

Can Anti-Semitism Be Measured?

Lucy S. Dawidowicz

With regard to anti-Semitism I don't really want to search for explanations; I feel a strong inclination to surrender to my affects in this matter and find myself confirmed in my wholly non-scientific belief that mankind on the average and taken by and large are a wretched lot.

—Sigmund Freud, in a letter to
Arnold Zweig, December 2, 1927

IN AN AGE when sociological scrutiny seems to extend into the most obscure corners of our experience, it may come as a surprise to learn that the phenomenon of anti-Semitism—one of the more enduring of social phenomena and, needless to say, one of special significance in our own time—has received scant attention from American social scientists. The apathy of the sociologists has been matched by the indifference of the great foundations, whose general view has been that anti-Semitism is (or should be) a parochial concern. Be that as it may, it is to the American Jewish organizations that we are indebted for whatever studies of consequence exist. The latest studies, sponsored by the Anti-Defamation League, have appeared in a series called "Patterns of American Prejudice," undertaken in conjunction with the Survey Research Center of the University of California at Berkeley.

The ADL series evokes resonances of the past. Some twenty years ago the American Jewish Committee sponsored another series, the five-volume "Studies in Prejudice," whose research was conducted jointly by the University of California Berkeley Public Opinion Study (no connection with the present Survey Research Center) and the Institute of Social Research, then at Columbia University in exile from its original home in Frankfurt am Main. It should be noted that in the period between the appearance of the two series, no other serious work on anti-Semitism in the United States was published, with the exception of *Jews in the Mind of America*, by Charles Stember and others (also sponsored by the American Jewish Committee; Basic Books, 1966).

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Four volumes of a projected eight in the ADL series, all published by Harper & Row, have so far been produced: *Christian Beliefs and Anti-Semitism*, by Charles Y. Glock and Rodney Stark (1966); *The Apathetic Majority: A Study Based on Public Responses to the Eichmann Trial*, by Charles Y. Glock, Gertrude J. Selznick, and Joe L. Spaeth (1966); *Protest and Prejudice: A Study of Belief in the Black Community*, by Gary T. Marx (1967); and *The Tenacity of Prejudice: Anti-Semitism in Contemporary America*, by Gertrude J. Selznick and Stephen Steinberg (1969).

The first of the four volumes probed the opinions and attitudes of 3,000 church members on the relation of their Christian beliefs to anti-Semitism, and discovered that one-fourth of those professing anti-Semitic attitudes based their prejudice on what they took to be Christian teaching.* The second book, which set itself the task of finding out whether public interest in the Eichmann trial bore any relation to anti-Semitism, is really too slight and inconclusive an effort to merit extended discussion. For the record, suffice it to note that of the 460 Oakland, California residents who were interviewed by the authors in the summer of 1961, 84 per cent had heard of the trial, but only 59 per cent knew that Eichmann was a Nazi; and only 33 per cent knew that six million was the standard estimate of the number of Jews killed by the Nazis. I shall, therefore, deal here chiefly with the two most recent books in the series. Of these, *The Tenacity of Prejudice* is the more ambitious effort. Based on lengthy interviews conducted in October 1964 with about 2,000 respondents—a representative sampling of Americans by age, sex, education, income, race, religion, and region—it sought to gauge the extent of anti-Semitic feeling in the United States. As for Gary Marx's *Protest and Prejudice*, it is a by-product, so to speak, of the riots in Negro slums in 1964; "Patterns of Prejudice" did not originally envisage an investigation of black anti-Semitism, but the seemingly anti-Jewish features of the riots, as directed at Jewish merchants in the ravaged communities, prompted the addition to the series.

These studies, as noted, have been carried out

*See the review by Sidney Monas, COMMENTARY, December 1966.

for the ADL by the Survey Research Center at Berkeley. Survey research, or survey analysis, as it is more commonly called—which I shall have occasion to discuss in greater detail below—can briefly be described as the technique of interpreting data gathered from interviews. It endeavors to identify and isolate the significant causal factors (“independent variables”) of a given phenomenon and to determine how these affect the pattern of behavior under examination. Which is precisely what Gertrude Selznick and Stephen Steinberg, the authors of *The Tenacity of Prejudice*, set out to do with regard to anti-Semitism. Drawing up a series of negative statements about Jews, they constructed an “Index of Anti-Semitic Belief” which they submitted for comment to the 2,000 respondents. Included were such questions as: are Jews “clannish”; “dishonest in business”; “disloyal to America”; “powerful in finance and government.” One-third of the respondents denied that Jews fit any of the unflattering descriptions. Another third subscribed to only a few of these commonly held anti-Semitic notions (Jewish clannishness proved the most popular). The final third, endorsing varied clusters of the proffered opinions, checked in with a pronounced strain of anti-Semitism. Nevertheless, most people who registered high on the index did not express any appreciable approval of political anti-Semitism.

Selznick and Steinberg then proceeded to locate anti-Semitism according to population patterns. Young people, they found, tended to be less prejudiced than their elders, native Americans less than foreign-born. “Liberal” Protestants (Congregationalists and Episcopalians) and Catholics proved less biased than “conservative” Protestants (Presbyterians, Methodists, Baptists, Lutherans). Geographically speaking, the greater concentration of anti-Semitism, it was discovered, was in the rural South and Midwest, regions with the least educated and most fundamentalist populations. Indeed, education turned out to be a more significant determinant of anti-Semitism than social class: the poorly educated registered more anti-Semitic than the well educated, regardless of income or occupational status. Yet among the college-educated, the authors learned, the higher the status and income, the greater the prevalence of anti-Semitic attitudes. Negroes, the index showed, responded no differently from whites, except with regard to the “economic” portion of the questionnaire; twice as many Negroes as whites believed that Jews were dishonest and exploitative in business practices. Also, unlike the situation prevailing among the white respondents, where greater youth and higher education tended to reduce the level of anti-Semitism, among Negroes the opposite pattern obtained.

Education, or the lack of it, the authors were certain, was *the* independent variable in deter-

mining the extent of anti-Semitic bias. Yet the relation between education and anti-Semitism, though strong, turned out to be imperfect: there was still a persistence of anti-Semitism among educated people, white and black. Selznick and Steinberg probed a variety of related factors in search of the culprit—the level of educational sophistication, exposure to the mass media, tolerance of cultural diversity, and, of course, authoritarianism and *anomie*. Still, correlations, where they appeared, suggested not a causal relationship but rather a syndrome.

In sum, 16 per cent of the respondents were revealed to be consistently free of anti-Semitic prejudice, rejecting anti-Jewish stereotypes, opposing social discrimination, and declaring they would vote against an anti-Semitic candidate. At the opposite end of the opinion scale were the 5 to 10 per cent who could be characterized as out-and-out anti-Semites. The majority occupied the vast middle ground, not favoring anti-Semitism but lacking in determination to oppose any of its manifestations. Anti-Semitism, Selznick and Steinberg concluded, is widespread in the United States, though not in virulent form. For rectification, they looked to educational institutions, which, with all their shortcomings, “are the primary means whereby the individual is integrated into the ideal norms and values that constitute and sustain a democratic and humane society.”

FOR GARY T. MARX, the study of anti-Semitism, even within his more specialized context, was secondary. His primary concern in *Protest and Prejudice* was to examine the climate of opinion in the black community regarding the civil-rights movement; Negro attitudes toward Jews were of subsidiary interest. In October 1964, he interviewed over 1,000 Negro adults in various parts of the country, North and South. To probe the depth and extent of civil-rights militancy and/or extremism in the black community, Marx fashioned a survey-analysis index which revealed most Negroes to be moderates, overwhelmingly rejecting black nationalism. And, like his illustrious namesake, he too found religion to be the opiate of the people, encouraging quietism rather than protest.

As for anti-Semitism, Marx certified from his data that most blacks were not anti-Semitic, or, at any rate, not more so than whites. Three out of ten non-Southern Negroes (a higher proportion than the Southerners) registered as anti-Semitic on Marx's index. Most Negroes (75 per cent) thought Jews were neither better nor worse than white Christians, while 20 per cent said Jews were better, and 5 per cent, worse. By this calculation Marx concluded that “*Jews were seen in a more favorable light than other whites by a four-to-one ratio*” (italics in the original). Comparing his data with those of the Selznick-

Steinberg study, Marx at first found no consistent pattern of differences between blacks and whites in anti-Semitic attitudes, but an "Index of Predisposition to Economically Based Anti-Semitism" showed that Negroes registered high. Marx explained the prevalence of such anti-Semitism as the consequence of the blacks' "actual experiences with Jews in the economic world." "While Negro anti-Semitism is deplorable," he summed up, "it certainly is more *understandable* than white anti-Semitism" (my italics—L.D.).

II

IN THE social sciences, questions of methodology are inextricably linked with questions of substance. Before proceeding further, we might therefore do well to consider the subject of survey analysis, a matter of no small pertinence to our discussion in view of the fact that the particular technique has established itself as dominant in the sociological investigation of American anti-Semitism. Is survey analysis an adequate tool for the study of a phenomenon as complex as anti-Semitism? To what extent has survey analysis itself affected the conceptualization of the problem? Finally, do the studies represent survey analysis at its best? Some answers to these questions, I trust, will emerge from the discussion that follows.

Survey analysis developed out of two diverse but not unrelated fields, market research and the study of propaganda. As new interviewing and statistical techniques were developed to elicit, describe, and measure public opinion on a wide range of matters, *vox populi*, hitherto absent from social or historical records, became a source of scientific information. Paul F. Lazarsfeld, author of the pathbreaking work *The People's Choice* (a study of the 1940 Presidential election), is generally acknowledged as the founder of survey analysis. His contributions to the discipline include the development of sophisticated mathematical formulas to study the interrelation of assembled data; the invention of the "panel," a body of respondents whom surveyors periodically reinterview; contextual analysis; and indeed the whole apparatus of survey analysis—administration, training, data-gathering, analysis, publication, even funding. Not content with a technique that depended solely on statistical data and quantification for its findings and insights, Lazarsfeld has always been aware of the need to diversify. In 1933, the year of his arrival in United States from Germany, he set down, in a paper entitled "Principles of Sociography," four basic methodological rules:*

* Paul F. Lazarsfeld, "An Episode in the History of Social Research: A Memoir," in Donald Fleming and Bernard Bailyn, eds., *The Intellectual Migration: Europe and America, 1930-1960* (Harvard University Press, 1969), pp. 282-83.

- a. For any phenomenon one should have objective observations as well as introspective reports.
- b. Case studies should be properly combined with statistical information.
- c. Contemporary information should be supplemented by information on earlier phases of whatever is being studied.
- d. One should combine "natural and experimental data." By experimental, I meant mainly questionnaires and solicited reports, while by natural, I meant what is now called "unobtrusive measures"—data deriving from daily life without interference from the investigator.

It would be unfair to demand that the survey analysts of the "Patterns in American Prejudice" series adhere to the ideal standards that the master himself could not always observe. Still, I, for one, found the reliance on survey data, in both *Protest and Prejudice* and *The Tenacity of Prejudice*, to the near exclusion of other data, intellectually constricting. Marx, to be sure, occasionally drew upon literary, historical, and journalistic sources, but then, as if to retain survey-analysis purity in his text, he relegated this material to footnotes. Selznick and Steinberg used even fewer auxiliary sources. Their various findings must therefore stand or fall entirely on the basis of the quantitative empirical data. Yet how does one measure the extent and intensity of anti-Semitism? Is there a National Bureau of Standards for the study of social phenomena which has specified the standard content, density, or weight of anti-Semitism?

In survey analysis, the standard measuring procedure for all phenomena is scaling. The scale, or index, can be constructed from a collection of statements, as we have seen, to which respondents are asked to register assent or disagreement, indicating also the degree of response ("a lot," "a little," "not at all"). Each item is designed to elicit a specific attitude or opinion, and their grouping reflects the conception that certain attitudes and opinions form a single general outlook. The critical process involved in constructing a scale lies in the selection and formulation of items that will provide a valid continuum and thus serve as an accurate and sensitive measuring device. The items selected for the scale naturally reflect the surveyors' hypotheses about the significant variables under study. Formulation of the items, too, obviously entails problems, since the wording can influence the response. After the scale items are finally drawn up, techniques for the testing of validity are applied, designed to enforce the scale's empirical objectivity.

As should be evident, in good survey analysis everything depends on the ingenuity of the scale. How good then is the anti-Semitism scale of the ADL studies? Unfortunately, no one thought to draw up a *uniform* scale that might be applied to all the surveys in the series and that might

therefore yield a more scientific understanding of the varieties of anti-Semitism. Instead we are given a patchwork of scales, with each study constructing a different index, using different items, in different quantities, often differently formulated. *Christian Beliefs and Anti-Semitism* used six items for its index; *The Apathetic Majority*, three; *Protest and Prejudice*, nine; and *The Tenacity of Prejudice*, eleven (seven of Marx's items were the same as Selznick and Steinberg's). Of the various authors, Marx alone employed "positive" items, that is, items favorable toward Jews. ("Positive" items, the experts tell us, are more likely to elicit the accepted "tolerant" responses and are thus less satisfactory in tapping hostile attitudes.)

Given this variety, what is one to make of the different indices? Are the scales of Glock, Marx, Steinberg and Selznick, *et al.* comparable to the Fahrenheit, Celsius, and Réaumur scales—that is, although they use different measuring units, do they measure the same phenomenon? Are the anti-Semitism scales interchangeable and their findings convertible? Obviously not, for anti-Semitism has no commonly accepted boiling or freezing point; no standard weights or intervals have been assigned to religious anti-Semitism, political anti-Semitism, economic anti-Semitism, authoritarianism, or ethnocentrism. Altogether, the disparity among the various scales raises serious doubts as to their validity. That the Survey Research Center made no attempt to standardize a scale to measure anti-Semitism is not very reassuring; nor is the fact that barely any use was made of the pioneer anti-Semitism scale developed in the early 1940's by Daniel J. Levinson and R. Nevitt Sanford for *The Authoritarian Personality*. That scale, of 52 items, among other things, distinguished between opinions and attitudes, and probed different images of Jews as individuals/group/culture.

III

A CLAIM OF survey analysis is that it can transcend the surveyor's subjective hypotheses. Yet, in the very construction of the apparatus for the gathering and measuring of empirical data, subjectivity inevitably plays a role and must, in the end, color the findings themselves. The fiction of total impartiality in social research has recently come under attack by, among others, Gunnar Myrdal, who in the interest of honesty and greater objectivity has made the suggestion—in which I concur—that social scientists disclose the personal and political values underlying their search.* This is a tricky business, however. Values may at times be so deeply internalized that the researcher has genuine difficulties in standing aside and acknowledging

them. Even the selection of topics shelters subjective viewpoints and values that can infiltrate research, sometimes innocently and subconsciously, occasionally with the intention to influence and manipulate. The reader is at a loss. He does not have even the poker player's option to pay to see the bidder's hand.

The Tenacity of Prejudice is a good example of how the researchers' premises—in this case, with regard to what constitutes the ideal society—have led to a misreading of the data. Selznick and Steinberg, it will be recalled, concluded that education was the independent variable in anti-Semitism, even though anti-Semitism continued to persist among the educated. That irregularity was most pronounced in the following items designed to measure intolerance: attitudes of non-Jews toward intermarriage with Jews; toward the exclusion of Jews from social clubs; and toward the continued observance of Christmas in the public schools. Respondents who otherwise came out very low on the anti-Semitism scale, here registered "intolerant"; in fact, the more educated a respondent, the greater the level of his intolerance. As already noted, the authors looked for assorted explanations, but the data nevertheless remained intractable.

The fault, I suggest, lies not in the data but in the attitudes held by Selznick and Steinberg about the nature of American society and of group relations. These attitudes are nowhere set forth explicitly, but are revealed by a close reading of their approach to the data. We see, for instance, that they consider a Christian intolerant if he is against intermarriage with a Jew. By the goose/gander rule, they must therefore also regard as intolerant Jews who are opposed to intermarriage. In so doing, however, they are forced to ignore considerations that apply with far greater weight to Jews than to American Christians. By making approval of intermarriage a barometer of tolerance, Selznick and Steinberg must logically regard a commitment to group survival as an obstruction to the creation of a prejudice-free, neutral society. Oddly enough, for a study that purports to gauge anti-Semitic feeling, nowhere is an effort made to deal with the question of the legitimacy of group life, religious or ethnic. Selznick and Steinberg seem to believe that anti-Semitism must be combatted because it is the ultimate obstacle to Jewish assimilation. Jewish survivalists, on the other hand, start from the premise that anti-Semitism constitutes a peril to Jewish continuity.

If their commitment to the neutral society has caused them to misread their data, the enthrallment of Selznick and Steinberg with education distorts their conclusions. Indeed, the emphasis on education as *the* countervailing force to prejudice exposes the weakness of this method of relying exclusively on attitudes and opinions without referring to ancillary or supplementary con-

**Objectivity in Social Research*, Pantheon, 1969.

pects of the Watts riot, found that 30 per cent of their respondents indicated signs of black militancy.* Their measuring devices differed from Marx's; but when the UCLA researchers administered Marx's scale to their Los Angeles respondents, the latter's black militancy evaporated.

The radical shifts in the civil-rights movement have, of course, turned Marx's sociology of the black community in 1964 into ancient history. Was he an innocent victim of unpredictable change? The folk-wisdom cautions: Forewarned is forearmed. The one constant characteristic of the civil-rights movement since the Supreme Court decision of 1954 has been change. In 1955 the Montgomery bus boycott catapulted Martin Luther King, Jr., into national prominence; in 1960 Negro college students organized the first sit-ins in North Carolina; in 1963, the March on Washington gave the highest national sanction to civil-rights protest and demonstration. A year later, the urban riots began. Given the fact of change, it remains a mystery why Marx did not avail himself of the protection that survey analysis provides through the techniques of sociological prediction. Prediction for social action is really what sociology is all about, at least to its activists. Comte's *savoir pour prévoir* still remains the sociological watchword.

In 1964, as in 1960 when the sit-ins began, young, college-educated Negroes provided the impetus for the changing patterns of black protest. Yet Marx sampled young and educated blacks only randomly. Only 13 per cent of his respondents had some college education; only 22 per cent were eighteen to twenty-nine years old. Had Marx, extrapolating from the trend of young, college-educated militants, drawn a larger sample of this group, his survey might have had more validity. Indeed, the role of strategic elites in influencing social behavior calls into question the usefulness of studies of mass opinion in some contexts. Such studies minimize the roles of opinion-molders, political leaders, and social activists, and blur the selective impact of propaganda. In his postscript to the paperback edition of *Protest and Prejudice*,† Marx at last confronts this problem. His final paragraph delivers a *coup de grâce* not only to his own study, but to the entire enterprise of "Patterns in American Prejudice":

The important questions are clearly not so much how many, but who, how intensively, and in what way? As the unprecedented domestic violence in the late 1960's and the changing tone of much black-white dialogue indicates, playing the numbers game with public-opinion data can be conducive to highly unrealistic assessments. . . . "Mass" in polls of black opinion can be an umbrella concept for a highly diverse collectivity which includes the youthful unskilled and unemployed, and ideologically articulate college students, as well as a great many older, more passive people. Everyone's opinion

does not count the same, and opinions are changing—if not fast enough for the most radical, certainly much too fast for the most conservative. (Italics in the original.)

IV

LET US return to the subject of black anti-Semitism. In opening his discussion of this subject, Marx immediately takes the sting out of the problem by remarking that "anti-Semitism is a 'normal' aspect of our culture" and a component of "our common culture"—shared, that is, by white and black alike. (Would he, I wonder, characterize racism as "normal" in the same way?) Attitudes, he adds, are "fashioned from experiences," and "for Negroes, anti-Semitic stereotypes appear to be much more related to actual experiences with Jews in the economic world"—hence, while Negro anti-Semitism is to be "deplored," it is also, according to Marx (and as I have already noted), "certainly . . . more understandable than white anti-Semitism." In confusing attitudes with social realities, and in assigning to subjective feelings the authority of objectivity, Marx would seem to have fallen into a trap that critics of survey analysis have long warned of. The late Theodor Adorno, who never cared much for survey research anyway, put it this way: "What was axiomatic according to the prevalent rule of social research, namely, to proceed from the subjects' reactions as if they were a primary and final source of sociological knowledge, seemed to me thoroughly superficial and misguided."*** The formation of attitudes is a complex matter to which experience, of course, contributes. But anti-Semitism, like all prejudices, is also a creature of propaganda and of indoctrination in centuries-old hatreds; its unhappy recrudescence in some black literature today is a phenomenon which Marx ignores altogether.

Marx's treatment of black anti-Semitism is in general on the capricious side. He begins by minimizing its existence; then he changes course to say that, yes, there is anti-Semitism in the black community, but that it derives from experience; finally, in a third shift, he maintains that the anti-Semitism in question is but a reflection of Negro hostility toward all whites. In one of his extra-survey-analysis footnotes, however, Marx himself offers evidence to refute this last contention—a passage from Claude Brown's *Manchild*

*See T. M. Tomlinson, "Ideological Foundations for Negro Action: A Comparative Analysis of Militant and Non-Militant Views of the Los Angeles Riot"; and T. M. Tomlinson and Diana L. TenHouten, "Method: Negro Reaction Survey," *Los Angeles Riot Study*, Institute of Government and Public Affairs, University of California, Los Angeles, June 1, 1967.

†Harper Torchbook, 1969.

**Theodor W. Adorno, "Scientific Experiences of a European Scholar in America," in *Fleming and Bailey, op. cit.*, p. 343.

in the *Promised Land* which would seem to indicate that blacks do distinguish between Jews and other whites. Negro folklore, says Brown, pictures all white people as mean and stingy: if a man is more mean than he is stingy, he is white—Christian or cracker; if he is more stingy than mean, he's a Jew. The sophistication of this piece of folklore should be sufficiently conclusive to indicate that black anti-Semitism is exactly that and nothing else, harking back as it does to the stereotype of the Jew as swindler and exploiter, as ancient a stereotype as that of the Jew as Christ-killer. The new articulateness of today's American blacks—many of whom form an uprooted peasantry becoming urbanized—simply gives fresh currency in the United States to one of Europe's oldest myths. It is indeed only in terms of the myth that one can understand the psychological process that makes this urban peasantry blame the Jews, rather than other ethnic groups whose occupational roles afflict Negroes far more severely than do Jewish merchants and landlords. The salience of the Jew as Jew, not as merchant or landlord, sets the dynamics of prejudice moving. And it is the myth, more than the experience, which makes it possible for young blacks today to parrot the pseudo-scientific mouthings of anti-Semites in Germany and Austria of one hundred years ago.

In 1968, when anti-Jewish fulminations on the part of various black militant groups rose to a particularly strident pitch, there were many, including Jews, who sought to minimize the significance of what was being said. This was not surprising. Nor was it surprising that these apologists should have adduced *Protest and Prejudice*, with its imposing array of statistics and tables, all at the service of "scientific, objective truth," in support of their contention: that black anti-Semitism was of no significance; that where it existed it was deserved; and that, in any event, Jews weren't being singled out as Jews but as whites. Finally, *Protest and Prejudice* was invoked as evidence for the "fact" that blacks were not even particularly anti-Semitic, at any rate not more so than whites, and perhaps less so. The use of the "protective authority" of science, in Max Weber's phrase, to advance partisan commitments is, of course, nothing new. Still, it was saddening to see yet another instance of scholarship pressed into the service of ideology, even if Gary Marx's effort lent itself only too readily to the purpose at hand. Perhaps more distressing is the apparent concurrence of other social scientists in the political uses of scholarship.

V

SURVEY ANALYSIS even at its best, free from intrusive values and obtrusive politics, is, with its single focus on opinion, not properly geared to study the etiology of anti-

Semitism. Useful for periodic pulse-taking, it nevertheless serves ultimately to limit our understanding of anti-Semitism, which is a phenomenon marked by a high degree of multiformity and contradictoriness. A pariah people everywhere for most of their history, Jews have been persecuted for believing in Judaism and excommunicated for disbelieving; despised when poor and loathed when rich; shamed for their ignorance of the host culture and rebuffed for mastering it; denounced as capitalists and assailed as Communists; derided for their separatism and reviled for their assimilationism. In the course of its long life, anti-Semitism has also assumed pseudo-rational guises, e.g., the Christian "teachings of contempt," the theories of alleged Jewish economic control and manipulation, the ideologies of alleged Jewish political domination or cultural pollution. The very persistence of anti-Semitism, as Shmuel Ettinger of the Hebrew University recently has argued, consolidates and intensifies the syndrome. Historical precedents, historical folk memory—these, almost inevitably, have at various times combined with other factors to make the Jews expedient scapegoats and expendable victims (as witness the most recent resurgence of anti-Semitism in Poland, where only 8,000 Jews remain in a population of 32 million).

Studying anti-Semitism as strictly an American phenomenon, without reference to its occurrence elsewhere in time and geography, strikes me as a highly provincial exercise. The specificity of anti-Semitism in America, to be sure, rests in indigenous political traditions and institutions, and it is important to know how these have affected certain forms of anti-Semitism,* but the themes, images, and ideas from which anti-Semitism draws its force have throughout history been transnational and transcultural. (Thus, the imported racist theories of Gobineau and Houston Stewart Chamberlain played a part in the passage of the restrictive immigration laws of the 1920's in the United States.) Indeed, anti-Semitic mythology often assumes a life of its own, with its own peculiar pattern of migration. The *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, consigned yesterday to the ash-heap of history, has today been resurrected for use by Arab propagandists. And the 18th-century European myth of the Illuminati, a somewhat less notorious variant on the theme of the international conspiracy, still persists in our own day, feeding the anti-Semitic prejudices of many a home-grown American bigot.

Survey analysis, in my opinion, is by its nature unequipped to investigate the historic images and themes of anti-Semitism which still flourish in the American variety, or to trace their passage from one culture to another. How, then, can survey analysis, all by itself and without the

* A forthcoming book in the "Patterns of American Prejudice" series, by Seymour Martin Lipset and Earl Raab, will probably deal with these questions.

support of other disciplines, be expected to perform the more difficult but necessary task of locating a specific variety of anti-Semitism within a meaningful historical continuum? Time, in the two books we have been discussing, was frozen at October 1964, when the interviews were conducted. But what does that date represent? Was October 1964 part of a continuing stable time, a time of long duration and slow motion? Was it part of a deceptive slow-motion time, continuously interrupted by abrupt crises? Or was it cyclical time, regular or irregular? Or retarded time—time-lagging time? Or explosive time? Society is in constant motion, yet social time is marked by intervals of different duration. Do opinions and attitudes match the patterns of societal time? Are they behind or ahead? Do they reflect a period's decline or beginning, or even a period in flux?

In *Jews in the Mind of America*, Ben Halpern elucidated a persuasive theory of a perennial syndrome called anti-Semitism, "compounded of simultaneous or alternating toleration and hostility." That syndrome exists in the time of Jewish history. But other rhythms of time flow outside and around, as well as through, Jewish history, quickening or retarding Jewish time. For instance, a new theory of cyclical societal expansion in the United States, propounded by P.M.G. Harris, claims:†

It turns out that not just the bread and butter in our society since 1870 . . . but the essence of American social structure—linking personal opportunity, community growth, institutional development, and societal change—since its very

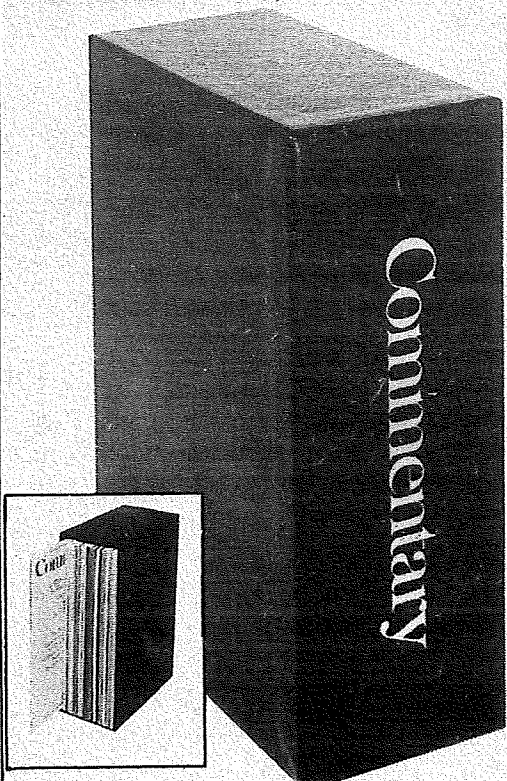
inception has always reflected, and re-created, cyclical fluctuations in rate of expansion of our population.

Drawing from many academic disciplines, theories, and research methods, in a complex demographic-historical study that locates, identifies, and describes cyclical fluctuations, Harris concludes that there appears to be a 22½-year cycle of oscillating socio-economic conditions in America, with concomitant wide-ranging effects on the family, socialization, life-cycles, educational and economic opportunity. The "mood of the nation," Harris declares, "also goes through swings or cycles adhering closely to the familiar interval." Is it not possible that anti-Semitic prejudice, too, is woven into the tapestry of this cycle, and should not social scientists address themselves to investigating this possibility?

It is to be hoped that subsequent volumes in the "Patterns of American Prejudice" series will contribute more to our understanding of anti-Semitism in America than their four predecessors. Perhaps if survey researchers were to yield some of their disciplinary autonomy and sovereignty and begin to share the insights of other fields of study, their work might progress beyond the commonplace and self-indulgent. Certainly, the study of anti-Semitism is too serious a matter to be left to the exclusive attention of survey analysts.

*See Georges Gurvitch, "Social Structure and the Multiplicity of Time," in Edward A. Tiryakian, ed., *Sociological Theory, Values, and Sociocultural Change* (Harper, 1967).

†P.M.G. Harris, "The Social Origins of American Leaders: The Demographic Foundations," *Perspectives in American History*, III (1969), p. 311.



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Anti-Semitism, Survey-Analysis

A Response to Lucy Dawidowicz

Gary T. Marx

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Lucy S. Dawidowicz clearly has strong feelings about Negro anti-Semitism. These feelings, along with her pretensions to social-science expertise, have led to an article ["Can Anti-Semitism Be Measured?," July] as unfair as it is uninformed.

With respect to my study, *Protest and Prejudice*, she quotes out of context, drops crucial qualifying words and phrases, makes misstatements of facts, misinterprets data, misunderstands the nature of survey research, uses a 1970 perspective to attack 1964 data, makes undocumented charges, and tries to pass off her strongly held value positions as scientific criticism; not to mention the intellectually lazy tactic of attacking the study not on its own terms for what it tried to do, but in light of questions and methods it chose not to deal with.

Mrs. Dawidowicz seems to be making three orders of criticism:

1) My personal values affected my findings.

2) My study of the black community in 1964 has been "turned into ancient history."

3) Surveys are inappropriate for measuring anti-Semitism.

After being attacked by segments of the white and black Left for doing a study that is seen as "racist" and a "cop-out" precisely because it tries to be "objective," "neutral," and "scientific," it is re-

freshing, even if not defensible, to be attacked for doing what is seen as partisan scholarship.

The main "evidence" adduced to support Mrs. Dawidowicz's charges are a statement from the preface about my involvement and concern with the civil-rights struggle and a quote from the dedication of the book which states:

To those oppressed because of their racial, religious, or ethnic identity in the hope that they will become more militant and more tolerant and thus transcend evils so long and cruelly perpetrated by man on man.

Would Mrs. Dawidowicz prefer a dedication which hoped that those oppressed for such reasons would become militant and perpetuate the intolerance, bigotry, hatred, oppression, and cruelty so characteristic of ethnic subordination?

Or, perhaps, she would prefer a society where those oppressed for ethnic reasons simply knew their place and didn't rock the boat for fear of producing an even worse society?

It is one thing for a researcher to acknowledge his values. It is quite another for a reviewer, who as a citizen and a Jew happens not to like the implications of the data, to take this acknowledgment as evidence of partisan scholarship.

The data presented were in no way always consistent with my values. In fact, I felt very ambivalent about some of the findings of mass moderation on the part of American blacks. That such information was nevertheless reported has led to criticism from those who think that social science should only be a vehicle for furthering political ends. For one strongly concerned with civil rights, to write a book stressing the variety of attitudes held by different groups of blacks, rather than emphasizing how extensive militancy and hatred of whites are, can hardly be called partisan scholarship.

One standard by which a body of scientific data can be evaluated is its consistency with other research. That the large number of studies done on mass black opinion since mine, and the eight studies concerned primarily with Negro attitudes toward Jews, reach descriptive conclusions essentially similar to mine, hardly bespeaks a partisan approach. Unless, of course, we are to believe that there is a massive conspiracy among a large number of researchers.

The accusation of partisan scholarship seems to emerge from the fact that the data have political uses. Mrs. Dawidowicz is upset that during Ocean Hill-Brownsville and related controversies some people took the data out of context and wrongly used them to deny the presence of black anti-Semitism. I am also upset by this. I am equally upset by the way white conservatives have misused the data on moderation to argue that blacks are essentially content and that problems stem from a small number of agitators. As well, I have not been pleased by the way some black nationalists have selectively used the data to argue that a majority of blacks support aggressive violence. This use of the same research study by those holding opposite ideologies hardly bespeaks partisan scholarship.

ly consistent with her personal values and interests, in this case, documentation of the extreme threat posed by black anti-Semitism as perhaps might be indicated by findings that all blacks hated Jews and only Jews?

Mrs. Dawidowicz's wish to discredit the data is so great that she is led to outright distortion, even beyond taking material out of context and denying the many qualifications contained in the book (such as my many warnings about the difference between attitudes and behavior, experience and perception, and that all opinions count equally only in a survey). For example, in contrasting my results with those of the UCLA study of Watts she writes: "... social researchers at UCLA, studying aspects of the Watts riot, found that 30 per cent of their respondents indicated signs of black militancy. Their measuring devices differed from Marx's but when the UCLA researchers administered Marx's scale to their Los Angeles respondents, the latter's black militancy evaporated." This is patent untruth. The UCLA researchers never applied my scale. In fact, they were unaware of it at the time of their study. Furthermore, her effort to suggest that the carefully carried out UCLA study done at a different point in time, in a city I didn't study, using a single question rather than an index, whose results on level of support for the Black Muslims have generally not been replicated by other research, somehow has major bearing on the validity of my study is unjustified.

The moderation found by my study and by many subsequent studies does not pose for her any questions about the problems inherent in a common-sense approach to complex social issues. Rather, she seeks to discount data which are inconsistent with her subjective conceptions of what they should be, by noting, "nothing it

seemed was what it appeared to be. Was the index at fault? Was the sample a fault? Were the interviewers at fault?" It is precisely because common-sense approaches are very often wrong that we do social science. The resolution of the difficulty lies not in Mrs. Dawidowicz's unsophisticated and undocumented methodological critique but in her unwillingness to accept empirical data which run contrary to her sense of what the data are, or should be. (The errors of methodological in-

terpretation in the essay are numerous and not of interest to the general reader. Here let me simply note Mrs. Dawidowicz's lack of understanding of the criteria by which questions are chosen for an index, the use of positively worded items to deal with problems of acquiescence, her confusing necessary and sufficient causes with statements of a probabilistic nature, and her failure to grasp the important difference between an index vs. a single question.)

Not acknowledging her retrospective view, Mrs. Dawidowicz accuses the study of being an uncritical apology for black militancy. Though in so doing she ignores the fact that the data and my value statements applied to the militancy of 1964, not that of 1970, some of which is clearly unrealistic, self-destructive, and a far cry from the earlier humanism of the movement. The study found that those most likely to be militant over civil-rights issues in 1964, rather than being the frustrated, alienated, hate-filled *lumpen* misfits, who populated the Eric Hoffer-Ronald Reagan image of activists, tended to be instead an elite group in the black community. They were better educated and informed, less socially isolated, had a more positive self-image, a higher morale, and were less hostile to whites. If such findings constitute an apology for the earlier phases of the civil-rights movement, so be it.

Mrs. Dawidowicz's failure to understand survey analysis and what my study tries to do is clearly indicated in the statement, "the radical shifts in the civil-rights movement have, of course, turned Marx's sociology of the black community in 1964 into ancient history." In a postscript to the book's paperback edition, I consider whether the data collected in 1964 are still relevant in the face of the profound changes that have occurred on the civil-rights scene and whether or not the mass moderation found in 1964 has now disappeared. Here it is useful to differentiate between the analytic and descriptive findings. My concern was primarily with the former. To argue that my sociology is now out of date would require Mrs. Dawidowicz to produce systematic empirical data that shows, for example, that religion no longer operates to inhibit militancy, that social mobility no longer encourages militancy, that being

removed from the values of the traditional South and having a positive self-image no longer increases the likelihood of civil-rights concern, or that having a low morale and being socially isolated are now suddenly conducive to a militant ideology. Does Mrs. Dawidowicz really believe that those with a high degree of unpleasant economic contact with merchants they perceive to be Jewish have suddenly become among those least likely to be anti-Semitic? Are attitudes toward Jewish and non-Jewish whites suddenly no longer related? Have the 20 per cent of blacks who make a distinction between Jewish whites and other whites suddenly started seeing Jews as worse than other whites, not better? With respect to the descriptive question of whether mass moderation still exists, the 30-odd studies summarized in the postscript, carried out in 1967 and 1968, clearly suggest that mass moderation is still present. In many ways the attitudes of the masses of black people were not terribly different in 1969 from what they were in 1964, the mass media and dramatic events notwithstanding. From all of the subsequent research that I have seen, these findings still hold. If Mrs. Dawidowicz has evidence to suggest that any of the above is no longer true, she has certainly not presented it.

Mrs. Dawidowicz argues that the study is lacking in validity because it did not sample disproportionately from certain segments of the black population, such as activists and college students. In doing this she again misses the point of the study. A study's validity and the criteria for serious methodological criticism is not based on whether groups of interest to a reviewer are oversampled. Rather, it comes from having a sample that is representative of the group one is interested in studying and in using questions that elicit as closely as is possible a person's actual feelings and attitudes.

The problem I chose to study was what effect did the civil-rights movement have on the black community *in toto*? In 1964 we had a number of useful historical and autobiographical accounts and studies on particular groups, like CORE and the Muslims, but there was relatively little data on the attitudes of the black community in its entirety toward the civil-rights movement. What was its impact

on the masses of blacks? Who were those most knowledgeable and most concerned with the civil-rights movement? What kinds of attitudes were held toward whites in general and Jews in particular? A fair evaluation of the study requires that it be criticized in light of how well it deals with these questions.

To argue that I deliver a *coup de grâce* not only to my study but to the entire enterprise of "Patterns of American Prejudice" by saying "the important questions are clearly not so much how many, but who, how intensively, and in what way?" is to rip an argument out of context. In saying this, I meant the important questions for the future of civil strife in America. This was in a context which discussed the future of race relations in American society and was not an abstract discussion of the relative merits of various methodologies, as Mrs. Dawidowicz's use of the quotation implies. There are a large number of important questions for which surveys are vital and indeed the only way to gain information. Among them are processes of opinion formation, sources of mass support and constraint for public figures and policies, and the distribution of attitudes in a population and their change over time.

Surveys are inherently no better and no worse than any other social-science technique. The worth of a technique depends on the type of questions one poses. Because surveys have limits, as do all methods (including Mrs. Dawidowicz's citation of "evidence" from Claude Brown), does not mean they are unsuitable for dealing with certain aspects of anti-Semitism. To be sure, broad interdisciplinary studies covering the vast sweep of history will yield richer accounts than single focused studies. Yet such focused studies are the building blocks out of which more grandiose efforts emerge. Furthermore, precisely because grand theories depend on a reading of "the facts," and our common-sense assumptions about the facts are so often wrong (such as the erroneous belief that blacks single Jews out for special hatred among whites or that blacks are appreciably more anti-Semitic than whites), it is necessary to do concrete empirical studies, even at the risk of occasionally showing common sense to be correct.

The changes that have occurred

since my study was written in 1965-66 have led me to speak out and write against the crass use of anti-Semitism for political and other purposes by some black leaders, as well as the kind of social conditions which may encourage this. Yet it seems to me that in America it is exceptionally shortsighted and parochial to move from seeing anti-Semitism as a problem to seeing it as *the* problem. . . .

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TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . Concerning the proposition of Gary T. Marx that black anti-Semitism is a reflection of black hostility toward all whites, it is necessary to add that it is also an expression of the black urge to identify with white American Anglo-Saxon Protestant culture. Let us not forget the sixteen-year-old black girl who wrote in her introduction to the black exhibit at the Metropolitan Museum that, with regard to the attitude toward the Jew, the blacks would find themselves at last "with the majority."

The attitude toward the Jew is one of a number of foci of black ambivalence with regard to white values. The black rejection of those values is usually expressed in the conscious ideology, which explores the alleged vacuousness of white American culture; the desire of black activists for participation in and acceptance by the dominant white culture, on the other hand, is expressed in less explicit forms. Anti-Semitism serves this duality of impulse exquisitely; hence the awareness that black anti-Semitism does have a qualitative uniqueness. In fact, it enables the black man to become white in relation to the Jew, who becomes black in American and Western Christian cultural terms (and in putting the matter this way, I do not mean to associate myself with the ahistorical view of Sartre).

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TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

In her review of *The Tenacity of Prejudice* Lucy Dawidowicz presents herself as the alert critic exposing the authors' hidden value biases to the naive reader. Unfortunately, her own strong value

commitments as a "Jewish survivalist" prevent even an accurate reading of the text. Mrs. Dawidowicz reports that we "consider a Christian intolerant if he is against intermarriage with a Jew." On the contrary, we wrote: "While disapproval of intermarriage can have roots in hostility toward Jews, it can also follow from a legitimate desire on the part of non-Jews to maintain their religious and cultural identity" (p. 43). However, Mrs. Dawidowicz is not entirely off the mark when she accuses us of viewing group survival as "an obstruction to the creation of a prejudice-free, neutral society." It seems clear that a democratic order places limits on what is acceptable in the name of group survival. As we noted in the book: "The more private the context, the more defensible the discriminatory practice; the more public the context, the less legitimate does all discrimination become. An example of a relatively legitimate form of discrimination is opposition to religious intermarriage (provided, of course, opposition . . . does not seek legal sanction). At the other extreme is political discrimination on religious, racial, or ethnic grounds" (p. 89). However, the problem is still more complex. We further noted that there are intermediate areas—the social club is a prime example—where it is unclear whether priority should be given to democratic values or to the desire of social groups to preserve their identity. On such issues (we also have black nationalism in mind) it is sometimes necessary to distinguish between what is permissible for a powerful majority and what is defensible for a frequently embattled minority. In a society committed to both pluralism and democracy, the majority has to forgo certain luxuries of self-segregation that minorities can often indulge in with little harm or moment to others.

We would answer Mrs. Dawidowicz's charge that we "seem to believe that anti-Semitism must be combatted because it is the ultimate obstacle to Jewish assimilation" in much the same way. In one sense, her characterization fits: we believe that Jews should be free to "assimilate" if they so desire, unhindered by Christian (or Jewish) survivalism. At the same time, we would be moral cretins not to oppose anti-Semitism for the simple reason that it is a peril to Jews. One does not have to be a "Jewish

survivalist" to defend Jewish survival.

Much of Mrs. Dawidowicz's review-essay is a polemic against survey analysis which, according to her, "serves ultimately to limit our understanding of anti-Semitism." Such criticism is hardly to be taken seriously. Survey research, like every academic perspective, is necessarily limited and partial and cannot answer all of the many questions that can be asked about so complex a phenomenon as anti-Semitism. If only because many good historical studies are available, we did not think it necessary to recapitulate the long history of Jewish suffering and the many ways in which Jews have been used as scapegoats. Instead we focused on a single question on which there was much disagreement and contradiction in the literature: why, in a society where anti-Semitism is indigenous and widespread, is it accepted by some individuals and rejected by others? This question not only is important in itself, but as we argue in the book, shows how historical theories have been overgeneralized and misapplied. From the fact that Jews have historically served as scapegoats for national ills, it is often inferred that individuals become prejudiced because they are seeking a scapegoat for their personal frustrations. Such analogical reasoning does not stand up under empirical scrutiny. There is little to indicate that people become anti-Semitic out of personal frustration, either psychological or economic. However, as we made clear (p. 188), while people do not typically become anti-Semitic because they seek a scapegoat for their personal frustrations, in an economic crisis their anti-Semitic beliefs can become activated and turned to scapegoating purposes. Instead of gratuitously assailing surveys for being ahistorical, Mrs. Dawidowicz might have reflected on the relation between survey findings and the cycles of anti-Semitism that seem to mystify her.

At the same time that Mrs. Dawidowicz criticizes surveys for being pedestrian, she entirely ignores the larger theoretical issues raised in our book. Nowhere does she mention our disagreement with the theory of prejudice propounded in *The Authoritarian Personality* and uncritically accepted for two decades by laymen and scholars alike. Nor does she mention our disagreement with Stem-

ber's recent conclusion that anti-Semitism is a vanishing phenomenon (this would indeed make any future resurgence of anti-Semitism mysterious).

Finally, Mrs. Dawidowicz dismisses the evidence presented in our study (and others) concerning education as a countervailing factor to prejudice, and does so on the flimsy grounds that a few college students indulge in astrology and other excesses. We never said (indeed our data show otherwise) that a modern education is 100 per cent effective in combating prejudice. What we did say is that at the present time education is practically the only institution in our society that is any bulwark at all.

Most of all we are dismayed that Mrs. Dawidowicz could become so enmeshed in her private opinions and loyalties as to lose sight of the implications of our study, as well as the others in this series, for the status and future of the American Jewish community.

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LUCY DAWIDOWICZ writes:

Understandably unhappy with my comments, Mr. Marx, like Hamlet in impotent rage, unpacks his heart with words and falls a-cursing. He accuses me of benightedness about the arcana of survey research. He regards the construction of an index of black nationalism, for instance, as being as complex and demanding as, say, the deciphering of Linear B or the mastery of Yiddish dialectology. I will disregard the *ad hominem* arguments and address myself to Mr. Marx's specific complaints.

1) *The UCLA study* (T. M. Tomlinson, "Ideological Foundations for Negro Action: A Comparative Analysis of Militant and Non-militant Views of the Los Angeles Riot," *Los Angeles Riot Study*, Institute of Government and Public Affairs, University of California, Los Angeles, June 1, 1967). Mr. Marx calls me a liar for citing this study's reference to his index. I quote two brief passages to establish my veracity and attest to Mr. Marx's limited capacity for the most elementary form of library research:

This study will use attitudes toward the Black Muslims as the criterion of militance. This approach is different from the us-

ual methods (e.g., Marx [appropriately footnoted with full bibliographic reference—L.D.]), which attempt to scale a series of critical items that ostensibly tap views representing gradations of militance. (pp. 1-2)

Thirty per cent of the total sample felt that the Muslims were doing "well" or "fairly well," 35 per cent felt that they were doing "harm," and 35 per cent felt they were doing "nothing" or "didn't know" how they were doing. This is not to say that the Muslims were the preferred organization of 30 per cent of the sample; in fact, if the respondents had been asked to rank the organizations in order of preference, the Muslims would have undoubtedly finished last. Marx [footnoted] indicates that less than 3 per cent of his sample of 1,100 from four different cities felt that the Muslims, compared with other organizations, were doing the best job. Had this study used Marx's method, the data would probably have been about the same. However, in this study, sympathy could be expressed without the contamination of relative evaluation. (p. 4)

My mistake was reading the subjective for the declarative, "had" for "when." Otherwise the conclusion I drew remains valid. Mr. Marx's index of black nationalism was not the precise instrument he thought it was; other devices to measure this phenomenon showed it to be of different proportions and intensity.

2) *Out of context*. Mr. Marx claims I took out of context the last paragraph of his postscript to the paperback edition of *Protest and Prejudice*. He was speaking, he argues, of substance (real life), not methodology, when he wrote: "... playing the numbers game with public-opinion data can be conducive to highly unrealistic assessments." Do I now hear the voice of the activist in the words of the social scientist? If indeed "the important questions for the future of civil strife in America" are, to quote Mr. Marx once more, "not so much how many, but who, how intensively, and in what way," then (a) I have not quoted him out of context, and (b) those are precisely the questions to explore if social research is to have any validity and not be divorced from real life.

Mr. Marx's remark that he was "upset" that some people "wrongly" used his book "to deny the presence of black anti-Semitism" sends out bad vibes. At the height of those troubles at Ocean Hill-Brownsville and elsewhere, Mr. Marx was quoted in the *Wall Street Journal* as saying that "Jews are incredibly paranoid. They see an anti-Semite under every rock."

Mr. Marx's letter has not disappointed my expectations of him. A man who cannot distinguish between Eric Hoffer and Ronald Reagan can scarcely be competent to distinguish between anti-Semitism and anti-whitism, or to recognize anti-Semitism at all.

Mrs. Selznick and Mr. Steinberg grant, grudgingly and periphrastically, that my interpretation of their values was on mark. They defend themselves on one point: they *did* say that disapproval of intermarriage was not necessarily an expression of anti-Jewish feeling. Right, but notwithstanding the qualification, they constantly used the responses to the question on intermarriage as an indication of discrimination.

The underlying and more important question here is whether attitudes toward intermarriage, social clubs, and Christmas carols in the public schools are indeed what Selznick and Steinberg made of them—indicators of anti-Jewish discrimination, albeit more defensible than other forms of intolerance because more private. The answer to this question, as I wrote in my article, revolves on one's view of what society is or should be. My friend Gavin Langmuir says the basic problem is agreeing on what is meant by anti-Semitism. If all kinds of dissimilarities and antagonisms are regarded as anti-Semitism, we are no closer to an understanding of what anti-Semitism is or how it works.

Mrs. Selznick and Mr. Steinberg complain that I did not take their book, and the whole series, seriously, with all their implications for the status and future of American Jews. I thought that was what my article was all about. What is the American Jewish community to make of these assorted findings, each volume with its own definition of anti-Semitism, its own measuring devices, and limited by its methodology and its authors' subjectivities? On the basis of these books, I wouldn't like to have any Jewish organization mapping policy and programs for me.