggravating factor is that French Jews feel isolated in their fight against antisemitism. Aren't the values that are attacked by this scourge are those of a whole nation?¹⁹

Unfortunately, his rhetorical question as well as Valls's remarks are still part of the French Jewish community's common experience.

16 J. Goldberg, “French Prime Minister: If Jews flee, the Republic Will Be a Failure,” *The Atlantic*, January 10, 2015, <https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2015/01/french-prime-minister-warns-if-jews-flee-the-republic-will-be-judged-a-failure/384410/>.

17 In 2015, one of the prominent Jewish intellectuals in France, Shmuel Trigano, expressed this view in his publication: *A Journey Through French Anti-Semitism* (Spring, 2015). For online summaries on Trigano's attitudes, see: <https://jewishreviewofbooks.com/articles/1534/a-journey-through-french-anti-semitism/>, accessed October 28, 2020.

18 Cf. J. Y. Camus, “France,” in *Antisemitism Worldwide 2014: General Analysis Draft*, ed. D. Porat (Tel Aviv: Kantor Center of the Study of Contemporary European Jewry, 2014), <https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/images/kantorfull.pdf>, 63–66.

19 Stephen Roth Institute, *Antisemitism Worldwide 2013*, 52.

In Hungary, we find that the quest for Hungarian national identity in the twenty-first century, the uncertainty about its common values and the place of minorities, including Jews, in this nation-state are central issues in Hungary's discourse today. Dr. Rafi Vago, the renowned scholar, has thus described the situation there:

deep divisions in Hungarian political life [could be found], between the center-right party *Fidesz* [the ruling party], the extremist right wing party, *Jobbik*, and the liberal-left, over Hungary's past. It ... became a test case for the delicate balance and relationship between various parts of Hungarian society, the media and the political spectrum.²⁰

Vago stressed that standing in the center of the conflict was

the need to face the fate of its almost 600,000 Jews who perished in the Holocaust and evaluate the inter-war and war time Horthy regime ... The [recent years] ... became [also] the focal point of strong differences of opinion [about] the rise of antisemitism, and the government's handling of those issues.²¹

Although the number of violent antisemitic incidents in Hungary is relatively small and rare, there are strong feelings among the Jews. "Jews can now feel antisemitism in the streets,"²² stressed Rabbi Schlomo Koves [Slomo Köves], the executive Rabbi of the Unified Hungarian Congregation. Many consider that the bad atmosphere is the result of the nationalistic discourse, especially the revisionism of Hungary's World War II past:

The main danger in Hungary is the attempt to "whitewash" the anti-semitic past, rehabilitate aspects of the Horthy era, emphasize Hungary's alleged loss of sovereignty in March 1944, with the German occupation, thus as attempt to relativize Hungary's role in the destruction of its Jewry.²³

It is not a debate that takes place behind closed doors and in academic circles only, but in the media and in public demonstrations as well. A few examples in short:

²⁰ R. Vago, "Hungary," in *Antisemitism Worldwide 2014: General Analysis Draft*, ed. D. Porat (Tel Aviv: Kantor Center of the Study of Contemporary European Jewry, 2014), <https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/images/kantorfull.pdf>, 54.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Stephen Roth Institute, *Antisemitism Worldwide 2013*, 44.

²³ Ibid.

- In 2014, the government, ruled by *Fidesz*, erected a statue at Freedom Square, showing Germany’s imperial eagle striking down on archangel Gabriel, Hungary’s guardian angel, symbolizing Hungary’s innocence versus Nazi aggression, in commemoration of March 19, 1944, the date of the Nazi occupation of Hungary. Continuing opposition to the statue reflects the attitudes of wide segments of the Hungarian public, not only among Jews, that the statue deflects Hungary’s responsibility for the Holocaust. The leading historian of the Holocaust in Hungary, and Holocaust survivor, Prof. Randolph L. Braham, returned a prestigious state award to the Hungarian government in protest of rewriting Hungary’s history.²⁴
- Another source of dispute is the project of the “House of Fates,” a planned educational center and a Holocaust museum in the eighth district, now home to many Jews. It became the focus of ongoing debates claiming that the project’s aims are not clear, that the voice of the Jewish community has not been taken into consideration.²⁵ Although the dispute has nothing to do with antisemitism per se, and many prominent members of the Jewish community, although not the official ones, are involved in the project, the contemporary opinion among the Jewish leadership in the Federation of Hungarian Jewish Communities [*Mazsihisz*]²⁶—and it is spreading down to the ranks—is of cessation from the government.²⁶

The FRA survey has shown many parallels between French Jewry and Hungarian Jewry that support the analysis above. Although France and Hungary differ in their political systems and civic ethos, the willingness of Jewish citizens to emigrate “because of not feeling safe living there as a Jew” in both countries is the highest according to the FRA survey: 48% of Hungarian Jews and 46% of French

²⁴ Cf. Vago, “Hungary,” 54; R. L. Braham, “Hungary: The Assault on the Historical Memory of the Holocaust,” in *The Holocaust in Hungary: Seventy Years Later*, ed. R. L. Braham and A. Kovacs (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2016), 261–310.

²⁵ Cf. “Budapest Politicians Tour New Holocaust Museum Described as Shocking,” *Hungarian Free Press*, May 7, 2015, <http://hungarianfreepress.com/2015/05/07/budapest-politicians-tour-new-holocaust-museum-described-as-shocking/>; Vago, “Hungary,” 55.

²⁶ For an update on this controversy, see: “High-ranking Fidesz Leader’s Anti-Semitic Comments Shake the Hungarian Jewish Community,” *Hungarian Spectrum*, issued December 1, 2019, accessed October 28, 2020, <https://hungarianspectrum.org/tag/mazsihisz/>. Another controversy was about the anti-George Soros campaign in Hungary that deepened the gap between the Government and the veteran Jewish establishment headed today by Andras Heisler. Cf. R. Ahren, “Decrying ‘Betrayal,’ Hungary Jews Say Netanyahu Ignoring Them,” *The Times of Israel*, July 20, 2017, <https://www.timesofisrael.com/decrying-netanyahu-betrayal-hungary-jews-say-pm-ignoring-them/>.

Jews.²⁷ The feelings of insecurity led to an increasing disbelief in the future of the community and has weakened the sense belonging to the nation as it would be shown later on. While the two countries differ in the overall number of violent antisemitic incidents, the fear of becoming a victim of threats, insults and verbal harassment—important factors in creating an antisemitic environment—is very similar. Sixty-five percent of Hungarian Jews and seventy-six percent of French Jews were worried of being exposed to these kinds of attacks.

The only actual difference was found when they were asked about their worries of being personally attacked. Seventy-one percent of French Jews answered that they are worried, in comparison to forty-three percent of Hungarian Jews. Indeed, this difference could be explained by their specific experiences.²⁸ On the other hand, Hungary has one unique factor—as 66% of respondents emphasized—which is the vast exposure of individuals to antisemitism in the public sphere, first and foremost, by the eagerness of mainstream politicians to adopt publicly antisemitic attitudes and antisemitic rhetoric, something that almost does not exist in French politics.²⁹

On the other side, we have the UK and Latvia. The FRA survey revealed, as was mentioned above, that 52% of UK Jews believe that antisemitism is not, or almost not a problem in Britain. And it is the highest rate among the EU members. The Jewish Policy Research (JPR) concluded in wake of the survey: “[The British Jewish population has] a strong sense of belonging to the UK.”³⁰ There are several empirical indications that support this assumption, for example, 77% of the respondents declared that they “have not considered emigrating” because of their fear of antisemitism.³¹ Knowing that the UK, according to TAU data, has the highest rate of antisemitic violence in Europe, causes one to wonder how is it that only a relatively small proportion of UK respondents to the FRA survey claimed to be worried about being a victim of violence. Thirty-five percent were worried of verbal harassment and twenty-five percent were worried of physical attacks; the smallest rate of all participants in the survey.³² Even though the

27 FRA, *Discrimination and Hate Crime*, 37.

28 Cf. *ibid.*, 33.

29 Cf. *ibid.*, 26.

30 M. Whine, “United Kingdom,” in *Antisemitism Worldwide 2014: General Analysis Draft*, ed. D. Porat (Tel Aviv: Kantor Center of the Study of Contemporary European Jewry, 2014), <https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/images/kantorfull.pdf>, 71.

31 Cf. FRA, *Discrimination and Hate Crime*, 37.

32 Cf. *ibid.*, 33. It is interesting that when asked about their personal experience, the rate of those who have suffered from violence is climbing to 19%. This is above the percentage of Latvia’s respondents (16%) and Italy, with the lowest rate of people who actually suffered from violence (12%).

number of violent antisemitic incidents in Britain is the highest among EU members, the sense of security of the British Jews, and their belief as shown in the survey, of being integrated into the British society, are remarkable.³³

In comparison to France, a considerably lower rate of respondents claimed to be suffering from antisemitic attitudes in the public sphere or at social events. The survey revealed that UK Jews sense that many in the political establishment—at least when it comes to the Conservative Party and the more moderate representatives of the Labour Party—are standing with them in fighting antisemitism and discrimination.³⁴

Concerns and questions have been raised in Britain recently about the future of Jewish existence in the country. The sense of security was diluted in the wake of the murderous antisemitic incidents in 2014 (Brussels), and in 2015 (Paris, Copenhagen, and Manchester), and the hate against the Jews shown in the streets of European capitals during the summer of 2014 and “Operation Protective Edge.” A prominent Londoner lawyer, Hillary Freeman, summarized the popular feelings:

As a Jew, I find this particularly offensive. It’s taking the Holocaust—the greatest tragedy in the history of the Jewish people—and using it as a stick to beat us with. ... I am horrified that my grandma, now 96, might live to see the country that gave her sanctuary over 70 years ago become a place that is no longer safe for Jews. But the terrifying truth is that once the genie of antisemitism has been released from the bottle, it is almost impossible to put it back.³⁵

The Paris massacres have sent shock waves throughout the UK’s Jewish society, and its members have been looking for reassurance to their civilian status in the

33 My analysis totally objects to Jonathan Boyd’s conclusion that “most European Jewish populations appear to feel a strong sense of belonging to the countries in which they live, and most seem to be able to comfortably manage the relationship between their Jewish and wider national identities. Even in the countries where levels of antisemitism are revealed by these and other data to be highest, Jews feel remarkably attached to the nations in which they live: over 70 percent of respondents in Hungary feel a strong sense of belonging to Hungary, and over 80 percent of respondents in France feel a strong sense of belonging to France.” J. Boyd, “Jewish Life in Europe: Impending Catastrophe, or Imminent Renaissance?,” Institute for Jewish Policy Research, issued November 2013, accessed October 28, 2020, <https://archive.jpr.org.uk/download?id=1491>, 12.

34 Cf. *ibid.*, 26.

35 H. Freeman, “Why, as a British Jew, I’m Terrified by the Anti-Semitism suddenly Sweeping my Country,” *The Daily Mail*, August 9, 2018, <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/debate/article-2720381/Why-British-Jew-I-m-terrified-anti-Semitism-suddenly-sweeping-country.html>.

UK. In 2015, during a meeting with Jewish Leaders, David Cameron, PM, praised the sense of mutual solidarity and belonging that unifies all Britons:

I know that everyone will be very concerned about what happened in Paris and the appalling attacks ... I want to reassure you that we will try and do everything we can to make sure that your organizations are properly engaged with our police and security services right across the board to see if there is anything more we can do to ensure security ... But I think we should use the momentum of those great demonstrations to emphasize what we are in this country: a very successful multi-ethnic, multi-faith democracy.³⁶

In November 2017, while celebrating a centenary to the Balfour declaration, Theresa May, stressed that there

can be no excuses for any kind of hatred towards the Jewish people. Criticizing the actions of Israel is never—and can never be—an excuse for questioning Israel’s right to exist, any more than criticizing the actions of Britain could be an excuse for questioning our right to exist.³⁷

The Jewish leadership has continuously played down a survey from January 2015, called the “Antisemitism Barometer”—criticizing it for severe methodological faults—which claimed that almost half of UK Jews are now considering emigrating.³⁸ By doing so, they also preferred to neglect the consequences from the changes of the Labour Party’s leadership, headed by Jeremy Corbyn, its harsh new policies toward Israel, and the antisemitism in the party’s ranks.³⁹

36 “Jewish Community Leaders Meet with Prime Minister David Cameron,” Jewish Leadership Council, issued January 13, 2015, accessed October 28, 2020, https://www.thejlc.org/jewish_community_leaders_meet_with_prime_minister_david_cameron2.

37 R. Sanchez, “Theresa May Says there Can Be ‘No Excuse’ for Anti-Semitism as she Marks Balfour Centenary with Netanyahu,” *The Telegraph*, November 2, 2017, <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2017/11/02/theresa-may-says-can-no-excuse-anti-semitism-marks-balfour-centenary/>.

38 Cf. J. Lewis, “Nearly Half of British Jews Say they Have no Future in Europe, Study Finds,” *The Jerusalem Post*, January 14, 2015, <https://www.jpost.com/Diaspora/Nearly-half-of-British-Jews-says-they-have-no-future-in-Europe-study-finds-387693>; “The Antisemitism Barometer,” Campaign Against Antisemitism, last updated 2019, accessed October 28, 2020, <https://anti-semitism.org/barometer/>.

39 Cf. A. Borschel-Dan, “British Jews Fight to Regain the Labour Party they once Called ‘Family,’” *The Times of Israel*, November 9, 2017, <https://www.timesofisrael.com/british-jews-fight-to-regain-the-labour-party-they-once-called-family/>. For an extensive analysis of the contemporary relations between the British Left and the British Jews, see: D. Hirsh, *Contemporary Left Antisemitism* (Milton: Routledge, 2018); and also D. Rich, “Antisemitism in the Radical Left and the British Labour Party,” *Kantor Center Position Papers*, issued January 2018, accessed October 28,

Jonathan Arkush, the president of the Board of Deputies, has pushed forward the idea of reaching out to the growing Muslim society, offering to tighten the bond of citizenship and integration of British society, in order to fortify again the sense of security among the UK Jewish population. In his words:

I want to meet Muslims and show them that Jews are actually human beings and you can combine being a good Muslim with being a good British citizen and hopefully take them away from being at risk of flirting with jihadi ideas.⁴⁰

Latvia, like Hungary and almost all post-Soviet States, deals mainly with its past in its quest for the future: the quest for a national identity. Violent antisemitism is almost a non-issue in Latvia. Unfortunately for the small community, the adoration of the Latvian Nazi-era SS units and other Nazi collaborators became part of the national discourse of the new Latvia.⁴¹ Even so, a high proportion of the respondents (68%) in the FRA survey showed a high sense of belonging and answered that they have “not considered emigrating.” On the one hand with similarities to Hungary, we see rising nationalism and the eulogizing of their own Nazi past, but on the other hand with similarities to the UK, we see a declaration of trust in their homeland.⁴²

The respondents were asked to point to several statements that are “possible contexts for negative statements about Jews.” In almost every possible “context,” the Latvian proportions were the lowest. Every statement that involved public attitudes or politicians’ attitudes against Jews had gotten a low rating; in contradiction to France, Hungary, and even better than the UK’s results.⁴³ The empirical findings show that what is being considered from the outside as a neo-Nazi and nationalistic debate has not yet converted into antisemitism and has not yet given rise to a new generation of extreme antisemites. One more factor is that the Israeli-Arab conflict, which according to the Latvian respondents has the small-

2020, https://en-humanities.tau.ac.il/sites/humanities_en.tau.ac.il/files/media_server/0001/Dave%20Rich%20180128.pdf.

⁴⁰ S. Linde, “New UK Jewish Leader: I Want to Meet Muslims,” *The Jerusalem Post*, June 25, 2015, <https://www.jpost.com/Diaspora/New-UK-Jewish-leader-I-want-to-meet-Muslims-407127>.

⁴¹ Cf. Stephen Roth Institute, *Antisemitism Worldwide 2013*; I. Cantorovich, “Post-Soviet Region in 2014,” in *Antisemitism Worldwide 2014: General Analysis Draft*, ed. D. Porat (Tel Aviv: Kantor Center of the Study of Contemporary European Jewry, 2014), <https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/images/kantorfull.pdf>, 19–20.

⁴² Cf. FRA, *Discrimination and Hate Crime*, 37.

⁴³ Cf. *ibid*, 26.

est influence on antisemitic discourse or violence in comparison to France, Hungary, and the UK (14 %, 56 %, 49 %, and 35 % respectively).⁴⁴

Conclusion

A few patterns have been found whilst studying and comparing contemporary antisemitism in four EU Member States, two from Western Europe—France and UK—and two from Central and Eastern Europe—Hungary and Latvia.

- The level of violent antisemitism, as is shown by the number of violent incidents, does not necessarily indicate the state of antisemitic perceptions. Generally, it could be a necessary condition in defining an antisemitic atmosphere but undoubtedly not the only one. France and Britain have the highest level of recorded incidents, but their Jewish population's self-perception of antisemitism is almost the opposite. The same could have been indicated in Hungary and Latvia. Both countries have a low level of violent antisemitism, but their perceptions of antisemitism in their countries differ from each other.
- In both countries where respondents have indicated that antisemitism is a severe problem (i.e., France and Hungary), they show either a high ratio of estrangement from the ethos that have been chosen for national identity (Hungary), or demonstrate ongoing dissatisfaction from the state of civic consolidation and express worries about society's disintegration (France). In both Latvia and Britain there is a higher level of confidence in the civic order, especially in Britain, and a strong belief that the British society is on the right path in dealing with the challenges of new antisemitism. But confidence in government and society, or lack of it, is only one part of the sufficient conditions.
- Frustration from the political establishment, from ruling parties, and from the solutions they supply in order to control violent antisemitism, but much more importantly, to supply a common basis for all fractions of society to unite around, are the major factors in adopting harsh perceptions about antisemitism. Without belief in the future of the country, and without confidence that Jews are an important component of its society, Jews feel abandoned. And this lack of confidence is the main sufficient condition in adopting the hard antisemitic atmosphere. In the UK we have shown a high level of cooperation between the authorities and the Jewish community; in Latvia

⁴⁴ Cf. *ibid.*, 24.

it was not a declared issue but empirically given that no friction was found between the Jews and the government. But in France, though de facto, the authorities are trying their best to confront antisemitism and to find new paths to civic integration, the level of trust toward the political establishment is still very low.⁴⁵ Much of the same could still be said about Hungary. There are many similarities here also to the US Jewry experience and the division over the Trump administration.

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