

For my mother and father

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Acknowledgements

This book came about in a somewhat unusual way. I had written an article for *Newsweek* about the antisemitism issue that was afflicting the British Labour Party and pitting its then leader, Jeremy Corbyn, against the Jewish community. Life was becoming near on intolerable for many British Jews as a result. After the piece was published, I received an email from Dr Gus Lehrer, an eminent mathematician and a pillar of the Australian Jewish community, asking to meet to discuss my piece. Gus liked what I had written, and we discussed how antisemitism was resurgent even among the supposedly enlightened. It was the last form of racial hatred that one could openly profess in civilized society.

The culmination of my conversations with Gus and thinking on the issue was the idea for *The 7 Deadly Myths*—a concise and hopefully entertaining book that identifies the myths that cling tenaciously to Jews and consciously or unconsciously determine how they are perceived. Something that could be used as a resource for students, educators and policymakers and a collection of fascinating stories of baffling conspiracy theories, odious figures and the devastation they together inflicted, and continue to inflict.

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Introduction

Understanding Antisemitism

Antisemitism is not easily understood because the Jews themselves are not easily understood. They are bound by ethnicity, even common genetic markers, yet a convert to the faith is a fully fledged and accepted Jew. They hold to ancient texts and religious traditions such as male circumcision and the laying of Tefillin, yet a Jew entirely devoid of these practices remains a Jew and can express their Jewishness in other ways. This in itself is a source of animosity. We tend to fear that which we cannot easily place.

This manifold nature of being Jewish, something that evolved through millennia, shaped by extraordinary experiences and developed in a homeland, then a diaspora, and then in both, means one can customize how they live as a Jew. It also means antisemitism can be customized to adhere to one's worldview. One can display an intense hatred of the Jewish religion but exhibit no animosity towards Jews as an ethnic group, as occurred in the case of early religious antisemitism. One could intensely hate the Jews as an ethnic group but care nothing for their religious preferences, as in the case of Nazism. And one can adorn the State of Israel with all manner of antisemitic conspiracy theory yet hold Judaism and Jewish culture in high regard, as has become common in some sectors of the far left.

For as long the Jews have been a people, they have been treated as a problem to be solved. Can this stubborn nation be absorbed into the great empires that came to rule over them? Can these original monotheists be allowed to live alongside Christianity and Islam? What is to be done with these wandering internationalists who for nearly two millennia possessed no country of their own? Can the Jew be a Frenchman? A German? An Arab? Can the Jew assimilate or are their eyes permanently cast east towards a lost homeland and downward at ancient texts? Does the Jew belong to a race, a religion or a nation?

The Jewish enigma has aroused some measure of benign curiosity, even some reverence. But overwhelmingly the Jews aroused fear and suspicion. In the pages that follow, we will find men for whom antisemitism became a creed, an evangelizing mission. These individuals could manipulate those fears and suspicions and recruit others to the cause of bringing the Jews low, seeing them humiliated

and destroyed. Why did they want this? It is impossible to understand. We search for a Jew in the lineage as if killing the Jews is an act of self-mutilation or self-purification. Perhaps a Jewish former lover. A personal slight. All of these inquiries prove unsatisfactory as they seek rational answers to the fundamentally irrational.

There are many characteristics of antisemitism that cannot be found in other forms of hatred. But this power to consume the hater as much as the hated, to turn bigotry into a monomaniacal quest, is surely its most distinct quality.

Antisemitism has summoned populations to burn their neighbors at the stake. It has motivated monarchs to uproot and expel entire communities. And it compelled a dictator, for whom antisemitism was his all, to unleash the most devastating war in human history. It loaded the gun of Robert Bowers, who murdered eleven worshippers in a Pittsburgh synagogue in 2018. Antisemitism has caused civilizations to decay with irrationalism and has polluted minds with puerile conspiracy theories.

Antisemitism has also personally touched every Jew. In the early years of my life in Australia, I had little firsthand exposure to antisemitism. It accompanied me only as a vestige of my family's former life in the Soviet Union, something I could feel but not quite see. My family had left the Soviet Union as refugees when I was three years old. Our eventual freedom, and that of millions of families like mine, was the culmination of a decades-long international campaign under the banner "Let my people go," which pressured the Soviet Government to allow its Jewish population to leave.

As the Australian diplomat Douglas White put it when raising the matter at the United Nations, "should the USSR find difficulty in according Soviet Jewry full freedom to practice their religion, it has a moral obligation to permit them to leave the country."¹

Of course, the Soviet Union would never freely admit it denied anything to anyone. The official Soviet position was that antisemitism belonged to the previous regime and any suggestion that the Jewish population faced institutional racism was just Cold War-era mischief making. In reality, Soviet Jews suffered immensely. Their identity papers were marked as "Jewish" regardless of how long families like mine traced their roots in those lands, or how integrated they strived to be. Aside from having no freedom to practice their faith, Jews were

1 "Persecution of Jews in Russia," Prime Minister's Department, A1209/111, item 62/963, 26 October 1962, National Archives of Australia (NAA), quoted in Sam Lipski and Suzanne Rutland, *Let My People Go: The Untold Story of Australia and the Soviet Jews 1959–1989* (Melbourne: Hybrid Publishers, 2015), 90.

subjected to racial restrictions, including entry quotas into universities, thereby excluding them from certain professions, and a prohibition on Jewish cultural practices including the printing of Hebrew-language publications. No other nationality or ethnic group suffered such measures.

This institutional antisemitism began in Tsarist times and had established the Jews as people of no worth, to be ridiculed and discarded. In George Orwell's *Down and Out in Paris and London*, a retired Russian army officer tells Orwell how in the army it was considered poor form to spit on a Jew "because a Russian officer's spittle was too precious to be wasted on Jews."²

In the seventeenth century, the Ukrainian nationalist figure Bogdan Chmelnitski and his horsemen unleashed such carnage on Jewish communities that to read the accounts of them leads one to call humanity into question. These crimes set a certain rhythm whereby any upheaval, any discontent, any pursuit of political transformation resulted in Jewish communities being set upon with a perverted delight and with total impunity. It happened throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries often at the instigation of the authorities. It happened during the civil war that followed the Bolshevik Revolution. And it happened during the Nazi invasion of the Soviet Union, resulting in some 1.5 million Jews disappearing in forest pits and ravines and burning warehouses, through every method of torturous and unnatural death imaginable.

The permanent fear of mob violence and the injustice of racist laws was a fact of life but the vulgarity and public humiliations the Jews experienced in the street, on the trolleybus, in the shop queue, stung bitterly and daily. It was not uncommon for irate citizens standing in futility to buy basic necessities to break out into curses and cries about the Jews. "If there's no water in the taps, the Jews drank it all," was one common refrain. "Beat the Jews, save our Russia," was another. Every Jewish boy had taken regular beatings in the schoolyard. My father's lunchtime football games would quickly descend into spirited bouts of "catch the Jew." My grandmother had once thrown herself upon her elder brother's prone body to protect him from the boots of antisemitic thugs that were striking his ribs and skull. My mother, who lived a block away from a Holocaust-era killing field in Kyiv known as Babi Yar, experienced antisemitism like a daily ritual. As her trolleybus approached her destination and the conductor called out, "next stop, Babi Yar," every day, without fail, one of the drunks dozing peacefully would suddenly return to lucidity, sit bolt upright, and cry out and cackle and lament, "if only they'd shot all you Jews here!"

2 George Orwell, *Down and Out in Paris and London* (Melbourne: Text Publishing, 2016), 48.

Only once did my mother see this behavior go challenged. An army officer in uniform berated the drunk for celebrating the deaths of fellow citizens, for which the officer was turned upon by his fellow travellers, receiving their howls and insults for his unpatriotic conduct.

My father would tell me of how admired he was by his pupils in the town high school where he taught math and physics. He was a young, dynamic and passionate teacher. Then one day, a rumor circulated the schoolyard, that he, their beloved mentor, was in fact a Jew. The students filed into his office, one by one, to ask if this was really so, and to offer their condolences. "But how could this be?" one boy asked him with great earnestness, "you're such a good person."

As a boy, my father had made the mistake of asking one of the old town matriarchs why the area on the edge of the town limits was called a ravine when it was in fact completely flat. "Ah my boy," she answered with great pride, "it was a ravine, until we filled it with Jews." My father had once asked his father why he kept an axe permanently positioned by the front door. He had never seen it used. His father took a sharp breath, sat his son down and asked him if he knew the word "pogrom."

Eli Wiesel survived the hellscape of Auschwitz and became a Nobel Laureate for a body of written work so soulful, it somehow heightens the sorrow of the Holocaust to know one as sensitive and beautiful as Wiesel was subjected to it. In the 1960s he travelled to the Soviet Union, including to my birthplace of Kyiv, to see for himself the conditions under which the Jews there lived. He then recorded his observations in a book titled *The Jews of Silence*.

Wiesel wrote that one thing struck him about the Jews there above all others. It was their fear. Fear inhabited the eyes of every Jew he encountered without exception. That fear came from the individual traumas described, some variation of which had been experienced by every Jew. But it also came from a collective panic from opening the papers to see the "rootless cosmopolitans" and "Zionist bankers" denounced, cartoons of great hook-nosed creatures preying upon the decent citizens of the state, or to read of the Night of Murdered Poets when Jewish artists and actors were rounded up, tortured and murdered under Stalin's orders. The fear was deep and generational.

Leaving the Soviet Union at the age of three, I of course had no personal experience of any of this. I carried no obvious trauma, nor did I, to my knowledge, exhibit the fear that Wiesel had observed. But I witnessed this in my parents and grandparents. It was not just in the stories they told me; those stories that were shaping my own consciousness and sense of self, but through their inherent, involuntary actions. The fear and trauma are not easily dislodged, not even by the safety and distance of Australia. It presents as a sort of nervous energy,

a perpetual sense of looming calamity, a tendency to experience joy as an interval between disasters, and a stiffening of the face the second the word “Jew” is heard.

Aside from some fairly harmless schoolyard run-ins, my childhood was free of antisemitism. When it did occur, it was momentarily jarring but mostly left me perplexed, seeking to decipher what was said and what or who had prompted it. At tennis practice a boy of no more than ten once came up to me and said, “Jewish, ewww.” In primary school, a classmate, who had clearly been well briefed, gave me a good dressing down for “being strange” for being a Jew. I can recall he was highly animated, flailing even, face fixed in a hawkish sternness rarely seen in the prepubescent. Strange indeed.

In high school, I regularly heard “Jew” used as a verb, as in “so and so got Jewed,” or “he’s trying to Jew you.” These incidents didn’t scar me or cause undue distress. They were unpleasant, but I had by that point come to understand what real antisemitism was, and it was not that.

My family moved house every couple of years as new migrants finding their way tend to do, and in my early teenage years we came to live in a modest apartment block in middle class Randwick in Sydney’s eastern suburbs. Directly above us lived a couple who had migrated from Austria. The man was ageing but tall and vigorous, with a deep resonant voice and a farmer’s build. When he met my father, who spoke with a strong Russian accent and whose pale blue eyes and fair complexion hardly betray his ethnicity, the neighbor was genial to a fault. He even offered to lend my father any tools he might need to get settled in. Then he saw my mother, and everything changed.

The neighbor’s name was Kurt Rosenberger and upon learning that the new occupants were Jews, he would stand on his balcony and bellow at us, night after night, alternating between a thunderous guttural roar and a sneering tone full of menace, “Hitler didn’t finish the job, I will finish it for him.” An evening serenade that continued for weeks. It was plainly terrifying to hear. It became difficult to sleep beneath such a man, and it pained me to see the fear that returned full bore to my parents’ eyes.

Why did he hate us so? What did he think we had done? What did he think we intended to do beyond living simple, honest lives as hopeful migrants in a new land?

He surely would have had no coherent answer to these questions. He probably didn’t ponder on them a great deal. But he knew with perfect certainty that the Jew, represented in that moment by my parents and their two boys, was something so loathsome, so repugnant, so unhuman, that he was justified in behaving in such a manner to an ordinary young family.

In every other stratum of his life, Kurt Rosenberger would have been a perfect gentleman, a man of deep morality, wholesome values, an even disposition. Owners board, neighborhood watch, that sort of thing. I often saw him engaging in civil banter with the couple across the road. How was it that when placed in the mere vicinity of a Jew, he was moved to such fury, such frenzy as to threaten repeatedly to kill a family?

In many ways, this is the same question that philosophers, historians and social scientists have posed when attempting to make sense of the Holocaust. How did a country as advanced and enlightened as twentieth-century Germany make antisemitism its national idea, deploying its magnificent energy and full force to pursue every Jew, even those thousands of miles away, until they were nearly obliterated from the face of the earth? How did many thousands of ordinary people all across Europe choose to join killing squads, volunteer to form search parties to comb the forests, and dispossess, humiliate and murder their neighbors simply because they were Jewish? How did elite soldiers, educated, Church-going men in their thirties, perform actions such as throwing Jewish children into pits of quicksand and hurling sweets at them gaily as they flailed and suffocated before their eyes?

We imagine them carrying out their missions with a robotic efficiency. But accounts of the method of the killings, testimonies of perpetrators, witnesses and survivors, tell a story of revelry, of jolly good sport. One of the few Jews who crawled out of the river of blood that was the Babi Yar killing site, recalled the soldiers “laughing as if they were watching a circus act.” Thousands of Ukrainians, Belarusians and Balts volunteered to join killing squads or for special assignment at the death camps. “Trawniki men,” they were called. They tended to parade around the camps, mocking the Jews standing in line for the gas chambers, hacking off breasts with their swords, driving rifle butts through unassuming skulls, purely for the thrill of it. In Kaunas, the Jews were paraded in a carpark as a young Lithuanian man bludgeoned Jews to death with a crowbar in front of a crowd that sung the national anthem and cheered every killing. The standard defense of following orders just doesn’t seem to do.

There were reports of German SS men asking to be transferred out of their units due to the psychological toll of hunting and killing innocent people, day after day. There is not a single record of such a request being met with demotion or disciplinary action. Yet few made such requests. No doubt they found the work interesting. Marauding through the verdant Soviet countryside in cars and on motorbikes, like merry adventurers, clad in leather, those immaculate German uniforms, carrying out “special measures,” under direct orders of the Chief of the Security Police, Reinhard Heydrich. They were sleuths and game

hunters all at once. They carried out their work with an almost majestic efficiency, sending back daily reports of their accomplishments: 875 Jewish girls and women shot in Berdichev; ninety Jewish children shot in Bila Tserkva; 33,771 in Kyiv; 23,600 in Kamenets-Podolsk.

Paul Blobel, who commanded the killing squad in Kyiv, was driving a fellow SS man to dinner one evening when his companion noticed some peculiar disturbance in the soil of a field they were passing. “Clumps of earth rose into the air as if by their own propulsion—and there was smoke; it was like a low-toned volcano; as if there was burning lava just beneath the earth. Blobel laughed, made a gesture with his arm pointing back along the road and ahead, all along the ravine—the ravine of Babi Yar—and said, ‘Here lie my thirty-thousand Jews.’”³

The answer to why many thousands of fairly unremarkable people, of different nations, professions, languages, religious sects, social classes, each devotedly carried out these acts lies in the cumulative effect of two millennia of conspiracy theories that explicitly bound the Jews up with every evil in our world—money, war, disease, trickery, arrogance, bloodthirstiness, even the killing of God. This was presented, virtually from birth in the form of vivid storytelling, searing sermons, classical literature, glorious art and carefully calibrated propaganda that appealed to human fear and psychological frailty.

This transformed the Jew from an individual human being, bound, often extremely loosely, to other Jews by ancestral, cultural, religious associations, possessing all the flaws and virtues with which each person is endowed, into something that is at once vastly inferior and terrifyingly dangerous. In other words, vermin. And as the Holocaust historian Yehuda Bauer said, “one does not argue with vermin.”⁴

The crimes of our time occur through this same well-honed process. One October morning in 2018, a man named Robert Bowers, a frequent poster of standard white supremacist fare on social media, entered the Tree of Life Synagogue in Squirrel Hill, Pittsburgh during the Sabbath service, armed with a semi-automatic rifle. Bowers took his aim and shot eleven Jews dead.

Who were the people he shot? Rose Mallinger, ninety-seven years old. Jerry Rabinowitz, a doctor who treated AIDS patients during the height of the epidemic. One patient recalled, “he often held our hands (without rubber gloves) and always, always hugged us as we left his office.” Cecil and David Rosenthal, brothers with intellectual disabilities, they were inseparable and never missed a

3 Gitta Sereny, *Into That Darkness: From Mercy Killing to Mass Murder* (London: Pimlico, 1974), p. 97.

4 Yehuda Bauer, *The Holocaust in Historical Perspectives*, (Canberra: ANU Press, 1970), p. 9.

service. David Stein, seventy-one, who had just become a grandfather. Richard Gottfried, a dentist who had sought solace in his faith following the death of his father. Joyce Fienberg, a retired research specialist. Melvin Wax, 88, a retired accountant who loved the Pittsburgh Pirates. Sylvan and Bernice Simon, killed in the same synagogue they were married in more than sixty years before. Irvin Younger, a grandfather who volunteered at the synagogue. Bowers didn't see doting grandparents, loving brothers or the Pittsburgh Pirates. He saw only vermin. He was doing the world a favor.

In the eyes of my old neighbor, Kurt Rosenberger, I wasn't a kid concerned with the petty debauchery and idleness that fills the teenage mind. I was a roach that had crawled into his line of sight and had to be exterminated, because unfortunately, as Kurt had lamented to us, Hitler had left some loose ends. Maybe Kurt himself felt he had some unfinished business: he would have been of fighting age after all.

Very many books and articles have speculated as to the question of "why?" Why have the Jews been so despised and so brutalized throughout history? "Why" is a necessary and logical question and this book, I believe, will go some way to answering it. At the very least, it will offer an understanding of historic and present antisemitism, its evolution, proponents, methods, consequences and so on, from which the reader can contemplate their own "why?"

Hannah Arendt believed that the Jew is a convenient scapegoat who has suffered from totalitarianism, but it could just as easily have happened to any other ethnic group. Maybe it could have, but it didn't.

Jean-Paul Sartre theorized that the antisemite does not hate the Jew for who he or she really is, but instead hates the mythical Jew he himself conjures to lay all ills of modernity and a rapidly changing world upon some living, breathing creature. There is something to this, though Sartre goes on to dismiss a distinct Jewish national consciousness, arguing that Jews are bound by their suffering and nothing more. With this, I profoundly disagree.

Then there is perhaps the most common explanation that antisemitism comes from jealousy for Jewish success. Jews are perceived to be uniformly wealthy and successful—itself a problematic formulation—and Jews have made considerable contributions to innumerable disciplines and fields.

Beyond the writers, the Nobel laureates and the scientists is an altogether more impressive achievement: their survival. They have survived from antiquity to modernity virtually unchanged in their national and religious customs. They have outlived the empires and war machines that sought to annihilate them. They regained their independence despite two millennia of dispersal and exile. Kurdish, Tibetan and Assyrian leaders, fellow ancient peoples who lost their

homelands, have spoken of the Jewish experience as the exemplar for how to remain a people despite seeing ancestral lands pass into the hands of others, and how to form a successful movement of national return.

The Dalai Lama said, “we always talk of the Jewish people scattered in so many countries, speaking so many languages. Yet the Jews keep their traditions. It is something very admirable.”⁵ The Korean Ambassador to Israel declared to an incredulous Israeli audience, “each Korean family has at least one copy of the Talmud. Korean mothers want to know how so many Jewish people became geniuses. Twenty-three percent of Nobel Prize winners are Jewish people. Korean women want to know the secret. They found the secret in this book.”⁶ A Chinese scholar observed that “the Jewish people have developed a tough, confident and incisive character and a culture that highlights creative thinking, practicality and pursuit of knowledge and truth.”⁷ These views provide some hope, but they are far from the norm; outliers that tend to bemuse more than anything.

Is this success, real or perceived, the cause of antisemitism? No. Success does not automatically arouse hatred. We admire those we consider worthy of success. We only despise those we consider undeserving.

Then there is the new dogma coming out of sociology departments along the lines that antisemitism is just one form of racism, all racisms are by-products of colonialism and power imbalances and cannot be defeated unless they are all defeated together—a proposition that completely dismisses the uniqueness of antisemitism, and essentially applies the “all lives matter” treatment to the ongoing torment of the Jews.

A more mystical explanation is to be found in the Talmud which traces antisemitism to Mount Sinai, where the Jews received the laws that formed the basis of western ethics. The Hebrew word for hatred is nearly identical to Sinai, “sinah.” Perhaps the sinah that came from Sinai is a form of jealousy, perhaps it is the spirit of rebellion against purported teachers and lawgivers.

The hatred of the Jews is patently unique. There is the longevity of it. The ubiquity of it. The fanaticism of it. The tenacity of it, leaching on to a religion, then seizing on ethnicity, race, community, a nation-state. There is the subtlety of it, its transmission through euphemisms and coda. Its positioning as the

5 Ari L. Goldman, “Dalai Lama meets Jews from 4 major branches,” *The New York Times*, September 26, 1989.

6 Ross Arbes, “How the Talmud Became a Best-Seller in South Korea,” *The New Yorker*, June 23, 2015.

7 Song Jian, “Chinese Jews and China-Israel Relation,” *Chinese Studies*, 3 (2014), pp. 121–127.

centerpiece of Nazism, the most devastating military-industrial machine ever assembled. There is even more than that.

All other forms of racism perceive the target group as inferior and treat them accordingly. Slavery, the reduction of humans to chattels, is based on the belief that superior races have the right to possess and exploit inferior ones. Colonialism, even practiced benevolently, is the product of a belief system that holds some races to be incapable of self-government. The exclusion of certain groups from professions, schools and social networks is derived from a feeling that members of that group would diminish those places.

The Jew is viewed entirely differently. He or she is not hated because of ignorant aversions to skin color or other physical attributes—such prejudices are so base and absurd that there is hope they can eventually be outgrown. The Jew is hated for something much more penetrating and elemental. The Jew is hated because of how he or she is perceived to think. This is not easily dislodged. The Jew is given a cunning malevolence, a capacity to trick and deceive. They are given a superior intellect but one that is perverse and drawn astray by dark forces. They use this intellect to plot the downfall of all non-Jews, to conspire to partake in their flesh, to murder their gods and prophets, to strip them of their wealth by the crafty accumulation of capital, to lead them into war, revolution and depression. No other ethnic group is subjected to such lurid formulations—accusations so wide and ludicrous no one could possibly rebut them.

No other victims of racism encounter greater denial of their plight. This inflicts a double indignity. Erasing the person, then denying that they had ever lived or died. Yes, Holocaust commemoration and education is now strongly embedded in the calendars and curricula of western nations. But this is as much a response to the ignorance and malice that accompanies the memory of the Holocaust than to the enormity of the event itself.

A poll conducted in the United States in 2020 found that a majority of Americans thought the number of Jews killed in the Holocaust was a third of the actual number. Nearly half were unable to name a single concentration or death camp. One in ten believed the Jews had caused the Holocaust.⁸ The mere presence of deniers of the Holocaust, a meticulously documented event of recent history which spanned the European continent, continued for a period of five years, and involved millions of individual perpetrators, victims and witnesses, speaks to the grisly determination of the antisemite.

8 Kit Ramgopal, "Survey finds 'shocking' lack of Holocaust knowledge among millennials and Gen Z," NBC News, September 16, 2020, <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/world/survey-finds-shocking-lack-holocaust-knowledge-among-millennials-gen-z-n1240031>

Of equal concern should be the more insidious, subtle and mainstream attempts to revise the history of the Holocaust through false equivalences, whereby every menace is a Nazi and every objectionable policy is a deportation to Auschwitz, every villain is a Goebbels or a Mengele, a phenomenon of soaring popularity among the pandemic conspiracy theorists. The attempts to reframe the Holocaust, and the Jews generally, to fit within modern theories of race further cloud our understanding of history and disfigures antisemitism into a lesser form of racism.

In January 2022, Whoopi Goldberg told an audience of millions on the show *The View* that the Holocaust “wasn’t about race” on the basis that the Nazis and the Jews were “two groups of white people.”⁹ Goldberg, though surely through astonishing ignorance and not malice, excluded the Jews, who had been hunted and slaughtered precisely because of race, from being victims of the millions of racist crimes of which the Holocaust is formed. Kenneth L. Marcus referred to this as “erasive antisemitism,” whereby the Jews are perceived only as being “white, privileged oppressors,” and therefore incapable of being victims of racism.¹⁰ To arrive at such a view, one must first dabble in stereotypes of Jews as being wealthy, powerful and privileged.

The cases of the superstar recording artist Kanye West and basketball player Kyrie Irving demonstrate the enduring relevance of antisemitic mythology and the unparalleled opportunities for its distribution created by social media. The industrialist Henry Ford had to rely on writers and the printing press to spread his belief in a global Jewish conspiracy. Kanye West needed only to tap a few incendiary words on an iPhone to instantly reach many millions of people throughout the world. Pavel Krushevan used a St Petersburg newspaper to introduce the world to the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*. Now newspapers merely report on the immense damage Kyrie Irving caused entirely on his own.

Beginning in October 2022, Kanye West embarked on a prolonged, multimedia campaign ostensibly motivated by his belief that the Jews control the industries in which he attained his immense wealth and fame and were responsible for, among other things, exploiting Black entertainers. There was something deeply personal to the tenor of his statements, indicating it stemmed from some personal misfortune or slight he attributed to the collective Jew. Indeed, West

9 James Hibberd, “Whoopi Goldberg Apologizes and Seemingly Doubles Down on Holocaust Comments,” *Hollywood Reporter*, February 1, 2022, <https://www.hollywoodreporter.com/tv/tv-news/whoopi-goldberg-the-view-holocaust-comment-draws-criticism-1235084661/>

10 David Bauder, “ABC suspends Whoopi Goldberg over Holocaust race remarks,” *APNews*, February 2, 2022, <https://apnews.com/article/whoopi-goldberg-apology-the-holocaust-jonathan-greenblatt-4a4c77055d7bb1c37662fc9b274a8869>

accused the Jews of corrupting the Christian values of his former wife, Kim Kardashian, by advancing immoral content on major streaming services and other media. When challenged for his statements, West claimed that he “actually can’t be Anti Semitic [sic] because black people are actually Jew.”

On October 14, 2022, West declared that when he awoke the following morning he would be “going death con 3 On JEWISH PEOPLE [sic],” a botched reference to the “DEFCON” state of readiness alerts used by the United States Armed Forces.

West then claimed Jews “black ball anyone who opposed their agenda,” and were responsible for “cancel culture.” Though initially dismissed as the ravings of someone laboring under a defect of mind, West’s enormous wealth and cultural influence ensured that a sequence of long-form interviews across print, social media, network television and podcasts afforded him opportunity to fully ventilate his theories for a prolonged period to global audiences, virtually without challenge. Though ripe for mockery, virtually all that he said showed a certain lucidity, even a clarity of thought and purpose, that placed West comfortably alongside the antisemitic theorists and agitators that animate many of the chapters of this book.

In one segment, West told an interviewer that he was nearly poisoned by a Jewish doctor, immediately invoking recollections of the poisoners libel that emerged in the Middle Ages, and Stalin’s “Doctors’ Plot,” in which Jewish doctors were accused of plotting to poison Communist Party figures. On a different occasion, West read out a graphic listing dozens of major media and entertainment companies before showing the supposedly Jewish executives highlighted in red,¹¹ giving support for the concept that Jews have seized the levers of power and control every influential stratum, as foretold in the sequence of antisemitic texts that created the Jewish global domination myth.

In another interview, West claimed that “Jewish people have owned the Black voice...The Jewish community, especially in the music industry, in the entertainment [industry] period, they’ll take one of us, the brightest of us, right, that can really feed a whole village, and they’ll take us and milk us till we die.”¹² This also invokes the global domination theme, and attributes a Jewish desire to enslave and kill, that came to be associated with the Blood Libel and Decide

11 “Kanye West Shows Chart of Powerful Jews, Apologizes For George Floyd Comments, Talks MAGA Hat & More,” published on YouTube by The Hollywood Fix, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P3MtXJ00Jg4>

12 Cited in “Kanye West: What you need to know,” Anti-Defamation League, October 14, 2022, <https://www.adl.org/resources/blog/ye-kanye-west-what-you-need-know>

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