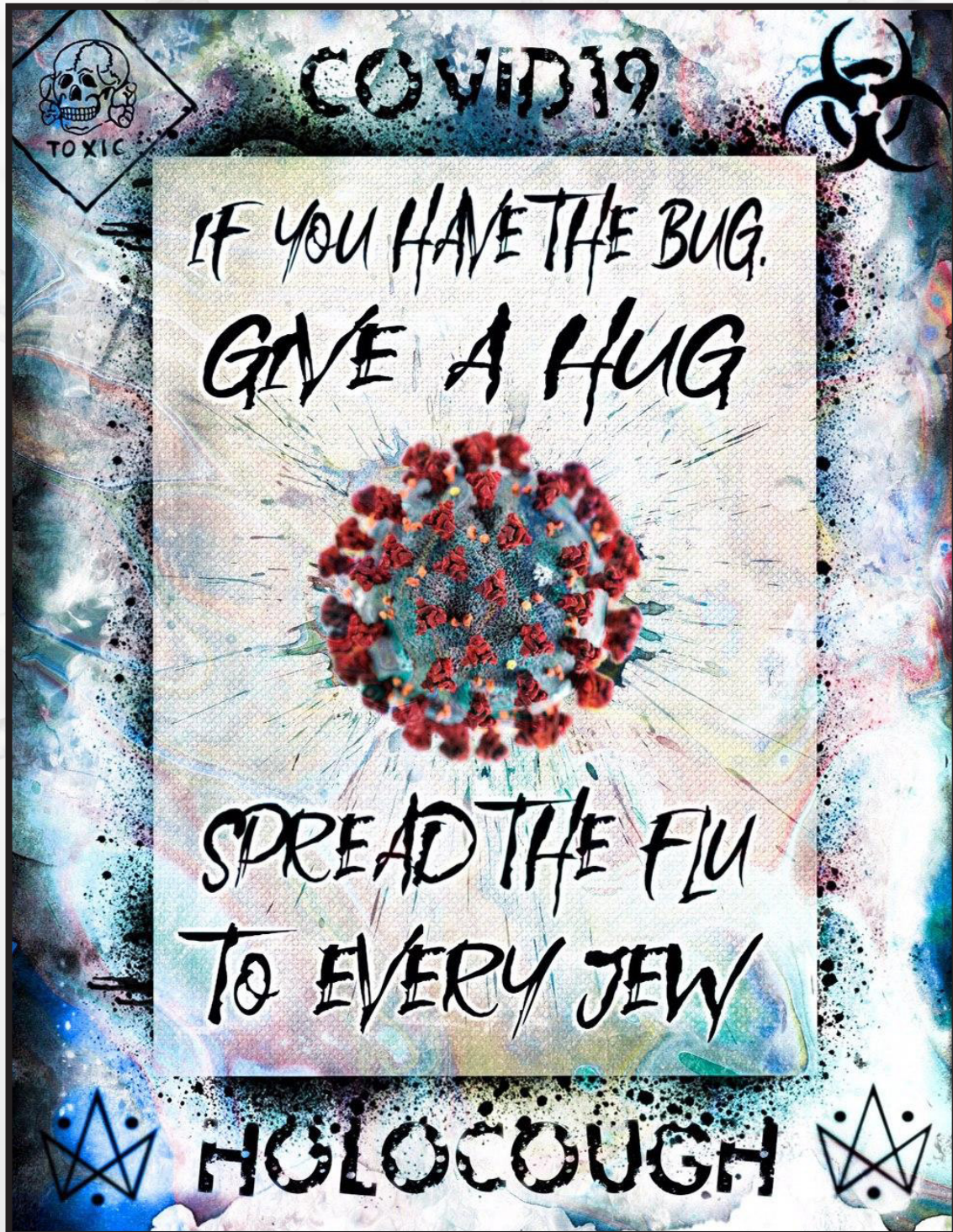


Deadly New Virus Intersects with History's Oldest Hate: *Report & Analysis*



by

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INTRODUCTION

By now everyone is painfully aware that the twenty-first century lacks immunity to not only contagious diseases but ancient ideological plagues like anti-Semitism. The current moment is particularly dangerous because of new efforts to harm Jews by exploiting well-founded concerns about the Coronavirus.

This essay puts under the microscope current examples of the threatening conjunction of anxieties about this new virus with thousand-year-old prejudices demonizing Jews not just as Christ killers and Shylocks but as disease purveyors. COVID-19 is a novel virus, for which there is still no vaccine like that invented by Dr. Jonas Salk to end the scourge of polio; but the manipulation of such pandemics by anti-Semites has historical roots going back millennia. Our focus will be the highly-relevant history of what might be called “medicalized” anti-Semitism.

THE HISTORICAL RECORD:

Prelude from The World War I Era: Spanish Influenza

Before delving back 1000 years, let’s revisit just a century ago. That was when the so-called **Spanish Influenza that arose at the end of World War I took at least 50 million lives internationally and 670,000 in the U.S.** In Goldsboro, North Carolina, one resident recalled, “We were actually almost afraid to breathe. . . .You were afraid even to go out . . .The fear was so great people were actually afraid to leave their homes . . . afraid to talk to one another.” Babe Ruth was put out of action by the Spanish flu for two weeks. At 1919’s Paris Peace Conference, President Wilson suffered symptoms that may have undermined his diplomatic effectiveness.

Just before the virus hit, Russell Dunne, an Irish immigrant, became notorious among New York Jews for attacking them on street corners as “kikes” and “long-nosed greasy vermin.” The twentieth century’s genocidal metaphor—the equation of Jews with “**vermin**”—was already in the air.

After a tirade at Madison Square Garden, Dunne was charged with inciting a riot. A Russian Jew, Judge Leonard Snitken, sentenced him to a month’s hard labor. Yet not Dunne but Snitken suffered the consequences when two men beat him severely in a stairwell of the court house.

The post-Spanish Flu Decade—the fabled Jazz Age—favored the Dunnes rather than the Snitkens. Jewish as well as Italian American soldiers were stereotyped as dirty, diseased, and stupid during and after World War I. Hundreds of thousands of Klansmen marched on Washington, D.C., during the 1920s. Racist immigration laws were enacted. The decade’s leading novelists like Ernest Hemingway demeaned Jews in their fiction. And Henry Ford and Adolf Hitler formed a virtual trans-Atlantic mutual admiration society during the decade.

A decade defaced by prejudice had its start after the world was ravaged by a killer virus that looked both forward to COVID-19 and backward to the medieval Black Death.

THE BLOOD LIBEL / RITUAL MURDER ACCUSATION

The age-old blood libel accusation—that Jews ritually murdered Christian children for their blood—became synonymous with medieval Europe, but dates back to the pre-Christian Hellenistic period when Jews were accused of kidnapping non-Jews to sacrifice in Jerusalem’s Second Temple. This was especially pernicious because it was Judaism that followed the Torah’s explicit instructions already rejecting human sacrifice 3,000 years ago. (As Judith and Milton Kestenberg put it in their essay “Child Killing and Child Sacrificing” in *Origins of Human Aggression*, “the renouncing of infanticide, as shown in the biblical story of Abraham and Isaac, stamped Jews for all times as rescuers and saviors of children . . . It was precisely this role of Jews as child-rescuers and child lovers [that] made them the target of those [like the Nazis] who cannot control their impulses to sacrifice children for the glory of the father and the fatherland.”)

Europe became obsessed with blood libels starting in the twelfth century. More children disappeared as cities grew, and Jews were blamed by Christians led to believe that Judaism required Christian blood for Passover.

In 1132 in Norwich, England, a 12-year-old named William was an apprentice who tanned and sold hides to the local population including Jews. He disappeared. The Christian villagers quickly blamed Jews, but Sheriff John de Chesney dismissed the accusation as nonsense and put Norwich Jewry under his protection. Nothing much happened for almost 20 years. Then, a hate monger, Thomas of Monmouth, compiled a chronicle, *The Life and Miracles of St. William of Norwich*, based primarily on the testimony of Jewish converts to Christianity like the monk Theobald of Cambridge. Theobald alleged there was a Jewish prophecy that the Jews would regain control of Israel if they sacrificed Christian children. Every year, Jewish leaders met in Narbonne, France to decide who would be asked to perform the sacrifice; in 1144, the Jews of Norwich were selected. The chronicler Thomas embellished this libelous story about young William’s death with gory detail of his own:

“Having shaved his head, they stabbed it with countless thorn points, and made the blood come horribly from the wounds they made. And so cruel were they and so eager to inflict pain that it was difficult to say whether they were more cruel or more ingenious in their tortures . . . And thus, while these enemies of the Christian name were rioting in the spirit of malignity around the boy, some of those present adjudged him to be fixed to a cross in mockery of the Lord’s Passion.”

The invention of the printing press gave new impetus to the ritual murder accusation. Illustrated books such as *The Nuremberg Chronicles*, featuring the **Martyrdom of Simon of Trent in 1475, dramatized lurid, baseless charges** by local prelates intent on creating a tourist attraction.



Holocaust survivor and Nazi hunter Simon Wiesenthal starting in 1951, fought to convince the Church to close down this tourist attraction six years after the Holocaust. **In 2020, an Italian Catholic artist has revived the blood libel in a new painting posted on Facebook**, despite Pope Paul VI’s repudiation of it at the Second Vatican Council in 1965, the year the Catholic Church disavowed anti-Semitism.

The point deserves emphasis that medieval Christians also justified the ritual murder accusation by claiming that Jewish men menstruated and needed Christian blood to replenish their depleted body fluids. Incredibly, such beliefs were still prevalent in Eastern Europe from Hungary’s Tisza-Eszlar and Ritter ritual murder cases in the 1880s to the Beilis Trial of 1912-1913, in Kiev, the basis the Bernard Malamud’s novel, *The Fixer* (1966). In 2006, a Ukrainian magazine revived false accusations from the Beilis Trial.

The ritual murder accusation had been transported to the Middle East by 1840, when Damascus became the conveyor belt for a new version of the blood libel that spread from Arab Christian to Muslim communities. The Blood Libel/Big Lie would be invoked again and again in the Arab world, most notably in the 1980s when a book—*The Matzah of Zion* **by Syrian Defense Minister Field Marshal Mustafa Tlass was published**. That widely distributed book became the basis of an **Egyptian film project by the same name which was supposed to be the Muslim world's answer to Schindler's List**.

Hamas' Al-Aqsa TV recently broadcast a speech by Dr. Sallah Sultan claiming to prove in excruciating detail how the Jews still murder non-Jewish children annually to knead matzah from their blood. Dr. Sultan is a "permanent U.S. resident," as fluent in English as Arabic, who travels around the Middle East where he urged suicide "martyrdom" attacks on U.S. troops in Iraq.

There have been ritual murder accusations in the U.S., most recently in 1928 in Upstate New York. In our time, blood libels have been updated with the screed that Israeli troops harvest the organs of Palestinians to sell on the international market. Believe it or not, **Jaspir Puar**, associate professor of Women's and Gender Studies at Rutgers University was slated to deliver a lecture in 2020 at Scripps College elaborating this same theory, based on her anti-Israel book, *The Right to Maim: Debility, Capacity, Disability*. Only university closures caused by the Corona pandemic aborted her presentation at this prestigious academic institution.

Robert Bowers, who murdered 11 at Pittsburgh Tree of Life Synagogue in November, 2018, mocked his victims by alluding to his crimes as payback for the "jewish [sic] Ritual Murder . . . also known as Blood Libel. " Echoing Bowers was John T. Earnest, who murdered one and maimed others at San Diego County's Poway Synagogue on Passover, 2019. He wrote in his online manifesto: "You are not forgotten Simon of Trent, the horror that you and countless children have endured at the hands of the Jews will never be forgiven."

JEWS AS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE BLACK DEATH

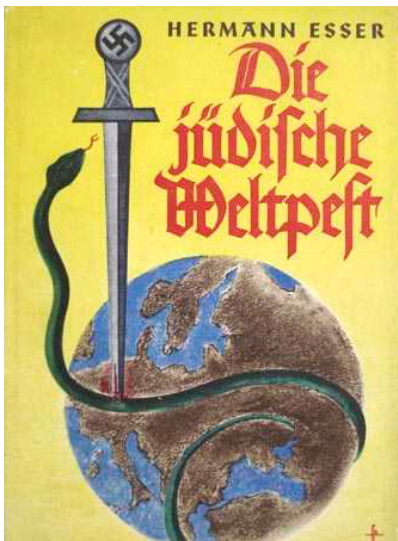
Mongols—fearsome warriors on horseback—conquered medieval China. Yet their greatest impact on world history came when Mongol armies transported rats, infected with a deadly bacterium, to their siege of a Crimean city from which Genoese merchants fled by ship.

From Italy to France, to Spain and England, and ultimately to Germany and Poland, the Black Death or Bubonic Plague (which also devastated Jerusalem) probably halved Europe's population of some 80 million between 1348 and 1352.

The Black Death altered Europe's demographic destiny; Jews were not spared, despite some speculation that they had lower fatality rates because of superior hygiene. **The Bubonic Plague also transformed European Jew-hatred**. No prior anti-Semitic mania ravaged entire societies like the pathogenic hatreds unleashed by the Black Death.

From Barcelona to Kraków, Jews were burned at the stake or expelled from 500 cities. In Mainz, Europe's largest Jewish community, Jews defended themselves. A Christian mob exacted revenge, killing 6,000 Jews. Europe's Jewish population shifted eastward to Poland.

Historians used to debate whether such pogroms were largely "from the bottom up," carried out by mobs of artisans and peasants, or "from the top down," led by knights, princes, and prelates with grievances against Jewish moneylenders. But Magda Teter's new book, *Blood Libel*, suggests that the Black Death caused the



disintegration of European societies, with Christians at all levels uniting in murderously scapegoating Jews as menacing “others.” Jews were pervasively demonized not just as poisoners of wells, but as polluters of society.

HITLER AS PLAGUE “DOCTOR”

Hermann Esser was a second-tier Nazi and friend of Hitler. He has made a recent internet list of “Ten Dead Nazis You’ve Never Heard Of.” Esser’s career never recovered after it became known he molested the wives and daughters of leading Nazis. Yet he should be remembered historically for one thing.

Starting in the mid-1920s when Hitler was writing *Mein Kampf*, Esser was laboring over his own grandiose work: *The Jewish World Plague*. It appeared in two editions at opportune times for hate propaganda in Germany: in 1933 when

Hitler seized power and in 1939, months after the Kristallnacht Pogrom.

This quote conveys his book’s rancid flavor:

“The knowledge of the Jew must be brought to every attic and every corner of Greater Germany, the knowledge that the Jew was a world plague from the beginning, remained so for millennia, and will forever remain one. Wherever Jewry has appeared, it has never built anything. It has always and everywhere destroyed or torn down, sucking others dry to fill itself. From the days of the Romans to our day, Jewry in every century, in every people, was and remained a foreign body, a destroyer of real and ideal values, a denier of any upward progress, a plague for body and soul . . . Jewry always and everywhere has been a homeless racial mish-mash, a world plague . . . That is its ‘chosenness’ from all the peoples of the earth, a ‘chosenness’ of destructive pestilence for the world and for mankind.”

Adolf Hitler took anti-Semitic plague metaphors with deadly seriousness. Here are two passages, both from *Mein Kampf*. First, on Jews and the Black Death:

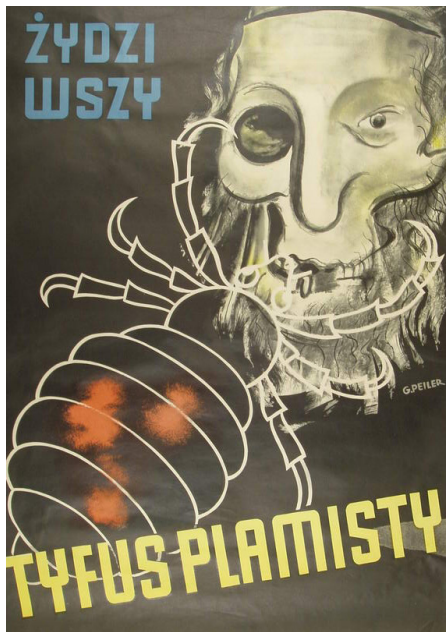
“If you cut even cautiously into such an abscess, you find, like a maggot in a rotting body, often dazzled by the sudden light—a kike! This was pestilence, spiritual pestilence, worse than the Black Death of olden times, and the people were being infected by it.”

Second on Jews and syphilis that Jews were accused of introducing in Europe from the Americas:

“The invention of a remedy of questionable character and its commercial exploitation can no longer help much against the Plague, . . . the Jewification of our spiritual life and mammonization of our material instinct.”

For Hitler the Jewish plague and Jewish syphilis were not merely metaphors. The Fuhrer viewed himself as “the great doctor” or “the Robert Koch of politics.” The father of modern bacteriology, Koch identified the causes of tuberculosis, cholera, and anthrax, and pioneered the study of infectious diseases. In Hitler’s World War II “Table Talk,” the Fuhrer declared “[Koch] discovered the bacillus and thereby ushered medical science onto new paths. I discovered the Jew as the bacillus and the fermenting agent of all social decomposition . . . The discovery of the Jewish virus is one of the greatest revolutions that has taken place in the world. The battle in which we are engaged today is of the same sort as the battle waged, during the last century, by Pasteur and Koch. How many diseases have their origin in the Jewish virus! We shall regain our health only by eliminating the Jew.” Not surprisingly, Nazis’ Polish language propaganda in 1942 also accused Jews of spreading typhus.





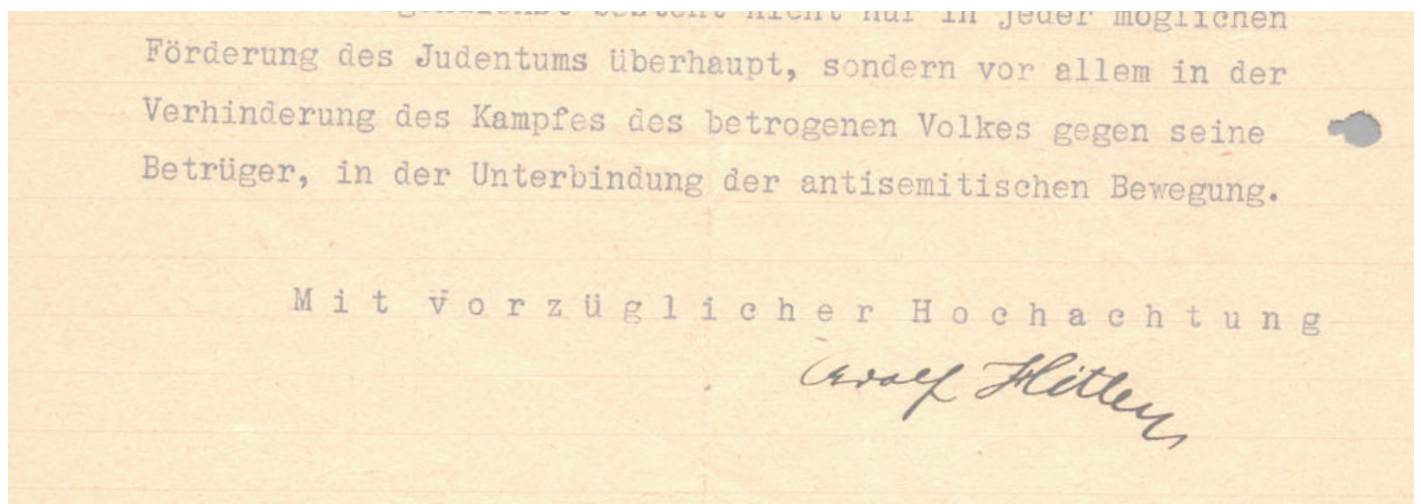
Fawned over by Germany's actors, actresses, and directors, Hitler was also involved in the production of the vile Nazi propaganda films, *Jud Süß* and *The Eternal Jew* (both 1940) which depicted Jews as rats or vermin. After World War II and the Nazi Holocaust, director Veit Harlan was acquitted at the Nuremberg Trials.

While scientists searched for cures of contagious viruses as well as syphilis, Hitler believed the only cure was political because "the Jewish plague" was an opportunist aggressor with global-spreading potential. Hitler had contempt for any half-way solutions short of extermination. "Anyone who wants to cure this era, which is inwardly sick and rotten, must first of all summon up the courage to make clear the causes of this disease." The Jews were "a veritable world sickness . . . a plague that devastates whole peoples.

. . . an international pestilence." One Nazi cartoon was captioned this way:



On display at the Simon Wiesenthal Center in Los Angeles is the so-called "Gemlich Letter." The document, a 4-page letter signed by Adolf Hitler, dated September 16, 1919, six years before the publication of *Mein Kampf*, describes his hatred of Jews and outlines his plans calling for: "The uncompromising removal of the Jews altogether. . ."



FROM THE BLACK DEATH TO COVID-19

Could a potentially cataclysmic killer like today's COVID-19 virus fuse with anti-Semitic ideology in a deadly 21st century synthesis?

In terms of a new linkage of a pandemic with extreme anti-Semitism, consider that the World Health Organization (WHO) already warns against “trolls and conspiracy theories” exploiting COVID-19.

Here are some anti-Semitic examples:

- Louis Farrakhan's Research Group Tweeted that Israel may have developed COVID-19 as a money maker “in response to news that an Israeli research institution will announce a coronavirus vaccine.”
- Iran's Press TV, the mouthpiece for Tehran's mullahocracy, has lied about its own botched attempts to contain the virus while warning that Iranians must not use any vaccine or medicine developed by “Zionists.” “[The] United States is run by lunatics, by psychopaths who are entirely capable of launching World War III by way of a biological warfare attack on China and Iran, with the Iran component presumably led by Israel.” The head of Iran's annual “Holocaust Cartoon” competition has transitioned from Holocaust Denial to Covid-19 conspiracy mongering.
- In Iraq, Muhammad Sadeq Al-Hashemi “proved” on Al-Ayam TV that Coronavirus is comparable to Americans using small pox-infected blankets to kill Native Americans, and that the ultimate criminals are the Rothschilds who also were behind the decision to nuke Hiroshima and Nagasaki.
- California State University Professor As'ad Abukhalil warns that Israel—which in fact is extending medical aid to the Palestinians—will institute racist caging of infected Palestinians. Code Pink's Ariel Gold Tweeted: “International Law: Israel is culpable for every coronavirus death in Gaza.”
- The FBI has identified Neo-Nazis who practice “domestic terrorism” by encouraging “one another to spread the virus, if contracted, through bodily fluids and personal interactions” to kill Jews and law enforcement. Their game plan: Coronavirus is “a cure for Jewishness”; therefore, any American patriot stricken with disease should go to Israel and “take out as many Jews as you can.”
- A George Washington University sophomore was attacked for wearing his kippah. One attacker yelled: “Oh! Yahood! Yahood! We've got a yahood over here. . . You produced it!”
- On social media, white supremacists rejoice when Israelis are afflicted, and 4chan and Gab posts identify the virus as an Israeli bio-weapon. Anti-Semitic hackers also disrupt online Jewish meetings.
- Pro-Putin Bulgarian websites blame “joos” and Zionists for Coronavirus, and some Arab outlets are already blaming Israel.

Israel's critics are not known for sympathy for Jews who have died of COVID-19. Former Human Rights Watch official Sarah Leah Whitson, now affiliated with the Quincy Institute, which faces charges of anti-Semitism from within its own ranks, Tweeted her delight that “six million Jewish Israelis” are now getting a taste of the crimes that they have been inflicting on Palestinians for over a half century, lamenting that Israel is having **“such a tiny taste. Missing a tablespoon of blood.”**

Make no mistake about it: the belief that Jews or Israel is responsible for Coronavirus is a deadly serious threat. An admirer of the 1980s terrorist group The Order, Timothy R. Wilson from a St. Louis suburb used the internet moniker Werwolfe 84. He was linked to two active neo-Nazi organizations, the National Socialist Movement (NSM) and Vorherrschaft Division (VSD), and had listed a synagogue and mosque as potential targets. This was the backdrop of his decision to bomb a St. Louis hospital treating Coronavirus, partly as an answer to what he called a Jewish “power grab.” Wilson died in a shootout with the FBI.

Meanwhile, Rick Wiles, an American far-right conspiracy theorist, radio host, and non-denominational pastor at Flowing Streams Church in Vero Beach, Florida, has declared through his anti-Semitic *TruNews* website this about the Jewish people and the Coronavirus Pandemic:

“The people who are going in to the synagogue are coming out of the synagogue with the virus. It’s spreading in Israel through the synagogues. God is spreading it in your synagogues! You are under judgment because you oppose his son, Jesus Christ.”

Wiles made the **Wiesenthal Center’s 2019 Top Ten Worst Anti-Semitic List** for claiming that the impeachment controversy was “a Jew coup.”

CONCLUSION

The Coronavirus Pandemic may be new, but Jews have a long and tragic history of being accused of spreading deadly viruses as well as sacrificing children to ingest their blood.

Hitler showed how a hater in a span of only twenty years could metastasize from an unknown anti-Semite into a tyrant who would unleash a genocide against a people after demonizing and dehumanizing them as “vermin.”

In 2020, the malevolent and hate-laced anti-Semitic conspiracies inspired by the medieval blood libel and the Black Death have infested the usual anti-Semitic bigots and venues, and even some prominent so-called “human rights” activists.

Dynamically linked to delusional anti-Semitism since the Middle Ages, viral pandemics still menace Jews today existentially as well as physically. In response, we should remain vigilant, monitoring online screeds that can translate into “lone wolf” actions. But even in the midst of a once-in-a-century epidemic, we must also continue to honor our people’s humanitarian imperative to be caring for our families, including and especially our precious elderly Holocaust survivors. We must also be there for our neighbors—whatever their faith or creed—working together to heal our nation and our world physically and spiritually.



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