Antisemitism

Antisemitism is latent or overt hostility or hatred directed towards, or discrimination against individual Jewish people or Jewish people collectively for reasons connected to their religion, ethnicity, and their cultural, historical, intellectual and religious heritage. Jewish people have been persecuted for their identities regardless of their religious beliefs.[1]

The Pyramid of Hate and Antisemitism

“The Holocaust did not start with the gas chambers. It started with hate speech.”[2] – Adama Dieng, former UN Special Advisor on the Prevention of Genocide.

The Pyramid of Hate[3] visually captures how isolated attitudes, words and behaviours form the foundation that makes extreme violence and hate possible. When applying the Pyramid of Hate to antisemitism, we can understand that the Holocaust did not happen in a vacuum but was instead

[1] https://www.toronto.ca/community-people/get-involved/community/toronto-for-all/confronting-antisemitism/

[2] https://www.un.org/counterterrorism/en/events/hate-speech-%E2%80%98-notice%E2%80%99-un-chief-launches-new-plan-%E2%80%98identify-prevent-and-confront%E2%80%99-growing

[3] https://www.adl.org/

dependent on the support received from the behaviours described in the lower levels of the pyramid.

Text-Based Version of the Above Image

Pyramid Level 1: Bias Attitudes

- Stereotyping
- Insensitive Remarks
- Fear of Differences
- Non-inclusive Language
- Microaggressions
- Justifying biases by seeking out like-minded people
- Accepting negative or misinformation/screening out positive information

Pyramid Level 2: Acts of Bias

- Bullying
- Ridicule
- Name-calling
- Slurs/Epithets
- Social Avoidance
- De-humanization
- Biased/Belittling jokes

Pyramid Level 3: Discrimination

- Economic discrimination
- Political discrimination
- Educational discrimination
- Employment discrimination
- Housing discrimination and segregation
- Criminal justice disparities

Pyramid Level 4: Bias Motivated Violence

- Murder
- Rape
- Assault
- Arson
- Terrorism
- Vandalism
- Desecration

- Threats

Pyramid Level 5: Genocide

The act or intent to deliberately and systematically annihilate and entire people.

Antisemitism: Past and Present

The examples of past and present antisemitism below correspond with each of the levels of the Pyramid of Hate.

Please note that the content below contains references to disturbing antisemitic violence.

Biased Attitudes

- In a 2021 survey of North American students, one third of respondents between Grades 6 and 12 said they don't know what to think about the Holocaust, think the number of Jews who died has been exaggerated, or question whether the Holocaust even happened.[4]
- 20% of Americans polled in a 2022 study by the Anti-Defamation League agreed that Jews have “too much power.”[5]

Acts of Bias

- In October 2022, antisemitic symbols appeared at a residence on Queen’s campus.[6]
- According to Statistics Canada, police-reported hate crimes against the Jewish population rose sharply in 2023. Since 2020, Jewish populations have consistently been the most targeted group for religious-based hate crimes.[7]
- In 2021 and 2022, synagogues in Toronto, Kitchener, and Guelph were vandalized with antisemitic graffiti.[8]

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[4] https://www.liberation75.org/survey

[5] https://www.adl.org/resources/press-release/number-americans-harboring-extensive-antisemitic-prejudice-doubled-2019

[6] https://www.queensu.ca/principal/statement-against-antisemitism-queens

[7] https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/260722/t006a-eng.htm

[8] https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/toronto/toronto-synagogue-vandalized-antisemitic-1.6146399

- Social media conspiracy posts blaming Jewish communities for spreading the COVID-19 virus proliferated.[9]
- During the COVID-19 pandemic, some anti-vaccine protestors in Canada equated their experience to Jews during the Holocaust[10]; anti-vaccine protestors also wore yellow stars while other protestors waved Nazi flags.[11]

Systemic Discrimination

- Canada developed and enforced restrictive antisemitic immigration policies designed to keep Jewish refugees from coming here. Between 1933 and 1948, less than 5,000 Jewish refugees were allowed into Canada – the smallest number of any Allied nation.[12]
- Between the 1920s and 1960s, some universities in Canada enforced quotas for the number of Jewish students admitted; historical records show that in the 1940s, Queen's was concerned about the increase of Jewish students at the university.[13]

Bias-Motivated Violence

- Christie Pits Riots: In August 1933, clashes erupted between Nazi sympathizers displaying swastikas during a baseball game and Jewish and Italian players at a park in Toronto, revealing xenophobic attitudes towards Jews and non-Anglo immigrants.[14]
- In August 2017, white supremacists rallied in Charlottesville, Virginia chanting "Jews will not replace us."[15]
- In October 2018, a gunman killed 11 worshippers at a Synagogue in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.[16]

Genocide

- The Holocaust: the systematic, state-sponsored persecution and murder of six million European Jews by the Nazi German regime and

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[9] https://www.adl.org/resources/blog/coronavirus-crisis-elevates-antisemitic-racist-tropes

[10] https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/manitoba/vaccine-mandates-holocaust-comparisons-1.6200527

[11] https://www.toronto.ca/community-people/get-involved/community/toronto-for-all/confronting-antisemitism/

[12] https://humanrights.ca/story/canada-antisemitism-and-holocaust

[13] https://qspace.library.queensu.ca/bitstream/handle/1974/6279/Singh_Ekta_201012_M.Ed.pdf?sequence=3&isAllowed=y

[14] https://www.cbc.ca/radio/checkup/blog/christie-pits-riots-a-reminder-of-canada-s-dark-past-1.4255629

[15] https://www.cbc.ca/news/world/charlottesville-year-later-1.4781346

[16] https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/toronto/pittsburgh-shooting-toronto-victim-joyce-fienberg-1.4881736

its allies and collaborators from 1933 to 1945. In November 2005, the United Nations General Assembly designated January 27th as International Holocaust Remembrance Day – the anniversary of the liberation of the Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration camp.[17]

Common Antisemitic Tropes

According to the Antisemitism in our Midst: Past and Present training video produced by the Berkeley Centre for Jewish Studies, common tropes persist today in North America and contribute to conspiracy theories about Jews. These include:

1. Images of Jews as creatures associated with infection, dirt and pestilence.
2. Echoes of the blood libel – claims that Jews murder people and use their blood for Jewish ritual.
3. Accusations of dual loyalty – the idea that Jews are more loyal to one another than the country where they live.
4. The notions that Jews, despite their small number, have enormous power.
5. The association between Jews and wealth, materialism and greed.
6. Antisemitism is sometimes considered the "canary in the coalmine"[18] for hate crimes in general.[19] In times of social, economic and political upheaval, narratives scapegoating marginalized groups often include attacks on Jews using antisemitic tropes.[20] In addition, antisemitic acts are sometimes dismissed because of the myth of disproportionate Jewish economic and political power.[21]

Standing in solidarity with all oppressed communities is integral to confronting and tackling all forms of hate.

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[17] https://www.un.org/en/observances/commemoration-holocaust-victims-day
[18] https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/canary-in-a-coalmine
[19] https://news.un.org/en/story/2019/10/1049591
[20] https://www.npr.org/2022/11/30/1139971241/anti-semitism-is-on-the-rise-and-not-just-among-high-profile-figures
[21] https://www.npr.org/2021/06/07/1003411933/antisemitism-spikes-and-many-jews-wonder-where-are-our-allies

Experienced or Witnessed Antisemitism on Campus?

I believe I've experienced or witnessed antisemitism on our campus. What should I do?

We are sorry that you've experienced this. We encourage you to make an appointment with a human rights advisor by completing the **Meeting Request Form**. A human rights advisor will listen to your experience and explain relevant Queen's policies and procedures, make referrals where appropriate, and offer options for addressing concerns. The service provided by human rights advisors is confidential,[22] and it is up to you to decide which actions, if any, to take.

If you prefer to document an incident of hate anonymously, please use the **IN-SIGHT submission form**.

If you are in immediate danger, please contact Campus Security and Emergency Services at 613-533-6111.

Resources of Interest

- **Confronting Antisemitism – City of Toronto**
- **Undergraduate courses at Queen's**
- **Christie Pits Riots**
- **Canada, Antisemitism and the Holocaust – Canadian Museum for Human Rights**

[22] Advisors observe the following exceptions to confidentiality: (i) when disclosure is required to prevent clear and imminent danger to the client or others;(ii) when legal requirements demand that confidential material be revealed;(iii) when a child is in need of protection." (Canadian Counselling and Psychotherapy Association, Standards of Practice, 5th Edition)