



Contemporary Antisemitism Case Studies

Directions: For each case study, 1) begin by reading the short description and viewing and discussing the accompanying image using the questions below.



Case Study One: Unite The Right Rally

On August 11 and 12, 2017, members of various right-wing organizations (white nationalists, neo-Nazis, neo-Confederates, and more) gathered in Charlottesville, Virginia in opposition to the proposed removal of a Confederate monument. The rally turned violent with street fights breaking out and, then, lethal when a self-proclaimed white supremacist drove his car into a group of counter-protesters, injuring thirty-five people and killing one woman.



“Jews will not replace us!”

This chant was a reference to the “Great Replacement Theory” that Jews pass as white people but are biologically different from white people and, also, that Jews are responsible for bringing immigrants into the country, making the country more diverse and less white.

In your own words, summarize the conspiracy theory in the case study.

What emotions does this case study raise for you? Why?

Why is this an example of a “shape-shifting conspiracy theory”?



Case Study Two: Tree of Life Synagogue Shooting

On October 27, 2018, a shooter killed eleven Jewish worshippers and wounded six more when he attacked the Tree of Life Synagogue in the Squirrel Hill neighborhood of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. This was the deadliest attack on Jews in the history of the United States.



Prior to the shooting on social media, the perpetrator wrote:

“HIAS [Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society] likes to bring invaders in that kill our people. I can’t sit by and watch my people get slaughtered.”

This post was a reference to the “Great Replacement Theory” that, that Jews are responsible for bringing immigrants into the country, making the country more diverse and less white.

In your own words, summarize the conspiracy theory in the case study.

What emotions does this case study raise for you? Why?

Why is this an example of a “shape-shifting conspiracy theory”?



Case Study Three: Covid-19 Pandemic

The Goyim Defense League (goy is a Yiddish term for non-Jewish) was founded in 2018 and has fueled antisemitic conspiracies, including the belief that Jews are responsible for the Transatlantic slave trade, the September 11, 2001 attacks, and that Jews control global finance and media. In 2021, during the Covid-19 Pandemic, this organization spread the conspiracy that the global pandemic was a Jewish conspiracy.



In your own words, summarize the conspiracy theory in the case study.

What emotions does this case study raise for you? Why?

Why is this an example of a “shape-shifting conspiracy theory”?