

2020 Audit of Antisemitic Incidents

All incidents have been corroborated

The Jewish Community Relations Council's 2020 Audit of Antisemitic Incidents indicates an overall increase in incidents and some troubling trends.

The audit includes 99 reported and corroborated incidents, which reflects a 36% increase in incidents from 2019.

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

- Expression (82% increase)
- Conspiracy theories (90% increase)
- Hate group activity (20% increase)
- Pejorative references to Israel and Zionism in an antisemitic context (61% increase)
- College and University activity (75% increase)
- Social media activity (100% increase)
- Middle School activity (71% decrease)

Expression:

There was a significant spike in expressions of antisemitism this year in comparison to years prior (18 in 2017, 21 in 2018, 34 in 2019, and 62 in 2020). Part of this spike may be attributed to COVID-19 pushing some hateful expression online instead of in person, further illustrated by the spike in social media incidents.

Some examples:

- Bend the Arc: Jewish Action Milwaukee sent out texts about a post-election meeting, one response stated, "No Jews are the problems in this country they all in Hollywood they own all the banks they own all the media they own Jew York Do f*** off".
- During a virtual high school history class, a student stated, "I hate Jews".
- A Wisconsin Mayor received an email after a local antisemitic incident "Lol, the man was right, his neighbor is a dirty Jew and Jews are responsible for organizing violent protests all over the country. This man should have never taken his neighbor's sign, but these hate crime enhancements are a f***ing joke and makes me hate Jews even more."
- At a Republican Party of MKE's "Protect the Vote Rally" rally in Milwaukee. During the protest, several people were recorded doing the Nazi sieg heil salute. From the video it appears they were doing it in the direction of counter protestors.

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- A woman was told by a salesperson that someone had "tried to Jew him down" on a sale.
- A middle school teacher posted a photo of himself with a gun in front of a Nazi swastika flag with the caption "Glad they finally got rid of 2 terrorists in Kenosha. Now get rid of the rest...I would have done the same dame thing..."

Conspiracy Theories:

38% of 2020 incidents included reference to conspiracy theories involving Jewish power; Jewish control of the banks, government, or media; Jews being behind the COVID pandemic; and Jews at the helm of global control. Many of these incidents play on stereotypes and project them on current events or societal ills.

Some examples:

- The Daily Stormer published an article about Justice Karofsky and Justice Dallet, calling them "an elite Jew sitting next to another Jew determining the course of our government," going onto say, "Every time you hear anything about this racism gibberish, it's all Jews making the claims."
- A woman shared a post on Facebook with an image of a smiling man, holding cash and a Star of David next him with the White House and Statue of Liberty above him. The caption read "Covid-19 turned into a massive boom for the banks and a massive bust for those that didn't know about the plan..."
- A Telegram message from former Congressional candidate Paul Nehlen states: "Hey Chinese friend. Uncle Paul here. Remember when your country was on the fast-track with your new infrastructure and world domination? Wonder if you also remember smugly remarking that the West, America in particular was controlled by the Jews here and in Israel? Well, according to our calculations, it sure looks like Israel has unleashed a bio weapon meant to teach you that they control your destiny as well. You gonna let those jealous, vindictive jews get away with it?"
- A Milwaukee news outlet posted an article about Lubavitch of Wisconsin preparing Passover resources on Facebook and a commenter posted a meme titled, "Who's really in control?" with nine variations of the antisemitic illustration of the "Happy Merchant" each with distinct characteristics and the following titles: "fed Reserve & Wall Street," "Internet Spying," "Hollywood & TV," "Law Courts," "Cancer Industry," "Pornography," "Wars for Israel," "Sex-Trafficking," and "Fake Opposition."
- An image shared to a Milwaukee based Facebook page depicted Orthodox Jews next to a drawing of a slave auction and stated, "They ran the slave trade...And now they run the Democratic Party."

Hate Group Activity:

This includes actions by known white power, white nationalist, Black separatist, and neo-Nazi groups. In 2019, there were 10 incidents of hate group activity, 5 of which were based in white supremacist ideology. In 2020, there were 12 incidents, 10 of which were white supremacists ideology.

Some examples:



- A flyer from the White Arian Resistance was distributed on dozens of front lawns. The flyer started with “White Lives Matter!” “You Will Not Replace Us!” describing how white people have decreased to 7% of the global population. It ends with “Jews Will Not Replace Us! The destruction of the White Race is engendered in Judaic world control. We defy their attempt to replace us with other races.”
- A home was vandalized with a swastika and "No Jews, No Sp**ks," the vandalism also included an attempted burglary and arson.
- Graffiti was found on a university campus that included an algis ([life rune](#)), [1488](#), a swastika, as well as the phrases “read David Duke!”, “F*** Israel,” and “come home white man.”
- A sticker reading “America First” from the Patriot Front (a known white national group) was found on a streetlight pole.
- During a Proud Boy rally a man was seen wearing a mask with a swastika on it.

Harassment, Threats, and Assaults:

There was a significant decrease between 2019 and 2020, but over the past few years the incidences of direct, personal acts of antisemitism have increased dramatically (from 6 in 2016, 15 in 2017, 16 in 2018, 40 in 2019, 22 in 2020). This trend points to a shift in how people express their antisemitic sentiments. They are bolder, more open, more personal, and more threatening.

Some examples:

- A synagogue received this voicemail: “Hey what do you guys believe in? Cause I believe in Hitler, you n*****s should have died in the gas chamber.”
- A supreme court justice received a direct message to their twitter campaign account stating “(((hooked-nosed shyster))) : “smacks of ‘racism’” eh? We don’t permit typical ghetto Democrat “voter fraud” to subvert and election, bet on it. Btw: “racist”/“racism” = term coined by your fellow Bolshevik, (((Leon Trotsky))), the label has become meaningless save for it being a “badge of honor” for those it’s assigned to by the likes of (((you))),” followed by a Happy Merchant female caricature.
- A Jewish man wearing kippah and tzitzit was walking his dog when a motorcyclist revved his engine and slowed down next to him and yelled “f***ing Jew” and flipped him off.
- A man took a Biden sign out of his neighbors' yard and started yelling at them when they confronted him. He called the neighbor a "dirty Jew" and blamed Jews for causing riots in Portland.

Holocaust, Nazi, and Hitler references:

In 2020, there was a 12% increase in the number of incidents with Holocaust, Nazi, or Hitler references. Some of these trends include Holocaust denial, minimizing the Holocaust by comparing it to mask mandates, and 16 incidents including a swastika.

Some examples:

- A sticker was found on a stop sign at the entrance of a college campus showing the white Nazi seal of the German eagle carrying a swastika on a black background with the words "Gott mit Uns" (God with us).

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- A high school history teacher made comments suggesting Jewish people created lies that led to "allowing themselves to be killed" in the Holocaust.
- A swastika was graffitied on a window that had a Black Lives Matter sign on the inside.
- A private resident posted two small Nazi flags and a Nazi era sign that says "Amt des Schiedsmannes" which translates to "Office of the Arbitrator" in their front window, on the other side is a picture of Hitler with a swastika over him.
- During a city Common Council's debate on a mask mandate, a local pastor made the comparison that wearing a mask is akin to being led to a train during the Holocaust. The crowd cheered the comments.
- A high school Zoom assembly was interrupted by Nazi marching music which was broadcast for 30 seconds.

Pejorative references to Israel and Zionism:

This audit recognizes the 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 2020, the number of incidents making pejorative references to Israel and Zionism rose 61% from the year prior.

Some examples:

- "Free Palestine" was graffitied on the property of both a synagogue and a Jewish institution in two separate incidents.
- An email was sent to a Rabbi, "The Left will have to choose. Does it fight for Jews (immensely powerful, rich, and privileged)? Or for blacks, Native Americans, and Palestinians (The Oppressed)? Because it can't do both...p.s. Death To Nazi Israel!"
- A photo on Instagram from a Jewish institution cooking class was shared by Students for Justice in Palestine with the caption "Israeli food does not exist." It included these comments "there is actually no such thing as Israeli food – just another part of our culture that Israel has stolen from Palestinians:)", "educate others on Israeli apartheid in Palestine", "...Are Israelis just brainwashed or do they have no souls?"

Notes:

There was a 71% decrease in middle school incidents and 45% decrease in incidents of harassment, threats, and assault. The number of vandalism incidents remained the same.

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The Jewish Community Relations Council of the Milwaukee Jewish Federation envisions a just community that reflects American and Jewish values. The mission is to speak as the representative of the Jewish community on issues of public affairs and public policy by convening and mobilizing the Jewish community through education, advocacy, social justice, and support for Israel.



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The JCRC conducts an annual audit of antisemitic incidents in Wisconsin to maintain accurate and consistent reporting, evaluate trends, educate the public, and empower individuals to help stop the spread of antisemitism and all forms of hate.

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