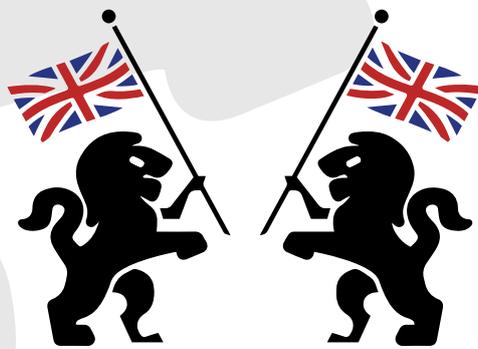


Antisemitism and the Corona Virus

April 2020



THE OFFICE OF HM GOVERNMENT'S
INDEPENDENT ADVISER ON ANTISEMITISM



Executive Summary

- Lord Mann, The Government's Independent Adviser on Antisemitism and his office are actively monitoring the rise in levels of antisemitism as a result of the Corona Virus.
- An escalation of antisemitism in the United Kingdom arising from the pandemic is not currently anticipated but vigilance will be required as the economic impact of Covid 19 continues to hit individuals and communities.
- A sudden violent wave of antisemitism should not be discounted. It will be critical to observe online warning signs which may only provide a narrow window for the preparation of a response.
- Lord Mann is confident that current key position holders, both at state level and within the Jewish community, are sufficiently expert in recognising these early warning signs. Whilst no changes to current government activities are recommended at this time, vigilance and high levels of preparedness for a rapid response are essential.

Introduction

As the economic impact of the Coronavirus pandemic continues, levels of antisemitism also rise. There are examples from across the world (within the United Kingdom, in the United States, Turkey, Iran and beyond^{1,2}) of a rise in age-old antisemitic conspiracy theories that portray Jews as a disease or as a virus. This is not the first time that Jews have been blamed for causing a plague.³

Since the outbreak of Covid 19, images have circulated depicting Jewish people as the 'real' virus, portraying Jews as carriers or spreaders of the disease, suggesting that, whether fake or real, Covid 19 has been created by Jews for their own profit and encouraging people to give Jews the Coronavirus.⁴

Extensive research has been carried out by both the Community Security Trust⁵ (CST) and the Anti-Defamation League⁶ (ADL) looking at the impact of the pandemic on the levels of antisemitism. Both documents (enclosed) offer narratives and important examples of the language and tropes being employed.^{7,8} Whilst these images are often spread across alt-right extremist platforms some have crossed onto mainstream social media platforms.

This briefing highlights signs of an international increase in antisemitic activity. The CST report⁹ notes "that antisemitism from within the United States of America was "influencing extremist narratives in the United Kingdom" and remarked on "anti-Chinese xenophobia merging with anti-Jewish conspiracy theories".¹⁰

Antisemitism and Corona Virus in the United Kingdom



Research carried out by anti-racism campaigners Hope Not Hate¹¹ has found that UK far-right groups have been using the lockdown measures to help promote anti-government narratives, notably to target the police and NHS workers.¹² This includes reports that notable YouTube influencers have released video collages, including “viral dance videos by police and health care workers, in an attempt to undermine their professionalism.”¹³ One such YouTube influencer, Carl Benjamin, was a former UKIP candidate for the European elections, and well known for his use of racist comments and antisemitic tropes in his YouTube videos.^{14 15}

Further research found a rise in the use of conspiracy theories linking 5G internet to the Corona Virus pandemic. Facebook groups discussing these conspiracies and pushing misinformation also espouse antisemitic tropes and anti-government conspiracies.¹⁶ Further information is available from Hope Note Hate: <https://www.hopenothate.org.uk/2020/04/13/anti-5g-conspiracy-theories-are-dangerous-and-spreading-fast/>

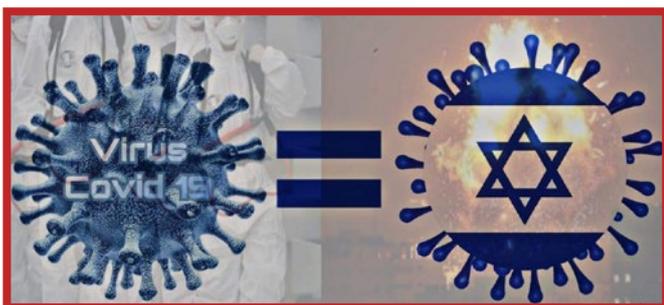
Antisemitism on Israel’s Holocaust Remembrance Day

On 21st April 2020, Jewish Communities worldwide commemorated Yom HaShoah, Israel’s Holocaust Remembrance Day.

An online campaign centred on the day and using the hashtag #Covid48 started trending, encouraged by activists on Palestinian social media outlets and on Twitter.

Images and tweets were shared through the hashtag seeking to spread antisemitic conspiracy theories depicting Israel and Jewish people as the Covid 19 Virus.

Examples of the images and individual tweets:

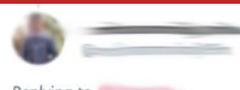




Replying to [redacted]

The deceased due to the corona is buried without farewell, this is the case of the Palestinian martyrs who are killed by the Israeli occupation and buried in number cemeteries.

#Covid48



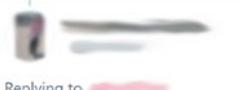
Replying to [redacted]

Amnesty International has been fighting since 1961 to end human rights violations. What about Palestinian prisoners in the Israeli occupation jails who face a policy of deliberate medical neglect and torture in the light of Corona virus epidemic?

#Covid48



3:07 pm - 20 Apr 2020 - Twitter for Android



Replying to [redacted]

#Covid48



The Israeli occupation is more dangerous than corona virus .

#Covid48



#Covid48



11:09 am - 21 Apr 2020 - Twitter Web App



Palestinian people are facing both the Israeli occupation and Covid19.

#Covid48 #Act4Palestine #corona



1 2



Antisemitism and Corona Virus in the United States of America

Antisemitic conspiracies have been used on posters at rallies around the United States where protesters have been demonstrating against government restrictions and for the reopening of the Country.

Far-right groups and individuals have joined protests in Washington, Idaho and Tennessee, Texas Michigan, Nevada, and Colorado.¹⁷ On the 20th April, the ADL reported that:

- “In Idaho, anti-government extremist Ammon Bundy, best known for his role in the 2016 Malheur standoff, has held multiple indoor public meetings in March and April in defiance of state-wide stay-at-home orders.”¹⁸
- “On April 19, Matt Marshall, a leader of the Three Percenters, a wing of the anti-government militia movement, helped organize a rally in Olympia, Washington. The event was advertised by the Oath Keepers, another anti-government organization.”¹⁹
- “Proud Boys, a far-right hate group, joined or held protests in Michigan, Nevada, Colorado, Washington and Florida.”²⁰
- “The Michigan Liberty Militia participated in the April 15 protest in Lansing, Michigan.”²¹
- “In Austin, Texas, conspiracy theorist Alex Jones joined a rally hosted by fellow InfoWars host Owen Shroyer.”²²

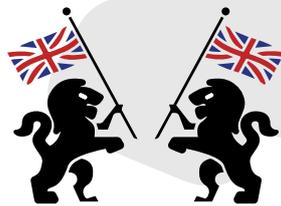


On the 19th April, protesters in Ohio (pictured above) held up antisemitic signs claiming that Jews were ‘the real plague’ and depicting them as rats.²³ “The Center on Extremism believes one of the men to be a member of the neo-Nazi National Socialist Movement.”²⁴

Endnotes



- 1 <https://fathomjournal.org/covid-19-blaming-the-jews-for-the-plague-again/>
- 2 https://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/entry/anti-semitism-jews-coronavirus_uk_5ea2e98cc5b6d376358e31c1
- 3 <https://www.jpost.com/jerusalem-report/plagues-jews-and-fake-news-623381>
- 4 <https://cst.org.uk/data/file/d/9/Coronavirus%20and%20the%20plague%20of%20antisemitism.1586276450.pdf>
- 5 <https://cst.org.uk/>
- 6 <https://www.adl.org/>
- 7 <https://cst.org.uk/data/file/d/9/Coronavirus%20and%20the%20plague%20of%20antisemitism.1586276450.pdf>
- 8 <https://www.adl.org/blog/coronavirus-crisis-elevates-antisemitic-racist-tropes>
- 9 <https://cst.org.uk/data/file/d/9/Coronavirus%20and%20the%20plague%20of%20antisemitism.1586276450.pdf>
- 10 <https://www.thejc.com/news/uk-news/cst-report-notes-chilling-spread-of-antisemitic-conspiracy-theories-linked-to-coronavirus-online-1.498956>
- 11 <https://www.hopenothate.org.uk/>
- 12 <https://www.hopenothate.org.uk/2020/04/17/covid-19-the-far-right-weekly-round-up-3/>
- 13 <https://www.hopenothate.org.uk/2020/04/17/covid-19-the-far-right-weekly-round-up-3/>
- 14 <https://jewishnews.timesofisrael.com/ukip-candidate-im-sorry-about-the-holocaust-but-i-dont-give-a-s/>
- 15 <https://www.thejc.com/news/uk-news/ukip-candidate-carl-benjamin-accused-jewish-people-of-identity-politics-over-the-holocaust-1.483446>
- 16 <https://www.hopenothate.org.uk/2020/04/13/anti-5g-conspiracy-theories-are-dangerous-and-spreading-fast/>
- 17 <https://www.adl.org/blog/extremists-involved-in-nationwide-protests-against-coronavirus-restrictions>
- 18 <https://www.adl.org/blog/extremists-involved-in-nationwide-protests-against-coronavirus-restrictions>
- 19 <https://www.adl.org/blog/extremists-involved-in-nationwide-protests-against-coronavirus-restrictions>
- 20 <https://www.adl.org/blog/extremists-involved-in-nationwide-protests-against-coronavirus-restrictions>
- 21 <https://www.adl.org/blog/extremists-involved-in-nationwide-protests-against-coronavirus-restrictions>
- 22 <https://www.adl.org/blog/extremists-involved-in-nationwide-protests-against-coronavirus-restrictions>
- 23 https://twitter.com/ADL_Cleveland/status/1251674063996624897?s=20
- 24 <https://www.adl.org/blog/extremists-involved-in-nationwide-protests-against-coronavirus-restrictions>



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