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June 2, 2021

Facebook Oversight Board  
1209 North Orange Street  
Wilmington, DE 19801

**Re: Reference Numbers: FB-4G1HJ8B1, FB-R2T4X780, FB-2TH5G6U1, FB-9M9ALFTU, FB-5KAL9U43, FB-1G8QIZWP, FB-D6SNJ09I**

Despite years of requests to address antisemitism, Facebook has failed to take sufficient action against posts, groups and users that promote antisemitism in clear contravention of the company’s community standards. Facebook’s inaction has helped spread hatred of Jews and has contributed to historical high levels of antisemitism in America and antisemitism online and offline across the globe.

We submitted the below seven examples of public antisemitic posts that violated Facebook’s policies for removal, but Facebook rejected these requests. We request that the Oversight Board put a stop to the implicit promotion of antisemitism on Facebook by overruling Facebook’s decisions to permit such content to flourish, and instead make clear that Facebook’s Community Standards prohibit such attacks on Jewish people based on “race, ethnicity, national origin, religious affiliation” and accusations that Jews “control[] major institutions such as... the government.”

## Community Standards

Facebook’s Community Standards define hate speech as “a direct attack on people based on what we call protected characteristics – race, ethnicity, national origin, religious affiliation, sexual orientation, caste, sex, gender, gender identity, and serious disease or disability.” They further define these “attacks as violent or dehumanizing speech, harmful stereotypes, statements of inferiority, expressions of contempt, disgust or dismissal, cursing, and calls for exclusion or segregation.”<sup>1</sup>

Tier 1 of Facebook’s Community Standards outlines general “[d]o not post” rules and specifies certain examples of “[d]esignated dehumanizing comparisons, generalizations, or behavioral statements (in written or visual form).” Among these examples is “Jewish people running the world or controlling major institutions such as media networks, the economy or the government.”<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> [https://www.facebook.com/communitystandards/hate\\_speech](https://www.facebook.com/communitystandards/hate_speech)

<sup>2</sup> [Id.](#)

## Antisemitic Conspiracies

A hallmark of modern antisemitism is the idea that Jews have extraordinary power with which they conspire to harm or control those outside the Jewish community.<sup>3</sup> The best-known example is the hateful hoax known as “The Protocols of the Learned Elders of Zion.” An early twentieth century fabrication by the Russian Okhrana, or Czarist secret police, the booklet’s twenty-four sections spell out the alleged secret plans of Jewish leaders seeking to attain world domination. The Protocols served as the basis for Nazi propaganda that laid the foundations for the Holocaust.<sup>4</sup> Although thoroughly discredited, the document and its ideas are still being used to stir up antisemitic hatred and incite violence.<sup>5</sup>

There are many ways of representing these antisemitic and hateful ideas, from physical stereotypes (e.g., Jews have big noses) to Seppia’s (Josef Plank, one of Nazi Germany’s leading cartoonists) much imitated drawing of a Jewish octopus with its tentacles around the globe, to depictions of Jews as puppeteers pulling the strings behind world events, to Der Sturmer’s caricatures of Jewish bankers.<sup>6</sup>

Portrayed as a tiny group perceived as holding inordinate power, Jews are easy to label as dangerous outsiders, as disgusting and perverse, as scapegoats for a variety of social, political and other ills – “from poverty, to poor family dynamics, to war, to destruction of the rainforest”<sup>7</sup> – and as targets worthy of righteous indignation. There are numerous ways to do that, among them misleading or photoshopped images of figures who happen to be Jewish; caricatures of Jews as money-hungry or avaricious, fat, or animalistic; and implications that Jews are operating conspiracies or that non-Jews are somehow under the control of a nefarious Jewish plot. Similarly, accusations of Jews as being agents of a foreign government have been used as the pretext for anti-Jewish persecution, violence, and ethnic cleansing from the Dreyfus Affair in France,<sup>8</sup> to the anti-Jewish repression in the USSR,<sup>9</sup> to the Farhud in Iraq.<sup>10</sup>

We see these tendencies – to scapegoat, divide, and exclude – at every turn. On International Holocaust Remembrance Day in 2021, in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, UN Secretary-General António Guterres commented on the pervasive and persistent tropes of opportunistic antisemitism that impute the same paranoid conspiracies onto the news of the day:<sup>11</sup>

“Propaganda linking Jews with the pandemic, for example, by accusing them of creating the virus as part of a bid for global domination, would be ridiculous, if it were not so dangerous. This is just the latest manifestation of an anti-Semitic trope that dates back to

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.adl.org/news/press-releases/adl-publishes-new-guide-to-antisemitic-tropes>

<sup>4</sup> <https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/protocols-of-the-elders-of-zion>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.adl.org/resources/backgrounders/a-hoax-of-hate-the-protocols-of-the-learned-elders-of-zion>

<sup>6</sup> <https://collections.ushmm.org/search/catalog/pa4913>; <https://collections.ushmm.org/search/catalog/irn542389>; <https://research.calvin.edu/german-propaganda-archive/images/sturmer/ds34-40.jpg>

<sup>7</sup> [https://www.huffpost.com/entry/daily-stormer-nazi-style-guide\\_n\\_5a2ece19e4b0ce3b344492f2](https://www.huffpost.com/entry/daily-stormer-nazi-style-guide_n_5a2ece19e4b0ce3b344492f2)

<sup>8</sup> <https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/alfred-dreyfus-and-the-dreyfus-affair>

<sup>9</sup> Lindemann, Albert S. & Richard S. Levy (2010). *Antisemitism: A History*. New York: Oxford University Press. pp. 187–188

<sup>10</sup> <https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/the-farhud>

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.un.org/press/en/2021/sgsm20553.doc.htm>

at least the fourteenth century, when Jews were accused of spreading the bubonic plague.”

Both ADL and the Facebook Community Standards team recognize that there is a clear connection between *online* antisemitic, racist and hateful images and tropes reverberating on Facebook and *offline* hate and violence directed at marginalized communities. In the United States, calls to violence in the name of white supremacy and “The Great Replacement” correlate to fatal shootings in Poway, El Paso, Pittsburgh and more, and led to the injuries and deaths at the white supremacist attacks in Charlottesville in 2017 and on the U.S. Capitol on Jan 6, 2021.<sup>12</sup>

### Antisemitic Content on Facebook

In May 2021, we requested Facebook take down the following seven examples of antisemitic content. Facebook rejected these requests both on the first and second levels of review. We request that the Oversight Board overturn this decision and send a clear message that antisemitism has no place on Facebook.

### Exhibit 1: Post quoting Joseph Goebbels with Jewish domination tropes on May 20, 2021 (Reference ID: FB-4G1HJ8B1)



May 20 at 1:55 PM ·

2 1 Share

Like Comment Share

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.adl.org/resources/backgrounders/the-great-replacement-an-explainer>

This post quotes Joseph Goebbels, the architect of Nazi propaganda and arguably the most well-known Nazi besides Adolf Hitler.<sup>13</sup> The quotation alleges that Jews control the media in order to dominate the world. The quotation is paired with an image of an octopus touching a variety of media outlets. Inside the image is the well-known antisemitic meme known as the “Happy Merchant,” which is a drawing of a Jewish man with stereotyped features greedily rubbing his hands together, along with the Star of David.<sup>14</sup> This is a clear reference to Seppl’s much imitated drawing of a Jewish octopus with its tentacles around the globe that was part of Nazi propaganda and has been used since to suggest Jewish domination of the world and clearly distinguishes this as antisemitic, rather than just a historical quote or counterspeech.<sup>15</sup>

### Exhibit 2: Post of “Hitler Was Right” on May 19, 2021 (Reference ID: FB-R2T4X780)



Violence between Israel and Palestinians escalated significantly in May 2021. People have diverse perspectives on this violence and the issue generally. Criticism of Israel and its policies and actions regarding the Israel-Palestinian conflict is not inherently antisemitic, and society should debate and discuss these issues like any others. However, such criticism must not fall into antisemitic tropes or hatred of Jews. This post, like many others during this period, clearly crosses that line. The post features a person holding a sign saying “Hitler Was Right” alongside a crossed out Jewish Star of David. Praising Adolf Hitler, the murderer of six million Jews, is not political debate but is clearly “a direct attack on people based on... religious affiliation” and glorification of violence.

### Exhibit 3: Post trafficking in Rothschild conspiracy theories on September 9, 2020 (Reference ID: FB-2TH5G6U1)

<sup>13</sup> <https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/joseph-goebbels-1>

<sup>14</sup> <https://www.adl.org/education/references/hate-symbols/the-happy-merchant>

<sup>15</sup> <https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/gallery/antisemitism-photographs>



“Waking Times” is a “News & Media Website” public page that is followed by over 612K users and regularly traffics in conspiracy theories and misinformation. This post repeats the conspiracy that the Rothschild family controls “major institutions” throughout the world. The Rothschild family were prominent Jewish bankers in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century and, as such, have been a prime target for antisemitism on their own behalf as well as, simultaneously and subsequently, standing figuratively for an imagined Jewish conspiracy.<sup>16</sup>

**Exhibit 4: Post alleging network of Jewish pedophilia on October 3, 2020 (Reference ID: FB-9M9ALFTU)**



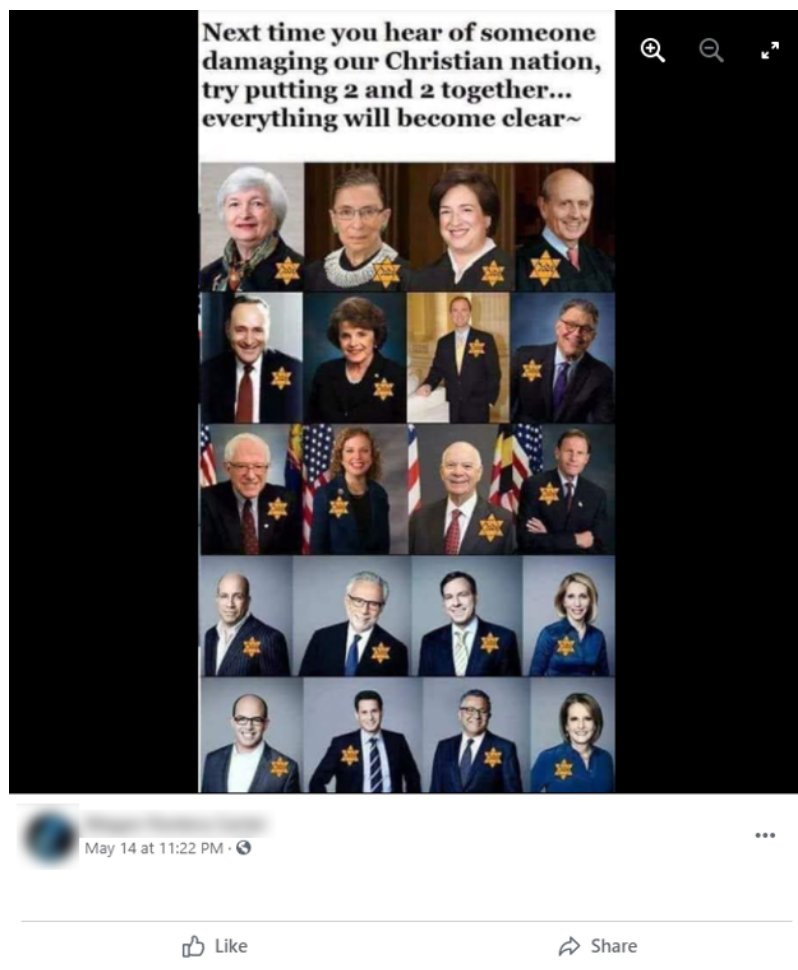
This post appears in the public community page “Rothschild Zionism,” which has 21k members and has existed since August 10, 2012. It describes itself as “About the dynastic Rothschild Bankster-Gangster Crime Family - Public Enemy Number One threat to world peace, liberty, and

<sup>16</sup> <https://www.adl.org/resources/backgrounders/jewish-control-of-the-federal-reserve-a-classic-antisemitic-myth#the-rothschild-connection>



justice. The capstone of the New World Order.” The caption to the image describes Jeffrey Epstein and Les Wexner as both “Child Trafficking Jewish Supremacists.” The intention of the post is to take one guilty person of Jewish provenance (Epstein) and, in an “expression of contempt” and “disgust” attempt to paint a “harmful stereotype” that would link all Jews to “the trafficking of children for sexual abuse.” Linking Jews to sexual deviance, assault, and exploitation has a long history used to justify the persecution of Jews.<sup>17</sup>

**Exhibit 5: Post suggesting well-known Jewish individuals ruining America on May 14, 2021 (FB-5KAL9U43)**

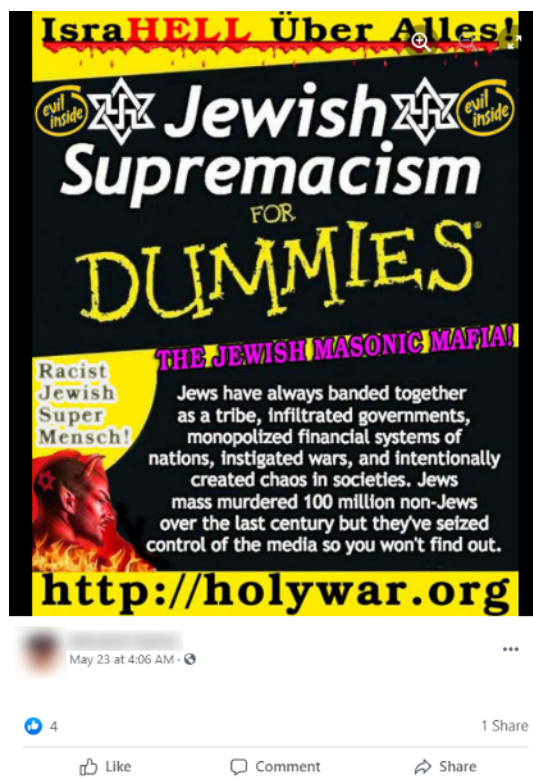


This post identifies a number of Jewish politicians, journalists and other public figures and suggests that they are ruining “our Christian nation.” This traffics in the common trope that Jews are trying to take over a country. A yellow Star of David is superimposed on each individual. This star does far more than mark them as Jewish; it is a reference to the star that Nazis required Jews to wear to identify themselves as Jewish and isolate them from the rest of society, leading

<sup>17</sup> *Slandering the Jew: Sexuality and Difference in Early Christian Texts*, by Susanna Drake, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013; Kerl, Kristoff. “‘Oppression by Orgasm’: Pornography and Antisemitism in Far-Right Discourses in the United States Since the 1970s.” *Studies in American Jewish Literature (1981-)*, vol. 39, no. 1, 2020, pp. 117–138.

to genocide.<sup>18</sup> As a result, this post clearly violates Facebook’s rules by suggesting that “Jewish people run[] the world or control[] major institutions such as media networks, the economy or the government” and by suggesting violence.

**Exhibit 6: Post alleging Jewish mass murder and tropes on May 23, 2021 (FB-1G8QIZWP)**



The post attributes a wide range of evils and conspiracies to Jews and Israel, claiming that a “Jewish masonic mafia” has murdered 100 million non-Jews and controlled the media. The imagery makes clear the demonization of all Jews with the Nazi symbol superimposed on the Star of David as well as a devil-like character with a Star of David. The image also links to a website that urges Christians to fight Jews and Israel for a variety of alleged evils. As a result, this post clearly violates Facebook’s rules by featuring “violent or dehumanizing speech” and “dehumanizing comparisons.”

**Exhibit 7: Post blaming Rothschilds for World Trade Center attacks on May 26, 2021 (FB-D6SNJ09I)**

<sup>18</sup> <https://www.ushmm.org/propaganda/archive/star-david-badge/>;  
<https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/photographs-and-overview-of-jewish-badges-in-the-holocaust>



For the nearly 20 years since the 9/11 terrorist attacks, antisemites have spread conspiracy theories alleging that Israel and Jews caused the events of that day.<sup>19</sup> The post features a video that begins with the phrase “Israel did 9/11” over an image of the burning Twin Towers. The post alleges that Jews, including the Rothschilds, participated in an elaborate conspiracy to perpetuate the terror attacks. This post clearly violates Facebook’s rules against hate speech.

### Conclusion

The above examples are only a few of the thousands of clear-cut examples of antisemitism on Facebook’s public pages and groups. They traffic in long-standing conspiracies and tropes that anti-Jewish groups have used for centuries to justify persecution, from pogroms under Czarist governments, to genocide under the Nazi regime, to shootings in this country. We have reported them to Facebook, and Facebook’s review found they did not violate the platform’s Community Standards. We hereby request that you use your independence to take action to ensure Facebook does not continue to propagate antisemitism. We also ask that you direct Facebook to provide sufficient resources and make necessary product changes to enforce currently existing policies at scale.

<sup>19</sup> <https://www.adl.org/blog/anti-semitic-911-conspiracy-theorists-thrive-15-years-after-attacks>