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Librarians Face a New Chapter on Book Banning *by Emily Pecot*

Could school librarians face jail time for the books they choose to include in your library?

The late Judith Krug, a former executive director of the American Library Association who co-founded Banned Books Week in 1982, said in interviews, “Librarians are trained as librarians; we have absolutely no training or expertise in being censors. Our jobs are to provide all the ammunition we possibly can to enable a child to expand his horizons. The right of any individual to read is an absolute necessity in a democratic society.”

According to the American Library Association, 15 states have introduced bills that would impose harsh penalties on libraries or librarians for distributing books that some think are inappropriate. Penalties in some of those proposed bills range from stiff fines to imprisonment for librarians.



Arkansas targets librarians

On March 31, 2023 Arkansas Governor Sarah Huckabee Sanders signed Act 372 into law. Under the law, librarians face up to six years in prison and a \$10,000 fine if they allow minors access to reading materials deemed “harmful.”

Proponents of Act 372 argued that it was essential to prevent children from accessing “**pornographic**” materials, while critics contended it restricts access to diverse content, particularly materials representing the LGBTQ+ community.

In May 2023, 18 **plaintiffs** including libraries, bookstores, advocacy organizations, and individual patrons sued the state, claiming that the law infringes on librarians’ free speech and lacks clarity on how to comply with the law.

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Defining Antisemitism in the Garden State *by Sylvia Mendoza*

In general, hate crimes are on the rise in the United States. Of the 11,862 reported hate crimes in 2023, 1,832 were due to **antisemitism**, according to data from the Federal Bureau of Investigation’s 2023 Hate Crime Statistics Report. That is a 63% increase over 2022 numbers.

In the Garden State, bias incidents are also on the rise. According to data compiled by the New Jersey State Police, released by the New Jersey Office of the Attorney General, anti-Black and anti-Jewish bias are the most common race- and religion-based motivations for reported bias incidents in 2023. In fact, anti-Jewish bias represented 22% of all bias reported incidents.

The Anti-Defamation League (ADL), a non-profit organization that fights antisemitism, bigotry and discrimination, keeps its own count of hate incidents against Jewish people on a national scale—both criminal and non-criminal acts. ADL has been tracking antisemitic incidents since 1979 and splits them into three categories—verbal or written harassment, vandalism, and physical assault. By their measure, nearly 8,900 anti-Jewish hate incidents and/or crimes occurred nationwide in 2023. By comparison, ADL recorded nearly 3,400 incidents in 2022. A hate incident is one that is driven by hate but which is not a crime. For example, name-calling may be motivated by hate but is not a criminal act.



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Federal Hate Crime Law Brings First Conviction *by Michael Barbella*

In February 2024, U.S. prosecutors won their first case under a federal hate crime statute that was expanded in October 2009 to encompass gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, and disability. A South Carolina jury convicted Daqua Lameek Ritter of a hate crime for the August 2019 murder of Dime Doe, a Black transgender woman.

“The jury’s verdict sends a clear message: Black trans lives matter, bias-motivated violence will not be tolerated, and perpetrators of hate crimes will be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law,” Assistant Attorney General Kristen Clarke of the U.S. Justice Department’s Civil Rights Division said in a statement after Ritter’s conviction. “We want the Black trans community to know that you are seen and heard, that we stand with the LGBTQ+ community, and that we will use every tool available to seek justice for victims and their families.”

In October 2024, Ritter was sentenced to life in

prison. South Carolina, where Doe was murdered, is one of two states—Wyoming is the other—without a state hate crimes law. Proposed hate crime legislation passed in the South Carolina House of Representatives in the 2023-2024 session; however, it stalled in the South Carolina Senate. While South Carolina has no hate crimes law, 19 cities and towns of the state’s 271 municipalities have passed hate crimes ordinances. South Carolina’s lack of a state hate crimes law did not impact the federal government’s ability to prosecute the case.

“The lack of a state-level hate crime law would not have made the case more difficult to prosecute,” says Christy Mallory, state and local policy director for The Williams Institute at UCLA School of Law, a think tank dedicated to conducting research on sexual orientation and gender identity law. “If anything, the lack of a state hate crimes law may make federal prosecutors more likely to act in those jurisdictions since there is not an **analogous** state law under which state or local prosecutors could act.”

Historic case

Ritter’s trial and subsequent conviction were landmark moments in the U.S. criminal justice system, as the case was the first to be prosecuted under the 2009 Matthew Shepard and James Byrd Jr. Hate Crimes Prevention Act, signed into law by then President Barack Obama. Since its enactment, the U.S. government has prosecuted numerous hate crimes, but none have ever reached the trial stage, as the Doe murder case did.

“The Shepard-Byrd Act gives the FBI the authority to investigate crimes like this, and that’s vital,” Supervisory Special Agent Anthony Snead Jr. of the Federal Bureau of Investigation’s Civil Rights Unit, said in an October 2024 press statement after the verdict in the Doe case. “Just 15 years ago, we did not

have the authority to investigate this act of violence. We want members of the LGBTQ+ community to feel heard and to feel comfortable being who they are. Because no one should be victimized for being who they are.”

Passage of the Act stemmed from the 1998 heinous murders of Shepard, a gay college student in Wyoming, and Byrd, a Black father of three from Texas. Matthew Shepard was 21 when two men approached him at a bar. The men took Shepard to a remote area where they robbed, beat and tortured him, eventually tying him to a fence and leaving him to die. Byrd, 49 years old at the time of his death, accepted a ride from three young white men, two of whom would later be identified as white supremacists. The men severely beat and tortured Byrd and then chained him to the back of their truck, dragging him for three miles.

History of hate crimes law

According to the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ), the current definition of a hate crime at the federal level is “a crime motivated by bias against race, color, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, or disability.”

The first modern federal hate crimes law was passed as part of the Civil Rights Act of 1968. Restrictions on the law were that victims had to be engaged in certain federally protected activities, which included voting, serving jury duty, working a federal job, or attending school.

Criminal penalties for hate crimes vary by state and many include sentencing enhancements. A sentencing enhancement is a legal provision that increases the penalty of a crime. For example, a crime that would be considered a **misdemeanor** could be increased to a **felony** if a bias-related motive can be proven. At the federal level, punishment for bias-motivated



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violence can range from 10 years to life in prison, and in some cases, depending on the severity of the crime, the death penalty.

The U.S. Supreme Court weighed in on enhanced sentencing for bias-motivated crimes with its 1993 ruling in *Wisconsin v. Mitchell*.

The Court unanimously declared that enhanced

sentencing does not violate the First Amendment and that harsher penalties in such cases are justified.

“This conduct is thought to inflict greater individual and societal harm,” U.S. Supreme Court Chief Justice William Rehnquist wrote at the time. “Bias-motivated crimes are more likely to provoke retaliatory crimes, inflict distinct emotional harms on their victims, and incite community unrest.”

In other words, when a hate crime occurs, someone from that protected class may see themselves in the victim. For example, in the case of Matthew Shepard and James Byrd, someone from the LGBTQ+ and African American communities, respectively, may see the media coverage of those two deaths and think “that could have been me,” causing fear for their own safety and wellbeing.

The most recent hate crimes legislation was signed into law in 2021 by then President Joseph Biden. The Covid-19 Hate Crimes Act addressed the increased rise in anti-Asian hate brought on by the pandemic. It also improved data collection of hate crimes and provides assistance to law enforcement for investigating hate crimes. That act also includes the Khalid Jabara-Heather Heyer NO HATE Act, which provides funding for state agencies to establish state-run hate crimes reporting hotlines and assist victims who might be reluctant to report hate crimes.

Flawed laws

Some legal scholars are not convinced that hate crimes laws are fair in their implementation, and some say these laws are not needed at all.

In a 2016 opinion piece for *Time* magazine,

the late James B. Jacobs, a professor at New York University School of Law and a criminal justice expert, argued that by including certain groups and

excluding others, hate crime laws may be a form of discrimination and noted that these laws “re-criminalize conduct that is already criminal,” creating a “hierarchy of victims.”

“From the beginning,

hate crime laws have simply given us something else to argue about: whose victimization should be punished more severely,” Professor Jacobs wrote. “So many crimes will be eligible for hate crime treatment that those victims who are not covered will, perhaps rightly, feel discriminated against.”

While on *The New York Times’* podcast, *The Argument*, Steve Freeman, vice president of civil rights with the Anti-Defamation League in New York, talked about the nature of hate crime laws.

“It is ADL’s view that these crimes definitely need to be taken more seriously. But that doesn’t necessarily mean there should be mandatory minimums or mandatory sentencing, mandatory punishment. It really means that the crimes are more serious because the impact they have is broader,” Freeman said. “And it remains a conversation about the best way to deal with that.”

On the same podcast, Kevin Nadal, a psychology professor at John Jay College of Criminal Justice, said that he is not willing to give up on hate crime laws but recognizes that they are flawed.

“I’m not saying no hate crime laws because hate crimes don’t exist,” Professor Nadal said. “I’m saying reform on how hate crime laws are used.”

Hate in the Garden State

According to 2023 FBI crime statistics, there were 11,862 hate crime incidents nationwide, an increase of 228 over the previous year. Most incidents were in the race-based category, followed by religion-based crimes and crimes against the LGBTQ+ community.

In the Garden State, data compiled by the New Jersey State Police revealed a total of 2,699 bias incidents reported in 2023, a 22% increase over 2022 numbers. In New Jersey, anti-Black and anti-Jewish bias were the most common type of incident reported. The consensus of experts is that many hate crimes go unreported.

“Research indicates that hate crimes are underreported—both in terms of hate crimes statistics reported by state and local law enforcement agencies to the FBI and in terms of crimes reported by victims to law enforcement agencies,” Mallory notes. “The lack of clarity and consistency in hate crimes laws across jurisdictions could contribute to this problem.”

In March 2024, New Jersey Attorney General Matthew J. Platkin and the Division of Civil Rights announced the launch of the Community Peacemaker Collaborative. The initiative is intended to respond to the rise of bias and hate in New Jersey, including the significant uptick in antisemitism and Islamophobia. The new initiative seeks to prevent and respond to bias incidents by training individuals across all 21 counties—including community and student leaders—on conflict resolution techniques and best practices for responding to bias incidents. •



1. Do you think crimes motivated by bias or hate should be punished more severely? Why or why not?
2. Consider the protected classes outlined in the Matthew Shepard and James Byrd Jr. Hate Crimes Prevention Act. What makes certain members of society “protected?” Do you believe there should be protected classes? Why or why not?
3. Do you agree or disagree with the U.S. Supreme Court’s decision that hate crimes inflict “greater societal harm?” Explain your answer.

Librarians CONTINUED FROM PAGE ONE

In July 2023, U.S. District Judge Timothy Brooks of the United States District Court for the Western District of Arkansas temporarily blocked two sections of the bill from going into effect. Judge Brooks expressed concern that the two disputed sections might be interpreted inconsistently and could impose restrictions based on content, which would violate the First Amendment's guarantee of free expression.

Judge Brooks opened his 49-page opinion that issued the temporary **injunction** with a quote from *Fahrenheit 451*: "There is more than one way to burn a book. And the world is full of people running about with lit matches." *Fahrenheit 451* is a science fiction novel, written by Ray Bradbury, that deals with the topic of censorship and book burning.

In December 2024, Judge Brooks issued the court's final ruling, declaring that the two sections in question were overbroad and unconstitutional.

"If the General Assembly's purpose in passing Section 1 was to protect younger minors from accessing inappropriate sexual content in libraries and bookstores, the law will only achieve that end at the expense of everyone else's First Amendment rights," Judge Brooks wrote in the final opinion of the court. "The law deputizes librarians and booksellers as the agents of censorship; when motivated by the fear of jail time, it is likely they will shelve only books fit for young children and segregate or discard the rest."

After the court issued its decision on Act 372, Arkansas Attorney General Tim Griffin announced the state would **appeal**. Similar laws to the one in Arkansas have been enacted in Indiana, Missouri, Oklahoma and Tennessee. It is not clear how the Arkansas decision will affect those laws. To date, no librarian has been imprisoned.

Thomas Healy, a professor at Seton Hall Law School and an expert on the First Amendment, says that whether a court would uphold criminal penalties in such a case is unclear.

"A court might think such penalties are too extreme, and there is some support in the case law for rejecting disproportionate punishment for First Amendment activities," Professor Healy says. "Putting the legal question aside, I would argue that throwing librarians in jail for distributing books that some parents don't like is deeply troubling and reeks of McCarthyism."

McCarthyism refers to a time in the 1950s when many people in the U.S. were persecuted for their political views.

Soft censorship

PEN America, a nonprofit organization that advocates for literary freedom, calls what Judge Brooks described in his opinion as "soft censorship."

"Soft censorship is when fears of real censorship may cause educators and librarians, school administrators, and school boards to self-censor or suppress speech well beyond what may have been banned or prohibited," according to a PEN America report posted on its website. "Forms of soft censorship occur when materials are purposefully removed, limited, or never purchased at all despite it being a title that would serve the community."

There were more than 10,000 instances of book bans across the country involving more than 4,000 unique titles in the 2023-2024 school year, according to PEN America. That is almost three times more than the number reported in the previous school year.

In addition, PEN America's report revealed that during the 2023-2024 school year book bans were recorded in 29 states and 220 public school districts. Most banned books deal with themes of race and sexuality, specifically stories about the LGBTQ+ community.

U.S. Supreme Court provides clarity

In general, Professor Healy says, a school board can decide what books it wants school libraries to purchase and make available to students.

"School librarians who defy those decisions can certainly be disciplined or even fired; they do not have a First Amendment right to distribute whatever books they want since they work for the school district," Professor Healy says. "However, the U.S. Supreme Court has suggested that there are limits on the ability of a school board to remove books that are already on library shelves."

Professor Healy is referring to the only book banning case to be heard by the U.S. Supreme Court—*Island Trees School District v. Pico*. The Court's ruling in the case was issued in 1982; however, the case began in 1975 when a community group in Levittown, NY wanted to remove nine books from library shelves in the Island Trees School District, including Kurt Vonnegut's *Slaughterhouse-Five* and Langston Hughes's *Best Short Stories by Negro Writers*. Their justification for removal was that the books were "anti-American, anti-Christian, **antisemitic** and just plain filthy." The school district removed the books.

Steven Pico, a high school senior at the time, and four other students challenged the school district's decision claiming the books were removed because "passages in the books offended [the group's] social, political, and moral tastes and not because the books, taken as a whole, were lacking in educational value." The U.S. Supreme Court ruled in the students' favor, but the decision is complicated.

While the Court invalidated the school board's decision to remove books based simply on disagreement with their content, there was no clear **majority opinion** in the case, Professor Healy says.

"The Court's reasoning is not entirely clear, but four members of the Court



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stated that school boards cannot remove books simply because they disagree with their content," he says. "A majority of the Court also agreed that school boards cannot remove books based on nothing more than narrow **partisanship** (i.e., a ban on all books written by Democrats). Beyond that, the case law gives school districts significant discretion to decide what books to distribute in their libraries."

Professor Healy says that unless *Pico* is **overturned**, "It suggests that there are some limits on the ability of school boards to remove books that are already on library shelves."

In an interview with the National Coalition Against Censorship more than 30 years after the Court's decision, Steven Pico was asked whether he thought kids today felt as passionate about free speech as he did in 1975.

"I believe more young people are informed and passionate about their rights and responsibilities to stand up despite the cost today than at any previous time in American history," Pico said. "I'm sure some of your readers may disagree with that statement. I am simply voicing one opinion, and that is the point, isn't it? The crux is one's freedom to voice an opinion; the crux is one's responsibility to stand up to others who try to silence authors, to silence the dissemination of ideas, to silence librarians, to silence discussion, to silence teachers, to silence students, and to silence the constitutional right to disagree."

Protecting librarians in the Garden State

In 2023, there were at least 14 attempts to restrict access to a total of 28 book titles in New Jersey, according to the American Library Association. In December 2024, New Jersey Governor Phil Murphy signed the Freedom to Read Act into law. Present at the bill signing was Martha Hickson, a retired librarian who has spearheaded efforts to stem book bans in New Jersey. Hickson recounted her struggles as a librarian, recalling the nasty names—pornographer and pedophile—that she was called. She also received threats, hate mail, and some demanded her arrest.



"Students feel the pain, too, when the books that describe their lived experience were called disgusting, obscene, and depraved," Hickson noted. "Students recognized that those insults were also intended for them. All of this has created a nationwide climate of fear."

According to Professor Healy, New Jersey's Freedom to Read Act protects school librarians by allowing them to sue parents for harassment, defamation, and infliction of emotional distress arising out of book banning efforts.

"The law also makes clear that librarians can't be sued or arrested for carrying out their duties to help determine what books a school library will offer," Professor Healy says. "Finally, the law directs local school boards to create an orderly process for parents and other stakeholders to challenge book curation decisions and makes clear that schools should strive to offer books that represent diverse viewpoints."

The New Jersey law will go into effect on December 9, 2025, exactly a year after it was signed into law. Currently, Illinois, Colorado, and Connecticut are considering laws similar to the one in New Jersey. •



1. How do you feel about the threats that many librarians face today? What do you think the consequence of these threats are? For librarians? For readers? Explain your answer.
2. Do you feel as passionate about free speech as Steven Pico did in the 1970s? Why or why not?
3. Steven Pico dedicated six years of his life to his cause when he was 16 years old. What issue do you feel passionate about that would make you dedicate a significant portion of your time to it? Explain your answer.



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Antisemitism CONTINUED FROM PAGE ONE

According to a preliminary report issued by ADL's Center for Extremism, California had the highest number of incidents—1,266. New York had 1,218 antisemitic incidents, followed by New Jersey with 830. ADL will issue a final report in spring 2025.

"Data show the vast majority of ethnic hate crimes are against Jews, regardless of their percentage of a population, whether it's the nation as a whole, or in municipalities or cities," explains Alan Abbey, a research fellow at the Jewish research think tank, Shalom Hartman Institute in Israel. Abbey also publishes the online edition of The Jerusalem Post, the oldest and largest English-language daily newspaper in Israel.

What is antisemitism?

According to the U.S. State Department's website: "Antisemitism is a certain perception of Jews, which may be expressed as hatred toward Jews. Rhetorical and physical manifestations of antisemitism are directed



toward Jewish or non-Jewish individuals and/or their property, toward Jewish community institutions and religious facilities." That definition comes from the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA), which is part of the United Nations. It is a non-legally binding working definition.

"The IHRA definition has become the preeminent and most widely accepted definition and learning tool used around the world when it comes to understanding manifestations of antisemitism today," explains Scott Richman, the Regional Director of the Anti-Defamation League for New York and New Jersey. "Many people do not understand the long history of antisemitism, going back thousands of years, how antisemitism manifests today, or even what it means to

be Jewish. A definition provides critical

education and guidance to help people understand the complex ways that antisemitism can manifest today so that we can call it out and combat it where we see it."

The State Department

website lists contemporary examples of antisemitism. These examples also come from the IHRA and include: (1) Calling for, aiding, or justifying the killing or harming of Jews (often in the name of a radical ideology or an extremist view of religion). (2) Making mendacious [dishonest], dehumanizing, demonizing, or stereotypical allegations about Jews as such or the power of Jews as a collective—especially but not exclusively, the myth about a world Jewish conspiracy or of Jews controlling the media, economy, government or other societal institutions. (3) Accusing Jews as a people of being responsible for real or imagined wrongdoing committed by a single Jewish person or group, the state of Israel, or even for acts committed by non-Jews. (4) Accusing Jews as a people, or Israel as a state, of inventing or exaggerating the Holocaust. (5) Accusing Jewish citizens of being more loyal to Israel, or to the alleged priorities of Jews worldwide, than to the interest of their own nations.

The website also contains this disclaimer: "However, criticism of Israel similar to that leveled against any other country cannot be regarded as antisemitic."

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Dispelling Anti-Semitic Tropes

The Anti-Defamation League (ADL) conducts a survey every year to determine Americans' attitudes toward Jewish people. In its 2023 survey, ADL asked respondents to rate the truthfulness of 14 negative Jewish stereotypes, also called tropes or "canards," which is characterized as a baseless rumor. ADL's survey found that one in five Americans agree with at least six of those tropes.

There are many antisemitic tropes or canards that have been repeated and perpetuated over time, with some overlapping others. In order to dispel these myths, it is helpful to know where they came from and how they have continued to thrive even in modern times. Below are just a few of these tropes.

Domination and Control

According to advocates, the Domination and Control trope is the one most commonly used and believed in today's society. For example, in 2022,

a gunman in Colleyville, TX targeted a synagogue because he believed that Jews had the power to free a convicted terrorist serving an 86-year sentence in New York City, whom he wanted released.

This particular trope dates back to the Middle Ages and has adapted over the years. It was reinforced in 1903 with the publication of an antisemitic text, titled "The Protocols of the Meetings of the Learned Elders of Zion," which falsely claimed to be minutes from a meeting of Jewish leaders where plans for global domination were discussed. Adolph Hitler used the lies in this document to spread hatred for the Jewish people by blaming them for economic hardships experienced by Germans. It was even used as a teaching tool in German schools to reinforce hatred of the Jews. This conspiracy theory is still prevalent today with repeated false accusations that Jews control the world financial system and the media, including the press, and the music and film industries. ADL's 2023 survey revealed that 26% of respondents believe that Jews have too much power in the business world.

Antisemitism CONTINUED FROM PAGE SIX

Defining antisemitism in New Jersey

While 37 states and Washington D.C. have adopted the IHRA definition of antisemitism, efforts to adopt it in New Jersey have met with resistance. The New Jersey bill [S1292] would adopt the IHRA definition, which would be used to determine whether an alleged act was motivated by antisemitism. In addition, the bill would appropriate \$100,000 for a public awareness campaign to combat antisemitism.

Freedom of speech is the primary concern with New Jersey's bill. Critics, including some Jewish organizations, claim that if signed into law, it would punish criticism of Israel. In June 2024, hundreds of people spoke at New Jersey Senate committee hearings that debated the pros and cons of adopting the IHRA definition of antisemitism in New Jersey and the passage of S1292. The public hearings lasted more than nine hours over two days.

At the hearings, Emma Horowitz, a resident of Teaneck who supports the bill, said, "In order

to combat something, we must be able to define it, and this is something that law enforcement and other communal institutions have long struggled to do."

Renee Steinhagan, a Jewish woman, criticized the bill, saying, "By making the Israeli government immune from criticism it will exacerbate antisemitism. It shields the Israeli state from criticism and fosters hostility and rage against Jews."

At press time, S1292 had been reported out of committee; however, no other movement on the legislation had been taken in the New Jersey State Senate. Should the New Jersey Senate pass the bill, it would still need support from the New Jersey State Assembly and the signature of the governor in order to become law.

"Whatever the definition of antisemitism, considering it as a form of hate speech is only



the beginning of the analysis, because one of the distinctive features of American free speech law is that in most contexts, there is no hate speech exception to the First Amendment and to the protection of free speech," explains Perry Dane, a professor at Rutgers Law School in Camden who focuses on Jewish and constitutional law. "So, people have a right to spew whatever hate they want. And in many contexts, there's no legal consequence."

Continued efforts to educate

In May 2023, the U.S. Department of Education's Center for Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships launched an Antisemitism Awareness Campaign, which is aimed at educators, students, parents and communities, and provides the necessary tools to address the issue.

In 2023, the federal government released the first ever National Strategy to Counter Antisemitism, one of the most comprehensive and ambitious efforts to counter antisemitism

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Wealth and Greed

The Wealth and Greed trope goes hand-in-hand with the Domination and Control trope. This one dates back to Medieval Times when Christians thought of money lending as a sin. Money lending was one of the few occupations that Jews were allowed to have at that time. The Wealth and Greed trope has been perpetuated in literature and the arts for centuries. For example, Shakespeare's character of Shylock, the money lender in the *Merchant of Venice*, is probably the most famous example of the stereotypical greedy Jew, helping to perpetuate the myth.

Those who push this trope often point to Judas, who betrayed Jesus for 30 pieces of silver, as an example of Jewish greed even though all the disciples and Jesus himself were Jewish. The trope became so normalized that in the 1930s the Oxford English Dictionary contained a definition for the word "Jew" that stated, "to cheat." The false narrative of the wealthy Jew was included in much of the Nazi propaganda, cementing anti-Jewish sentiment

among the Germans, which led to the atrocities of the Holocaust. The trope still endures today. The ADL survey revealed that 20% of Americans agreed with the statement: "Jews are more willing than others to use shady practices to get what they want."

Deicide

Deicide is the act of killing a divine being. In 2020, ADL reported that 27% of Americans still believed that the Jews killed Jesus, committing deicide. Believers of this trope see Jesus' trial as a conflict between Jews and Christians, even though Christianity wasn't founded until after Jesus' death. Hitler used the trope of the Jew as "Christ Killer" to win the support of the German people in exterminating the Jews. The Vatican disavowed the deicide trope in the 1960s, saying that the Jewish people must not be held responsible for Jesus' death, yet the canard still persists today. •

Antisemitism CONTINUED FROM PAGE SIX

in American history. The strategy implores both parties to condemn antisemitism in all its forms. Dr. Deborah E. Lipstadt, a former special envoy at the U.S. State Department appointed to monitor and combat antisemitism abroad, called this “taking politics out of the issue.”

In an op-ed for *The New York Times*, Dr. Lipstadt wrote that antisemitism goes beyond the threat to the Jewish people. She said that

terrorist organizations that perpetuate antisemitic ideologies are not just sowing hatred against Jews.

“The primary goal may not be only to spread Jew hatred, but to use Jew hatred to sow societal divisions and make all of us doubt the political health and strength of the democratic world,” Dr. Lipstadt wrote. “Anything that erodes the rule of law and undermines our national security must be confronted collectively.” •



1. What do you think leaders and people in the community can do about increased attacks against Jewish people?
2. Do you agree or disagree with Dr. Lipstadt that spreading hatred against Jews threatens more than just the Jewish people? Explain your answer.

Glossary

analogous — comparable to. **antisemitic** — being prejudice or hostile toward Jewish people. **antisemitism** — prejudice or hostility toward Jewish people. **appeal** — a request that a higher court review the decision of a lower court. **convicted** — to be found guilty of a criminal offense either by the verdict of a jury, the decision of a judge or by entering a guilty plea. **felony** — a serious criminal offense usually punished by imprisonment of more than one year. **injunction** — an order of the court that compels someone to do something or stops them from doing something. **majority opinion** — a statement written by a judge or justice that reflects the opinion reached by the majority of their colleagues. **misdemeanor** — a lesser crime, usually punishable by a fine or short jail term. **overturned** — in the law, to void a prior legal precedent. **partisanship** — bias or prejudice in favor of a particular cause. **plaintiff** — person or persons bringing a civil lawsuit against another person or entity. **pornographic** — obscene or explicit. **statute** — legislation that has been signed into law.

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