



**Jewish Community
Relations Council**

MILWAUKEE
JEWISH FEDERATION

2019 Audit of Antisemitic Incidents

All incidents have been corroborated.

The Jewish Community Relations Council's 2019 Audit of Antisemitic Incidents indicates an overall increase in incidents and some troubling trends.

The audit includes 73 reported and corroborated incidents, which reflects a 55% increase in incidents from 2018 to 2019 and a 329% increase since 2015.

Geographical Considerations: Our reporting includes events that occur in the State of Wisconsin, are committed by persons residing in the State of Wisconsin, relate to Wisconsin institutions, relate to or specifically respond to Wisconsin persons, and/or would otherwise go unreported if not reported within our audit.

Trends

Harassment, threats, and assault increased by 150% (from 16 to 40 incidents).

Hate group activity (900% increase)

References to the Holocaust, Nazi, and Hitler (94% increase)

Middle school activity (250% increase)

Conspiracy theories (67% increase)

Pejorative references to Israel and Zionism (160% increase)

Harassment, Threats, Assault

In recent years, the incidence of direct, personal acts of antisemitism has increased dramatically (from 0 in 2015, 6 in 2016, 15 in 2017, 16 in 2018, to 40 in 2019). This trend points to a shift in how people express their antisemitic sentiments. They are bolder, more open, more personal, and more threatening.

Hate group activity includes actions by known white power, white nationalist, black separatist, and neo-Nazi groups. There were 10 incidents that clearly involved hate groups in 2019, though other incidents may have a less apparent connection. This trend points to increased boldness and visibility of such groups.

Some examples:

- Distribution of flyers from the Loyal White Knights of the Ku Klux Klan with racist and antisemitic language, including, "When the Blacks and Jews are the majority they will NOT stand for white quality like they have tricked us into doing for them!"
- A man walked around a Milwaukee festival with a Stahlhelm flag, which is a variation of the Imperial flag used by Stahlhelm Bund der Frontsoldaten, an

organization whose ideology was adopted by German neo-Nazi and far-right activists after World War II.

- Multiple posts by a local African American religious group echoed antisemitic tropes about Jewish control of the media and government, and about Jews being responsible for the “filth and degenerate behavior” from Hollywood.”
- Tweets from former Wisconsin Congressional candidate Paul Nehlen included calling Jews “unlawful, racist murders” who are part of the “Synagogue of Satan.” One photo showed Nehlen making a white power hand gesture with 110 written on his palm. His shirt showed Pittsburgh shooter Robert Bowers, with the words, “Screw the Optics. I’m going in.”
- A man claiming to be part of the Sicarii, part of the Black Hebrew Israelites, went to a synagogue and told the rabbi that Jews are imposters.
- Graffiti on a bike trail of the Othala rune and “Ruhm und Ehre,” which references a song, “Honor and glory for the Waffen SS” and the “Blood and Honor” Nazi slogan.
- A Racine synagogue was vandalized with spray painted swastika, symbol for neo-Nazi group The Base, and “Jude.”
- A sticker “Life Liberty and the Pursuit of Victory” from the Patriot Front (a known white nationalist group) found on a street sign.

Holocaust, Nazi, and Hitler references: During 2019, there was a notable increase of 94% from the previous year in incidents referencing the Holocaust, Nazis, and Hitler. Trends:

- Holocaust denial and minimization, including multiple social media posts calling the Holocaust a hoax and that “the Holocaust was invented propaganda to destroy Germany.”
- More than two dozen instances of vandalism of swastikas and other Nazi and neo-Nazi related symbols. Notable was the appearance of more obscure references and symbols, such as Othala runes, mentions of the Waffen SS, references to “blood and honor,” the SA, the number 110.
- Harassment, including comments such as: “I hope Hitler comes back to kill the Jews”; “If I was part of Hitler’s army, I would shoot and kill her”; “Do you prefer gas or bullets?”; “You should go die in a gas chamber.” All these took place among middle school students.
- Increased incidence of people calling Jews “Nazis” as pejoratives.

Some examples:

- College students posted in their off campus housing a sign: “No...Liberals, Jews, Muslims, Queers or Hmongs,” and a large flag with a swastika on it. Another incident at another university included a Star of David with a swastika inside it drawn on a board in university housing.
- Middle school students said to a Jewish eighth-grader: “Do you prefer gas or bullets?” “You should go die in a gas chamber.” “All Heil Hitler.” “Bring back Hitler so he can kill all the Jews.”

Middle School activity: Incidents among middle school students increased 250%, from two to seven incidents. Five of those incidents were harassment involving references to Holocaust, Nazi, or Hitler.

Conspiracy theories: Twenty percent of incidents include references to conspiracy theories involving Jewish power; Jewish control of the banks, government or media; Jews as masterminds of the 9/11 terror attack; and Jews as puppet-masters who use others for

malevolent means. Many of these incidents paint Jews as inherently negative and play on stereotypes.

Examples:

- A video of Milwaukee Jewish community leader speaking at a press conference about gun laws was shared to a neo-Nazi website, with the caption: "Milwaukee Jewish Federation, another Jewish and Zionist organization/lobby to add to the list, wants to take away your guns under the banner of 'common sense.'" Comments included, "Having these people lead any talks regarding gun reform is not in the best interest of American citizens..." and "Oy! Ve must disarm the goyim, and soon!"
- References to George Soros' influence ("a Soros group") in a state judicial race. Soros is often used as a dog whistle for conspiracy theories of Jewish control.
- Comments on a news article about efforts to demolish a historic home referred to the Jewish consultant with the comment, "Nothing a little Jewish lightning [sic] can't take care of." "Jewish lightning refers to a conspiracy theory about arson with the intent of fraud.
- Flyers criticizing a professional hired to conduct an equity audit in a school district labeled the professional as an "ethnically Jewish anti-racist activist" while accusing him of being a communist subverting the community against whites.
- Social media post by a local person about "The Zionist Jewish Lobby Control USA" included comments about Jewish control over agencies of the media, pornographic industry, and government.
- During a film discussion, a participant said: "Don't all Jews own the media? The Jews control what we see"; "The Jews have always been taught to colonize"; "The only reason most politicians pretend they support Israel is because of the money and no other reason."
- Social media post by a local person featured photos of Jewish and non-Jewish CNN hosts with blue Stars of David on their pictures. Part of the caption read, "If Jews represent just 2% of the U.S. population, would it be odd for a media organization to also have a Jewish President and Jewish Vice-President, a Jewish-majority of Executive Vice Presidents, and a Lead Political Anchor..." Comments included: "Zionists are basically Satanists" and repeatedly talked about Rothschilds and Soros wanting global dominance and being Satanists.
- Social media post by a local person: "9/11 was a conspiracy made in America and designed by Zionists."
- Message taped to a college student's door said, "The bourgeoisie work for the birds JEWS."
- Email to a Jewish institution claimed that Jewish Bolsheviks starved millions, that "Churchill's and FDR's Jewish handlers led their little plot to kill as many Germans as possible after WWII? There was genocide in WWII, however, it was NOT directed at the Jews, but rather at the German people."
- A Jewish community member was harassed in his workplace after being told he looks Jewish and that the Jews control the diamonds and the banks.
- A hired contractor came to an elderly Jewish woman's house, and after seeing Judaic objects, ranted that he hated all Jews and that Jews have destroyed the world through their greed.
- An email sent to staff at a Jewish institution included claims that the Jews control the U.S. Banks, the police, the military, social media, U.S. courts, politicians, etc. It also repeatedly talked about how Jews/Jewish-Bankers are running the new slave-trade in the prison system and systematically creating racism.

- A user named “Reltih LivesOn” (Reltih is Hitler backwards) posted to a Jewish institution’s social media page: “The holocaust is a hoax. Hitler wanted peace. Stalin Churchill and the Jews forced an unforgivable war on a nation of ppl for money. You are a lie a deceiver manipulator of nation and the devil’s puppet. The creators of Babylon will burn in the fires of wat [sic] you started. All jews must die in order to save he [sic] human race.”
- Social media post tagged a Jewish institution and claimed that Hitler liberated Germany from the “occult Zionist occupation.” It called Zionists Satanists and claimed that the Holocaust was invented propaganda to destroy Germany. It also quotes several other conspiracy theories such as the Rothschilds, Jew as initiators of colonialism and human trafficking.

Israel/Zionism: This audit understands that there is legitimate criticism of Israel and Zionism. Not all anti-Israel activity is antisemitism. Generally, such activity crosses the line when all Jews are held responsible for the actions of Israel; when Israel is denied the right to exist as a Jewish state and equal member of the global community; and when traditional antisemitic symbols, images, or theories are used (Source: ADL).

In 2019, the number of incidents that referenced the “Zionist Jewish lobby,” called Jews “Zionists” as a pejorative or shorthand for essential evil, rose 160% to 13.

Examples:

- Email to a Jewish institution: “A year ago at this time I was a big supporter of Israel. Now I long to see it overrun by Palestinians. Death to Israel!!!!”
- Social media post by a local person claiming “The Zionist Jewish State, Israel is fascist...” Comments on the post referenced conspiracy theories and compared Israel and Zionism to Hitler: “...The state of Israel is an apartheid globalist Zionist anti-semitic state. It has nothing legitimate to do with Judaism. That’s just a cover story so that certain factions that have been pushing this agenda...”
- Multiple social media posts blaming “advocates for Israel” for “shut[ting] any criticism of U.S. policy or wrongdoing by the Zionist state coming from Americans.” Note that calling Israel “The Zionist state” is used as a slur.
- Social media post by a local person about a Congressional candidate’s antisemitic tweet included a comment that invokes antisemitic canards about Jewish control: “Oops. She told the truth about how Israel runs the U.S. Middle East policy.”
- A local Jewish business owner received an email linking to an article about Zionists as a Satanic cult that control everything and use innocent Jews as a cover for their schemes.

Notes:

There was a 50% decrease in the number of reported incidents in high schools, from six to three. Incidence of vandalism decreased from 16 to 13.