

# Antisemitic Tropes Chart

## Note to Teacher:

Please do not print out and distribute this chart or give students unmonitored access to it, as it contains images and language that could cause harm out of this specific context. We recommend pairing the Antisemitic Tropes Chart with the [Explainer on Antisemitism and Its Impacts](#).

**Antisemitic Tropes** are widely shared ideas, stereotypes, phrases, images or conspiracy narratives that falsely blame, demonize, or otherwise disparage Jews.

Definitions and Origins of Tropes	Contemporary Versions
<p><b>Blood Libel:</b> a false accusation dating back to the Middle Ages that Jews murder non-Jews (particularly children) to use their blood in rituals, such as baking matzah bread for Passover.</p> <p>In the modern era, this trope has translated into Jews being falsely accused for missing or murdered children and has led to persecution, violent assaults, destruction of property and even massacres of innocent Jews.<sup>1</sup> Describing Jews as demonic, devilish, or blood-thirsty is part of this trope.</p>	<p>Some people who believe in the QAnon conspiracy have shown up to various protests holding signs about adrenochrome, a chemical compound formed by the oxidation of adrenaline. QAnon promotes the myth that secret Jewish societies (cabals) extract adrenochrome from the blood of child victims and ingest it to extend their lives.<sup>2</sup></p>  <p>Getty Images / Stephen Maturen / Stringer</p>
<p><b>Global Domination/Power:</b> a false conspiracy narrative that Jews are global puppet masters who secretly control the media, the economy and powerful governments.<sup>3</sup></p> <p>This conspiracy originated in an early twentieth-century publication entitled <i>The Protocols of the Learned Elders of Zion</i>, which claimed to document the secret meeting of powerful Jews who were conspiring to take over the world. A meeting like this never happened. In the 1920s, American industrialist Henry Ford brought <i>The Protocols</i> to the US, printed it first as a series of articles in his newspaper, and then in its entirety. It became the second-highest selling book beneath the Christian bible during that time. The Protocols became widely published, translated into 16 languages, and played a role in Nazi ideology.<sup>4</sup> It still circulates today in white supremacist groups.</p> <p>Terms like “Globalists,” “The Cosmopolitan or Academic Elite,” “Cabal” and “The Rothschilds” are antisemitic dog whistles associated with this trope.</p>	 <p>Michael Kemp / Alamy Stock Photo</p> <p>A temporary mural in London relies upon stereotypes of Jews to express the theme that a Jewish cabal operates the world's economic levers and profits off the suffering of the poor.</p>  <p>a katz / Shutterstock</p> <p>Messages such as this one held up by a man in New York City's financial district refer to the false conspiracy narrative that Jews secretly control entire countries.</p>

<sup>1</sup> “Blood Libel,” American Jewish Committee.

<sup>2</sup> Julia Carrie Wong, “QAnon explained: the antisemitic conspiracy theory gaining traction around the world,” *The Guardian*, August 25, 2021

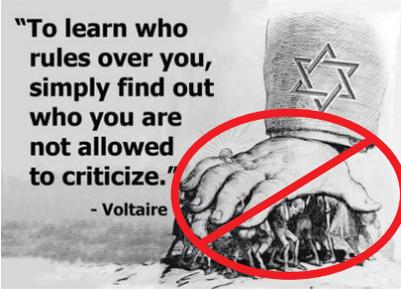
<sup>3</sup> “Control,” American Jewish Committee.

<sup>4</sup> “Power,” American Jewish Committee.

Definitions and Origins of Tropes	Contemporary Versions
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**Definitions and Origins of Tropes**

**Contemporary Versions**



**“To learn who rules over you, simply find out who you are not allowed to criticize.”**  
- Voltaire

This quote is falsely attributed to Enlightenment-era thinker Voltaire. Its origins are a 1993 radio broadcast by a self-described white supremacist and Holocaust denier.<sup>5</sup>

**Great Replacement Theory:** an untrue conspiracy narrative originating in early-twentieth-century French nationalism, but adopted and modified by the American white nationalist movement, which falsely accuses Jews of working to increase the number of non-white people who immigrate to the United States.

Those who promote this false claim believe Jews secretly control policies that allow non-white immigrants into the US as part of a Jewish plan to outnumber and ultimately destroy the white race.<sup>6</sup>



Getty / Anadolu Agency

**At the 2017 Unite the Right rally in Charlottesville, Virginia, white nationalists chanted “Jews will not replace us.”**

**Video:** Charlottesville: Race and Terror (VICE News Tonight) 00:00-1:30

**Disease/Filth:** the false accusation that Jews are both diseased and spreaders of disease

In the fourteenth century, during the Bubonic plague, Jews were falsely blamed for intentionally spreading the disease through common drinking wells, which led to the murder of thousands of innocent Jews. Hitler referred to Jews as “vermin” and accused them of spreading bacteria in his manifesto *Mein Kampf*. During the COVID-19 pandemic, Jews have been accused of both intentionally spreading COVID and profiting off the vaccine.<sup>7</sup>

**A stereotypical depiction of a Jewish person with grotesque, exaggerated features is employed to convey the Disease/Filth conspiracy theory that Jews infected with COVID-19 are intentionally spreading the SARS-CoV-2 virus.**



**Flyers like this one have blanketed multiple cities across the US and Canada. It falsely claims the antisemitic conspiracy narrative that Jews control government responses to the COVID-19 pandemic in order to profit off of the vaccine and manipulate the disease for their own purposes.**



5 Sophia Tulp, “US congressman shares neo-Nazi’s quote wrongly attributed to Voltaire,” Associated Press, January 31, 2021.  
 6 “The Great Replacement:” An Explainer,” Anti-Defamation League.  
 7 “Poisoning the Well,” American Jewish Committee.

## Definitions and Origins of Tropes

**Deicide:** the myth that Jews are responsible for the crucifixion of Jesus based on portrayals of Jesus' trial in the New Testament of the Christian bible.

The Catholic Church under Pope Paul IV discredited this accusation in a 1964 declaration.<sup>8</sup> Though the Romans were squarely in power and responsible for the death of Jesus, the myth persists and is used to justify anti-Jewish hatred and Jewish suffering.

## Contemporary Versions



An antisemitic group employs the Deicide trope at a rally.

Richard Levine / Alamy Stock Photo

**Wealth/Greed:** the false beliefs that all Jews are rich, inherently good with money, stingy, cheap, hoarding, selfish, or obsessed with gaining more wealth.

This stereotype originated in the Middle Ages, when rigid restrictions were placed on Jewish occupations. Money lending and tax collection, forbidden jobs for Christians, were among the few occupations available to Jews. Christian leaders would often recruit Jews for these roles, then use them as scapegoats when lower class Christians suffered from poverty.<sup>9</sup>



Depictions such as the one above employs multiple antisemitic tropes and stereotypes (grotesque facial features, hands clasped in a gesture of greed, traditional Jewish names and Yiddish lingo) to spread the harmful narrative that Jews are constantly scheming over ways to manipulate the financial market in order to gain more wealth.

**Holocaust Denial/Distortion:** the false claim that the Holocaust did not actually happen or the insistence that the magnitude of Jewish suffering and death during the Holocaust has been grossly exaggerated.

Holocaust distortion also includes trivialization—incorporating aspects of the Holocaust (e.g., the term "Nazis" and Star of David armbands) in modern contexts by non-Jewish groups who claim they are being persecuted in similar ways and want to draw attention to their own suffering. Misusing these symbols and terms in a different context is offensive because it minimizes the magnitude of genocide and the specific pain and suffering of Jews.



Thad Alton / Kansas Reflector

Kansas residents protesting a COVID-19 vaccine mandate.

<sup>8</sup> "Deicide," American Jewish Committee.

<sup>9</sup> "Greed," American Jewish Committee

## Definitions and Origins of Tropes

**Dual Loyalty:** an implied or direct accusation that Jews in the diaspora (Jews who live outside of Israel) are ultimately more loyal to Israel or a secret Jewish cabal than the country in which they have citizenship.

This false trope has been employed as long as Jews have lived beyond the land of Israel, but it became popularized through the “stab-in-the-back myth” after WWI, when German Jews were falsely blamed for betraying German soldiers and contributing to Germany’s defeat.<sup>10</sup> The Soviet Union widely employed this trope in anti-Zionist propaganda that accused Russian Jews of not only being more loyal to Israel than the Soviet Union, but also of having an allegiance to Nazi fascism.<sup>11</sup> Today, we see this trope invoked on college campuses when Jewish students are asked to denounce or delegitimize Israel.

## Contemporary Versions



Here, the same exaggerated features are found on a character dressed in Hasidic Jewish attire, the Nazi-era Star of David badge with the German word for Jew affixed to his jacket. The man is stealing money from a poor American non-Jewish family (representing federal aid programs) to give to Israel, a false conspiracy narrative that employs the Dual Loyalty trope.

<sup>10</sup> "Dual Loyalty," American Jewish Committee.

<sup>11</sup> "Contemporary Anti-Zionism's Connections to Soviet Propaganda," Center for Antisemitism Research, ADL, February 22, 2023.