

CORONAVIRUS AND THE PLAGUE OF ANTISEMITISM



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INTRODUCTION

Antisemitism has often been compared to a virus, but really it acts like a parasite: because whenever there is a major crisis in the world, antisemites use it to spread their hatred for Jews. No matter how much genuine suffering there is, antisemites will always react to it by blaming Jews, and then find a way to spread their particular venom to others.

The COVID-19 pandemic that is currently gripping the entire world is no exception. One example is the phenomenon of coordinated antisemitic ‘zombombing’, whereby racists and trolls invade virtual synagogue services and other meetings that are held on Zoom and other video conferencing sites to spread antisemitic abuse. Another is the explosion of antisemitic conspiracy theories that began to populate social media as soon as news emerged of a dangerous new virus spreading across the world. CST has tracked and recorded antisemitic posts on mainstream sites like Facebook and Twitter, and in more obscure corners of the internet where extremists gather, like 4Chan and Gab, all of which are consumed with the same hateful obsession: that the Jews must be behind this awful new menace, and that this crisis is the latest opportunity to spread their hatred.

Even when these theories do not start with the Jewish community antisemities jump at the opportunity to blame the Jews. For example, when the idea spread that 5G towers and networks were causing or spreading the new coronavirus, conspiracy theorists were quick to suggest that Jews either owned the telecommunication industry or were deliberately building towers in ‘non-Jewish’ areas. One UK user posted to Facebook: “Quick update there are no 5G Towers in Jewish areas I wonder why”.

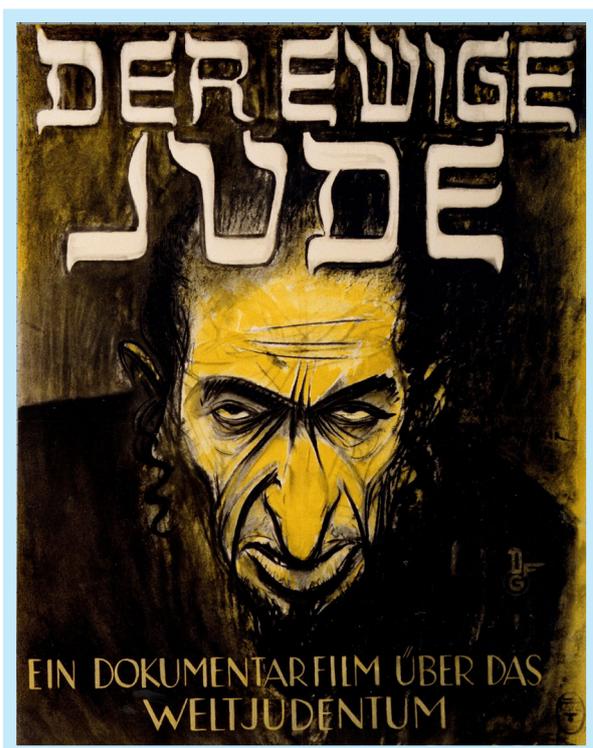
These racist ideas have global reach, with posts and memes from the United States influencing extremist narratives in the United Kingdom, and anti-Chinese xenophobia merging with anti-Jewish conspiracy theories.



This association of Jews with disease and infection is not original and draws on a long history and deep-rooted antisemitic tropes. The best known, and most dramatic, example of this came in the late 1340s, when bubonic plague – the Black Death – swept through Europe, killing around 20 million people. This staggering death toll amounted to a third of the entire population of Western Europe. In many places, Jews were blamed for causing the plague by allegedly poisoning wells, and they were tortured, put on trial, executed and expelled. Thousands of Jews were murdered for this non-existent crime and hundreds of Jewish communities were destroyed. According to one account from Strasbourg in 1349, “*In the matter of this plague the Jews throughout the world were reviled and accused in all lands of having caused it through the poison which they are said to have put into the water and the wells-that is what they were accused of-and for this reason the Jews were burnt all the way from the Mediterranean into Germany, but not in Avignon, for the pope protected them there.*”

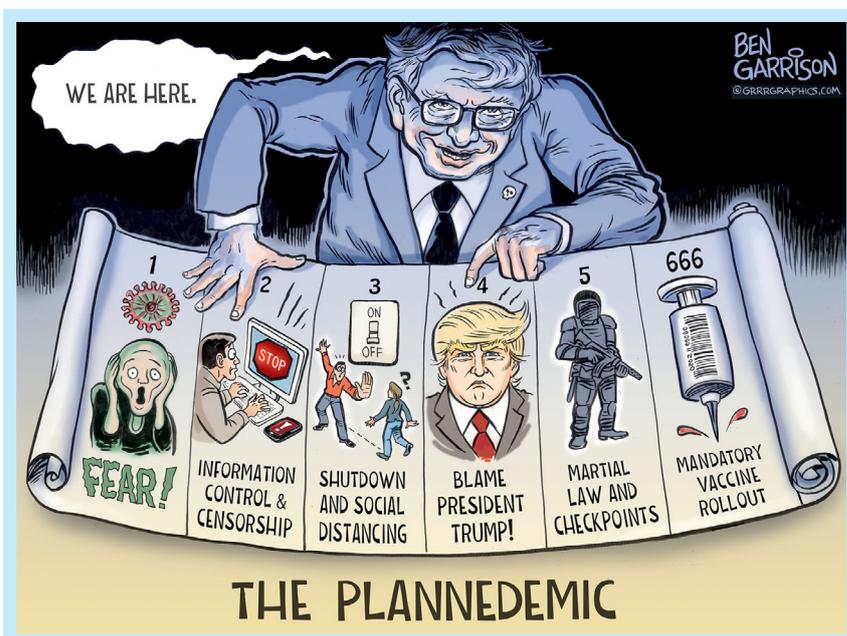
The scale of persecution during the Black Death was so vast that it led to Western Europe being virtually emptied of Jews, many of whom travelled east to begin the great civilisation of Polish Jewry that ended with the Holocaust. The path to the Holocaust was also built, in part, on the antisemitic association of Jews with disease

and infection. Adolf Hitler compared Jews to a “harmful bacillus” in *Mein Kampf* and spoke of a “Jewish virus” that threatened Germany; Nazi propaganda regularly compared Jews to fleas, lice and other disease-bearing creatures, most notoriously in the film *Der Ewige Jude* (The Eternal Jew), which depicted Jews as rats spreading their infection across Europe. This is the antisemitic legacy that is now echoed in this century by conspiracy cranks and Jew-haters across the internet.



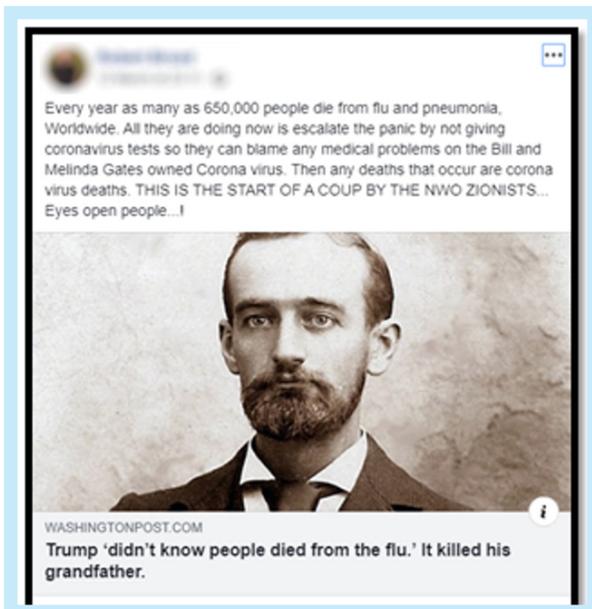
The spread of this antisemitism online is particularly chilling because the overwhelming response of people in Britain to this crisis has been to pull together and support the collective effort against COVID-19. The number of people volunteering to help others, whether as part of the national support for the NHS or offering local support for neighbours in isolation, shows the true character of our country. These racist narratives have not, so far, influenced mainstream public debate in Britain, but that is no reason to ignore them: the longer this crisis goes on, with its profound impact on people’s jobs, livelihoods and mental health, the more likely it is that people will start to look for scapegoats. Hatred flourishes when left unchecked, and CST is highlighting the existence of this antisemitic material so that action can be taken by social media companies and law enforcement where appropriate.

The antisemitic posts, comments and memes that CST has seen since the spread of COVID-19 began to attract significant attention in this country in late January fall broadly into five different categories, ranging from bizarre conspiracy theories to the sheer nastiness of those who like to see others suffer and even die. This briefing will explain and give examples of each of these five categories.



THE VIRUS IS FAKE – IT'S A JEWISH CONSPIRACY

Whenever a new crisis emerges, whether it is a terrorist attack, an economic crash or a global pandemic, the kneejerk response of conspiracy theorists is to assume the 'official' story is untrue. These posts all shed doubt on the idea that COVID-19 is real, and assume that stories of a deadly virus are part of a Jewish plot to mislead the public.



Corona virus is a hoax by the vax kikes teamed with the banker kikes

As usual, the vax kikes want to pump u and your kids full of aluminum and mercury to turn u into a nigger tier retard who's content doing a menial job for 50 years

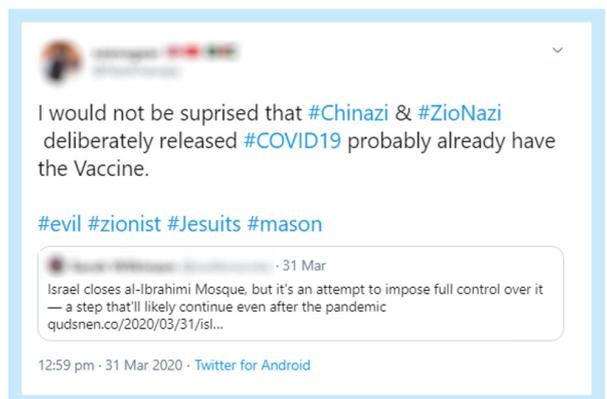
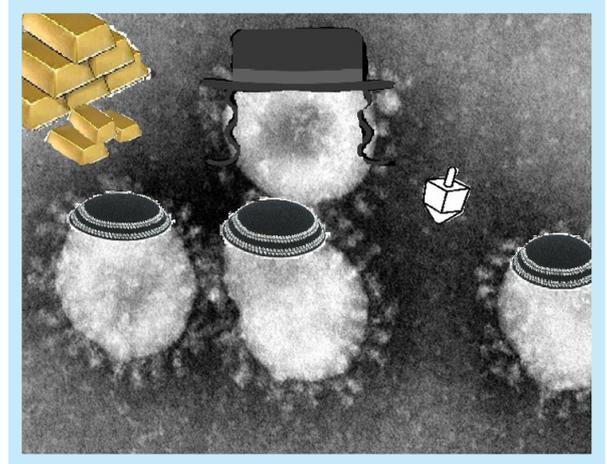
As usual the banker kikes want to crash the economy and tighten the money supply so that (a) small indie businesses go out of business, then large US-UK-Israel companies can move in and take the market. (b) people default on their mortgages and lose their homes to the banks (c) large businesses plead for loans from western banks (d) governments plead for loans from western banks which they can repay by taxing the people

Same kikery that's been reoccurring for centuries.

THE VIRUS IS REAL – BUT IT'S STILL A JEWISH CONSPIRACY

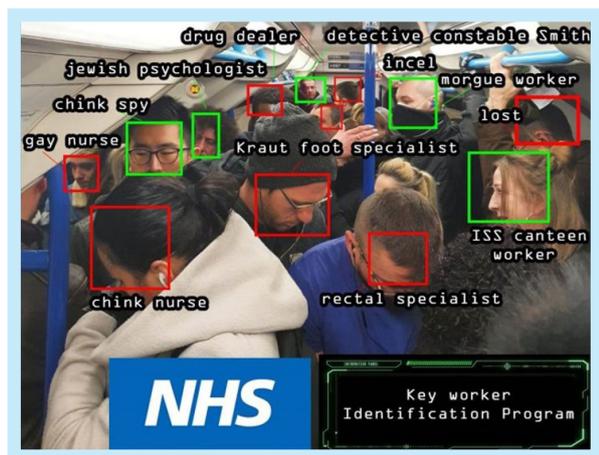
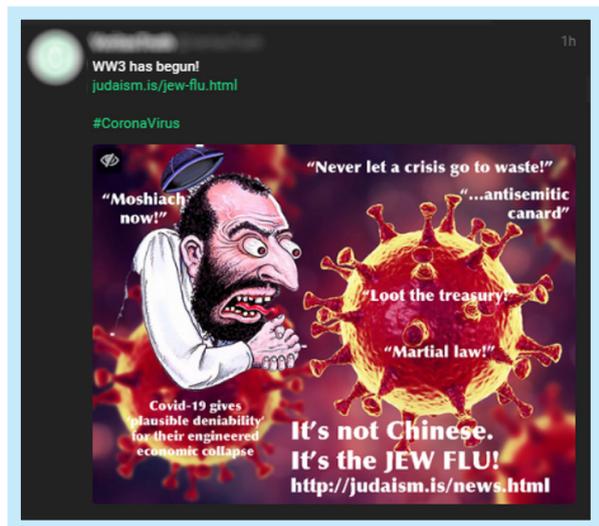
An alternative angle for conspiracy theorists is to accept that COVID-19 really exists, but assume that it has been deliberately created and spread for malevolent purposes. There are several variations on this theme: that there is a 'Zionist agenda' to depopulate the world by killing huge numbers of people; that coronavirus is part of a plot involving some combination of the United States, Israel and China; that Israel or the Jews developed coronavirus and blamed it on China to try to start World War Three; that prominent Jewish and non-Jewish businessmen such as George Soros (a regular hate figure for conspiracy theorists) have a financial interest in spreading the virus and then developing a vaccine; or some combination of these theories. Whatever the angle, the final destination of the theory remains the same: to blame the Jews in some form or another.

These two images use antisemitic motifs or Jewish imagery alongside or on top of images of the virus, to suggest that the virus is somehow 'Jewish' or that Jews are behind the threat it poses.



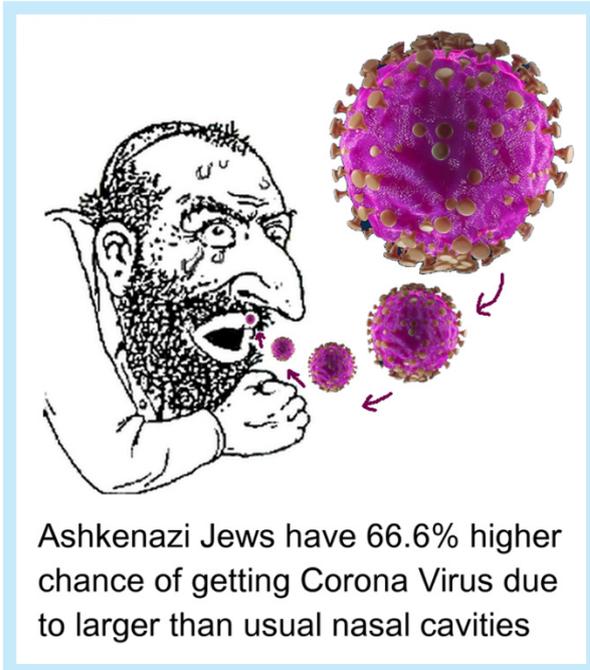
JEWES ARE THE PRIMARY SPREADERS OF THE VIRUS – ‘THE JEW FLU’

For centuries, antisemitic propagandists have depicted Jews as dirty, unclean and associated with disease. Genuine media stories about the relatively high prevalence of coronavirus in some Jewish communities, and early reports that British Jews have been disproportionately represented amongst those who have died from COVID-19, have encouraged antisemites to assume that Jews are the primary spreaders of the virus, either deliberately – to try to kill white people – or inadvertently. Having initially nicknamed coronavirus the ‘Wu Flu’ (referring to Wuhan as the geographical origin of the virus), some of these online haters have now dubbed it the ‘Jew Flu’, implying either that Jews are behind it, or that it is most closely associated with Jewish victims and spreaders.



CELEBRATING JEWISH DEATHS

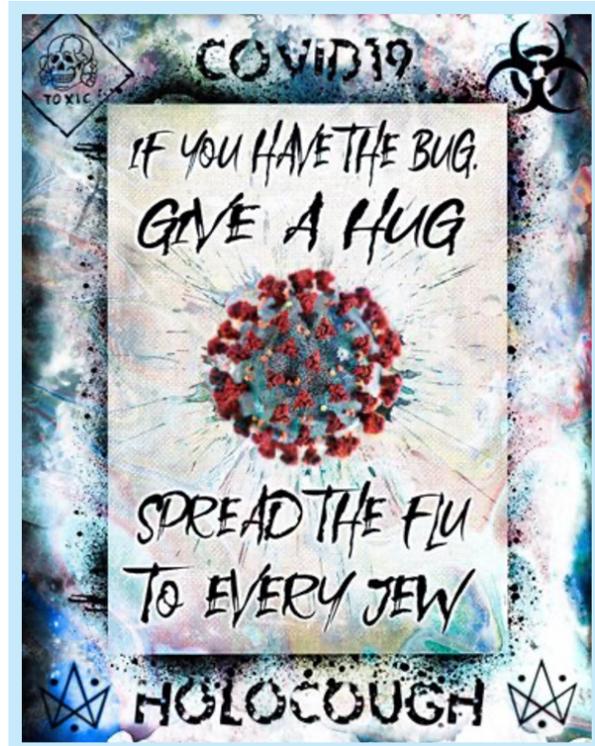
Amongst hardcore antisemites and extreme right wing circles, news that Jewish people are dying from COVID-19 in disproportionately high numbers has brought sickening celebration.



LET'S SPREAD IT TO THE JEWS – THE 'HOLOCOUGH'

The final station on this hateful journey is to try to use coronavirus to kill Jews. This is the logical conclusion of this antisemitism, with far right activists talking online about getting infected, either deliberately or accidentally, and then going to synagogues and other Jewish buildings to try to infect as many Jewish people as possible. They have even given it a depraved new name – the 'Holocough'.

These posts may (or may not) be intended as a sick joke, but they are posted on extremist sites like Gab and 4chan where genuine far right terrorists and their supporters gather. Terrorist murderers including Brenton Tarrant, who recently pleaded guilty to shooting 51 people dead at two mosques in Christchurch, Robert Bowers, who murdered 11 worshippers at the Tree of Life synagogue in Pittsburgh, and Stephan Balliett, who killed two people after trying to attack the synagogue in Halle, Germany, on Yom Kippur, all used these peripheral social media sites to post their intentions and livestream videos of their attacks. These sites are now full of posts and memes celebrating their murderous work. There is perhaps an instinctive reaction to dismiss extremist linkage of the virus with Jews as something so ridiculous as to be somehow irrelevant. In fact, all of the context and content of this CST research briefing shows that the opposite is the case. The harsh reality is that linking Jews to viruses, plagues, rats and bacteria is a deep-rooted historical phenomenon that repeats today in neo-Nazi propaganda, including within the online circles that foster and celebrate terrorist murderers. As with so many other antisemitic themes, such as Jews as child-killers, or Zionists controlling America, the charges are ridiculous: but they carry deadly consequences, just as they have always done.



CST'S MISSION

- To work at all times for the physical protection and defence of British Jews.
- To represent British Jews on issues of racism, antisemitism, extremism, policing and security.
- To promote good relations between British Jews and the rest of British society by working towards the elimination of racism, and antisemitism in particular.
- To facilitate Jewish life by protecting Jews from the dangers of antisemitism, and antisemitic terrorism in particular.
- To help those who are victims of antisemitic hatred, harassment or bias.
- To promote research into racism, antisemitism and extremism; and to use this research for the benefit of both the Jewish community and society in general.
- To speak responsibly at all times, without exaggeration or political favour, on antisemitism and associated issues.



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