

CONCEPTUALIZING HATE SPEECH: HOW THE INTERNET HAS CONTRIBUTED TO
ANTISEMITISM IN THE UNITED STATES

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ABSTRACT

Antisemitism has been prevalent from the pre-modern to the modern period. Examples are the Catholic church in the Middle Ages and the rise of Hitler during World War II. Unfortunately, time has not eradicated the pervasiveness of hate speech against Jews. In our times, the wide-spread use of websites and social media has given people with antisemitic views a much larger stage to spread their hatred. Furthermore, the dark web allows hate groups to go underground on the Internet through encrypted data to spread their views. The growth of the Internet has given people a new forum to spread their hatred and bigotry away from the restriction of censorship laws, which do not exist in the United States due to the First Amendment of freedom of speech. In addition to the First Amendment, there are hate speech laws in place in the United States. The Internet also gives extremists the ability to connect and “link up” with others who share their racist, xenophobic beliefs, allowing them to further spread their hatred. This platform is hard to police because of the volume of data going in and out of the metaphorical highway that makes up the Internet, thus leaving minority groups to be persecuted and targeted even further.

This thesis tackles the topic of hatred against Jews and the internet by examining antisemitism online. A brief history of antisemitism is given first. Then online examples of antisemitism are discussed. Finally, the lack of hate speech laws is explained and possible solutions to stopping antisemitism on the Internet are discussed.

Keywords: antisemitism, Judaism, hate speech, Internet

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Introduction

It is no secret that the Jewish people have not had it easy throughout history: They were often blamed and used as scapegoats for just about every major event that happened. Take the crucifixion of Jesus Christ: Many Christians blame the Jews for that despite the fact that the Bible itself states that the Romans carried out that execution. When the Black Death struck Europe, Jews were blamed for causing it due to their failure to convert to Christianity: The plague was a punishment from God. When Germany and Austria lost World War I, a young politician named Adolf Hitler decided to use already existing suspicion of Jews to his advantage. He created a platform built on antisemitism and white supremacy, both of which lead him to a victory for a government seat where he later carried out one of the largest genocides in history: The Holocaust or the Shoah. Despite the hardship and pain the Jewish people have been through, there are still those who continue to curse both their people and their religion, all in the name of racism and xenophobia. Out of the 917 hate groups registered in 2016 on the Southern Poverty Law Center's "Hate Map," 707 hold some kind of antisemitic beliefs. Overall, the number of hate groups has risen from 457 in 1999 to the number I stated above, 917 in 2016.¹

To explain how the Internet facilitates and intensifies antisemitic hate speech, this thesis does a few things. First, it gives a brief history of antisemitism and its roots. Second, it looks at online hate speech to examine how the Internet can foster antisemitism. Third, the lack of hate speech laws in the United States is revealed, showing how those who are affected by online hate

¹ Southern Poverty Law Center, "Hate Map," <https://www.google.com/url?q=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.splcenter.org%2Fhate-map>. Accessed May 15, 2017.

speech are left vulnerable. Finally, this thesis offers some suggestions for what can be done in the future to control antisemitic hate speech on the Internet.

Methodology

This thesis used basic research methods in order to support the thesis statement of how the Internet fosters antisemitism. Studies done by the World Jewish Congress were implemented into the paper to underline points made: Millions of interactions on social media were monitored by the World Jewish Congress to show any instances of antisemitism on platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. Rather than conducting my own research, as there was a much smaller pool to gather information from at my university, I instead decided to use other organization's research. This helped me get a much broader understanding of the underlying problem, whereas if I had surveyed the small amount of students at my institution, the data would have been much more specific. Although specific data is usually a good thing, I am analyzing antisemitism on social media in the entire United States, therefore the data needs to be much broader.

In addition, I also personally accessed the Dark Web and recorded my findings in order to describe what it is like. This included downloading the TOR network in order to access the Dark Web. To do this, I downloaded an app called "TorVPN" from the Apple Application Store onto my iPad. I then accessed the TOR network with Dr. Horowitz and compiled a list of information to interpret and add to this thesis. For the most part, subjective and interpretative methods were used to gather the sources used in this thesis, as there was not an abundance of hard data about

this particular subject. Case studies were also implemented to show specific occurrences of the phenomena discussed in the paper.

A Brief History of Antisemitism

The Anti-Defamation League defines antisemitism as “The belief or behavior hostile toward Jews just because they are Jewish. It may take the form of religious teachings that proclaim the inferiority of Jews, for instance, or political efforts to isolate, oppress, or otherwise injure them. It may also include prejudiced or stereotyped views about Jews.”² Despite the progress that the United States has made throughout history, including the ending of slavery, allowing those of the LGBTQIA+ community to get married, and many other things, antisemitism is just about as prevalent as it was during the reign of Hitler. Granted, antisemitic sentiments are hidden a lot more than they were during the time of the Third Reich, thanks to a little something called the Internet. From Biblical times up until today’s modern era, antisemitism still remains as prevalent as ever.

Since the dawn of other Western religions, antisemitism has constantly been on the rise. For the first 1000 years of the Christian era, Jews were often to blame for most major events. Up until fairly recently, it was a widely held belief among Christians that Jews were responsible for the death of Jesus Christ. Despite the fact that the Bible directly tells the story as Pontius Pilate, the Roman prefect who served under Emperor Tiberius, giving the order to sentence Jesus to death: “And Pilate gave sentence that it should be as they required. And he released unto them him that for sedition and murder was cast into prison, whom they had desired; but he delivered

² Anti-Defamation League, “Anti-Semitism,” <http://www.adl.org/anti-semitism>. Accessed May 23, 2017.

Jesus to their will.”³ Despite this clear evidence in their own book of worship, Christians pushed the Jews to exile, claiming it was their punishment for what they had done to Christ, and also for refusing to convert to Christianity. The belief that Jews committed deicide created a “domino effect”, if you will, leading to the creation of more and more horrific rumors about the Jewish people.

As the Crusades rolled through Europe to combat the acquisition of land by Muslim nations, anti-Jewish sentiments became more and more prevalent. The idea of “blood libel” came to be a strong rumor surrounding the Jewish people. This was the belief that Jews were using the blood of Christian children as “wine” in their religious ceremonies and rituals. This rumor struck fear throughout the Christian community and led Christians to believe that Jews were in service to the “anti-Christ”, rather than God himself. These rumors of blood libel coupled with the Black Death ravaging the European population created a fear of Jewish people, as non-Jews began to believe that the Jews brought the Black Death on through their rituals and religious ceremonies. This fear, comparable to that of the Red Scare when communism was thought to be threatening the US in the 20th century, swept through Europe. Pogroms, or “riots launched against Jews by local residents, and frequently encouraged by the authorities”⁴, were frequently practiced toward Jews throughout this era. Thankfully, the next time period would come along to slow a bit of this behavior.

The Modern Era, although still rife with antisemitism, seemed a bit more tame than its predecessor, the first millennium. European antisemitism from a religious perspective seemed to

³ *The Holy Bible: King James Version*. London, Oxford Classics, 2008.

⁴ United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, “Anti Semitism in History: The Early Church to 1400,” <https://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/article.php?ModuleId=10007170>. Accessed May 15, 2017.

decrease with the coming of the Enlightenment, a time which focused on scientific breakthroughs and less on religion. Because of this change, Jews were now allowed rights that they weren't before the Enlightenment. They were able to hold state official positions, be generals in the army, and hold various positions in the workforce. This does not mean that antisemitism stopped, it simply took on a different form. Rather than being centered around religion, antisemitism now came from a political, cultural, and intellectual perspective. Because the church banned lending money at interest, Jews often took up the role of moneylenders. There were so many Jews flocking to this position that Christians began to believe that Jews were attempting to take over the European economy, which of course was simply a coincidence. This position was only so popular to Jews because they did not have to compete with Christians vying for the position, as their church forbade them from taking it. In addition to this antisemitism going on in Western Europe, in Eastern Europe Jews had it a bit harder. They were not afforded the same rights as Jews in Western Europe were, unless of course they converted to Christianity.⁵ Although the Modern Era was not as heavily antisemitic as the time period before it, it was not without its instances of anti-Jewish sentiments.

After the Modern Era came the era of Nationalism all across the world, including in America, as Jews were finally making their way to the United States. With the fall of the Ottoman Empire and the Bolshevik revolution, the rise of the far-left political spectrum came to Europe. Communism and socialism became prevalent in Europe, which meant equality for all, so most anti-Jewish restrictions were dropped and Jews were finally able to live the normal life that

⁵ United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, "Anti-Semitism in History: The Early Modern Era, 1300-1800", <https://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/article.php?ModuleId=10007172>. Accessed May 17, 2017.

non-Jews had been able to live in Europe. Jews were now allowed to live and work with non-Jews, but some people in Europe felt that they were being overrepresented, which exposed Jews to a whole new form of political discrimination. Antisemitic political parties were created in order to fight against the Jews who were supposedly forcing out non-Jews in the economy, so antisemites were now able to flaunt their prejudiced beliefs in the new political, social, and economic climate. This new wave of antisemitic politics created a space for one of the first and most popular antisemitic books, *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, to be published. Elie Wiesel, Holocaust survivor and Nobel laureate, said of the book ““If ever a piece of writing could produce mass hatred, it is this one. . . . This book is about lies and slander.”” The book essentially is a fairy tale created to make non-Jews believe that a governing body of Jews, the “Elders of Zion”, was trying to take over the world.⁶ These Elders of Zion are a nonexistent group that antisemites made up to spread lies about the Jewish people and their so-called plan for world domination. The age of Nationalism brought about a lot of antisemitism not focused on religion, but more focused on politics. This ushered in a new age of antisemitism that would continue all the way until World War II, and even to present day.

With the presence of slavery in the United States up until the Civil Rights movement, race was an ever-present factor in society both in the United States and across the world. There was an intellectual revolution in terms of biology, led by the infamous biologist Charles Darwin. His theory of Social Darwinism surged in popularity, leading people to believe “that human beings were not one species, but divided into several different ‘races’ that were biologically driven to struggle against one another for living space to ensure their survival brought about the

⁶ United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, “Protocols of the Elders of Zion”, <https://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/article.php?ModuleId=10007058>. Accessed May 17, 2017.

belief that the white race is superior to just about all other races.”⁷ This brought a new form of antisemitism that was focused on the Jewish people as a race. People who believed this idea of racial superiority based their facts off of the theory of racial eugenics, or “the selection of desired heritable characteristics in order to improve future generations.”⁸ This has since been dubbed false information, as the idea of humans being separate racial species has been debunked, however antisemites still continued to use this pseudoscience up until the rise of Adolf Hitler. This racism that Jews faced both in the United States and in Europe is comparable to what African American experienced that forced them into slavery. This ushered in a new antisemitic platform for politicians to use, which gave rise to the leaders in Europe that would carry out one of the biggest genocides in history, the Holocaust.

After the defeat that the Germans and Austrians faced in the First World War, they were scurrying to find someone to blame it on. There was no way in their mind that they could have lost the war on their own, due to the extreme feelings of nationalism that Germans were feeling. Because of this, a new scapegoat was created to hold the blame for the loss: Jews. A young Austrian politician named Adolf Hitler used this platform to continuously advance his political power in Germany. Hitler was a very good public speaker, and knew how to motivate his audience. Slowly but surely, he convinced the German people that Jews and Communists were to blame for the loss of the First World War. He used the anger created by the Treaty of Versailles, which had Germany and Austria paying thousands upon thousands of Marks, to his advantage.

⁷ United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, “Anti Semitism in History: Racial Anti Semitism, 1875-1945”, <https://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/article.php?ModuleId=10007171>. Accessed May 17, 2017.

⁸ Encyclopedia Britannica, “Eugenics”, <https://www.britannica.com/science/eugenics-genetics>. Accessed May 17, 2017.

He created myth after myth about the Jews and how it was their fault that Germany and Austria lost the war: Jews somehow started the war to bring in financial gain, they wanted to bring political ruin to the European non-Jews so that they could have financial power over the European continent. Hitler's rhetoric argues that Jews were in charge of the Treaty of Versailles, and this was the reason German was paying so much money in reparations, the list goes on and on.⁹ Although these were all lies made up to further Hitler's political gain, the German people believed him. They were desperate for a positive political leader after their loss in the war, and Hitler was exactly that. This would bring in the reign of the Nazi regime, and would create one of the most poisonous events of the era of World War II.

After Hitler was elected to power in Germany, the Nazi party followed suite. Soon, anti-Jewish practices were put into place as the government continued to blame the Jews for all of their failures. Anti-Jewish boycotts of businesses, burning of Jewish books, and anti-Jewish legislation were all a part of the Hitler's grand plan to eradicate the Jews and create a master race, the white Aryans. This "Final Solution" was the end game plan for Hitler and the Nazis; it included practices put in place to separate Jews from non-Jews, entitled the Nuremberg Laws. Soon after this legislation was put into place, the discrimination against Jews became violent. Kristallnacht, or The Night of Broken Glass, was the deliberate destruction of Jewish businesses and places of worship, ultimately solidifying their separation from the rest of society in Europe. Jews were separated into ghettos and later were sent to concentration camps across Europe, where 6 million of them would be murdered in the name of Hitler and the Nazis. This was the

⁹ United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, "Anti-Semitism in History: World War I", <https://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/article.php?ModuleId=10007166>. Accessed May 17, 2017.

ultimate form of antisemitism that resulted from the rise of Hitler and the use of the Jews as excuses for all of Germany's failures as a country.

In today's modern era, antisemitism continues to rise. The Southern Poverty Law Center is an organization that tracks and monitors different hate groups throughout the United States. According to their "Hate Map", which is ever-changing, the total amount of hate groups in the US as of 2016 comes to 917, a significant increase from the 457 groups operating in 1999. Out of the 917 total hate groups in the US, 707 hold some sort of antisemitic beliefs. These groups include Black Separatists, Christian Identity, the Ku Klux Klan, Neo-Nazis, Racist Skinheads, Racist Traditional Catholics, and White Nationalists, to name a few.¹⁰ The number of hate groups that hold antisemitic beliefs in this country is simply horrifying, and not enough is being done to stop it from happening both in real life and on the Internet.

The Holocaust was the culmination of centuries of antisemitism that is unfortunately still present today. Unfortunately, the rise of the Internet has given antisemites an anonymous forum to voice their discriminatory beliefs, and most of it goes without punishment in the United States. The lack of hate speech laws does a tremendous disservice to those who are victims of hate speech on the Internet, and there are only a few solutions that are possible to put in place to change that. With the First Amendment in place, those put out messages of hate on the Internet have no punishment to face, and it can even cause more and more radicalization of racists and xenophobes. Hate speech is on the rise, and even more so with antisemitic hate speech, and something must be done about it.

Antisemitism on the Internet

¹⁰ Southern Poverty Law Center, "Hate Map", <https://www.splcenter.org/hate-map>. Accessed May 15, 2017.

The Internet is defined by Merriam-Webster as “an electronic communications network that connects computer networks and organizational computer facilities around the world.”¹¹ The Internet brings people together who otherwise would not have been able to meet, which is both a blessing and a curse. The Internet can be used to bring family members together who are miles away from each other, or to bring together like-minded people who can spread joy and peace in the world. However, the Internet can also be used by hateful people to spread their prejudices across the world, bringing together possible terrorists who would use the Internet’s power for horrible things, or just further spreading horrible values, like racism and antisemitism.

Surface Web

One of the first and most infamous extremist hate websites on the Internet is StormFront, created by Don Black, a colleague of David Duke (the leader of the Ku Klux Klan) and a vehement supporter of the Klan and the White Nationalist movement. The website, which is still active today, has inspired many others on the web, including the Daily Stormer, a website which is filled with Nazi-esque propaganda showing Jews in stereotypical fashion: Dark thick hair, big noses, and always surrounded by money. These two websites, along with countless others, were allowed to come to fruition due to the rise of “violent radicalization and online activity of the radical right wing”¹² during the Internet Revolution. Many people became radicalized during the rise of the Internet due to the ease of access to information, also known as Open Source Information. Notorious extremist groups such as Hezbollah, the Islamist militant group from

¹¹ Merriam-Webster, “Internet”, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/Internet>. Accessed August 3, 2017.

¹² Hacoen, Eli, “Digital Hate: Terror, Anti-Semitism, and Racism on the Internet”, in *Terrorism and the Internet*, edited by Hans-Liudger Dienel, Yair Sharan, Christian Rapp, and Niv Ahituv (Amsterdam: IOS Press BV, 2008), 10.

Lebanon, or Hamas, the Palestinian-funded militant group, are easily able to spread their anti-Christian and anti-Jewish sentiments on the Internet. Although terrorism is clearly a different beast than anti-Semitism is, the Internet can bring people together who have similar beliefs, such as anti-Semitism, that can lead to the formation of terrorist groups who go after certain minority groups. Due to the lack of regulation in the United States rooted in the First Amendment, extremists and antisemites are able to gather “recruits” to bolster their ranks, further exploiting the Internet to their own evil advantage.

With the first official white supremacist website, StormFront.org, being launched in 1995, it is obvious to say that the sites have had no trouble growing in number. Jonathan Greenblatt, the Director and CEO of the Anti-Defamation League, has shared himself that these websites are some of the scariest entities to fight when it comes to anti-Semitism. In a CNN Special Report entitled “Spreading Hate: The Dark Side of the Internet”, Greenblatt states the scariest thing about these websites is that they “it can be found by a 12 year old with just a few clicks”. Needless to say this provides a whole new platform for white supremacists to spread their poisonous beliefs, and it can start out at such a young age, setting the stage for a lifetime of hate inside of one person. As a matter of fact, the CNN Special Report found that the infamous Charleston church shooter Dylan Roof was an active viewer and commenter on StormFront.org, posting things that could have potentially lead investigators to believe he would harm people, and could have helped stop the shooting from happening altogether. Alas, four months after Roof began viewing content on StormFront.org, he “one of the deadliest hate crimes in modern US history”.

The Internet's largest success is bringing together those who otherwise wouldn't have found each other, which can be a good thing, but in this case, it is extremely bad. The Internet "offer[s] enfranchisement to the disenfranchised and voice to the voiceless...It allows individuals who are isolated or alienated, both physically and psychologically, to feel that they are linked, empowered and members of an international movement."¹³ This empowerment is what fuels antisemites and other extremists on the Internet, and where it becomes almost more powerful than real life does. David Duke, the leader of the Ku Klux Klan, took advantage of the power of the Internet and told his followers "Develop computer and other technical skills. The computer and Internet revolution give us untold possibilities to awaken our people all over the world and to build our Movement."¹⁴ This terrifying message given to his followers has allowed Klansmen to flock to message boards, forums, and chat rooms in order to spread their white nationalism and antisemitism, which creates a domino effect. One person sees an antisemitic message on the Internet, and then spreads it himself, allowing it reach more and more impressionable users on the Internet, and so on. A more recent example would be the events of Charlottesville, where neo-Nazis came together to spread ideas of white supremacy, spewing their hatred among the population. It is near impossible to filter out and delete every antisemitic or racist post on the Internet due to the failure of the few hate speech laws that do exist in the United States, which will be discussed further along in this paper.

After the events at Charlottesville, many social media providers began to take action against the hatred being spewed on the Internet. Domains were taken down by tech giants such as Google and GoDaddy.com, and Twitter users were being blocked from using the site. To

¹³ Ibid., 19.

¹⁴ Ibid., 12.

combat this, one of the Charlottesville rally founders, Pax Dickinson, described as a technologist and a leader of the “alt-tech” movement which is defined as “ a movement to develop alternative services tailor-made to support extremists, especially those kicked off mainstream platforms.”Some examples of these alt-tech websites, usually on the Dark Web, consists of alternatives to Twitter, Patreon, and Kickstarter, among others. “Both Hatreon and GoyFundMe, the latter founded by Matt Parrott of the Traditionalist Worker Party, have been designated as hate groups by the SPLC for their role in financing the hate movement.”¹⁵ Hatreon and GoyFundMe are both white nationalist takes on Patreon and Go Fund Me, popular websites for mainstream use.

On the next two pages you can see the screenshots from the homepages of Gab.ai and Hatreon respectively, both focusing on the idea of “freedom of speech” and others ways to prevent them from taking blame for any hateful behavior taking place on their site. These sites were not hidden behind the Dark Web, but they were in plain sight for people to access. Of course, to join Gab.ai you have to email them and express interest, but Hatreon had all of it’s content out for the web to see.

¹⁵ *Spreading Hate: The Dark Side of the Internet*. Performed by Kyra Phillips (2018; New York City, NY: Cable News Network, 2018), Television.

Hatreon Community Guidelines

Last updated: July 19, 2017

Authenticity

Do not create false pages or collect money for false projects. Hatreon can only be used to fund real, creative activity.

Hate Speech

Hate speech is protected speech. Hatreon exists in reaction to politically motivated no-platforming at sites like Patreon. Always consider your local, state, and national laws, but the site stands for free speech absolutism and will protect creators' interests against sovereign and corporate threats. Do not abuse this protection.

Illegal Activity

Hatreon reserves the right to review and remove accounts that directly or primarily promote illegal activity. We side with the interests of speakers, but as an organization or individual be careful about your representations. For example, we believe it is protected speech and in the public interest to learn about drug or explosives sales and manufacturing. But a page merely funding the sale or manufacture of illegal drugs or explosives will likely not be funded.

Who Can't Use Hatreon

After creating a Hatreon page, any creator caught or convicted of making credible violent threats, committing violent crimes or fraud, or performing illegal activities like those aforementioned will be banned from the site.

Members of organized crime, known terrorist organizations, OFAC debarred parties or similarly sanctioned US persons and foreign nationals may not collect funds through Hatreon. If you have been convicted of sex crimes, fraud or money laundering you are also unable to use our service.

Guideline Enforcement

Creators who violate these community guidelines may be banned from using Hatreon. If you see a page on the site that you feel violates these guidelines, please send us an email. Please also realize that Hatreon is an advanced community, and while you may not agree with someone's activity, it may not be a violation of these guidelines.

Retrieved from [Hatreon.net](https://hatreon.net)



YOU WILL NEVER SILENCE THE STORYTELLERS

The Battle For The Free Internet

Gab is an ad-free social network dedicated to preserving individual liberty, the freedom of speech, and the free flow of information on the internet. A free and open internet is essential to the future of a free world. Freedom is creative. It produces. It generates. From freedom flows truth, beauty, wisdom, and growth.

Censorship and closed systems are ultimately about two things: destruction and control. Censorship does not create value, it annihilates it. It corrals human thought into the direction of its choosing. It attempts to bend the global consciousness to its will. This has always historically been the case. Censorship is nothing new.

The difference is we don't have to stand by and watch it happen. We don't have to watch the free and open internet be manipulated by 4-5 smug elites in Silicon Valley.

The internet belongs to We The People. Period.

Together we can preserve something incredible for generations to come. A human achievement so great it challenges the status quo and power of the global elite: the fundamental human right of expression.

There is none more powerful in this world than the storytellers. No amount of money, human resources, or time can stop them or their ideas. The goal of censorship is to silence the storytellers, the truth seekers, the contrarians, the artists, those who question the status quo. We cannot stand by and watch this continue to happen.

This will not be an overnight battle. It will likely be a 5-10 year digital, cultural, and information war. We can and will win. We've built an incredible community of amazing people who share our values and cherish liberty. That is why we will continue to win. Join us and help keep the internet great for generations to come.

You will never silence the storytellers.

Retrieved from Gab.ai

One instance that I was surprised to see on Hatreon's Community Guidelines was the area that discussed protected speech. The site states that "Always consider your local, state, and national for laws, but the site stands for free speech absolutism and will protect creators' interests against sovereign and corporate threats. Do not abuse this protection." It is interesting that a site like this would protect the people who use their site. When you think of people who have prejudiced beliefs, specifically white nationalists, you would not think that they would care about protecting their own, as they say.

Similarly to Hatreon, on Gab.ai's homepage, there are many mentions of people trying to take away people's freedom of speech. Gab.ai states that "Censorship and closed systems are ultimately about two things: Destruction and control." Essentially, they believe that censorship of hate speech and other prejudiced language is another way for the government to "control" the people. This is a reason why freedom of speech laws prevent any real kind of punishment for people who use hate speech, specifically online. The argument that the government telling people what they can and can't is being oppressive of someone's First Amendment rights will always exist, unless that Amendment is taken away. There are plenty of countries in the world that specifically do not have freedom of speech laws so that they can enact things like hate speech and protect marginalized identities. These two sites, and many more like them, clearly have a distorted opinion of hate speech laws, and they are using their First Amendment rights as a scapegoat to allow for hateful speech across the Internet.

Social Media

Although social media falls underneath the umbrella term of "websites" on the Internet, they are essentially a whole different monster to deal with. Unfortunately, hate speech laws are

very hard to implement in a country where most social media sites have been founded, therefore you cannot criminalize every instance of hate speech that comes across a social media platform. Even Samuel Wooley, a Research Director for the Institute for the Future, stated that “You wouldn’t want to be Facebook or Twitter right now, trying to protect free speech, but also trying to get rid of the misinformation and fake news online, it’s a really tricky problem”¹⁶. Because of this lack of policing on these social media sites, people are able to spread essentially whatever ideas they please, provide they don’t get caught. In fact, many people have argued that the white nationalist rally and the events following in Charlottesville, Virginia were all started through online social media sites.

In the CNN Special Report, a reformed neo-Nazi named Christian Picciolini stated that the Internet is ““a platform that is encouraging this type of violence, that is radicalizing young people, it’s created this ecosystem of hate”, and many of that hate circulates on social media. In fact, George Washington University found that white supremacist support on Twitter has grown by over 300%, which coincidentally fell in with the timeline of the 2016 presidential election. David Joseph Lenio, a man who was banned from using Twitter because of how bad his threats got on the platform, was recently acquitted of two felonies and was allowed to return to Twitter. Within weeks of his return to Twitter, Lenio started spewing more hatred, “asking at one point how much it would cost to buy a gun with enough ammunition to kill 99 school children. In early 2017 he tweeted that he would rather see 500 American Jews beheaded than to see one Holocaust denier spend five minutes in jail.” The gaming platform Discord also fell under attack, as Charlottesville rally planners used it for their preliminary discussions on the rally. “There

¹⁶ *Spreading Hate: The Dark Side of the Internet*. Performed by Kyra Phillips (2018; New York City, NY: Cable News Network, 2018), Television.

were conference calls and scores of discussions on the gaming platform Discord with detailed plans regarding everything from where to park, what to wear and where to use the bathroom. There was also online discussion of the legality of driving a vehicle into a crowd of counter-protestors.”¹⁷

Perhaps one of the most bizarre of these white supremacist social media interactions was something called “Pizzagate”. An owner of a Washington, DC pizzeria was accused of operating a child trafficking ring that was somehow connected to Hillary Clinton’s presidential campaign. Although the owner denied and denied the accusations, the rumor circulated on Twitter and was shared more than 5 million times. The rumor was started by Alex Jones, a famous YouTuber who discusses conspiracy theories and generally likes to doubt US politics. The rumor reached the wrong person, a man named Edgar Madison Welch left his two young daughters at home, intending to stop the child prostitution ring himself. His evidence? The Internet. While recording a home video on the drive from Salisbury, North Carolina to Washington, DC, Welch stated that “Like I’ve always told you, we have a duty to protect people who can’t protect themselves” and Tweeting out that he “ “may have to sacrifice the lives of a few to save the lives of many”. Once Welch reached the pizzeria with his revolver and assault rifle ready to bust the trafficking ring, he quickly realized that he had been misled. Thankfully, no one was hurt, and Welch is now in jail, however this event goes to show how dangerous the Internet, and social media in general, can be to people who will believe whatever they see on the Web.

White nationalists have now become so advanced with their social media usage that they no longer even have to physically type out a message to share to their followers, they can now

¹⁷ Southern Poverty Law Center, “The Year in Hate & Extremism”, *Intelligence Report*, Spring 2018, 164.

use bots to spread their messages of hate. These bots can use scripts to send out a constant barrage of hate on virtually any social media platform, which leads to a whole new class of online hate speech through social media. Of course, it is impossible to implement any kind of punishment onto a bot since it is not an actual person, but can you even charge the person who is using the bot? Would they even be guilty if they could connect it to them, considering they never actually typed out the hateful words put out onto the Internet? This brings up a whole other idea of how to even create punishments for people who use hate speech on the Internet, it is nearly impossible.

With the creation of message boards, forums, and online chat rooms, people are able to communicate with one another without ever leaving their homes. People are granted an air of anonymity on the Internet, which often times allows them to say things that they would never hesitate to say aloud to someone in person. This could arguably bring about the hate speech, and in particular antisemitism, that this paper is discussing. One of the first texts conveying antisemitic sentiments that was discussed earlier, *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, is now available on the Internet for free, potentially giving radical religious groups, Neo-Nazis, and other antisemites direct access to fuel their antisemitic beliefs. Basically, the Internet gives prejudiced people yet another forum to spread their hate, and it could arguably be even worse than anti semitism in person, because that person behind the screen could very well be shielded from any punishment due to the anonymity of the Internet.

Just this year, the election of Donald Trump as the president of the United States occurred. This election divided the United States considerably due to the rhetoric that President Trump used during his campaign, but there was something besides Trump himself that was

brought to many people's attention. Trump's daughter, Ivanka, married Jared Kushner, who was chosen to be one of Trump's senior advisors. Many people were overjoyed to see him be appointed to his father-in-law's cabinet, however, many weren't due to the small fact that Kushner is a Modern Orthodox Jew. This created a whirlwind of antisemitic comments online toward Kushner, and even toward Ivanka and their children. Soon after Trump fired Steve Bannon, a known antisemite, the online tirade of antisemitism toward Kushner began.

Antisemitic statements were hurled at Kushner on Twitter, with some Tweets reading "This is what happens when America is led by Jewish supremacists. These traitors put #IsraelFirst while we pay the price. #NoWarsForIsrael" and "We are being brought down from within. ZIO Supremacists are the true enemy of the American people... not Assad, not Putin. #FireKushner"

¹⁸ These two examples are tame compared to what some users wrote on the Internet about Kushner, one of those users being the infamous David Duke, the leader of the Ku Klux Klan. This example of a high ranking government official experiencing anti semitism could make one think about what the average Jew faces on the Internet, with no government agencies to defend them. The sheer amount of antisemitic statements on the Internet is shocking to say the least, and the data collected on them probably doesn't even cover all of the instances of antisemitism.

As of 2015, 73% of the United States' population were active Internet users, and this number has continued to rise. In 2016, the World Jewish Congress surveyed the Internet for anti semitism across multiple social media platforms, along with the help of the Israeli monitoring firm Vigo Social Intelligence, it found shocking numbers for the amount of anti semitism on

¹⁸ *Anti-Defamation League*, "Explosive Growth of Hateful Memes and Anti-Semitic Conspiracy Theories Against Jared Kushner", <https://www.adl.org/blog/explosive-growth-of-hateful-memes-and-anti-semitic-conspiracy-theories-against-jared-kushner>. Accessed August 3, 2017.

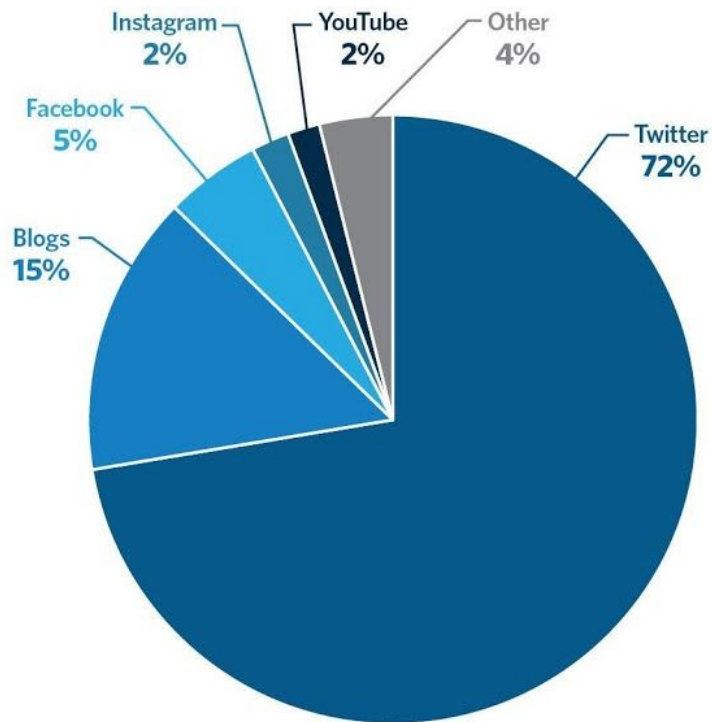
social media. The World Jewish Congress found that 382,000 hate messages were sent to Jews on social media, 63% of those being sent on Twitter. This means that about 44 antisemitic messages are sent every hour. In addition to antisemitic speech, there were 23,400 calls for violence against Jews on social media in 2016, saying things such as “The Jewish people are responsible for every bad thing that has happened in this world. They all deserve to die.

#Holocaust #killjews...”¹⁹ The study found that terms such as “ ‘kike’, ‘Zyd’, or ‘Big Nose’ ” were used to express hatred toward Jews. Terms such as “ ‘kicking, killing, raping [and] burning’ ”²⁰ were also used in tandem to promote threats of violence toward Jewish people. The graph below from the World Jewish Congress’ 2016 study of anti semitism on the Internet shows the spread of antisemitic remarks across the different platforms of social media. The two images below visually show these figures.

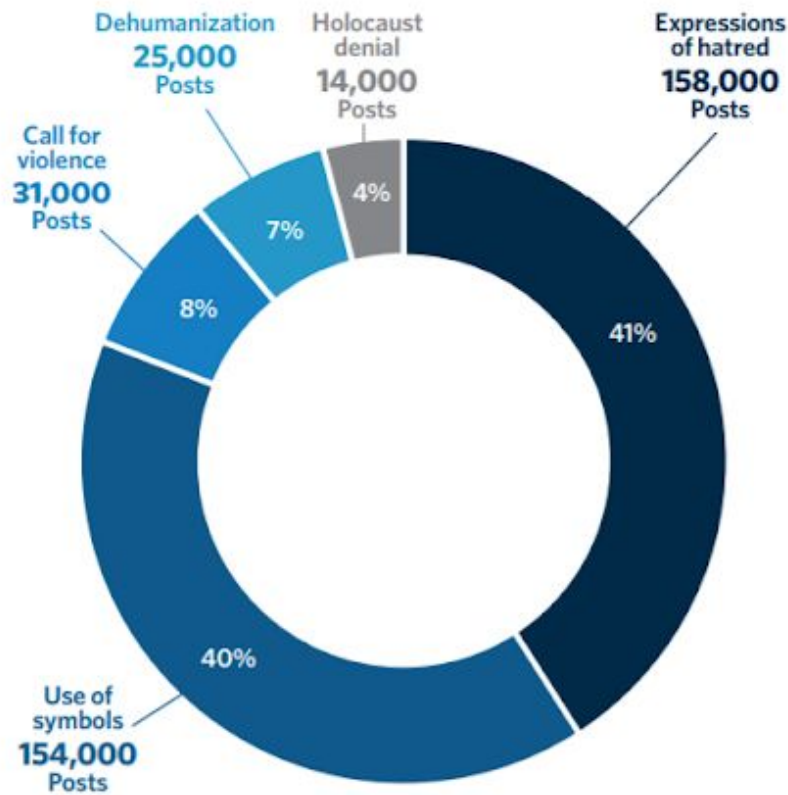
¹⁹ World Jewish Congress, “An anti-Semitic post is uploaded to social media every 83 seconds, WJC research finds”, last modified March 24, 2017, <http://www.worldjewishcongress.org/en/news/an-anti-semitic-post-is-uploaded-to-social-media-every-83-seconds-wjc-research-finds-3-5-2017>. Accessed May 23, 2017.

²⁰ World Jewish Congress, “The Rise of Anti Semitism on Social Media - Summary of 2016”, <http://www.worldjewishcongress.org/download/RVsVZzRXTaZwO41YbzlWwg?>. Accessed August 3, 2017.

DISTRIBUTION BY SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORM



Source: The Rise of Anti-Semitism on Social Media: Summary of 2016



Types	Expressions of hatred	Use of symbols	Call for violence	Dehumanization	Holocaust denial
Twitter	116,920	92,400	22,475	8,750	1,540
Blogs	25,280	12,320	4,650	9,750	9,240
Facebook	6,320	27,720	1,550	3,750	1,820
Instagram	4,740	18,480	620	250	-
YouTube	3,160	2,310	465	1,000	140
Other	1,580	770	1,240	1,500	1,260

Retrieved from the World Jewish Congress

With these messages going unchecked on the Internet, we could be allowing hate groups, terrorists, and racists push an agenda that directly opposes the basic freedoms that US citizens are granted.

Other (Blogs, Forums, Video Games, etc.)

There are often forms of hate sites that do not necessarily fit into the Surface Web, Dark Web, or Social Media categories. To be fair, many people who encounter certain racist forums and blogs on the Internet are often not even aware of what they are viewing until it is too late. The Internet allows people to “market” to certain demographics, much like the ways in which certain advertisements come up on your computer based on the different websites you visit. Children and teens can be enticed to antisemitic websites using video games. Some of the most crude and appalling examples include “Aryan Test, Clean Germany...and KZ (German for Concentration Camp) Manager”.²¹ A lot of these games reward players by giving them more points the more Jews are killed in the game, for example, therefore normalizing violence and violent speech against Jews. Although these games seem tame, they are very easy ways to get into the minds of impressionable youths, therefore allowing people to spread their hatred without censorship, as the Internet is largely unmonitored when it comes to hate speech. This is just a small example of the part of the Internet that people who hold antisemitic beliefs can use to push their own antisemitic beliefs on users, whether those users know it or not.

Dark Web

There is also something that exists on the Internet that the majority of Internet users do not see: The Dark Web. The Dark Web is defined as “the assortment of the websites, which present on an encrypted network and cannot be accessed by utilizing the conventional search engines or conventional browsers.”²² This area of the World Wide Web is so discreet that users

²¹ Hacothen, Eli, “Digital Hate: Terror, Anti-Semitism, and Racism on the Internet”, in *Terrorism and the Internet*, edited by Hans-Liudger Dienel, Yair Sharan, Christian Rapp, and Niv Ahituv (Amsterdam: IOS Press BV, 2008), 10.

²² Abdulmuttaleb Abduljalil, *Critical Analysis of the Emerging Dark Web* (Cardiff: Cardiff Metropolitan University, 2017), 1.

have to download an entirely new browser to access the data that is on the Dark Web. Many hate groups have been forced to begin to use the Dark Web to spread their ideology, most recently the infamous Daily Stormer. After 2017's event in Charlottesville, Virginia, where Americans saw neo-Nazis parading down their streets saying things that "Jews will not replace us" and many other antisemitic, xenophobic, and racist things, many domains were kicked off of the easily accessible surface web, or the normal Internet to computer users.

People get away with using this "underground" network because the majority of the content is encrypted, or the use of Internet code to "conceal the usage of the web user and makes it harder to be tracked"²³. This allows people to further hide behind the anonymity of the Internet. The surface web can already help people keep themselves from being identified, however the dark web takes that a step further with encryption, which can contribute to a dangerous level of anonymity. In the next section of this paper, I will describe my experience with accessing the Dark Web and explain what I experienced when accessing it.

In order to access the Dark Web, I needed research safe ways to do this. As the Dark Web is essentially an unregulated version of the World Wide Web, there is a possibility that data can be stolen from any device that it is accessed on, a risk that I did not want to expose myself to. I found that the safest way to access the Dark Web was to use a TOR browser, which essentially is a separate Internet browser similar to Google Chrome, Microsoft Edge, etcetera, that is encrypted to ensure no information is shared within the browser. I accessed this TOR browser using the Apple App Store on an old iPad that I no longer had use for. Once I downloaded the app, I opened the TOR browser. Using the search engine "duckduck.go", which Dr. Horowitz later

²³ Ibid., 1.

informed me is an encrypted search engine that does not transmit data, I searched for all of the websites used in this thesis.

Within my Dark Web research, I visited two sites in particular, The Daily Stormer, as well as Stormfront. Originally, Dr. Horowitz and I had attempted to pull up The Daily Stormer on our own computers, however it returned the common error “404 Error: Site Not Found”. Later on, we determined that the site had been removed from the surface web and had been forced down to the Dark Web. When I pulled up the page for The Daily Stormer, self-titled “The Most Censored Publication in History”, no doubt a reference to the many different domains the site has been kicked off of. The site was laden with obnoxious photos and videos with titles that are just begging for people to open them, such as “Exodus Americanus #114: Colored People and Women Were a Mistake” and “The David Duke Show: Jewish Lies Against Syria Heroes”. At the very bottom of the page, a disclaimer was posted, stating the following: “We here at the Daily Stormer are opposed to violence. We seek revolution through the education of the masses. When the information is available to the people, systemic change will be inevitable and unavoidable. Anyone suggesting or promoting violence in the common sections will be immediately banned, permanently.” Considering one of the first headlines on the page says “Russia we demand you nuke Tel Aviv”, it is absurd that this website has such a statement. Their entire website promotes hatred and violence, yet they are claiming they do not suggest or promote it.

Throughout The Daily Stormer’s site, there were nine different categories entitled the following: Featured Stories, US, World, Jewish Problem, Society, Insight, Race War, Video, and Radio. Each had articles written by mostly Andrew Anglin, the founder of The Daily Stormer.

Profanities such as dyke, kike, whores, and more are strewn across the website's homepage. The title of the entire section about Jews, entitled "The Jewish Problem", is a direct reference to Hitler's Final Solution to wipe out the Jewish people from Europe. The solution to "The Jewish Problem" was the Final Solution to send Jews to concentration and work camps throughout Europe. Photos like the one displayed below are seen multiple times across the site, seemingly Andrew Anglin's symbol for Jews for the entire website.



Retrieved from BuzzFeed

Additionally, before the end of the homepage, the heading "SAVE THE STORMER!" was posted in all capital bold letters, with the subheading, "The Daily Stormer is being sued by Jewish terrorists. In order to survive, we need shekels. Send BTC or XMR. The site will be shut down if we don't win this." The Daily Stormer's obsession with taking events from mainstream media and turning it around on Jewish people clearly shows their intentions. They are purely an

anti-Semitic and white supremacist website dedicated to perpetuating their racist and hateful thoughts.

The Internet Fights Back

After the events across America that had neo-Nazis in the forefront of the nightly news, many US based companies began to fight back against the rising antisemitism, racism, and all around white supremacy that began to pollute the United States. Many corporations such as BitCoin, PayPal, GoDaddy, and many others began to reject websites such as the Daily Stormer and get rid of their domain space, making them retreat to the Dark Web, as stated before. Notice how The Daily Stormer asked for “BTC or XMR”, rather than PayPal donations or any other electronic mode of donations. Virtually every money handling website has banned hate sites like The Daily Stormer from using their services, so the sites have to resort to using CryptoCurrency like Bitcoin or XMR. These pseudo-currencies are encrypted, operating separately from any central banks, and many throughout the financial world have debated their validity as an actual currency. Twitter, Spotify, and other entertainment companies have also began the fight against hate groups since Charlottesville’s events. Business Insider reports that Apple has removed Apple Pay “support for websites that sell racist and other neo-Nazi apparel”, “Twitter suspended accounts associated with the Daily Stormer”, and even Facebook has joined the fight in banning accounts of people who were proven to be white supremacists on the Internet.

These restrictions put on hate sites like The Daily Stormer explains why I had such trouble accessing The Daily Stormer on the surface web. The Daily Stormer was forced to adopt a .NAME domain, which is one of the last domains available to them after the majority of surface web domain companies rejected them for a domain name. Another site known as

StormFront, and older neo-Nazi website than The Daily Stormer, has virtually been reduced to nothing among the banning of white supremacist domain support by companies that provide websites with domain names. The founder, Don Black, tried to fight back against the censoring of his site, but his wife did not want to keep paying the huge amounts of money for many domain names to keep the site going. The failure of StormFront to push through the boundaries put up by domain name providers is a huge victory within the US, and is an example of how we can shut down hate speech even with Freedom of Speech laws in place. This victory is a huge showing of solidarity of some of America's biggest companies that are refusing to encourage white supremacists anymore, and is a noteworthy detail to mention alongside the issue of anti semitism on the Internet.

The Lack of Hate Speech Laws

Unlike many countries, citizens of the United States freedom of speech as specified in the First Amendment. As stated in the Bill of Rights "Congress shall make no law...abridging the freedom of speech..."²⁴ This amendment therefore makes it legal to say pretty much anything in the United States, which of course is good on so many levels, but it also allows for people to say whatever hateful things they want. In addition to the First Amendment, there have been no hate speech laws created in the United States, giving racists and xenophobes "carte blanche" to verbally attack those who they think are deserving of hateful speech. Part of the issue of hate speech in America is that to prohibit it would be to take away people's First Amendment right of freedom of speech, showing how flawed the United States Constitution can be.

²⁴ The United States Constitution.

Despite the fact that there are no hate speech laws in America, there has been a long-running debate of whether or not the First Amendment excludes hate speech. The solution to this debate is to just look at the Amendment itself, which clearly does not have any exceptions to any kind of speech within in its context. Simply reading the text of the Constitution eradicates this argument. So, what can be done about hate speech if there is no way to put hate speech laws into place in the United States? Some argue that education is the only way, but additional solutions will be explored in the next section.

Possible Solutions

Although hate speech laws are most likely never going to be passed in the United States due to the First Amendment protection of free speech, there are a few solutions that we can implement as a society that can lower and further prevent antisemitic and other hate-driven speech on the Internet. Not much research has been done on this subject, as it is mostly a subjective topic, but there are a few ways that we can educate and empower future generations to put a stop to hate speech on social media and the Internet in general, leaving it a more positive and less hateful platform. The first possible solution is to employ a social media analytical agency to monitor trends with hate speech online, see where they are coming from, why they are happening, and how to target the populations who are sending out these hateful messages to change their viewpoint. An example of this method's success occurred in South Sudan, where a nonprofit agency called PeaceTech Lab monitored the social media in that area and was able “ to identify terms and sources most closely associated with hate speech and...to point to important

trends that can support efforts to counter hate speech.”²⁵ This method could potentially halt hate speech in its path on social media because people could anticipate events that would bring on hate speech and push educational material that could convince those who would normally send messages of hate to think twice about it.

Another method that could potentially help lower the prevalence of hate speech is the organization of the platform that it is normally spread on. There are ways to disable comments on certain websites and make those hate comments less visible to those who are on that website. When other people see hateful comments or posts on social media, they may be more likely to post their own hateful comment or post, according to a recent study done at Stanford and Cornell University.²⁶ Eradicating the ability for many viewers to see hateful comments that are posted could significantly lower the possibility of more hateful posts being put on social media. Social media creators can now use software that will allow moderators to sift through posts on social media, all thanks to the up and coming technological powerhouse, Google. This has been done by a few entities that have seemed to work. Back in 2015, Reddit banned a number of toxic forums that were famous for breeding some of the filthiest racist comments on the Internet. “When the forums were banned, the researchers found that the poisonous discussions didn’t migrate to other forums on the site, and that many users left Reddit altogether. For users that stayed on the site, researchers found that their use of hate speech decrease by 80 percent.” For an international example, Germany, who is famous for backtracking their history in order to

²⁵ Froehlich, William, “Combat Hate & Discrimination”, *Divided Community Project*, last modified April 7, 2017, <http://moritzlaw.osu.edu/dividedcommunityproject/social-media/combat-hate-discrimination>.

²⁶ Justin Cheng, Michael Bernstein, Cristian-Danescu-Niculescu-Mizil, and Jure Leskovec, *Anyone Can Become a Troll: Causes of Trolling Behavior in Online Discussions*. (Portland: CSCW, 2017), 1.

erase the Nazi and Holocaust stigma from their identity, implemented a new law required companies to remove hateful and extremist content from the Internet. Companies who failed to do so were fined 50 million Euros. After this law was put in place, “ international Twitter users discovered that changing their location settings to Germany dramatically decreased the amount of hateful content a user interacted with on the platform.”²⁷

The Anti-Defamation League announced that they are teaming up with Google, Facebook, Twitter, and Microsoft to create a “Cyber Hate Problem Solving Lab” in Silicon Valley. They are hoping that they can shift “the conversation away from the lawyers and policy people to engage engineers and product managers.”²⁸ Greenblatt hopes that instead of victims having to press legal charges every time they are harassed on the Internet, they can get this Cyber Hate team to tackle it from a technological standpoint and get rid of the hateful contact altogether.

All in all, despite the inability for hate speech to be criminalized in the United States, there are a few ways that we can combat hate speech ourselves that are still within the First Amendment protection of freedom of speech. Although these methods require a bit more work-around, they are still very promising ways of lowering and hate speech from many social media platforms. Unfortunately, there will still be places such as The Daily Stormer, Reddit, and other anonymous social media blogs where people will be able to blatantly get away with hate speech, specifically antisemitic hate speech, but until the day comes where no one has a bad thing to say about Jews, these methods will just have to do for now.

²⁷ Southern Poverty Law Center, “The Year in Hate & Extremism”, *Intelligence Report*, Spring 2018, 164.

²⁸ *Spreading Hate: The Dark Side of the Internet*. Performed by Kyra Phillips (2018; New York City, NY: Cable News Network, 2018), Television.

Conclusion

Anti-Semitism indeed is spreading like a disease, and those who have seen its horrors throughout history must be devastated to see it on the rise again. People who are known to have antisemitic beliefs are put on a pedestal in today's polarizing political climate. For example, the Women's March in Washington, D.C., was led by a Muslim woman, Linda Sarsour, who is known to be an anti-Zionist, anti-Semite, and has ties to Palestinian terrorists who are praised for their violent crimes against Jews. The original White House Chief Strategist, Steve Bannon, was known for having antisemitic beliefs and was tied to white supremacists. All of these antisemitic themes are only being further spread on social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. Although there is not much that can be done to combat anti-Semitism in the way of legal solutions, there are ways to work around the protections of the First Amendment that allows people to freely spew their hate on any platform they wish. This is all we can do for now, for until the Jewish people are freed from any negative criticism against them, we must do whatever we can to combat antisemitic hate speech. As the famed philosopher George Santayana once said, "Those who cannot remember the past are doomed to repeat it", let us not allow this to happen to us, and let us never forget.

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