

ADL Poll Finds Anti-Semitic Attitudes on Rise in America

New York, NY, November 3, 2011 ... A nationwide survey of the American people released today by the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) found that anti-Semitic attitudes have risen slightly in America, demonstrating once again that "anti-Semitic beliefs continue to hold a vice grip" on a small but not insubstantial segment of America.

The ADL survey found that 15 percent of Americans – nearly 35 million adults – hold deeply anti-Semitic views, an increase of 3 percent from a similar poll conducted in 2009, and matching the levels of anti-Semitic propensities recorded in the U.S. in 2005 and 2007. Over the last decade, the highest level of anti-Semitic attitudes was reported in 2002, when an ADL poll found 17 percent of Americans harbored anti-Jewish attitudes.

The 2011 *Survey of American Attitudes Toward Jews in America*, a national telephone survey of 1,754 adults, was conducted October 13-23 by Marttila Strategies of Washington, D.C. and Boston. The margin of error is +/-2.8 percent.

"The fact that anti-Semitic attitudes have increased significantly over the past two years is troubling and raises questions about the impact of broader trends in America – financial insecurity, social uncertainty, the decline in civility and the growth of polarization – on attitudes toward Jews," said Abraham H. Foxman, ADL National Director. "It is disturbing that with all of the strides we have made in becoming a more tolerant society, anti-Semitic beliefs continue to hold a vicegrip on a small but not insubstantial segment of the American public."

Among the more disturbing findings, the ADL survey shows that at a time of high unemployment and economic uncertainty, age-old myths about Jews and money and Jewish power in business endure.

Nineteen percent (19%) of Americans answered "probably true" to the statement "Jews have too much control/influence on Wall Street," an increase from 14 percent in 2009.

"The stereotypes about Jews and money endure, and the fact that more Americans are now accepting these statements about Jews as true suggests that the downturn in the economy, along with the changing demographics of our society, may have contributed to the rise in anti-Semitic sentiments," said Mr. Foxman. "Once again the old anti-Semitic standbys about Jewish loyalty, the death of Jesus and Jewish power remain strong."

Additional Findings:

Anti-Semitic propensities are measured by an 11-question index developed by ADL more than 40 years ago. The index includes 11 statements used to gauge the anti-Semitic attitudes of the respondents.

In the new survey a surprising number of Americans agreed with sharply worded criticisms of Jews:

- Fourteen percent (14%) agreed with the statement that "Jews have too much power in the U.S. today," an increase from 13 percent in 2009.
- Fifteen percent (15 %) agreed that Jews are "more willing to use shady practices," up slightly from 2009.
- Sixteen percent (16%) agreed that Jewish "business people are so shrewd, others don't have a chance," up from 13 percent in 2009.

- Thirty percent (30%) believe that Jews are "more loyal to Israel than to America," a percentage that has remained virtually unchanged since ADL's benchmark survey in 1964, despite the changing makeup of the U.S population.
- Nearly half of all respondents agreed with the statement that Jews "stick together more than other Americans, and 33 percent said they believe Jews "always like to be at the head of things."
- A surprisingly large number of Americans continue to believe that "Jews were responsible for the death of Christ." Thirty-one percent (31%) of Americans agreed with that statement. One-quarter of Americans believe that Jews "still talk too much about what happened to them in the Holocaust."

Demographic Trends, Minorities, and Anti-Semitism

According to the ADL poll, the most educated Americans are largely free of prejudicial views. Less educated Americans are more likely to hold anti-Semitic views. The poll found that 22 percent of who graduated high school or completed some high school harbor strongly anti-Semitic views, as compared to 13 percent among those who completed some college, and 9 percent among those who graduated from college.

The poll also looked at anti-Semitic views among significantly large minority groups:

- **Hispanics:** Once again, Hispanic Americans born outside of the U.S. are more likely than Hispanics born in the U.S. to hold anti-Semitic views. According to the survey, 42 percent of foreign-born Hispanics hold anti-Semitic views, as opposed to 20 percent of U.S. born Hispanics.
- **African-Americans:** In the past four years, anti-Semitic views among the African-American population have remained steady, but are consistently higher than the general population. In 2011, 29 percent of African-Americans expressed strongly anti-Semitic views. That percentage is consistent with the findings of past surveys.

The steady growth of the Hispanic population, now at 15 percent of the adult population, means that Hispanics and African-Americans together now comprise 27 percent of the American population, a number that is sure to grow in the coming years. This population increase of the cohorts with a substantially higher percentage of anti-Semitic beliefs than the total population also means that anti-Semitic propensities in the coming years will be a challenge, according to the ADL poll.

"At a time when you have conflicting trends in American society – on the one hand the rise of an African-American president, on the other hand a rise in anti-Hispanic and anti-Muslim sentiment – the question is whether this uptick in anti-Semitic sentiments signals a broader trend in attitudes toward Jews or not. Only time will tell."

Positive Findings

Jews were found to be held in high regard on many key measurements. Even Americans who hold the most anti-Semitic views agreed with many positive statements about Jews, including:

- Jews have a strong faith in God (79 percent);
- Jews have contributed much to cultural life of America (64 percent);
- Jews emphasize the importance of family life (83 percent).

The survey was conducted with a base sample of 1,200 plus an oversample of 243 African-Americans and 227 Hispanics, bringing the oversample for both communities to 400 each. For many questions, the survey used the technique of "split sampling," a process in which the 1,200 person sample was split into

two demographically representative samples of 600 respondents each. For those questions, the survey had a margin of error of +/- 4.9 percent.

The purpose of split sampling in the survey was to maximize the number of questions that could be asked, to test different hypothesis about an issue, and to test the impact of different question wording.