ANTI-SEMITISM @ COLLEGE

Survey of US Members of AEπ and AEΦ

SPRING 2021

The Louis D. Brandeis Center for Human Rights Under Law

CONDUCTED BY: Cohen Research Group
## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Insights</th>
<th>Implications</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>01</strong> Anti-Semitism is pervasive at or at college despite COVID-19</td>
<td>Two thirds of students experienced or were familiar with acts of anti-Semitism over the past 120 days on campus or in virtual campus settings. Despite relative student isolation during the pandemic, anti-Semitism continued at college while some of it moved online. <em>This is prior to the May 2021 Israel-Gaza hostilities.</em></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>02</strong> Students are feeling unsafe, concerned about being verbally or physically attacked as Jews.</td>
<td>More than a quarter of students, increasing with college year, say they have felt unsafe as Jews on their campus or in virtual campus settings. As many as 10% were aware of physical attacks against Jewish students. Instead of college being a time of increasing freedom and self-exploration, students are also learning over time at college that just being Jewish draws new threats.</td>
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<td><strong>03</strong> As a result, students are actively hiding their Jewish identity</td>
<td>Again, increasing with college year, 50% of Jewish students hide their Jewish identity and more than half avoid expressing their views on Israel. At an impressionable age, young adults are concluding that to avoid anti-Semitism they must view their religion and Jewish identity as something to hide, not celebrate.</td>
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CONTENTS

Insights

01
Anti-Semitism @ College
How common, and how recent, are verbal and physical acts of violence during the pandemic?

02
Feeling Unsafe
How does anti-Semitism affect Jewish student views of their college environment and their physical and emotional safety?

03
Hiding Their Jewish Identity
What steps are Jewish students taking to protect themselves from anti-Semitism?
RESEARCH INTRODUCTION

In 2005, the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights warned that campus anti-Semitism had become a serious problem.

A 2013 Pew Research Center survey of Jews found that experience with anti-Semitism is more prevalent among young adults.

The LDB-Trinity College study a year later found it was pervasive on college campuses.

Despite COVID-19, and the transition to remote learning by many colleges, anti-Semitism is still a serious problem and widespread in college and online.
Members of ΑΕΠ and ΑΕΦ feel a strong sense of Jewish identity and connection to Israel.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>ΑΕΠ</th>
<th>ΑΕΦ</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Consider other Jews extended family</td>
<td>82%</td>
<td>84%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supportive of Israel</td>
<td>84%</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Traveled to Israel</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>55%</td>
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</table>

The survey was conducted at the end of the Spring 2021 semester prior to the May 2021 Israel-Gaza hostilities.

More than three in five ΑΕΠ and ΑΕΦ members said they also belong to Hillel (62%, 63%, respectively) and almost half to Chabad (49%, 47%).
Anti-Semitism @ College

ΔΕΠ and ΔΕΦ Jewish members often are experiencing, observing, and hearing about verbal and physical abuse at college and in virtual campus situations.
Most Jewish students surveyed have first- or second-hand experience with verbal acts of anti-Semitism on their campus or online

Most common: Offensive statements about Jews and the Holocaust, including referring to Jews as being "greedy," "cheap," or having other negative qualities, assigning to all Jews collective responsibility for actions by Israel, and using pejorative nicknames.

1 in 2
50% of AEPJ members personally experienced an anti-Semitic verbal attack in the past 120 days. Even more observed or heard about them happening on or at their college campus.

2 in 3
69% of AEI members

AZCentral: Several of these anti-Semitic posters were found on the Arizona State University campus.

The survey was conducted at the end of the Spring 2021 semester prior to the May 2021 Israel-Gaza hostilities.
Most common verbal acts of anti-Semitism experienced by Jewish students in the past 120 days

Anti-Semitism on campus is most often experienced through words and offensive statements targeted at Jews as a community. Persistent prejudices such that Jews are “greedy” or “cheap” are commonplace on campus. The notion that Jews have a collective responsibility for Israel’s military actions was relatively common despite the study being completed before the latest conflict with Gaza.

The survey was conducted at the end of the Spring 2021 semester prior to the May 2021 Israel-Gaza hostilities.
Other verbal acts of anti-Semitism experienced by Jewish students in the past 120 days

Many AEPI and AEΦ students experienced various forms of prejudice on and off campus such as being called "untrustworthy" or having too much "political power" over policymakers in the United States. Recently, this category has expanded to include blanket derogatory statements about Jews and Zionism in terms of white supremacy or responsibility for the "Nazi" treatment of Palestinians in Israel.

The survey was conducted at the end of the Spring 2021 semester prior to the May 2021 Israel-Gaza hostilities.
Many Jewish students surveyed have personal or second-hand knowledge of other anti-Semitic acts at their schools

This category includes more aggressive verbal actions such as accusing Jews or Israelis of unethical behavior, shouting or name-calling at Jews, deliberately spitting on Jews, and actual or threatened physical acts of anti-Semitism on Jews, including attacks with weapons.

1 in 4
26% of AEII members personally experienced, observed or heard about an anti-Semitic act of abuse in the past 120 days on or @ their college campus.

1 in 6
17% of AEΦ members

The survey was conducted at the end of the Spring 2021 semester prior to the May 2021 Israel-Gaza hostilities.
Awareness of physical acts of anti-Semitism against Jewish students in the past 120 days

While the students we interviewed rarely experienced these acts or threatened acts of anti-Semitic abuse themselves, many were very aware of it happening on their campus or in virtual campus settings, creating an environment where being targeted for being Jewish is a part of their college experience.

Note: Separately, and not included in the above graph, 15 AEPI members and 1 member of AEΦ personally experienced being spit upon for being Jewish.

The survey was conducted at the end of the Spring 2021 semester prior to the May 2021 Israel-Gaza hostilities.
Awareness of public verbal acts of anti-Semitism toward Jewish students in the past 120 days

Aided by social media and, in some cases, official platforms, anti-Semitism and prejudice have become more public. Many AEII and AEF students reported experiencing, seeing, or hearing about acts of verbal abuse on campus and online such as aggressive shouting or name-calling or accusing Jews of unethical behavior.

The survey was conducted at the end of the Spring 2021 semester prior to the May 2021 Israel-Gaza hostilities.

Awareness = observed or heard about an incident.
02

Feeling Unsafe

The longer students are on campus or in virtual college situations, the more they feel concerned about being verbally attacked, excluded, bullied, or harassed online, or even marginalized by professors.
Most students surveyed have felt unsafe as a Jew at some point while on campus or in virtual campus settings.

Anti-Semitism is influencing students’ feelings of safety at college and online while enrolled in classes or participating in organized activities.

More than **3 in 5**
- 64% of ΑΕΠ members have not felt safe as a Jew on their campus or in virtual campus settings often, sometimes, or rarely.

More than **2 in 3**
- 67% of ΑΕΦ members have not felt safe as a Jew on their campus or in virtual campus settings often, sometimes, or rarely.

The survey was conducted at the end of the Spring 2021 semester prior to the May 2021 Israel-Gaza hostilities.
FEELING UNSAFE BY COLLEGE YEAR

Concern about safety increases between freshman and senior year in college

Students in their first year feel safer as Jews on campus and online than those who have experienced four years at their college.

The survey was conducted at the end of the Spring 2021 semester prior to the May 2021 Israel-Gaza hostilities.
FEELING UNSAFE SPECIFIC CONCERNS

Students who felt unsafe are concerned about being attacked verbally, socially, and physically

While AEII and AEΦ Jewish students who felt unsafe are most concerned about being verbally attacked, about three in ten are concerned about being marginalized or penalized by their college professors.

* These data are from the subgroup of 458 members of AEII and 211 members of AEΦ who felt unsafe being a Jew at some point while they were on campus or in a virtual campus setting.
FEELING UNSAFE SPECIFIC CONCERNS

Specific safety concerns increase the longer Jewish students spend time in college

One-fifth of seniors fear that they will be physically attacked.

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<tr>
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<th>FRESHMEN</th>
<th>SENIORS</th>
<th>Difference</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>VERBAL ATTACK</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>+9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOCIALLY EXCLUDED</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>=</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BULLIED OR HARASSED ONLINE</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>+8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MARGINALIZED OR PENALIZED BY PROFESSOR</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>+16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PHYSICAL ATTACK</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>+3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The survey was conducted at the end of the Spring 2021 semester prior to the May 2021 Israel-Gaza hostilities.

* These data are from the subgroup of 458 members of AEI who felt unsafe being a Jew at some point while they were on campus or in a virtual campus setting.
Hiding Their Identity

As a result of their personal or shared experiences with anti-Semitism on campus or online, many feel the need to hide their Jewish faith and culture.
As a result, a majority of students surveyed felt they needed to hide their Jewish identity while on campus in-person or online.

Experiencing campus anti-Semitism first-hand and through others teaches students to be concerned about being targeted for being Jewish.

49% of AEI members  

50% of AEΦ members

have felt they needed to hide their Jewish identity while on campus in-person or in virtual campus settings.

"An anti-Semitic speaker came to our school." - AEI member  

"A professor was pushing anti-Israel bias in a geography class." - AEI member  

"In the fall of 2020, a fire was deliberately set to our campus' Chabad." - AEΦ member  

"People don't like Jews." - AEΦ member

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HIDING THEIR IDENTITY SPECIFIC CONCERNS

Students who felt they needed to hide their Jewish identity were concerned about being attacked verbally, socially, and physically

While AEΠ and AEΦ Jewish students who felt the need to hide their Jewish identity are most concerned about being verbally attacked, about three in ten are concerned about their college professors.

The survey was conducted at the end of the Spring 2021 semester prior to the May 2021 Israel-Gaza hostilities.

* These data are from the subgroup of 458 members of AEΠ and 211 members of AEΦ who felt unsafe being a Jew at some point while they were on campus or in a virtual campus setting.
The longer Jewish students are enrolled, the more they feel the need to hide their identity.

Even though respondents did not say that they "often" feel the need to hide their identity - they said that they "sometimes" feel the need to hide their identity.

The survey was conducted at the end of the Spring 2021 semester prior to the May 2021 Israel-Gaza hostilities.
The pandemic was not a panacea for anti-Semitism on college campuses, as most Jewish students reported experiencing verbal acts of anti-Semitism in-person or online, and a significant group was aware of more aggressive acts of anti-Semitism, including threats of, or actual, violence.

The college experience is being undermined by anti-Semitism. In the face of acts of anti-Semitism on their religion and identity in and out of the classroom Jewish students are learning to hide their identity to ensure their safety from verbal, social, and physical acts of anti-Semitism.

Students are experiencing both traditional anti-Semitism in the form of traditional anti-Semitic tropes and a newer form of anti-Semitism as it relates to Israel. It is significant that the anti-Zionism and anti-Israelism reported in this survey was experienced before the recent Israel-Gaza hostilities. It is likely that had the survey taken place in May instead of April, the number of anti-Semitic incidents relating to Israel would have been higher and the percentage of students expressing fear of being targeted would have been greater than reflected in the survey.

Implications and challenges for the return to campus
METHODOLOGY

Goals: The goal of this study is to understand the prevalence of acts of anti-Semitism at U.S. colleges and universities and in virtual campus settings through interviews with enrolled students who are members of the Alpha Epsilon Pi fraternity (AEPi) and the Alpha Epsilon Phi sorority (AEPhi), two predominantly-Jewish college Greek organizations.

Research Methods: We worked with both organizations to invite all currently active members by email to participate in an internet survey commissioned by The Louis D. Brandeis Center. The survey was conducted by Cohen Research Group April 14-21, 2021. Two email invites were sent four days apart and students were paid with a $10 Amazon gift card for their full participation in the research.

Respondents: Students were eligible for the survey if they self-reported being Jewish or had close family relatives who consider themselves to be Jewish. The results highlighted in this presentation are of 710 members of Alpha Epsilon Pi and 317 members of Alpha Epsilon Phi.

Confidentiality: Due to the sensitivity of the subject matter, in addition to survey industry policies and practices, individually identifying information was not shared with LDB, AE Pi or AE Phi unless they opted-in to being contacted further to discuss their experiences. The full set of questions and cross-tabulations are available upon request.
About the Louis D. Brandeis Center

The Louis D. Brandeis Center for Human Rights Under Law is an independent, unaffiliated, nonprofit corporation established to advance the civil and human rights of the Jewish people and promote justice for all. LDB conducts research, education, and advocacy to combat the resurgence of anti-Semitism on college and university campuses.

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