

Politicizing Memory: Who thinks the Holocaust should be put behind us?

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Introduction

The Holocaust was the systematic, state-sponsored persecution and murder of six million Jews by Nazi Germany and its collaborators, alongside the targeting of other groups, and it remains a defining warning about where antisemitism, dehumanization, and indifference can lead. A June 2027 Leger survey for the Association for Canadian Studies reveals that a majority of Canadians disagree that the Holocaust is an issue of the past and not as relevant to present day society. Still, an important minority—about one-third—does agree that the Holocaust is less relevant to present-day. that agreement with “moving on” from the Holocaust is not merely a neutral opinion as many of those who support this view disproportionately endorse antisemitic tropes as revealed in a deeper dive into the survey results. Among those who strongly agree that since October 7, 2023 they have become more negative toward Jewish people, 51% strongly agree that the Holocaust is mostly an issue of the past. Among those who strongly agree that Jewish people in Canada are responsible for the actions of the Israeli government, 55% strongly agree that the Holocaust is mostly an issue of the past and not as relevant to present-day society. Among those who strongly disagree that Canadian Jews are responsible for Israel’s government, only 7% strongly agree that the Holocaust is mostly in the past. The results illustrate that those who think it is time to “move on” from the Holocaust are more inclined to endorse the antisemitic trope of holding Jews collectively responsible for the actions of Israel. Put another way the cross-tabs suggest that Holocaust minimization and contemporary antisemitic generalization reinforce each other. People who collapse distinctions between Israel, the Israeli government, Jews globally, and Jews in Canada are also more likely to reject the continuing relevance of Holocaust memory. Of course not everyone who suggests that it is time to move on from the Holocaust is antisemitic but the data do confirm a strong link between contemporary antisemitic tropes and the weakening of Holocaust memory.

Methodology

The findings arise from a survey of Canadians conducted by the firm Leger for the Association for Canadian Studies between June 5 and 7, 2026. The survey was conducted with 1518 respondents in Canada. A margin of error cannot be associated with a non-probability sample in a panel survey for comparison purposes. A probability sample of 1518 respondents would have a margin of error of $\pm 2.5\%$, 19 times out of 20.

A majority of Canadians disagree that the Holocaust is an issue of the past and not relevant to the present day;

The Holocaust is mostly an issue of the past and not as relevant to present-day society.	Total	Male	Female
(NET) AGREE	33%	40%	27%
Strongly agree	11%	13%	9%
Somewhat agree	23%	27%	19%
(NET) DISAGREE	55%	51%	59%
Somewhat disagree	28%	29%	28%
Strongly disagree	27%	22%	31%
I don't know / I prefer not to answer	12%	10%	14%

A majority of Canadians disagree that the Holocaust is an issue of the past and not relevant to the present day;

The Holocaust is mostly an issue of the past and not as relevant to present-day society.	Total	18-34	35-54	55+
(NET) AGREE	33%	33%	32%	34%
Strongly agree	11%	12%	11%	10%
Somewhat agree	23%	21%	21%	25%
(NET) DISAGREE	55%	48%	55%	59%
Somewhat disagree	28%	24%	26%	32%
Strongly disagree	27%	24%	29%	27%
I don't know / I prefer not to answer	12%	19%	13%	6%

A majority of Canadians disagree that the Holocaust is an issue of the past and not relevant to the present day;

The Holocaust is mostly an issue of the past and not as relevant to present-day society.	Total	Atl.	QC	ON	MB/SK	AB	BC
(NET) AGREE	33%	37%	42%	30%	34%	34%	26%
Strongly agree	11%	11%	14%	9%	16%	11%	7%
Somewhat agree	23%	25%	28%	21%	18%	23%	19%
(NET) DISAGREE	55%	55%	47%	58%	54%	53%	61%
Somewhat disagree	28%	31%	26%	30%	30%	26%	27%
Strongly disagree	27%	24%	21%	28%	24%	27%	35%
I don't know / I prefer not to answer	12%	9%	11%	12%	13%	12%	12%

Francophones most likely to agree that the Holocaust is mostly an issue of the past and not as relevant to present-day society.

The Holocaust is mostly an issue of the past and not as relevant to present-day society.	Total	French	English	Other	Born in Canada	Born outside of Canada
(NET) AGREE	33%	46%	29%	35%	32%	39%
Strongly agree	11%	14%	10%	10%	11%	9%
Somewhat agree	23%	33%	19%	25%	21%	29%
(NET) DISAGREE	55%	43%	58%	55%	56%	51%
Somewhat disagree	28%	24%	30%	28%	29%	26%
Strongly disagree	27%	19%	29%	26%	27%	25%
I don't know / I prefer not to answer	12%	11%	12%	10%	12%	11%

Those who strongly agree that since the October 7, 2023, terrorist attack in Israel, they become more negative toward Jewish people are far more inclined to strongly agree that The Holocaust is mostly an issue of the past and not as relevant to present-day society. -

The Holocaust is mostly an issue of the past and not as relevant to present-day society. - Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with each of the following statements.	Since the October 7, 2023, terrorist attack in Israel, I have become more negative toward Jewish people. - Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with each of the following statements.			
	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree
Strongly agree	51%	13%	8%	9%
Somewhat agree	15%	38%	33%	17%
Somewhat disagree	15%	29%	37%	27%
Strongly disagree	16%	16%	13%	42%
I don't know / I prefer not to answer	3%	4%	9%	4%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Those who strongly agree that Israel's military actions in Gaza justify negative attitudes toward Jewish people in Canada are most inclined to strongly agree that the Holocaust is mostly an issue of the past and not as relevant to present-day society

The Holocaust is mostly an issue of the past and not as relevant to present-day society	Israel's military actions in Gaza justify negative attitudes toward Jewish people in Canada.			
	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree
Strongly agree	41%	8%	8%	10%
Somewhat agree	20%	40%	27%	17%
Somewhat disagree	16%	30%	40%	26%
Strongly disagree	22%	19%	21%	44%
I don't know / I prefer not to answer	1%	3%	4%	3%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Those who strongly agree that Jewish people in Canada are responsible for the actions of the Israeli government are most inclined to strongly agree that the Holocaust is mostly an issue of the past and not as relevant to present-day society

The Holocaust is mostly an issue of the past and not as relevant to present-day society. -.	Jewish people in Canada are responsible for the actions of the Israeli government			
	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree
Strongly agree	55%	21%	10%	7%
Somewhat agree	20%	46%	32%	20%
Somewhat disagree	10%	23%	37%	30%
Strongly disagree	10%	6%	14%	38%
I don't know / I prefer not to answer	5%	4%	7%	5%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%