



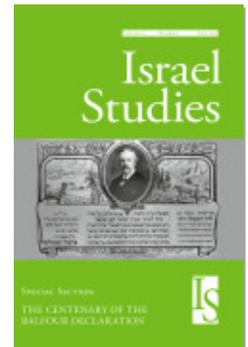
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Young American Jews and Israel: Beyond Birthright and BDS

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ABSTRACT

The article examines the attitudes of young adult American Jews towards Israel and their views about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Drawing on the Pew Research Center's 2013 survey of American Jews, the largest in more than a decade, as well as other empirical data, the article rejects the popular claim that young American Jews are emotionally detached and disconnected from Israel. Instead, the article argues that they are actually more engaged with Israel than their predecessors were, but that they are also more critical of Israeli government policies and feel more sympathetic towards the Palestinians than older American Jews. A number of reasons for these attitudes towards Israel are put forward, focusing on the political orientation, demographic composition, and formative experiences of this younger cohort of American Jews. In doing so, the article seeks to explain the generational differences between younger and older American Jews when it comes to Israel.

INTRODUCTION

NO DEMOGRAPHIC GROUP WITHIN THE AMERICAN JEWISH COMMUNITY receives more attention today than young adults (those between the ages of 18 and 35). The so-called “millennial”¹ generation has been a major focus of communal concern, and philanthropic largesse, for its allegedly shallow Jewish identity, weak commitment to Israel, disinterest in organized Jewish life, and indifference to specifically Jewish concerns.² They are also widely seen as the victims of rampant antisemitism and anti-Zionism on college campuses, harassed and intimidated by pro-Palestinian students and faculty, and pressured to disassociate from Israel by a growing Boycott,

Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) movement against Israel, and a campus climate in which the equation of Israel with Apartheid South Africa and Zionism with racism has become increasingly common. Whether because of fear, propaganda, peer pressure, or just plain indifference, many young American Jews (specifically, non-Orthodox ones), we are often told, want nothing to do with Israel. They are, in short, Israel-phobic.

This popular view of young American Jews is hard to reconcile with the fact that they are actually more likely to have visited Israel than older Jews, and in surveys they express just as much of an attachment to Israel as their predecessors once did. What, then, is the truth about young American Jewish attitudes toward Israel? Are young American Jews apathetic about Israel? Are they alienated by its government's policies? How do their views differ, if at all, from older American Jews? This article addresses these topical questions as it explores the relationship between young American Jews and Israel. Drawing on survey data (primarily the 2013 Pew Research Center's "Portrait of Jewish Americans", the largest survey of American Jews in more than a decade),³ I examine the attitudes of young American Jews towards Israel and their views about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. I challenge the popular belief that young American Jews today are apathetic about Israel, or even alienated from it. I argue that rather than distancing themselves from Israel, as many have claimed, young American Jews are actually engaging with Israel in ways that their parents or grandparents seldom did. Moreover, their attitudes towards Israel are often more nuanced than those of their older counterparts—generally, feeling emotionally attached to the country, but critical of its government's policies, especially concerning Palestinians.

In making this argument, I begin by addressing the issue of young American Jews' attachment to Israel. This is an issue that has long preoccupied American Jewish communal leaders, and been the subject of copious amounts of research by sociologists of the American Jewish community. While the question of whether the attachment of young adult Jews to Israel is declining, as many fear, is still being fiercely debated by scholars,⁴ it is not the only question of concern. An equally important, but often-ignored question, is why younger American Jews who are attached to Israel are more likely to also be critical of it than older Jews. In answering this question, I posit four major reasons—namely, (1) they are more liberal than their older counterparts; (2) they are more oriented toward universalism and more concerned with social justice as central to their Jewish identities and Judaism (partly because they are more likely to be the offspring of intermarriage); (3) the Holocaust and anti-Semitism has had less of an impact on them; and (4) they have significantly different "generational memories" of Israel than

older generations. Collectively, these differences help explain why young American Jews tend to be more critical of Israel and less willing to give it their unconditional support. They also help account for the generational divide that exists in American Jewish opinion about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, with younger Jews generally being more leftwing and dovish than older generations (this applies specifically to non-Orthodox Jews).

YOUNG AMERICAN JEWS' ATTITUDES TO ISRAEL: CRITICALLY ENGAGED, NOT DISENGAGED

Claims that American Jews, especially younger ones, are becoming less attached to Israel go back to at least the 1980s.⁵ Such claims have been accompanied by a lot of handwringing, anxiety and agonizing within the organized American Jewish community. In recent years, these claims have been increasingly common. It has now become the conventional wisdom in the Jewish community that “distancing” is occurring between American Jews and Israel, and that young non-Orthodox American Jews are particularly disconnected from Israel. There is certainly evidence to support this view. When asked in surveys, younger Jews typically express less of an emotional attachment to Israel than older ones. In the national survey of American Jewry conducted by the Pew Research Center in 2013, for example, 79% of American Jews aged 65 and older said they felt attached to Israel, as did 75% of those aged 50–64, compared with 60% of those aged 18–29. The Pew survey also showed a generational divide in the importance attributed to caring about Israel. Among Jews aged 50 and older, about half said that caring about Israel was essential to what being Jewish meant to them. By contrast, only around a third of Jews under the age of thirty felt this way.⁶ An even more striking indication of how much less important Israel is to younger American Jews was the finding in another national survey of American Jews conducted in 2007 that less than half of those surveyed who were under the age of 35 felt that Israel’s destruction would be a personal tragedy, compared to more than three-quarters of those over the age of 65.⁷

However, the strong correlation in surveys between age and attachment to Israel, such that the older you are, the more strongly attached to Israel you are likely to be, does not necessarily prove that American Jews are becoming less attached to Israel over time—the so-called “distancing hypothesis”.⁸ Repeated surveys going back over the past 25 years have consistently shown that younger American Jews are less attached to Israel

than older Jews. There is nothing new about this. In fact, the survey data indicates that young American Jews today are no less attached to Israel than previous generations of young Jews.⁹ In the past, attachment to Israel increased with age—put simply, as Jews got older, they cared about Israel more—so the real question is whether this pattern will still hold true in the future. Will young American Jews who are currently not emotionally attached to Israel, or not strongly attached, become more attached as they grow older? In other words, are age differences in attachment to Israel a “lifecycle phenomenon” or a “generational phenomenon”?¹⁰ If the latter is the case, then it is likely that American Jewish attachment to Israel will gradually decline over time.¹¹ As Steven M. Cohen and Ari Kelman write: “All things considered, we think that non-Orthodox Jews in America, as a group, are growing more distant from Israel and will continue to do so.”¹² Ongoing assimilation and high rates of intermarriage—the intermarriage rate is now at 58%, up from just 17% in 1970, and it is 71% among non-Orthodox Jews—certainly suggest that non-Orthodox American Jewish attachment to Israel is likely to weaken over time (intermarried Jews and the children of intermarried of Jews are much less attached to Israel than other Jews).¹³

Other current trends among young non-Orthodox American Jews, most notably, a gradual erosion of the ethnic dimension of Jewish identity;¹⁴ a greater emphasis on Judaism and Jewish identity as a personal choice;¹⁵ and the disengagement of young Jews from Jewish establishment organizations that have played a key role in encouraging Jewish support for Israel, also portend a future decline in American Jewish attachment to Israel.¹⁶ On the other hand, the advent of mass youth travel to Israel, particularly through the hugely popular Taglit-Birthright program, which provides free ten-day tours to Israel for Diaspora Jews aged 18–26,¹⁷ augurs extremely well for future American Jewish attachment to Israel since substantial research demonstrates a much stronger attachment to Israel among Jews who have been to Israel, including among alumni of Birthright trips.¹⁸

Whether or not “distancing” from Israel will occur in the future, what is indisputable is that today, contrary to widespread concern, a solid majority of young adult American Jews (60% of 18–29 year-olds in the 2013 Pew Survey) say that they feel attached to Israel.¹⁹ This clearly refutes the popular claim that young American Jews are emotionally detached and disconnected from Israel. In fact, another recent survey indicates that attachment to Israel has even increased among young non-Orthodox American Jews.²⁰ Rather than being disconnected from Israel, young American Jews are actually more connected with Israel than those in the past.²¹ Many are

apathetic about Israel (and probably apathetic about their Jewishness, as the data shows that those who feel unattached to Israel tend to be disconnected from Jewish life in general, not just Israel), but many others are becoming actively engaged with the country. More young American Jews are learning about Israel, visiting Israel, and studying and volunteering in Israel than ever before (thanks in large part to numerous educational and experiential programs such as Birthright Israel and Masa Israel, and to the proliferation of college courses on Israel and on the Arab-Israeli conflict²²). Not only are young American Jews more directly engaged with Israel than ever before, they are also more exposed to Israel than ever before due to the media's almost incessant coverage of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the constant posting, sharing, and tweeting of news, opinions, and videos on social media (which has become a major source of news for millennials, the first generation of "digital natives"²³).

Instead of disengaging from Israel, many young American Jews are critically engaging with it—they are questioning, challenging, and criticizing, not simply accepting or endorsing what Israel does, or has done in the past (and some go so far as to question Zionism and Israel's very identity as a Jewish and democratic state). Critical engagement with Israel is a manifestation of attachment, not alienation.²⁴ It is generally because they care about Israel, or at least feel somehow connected to it, that many young American Jews question and challenge those aspects of Israel that they find problematic or objectionable. Their attitude towards Israel's government tends to be skeptical,²⁵ and often critical, especially of Israeli government policy toward the Palestinians.²⁶ Growing numbers of young American Jews have become critical of Israel's treatment of the Palestinians, and many are willing to loudly voice their criticisms in a way that older American Jews often shied away from doing (back when there was a prevailing taboo within the American Jewish community against public criticism of Israel). Notwithstanding their emotional attachment to Israel, therefore, support for Israel among young American Jews is more tentative and less automatic (of course, there are many exceptions to this, especially among the Orthodox).²⁷ The notion of simply being loyal to Israel is alien to them. They will only support Israel if it acts in accordance with their values and beliefs. In fact, many young American Jews today believe that Israel deserves their criticism, not their unquestioning support.²⁸

In general, young American Jews are more nuanced, or ambivalent, in their attitudes towards Israel than their parents and grandparents—feeling emotionally attached to the country (at least for the most part), but often critical of its government's policies.²⁹ Although they care about Israel, they

are less willing to give it their unconditional support. In a national survey of American Jews conducted in 2007, for example, those under the age of 35 were more likely to say that they sometimes felt ambivalent or even ashamed about Israel than older American Jews—over 30% reported sometimes feeling “ashamed” of Israel’s actions. They were also less likely to self-identify as pro-Israel or as a Zionist, and they were less comfortable with the idea of a Jewish state and much more likely to believe that “Israel occupies land belonging to someone else” than Jews aged fifty or above were.³⁰

The generational divide between younger and older American Jews in their attitudes towards Israel is clearly reflected in their differing opinions about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. This is evident in the findings of the 2013 Pew Survey. For instance, only a quarter of Jews aged 18 to 29 believed that the Israeli government was “making a sincere effort to bring about a peace settlement with the Palestinians” (compared to 43% of those aged over 50), and half of young American Jews thought that settlement building undermined Israeli security.³¹ The Pew survey also showed that young, non-Orthodox American Jews are less suspicious of the Palestinians, and more hopeful about the prospects for peaceful coexistence between Israel and a future Palestinian state. They were more than twice as likely as older (over 50) non-Orthodox American Jews to think that the Palestinian leadership was making a sincere effort to bring about a peace settlement with Israel; and three-quarters of them (76%) believed that Israel and a Palestinian state could peacefully coexist, compared to 63% of non-Orthodox Jews between the ages of 50 and 64, and 56% of those over the age of 65. There was also a significant generational difference in views about the U.S. government’s support for Israel, with a quarter of respondents aged 18 to 29 saying that the United States supports Israel too much, compared with only 5% of those over 50 who said this.³² After decades of tireless American Jewish advocacy aimed at increasing US support for Israel, it is quite remarkable that one in four young American Jews now want the U.S. government to support Israel less.

Crude statistics, however, cannot really capture how profoundly the attitudes of many young American Jews to Israel’s conflict with the Palestinians differ from those of older generations. This passage written by a young Jewish American in the summer of 2010 powerfully conveys this difference in attitude:

For many Jews my age, who love Israel and strive to nourish her efforts to thrive in a hostile region, defending her actions in Gaza has too often become an immense moral struggle that requires the suspension of our values as

human beings and, notably, the suspension of our values as Jews. Where many older American Jews see a faultless and holy entity struggling simply and nobly to exist, we of the younger persuasion see a government—a special government, presiding over a place near and dear to our hearts, but a government nonetheless—with the capacity to make wrong decisions in light of a tortuous history. Some among my mother’s friends rejoice in violent attacks on Palestinians who seek to harm Israel, while my friends cringe at the initiation of bloodshed by Jews. We see their aggressive stance as zealotry and paranoia; they see our discomfort as abandonment and naiveté.³³

Such an attitude is quite common among well-educated, liberal, non-Orthodox young American Jews, and many of them have flocked to join groups like J Street U (which has over fifty chapters on college campuses), IfNotNow,³⁴ and, further to the left, Jewish Voice for Peace.³⁵ This does not necessarily mean, however, that young Jews are always critical or unsupportive of Israel’s actions. In fact, a large survey of young American Jews taken before and after the 2014 Gaza War (“Operation Protective Edge”) found that the vast majority thought that Israel’s actions in the war were mostly or completely justified, and most also said that they supported Israel during the war.³⁶ This was true regardless of their political orientation, with 78% of self-described liberals viewing Israel’s conduct in the war as mostly or completely justified, compared to just 21% who viewed it as unjustified.³⁷ The survey also showed an increase in attachment to Israel among these young American Jews after the war, and, perhaps surprisingly, that this increase was greatest among those who identified themselves as liberal.³⁸ Although its sample is not completely representative,³⁹ the results of this survey suggest that most young American Jews feel a heightened solidarity with Israel when it is at war (even when the war is controversial internationally, and unpopular among their non-Jewish American peers⁴⁰), just as earlier generations of American Jews have always done.

EXPLAINING THE GENERATION GAP

Having described how the attitudes and views of young American Jews regarding Israel and its conflict with the Palestinians differ from those of older American Jews, I now suggest some possible explanations for these differences. A commonly given explanation for why young American Jews are critical of Israel is because of the prevailing “anti-Israel” sentiment on American college campuses. According to this view, frequently espoused by

those on the American Jewish right, young American Jews are being “brain-washed” and pressured by their peers and their professors (who are allegedly anti-Israel, if not anti-Semitic) to become hostile to Israel and Zionism. An alternative explanation, popular among those on the American Jewish left, is to place the blame solely on Israeli government policies, especially those of current Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. This view put forward most famously by the journalist Peter Beinart in a provocative essay in *The New York Review of Books* in 2010, holds that increasingly illiberal, rightwing Israeli policies towards the Palestinians, and the “failure of the American Jewish establishment” to criticize those policies, is driving young American Jews away from supporting Israel or even identifying with Zionism.⁴¹ In Beinart’s words: “For several decades, the Jewish establishment has asked American Jews to check their liberalism at Zionism’s door, and now, to their horror, they are finding that many young Jews have checked their Zionism instead.”

Both of these explanations, though politically convenient for those on the right and on the left, do have some truth to them. Some American college and university campuses are indeed becoming hotbeds of pro-Palestinian activism and even anti-Zionism, as the growing Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) campaign against Israel attests (this is not true for the overwhelming majority of campuses, where there is little or no anti- or pro-Israel activity).⁴² There has been a surge of protests against Israel (such as Israel Apartheid Weeks, divestment campaigns, and mock eviction notices) on college campuses in recent years, especially following the 2014 Gaza War. According to the Israel on Campus Coalition, a pro-Israel organization that tracks Israel-related activities on campuses, a total of 1,630 “anti-Israel events” took place at 181 colleges and universities in the U.S. during the 2014–15 academic year, and the number of campuses with “anti-Israel activity” increased by 31% compared with the previous academic year.⁴³ As pro-Palestinian activism has become more popular, even fashionable, on many college campuses (albeit, it must be stressed, still only at a relatively small number of them), and increasingly linked with other leftwing and liberal activist causes, it is surely affecting the way that some American Jewish college students (who number more than 350,000⁴⁴) relate to Israel. A 2014 study of hostility to Israel and antisemitism on US college campuses that surveyed applicants to the Birthright Israel program found that “slightly less than half were told that ‘Israelis behave like Nazis toward the Palestinians’, and about one quarter were blamed for the actions of the Israeli government because they were Jewish.” Overall, a third of young American Jews in the survey (34%) agreed at least “somewhat” that

there was a hostile environment toward Israel on their campus, while 15% of respondents said that there was a hostile environment toward Jews on their campus.⁴⁵ In such environments, where Israel is often vilified as an “apartheid state” and Zionism depicted as a racist, “settler-colonial” ideology, it has become uncomfortable, even threatening, for some American Jewish college students to publicly identify with or support Israel.⁴⁶

The fact that American Jewish college students are much more likely than their parents or grandparents to be exposed to the Palestinian narrative might be one reason why they tend to be more dovish in their opinions about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, as research shows that American Jews who support compromise with the Palestinians and Israeli concessions are more likely to see the conflict at least partly through the lens of the Palestinian narrative—regarding the Palestinians as indigenous inhabitants of the land, and as having been dispossessed and suffering from discrimination and military rule.⁴⁷ Although some young American Jews might become more critical of Israel and more sympathetic to the Palestinians, others might be turned off completely by the polarized and heated political atmosphere on some college campuses concerning the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Anecdotal evidence suggests that many Jewish students, feeling pressured on the one hand from BDS and Palestinian solidarity activists to distance themselves from Israel and on the other from some national Jewish organizations to join their battle against BDS, prefer to steer clear of both sides.⁴⁸ Instead of becoming “anti-Israel” or “pro-Israel”, they simply avoid dealing with it altogether, at least on campus.

Israeli policies and actions themselves are also bound to influence the attitudes of young American Jews toward Israel. While they may have little knowledge about Israel, many young, non-Orthodox American Jews feel uncomfortable with its policies, just as many older, non-Orthodox American Jews do. Across much of the American Jewish community (with the notable exception of the Orthodox), there is growing discomfort with Israeli policies, especially concerning the Palestinians, and mounting criticism of these policies. The increasing tendency among American Jews to criticize and challenge Israeli policies reflects a fundamental change in how American Jews view Israel and how they relate to it,⁴⁹ but this is particularly true among younger American Jews, due to the specific demographic composition and formative experiences of this age cohort. Unlike older American Jews, younger Jews have no recollection of center-left governments in Israel energetically pursuing peace with the Palestinians—many were not even born when the Rabin government signed the Oslo Accords with the Palestinians in the early 1990s. Young American Jews have only

really known center-right or rightwing Israeli governments whose policies towards the Palestinians have often been hawkish and hardline (with the partial exception of the Olmert government from 2006 to 2009). For many of those still in college, Likud leader Netanyahu has been the only Israeli Prime Minister they can remember. The fact that Prime Minister Netanyahu clashed repeatedly with US President Barack Obama (particularly over the nuclear deal with Iran), and became unpopular among Democrats, has probably influenced the views of young, non-Orthodox American Jews, who enthusiastically supported Obama and mostly vote for the Democratic Party.⁵⁰

The discomfort that many young American Jews feel about Israel's policies towards the Palestinians, however, goes beyond any particular antipathy they might feel toward Netanyahu. It is primarily driven by a widespread conviction among liberals in the US (and elsewhere) that Israeli government policies regarding Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, and to lesser extent Palestinian citizens of Israel, are fundamentally antithetical to liberal values. The belief that Israel's treatment of the Palestinians is illiberal, unjust, and oppressive has moved growing numbers of liberals in the US to become more critical of Israel and more sympathetic towards Palestinians. For instance, a survey taken by the Pew Research Center in April 2016 found that, for the first time, liberal Democrats, unlike other Americans, sympathized more with the Palestinians than with Israel.⁵¹

Sympathy for Palestinians among liberals in the US is particularly pronounced among young Americans as they tend to be more liberal and progressive than older Americans (millennials were among Obama's strongest supporters and are much more likely to vote Democratic than older voters), possibly because they are more ethnically and racially diverse and better educated—both of which are associated with liberal attitudes.⁵² The same 2016 Pew survey found that although millennials (those born after 1980) still tended to sympathize more with Israel than with the Palestinians (43% of millennials, as opposed to 61% of baby boomers, expressed greater sympathy for Israel), about a quarter of millennials sympathized more with the Palestinians, the highest proportion of any generation. Millennials were in fact about twice as likely as baby-boomers (those born between 1946 and 1964) to express more sympathy for the Palestinians than for Israel (27% to 14%). Furthermore, according to Pew, "The share [of millennials] sympathizing with the Palestinians has risen significantly in recent years, from 9% in 2006 to 20% in July 2014 to 27% today."⁵³ Growing support for the Palestinians among liberals and millennials, therefore, contributes to the generational divide between younger and older American Jews in their views about the

Israeli-Palestinian conflict, because most young American Jews are not only liberal (60% in the Pew survey described themselves as liberal and only 10% as conservative), they are also more liberal than older American Jews, and more liberal than non-Jewish Americans in their age group.

The liberalism of young, non-Orthodox American Jews is reflected in their general preference for a more universalistic and less particularistic approach to Jewish politics. For them, Jewish politics must have a bigger purpose than group survival and Israel's survival.⁵⁴ They are motivated more by concerns for social justice and the environment than Israel.⁵⁵ The pursuit of social justice—popularized in the concept of *tikkun olam*—is regarded by many of them as central to their Jewish identity and to their understanding of Judaism,⁵⁶ much more so than Zionism and support for Israel. Moreover, whereas supporting Israel nowadays may clash with the liberal values of young American Jews, and might also sometimes entail being marginalized in, or even excluded from, progressive circles, social justice activism allows younger Jews “to connect their Jewish identities with their progressive politics”.⁵⁷ The emphasis that young, non-Orthodox American Jews place upon universal social justice, rather than Israel, might also be a consequence of their weaker attachment to “Jewish peoplehood” when compared with older American Jews.⁵⁸ Although being Jewish is no less important to younger Jews, their notion of Jewishness is less ethnic and tribal, and more cultural and cosmopolitan.⁵⁹ This is particularly true for the children of interfaith marriages, who account for almost 50% of young American Jewish adults (according to the 2013 Pew survey). For this large proportion of young American Jews, Israel tends to be less important to their Jewish identities than social justice, and they are more likely to be critical of Israel or feel ambivalent or apathetic about it than those with two Jewish parents. Since there are so many more children of interfaith marriages among millennials than older generations of American Jews,⁶⁰ this also helps explain the different attitudes of this generation towards Israel.

Two other important factors can be identified to account for the different attitudes towards Israel held by younger as compared to older American Jews: their chronological distance from the Holocaust, and their different “generational memories”. The impact of both of these factors is profound, albeit hard to accurately gauge. The simple fact that young American Jews were born and have grown up decades after the Holocaust, unlike their parents and especially their grandparents, undoubtedly affects their attitudes toward Israel and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, as well as other issues. A survey taken in 2012, for example, found a significant difference between older and younger American Jews in the importance they attribute to the

Holocaust in shaping their political beliefs and actions.⁶¹ For many, if not most, Jews around the world (in the Diaspora and in Israel), the Holocaust has been interpreted as providing incontestable proof of the need for a Jewish state. Without a state of their own to protect them, European Jewry was powerless in the face of Hitler's genocidal anti-Semitism. With a state of their own, however, Jews would never again be so weak and defenseless. This became (and still is) the major, and certainly most important, rationale for Israel's existence in the minds of American Jews. Hence, the Holocaust became the definitive reason for American Jews to support Israel. The Holocaust also became discursively linked to Israel in the "Holocaust to rebirth" narrative that became increasingly popular among American Jews. This narrative links the Holocaust and the creation of the State of Israel, depicting the latter as representing the revival (or redemption, in more religious terms) of the Jewish people after its near destruction.⁶² The Jewish state thus comes to symbolize the Jewish people, and as such, its survival is implicitly equated with Jewish survival. Since Israel symbolizes and secures Jewish survival, all Jews should support it. American Jewish support for Israel, therefore, is strongly linked to the collective memory of the Holocaust, so the weakening, or attenuation, of this collective memory among younger American Jews may well weaken their support for Israel, or at least for its governments.

Young American Jews tend to feel much less insecure and vulnerable than their predecessors did. They have grown up during a time in which American Jews are more assimilated, more affluent, and more influential (culturally and politically) than ever before. As such, many younger American Jews are more likely to identify with the notion of "white privilege" than with the notion of Jewish victimhood. Although many Jewish college students today claim to have personally experienced or witnessed anti-Semitism on their campuses (mostly in the form of comments and jokes),⁶³ overall, anti-Semitism in the United States is at historic lows⁶⁴—notwithstanding fears about a recent upsurge in anti-Semitism since the election of Donald Trump as president.⁶⁵ Jewish success and security in the US has meant that younger American Jews are much less inclined to believe that gentiles are hostile to Jews, and that Jews are always at risk, as older generations of Jews have generally done.⁶⁶ Nor are younger American Jews as likely to see the world at large as such a threatening place for Jews since most Jews in the world now live in liberal democracies, unlike in the past when millions were trapped in the Soviet Union. Far from perceiving Israel as a potential "safe haven" (as their parents or grandparents might do), young American Jews feel relatively safe in the United States, and their

diminished sense of threat means that they probably feel less of a need for solidarity with other Jews or with Israel. Given this, they see no reason not to freely voice their own critical opinions about Israel.

Finally, young American Jews have a very different “generational memory” when it comes to Israel than older American Jews. Major national and world events that occur during a person’s late childhood, adolescence, or early adulthood leave a lasting impression on people’s memories, attitudes, and worldviews.⁶⁷ In American history, for example, the Great Depression, World War II, and the Vietnam War all left lasting imprints on successive birth cohorts. Hence, historians and sociologists refer to “generational memory” to describe how formative events and collective memories differ between generations.⁶⁸ Those American Jews who remember the establishment of Israel in 1948, therefore, and those who remember the 1967 and 1973 wars have very different generational memories of Israel than those born after 1967 whose impressions of Israel may well have been shaped by the First or Second Palestinian Intifadas (lasting from 1987 to 1991, and 2000 to 2005, respectively).

Young American Jews, born decades after Israel’s founding, have no nostalgic memory of Israel’s early years and no experience of the emotional highs and lows of the Six-Day War. Nor do they even recall the hopes that accompanied the Oslo peace process in the 1990s. Instead, they have grown up during the Second Intifada and Israel’s wars against Hamas in the Gaza Strip, wars that have inflicted heavy casualties among Palestinians and generated fierce criticism of Israel around the world. Consequently, young American Jews look at Israel through a different lens than previous generations. Many tend to see the country only through the lens of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Growing up with Israel as a military power, an occupier, and a focus of endless controversy has given them a very different image of the country and its people. While baby boomers may fondly recall images of smiling, suntanned *kibbutznikim* dancing the *hora*, many millennials have images in their minds of stern-faced soldiers manning military checkpoints in the West Bank.

Younger American Jews are also less likely to perceive Israel as vulnerable and embattled.

The generations that grew up at the time of the Holocaust and the founding of the State, along with those whose defining experiences were the Six Day War and the Yom Kippur War, share an image of an embattled heroic peace-seeking Israel, a democratic and progressive David surrounded and mortally threatened by a malevolent and fanatical Goliath—the Arabs.⁶⁹

For many younger American Jews, by contrast, Israel appears to be a strong and militarily powerful state, and hence less in need of their absolute support. Nor do younger American Jews idealize Israel the way their parents or grandparents might have done.⁷⁰ To them, Israel is not the mythic land that American Jews once fantasized about. It is not the Israel depicted in Leon Uris' massively popular novel and later Hollywood movie *Exodus*. Instead, for young American Jews, Israel is a place that many of them have actually been to, not a symbol that they worship from afar.⁷¹

CONCLUSION

The article has explored the attitudes and views of young American Jews towards Israel and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. It is important to understand these attitudes and views and what is driving them if for no other reason than the fact that younger American Jews (those between the ages of 18 and 35) make up about a quarter of the American Jewish population today. These young people are also the future of the American Jewish community, and among them are presumably the next generation of American Jewish leaders. The current attitudes of young American Jews toward Israel, therefore, have potentially far-reaching repercussions for the future American Jewish relationship with Israel, and even for the future of US-Israel relations.

Contrary to the common claim that young American Jews are estranged from Israel (for whatever reason), I have argued that, in fact, most are emotionally attached to Israel, but that they tend to be more critical of Israeli government policies regarding the conflict with the Palestinians. They are, therefore, more ambivalent, even conflicted, in their support for Israel, than older American Jews whose support for Israel tends to be more uncritical and unconditional. Rather than offering a single, simple, explanation for the generational differences in attitude toward Israel, I have put forward a number of different, but not mutually exclusive, reasons, involving the political orientation, demographic composition, and formative experiences of young American Jews.

Looking ahead, the rise of a more critical and dovish generation of American Jews vis-à-vis Israel, along with the gradual passing of an older generation of stalwart American Jewish supporters of Israel, points to a more difficult, and possibly more distant, future relationship between Israel and non-Orthodox American Jewry, especially if Israeli politics and society move further to the right (Orthodox American Jews will probably remain

staunchly attached to and supportive of Israel). If the Israeli-Palestinian conflict remains unresolved, as looks likely, then American Jewish criticism of Israeli policies will continue and probably intensify. Unless major changes occur in Israel's policies towards Palestinians, younger non-Orthodox American Jews may well eventually become alienated from Israel, and emotionally disengage from it. Ultimately, American Jewish support for Israel on which Israel has long depended, might weaken, and an erosion of American Jewish support for Israel could, in turn, undermine American government support for Israel (although this is also driven by many other factors that are unrelated to American Jews, such as strategic considerations, cultural affinities, and broader American public support, especially among white Evangelical Christians).

This will only happen, however, if the attitudes and views of young American Jews regarding Israel do not significantly change as they grow older. The big question, then, is how stable are these attitudes? Future research should try to answer this question. One way to do so would be through a longitudinal study of whether, and if so how, the views of young American Jews in the past changed over time. The difficulty with this approach is that there is a lack of systematic empirical data about the views of young American Jews toward Israel and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in the past (besides, the survey data on their emotional attachment to Israel).⁷² But, there is good reason to think that the dovish and often critical attitude that most young, non-Orthodox American Jews now hold toward Israel is likely to be an enduring one for many, because a substantial amount of scholarly research has shown that once political attitudes and identities are formed in late adolescence and young adulthood they tend to remain fairly stable throughout a person's lifespan.⁷³ If that is the case, then the American Jewish relationship with Israel, already increasingly strained, looks likely to become more fraught and fragile in the future.

NOTES

1. The label "millennial" refers those born after 1980—the first generation to come of age in the new millennium.

2. Jacob Ukeles, Ron Miller, and Pearl Beck, *Young Jewish Adults in the United States Today* (New York, 2006); Anna Greenberg, *OMG! How Generation Y is Redefining Faith in the iPod Era* (New York, 2005); Anna Greenberg, *Grand Soy Vanilla Latte with Cinnamon, No Foam: Jewish Identity and Community in a Time*

of *Unlimited Choices* (New York, 2006); Frank Lunz, *Israel in the Age of Eminem* (New York, 2003).

3. Because of its large sample size (3,475 American Jews in all 50 states), the Pew Survey is the most authoritative sampling of American Jewish opinion available to date. Pew Research Center, "A Portrait of Jewish Americans: Findings from a Pew Research Center Survey of U.S. Jews," October 2013. See <http://www.pewforum.org/2013/10/01/jewish-american-beliefs-attitudes-culture-survey/>.

4. For useful overviews of the debate about the "distancing hypothesis", see Shmuel Rosner and Inbal Hakman, *The Challenge of Peoplehood: Strengthening the Attachment of Young American Jews to Israel in the Time of the Distancing Discourse* (Jerusalem, 2011); Ron Miller and Arnold Dashefsky, "Brandeis v. Cohen et al.: The Distancing from Israel Debate," *Contemporary Jewry* 30 (2009): 155–64.

5. The question of whether American Jewry and Israel were "drifting apart" was the subject of a symposium organized by the American Jewish Committee in New York City on 4 November 1989. See also Steven M. Cohen, *Are American and Israelis Jews Drifting Apart?* (New York, 1989).

6. Pew Research Center, "A Portrait of Jewish Americans."

7. Steven M. Cohen and Ari Y. Kelman, *Beyond Distancing: Young Adult American Jews and their Alienation from Israel* (New York, 2007), 9.

8. See Theodore Sasson, Charles Kadushin, and Leonard Saxe, "American Jewish Attachment to Israel: An Assessment of the 'Distancing' Hypothesis," Steinhardt Social Research Institute, February 2008, <http://www.brandeis.edu/cmjs/pdfs/IsraelAttach.030308.22.pdf>; Sasson, Kadushin, and Saxe, "Trends in American Jewish attachment to Israel: An assessment of the "distancing" hypothesis," *Contemporary Jewry* 30.2–3 (2010): 297–319.

9. See Theodore Sasson and Leonard Saxe, "Wrong Numbers," *Tablet*, 28 May 2010; Gal Beckerman, "Survey says young Jews do care about Israel," *The Forward*, 1 September 2010; Matthew Ackerman, "The Silent Young Jewish Majority," *Commentary*, 10 January 2012.

10. Theodore Sasson, Benjamin Phillips, Graham Wright, Charles Kadushin, and Leonard Saxe, "Understanding Young Adult Attachment to Israel: Period, Life-cycle and Generational Dynamics," *Contemporary Jewry* (2012); Theodore Sasson, Charles Kadushin, and Leonard Saxe, "On Sampling, Evidence and Theory: Concluding Remarks on the Distancing Debate," *Contemporary Jewry* 30 (2010): 149–53.

11. Cohen and Kelman, "Beyond Distancing"; Steven M. Cohen and Ari Y. Kelman, "Thinking About Distancing from Israel," *Contemporary Jewry* 30 (2010): 287–96; "Distancing is Closer than Ever," *Contemporary Jewry* 30 (2010): 145–8.

12. Cohen and Kelman, "Thinking About Distancing from Israel," 295.

13. According to the 2013 Pew survey, almost half (48%) of the young Jewish adult population in the US have parents who are intermarried, compared with just 18% of baby-boomers. There is a big difference in attachment to Israel between children of in-married Jewish families and children of inter-married families, as

the latter are much less attached to Israel. Cohen and Kelman, “Beyond Distancing,” 14–15. See also, Cohen and Kelman, “Distancing is Closer than Ever,” 145–8.

14. Steven M. Cohen and Jack Wertheimer, “Whatever Happened to the Jewish People,” *Commentary* 121.6 (2006): 33–7; Steven M. Cohen, “Jewish Identity Research in the United States: Ruminations on Concepts and Findings,” in *Continuity, Commitment and Survival: Jewish Communities in the Diaspora*, ed. Sol Encel and Leslie Stein, 1–22 (Westport, CT, 2003), 8. See also Shaul Magid, *American Post-Judaism: Identity and Renewal in a Postethnic Society* (Bloomington, IN, 2013).

15. Chaim Waxman, “Beyond Distancing: Jewish Identity, Identification, and America’s Young Jews,” *Contemporary Jewry* 30 (2010): 227–32, here 229. See also Steven M. Cohen and Arnold M. Eisen, *The Jew Within: Self, Family, and Community in America* (Bloomington, IN, 2000).

16. Cohen and Kelman, “Distancing is Closer than Ever,” 145–8.

17. The Taglit-Birthright Israel program was launched in 1999 and is funded by a coalition of private donors, Jewish organizations, and the Israeli government. Since the trips began, more than half a million young Diaspora Jews from over 66 countries—two-thirds of them from the US—have been on these “educational” tours, and they have become almost a rite of passage for young Jews. According to the 2013 Pew Survey, 48% of young American Jews (those aged 18–29) have visited Israel through Taglit-Birthright Israel. For detailed studies of the program, see Leonard Saxe and Barry Chazan, *Ten Days of Birthright Israel: A Journey in Young Adult Identity* (Lebanon, NH, 2008); and Shaul Kelner, *Tours that Bind: Diaspora, Pilgrimage, and Israeli Birthright Tourism* (New York, 2010).

18. Numerous studies have now been conducted on the impact of Birthright tours on participants’ attachment to Israel. These indicate that the trips have succeeded in strengthening attachment to Israel. See Leonard Saxe, Charles Kadushin, Shahar Hecht, Benjamin Phillips, Mark I. Rosen, and Shaul Kelner, *Evaluating Birthright Israel: Long Term Impact and Recent Findings* (2004); Leonard Saxe, Benjamin Phillips, Graham Wright, Mathew Boxer, Shahar Hecht, and Theodore Sasson, *Taglit-Birthright Israel: 2007–08 North American Cohorts* (2008); Leonard Saxe, Benjamin Phillips, Theodore Sasson, Shahar Hecht, Michelle Shain, Graham Wright, and Charles Kadushin, *Generation Birthright Israel: The Impact of an Israel Experience on Jewish Identity and Choices* (2009); Leonard Saxe, Theodore Sasson, Shahar Hecht, Benjamin Phillips, Michelle Shain, Graham Wright, and Charles Kadushin, *Jewish Futures Project: The Impact of Taglit-Birthright Israel: 2010 Update* (2011) [all Brandeis, Waltham, MA: Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies].

19. It is likely that the increasing proportion of young Jews who are Orthodox and the impact of increasing travel to Israel by young non-Orthodox Jews have offset a decline in attachment to Israel among non-Orthodox Jews, especially the unaffiliated and the intermarried.

20. A 2012 survey of non-Orthodox American Jews below the age of 35 found that they were much more attached to Israel than those aged 35–44. The likely reason for this is the fact that younger Jews are more likely to have visited Israel

due to the Birthright program—what Steven M. Cohen has called the “Birthright Bump”. Chemi Shalev, “Poll: Young American Jews are growing more attached to Israel,” *Ha’aretz*, 9 July 2012.

21. Theodore Sasson, *The New American Zionism* (New York, 2013).

22. Over the past decade, there has been a large increase in the number of college courses focusing on Israel and a significant expansion of Israel Studies programs at universities in the US. In a study of 246 universities and colleges, for instance, the number of Israel-focused courses increased from 325 in 2005–06 to 570 in 2011–12. A. Koren, N. Samuel, J.K. Aronson, L. Saxe, E. Aitan, and J. Davidson, *Searching for the Study of Israel: A Directory of Courses about Israel on U.S. College Campuses 2011–12* (Waltham, MA, 2013).

23. Jeffrey Gottfried and Michael Barthel, “How Millennials’ political news habits differ from those of Gen Xers and Baby Boomers,” Pew Research Center, 1 June 2015, <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2015/06/01/political-news-habits-by-generation/>.

24. Jack Wertheimer, “American Jews and Israel: A 60-Year Retrospective,” *American Jewish Yearbook* 108 (2008): 3–79, here 74.

25. For example, in a study conducted in 2010, when presented with Israeli and Turkish statements regarding the May 2010 flotilla incident (in which Israeli soldiers and pro-Palestinian activists clashed as the activists tried to bypass the Israeli naval blockade of the Gaza Strip), younger American Jews were less likely to agree with the Israeli statement. Rather, a plurality of the group aged 18–29 felt that the truth was probably about halfway between the Turkish and Israeli statements. Theodore Sasson, Benjamin Phillips, Charles Kadushin and Leonard Saxe, *Still Connected: American Jewish Attitudes about Israel* (Waltham, MA, 2010), 15.

26. In a 2012 survey of non-Orthodox American Jews under 35 years old, 40% opposed Israeli settlement construction (while only 22% supported it), and 45% said that Israel is not acting as if it wants peace with the Palestinians. Chemi Shalev, “Poll: Young American Jews are growing more attached to Israel,” *Ha’aretz*, 9 July 2012.

27. An online survey of 1,157 self-identified American Jewish college students conducted in 2014 found that while Israel was most commonly cited as “the most crucial issue concerning young Jewish people today”, only 35% of those surveyed felt that supporting Israel was very important to being Jewish. Ariela Keysar and Barry M. Kosmin, “The Demographic Survey of American Jewish College Students 2014,” reported in Derek M. Kwait, “First Results of the Jewish Student Survey are in!” *New Voices*, 15 September 2014.

28. For a good expression of this attitude, see Dana Goldstein, “Why Fewer Young American Jews Share Their Parents’ View of Israel,” *Time*, 29 September 2011.

29. It should be noted that most young American Jews have really only known Israeli governments dominated by the Likud party and led by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, since 2009. It is conceivable, therefore, that their skeptical

and critical attitude toward Israel's government is more a reaction to rightwing Israeli governments, and not to all Israeli governments.

30. Cohen and Kelman, "Beyond Distancing," 8.

31. Pew Research Center, "A Portrait of Jewish Americans," 89–91.

32. *Ibid.*

33. Daniel Cluchey, "Generation Why: Young American Jews and Israeli Exceptionalism," *Huffington Post*, 8 June 2010.

34. Debra Nussbaum Cohen, "Anti-occupation Jewish Millennial Group 'If Not Now' Picks Up Steam in U.S.," *Ha'aretz*, 2 May 2016.

35. First established in Berkeley, California, in 1996, Jewish Voice for Peace (JVP) has become the *bête noire* of the organized Jewish community in recent years because of its outspoken support for the BDS campaign against Israel. Despite being blacklisted by much of the organized Jewish community and even demonized in some circles, JVP has grown rapidly in recent years. The group now claims to have 9,000 dues paying members (up from just 600 in 2011), 200,000 online supporters, and more than 60 chapters around the country, including many on college campuses.

36. Michelle Shain, Leonard Saxe, Shahar Hecht, Graham Wright, and Theodore Sasson, "Discovering Israel at War: The Impact of Taglit-Birthright Israel in Summer 2014," Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies, February 2015.

37. Theodore Sasson, Leonard Saxe, and Michelle Shain, "How Do Young American Jews Feel About Israel?" *Tablet*, 24 February 2015.

38. Shain, et al., "Discovering Israel at War," 25.

39. The sample only comprised applicants to the Birthright program, so it excluded individuals without any interest in Israel and those most alienated from it.

40. In a survey conducted by the Pew Research Center, young Americans (18–29 year olds) blamed Israel more than Hamas (29% Israel vs. 21% Hamas) for the 2014 Gaza War, whereas older age groups viewed Hamas as more responsible (30–49 year olds—20% Israel vs. 37% Hamas; 50–64 year olds—14% Israel vs. 47% Hamas; 65+ 15% Israel vs. 53% Hamas). Pew Research Center, "Hamas Seen as More to Blame Than Israel for Current Violence," 28 July 2014, <http://www.people-press.org/2014/07/28/hamas-seen-as-more-to-blame-than-israel-for-current-violence/>. Similarly, a Gallup survey found that just 25% of 18–29 year old Americans viewed Israel's conduct in the war as justified, compared with 51% who viewed it as unjustified. Jeffrey M. Jones, "Americans' Reaction to Middle East Situation Similar to Past," 24 July 2014, http://www.gallup.com/poll/174110/americans-reaction-middle-east-situation-similar-past.aspx?utm_source=add_this&utm_medium=addthis.com&utm_campaign=sharing#.U9F59B8tTc.twitter.

41. In his essay, Beinart delivered a blistering attack on the American Jewish establishment, assailing it for what he described as its slavish devotion to supporting the increasingly illiberal, intolerant, and oppressive policies of rightwing Israeli governments. By refusing to criticize Israeli government policies, Beinart argued, the American Jewish establishment was not only betraying the values of liberal

Zionism, but also alienating young liberal American Jews from Israel and Zionism. Peter Beinart, "The Failure of the American Jewish Establishment," *The New York Review of Books*, 28 May 2010.

42. Leonard Saxe, Graham Wright, Shahar Hecht, Michelle Shain, Theodore Sasson, and Fern Chertok, "Hotspots of Antisemitism and Anti-Israel Hostility on US Campuses," Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies, 2016.

43. Israel on Campus Coalition, "2014–2015 Campus Trends Report," <http://israelcc.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/ICC-2014-2015-Campus-Trends-Report.pdf>.

44. Annette Koren, Leonard Saxe, and Eric Fleisch, "Jewish Life on Campus: From Backwater to Battleground," in *American Jewish Yearbook 2015*, ed. Arnold Dashefsky and Ira Sheskin, 45–88 (Dordrecht, 2016), here 49.

45. Leonard Saxe, Theodore Sasson, Graham Wright, and Shahar Hecht, "Anti-semitism on the College Campus: Perceptions and Realities," Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies, 2015.

46. Judy Maltz, "From the BDS front lines: How the on-campus brawl is turning young Jews off Israel," *Ha'aretz*, 4 May 2016.

47. Ella Ben Hagai, Eileen L. Zurbriggen, Phillip L. Hammack, and Megan Ziman, "Beliefs Predicting Peace, Beliefs Predicting War: Jewish-Americans and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict," *Analyses of Social Issues and Public Policy* 13.1 (2013): 286–309, here 304.

48. Judy Maltz, "From the BDS front lines," *Ha'aretz*, 4 May 2016.

49. For a full elaboration of this change and its implications see Dov Waxman, *Trouble in the Tribe: The American Jewish Conflict over Israel* (Princeton, 2016).

50. In a poll taken by Gallup in February 2017, only 32% of self-identified Democrats had a favorable opinion of Netanyahu, compared with 41% who viewed him unfavorably. Younger Americans (18–29 year olds) also viewed Netanyahu more unfavorably than favorably (32% to 26%). Lydia Saad, "Israel maintains positive image in the U.S.," Gallup, 15 February 2017, <http://www.gallup.com/poll/203954/israel-maintains-positive-image.aspx>.

51. Forty percent of liberal Democrats said they favored the Palestinians, compared with 33% who favored Israel. By contrast, among Americans in general, 54% sympathized more with Israel and just 19% with the Palestinians. Pew Research Center, "Public Uncertain, Divided Over America's Place in the World," 5 May 2016, <http://www.people-press.org/2016/05/05/5-views-of-israel-and-palestinians/>.

52. Derek Thompson, "The Liberal Millennial Revolution," *The Atlantic*, 29 February 2016. See also, Pew Research Center, *Millennials in Adulthood: Detached from Institutions, Networked with Friends* (Washington DC, 2014).

53. Pew Research Center, "Public Uncertain, Divided Over America's Place in the World," 5 May, <http://www.people-press.org/2016/05/05/5-views-of-israel-and-palestinians/>. See also, Samantha Smith and Carroll Doherty, "5 facts about how Americans view the Israeli-Palestinian conflict," Pew Research Center, 23 May 2016, <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2016/05/23/5-facts-about-how>

-americans-view-the-israeli-palestinian-conflict/. Similarly, in a survey taken in December 2014, young Democrats were slightly more likely to want the US to favor the Palestinians than Israel, unlike any other age group; and 50% of young Democrats wanted the US to enact economic sanctions in response to Israeli settlement building. Shibley Telhami and Katayoun Kishi, "Widening Democratic Party divisions on the Israeli-Palestinian issue," *The Washington Post*, 15 December 2014.

54. Steven M. Cohen, "Highly Engaged Young American Jews: Contrasts in Generational Ethos," 15 September 2010, <http://jcpa.org/article/highly-engaged-young-american-jews-contrasts-in-generational-ethos/>.

55. In a 2011 survey of young American Jews (those aged 18–35), when asked to list which causes they care about most and for which they would be willing to volunteer, "Israel/Middle East peace" appeared 10th on the list, behind social justice issues, the environment, human rights, and animal rights. Fern Chertok, Joshua Tobias, Sarah Rosin, and Mathew Boxer, "Volunteering + Values: A Repair the World Report on Jewish Young Adults," Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies, 2011.

56. Sylvia Barack Fishman with Rachel S. Bernstein, and Emily Sigalow, "Reimagining Jewishness: Younger American Jewish Leaders, Entrepreneurs, and Artists in Cultural Context," in *The New Jewish Leaders: Reshaping the American Jewish Landscape*, ed. Jack Wertheimer, 159–213 (Waltham, MA, 2011), 164–5.

57. Shifra Bronznick, and Didi Goldenhar, *Visioning Justice and the American Jewish Community* (New York, 2008), 33.

58. In the 2013 Pew Survey, for instance, younger Jews were much less likely than older Jews to feel a strong sense of belonging to the Jewish people.

59. Sylvia Barack Fishman, "Kaddish For Peoplehood and Younger Jews?" *The Jewish Week*, 23 November 2010.

60. According to the 2013 Pew survey, 48% of millennials had intermarried parents. The proportion of adults with intermarried parents declined with each older generation, from 24% for Generation X, to 18% for Boomers, to just 6% for the Silent generation.

61. In the survey, 68% of American Jews aged over sixty said the Holocaust was very important in shaping their political beliefs and action, compared to 41% of American Jews aged 18–39. Robert P. Jones and Daniel Cox, *Chosen for What? Jewish Values in 2012: Finding from the 2012 Jewish Values Survey* (Washington DC, 2012), 7.

62. This narrative continues to underpin the annual "March of the Living" in which Jewish teenagers from around the world visit the notorious Nazi concentration and death camp Auschwitz-Birkenau and then Israel. The fact that the trip ends in Israel accords with the "Holocaust to rebirth" narrative and evokes the belief that the Jewish state's existence now ensures that Jews are no longer defenseless.

63. Saxe, Sasson, Wright, and Hecht, "Anti-Semitism and the College Campus: Perceptions and Realities".

64. The Anti-Defamation League recorded a total of 941 anti-Semitic incidents

in the US in 2015, a significant decline from only a decade ago when more than 1,500 incidents of anti-Semitism occurred in 2006. Anti-Defamation League, "ADL Audit: Anti-Semitic Assaults Rise Dramatically Across the Country in 2015," 22 June 2016, <http://www.adl.org/press-center/press-releases/anti-semitism-usa/2015-audit-anti-semitic-incidents.html#.V7YXHJMrLqo>.

65. Due to a lack of statistical data, it is not yet clear whether there has in fact been a surge of anti-Semitic incidents since Trump's election. Mark Oppenheimer, "Is anti-Semitism truly on the rise in the U.S.? It's not so clear," *The Washington Post*, 17 February 2017.

66. Fishman, with Bernstein and Sigalow, "Reimagining Jewishness," 174.

67. Karl Mannheim, "The Problem of Generations," in *Essays on the Sociology of Knowledge*, 276–332 (London, 1952), here 292–9.

68. Howard Schuman and Amy Corning, "Generational Memory and the Critical Period: Evidence for National and World Events," *Public Opinion Quarterly* 76.1 (2012): 1–31.

69. Jonathan Rynhold, *The Arab-Israeli Conflict in American Political Culture* (New York, 2015), 149.

70. Fishman, Bernstein, and Sigalow, "Reimagining Jewishness," 174.

71. Theodore Sasson, *The New Realism: American Jewish Views about Israel* (New York, 2009).

72. One survey carried out by the American Jewish Committee in 1989, during the First Palestinian Intifada, shows that young American Jews back then were also more critical of Israel's treatment of Palestinians than older American Jews. The survey found that those under the age of 35 were more critical of Israel's response to the First Intifada, less suspicious of Arabs and Palestinians and less likely to see them as threatening Israel's survival, and slightly more dovish in their views about Israeli foreign policy. They were also much more likely to think that Israel's treatment of Arabs (both those within Israel and those in the West Bank and Gaza Strip) was unfair. A plurality, for instance, believed that "Many Israelis' attitudes toward Arabs are racist." Unfortunately, it is impossible to know whether the views of these young American Jews significantly changed since then because subsequent AJC surveys posed different questions under different circumstances. Steven M. Cohen, *Ties and Tensions: An Update—The 1989 Survey of American Jewish Attitudes Toward Israel and Israelis* (New York, 1989).

73. Drew Desilver, "The politics of American generations: How age affects attitudes and voting behavior," Pew Research Center, 9 July 2014, <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2014/07/09/the-politics-of-american-generations-how-age-affects-attitudes-and-voting-behavior/>. See also, Duane F. Alwin and Jon A. Krosnick, "Aging, Cohorts, and the Stability of Sociopolitical Orientations Over the Life Span," *American Journal of Sociology* 97.1 (1991): 169–95; David O. Sears and Carolyn L. Funk, "Evidence of the Long-Term Persistence of Adults' Political Predispositions," *The Journal of Politics*, 61.1 (1999): 1–28; David O. Sears and

Nicholas A. Valentino, "Politics Matters: Political Events as Catalysts for Preadult Socialization," *American Political Science Review* 91.1 (1997): 45–65.

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