

Anti-semitic themes in the Kremlin's narratives



ANTI-SEMITISM AND CONSPIRACY THEORIES

- Many conspiracy theories subconsciously or consciously contain anti-semitic themes and will usually devolve into overt antisemitism the longer their rhetoric is observed.
- This is because antisemitic conspiracy theories are among the oldest and broadest in conspiracy theory culture; containing the central themes of money/financial corruption, protection of power and use of influence to get puppets to do the dirty work.
- The Holocaust has made these narratives unpalatable for every day populism, so many of the far-right have used coded language that directs criticism to unnamed shadowy "elites", "foreign interests" and "dark, external forces".
- The Kremlin has utilised these narratives publicly and covertly throughout the Cold War and the present day to undermine rivals and create divisions in western society.



George Soros, financier, philanthropist and pro democracy advocate

ANTISEMITIC THEMES IN THE KREMLIN'S UKRAINE NARRATIVE

- Antisemitic themes can be found throughout the Kremlin's Ukraine narrative, often in subtle forms in the official Kremlin narratives and more overtly in its unacknowledged disinformation efforts.
 - In 2021, former President and Prime Minister, and now Deputy of the National Security Council, Dimitry Medvedev released an article in which he attacked President Zelensky - whom he described as a man "with certain ethnic roots" - and the entire Ukrainian government of corruptly serving "foreign interests and rabid nationalists" as "vassals" who "work only to line their pockets".
 - He went further and compared Zelensky to a Sonderkommando (Jewish slave labourers forced to cremate corpses at Nazi extermination camps); stressing his identity as a Jew rather than a Ukrainian.
 - On May 1st, Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov asserted that Zelensky's Jewish heritage did not mean he was not a Nazi; claiming that "among the worst antisemites are Jews" and that "Hitler himself had Jewish blood" (a theory that has been repeatedly debunked). Dani Dayan, the head of Israel's Yad Vashem Holocaust museum, argued this comment followed an antisemitic trope of inverting the reality of the Holocaust to depict Jews as the perpetrators.
- The Kremlin is also attempting to reignite its previous veiled antisemitic disinformation narrative that Ukraine interfered in the 2016 US presidential election at the behest of billionaire philanthropist George Soros (pictured above), who is of Jewish descent and the Kremlin accuses of controlling pro-democracy protests across the world, in order to smear Ukraine through the antisemitic narrative of a Jewish financier pulling the strings.
 - The Kremlin's assertions of US bio-labs in Ukraine manufacturing germ weapons also plays on antisemitic conspiracy theories that Jewish cabals utilise pandemics and vaccines to cull or destroy the gentile population.
 - At the same time, the Kremlin has gone out of its way to emphasise its lack of overt antisemitism in comparison to the rest of Russian history a key part of its narrative as a saviour; allowing it to balance its narrative of the Ukraine invasion as a battle against Nazism while appealing to antisemitic thought globally.

THE TARGET AUDIENCE GOES BEYOND RUSSIA

- No country is free of antisemitism, and a general uptick in belief in conspiracy theories - combined with the link between antisemitism and conspiracy culture - is exposing more people to antisemitic material.
- Russian disinformation campaigns have actively targeted this; particularly within the US.
- Evidence suggests Russian narratives are finding traction across the spectrum. Parts of the Qanon and Christian nationalist communities have framed the conflict as a war for traditional values against shadowy cabals as part of a more general convergence between the Kremlin and right-wing media and politicians. While hard left "anti-Zionist movements" have seen Russia and Ukraine as manipulated into the conflict by "financial lobbyists" in Israel and the US.