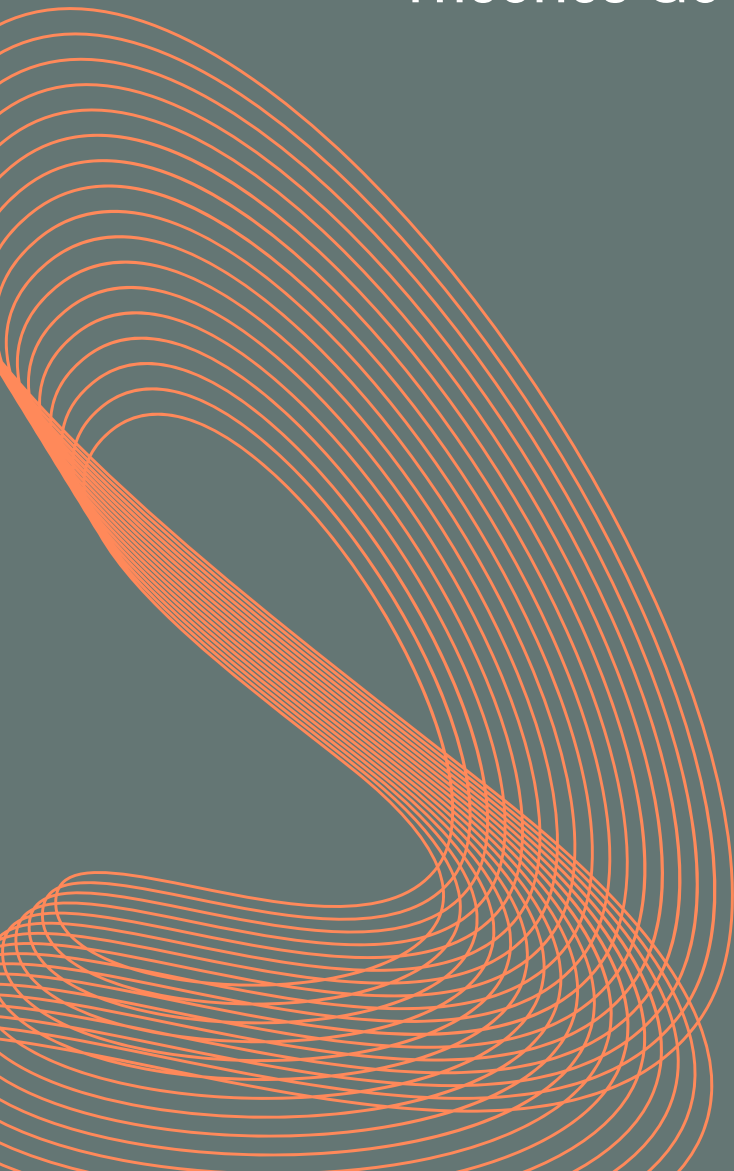


EXTREMISM FACT SHEET

Recycled Bigotry:
Antisemitic Conspiracy
Theories Go Mainstream



Far-right actors in the U.S. center historic antisemitic conspiracy theories as a key tactic in their campaign to mainstream hate and extremism. This approach gives new life to anti-Jewish tropes and threatens Jewish people, other minorities, and American democracy.


HISTORIC HATE RESURGENT: ANTISEMITIC CONSPIRACIES THRIVE IN THE MAINSTREAM

Today's antidemocratic rhetoric mainstreams antisemitic conspiracy theories, furthering anti-Jewish hate and other forms of bigotry in discourse and policy. Modern manifestations of antisemitic conspiracies and tropes are tailored to current social anxieties, increasing their resonance.

Mainstream far-right politicians, media personalities, and other influencers often promote diluted versions of antisemitic conspiracy theories that do not explicitly name Jews but use dog whistles and historical anti-Jewish tropes.

Then and now, extremists depict Jewish people as an enemy force intent on subverting the government and replacing or enslaving white Christians. Extremists deploy these conspiracies to further authoritarian policies and encourage violence against Jewish and other minority communities.

Reactionary movements across history have scapegoated Jews and promoted antisemitic conspiracy theories to fuel bigoted, violent, and genocidal campaigns. In the 1920s anti-Communists labeled Jews "Bolshevik" enemies around the world, just as fascists blamed Jews for the Great Depression in the 1930s, and segregationists in the 1960s claimed Jews were driving the American Civil Rights Movement.



Jewish Telegraphic Agency
DAILY NEWS BULLETIN
660 FIRST AVENUE • NEW YORK 16, N.Y.
Contents Copyright: Republication only by previous arrangement

Vol. XXVII - 42nd year Thursday, April 14, 1960 No. 72

HATRED OF JEWS STRONG AMONG EXTREME SEGREGATIONISTS IN SOUTH

NEW YORK, April 13. (JTA) -- "It is the Jew, rather than the Negro, who is the most hated target of the extremist wing of the segregationist movement" in the South, the New York Times reported today in an on-the-spot survey on the racial issue in the South conducted by Harrison E. Salisbury, member of the editorial staff of the newspaper. Mr. Salisbury emphasized that this is the opinion of a highly competent Jewish observer who has lived in the South most of his life.

Reproducing anti-Jewish election posters of retired Admiral John G. Crommelin, self-styled "white man's candidate" for the U.S. Senate, the Times correspondent established that "an open and active link between anti-Negro racism and anti-Jewish prejudice" is provided by such men as Crommelin. "He calls Jews the real enemy of the 'White Christian Alabamians' asserting that they control the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People," Mr. Salisbury wrote. He adds that "the Crommelin viewpoint is deplored even by many violent segregationists, but it seems to have wider acceptance than many Alabamians will publicly admit."

In 1960 the Jewish Telegraphic Agency reported on segregationists' belief that Jews controlled the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and were their "real enemy."

HOW EXTREMISM IS NORMALIZED: KEY MAINSTREAM CONSPIRACIES YOU MAY HAVE HEARD

The far-right spreads and normalizes anti-Jewish bigotry by using conspiracies that either directly label Jews as a threat, or do so more subtly through historical imagery and tropes rooted in antisemitism. Whether intentionally or not, purveyors of these conspiracies spread anti-Jewish bigotry. Three common antisemitic conspiracy theories are: George Soros as a "puppet master," the "great replacement," and "pedophile rings."

01

The "Great Replacement": This conspiracy claims Jews are orchestrating the replacement of white Christian Americans with non-white immigrants, Black people, or others who they think are inferior and "easier to control." Today's versions avoid referencing race and religion explicitly, instead emphasizing culture, immigration status, or political power. For example, in 2022 Representative Marjorie Taylor Greene told supporters that immigrants "are replacing your culture."

02

George Soros as a "Puppet Master": This conspiracy draws from the 19th century antisemitic text, the Protocols of the Elders of Zion to depict Jews as an all-powerful, global cabal of "puppet masters" who secretly engineer world events. Today's versions often name Jewish elites, George Soros,¹ or the Rothschilds as antagonists, or use more general terms like "globalists" and "cultural Marxists." For example, a Fox News segment in 2023 claimed George Soros quietly supports immigrant rights organizations to eradicate national borders.

03

"Pedophile Rings": This conspiracy suggests a Jewish cabal orchestrates a pedophile ring to prey on Christian children. It is rooted in the antisemitic Blood Libel trope and in recent years was mainstreamed by the QAnon conspiracy movement.² The far right evokes this conspiracy when suggesting LGBTQ+ communities are coordinated networks that "groom" children.



(Left) In 2017, white supremacists marched in Charlottesville, Virginia, chanting "Jews will not replace us" (Getty Images). (Right) In 2021, Congressman Brian Babin told far-right news channel Newsmax that Democrats were orchestrating the "great replacement" with immigrants.

EXTREMIST NETWORKS: ANTISEMITIC CONSPIRACIES ANIMATE OTHER EXTREMISTS

Antisemitic conspiracy theories provide the foundation for the most extreme elements of the broader antidemocratic far right.³ These narratives blame Jewish people for economic, social, and political grievances, and provide the ideological justification for white supremacist, xenophobic, and male supremacist movements.

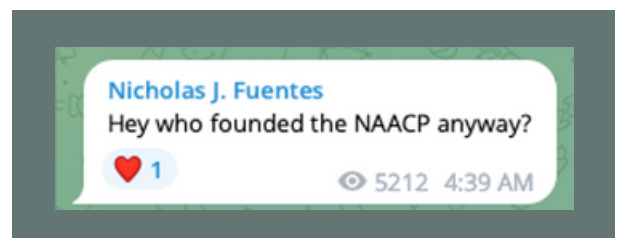
White Supremacists: White supremacists can reconcile their conflicting beliefs—that white people are inherently superior to minorities yet face an existential threat from them—if they believe conspiracies claiming Jews control and weaponize other minorities against them. For example, in 2019, influential white supremacist Nick Fuentes, whose goal is to mainstream white Christian Nationalism, suggested that Jewish people founded the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People⁴ (NAACP) to control African Americans.

Male Supremacists: Male supremacists, including female supporters, often claim LGBTQ+ advocates are part of a plot to control cisgender Christian men; suggestions that evoke antisemitic conspiracies. Moms For Liberty (MFL), a leading organization in the attack on LGBTQ+ rights in schools, frequently leverages antisemitic and conspiratorial dog whistles to slander LGBTQ+, antiracist, and other civil rights advocates. At an MFL event in 2021, a speaker described political opponents as a “globalist” threat, while at another in 2023, former Fox Nation host Lara Logan claimed the Rothschild family financed the original opposition.

Election Deniers: Many leaders of the election denial movement are part of QAnon networks and leverage adherents’ beliefs in pedophile rings and other antisemitic tropes to undermine elections and democratic institutions. For example, in 2022 a leading QAnon influencer founded an organization dedicated to supporting election deniers running for Secretary of State.



Former Fox News host Tucker Carlson released an original film in 2022, depicting George Soros as a global conspirator targeting western civilization.



This 2019 Telegram post from white supremacist Nick Fuentes evokes the antisemitic trope that African Americans are controlled by Jews.

THE HARMFUL IMPACT OF ANTISEMITIC CONSPIRACIES IN YOUR COMMUNITY

The growth and normalization of antisemitic tropes and conspiracies harms all of our communities, from increased hate in our neighborhoods and schools, to discriminatory legislation. It drives bigoted policies, increases antisemitic sentiment, regularly inspires violence, and undermines our democracy.

Drives Bigoted Policies: Antisemitic conspiracies and tropes enhance support for discriminatory policies that institutionalize hate at federal, state, and local levels. For instance, between 2021 and June 2023, state legislators introduced nearly 80 bills that limit educational content about racism and the history of America's minority communities. In one case, a school district administrator informed teachers that a new law would require them to teach "opposing" perspectives on the Holocaust.

Increases Antisemitic Sentiment: Antisemitism in the U.S. is widespread and it is on the rise. Polling conducted in 2022 revealed that 85 percent of Americans agree with at least one antisemitic trope, which is an increase from previous polling. It also found that younger Americans are equally likely to subscribe to anti-Jewish tropes as are older Americans.

Inspires Hate-Fueled Attacks: Antisemitic incidents in the U.S. reached record-breaking levels in 2022, averaging ten a day. This trend follows white supremacist terrorist attacks targeting Jews in Poway, California, in 2018, and Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, in 2019. At the same time, antisemitic conspiracy theories fueled white supremacist attacks against other communities, including immigrants in El Paso, Texas, in 2019, and the Black community in Buffalo, New York, in 2022.

Undermines Democracy: Antisemitic conspiracy theories are inherently antidemocratic and drive election deniers and other antidemocratic actors. For instance, the "great replacement" conspiracy undermines confidence in elections by suggesting that a cabal of elites controls the electoral system. Polling shows that three quarters of Americans who believe in the "great replacement" conspiracy also deny the legitimacy of the 2020 presidential election.



A sign outside the Tree of Life memorial in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, after a white supremacist motivated by antisemitic conspiracy theories attacked a synagogue killing 11 people (Associated Press).



A woman protests against rising antisemitism in New York City in January, 2020 (C. Penler/Shutterstock).

TAKE ACTION: HOW YOU CAN RESPOND TO ANTISEMITISM

Recognize that Protecting Democracy and All Communities' Safety Requires Challenging Antisemitism: Antisemitism is often the harbinger of attacks on other minority groups and attacks on democratic principles. We must name this hate when we see it—both overt and subtle references—and refuse to let its purveyors normalize anti-Jewish bigotry. In May 2023, the Biden Administration released the first-ever National Strategy to Counter Antisemitism along with specific initiatives to build “cross-community solidarity,” but we must expand on that at the state and local levels.

Get Involved in Your Community: A vibrant democracy reflects all its citizens and requires your participation. At the local level that means getting involved with school boards, city councils, town halls, and other elements of government such as elections administration. Express solidarity with communities that are under attack and join events that uplift their voices. For more ideas, see these recommendations from the American Jewish Committee for countering antisemitism in your community.

Support Inclusive Policies and Reject Discriminatory Policies: Advocate for policies that support Jewish communities and other communities targeted by antisemitic conspiracy theories. For example, support campaigns to promote Holocaust education and challenge attempts to dismantle inclusive curricula in schools.

ABOUT HUMAN RIGHTS FIRST

We work to create a just world in which every person's intrinsic human rights are respected and protected, to build societies that value and invest in all their people. To reach that goal demands assisting victims of injustice, bringing perpetrators of abuse to justice, and building institutions that ensure universal rights.

CONTACT US

To learn more about our work, please visit humanrightsfirst.org or email us: ExtremismInfo@humanrightsfirst.org.

ENDNOTES

1. Human Rights First receives funds from over thirty institutions, including the Open Society Foundation, founded by George Soros.
2. QAnon or “Q” is a conspiratorial extremist movement that originally focused on the belief that former President Trump and the U.S. military are secretly planning a war against an elite cabal of satanic pedophiles who have corrupted every level of government and that only the U.S. military can save the country.
3. The antidemocratic far-right extremist movement is an umbrella term for the movement working to transform America's multiracial, pluralistic, democratic system into one that is largely authoritarian and organized hierarchically according to race, ethnicity, religion, sex, and/or culture. This includes but is not limited to the xenophobic and anti-immigrant movement, the election denial movement, the male supremacist movement, and the white supremacist movement.
4. “Christian nationalists” do not refer to all white theologically conservative Christian groups. Christian nationalism is a political theology that coopts Christian narratives and symbolism.