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## Antisemitic Rhetoric from Influential Individuals on Social Media during the Recent Rise of Jewish Hate in the United States of America

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# **Antisemitic Rhetoric from Influential Individuals on Social Media during the Recent Rise of Jewish Hate in the United States of America**

A thesis submitted in partial satisfaction  
of the requirements of the University Honors Program  
of Loyola Marymount University

by

**Jimmy Warshawsky**

**May 3, 2023**

**Antisemitic Rhetoric from Influential Individuals on Social Media during the Recent Rise  
of Jewish Hate in the United States of America**

Jimmy Warshawsky

CMST 4500: Media Studies Capstone

Dr. Jason Jarvis

May 3, 2023

## **Antisemitic Rhetoric from Influential Individuals on Social Media during the Recent Rise of Jewish Hate in the United States of America**

For a brief period towards the end of 2022 and the beginning of 2023, it seemed like every day I would wake up to new news that someone, almost always someone with an extremely large following, had said something antisemitic. I don't remember it being like this before. When you grow up going to Passover seders and Yom Kippur services and Rosh Hashanah celebrations, you hear countless stories about how much suffering and hatred the Jewish people have lived through in their 3,000-year history, but I never really experienced that hate for myself. Quite frankly, I can only remember one or two comments from my entire childhood that struck me as antisemitic. I knew that the Jews had been persecuted for centuries, but it seemed like all that was over. It was in the past. It wasn't something that would ever truly affect me in my lifetime. I was very wrong.

In college, I realized that antisemitism was far from over. I began hearing stories from my family members and friends about how they were teased, insulted, or even physically harmed because of their Jewish identity. When I started to travel more to different parts of the country and the world, I was warned to keep my Jewishness to myself and to never wear my *chai* necklace in public in some of these places. I began seeing more and more attacks on the Jewish community online, both verbally and physically. Some of them weren't far away at all, though. Some of them felt like they were right in my backyard. It felt like all of a sudden America had a president that not only associated with hateful people and known antisemites, but perpetrated antisemitic ideas and conspiracies himself left and right. I'm not sure when it stopped surprising

me to hear news that a politician or celebrity said something wildly hateful toward Jewish people, but it really doesn't surprise me anymore.

A large portion of this content comes directly from these people to our eyes and ears through social media. Between October of 2022 and March of 2023, I noticed a particular increase in the amount of these posts that I was seeing. This paper serves to analyze these posts from four notable influencers who have come under immense fire for their antisemitism, either directly or indirectly. The influencers are Kanye West, a rapper who now goes by the name of Ye, Kyrie Irving, a star NBA basketball player, Nick Fuentes, a young political commentator, and Donald Trump, the former president of the United States of America. There has been a countless amount of antisemitism that has occurred outside of this time period, from other people, and from these people but outside of direct social media, but this paper will be focusing directly on the Twitter, Instagram, and Truth Social posts from West, Irving, Fuentes, and Trump between October 2022 and March 2023. There are multiple reasons for these selections. This time period spans the length of Kanye West's antisemitic outbursts, beginning with the posted screenshots of his conversations with Sean "Diddy" Combs and ending with his very interesting apology post after he watched Jonah Hill in *21 Jump Street*. These four people were chosen because they each have very big followings, play a very different role in this country, and have posted antisemitic messages in the chosen time period, and they are all connected to each other in various ways. I am focusing solely on the social media posts of these individuals, rather than including news media clips, press statements, etc. because social media is one of the largest

contributors to this recent rise in antisemitism, in addition to keeping the scope of this research project narrow.

In this paper, I will first discuss the history of antisemitism in America to give important and relevant context to my study. I will then explain the recent rise in antisemitism and address viewpoints from various experts and contributors on what, why, and how this is happening. I'll go over each of the selected influencers' connections with antisemitism and how the public has reacted to them. To finish the literature review, I'll discuss previous research on antisemitism and hate on social media and in the recent rise. I'll identify the different forms of antisemitism and their distinctions from each other and give examples as to when these have been used in times outside of my study. I'll then go through my methods for this study, which include identification and coding of the set of posts and testing with generative artificial intelligence. I'll conclude by presenting my results, discussing them, and noting the limitations of this paper and need for future research. The purpose of this study is to discover what specific antisemitic tropes these influencers have been using in their rhetoric and to determine the severity and explicitness of their posts. As a young Jewish person living in America, I find it is important to acknowledge my identity and implicit bias in dealing with such a sensitive topic that affects me deeply, but I will attempt to be as unbiased as possible in this study.

### **Literature Review**

To begin the body of this paper, I am going to provide context on the topic that I have been studying this semester for this research paper, American antisemitism, particularly American Antisemitism from influential people on social media. The Jewish people have faced

persecution in almost every part of the world for thousands of years, whether you place the start date in biblical times with Jewish enslavement in Egypt, or in the first few hundred years of the Common Era. Since then, Jews have been mistreated, scapegoated, expelled, and slaughtered in hideous ways, primarily in Europe. In fact, the reason that Jews came to America in the first place was to get away from the horrors they were facing in Europe and beyond. The Anti-Defamation League (ADL) is a global NGO based in the United States that specializes in civil rights law and fighting antisemitism. They have an extensive database of texts and research that I'll be drawing on in multiple sections of this paper. In their guide to American antisemitism, they write "The history of Jews in America is a history of the ongoing negotiation between hard-won legal freedoms and the lingering social effects of racial and religious prejudice as it persists and reignites in this country" (ADL, n.d.) While the first Jews to immigrate to America didn't find full religious tolerance as they might have expected, by 1740, less than a hundred years after they first landed in New Amsterdam in 1654 after fleeing from Brazil, naturalization laws included Jewish residents, which offered them a legal status that wouldn't have been possible in Europe for another half century (ADL, n.d.). In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, European Jews continued to immigrate to the United States in the hopes of escaping antisemitism and finding economic opportunity.

### **Early American Antisemitism**

Even though they largely found freedom here, "as outsiders bearing a history of condemnation by Christianity and by emergent racial science, Jews still found themselves scapegoated in America" (ADL, n.d.). In Civil War times, both sides of the fight made baseless

accusations that Jewish people were aiding the other side. After more than two million Jews from Eastern Europe immigrated to America between 1881 and 1914, including members of my family, “some Americans balked at the Jewish minority and resented their presence in urban life, expressing discomfort about Jewish immigrants’ foreign mannerisms, customs and their pronounced drive to succeed in America” (ADL, n.d.). It’s also around this time that I found the first accounts of a conspiracy in this country that, as I’ll discuss later in this paper, is still being widely distributed today. When the economy took a hit in the late 1800s, agrarian populists of the South and Midwest seized on conspiracy theories, claiming that urban Jews were exploiting markets and the federal government as a whole” and “some such populists condemned Jews as a national threat, as an entire corrupt class of international financiers who owned the banks and ruined small family farms by promoting the gold standard” (ADL, n.d.). While much of this hatred occurred on the fringes of society, Jewish people also faced antisemitism in the mainstream, including “educational quotas [at universities], discrimination in the professional sphere, restriction from residential and recreational communities and continued acts of outright physical violence” (ADL, n.d.).

Jewish people have always faced a unique challenge in navigating their identity. What I’ve gathered throughout my lifetime is that everyone views it a little differently. Some think of Jewishness as a race or an ethnicity, while to others it is purely a religion. Others view it as closer to a nationality, which can create a lot of tension for Jewish Americans. I’ll write further on these issues and how they relate to antisemitism at later points in this paper. Eric L. Goldstein (2006), in *The Price of Whiteness: Jews, Race, and American Identity*, wrote “The question of whether Jews ought to fashion themselves as a race or merely a religious denomination became



one of the most hotly debated issues of early-20th-century Jewish communal discourse.” Many Jewish people felt that they deserved racial protections, not only religious ones which they had been granted previously. While many Jews could and did assimilate into whiteness, it only happened sometimes, and always in a racist system (ADL, n.d.).

### **The Original Influencers**

One hundred years before Donald Trump took office primarily by way of using media to spread his controversial ideas and mobilize his supporters, the popularity of mass media was growing rapidly with the invention of the radio and the public’s fixation on press. This heavily influenced the social climate in the United States. Using mass media, “some of the most influential people in the country used their national platforms to stoke hatred and fear of Jews in the interwar years” (ADL, n.d.). One of these people was Henry Ford, one of the most well-known and praised businessmen of all time. Zach Beauchamp (2022), senior correspondent for Vox, writes that “he was also a hardcore antisemite, blaming Jews for everything from World War I to an alleged decline in the quality of candy bars.” He purchased his hometown newspaper, the Dearborn Independent, and used it to publish and promote antisemitic conspiracy theories in 91 consecutive issues (ADL, n.d.). Because he required his Ford Motors dealers to distribute the paper, it became the second-largest newspaper in the country and his hatred reached a massive number of people. Ford drew from “*The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, an infamous Russian forgery that purported to be records of the Jewish conspiracy’s worldwide activities” and “he reprinted much of this content in his four-volume *The International Jew*, which saw hundreds of thousands of copies distributed” (Beauchamp, 2022; ADL, n.d.). Historian Norman Cohn (2018)

stated, “*The International Jew* probably did more than any other work to make The Protocols [of the Elders of Zion] world famous” (as cited in Beauchamp, 2022). Adolf Hitler, when asked about the portrait of Ford hanging over his desk by a Detroit News reporter in 1931, answered that he regarded Henry Ford as his inspiration (Beauchamp, 2022).

Ford was arguably the most well-known antisemite in America during his time, but he wasn't the only one. Beauchamp (2022) notes that “Ford’s propaganda set the stage for a wave of American antisemitism in the runup to World War II, including the rise of infamous antisemitic demagogue Father Charles Coughlin.” Coughlin was a Catholic figure who had a weekly radio show with 15 million listeners. On his show, he “propagated antisemitic beliefs, justified Nazi violence against Jews overseas, and provoked his American followers to paint swastikas on Jewish businesses and gang up on Jews in the streets” (ADL, n.d.). In the 1930s, physical violence towards Jews increased as a result. American antisemitism was reaching an all-time high. In one poll from 1939, it was shown that “fewer than 40 percent of Americans believed Jews should be treated “as any other Americans”” (ADL, n.d.). Charles Lindbergh, American aviator and activist, claimed in 1941 that the real endangerment to the American people was the Jewish control of “our motion pictures, our press, our radio and our Government” (ADL, n.d.). There’s that conspiracy again. Towards the end of the war, the country had become very used to the normalized and mainstream antisemitism.

### **Post-War Feelings**

After World War II, the American public became much more well-aware of the reality of the Holocaust and Nazism, and the fact that the thousands of Jewish soldiers fought for the

United States, and antisemitism and anti-Jewish sentiments steadily began to decline (ADL, n.d.). With the civil rights movement, “Jews gradually were loosened from the grip of discrimination that had blocked their entry into universities, success in the job market and access to the housing market,” and by the 1970s, it was definite that “antisemitism ... was shifting to the margins of American society” (ADL, n.d.). Even though it went away in the mainstream in this country for the most part, antisemitism was never put away completely. There are multiple examples in the years between the war and 2015 that show us that. The ADL (n.d.) writes, “widespread anxiety about globalization, mass migration and economic inequality — especially after the 2008 financial crisis — have created the conditions in which antisemitism has always festered.” Whenever those things are present, people will fall back into conspiracy and hatred and use Jews as an easy, albeit very, very wrong, answer, to the reasons behind their difficult and complex problems. It is almost a universal truth throughout history that when something goes wrong, Jewish people will be blamed for it. Some people who genuinely feel hatred for the Jewish community, and some people who don’t know any better, will use terms like “globalist” which is often a derogatory code-word for Jews, and evokes an “antisemitic myth, falsely accusing mysterious agents of multiculturalism and international cooperation of weakening America from within” (ADL, n.d.). It’s important to understand that although it seemed like antisemitism went away for 70 years, these sentiments still persevered, just not in the American mainstream. Today, we have seen them return there.

## **The High Tide**

R. Amy Elman (2022), professor of political science and Jewish studies, says that we have to change the way we look at antisemitism in this country, writing that we must reject ““American exceptionalism” in which antisemitism happens elsewhere—in other states, political parties, professions, campuses, and communities.” She continues, “Antisemitism so understood occurs only to the unfortunate, in places we don’t frequent, and at the outer edges of the political spectrum [... however] I suggest American antisemitism is so pervasive—so utterly mainstream—that it hides in plain sight” (Elman, 2022). This understanding by the public that antisemitism exists in America is crucial to working through it and attempting to fix it. The recent rise of antisemitism that we’ve seen here can be traced pretty directly to the timeline of the presidency of Donald Trump. Because he was and is such a controversial and polarizing political figure, and he made it into the biggest office in American politics, a space was opened for hate, that had previously only existed in society’s outskirts, to seep back into the mainstream. The most pronounced examples of this have been from those on the far right of the political/ideological spectrum. These people “have been emboldened by President Trump’s adoption of specific elements of their rhetoric and his dismissal of their hate, such as his use of terms like “globalist” or “migrant caravans” or even his campaign slogan, America First” (ADL, n.d.).

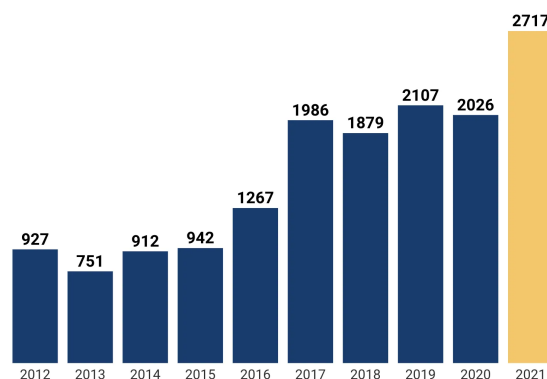
In 2018, hate crimes reached their highest point in 27 years, and Jews were shown to be the most frequent target, by far, of religious-based incidents. Jamie Moshin (2018) writes, “While one can point to the rise of antisemitic acts since the inception of Trump’s

presidency—an increase of 86 percent—one cannot prove that Trump’s rhetorics have *caused* this rise [and] I believe that President Trump is tapping into, and bringing forth, a deep wellspring of systemic antisemitism that many (incorrectly) assumed to be either extinct or nothing more than the expression of a radical individualism.” Marin Cogan (2022), another senior correspondent at Vox, summarizes the prevalent attacks on Judaism in America in the last six years that have made antisemitism much harder to ignore, “To consider it one way, there was nothing particularly new or notable about antisemitism in the United States in 2022. After all, to be Jewish in the United States during the last five years has meant being confronted with evidence of the hatred lurking in our neighbors’ hearts. We saw it in 2017, when polo-shirted Nazis chanted “Jews will not replace us” as they unleashed terror on the streets of

Charlottesville, Virginia; in 2018, when 11 Jews were massacred at the Tree of Life synagogue in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania; in 2019, when a shooter killed one and injured three others at the Chabad of Poway in California; and in smaller attacks perpetrated in between, on streets and subways, at restaurants and rallies, outside shuls and sukkot.” The ADL published a report of antisemitic incidents in the past ten years that

showed record numbers. It is impossible to say now that antisemitism has not risen again in the United States. Pamela Nadell (2022), historian and director of the Jewish studies program at American University, says, “Historians have called the period between World War I and World

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Ten Year Review | 2012–2021



ADL

War II the ‘high tide’ of American antisemitism. I think we may have to rename that: I think we are at the moment living in the *high tide of American antisemitism* [emphasis added]” (as cited in Beauchamp, 2022). While Donald Trump is not as explicitly antisemitic as someone such as Henry Ford was in his day, it’s important to remember that Ford was never the President of the United States. Ford was never as popular or as influential as Trump is today. The American people didn’t elect Henry Ford, but they elected Donald Trump.

### **Trump, West, Irving, and Fuentes**

In November of 2022, Donald Trump, Kanye West, and Nick Fuentes all sat down for a dinner together at Mar-a-Lago. This was problematic for so many reasons, probably too many reasons to attempt to cover here. In this section, I’ll briefly cover each of these individuals’ histories with antisemitism, in addition to Kyrie Irving’s, as the fourth selected member of this study. We’ve already discussed how Trump opened the door for the resurgence of many themes of hate including antisemitism, but what specific actions has he taken? Again, Trump has never outwardly expressed a hatred or even a dislike of the Jewish people, but he has perpetrated antisemitic tropes and conspiracies more times than one can even count. Aaron Blake, senior political reporter for the Washington Post, tracked a good amount of these times, and I have added them here. For one, Trump consistently speaks about American Jews as if their country is Israel and not the United States (Blake, 2022). During the White House Hanukkah Party in 2018, a Republican Jewish Coalition event in 2019, and a call after Rosh Hashanah in 2020, he repeatedly referred to Israel as “your country,” to Benjamin Netanyahu as “your prime minister,” and to David Friedman, his ambassador to Israel, as “your ambassador.” Trump has also

mentioned many times that he believes American Jews are largely disloyal to Israel, and that they are insufficiently appreciative of how he has handled the United States-Israel relationship. He has stated that when a Jewish person votes for a Democrat, “it shows either a total lack of knowledge or great disloyalty” (Blake, 2022). I will cover why this idea of dual loyalty perpetuates antisemitism when I cover the multiple forms of antisemitism in a later section. We already know that “The most popular antisemitic trope in politics is that Jews control things behind the scenes — often by virtue of their money and cunning [and] Trump has also leaned into this” (Blake, 2022). In 2015, he told Republican Jews that he didn’t want their money, although they “stupidly” wanted to give him money. Further down the road in his campaign, he “tweeted an image of Hillary Clinton surrounded by money with the words “Most Corrupt Candidate Ever!” inside a six-pointed star, the shape of the Star of David [and he] ran an ad featuring several prominent Jews — George Soros, Janet L. Yellen and Lloyd Blankfein — while warning of “global special interests” (Blake, 2022). Trump also stated in a 2021 interview, “It used to be that Israel had absolute power over Congress, and today I think it’s the exact opposite” (as cited in Blake, 2022). He has also suggested multiple times that any ethnic allegiance should extend to him because his son-in-law, Jared Kushner, is Jewish, and therefore so are his grandchildren. He has since posted on social media threats to the Jewish community.

From what I remember, Kanye West used to be a pretty normal, unproblematic individual. He made a lot of very successful music, some of which I listened to regularly, and was many people’s favorite artist. At some point, he became *very* problematic. His pop culture controversies eventually turned into political ones, especially with his outright support of Donald Trump. Cogan (2022) writes, “It’s hard to overstate the importance of Kanye West’s

transformation from one of hip-hop's most salient rappers into one of the country's most prominent Jew haters." Beginning in October of 2022, West "went on a spree of public appearances and interviews in which he spouted antisemitic comments and conspiracy theories, criticized Black Lives Matter, ended business relationships and was blocked on social media platforms, leading to widespread criticism and disavowal by industry peers" (Dellatto & Porterfield, 2023). At his Yeezy fashion show, he wore a shirt that read "White Lives Matter," which is a phrase associated with a Neo-Nazi group of the same name (Dellatto & Porterfield, 2023). He then began to post very troubling screenshots around the internet about his relationship with the brand Adidas and LVMH CEO Bernard Arnault. He was interviewed on Fox News and spewed baseless claims about abortion and obesity. Then, on October 7th, he mentioned Jews publicly for the first time by posting a screenshot of his texts with Sean "Diddy" Combs. He continued to post wildly antisemitic statements on social media that were primarily hinged on two antisemitic conspiracy theories: that Jewish people control the media and that Jewish people stole the identity of Black people. Following, footage is posted and leaked online of various clips of West discussing these conspiracy theories among others and even praising Adolf Hitler, saying he "likes Nazis" and can see "good things about Hitler" (Dellatto & Porterfield, 2023). What finally got him kicked off of Twitter for good was when he posted an image of a swastika combined with a Star of David.

Kyrie Irving didn't contribute nearly as much to the recent rise of antisemitism as West did, but he did in his own way. The thing he did that caused all of his controversy, and praise from West, was posting a link on Twitter on October 27, 2022 to a documentary that was filled with highly antisemitic tropes and stereotypes (Ganguli & Deb, 2022). For a week afterward, he



didn't apologize or condemn antisemitism and was promptly suspended indefinitely from his NBA team, the Brooklyn Nets. Nike also suspended their relationship with him. He then spoke at a press conference and backed up what he had posted, stating, "History is not supposed to be hidden from anybody ... I'm not going to stand down on anything I believe in. I'm only going to get stronger because I'm not alone. I have a whole army around me." (Irving, 2022 as cited in Ganguli & Deb, 2022). On November 3, Irving apologized in an Instagram post and he was eventually traded to another NBA team, the Dallas Mavericks.

Finally, the biggest antisemite of our chosen four individuals is Nick Fuentes. Fuentes is a 24-year-old political commentator who hosts his own webcast called *America First*, which has a very large following online. Fuentes is a known Holocaust denier and proponent of antisemitic conspiracies. Beauchamp (2022) writes, "Fuentes's smirking, "just kidding" demeanor on his *America First* webcast barely hides his eliminationist antisemitism — and sometimes the mask falls off entirely." In one of his broadcasts in November of 2022, he said, "The Jews had better start being nice to people like us, because what comes out of this is going to be a lot uglier and a lot worse for them than anything that's being said on this show" (Fuentes, 2022, as cited in Beauchamp, 2022). Fuentes, very worryingly, has been gaining traction in the Republican party recently. He hosted an America First Political Action conference in February of 2022 and got prominent GOP figures such as Representatives Marjorie Taylor Greene and Paul Gosar to attend. His biggest win to date was his dinner with the "highest-profile proponent of antisemitic conspiracy theories in the country," Kanye West, and the nation's former leader, Donald Trump, who reportedly came away impressed (Beauchamp, 2022).

## **Public Opinion and Fear**

Personally, I was abhorred and disturbed when I found out about most of the things I outlined above. I can say the same about most of the Jewish Community. All of the violence and hatred eroded the sense of safety and security that American Jews had been feeling for decades (Cogan, 2022). Gil Preus (2022), the CEO of the Jewish Federation of Greater Washington, said that the events of the months leading up to the end of 2022 had been extremely challenging for Jewish people, and that “the fear that people have, when they see swastikas or other things put up in their neighborhoods or see it online, has arisen in a way that it shouldn’t. Each time that we see one of these antisemitic acts, it feels like the culture around antisemitism has been changing. It’s affecting every part of Jewish communal engagement” (as cited in Cogan, 2022). One of the main differences of antisemitism today versus that of before is well-put by op-ed columnist for the New York Times, Michelle Goldberg (2022), stating, “For most of my adult life, antisemites ... have lacked status in America. The most virulent antisemites tended to hate Jews from below, blaming them for their own failures and disappointments. Now, however, anti-Jewish bigotry, or at least tacit approval of anti-Jewish bigotry, is coming from people with serious power: the leader of a major political party, a famous pop star, and the world’s richest man.”

Social media provides some context as well to understanding the general sentiment of the public. For the most part, the public has denounced Trump, West, Irving, and Fuentes for their antisemitic comments and actions, but some are defending them. In analyzing reactions to their controversial statements, Jikeli and Soemer (n.d.) found that “more than 80 % of the top 20 retweets of these five weeks were related to antisemitism, past or present, mostly denouncing

antisemitism. However, the sixth most popular tweet (retweeted 10,785 times) suggested that Ye might have been right that “*Jews control everything.*” After Elon Musk took over Twitter, the first peak of conversations about Jews occurred on October 30, 2022. Most of these tweets “denounced antisemitism, but 18 % of conversations about Jews were antisemitic, an unusually high percentage [and] on that day, 23 % of the top 20 retweets (7,611 retweets altogether) defended Ye’s explicit or Kyrie Irving’s implicit statements about Jews” (Jikely & Soemer, n.d.). The fact that these highly influential people are spewing antisemitic comments and conspiracy theories makes people believe it is okay to share them as well, which creates a very dangerous atmosphere for Jews on and offline. They are called social media *influencers* for a reason.

### **Methods**

For my research in this study, I’ll first be compiling the social media content of Donald Trump, Kanye West, Kyrie Irving, and Nick Fuentes between the months of October 2022 and March 2023 that relate in any way to Jewish people. This task is more difficult than a traditional social media content gathering because almost all of these posts have since been deleted or the accounts that posted them have been deleted, restricted, suspended, and/or removed. I’ll be searching through various news publications, web archives such as the WayBack Machine, and even image search engines to find screenshots and recordings of these past tweets and posts. Originally I was going to record the amount of interaction, such as likes and comments, that these posts received, but since so many of them were deleted or they had interactions disabled by the platforms, this won’t be possible. For determining if a post relates to Jewish people, I’ll be pulling any content where the words “Jews,” “Jewish,” “antisemitic,” “semitic, [*sic*]” “Israel,” or

“Hebrew(s).” In addition to these words, I’ll also be using common codes for Jews such as “globalist.” Any posts that use a visual related to Judaism such as a Star of David or a swastika will also be pulled. Finally, I’ll pull posts from any of these four individuals that reference each other’s previous actions. These posts will be compiled in a spreadsheet, with written content copied over and visual content described through text, and the date and platform noted.

Once all of the content is compiled, I’ll code each post for the antisemitic tropes that it relies on. Jikeli et al. (2022) provide a method for classifying antisemitic content which I’ll be relying on in this study. The goal of their research was to provide a method for annotating antisemitic tweets that was less biased and more concrete, especially because antisemitism itself can have such a broad and sometimes confusing definition. They chose to use the definition set forth by the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA), which they refer to as the working definition. The working definition “has been endorsed and recommended by more than 30 governments and international bodies and is frequently used to monitor and record antisemitic incidents,” which makes it the best definition to use for my study as well (Jikeli et al., 2022). The working definition that the IHRA (n.d.) writes provides eleven examples of contemporary antisemitism, which I numbered one through eleven. Trump, West, Irving, and Fuentes seem to rely on only a few of them, which I’ll outline here.

1. Calling for, aiding, or justifying the killing or harming of Jews in the name of a radical ideology or an extremist view of religion.
2. Making mendacious, dehumanizing, demonizing, or stereotypical allegations about Jews as such or the power of Jews as collective — such as, especially but not exclusively,

the myth about a world Jewish conspiracy or of Jews controlling the media, economy, government or other societal institutions.

3. Accusing Jews as a people of being responsible for real or imagined wrongdoing committed by a single Jewish person or group, or even for acts committed by non-Jews.
4. Denying the fact, scope, mechanisms (e.g. gas chambers) or intentionality of the genocide of the Jewish people at the hands of National Socialist Germany and its supporters and accomplices during World War II (the Holocaust).
6. Accusing Jewish citizens of being more loyal to Israel, or to the alleged priorities of Jews worldwide, than to the interests of their own nations.\*
9. Using the symbols and images associated with classic antisemitism (e.g., claims of Jews killing Jesus or blood libel) to characterize Israel or Israelis. (IHRA, 2022)

The IHRA also states that antisemitism includes but is not limited to these examples, so it is important to remember that a piece of content can be antisemitic without falling exactly into one of these eleven examples. I anticipate there will be some posts that I find antisemitic, along with the general public, but don't fit with the working definition. For these, I will give them the label 12, referring to something obviously antisemitic that doesn't get a label 1-11. Also of note, for label 6, even though the definition is focused on accusations of loyalty to Israel, I will be applying label 6 to any accusations of loyalty or disloyalty to Israel.

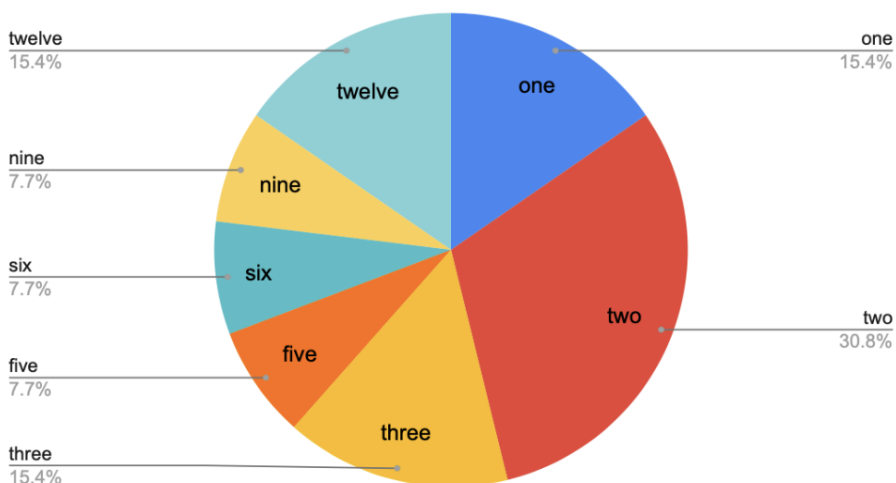
As a secondary form of annotation and coding, I will be inputting the gathered social media content into a generative artificial intelligence, ChatGPT, and asking it to explain whether each post is antisemitic or not. I'll first prompt the AI by saying, "I am going to provide a description of a social media post, and I would like you to decide if this post is antisemitic or not

and explain why. Do you understand?” followed by a description of the post after it responds. I believe that this method might be less biased than human annotation, and could provide alternative definitions and examples than the IHRA working definition. At the very least, it will serve as an additional set of annotations to compare our original set to.

## Results

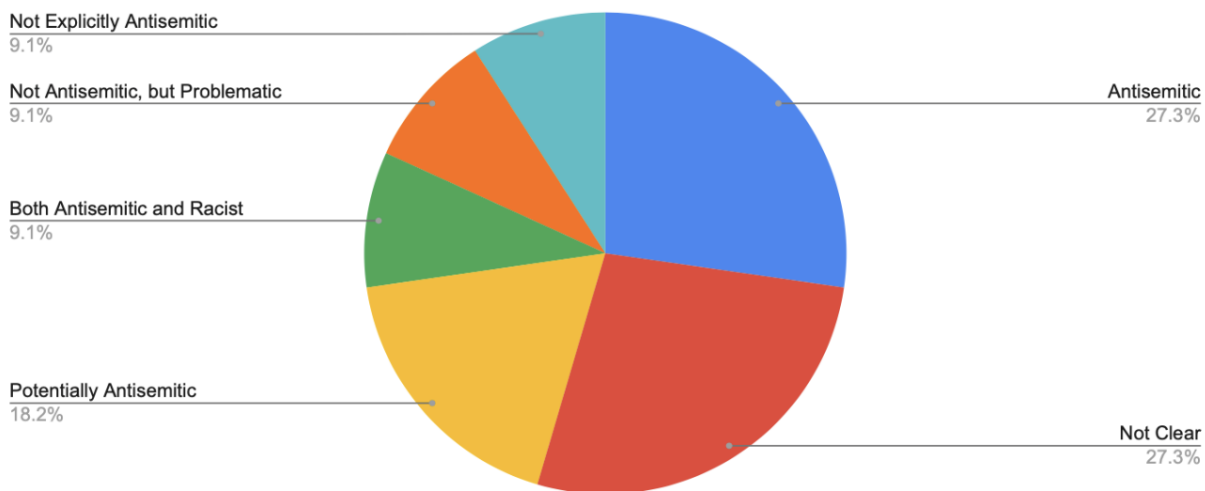
After searching the internet for social media posts from Trump, West, Irving, and Fuentes that related to Judaism between October 2022 and March 2023, I found 12 posts to analyze. Of these 12 posts, 7 were posted in October, 1 in November, 2 in January, and 1 in March. 8 of the posts were made on Twitter, 3 were made on Instagram, and 1 (the only post from Donald Trump) was made on Truth Social. The biggest contributor to the data set was Kanye West with 7 posts, followed by Kyrie Irving and Nick Fuentes with 2, and Trump’s 1. Of the 12 posts, only 2 remain on the platforms today, due to either individual removal by the user or the platform, account deletion, or account removal or suspension by the platform.

Distribution of Tropes (IHRA Working Definition)



Upon coding the content for antisemitic tropes laid out by the IHRA working definition, it was found that the most common trope used was 2, “Making mendacious, dehumanizing, demonizing, or stereotypical allegations about Jews as such or the power of Jews as collective — such as, especially but not exclusively, the myth about a world Jewish conspiracy or of Jews controlling the media, economy, government or other societal institutions.” 3 of the posts received multiple labels and 2 of them received none, signifying that of the 12 posts relating to Judaism, 10 of them (83%) were antisemitic. The distribution of tropes is shown in the figure above.

### AI Designations



When input into ChatGPT, each post generated a result that included a designation on how antisemitic it was and explanations for why it felt that way. The most common designations were “antisemitic” and “not clear,” with each being applied to 3 of the 12 posts. Other designations included “not explicitly antisemitic,” “not antisemitic, but problematic,” “both antisemitic and racist,” and “potentially antisemitic.” The full transcript of my conversation with ChatGPT is in the appendix of this paper. The spreadsheet I used to track this data is below.

Name	Username	Platform	Date	Content	Reference	IHRA Codes	AI Designation
Kanye West	kanyewest	Instagram	10/07/2022	Photo: Screenshot of text to Sean Diddy Combs which reads "This ain't a game / Ima use you as an example to show the Jewish people that told you to call me that no one can threaten or influence me / I told you this was war / Now gone get you some business [sic]" Caption: "Jesus is Jew"	<a href="https://twitter">https://twitter</a>	2 3	Potentially Antisemitic
Kanye West	kanyewest	Twitter	10/09/2022	"I'm a bit sleepy tonight but when I wake up I'm going death con 3 On JEWISH PEOPLE The funny thing is I actually can't be Anti Semitic because black people are actually Jew also You guys have toyed with me and tried to black ball anyone whoever opposes your agenda"	<a href="https://web">https://web</a>	1	Antisemitic
Kanye West	kanyewest	Twitter	10/30/2022	Photo: black and white headshot of Kyrie Irving, Caption: "There's some real ones still here"	<a href="https://twitte">https://twitte</a>	12	Not Clear
Kanye West	kanyewest	Instagram	10/31/2022	Screenshot of text with Def Jam Recordings co-founder Russel Simmons which reads, "I'm staying in America / I gotta get the Jewish business people to make the contracts fair / Or die trying."	<a href="https://www">https://www</a>	2	Potentially Antisemitic
Kanye West	kanyewest	Twitter	11/04/2022	"I'm starting to think anti Semitic means nigger"	<a href="https://www">https://www</a>	12	Both Antisemitic and Racist
Kanye West	kanyewest	Twitter	12/01/2022	"YE24 LOVE EVERYONE #LOVESPEECH" Photo: Screenshot of a Swastika combined with a Star of David	<a href="https://finan">https://finan</a>	5	9 Antisemitic
Kanye West	kanyewest	Instagram	03/25/2023	Photo: 21 Jump Street Poster, Caption: "Watching Jonah Hill in 21 Jump Street made me like Jewish people again / No one should take anger against one or two individuals and transform that into hatred towards millions of innocent people / No Christian can be labelled antisemite knowing Jesus is a Jew / Thank you Jonah Hill I love you"	<a href="https://www">https://www</a>		Not Antisemitic, but Problematic
Donald Trump	realDonaldTrump	Truth Social	10/16/2022	"No President has done more for Israel than I have. Somewhat surprisingly, however, our wonderful Evangelicals are far more appreciative of this than the people of the Jewish faith, especially those living in the U.S. Those living in Israel, though, are a different story — Highest approval rating in the World, could easily be P.M! U.S. Jews have to get their act together and appreciate what they have in Israel - Before it's too late!"	<a href="https://www">https://www</a>	6	Potentially Antisemitic
Kyrie Irving	KyrieIrving	Twitter	10/27/2022	Link to a documentary called "Hebrews to Negroes: Wake Up Black America," which has been deemed as wildly antisemitic and is filled with antisemitic tropes	<a href="https://fonwa">https://fonwa</a>	2 3	Not Explicitly Antisemitic
Kyrie Irving	KyrieIrving	Twitter	10/29/2022	"I am an OMNIST and I meant no disrespect to anyone's religious beliefs. The "Anti-Semitic" label that is being pushed on me is not justified and does not reflect the reality or truth I live in everyday. I embrace and want to learn from all walks of life and religions. / Héléa "	<a href="https://twitte">https://twitte</a>		Not Clear
Nick Fuentes	NickJFuentes	Twitter	01/25/2023	Gif: Ye24 presidential bid which then fades into a sign that reads "DEFCON 3"	<a href="https://twitte">https://twitte</a>	1	Not Clear
Nick Fuentes	NickJFuentes	Twitter	01/25/2023	"Globalist American Empire" "Zionist Occupied Government" "	<a href="https://www">https://www</a>	2	Antisemitic

## Discussion

When designing this study, I had originally assumed that there would've been much more content pulled in it, but while doing research I realized that although each individual post was very powerful and caused lots of harm, there weren't actually that many of them. Their ability to make headlines and generate reactions made it seem like there were way more of them than there were. Also, lots of the antisemitic comments that were said during the recent rise came from places such as the news or other independent sources, which were not the focus of this study. Social media plays arguably the biggest role in recent antisemitism, but it operates in a system that has many moving parts. What's important to remember is that every bit of content that is said does make it to social media, where it is put into algorithms and echo chambers for people to interact with as they please.



As expected, the most antisemitism that I studied centered around tropes and conspiracies of Jewish control, whether that be of the media or the government or something bigger. This tracks with what I have felt as a Jewish person living through these times and is proved by this research. West, Irving, and Fuentes all perpetrated ideas that Jews control things that they do not control, as evidenced by the fact that more than 36% of their tweets about Judaism in the time period relied on that trope. Donald Trump, however, didn't ever promote this idea and instead played on the more classic and less mainstream trope of dual loyalty in his lone tweet. Remember, though, that most of Trump's antisemitism has come from outside of social media. I also discovered through this study that many social media posts don't come off as antisemitic without further context. Some of the content seemed not antisemitic at all, but when placed in the context of the world at the time it was posted, we can see how clearly antisemitic it is.

The fact that a majority of the posts in this study came from a rather small time period provides some amount of hope that this rise in antisemitism could just be a spike and it won't persist, but the numbers on attacks and antisemitic sentiment that we've discussed previously would suggest otherwise. Even if it does die down after this spike, antisemitism is not going to go away fully. This becomes even more true when we don't acknowledge the hatred and we just let it go away naturally. Censorship and restrictions on hate online are definitely important, but there is a fine line to walk between censorship and sweeping hate under the rug. If we don't expose it and learn from it, then nothing will ever change for the better. It is not clear to me if the fact that it was so difficult to find most of this content online is a good or a bad thing. Only time will tell if we are now on the downslope of this high tide in antisemitism or not.

I found the most interesting part of my research to be my conversation with the generative artificial intelligence ChatGPT. I was surprised at how well it was able to interpret my descriptions of these posts without any context, and I was impressed with its ability to explain exactly why they were antisemitic. I believe it did a better job than I could've personally in laying out the exact reasons behind why it gave the designation to each post that it did. It felt very unbiased, and it rarely asserted anything without a disclaimer, generally calling for the reader to use additional context before reaching a final answer. I would highly recommend for others to read parts of my conversation, which is in the appendix of this paper, as they not only demonstrate the incredible functionality of AI but also explain in very easy-to-understand ways how these social media posts are extremely problematic. One of the biggest problems that social media platforms have is not being able to identify hate speech because their algorithms lack the human-like intelligence required to spot more covert instances (Baider, 2022). However, this study shows proof that artificial intelligence, when used alongside human annotations, may be a suitable solution for identifying and explaining hate speech online.

### **Conclusion**

This study was very helpful in collecting the instances of antisemitism in recent months on social media from high-profile influencers, but there were some limitations. For one, the sample size was rather small, so it is hard to know if this data could be extrapolated properly to other individuals or other time periods. Because so much of the content studied was deleted, it was impossible to gather more data on it such as interactions with the public. Antisemitism is also a very broad topic with many definitions, and none of them are perfect. The IHRA working

definition served as a good base for this study, but it doesn't include everything and feels slightly out-of-date now. It is also confusing when dealing with anti-Jewish sentiment versus anti-Israeli sentiment as some organizations, including the ADL, would classify both of these as antisemitic, while many others, including myself, would not. In addition, working with AI always poses certain limitations. It doesn't operate with an up-to-date database and lacks recent and relevant context for this and similar studies and is also known to generate false data at times. Future research on this topic should continue to expand the scope of this project, studying more content from influencers and the public. If possible, the interactions and impact should also be measured and studied. It would be beneficial to study antisemitic content outside of social media as well. Finally, researchers should ask the question of what the proper way to deal with antisemitic and other hateful social media posts is. The general consensus today seems to be that they should be deleted with the account that posted them suspended, but it is not clear that this is the best way to combat hate. Further research must be done to find out the best way to proceed, in the hopes of minimizing antisemitism as much as possible and making sure that this is the last high tide this country ever has to go through.

## Appendix

Full Transcript of Conversation with ChatGPT

Me: I am going to provide a description of a social media post, and I would like you to decide if this post is antisemitic or not and explain why. Do you understand?

ChatGPT: Yes, I understand. Please provide the description of the social media post and I will do my best to evaluate it.

Me: Photo is a screenshot of text message which reads "This ain't a game. Ima use you as an example to show the Jewish people that told you to call me that no one can threaten or influence me. I told you this was war. Now gone get you some business."

ChatGPT: Based on the description you provided, it is possible that the social media post is antisemitic. The language used in the text message seems to imply that the sender is threatening the recipient as a way of showing "Jewish people" that they cannot be intimidated or influenced. This statement suggests that the sender believes that the Jewish community is trying to control or manipulate them in some way, which is a common antisemitic stereotype.

Additionally, the statement "this was war" could be interpreted as a reference to the longstanding and harmful stereotype of Jewish people as warmongers or manipulators who are secretly controlling world events.

It is important to note that the context surrounding the post, such as who posted it, what their intentions were, and how it was received by the community, can also affect its interpretation and whether or not it is considered antisemitic. However, based solely on the description you provided, there are elements of the post that raise concerns about its potentially antisemitic nature.

Me: I am going to provide a description of a social media post, and I would like you to decide if this post is antisemitic or not and explain why. Do you understand?

ChatGPT: Yes, I understand. Please provide the description of the social media post and I will do my best to evaluate it.

Me: Tweet that reads, "I'm a bit sleepy tonight but when I wake up I'm going death con 3 On JEWISH PEOPLE The funny thing is I actually can't be Anti Semitic because black people are actually Jew also You guys have toyed with me and tried to black ball anyone whoever opposes your agenda"

ChatGPT: Based on the description you provided, it is clear that the social media post is antisemitic. The use of the phrase "death con 3" suggests that the author intends to escalate their hostility towards Jewish people, and the fact that they specifically mention Jewish people in a threatening way is concerning.

Furthermore, the author's claim that they cannot be antisemitic because "black people are actually Jew also" is not accurate. While there are Black Jewish communities, being Black does not inherently make someone Jewish, and using this claim as a defense against antisemitism is inappropriate.

The statement "you guys have toyed with me and tried to black ball anyone who ever opposes your agenda" suggests that the author believes in a conspiracy theory that Jewish people are secretly controlling events and suppressing dissenting voices. This is a common and harmful antisemitic trope.

In conclusion, the language and themes used in the social media post you described clearly indicate that it is antisemitic and promotes harmful stereotypes.

Me: I am going to provide a description of a social media post, and I would like you to decide if this post is antisemitic or not and explain why. Do you understand?

ChatGPT: Yes, I understand. Please provide the description of the social media post and I will do my best to evaluate it.

Me: Photo is a black and white headshot of Kyrie Irving with the caption, "There's some real ones still here"

ChatGPT: Based on the description you provided, it is not clear whether the social media post is antisemitic or not. The image and caption you described do not contain any explicitly antisemitic language or imagery, so on their own they do not raise concerns about antisemitism.

However, it is possible that the context surrounding the post, such as who posted it, what their intentions were, and how it was received by the community, could affect its interpretation and whether or not it is considered antisemitic. If there is additional information or context that suggests that the post is promoting harmful stereotypes about Jewish people or perpetuating antisemitic conspiracy theories, then it would be appropriate to consider it antisemitic.

Without more information, I cannot make a definitive determination about the post's potential for antisemitism.

Me: I am going to provide a description of a social media post, and I would like you to decide if this post is antisemitic or not and explain why. Do you understand?

ChatGPT: Yes, I understand. Please provide the description of the social media post and I will do my best to evaluate it.

Me: Photo is a screenshot of a text message sent to Def Jam Recordings co-founder Russel Simmons which reads, "I'm staying in America. I gotta get the Jewish business people to make the contracts fair or die trying."

ChatGPT: Based on the description you provided, it is possible that the social media post is antisemitic. The text message suggests that the sender believes that Jewish business people are unfair and need to be threatened or intimidated into making contracts fair. This perpetuates a harmful stereotype of Jewish people as greedy and untrustworthy in business, which is a form of antisemitism.

Additionally, the phrase "or die trying" is concerning because it suggests a willingness to resort to violence or extreme measures in order to achieve their goal, which is not an appropriate or productive way to address concerns about contract negotiations.

It is important to note that the context surrounding the post, such as who posted it, what their intentions were, and how it was received by the community, can also affect its interpretation and whether or not it is considered antisemitic. However, based solely on the description you provided, there are elements of the post that raise concerns about its potentially antisemitic nature.

Me: I am going to provide a description of a social media post, and I would like you to decide if this post is antisemitic or not and explain why. Do you understand?

ChatGPT: Yes, I understand. Please provide the description of the social media post and I will do my best to evaluate it.

Me: Tweet that reads, "I'm starting to think anti Semitic means n\*\*\*er"

ChatGPT: Based on the description you provided, the social media post is not only antisemitic, but also racist. The use of a racial slur to refer to Black people is inappropriate and offensive. Additionally, the tweet suggests a false equivalence between being anti-Semitic (discrimination against Jewish people) and being a racial slur for Black people. This perpetuates a harmful and untrue stereotype that Jewish people are somehow equivalent to or interchangeable with Black people.

It is important to note that this tweet also shows a lack of understanding about the meaning and significance of antisemitism and how it operates. Antisemitism is a distinct form of discrimination that is based on prejudice against Jewish people, and it has a long and painful history that is separate from other forms of discrimination.

In conclusion, the social media post you described is both racist and antisemitic, and it promotes harmful stereotypes and false equivalencies.

Me: I am going to provide a description of a social media post, and I would like you to decide if this post is antisemitic or not and explain why. Do you understand?

ChatGPT: Yes, I understand. Please provide the description of the social media post and I will do my best to evaluate it.

Me: Photo is a graphic of a Swastika combined with a Star of David, with the caption "YE24 LOVE EVERYONE #LOVESPEECH"

ChatGPT: Based on the description you provided, the social media post is antisemitic. The combination of the Swastika, which is a symbol associated with the Nazi party and the persecution of Jewish people, and the Star of David, which is a symbol of the Jewish faith and identity, is a clear and deliberate attempt to equate Jewish people with the Nazi regime that



committed atrocities against them. This perpetuates a harmful and false stereotype that Jewish people are somehow responsible for or complicit in their own persecution.

The use of the hashtag "#LOVESPEECH" is also concerning because it suggests a disingenuous attempt to mask the antisemitic nature of the post as a message of love and unity. Using love and acceptance to cover up or excuse bigotry is not an appropriate or effective way to address discrimination.

In conclusion, the social media post you described is antisemitic and perpetuates harmful stereotypes and false equivalencies.

Me: I am going to provide a description of a social media post, and I would like you to decide if this post is antisemitic or not and explain why. Do you understand?

ChatGPT: Yes, I understand. Please provide the description of the social media post and I will do my best to evaluate it.

Me: Photo is a poster of the movie 21 Jump Street, with the caption, "Watching Jonah Hill in 21 Jump Street made me like Jewish people again. No one should take anger against one or two individuals and transform that into hatred towards millions of innocent people. No Christian can be labelled antisemite knowing Jesus is a Jew. Thank you Jonah Hill I love you."

ChatGPT: Based on the description you provided, the social media post is not antisemitic. The poster of the movie "21 Jump Street" with the caption does not contain any content that is directly discriminatory or harmful towards Jewish people.

However, it is important to note that the post does contain some problematic elements. The phrase "made me like Jewish people again" implies that the person who made the post previously

held negative views towards Jewish people. It is not clear what those negative views were or how they were formed, but it is concerning that they existed in the first place.

Additionally, while it is true that Jesus was Jewish, and that knowledge should help to promote understanding and respect between Christians and Jewish people, it is not accurate to say that "no Christian can be labelled antisemite" simply because of that fact. Antisemitism is a complex phenomenon that can manifest in many different ways, and it is possible for someone to hold prejudiced beliefs or engage in discriminatory behavior towards Jewish people despite their religious beliefs.

In conclusion, the social media post you described is not antisemitic, but it does contain some problematic elements that should be examined and addressed.

Me: I am going to provide a description of a social media post, and I would like you to decide if this post is antisemitic or not and explain why. Do you understand?

ChatGPT: Yes, I understand. Please provide the description of the social media post and I will do my best to evaluate it.

Me: Social media post that reads, "No President has done more for Israel than I have. Somewhat surprisingly, however, our wonderful Evangelicals are far more appreciative of this than the people of the Jewish faith, especially those living in the U.S. Those living in Israel, though, are a different story — Highest approval rating in the World, could easily be P.M.! U.S. Jews have to get their act together and appreciate what they have in Israel - Before it's too late!"

ChatGPT: Based on the description you provided, the social media post contains elements that are potentially antisemitic.

The statement "our wonderful Evangelicals are far more appreciative of this than the people of the Jewish faith" implies that all Jewish people are ungrateful for the actions taken by the current President in support of Israel. This is a sweeping generalization that can be harmful and offensive. It also creates a division between Jewish people and evangelical Christians, and implies that the latter group is more deserving of recognition and praise.

Additionally, the statement "U.S. Jews have to get their act together and appreciate what they have in Israel - Before it's too late!" can be interpreted as a veiled threat or warning. This type of language has been used historically to marginalize and discriminate against Jewish people, and can contribute to an atmosphere of fear and intimidation.

In conclusion, while the social media post does not contain explicitly hateful language, it does contain elements that are potentially harmful and discriminatory towards Jewish people. It is important to be mindful of the impact that language can have on different communities and to avoid making sweeping generalizations or using language that could be interpreted as threatening or hostile.

Me: I am going to provide a description of a social media post, and I would like you to decide if this post is antisemitic or not and explain why. Do you understand?

ChatGPT: Yes, I understand. Please provide the description of the social media post.

Me: Tweet with a link to a documentary called "Hebrews to Negroes: Wake Up Black America," which perpetrates the conspiracy of the Black Hebrew Israelites

ChatGPT: Based on the description you provided, the tweet promoting the documentary "Hebrews to Negroes: Wake Up Black America" does not necessarily contain explicit antisemitic language or imagery. However, it does promote a controversial and unsubstantiated conspiracy

theory known as the Black Hebrew Israelite movement, which often involves anti-Semitic rhetoric.

The Black Hebrew Israelite movement promotes the idea that black people are the true descendants of the ancient Israelites and that Jews who identify as such today are impostors. This belief system often involves antisemitic conspiracy theories and other forms of hate speech against Jews.

Therefore, while the tweet itself may not be explicitly antisemitic, it is promoting content that is rooted in a belief system that can be associated with antisemitism.

Me: I am going to provide a description of a social media post, and I would like you to decide if this post is antisemitic or not and explain why. Do you understand?

ChatGPT: Yes, I understand. Please provide the description of the social media post.

Me: Tweet that reads, "I am an OMNIST and I meant no disrespect to anyone's religious beliefs. The "Anti-Semitic" label that is being pushed on me is not justified and does not reflect the reality or truth I live in everyday. I embrace and want to learn from all walks of life and religions. Hèlà"

ChatGPT: Based on the information provided in the tweet, it is unclear if the post is antisemitic or not. The tweet mentions being labeled as "Anti-Semitic," but it does not provide any context or details about what may have led to that label. Without further information, it is difficult to determine if the post itself contains any antisemitic content or not.

Me: I am going to provide a description of a social media post, and I would like you to decide if this post is antisemitic or not and explain why. Do you understand?

ChatGPT: Yes, I understand. Please provide the description.

Me: Tweet is a gif of a graphic reading "Ye24" which then fades into a sign that reads "DEFCON 3"

ChatGPT: Based on the description provided, it is difficult to determine if this tweet is antisemitic or not as there is no explicit reference to Jewish people or any other group. The gif itself appears to be a combination of two different graphics, but without further context or information about the person who posted it, it is unclear if there is any antisemitic intent or message behind it.

Me: I am going to provide a description of a social media post, and I would like you to decide if this post is antisemitic or not and explain why. Do you understand?

ChatGPT: Yes, I understand. Please provide the description.

Me: Tweet that reads, " "Globalist American Empire" "Zionist Occupied Government" "

ChatGPT: This tweet is antisemitic. The phrase "Zionist Occupied Government" is a well-known antisemitic conspiracy theory that claims that Jews, through their supposed control of the government, media, and finance, are secretly manipulating world events to benefit themselves at the expense of others. It is a form of antisemitism that denies Jews the right to self-determination and portrays them as a malevolent force. The use of the word "globalist" in conjunction with this theory also suggests a belief in a broader anti-Jewish conspiracy.

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