



Overview

Antisemitism is a set of dehumanizing and hostile beliefs and behaviors that target Jews, both as individuals and as a group, because of their Jewish identity. It takes on many forms, including overt acts of violence, discrimination, harassment and vandalism, as well as more subtle codes, tropes and assumptions. A central feature of antisemitism is its conspiratorial nature, where historical antisemitic conspiracies and myths offer a blueprint for future generations to draw on when blaming Jews for various world events. Seemingly disparate groups and individuals across the ideological spectrum use antisemitism to manufacture fear and divide society.

Antisemitism operates as an energizing force behind white supremacy, and both directly and indirectly affects millions of Jews and non-Jews in the United States and around the world. Movements, organizations and individuals committed to a just and equitable society are often portrayed as tools manipulated by Jews to undermine or remake society. Most often this involves attempts to racialize and vilify Jews as the manipulative puppet masters behind various economic, political, and social schemes. Antisemitism does not occur in isolation. Any effort to dismantle white supremacy must work to combat antisemitism alongside and connected to other forms of hate and bias. The SPLC is committed to tracking and combating antisemitism as part of our efforts to build an inclusive, multiracial society.

This document is intended as a resource and starting point for a discussion about what antisemitism is, how extremists in the United States use it, and how some tropes have become normalized in society. It does not claim to provide all the answers to questions surrounding antisemitism, and because of this, the document will be routinely updated based on emerging trends and themes in American society.

Tropes and misconceptions

Contemporary antisemitic tropes and stereotypes have existed for millennia but are adapted to relate to present-day issues. Throughout history, those in power have historically scapegoated Jewish people to manufacture fear, divide societies and deflect blame. Below are a few common antisemitic tropes:

- **Power and control:** Claims that Jews are manipulative with secret and undue influence over various institutions, governments, and social movements (e.g. George Soros, globalism, communism).
- **Greed:** Assumptions that Jews are greedy, self-serving elites associated with money or worldwide financial systems.
- **Holocaust denial, distortion and relativism:** Questioning, denying, or manipulating the established historical record of the Holocaust to suggest that the genocide of Jewish people is exaggerated or fabricated, and using disingenuous Holocaust analogies to diminish or lessen the severity of the Holocaust.
- **Blood libel:** The enduring myth that Jews murder non-Jews for religious rituals, especially preying on Christian children.
- **Deicide:** The false accusation that Jews murdered Jesus and are enemies of Christianity.



- **Disloyalty:** The charge that Jewish people are inherently disloyal neighbors and citizens.
- **Conflation with nation-state:** Criticism of Israel is not unequivocally antisemitic; however, it can be when Jewish people, on the whole, are held accountable for actions taken by the Israeli government or when Israel is conflated solely with Jewish people.

Examples of prominent antisemitic narratives

The mutability of antisemitism means it has underpinned a wide array of conspiracy theories and acts as a common baseline in several prejudicial ideologies, animating hate against many non-Jewish communities along with Jewish ones. Antisemitism frequently manifests as a belief that Jewish people control marginalized and minoritized communities, as well as social movements that seek equity and justice for those groups. Antisemitic conspiracies thus paint Jewish people as a threat to the established order. Some examples include:

The ‘great replacement’ theory

Adherents of the “[great replacement](#)” theory believe there is a calculated effort to replace white European populations with non-white foreign populations, resulting in reduced white political power and ultimately white genocide. This conspiracy theory is inherently white supremacist, stoking xenophobic fears about immigration and characterizing nonwhite populations as inferior. Proponents of this conspiracy theory often present Black people as pawns in a Jewish plot to harm white people and destroy America. Many proponents of the “great replacement” believe powerful Jewish individuals or a Jewish “deep state” are responsible for this plot. For example, in [October 2018](#), a caravan of people fleeing poverty and violence left Honduras on foot to seek asylum in the United States. Almost immediately, a conspiracy theory emerged claiming that philanthropist George Soros was funding this operation to influence elections and to bring [Islamic](#) militants and members of MS-13 to orchestrate violence and destruction. Attacks and accusations of conspiracies related to the “great replacement” have frequently targeted Jewish and non-Jewish refugee organizations because of their work on resettling Muslim refugees from the Middle East and North Africa. Adherents of this violent conspiracy theory have committed tragic acts of violence targeting Jews at the [Tree of Life synagogue](#) in 2018, predominantly Hispanic shoppers at an [El Paso Walmart](#) in 2019 and the Black community in [Buffalo, New York](#), in 2022.

The demonization of queer people

In recent years, antisemitic extremists have manipulated age-old tropes about Jewish sexual deviance to align with mainstream efforts to attack the LGBTQ+ community. Believers of the [QAnon](#) conspiracy have spouted these falsehoods, alleging that a cabal of elites operate a child trafficking ring to harvest their blood to secure a chemical that helps them stay young. Hate groups in communities across the country distribute fliers blaming Jews for promoting the “gay agenda,” exemplifying this conspiracy. Similarly, neo-Nazis have regularly demonstrated against the LGBTQ+ community in recent years with signs asserting, for example, “Judaism allows child rape” and “Jews run the pedo agenda.”

Male supremacy

Antisemitism and male supremacy are mutually reinforcing, working together to animate each other and escalate resentment stemming from a perceived loss of white male status and power. A 2020 [Hope not Hate survey](#) of 16- to 24-year-olds in the United Kingdom found young people who reported negative attitudes towards feminism were significantly more likely to endorse antisemitic conspiracy theories and



engage in Holocaust denial and distortion. Misogyny often acts as a powerful pathway into antisemitism, blending personal experiences with a politicized threat framework. Once individuals internalize this idea of victimization, they easily apply this same framing to other perceived enemies, particularly Jewish people. Male supremacists view women as genetically inferior, stupid and lazy, yet also suggests we live in a gynocentric society dominated by feminists who favor women to the detriment of men. To resolve this logical inconsistency, many adherents present feminism as an invention of the Jewish elite to emasculate men and corrupt society. A leaked style guide from the neo-Nazi Daily Stormer website outlined this strategy suggesting that: “Whenever writing about women make sure to follow the prime directive and blame Jew feminism for their behavior.” It went on to add, “Women should be attacked, but there should always be mention that if it wasn’t for the Jews, they would be acting normally.” Various responses to the *Dobbs* Supreme Court decision, which overturned the constitutional right to abortion in June 2022, also illustrated this pattern. The antisemitic hate group Goyim Defense League distributed flyers with the heading “every single aspect of abortion is Jewish,” while notorious white supremacist [Nick Fuentes](#) claimed the Supreme Court’s decision came down to Jews versus Catholics, noting the danger of Jewish people holding positions of power in government.

The role of Israel

Criticism of Israel is not inherently antisemitic. Political protests, free speech and the right to criticize government policies are essential components of our democracy. However, individuals cross the line from legitimate political speech to antisemitism when they target and punish individual Jews and Jewish establishments, rather than political institutions, for the actions of the Israeli government. For example, in the months since October 2023, [synagogues](#), Jewish [community organizations](#) and Jewish-owned [businesses](#) have been vandalized, threatened, and harassed with anti-Israel slogans. These incidents disrupt religious services, intimidate the Jewish community, and send a threatening message that Jewish people are held collectively responsible for the actions of the Israeli government. Similarly, expressions of anti-Israel and anti-Zionist sentiments become antisemitic when they pair with age-old antisemitic tropes. The terms “Zionist,” “Zionism” and “Israel” are often used as code words for Jews to disguise overt antisemitism and make these messages more palatable to mainstream audiences. For example, extremist leaders have persistently disseminated the conspiracy theory that the media is “Zionist controlled.” In 2014, [David Duke](#) posted an image on his [website](#) illustrating how all news organizations were part of the “Zionist Nazi Mainstream media” and attributed “cover-ups” and “illegal wars” to Zionists. More recently, [Mike Peinovich](#) of the white nationalist and antisemitic National Justice Party proclaimed at a 2023 [rally](#) that “Americans have been deceived into supporting [Israel] by Jewish influence over our banks, our media, and our politicians. However, we must collectively assert ‘enough’ and rise up as a united people.” Accusations that Zionists hold secret and disproportionate influence over society and control the media, elections or various governments are common examples of this strategy of disguising antisemitic speech. In addition, Christian Zionism, which is supportive of Israel politically, can espouse antisemitic and anti-Muslim beliefs. Core to this belief is the idea that the founding of the modern state of Israel was biblically ordained, and that Jesus Christ’s return requires Israel’s existence. In other words, Israel’s existence is but a means to another religion’s end.

Just as it is antisemitic to hold Jews collectively responsible for the actions of the Israeli government, it is also wrong to assume any critique of Israel is an attack on the Jewish community. The Jewish community is incredibly diverse and cannot be treated as a monolith. Jews come from a range of different racial, ethnic and economic backgrounds, and while some practice Judaism, others consider themselves atheists. Jews differ from each other on a number of social and political issues, including Israel.



For further questions, explanations, or educational resources, please contact SPLC Intelligence Project Senior Research Analyst Alon Milwicki at alon.milwicki@splcenter.org or LFJ Professional Learning Facilitator Jaci Jones at jaci.jones@splcenter.org

The SPLC actively monitors hate and antigovernment extremist activity across the United States. The SPLC track groups, online activity, threats and incidents to give an accurate picture of the situation to policymakers and communities working to prevent and respond to acts of hate and violence.

Sources:

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Resources

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3. keshetonline.org/resources-and-events/
4. rac.org/about-religious-action-center-reform-judaism
5. diasporaalliance.co/
6. jewishdems.org/action/



Resources from Learning for Justice

7. [Let's Talk](#)
8. [Speak Up at School](#)
9. [Responding to Hate and Bias at School](#)
10. learningforjustice.org/magazine/acclaimed-documentary-one-survivor-remembers-urges-all-to-never-forget
11. learningforjustice.org/magazine/understanding-and-counteracting-antisemitism-and-islamophobia-in-schools