

Antisemitism in Plain Sight: Introduction to the Special Issue, Part II

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Abstract

This introduction to the second of two special issues of the Journal of Deradicalization examines contemporary antisemitism through six contributions. We first discuss the question of the scale and selectivity of anti-Israel mobilization since October 7, 2023: whether the phenomenon sometimes called “Palestinianism” acts, in part, as antisemitism in a more socially acceptable guise. Against that cultural and historic backdrop, we introduce six articles spanning visual, survey, experimental, and clinical case-study methods. This includes the first systematic analysis of offline, visual antisemitism: graffiti, defaced memorials, and marked Jewish space—as opposed to the online and rhetorical antisemitism that has dominated the literature. Complementing this visual analysis, contributions using population surveys, moral-psychology experiments, and clinical case material converge on a common finding: hostility toward Israel and hostility toward Jews are empirically separable yet functionally entangled, each capable of licensing the other under the right ideological and situational conditions. Turning to intervention, the issue offers evidence, some encouraging and some cautionary, on trauma-informed victim support, multidisciplinary disengagement work with radicalized youth, and biographical intergroup contact as a scalable prevention tool. For P/CVE practice, the collection suggests that countering contemporary antisemitism should include attending to where hate becomes visible in public space, disentangling anti-Israel sentiment from anti-Jewish animus in risk assessment, and investing in early, relationship-based prevention rather than relying solely on reactive security responses.

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Introduction

This is the second part of the special issue of the Journal for Deradicalization devoted to the social science of antisemitism. As the introduction to the first issue detailed, antisemitism has surged globally since 2023, accelerating sharply after the October 7 Hamas attack on Israel and Israel’s subsequent military campaign in Gaza (Kruglanski & Moskalenko, 2026). The European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights’ third survey of Jewish Europeans² found

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² https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2024-experiences-perceptions-antisemitism-survey_en.pdf

that 96 percent of respondents had encountered antisemitism in the preceding year, with three-quarters believing that people in their country hold them collectively responsible for the actions of the Israeli government (European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, 2024). This finding of collective attribution of Israeli state conduct to Jews as individuals is the thread that connects the six articles in this issue, and it is where we begin.

Beyond Criticism of Policy: The Case for “Antisemitism in Disguise”

The recent wave of anti-Israel, anti-Zionist, and pro-Palestinian demonstrations on university campuses in the United States and across parts of Europe is frequently framed in humanitarian terms: as a moral response to the suffering of civilians in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank. The images of devastation following the October 2023 Hamas attack and Israel’s subsequent military campaign have understandably evoked anguish and protest. Yet the scale and selectivity of these mobilizations raise a question: why does this particular conflict provoke such sustained and often absolutist outrage, while other humanitarian catastrophes of equal or greater magnitude elicit comparatively muted responses?

Consider the ongoing war initiated by Russia against Ukraine, which has produced massive civilian casualties and displacement. Or the brutal conflict in Sudan, widely documented by organizations such as Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International, involving ethnic massacres and large-scale atrocities. Similarly, the repression of Uyghur Muslims in China, described in reports by the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (2022), has not produced anything like the same level of sustained protest in Western academic and cultural institutions. While differences in media coverage and geopolitical salience may partly explain this disparity, the consistent singling out of Israel suggests that something more than neutral humanitarian concern may be at work.

This is relevant when segments of these protest movements cross from criticism of Israeli policy into open or implicit support for organizations such as Hamas and Hezbollah, both designated terrorist organizations by the U.S. Department of State, the European Union, and other governments. Yet in some demonstrations, slogans, symbols, or rhetoric have appeared that either explicitly praise these groups or frame their actions as legitimate resistance. The normalization, or even romanticization, of such organizations, whose tactics

have included deliberate attacks on civilians, raises serious moral questions. It suggests that opposition to Israel is, in certain quarters, not merely a critique of state policy but part of a broader ideological posture that tolerates or endorses violence when directed at Israelis.

Symbolic politics (the explicit focus of one of this special issue's articles—by Howard Grice) underscores this asymmetry. Palestinian flags have been prominently displayed on public buildings and institutions across Europe, including reports of flags flown at sites such as the Santiago de Compostela Cathedral. Such gestures are presented as expressions of solidarity with Palestinian civilians. Yet there have been no comparable symbolic campaigns for the victims of Sudan's civil war, or for Uyghurs facing systemic repression. The selectivity of these public moral signals of what is elevated and what is ignored again invites questions.

As does the frequent invocation of “genocide” to describe Israeli policy. Under the United Nations Genocide Convention (1948), genocide entails specific intent to destroy a protected group. Whether Israeli actions meet this legal threshold is a matter of ongoing dispute, including proceedings before the International Court of Justice. Critics of the genocide claim point to the continued existence and growth of Palestinian populations, as well as the fact that roughly 20 percent of Israel's citizens are Arab, with formal political rights and representation in the Knesset. Proponents counter with arguments about patterns of destruction and intent. But the categorical use of the term in public discourse, often detached from its legal criteria, risks transforming a grave accusation into a rhetorical weapon.

At the same time, the internal diversity of Israeli society is frequently overlooked in this discourse (see Clark McCauley's paper in this issue). Large segments of the Israeli public have opposed the policies of the government led by Benjamin Netanyahu, as reflected in mass protests and survey data from institutions like the Israel Democracy Institute. Opposition to settlement expansion, support for negotiated solutions, and deep political divisions are all well documented. Yet international protest discourse often flattens these distinctions, portraying Israel as a unified and uniformly culpable actor—and, as several of the papers in this issue show, portraying Jews outside Israel the same way.

These patterns of selective outrage, occasional tolerance for or endorsement of groups widely recognized as terrorist organizations, asymmetrical symbolic gestures, and the flattening of complex realities cannot be fully explained by humanitarian concern alone. None

of this negates the reality of Palestinian suffering or the legitimacy of criticizing Israeli policy. But it raises the question of whether the recent pro-Palestinian protest culture is, in some of its expressions, antisemitism in disguise.

This is, of course, an empirical question as much as a normative one, and it is the question this issue's contributors take up from several very different vantage points: how a conflict over a state influences attitudes toward a people.

It is worth addressing the question of how survey research, visual ethnography, and moral-psychology experiments fit in at a journal devoted to preventing and countering violent extremism (P/CVE). P/CVE scholarship and practice have increasingly organized themselves around a public health model of prevention, distinguishing primary prevention (population-level interventions addressing risk and protective factors before radicalization begins), secondary prevention (interventions targeted at individuals already showing risk indicators), and tertiary prevention (intervention with individuals who have radicalized or mobilized to violence; National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, 2017; Weine et al., 2019). In this model, identifying and measuring the risk factors that make collective blame, dehumanization, and public tolerance of hostility more likely is the primary prevention tier of P/CVE work, on which secondary and tertiary interventions depend for their evidence base. The six articles in this issue span that continuum. Grice, McCauley, and Galvan, Selterman, and Womick identify, respectively, the environmental, cognitive, and moral-psychological mechanisms by which anti-Israel sentiment converts into antisemitic hostility – primary prevention evidence. Petropoulos and Fotou, and Jouenne, Prokhovnik-Raphique, and Bar-Halpern are at the secondary and tertiary tiers, with victims of hate crime and with adolescents already drawn toward extremist content, respectively. Finally, Goodbun and Abrams close the issue with a primary prevention intervention. Read together, the issue demonstrates evidence at each tier of the prevention continuum for a form of prejudice (antisemitism) that P/CVE frameworks have historically undertheorized.

The Present Collection

This second part of the special issue on antisemitism includes six articles that together illustrate a broad methodological range: qualitative visual analysis, large population surveys,

path-analytic experiments in moral psychology, clinical case study, and field-based prevention trials with random-assignment logic. They move from the macro level of public space and public opinion to the individual level of moral perception and clinical intervention, and conclude with two contributions detailing the effects of interventions, one institutional and one educational, that speak directly to how the harms documented earlier in the issue might be prevented or repaired.

A defining feature of this collection, and one we want to highlight, is its methodological pluralism. Where much of the antisemitism literature of the past decade has concentrated on either survey attitudes or online/digital hate speech, the six papers here draw on offline visual ethnography, cross-sectional and longitudinal survey data, experimental path models, in-depth clinical case narratives, and pre-post field intervention data from real schools and real helplines. No single method could have produced the picture that emerges from reading them together; it is the combination that allows us to see antisemitism operating simultaneously as image, attitude, moral narrative, lived trauma, and treatable psychological process.

Howard Grice (2026) opens the issue with what is, to our knowledge, the first systematic academic analysis of *offline visual* antisemitism in Europe during the Gaza war. While a substantial body of scholarship has examined antisemitic rhetoric and imagery online, Grice observes that comparatively little research has treated graffiti, paint attacks, stickers, and the defacement or removal of memorials as objects of sustained analysis in their own right, even though monitoring organizations have compiled extensive documentation of exactly this material. Drawing on a corpus of 88 documented incidents across Europe in 2023–2024, Grice identifies four recurring visual strategies. These include red symbolism implying violence and complicity (red handprints on the Paris Shoah Memorial); Nazi symbolism and Holocaust inversion (swastikas merged with the Star of David, posters of Israeli hostages defaced with Hitler moustaches); the desecration and overwriting of Jewish memory (the Anne Frank statue in Amsterdam vandalized with Gaza-related slogans); and the marking and targeting of Jewish space (Stars of David painted on Jewish homes in Berlin, “Free Gaza” sprayed on the Choral Synagogue in Vilnius).

Across all four themes, Grice argues, the underlying mechanism is the visual collapsing of the distinction between Jewish identity and the actions of the Israeli state, so that

Jewish individuals and institutions become “proxies” onto which geopolitical anger is discharged. This is, in effect, a visual documentation of the same conflation of Jews with Israel that animates the discussion above and several of the papers that follow. Grice’s methodological contribution is innovative and significant: by treating antisemitic images as a coherent communicative system rather than a series of disconnected vandalism incidents, the analysis demonstrates how repetition, placement, and symbolic association allow hostility to become normalized within the physical, shared environment of daily life. Such normalization is arguably more problematic than a comparable volume of online hate that a person can choose to block or ignore. For P/CVE practice, Grice’s recommendation that monitoring bodies and policymakers extend systematic attention to offline visual antisemitism, alongside existing digital-monitoring efforts, is among this issue’s most actionable proposals. Criminological research on environmental disorder has long shown that visible, unaddressed signs of transgression communicate tolerance and can license further escalation (Wilson & Kelling, 1982). Grice’s four visual strategies function similarly: a graffiti of a swastika or a defaced memorial is an ongoing signal, to both perpetrators and bystanders, of what is acceptable. In other words, offline visual antisemitism is a primary-prevention target.

Turning from the symbolic marking of public space to public opinion itself, Clark McCauley (2026) offers an analysis of why so many Americans might have come to see Jewish Americans as responsible for Israeli policy---the conflation that Grice documents visually across the EU. Drawing on an extensive review of recent U.S. polling data, McCauley shows that a 2025 Anti-Defamation League survey found a sharp increase in the percent of American adults agreeing that “Jewish Americans need to answer for the actions of the State of Israel,” as compared to 2019. Rather than attributing this shift to age-old stereotypes or conspiracy theory alone, McCauley highlights the role of the existing connections between U.S. Jews and Israel: emotional attachment, rates of travel and residence, participation in pro-Israel advocacy, and the visibility of a small number of prominent Jewish supporters of Israeli policy. McCauley suggests that these connections may lead observers to generalize from these examples to the community as a whole. Invoking the “law of small numbers” and vividness bias from cognitive psychology, McCauley draws a parallel to the post-9/11 surge in hate crimes against Muslims and Arabs, a population similarly blamed collectively for the acts of a small, unrepresentative minority. It is important

to note that McCauley's data also challenge any simple story of Jewish uniformity. Thus, he shows, American Jewish opinion on the Gaza war ranges from unconditional support (represented by organizations like AIPAC) to explicit accusations of genocide (represented by Jewish Voice for Peace), with a substantial share of American Jews themselves disapproving of Israel's conduct of the war. McCauley's practical recommendation is to publicize the disagreement among American Jews about Israeli policy, to offer an evidence-based counter to the collective-responsibility narrative. In the P/CVE terms, this is precursor identification: before practitioners can design a primary-prevention message or educational intervention, they must first establish that a specific, correctable cognitive bias is driving the shift in attitudes that McCauley documents. That diagnostic step is necessary for prevention efforts to target the right mechanism.

Manuel Galvan, Dylan Selterman, and Jake Womick (2026) bring a third, experimental lens to the same underlying puzzle: how does conflict over a state translate into prejudice against people? Applying Dyadic Morality Theory (Schein & Gray, 2018) to two U.S. surveys (Ns = 500 and 400) collected during the Gaza war, the authors show that Americans routinely "typecast" Israelis and Palestinians into complementary moral roles of victim and villain, and that this typecasting mediates the relationship between authoritarianism and prejudice. Right-wing authoritarianism operates through casting Palestinians as villains, which predicts Islamophobia; left-wing authoritarianism operates through casting Israelis as villains, which predicts Antizionism. The authors find that Judeophobia (prejudice toward Jews as a people) and Antizionism (hostility toward the state of Israel and its supporters) are empirically separable constructs with partly distinct predictors, even though they are correlated and even though, under certain moral framings, one can license the other. This finding echoes two papers from Part 1 of the Special Issue: Ellenberg et al., 2026, and Moskalenko & Pavlovic, 2026—that also demonstrated divergent predictive validity for anti-Israel and anti-Jewish attitudes in their studies.

Galvan and colleagues' finding captures a distinction that runs through the entire issue: anti-Israel sentiment and antisemitism are neither identical nor wholly independent, and untangling the conditions under which the former becomes a vehicle for the latter is one of the central analytic tasks facing this field. The authors' proposed intervention is disrupting

simplistic villain/victim moral narratives by highlighting shared vulnerability and civilian suffering on both sides.

Villain/victim typecasting can be seen as a milder and more prevalent version of the dehumanization processes that the violent extremism literature has long identified among psychological mechanisms enabling justification of hostility, and ultimately violence, toward an outgroup (Moskalenko et al., 2019; Giner-Sorolla, Leidner, & Castano, 2011). Indeed, the Two Pyramid Model of radicalization (McCauley & Moskalenko, 2014) treats the moral licensing of hostility toward a group as a necessary early step on the opinion pyramid. Mapping the discourse-level moral narratives that make such licensing more or less likely (what Galvan, Seltermann, and Womick do) is thus a direct empirical contribution to P/CVE risk assessment.

The remaining three articles turn from documenting and explaining antisemitism to the practical work of responding to it, moving from institutional response to individual clinical intervention, to prevention in childhood and adolescence.

Nikolaos Petropoulos and Eleni Fotou (2026) examine the consequences of antisemitic victimization through a trauma-informed lens. They argue for embedding victim support within P/CVE ecosystems that have traditionally focused almost exclusively on perpetrators. Drawing on the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights' 2024 survey (in which 84 percent of respondents viewed antisemitism as a serious problem in their country and only 11 percent of those who experienced antisemitic discrimination ever reported it) the authors describe how antisemitic victimization produces trauma responses aligned with the broader trauma literature. These responses include avoidance, shame, anxiety, and, in some cases, an identification with the perpetrator that can manifest as harsh self-distancing from Jewish identity or from Israel.

Petropoulos and Fotou argue that when institutions fail to validate victims' experiences, the resulting erosion of trust in authority creates grievance, a sense of institutional betrayal, and perceived injustice that extremist narratives exploit. Conversely, trauma-informed policing, victim-centered reporting mechanisms, and multi-agency collaboration between hate-crime units and prevention practitioners can, they argue, function as an underappreciated form of primary prevention. Their recommendations include referral

pathways between hate-crime units and P/CVE practitioners, and the anonymized use of victim narratives in educational programming.

Emma Jouenne, Alla Prokhovnik-Raphique, and Miri Bar-Halpern Hobin (2026) shift the focus to individual-level clinical intervention, presenting two detailed case studies from Parents for Peace. This U.S. non-profit conducts trauma-informed disengagement work with radicalizing youth. One case is an African American adolescent drawn into jihadist-oriented online content, the other is a socially anxious white American adolescent whose antisemitic “jokes” functioned as tests of belonging and status within extremist online communities. In both instances, antisemitism did not initiate radicalization so much as finalize it, providing a named enemy that turned grievance, isolation, and identity uncertainty into a coherent, morally simplified worldview. The authors’ account of “Exit Peer Specialists” (“formers”)--formerly radicalized individuals embedded within, and supervised by, multidisciplinary clinical teams, offers a response to a longstanding ethical concern in the disengagement literature: how to harness the credibility of lived experience without incurring the risks of relapse, boundary violation, or unsupervised practice. Both youths in these case studies showed meaningful, if uneven, improvement through sustained relationship-based work combining psychoeducation, religious literacy, family engagement, and peer mentorship. This suggests that even entrenched antisemitic ideation can be countered with interventions that address the underlying psychosocial vulnerabilities rather than the ideological content alone.

Closing the issue on a note of qualified optimism, Katie Goodbun and Dominic Abrams (2026) report on two field studies evaluating “biographical intergroup contact.” This intervention teaches children and adolescents about the life and perspective of a real Jewish outgroup member, in this case Anne Frank, delivered through the Anne Frank Trust UK’s school-based education program. In Study 1 (N = 122, ages 12–15), biographical contact produced a significant increase in participants’ willingness for contact with Jewish people, and this change predicted 43 percent of the variance in improved attitudes toward six other stigmatized groups commonly targeted by extremism. Study 2 (N = 330, ages 8–12) found corresponding gains in three hypothesized mechanisms: knowledge about prejudice, intergroup empathy, and confidence in intergroup communication.

Unlike more traditional Holocaust education, whose measured effects on attitudes tend to be modest and short-lived (Cowan & Maitles, 2005, 2007), biographical contact appears to

work through a more personal, parasocial engagement with a single, vividly rendered individual—suggesting, not coincidentally, an antidote to the very “vividness bias” that McCauley identifies as a driver of collective blame, here redirected toward humanizing rather than stigmatizing ends. Goodbun and Abrams’ findings offer some of the most encouraging evidence in either volume of this special issue that antisemitism, and prejudice more broadly, can be substantially reduced through a scalable, low-cost, school-based intervention delivered well before adolescence hardens attitudes into fixed positions.

Concluding Discussion: Implications for P/CVE

Within the primary/secondary/tertiary prevention continuum discussed above, this issue's six articles present evidence at each tier that has been largely absent from the literature to date. Four implications for P/CVE practice and policy follow.

First, antisemitism is not only a digital phenomenon, and prevention frameworks calibrated primarily to online content will miss a significant share of it. Grice’s analysis demonstrates that antisemitism is materially embedded in the physical environments Jewish communities exist in, such as synagogues, homes, and memorial sites. This offline visual dimension has received disproportionately little research or policy attention relative to digital hate speech. P/CVE monitoring and rapid-response infrastructure should extend systematically to physical public space, not only to online platforms.

Second, and running through nearly every paper in this issue, effective risk assessment and prevention work requires the analytic separation of anti-Israel sentiment from antisemitism. Galvan, Selterman, and Womick’s demonstration that Judeophobia and Antizionism are statistically distinguishable, McCauley’s account of how real connections between diaspora Jews and Israel get generalized through cognitive bias into collective blame, and Grice’s documentation of visual acts that effectively conflate Jewish identity and Israeli state action, provide practitioners with both the conceptual tools and the empirical foundation to operationalize this distinction. Doing so is important because failing to make the distinction carries political and psychological costs: treating all criticism of Israel as antisemitic stifles legitimate political speech, while treating none of it as a potential vector for antisemitism cedes ground to a documented mechanism of prejudice proliferation.

Third, this issue's contributions agree on the importance of addressing the psychosocial substrate beneath ideological content, rather than the content alone. Petropoulos and Fotou's trauma-informed model, and Jouenne, Prokhovnik-Raphique, and Bar-Halpern Hobin's case studies of adolescent disengagement, both show that antisemitic narratives derive much of their power from unmet needs for validation, social belonging, and control. Interventions that address only the falsity of antisemitic beliefs, without addressing the isolation, grievance, or trauma that made those beliefs appealing or that the victimization inflicted, are likely to fall short. This is consistent with the broader message of the first issue's contributions on need for significance (Ellenberg et al., 2026) and institutional apology (Mann, 2026): deeply motivated prejudice, and the trauma it produces, resist purely informational or symbolic remedies.

Fourth, Goodbun and Abrams' findings suggest that the earliest possible intervention--delivered in primary and secondary schools, well before radicalized attitudes have hardened--may be especially cost-effective relative to later clinical or institutional responses. A scalable, humanizing, biographically detailed intervention that produces measurable secondary transfer to prejudice against other stigmatized groups represents exactly the kind of "upstream" investment that P/CVE frameworks, historically weighted toward reactive security responses once radicalization is already underway, have tended to underfund.

This issue presents a variety of methods to both study and counter antisemitism. It also identifies the challenges for practitioners and policymakers: to recognize antisemitism wherever and however it manifests; to resist collapsing legitimate political disagreement about Israel into a single undifferentiated charge of Jew-hatred; and to resist the opposite error of treating that disagreement as a separate phenomenon immune from fostering exactly the prejudice this issue documents. The six contributions gathered here, alongside their six companions in the first volume of this special issue, constitute a substantial and methodologically diverse foundation for that task.

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