

Conversations About Jews on Twitter: Recent Developments Since Elon Musk's Takeover

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Abstract

The controversy about Ye's (Kanye West) antisemitic comments and Elon Musk's tumultuous takeover of Twitter have led to fears of an increase in antisemitism on Twitter. We looked at conversations on the Twittersphere from January to November 2022, with a focus on the period of October 1 to November 6 when the number of conversations about Jews more than doubled. We also examined the first peak of conversations about Jews after Musk's takeover.

The majority of these conversations in October and early November were reactions to controversial statements about Jews by Ye, former president Donald Trump, and Kyrie Irving, including antisemitic stereotypes of Jewish control of the media and antisemitic ideas that are promoted by some Black Hebrew Israelites. More than 80 % of the top 20 retweets of these five weeks were related to antisemitism, past or present, mostly denouncing antisemitism. However, the sixth most popular tweet (retweeted 10,785 times) suggested that Ye might have been right that "*Jews control everything.*"

On October 30, the first peak of conversations about Jews after Musk's takeover, the majority of tweets denounced antisemitism, but 18 % of conversations about Jews were antisemitic, an unusually high percentage. On that day, 23 % of the top 20 retweets (7,611 retweets altogether) defended Ye's explicit or Kyrie Irving's implicit statements about Jews.

Introduction

Widespread antisemitism on social media platforms has been recognized as a growing problem, and since 2017, major platforms have begun to take the issue more seriously. This was partly in response to violence related to online communications and advertisers withdrawing their ads from platforms where their ads may have appeared alongside hateful, repulsive messages. However, reducing hate messages against Jews and other minorities is a technical challenge due to the sheer volume of messages and the difficulties in automated hate speech detection. It also raises important questions about censorship and freedom of expression on these platforms. While our research shows that antisemitism on Twitter is widespread¹—in 2020, 10.7 % of the tweets that included the word “Jews” were antisemitic²—Twitter has suspended or deleted some prominent users and tweets. One of the recent most prominent cases was Ye (Kanye West) who was suspended for almost 4 weeks from Twitter after an antisemitic rant in early October. Twitter has also taken measures against users who disseminate fake information about Covid or users who were suspected of using the platform to incite violence. Most prominently, Donald Trump was banned from Twitter in early 2021 in the context of the January 6 riots in Washington D.C. His account was reinstated on November 20, 2022, after Elon Musk polled Twitter users.

When Musk, a known free-speech advocate, proposed on October 4, 2022, to complete a deal to acquire Twitter and then closed the deal on October 28, 2022, some users tested out the boundaries of moderation policies on Twitter. Users of the imageboard 4chan, which is often used by white supremacists, initiated a campaign to spread propaganda on Twitter using the hashtag #TheNoticing which has been used to spread extreme antisemitic and racist messages.³ The Network Contagion Research Institute noticed an increase in the use of the N-word⁴ and terms associated with Jews.⁵

The Anti-Defamation League released some results of an ongoing study on Twitter that “*indicate a 61.3% increase in the volume of tweets (excluding retweets) referencing “Jews” or “Judaism” with an antisemitic sentiment in the two weeks following Musk’s Twitter takeover, compared to the two weeks prior.*”⁶

Commentators have feared that hate messages could be spread completely unchecked. On November 2, Musk said that Twitter won’t reinstate banned accounts for at least another few weeks and he has previously floated the idea of a content moderation council. On October 18, he announced Twitter’s new policy, including that “*Negative/hate tweets will be max deboosted & demonetized, so no ads or*

¹ Gunther Jikeli et al., “Differences between Antisemitic and Non-Antisemitic English Language Tweets,” *Computational and Mathematical Organization Theory*, September 9, 2022, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10588-022-09363-2>.

² <https://isca.indiana.edu/publication-research/social-media-project/media.html>

³ Asaf Elia-Shalev, “‘Now That Elon Is Taking over’: Online Antisemites See Opening as Twitter Is Handed over to Musk,” *Jewish Telegraphic Agency* (blog), October 28, 2022, +; Stuart A. Thompson, “Antisemitic Campaign Tries to Capitalize on Elon Musk’s Twitter Takeover.,” *The New York Times*, October 28, 2022, sec. Technology, <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/10/28/technology/musk-twitter-antisemitism.html>.

⁴ https://twitter.com/ncri_io/status/1588572489361526784

⁵ https://twitter.com/ncri_io/status/1588584197610147842

⁶ They annotated 1,100 tweets altogether (before and after Musk’s takeover) and found 264 anti-Jewish tweets, that is, 24 % anti-Jewish tweets. <https://twitter.com/orensegal/status/1593715384267702272>

other revenue to Twitter. You won't find the tweet unless you specifically seek it out, which is no different from rest of Internet. Note, this applies just to the individual tweet, not the whole account."

However, it is unclear if antisemitic content has increased significantly during or after the change of ownership of Twitter. Other events in October might have had a major impact, too.

Three events were covered extensively in the news in October 2022 that are related to debates about antisemitism. On October 7 and 8, Ye posted an antisemitic rant on Instagram and Twitter which included threats against Jews in general, a conspiracy theory about Jews pushing "their" agenda, and a reference to the Black Hebrew Israelites' belief that Black people are the real Jews.⁷ He subsequently repeated his antisemitic beliefs in statements and interviews. On October 16, former President Trump made a controversial statement on his social media platform Truth Social about Jews and Israel, complaining that American Jews do not appreciate him sufficiently.⁸ And on October 27, NBA star Kyrie Irving shared a link to the film "Hebrews to Negroes" on Twitter. The film tries to "prove" the Black Hebrew Israelite belief that Black Americans, among others, are the true descendants of the biblical Israelites. It claims that modern Jews are imposters who stole the religious heritage of Black people and have engaged in a "cover-up" to prevent Black people from knowing their "true" identity. It also includes accusations that Jews are in part responsible for the transatlantic slave trade and that Jews falsified the history of the Holocaust in order to conceal their nature and protect their alleged status and power.

To shed light on conversations about Jews in the Twittersphere during these turbulent times, we used a mix of quantitative and qualitative methods.

Methods

We scraped all tweets that include the words "Jews" and "Kikes" from January 1 to November 6, 2022, from the Twitter archive and plotted the number of tweets per day.

To explain the peaks and higher baseline number of conversations about Jews since early October 2022, we identified the most frequent words in our corpus during this period (October 1 to November 6). This helped us to identify relevant themes and keywords. A timeline for some of these keywords tracks peaks that might explain the peaks in conversations about Jews.

The first peak of conversations about Jews after Musk's takeover was on October 30, 2022, with close to 100k messages on that day. We draw a randomized sample of 100 tweets from that day and annotated it manually. Both authors annotated the sample independently and then discussed discrepancies in the annotation. The annotation includes whether or not the tweet is antisemitic according to the Working Definition of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA), whether it is calling out antisemitism, and whether it addresses any of the identified topics, based on the top word frequencies.

⁷ His tweet on October 8 read *"I'm a bit sleepy tonight but when I wake up I'm going death con 3 On JEWISH PEOPLE The funny thing is I actually can't be Anti Semitic because black people are actually Jew also You guys have toyed with me and tried to black ball anyone whoever opposes your agenda."*

⁸ He posted the message *"No President has done more for Israel than I have. Somewhat surprisingly, however, our wonderful Evangelicals are far more appreciative of this than the people of the Jewish faith, especially those living in the U.S. Those living in Israel, though, are a different story -- Highest approval rating in the World, could easily be P.M.! U.S. Jews have to get their act together and appreciate what they have in Israel -- Before it is too late!"*

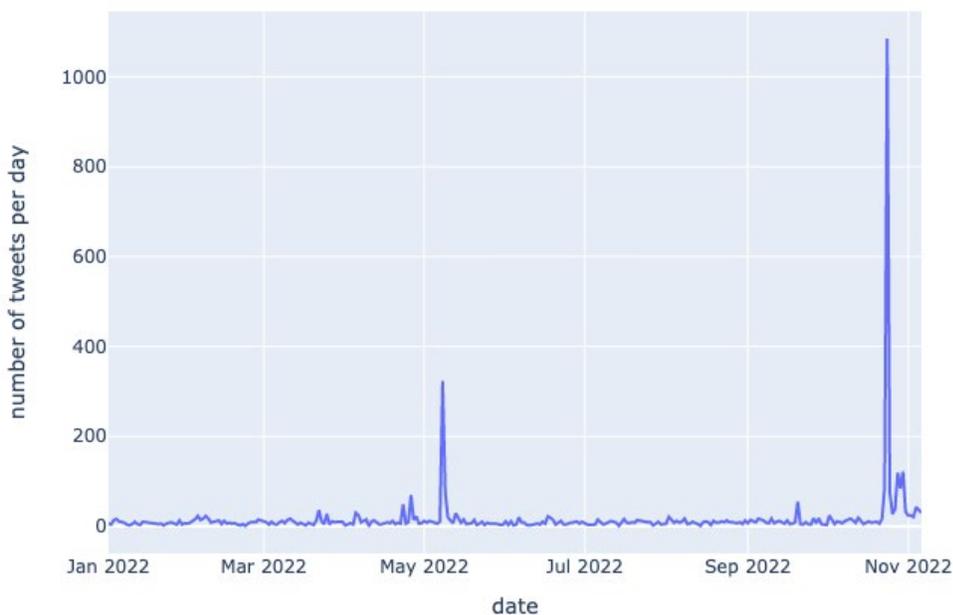
Finally, as part of methodological triangulation to identify salient themes, we examined the top 20 retweets in the period from October 1 to November 6 and the top 20 retweets on October 30. Popular retweets are a good indication of topics that trigger approving sentiments. Users tend to hit the retweet button if the tweet is important to them or if it expresses a sentiment they share.

Findings

The use of the K-word is marginal

“Kikes“ is one of the most open insults against Jews. Antisemites might have wanted to test out if the open use of this insult would result in any sanctions from Twitter. Graph 1 shows the number of tweets with the K-word from January 1 to November 6. The Median number of tweets per day is 8.5 and the Mean is 16 tweets.

Graph 1: All tweets with the K-word between Jan. 1 and Nov. 6, 2022



The highest peak was on October 24 with 1,047 tweets. However, 1,034 of these tweets were retweets of a tweet that called out antisemitism. It was created on October 23 and read "So @TwitterSafety I guess as a Jewish woman, a dude with "kikes gets raped" as his handle doesn't go against your rules? Wtaf."⁹ This confirms our earlier findings that a majority of tweets that include the K-word are not

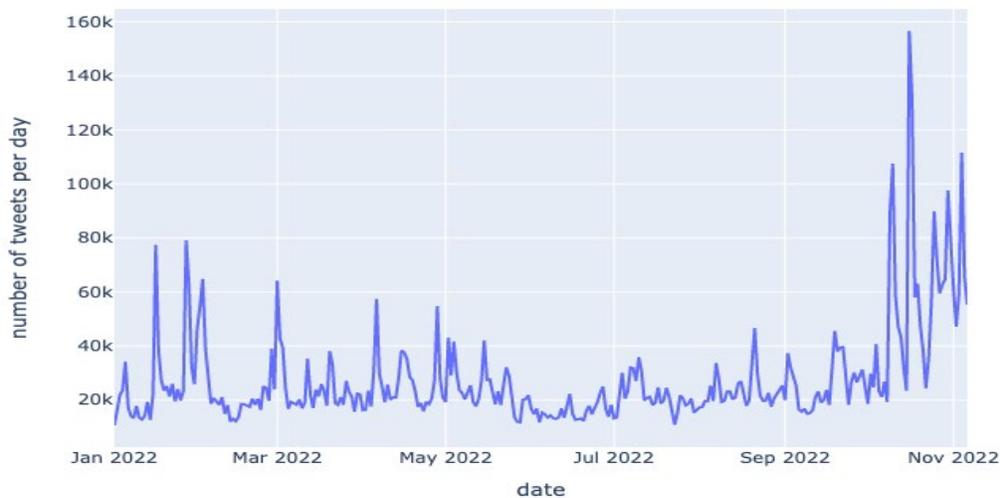
⁹ Tweet can be found at <https://twitter.com/doriranchgirl2/status/1584257614111596545>.

antisemitic but in fact, call out antisemitism by others.¹⁰ Very few users employ this term. It is hardly indicative of any larger developments on Twitter.

20k to 155k conversations about Jews every day

The term “Jews” is used frequently, 8.6 million times from January 1 to November 6, 2022, 27,605 times per day on average (mean) with a median of 21,770. Conversations about Jews show frequent peaks, many around 40k and some even higher. Graph 2 shows a clear increase since early October with several peaks, on one day more than 150k. The average number of tweets per day and the median have increased significantly. While they were 23,508 tweets per day on average from January to September, they more than doubled to 55,862 tweets per day from October 1 to November 6.

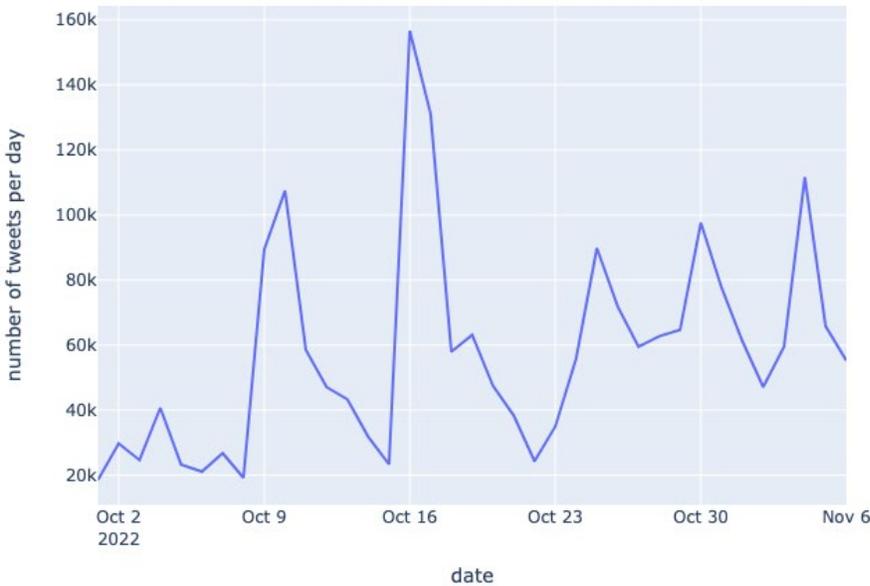
Graph 2: All tweets with the keyword “Jews” between Jan. 1 and Nov. 6, 2022



Graph 3 zooms in on the month of October 2022 and early November, showing several significant peaks, on October 9 with over 87k tweets, October 10 with over 100k tweets, October 16 with 155k tweets, October 17 with 128k tweets, October 25 with over 80k tweets October 30 with almost 98k tweets, and November 4 with 110k tweets. There were 2.1 million tweets with the word Jews from October 1 to November 6, 2022.

¹⁰ Gunther Jikeli et al., “Towards an AI Definition of Antisemitism?,” in *Antisemitism on Social Media*, ed. Monika Hübscher and Sabine Von Mering (Abingdon, Oxon; New York, NY: Routledge Taylor & Francis Group, 2022), 193–212.

Graph 3: All tweets with the keyword “Jews” between Oct. 1 and Nov. 6, 2022



The peaks on October 9 and 10 came shortly after Ye's antisemitic rants. The peak on October 16 is on the day Trump made his controversial statement. The other peaks are harder to explain. There is no peak on the day or the next day when Irving posted his controversial tweet and there is no peak on the day or the day after when Musk took over Twitter.

Frequently used words in conversations about Jews from Oct. 1 to Nov. 6 and explaining the peaks

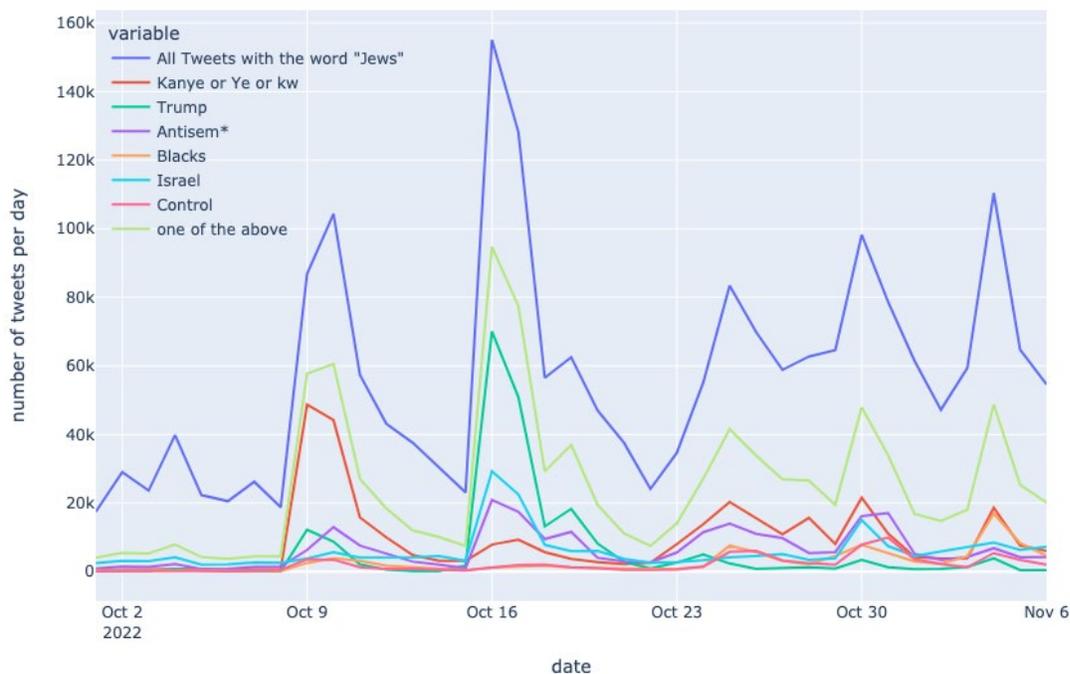
The 25 most frequent words in this period (excluding stop words and generic words, such as time, today, million, years, and speak) can be found in Table 1.

Table 1: 25 most frequent words in conversations about Jews between Oct. 1 and Nov. 6, 2022

keyword	frequency	keyword	frequency	keyword	frequency
jews	2,257,235	trump	162,246	jew	73,652
jewish	292,229	white	134,028	racist	73,032
kanye	264,146	west	96,058	control	72,075
antisemitic	201,840	world	95,815	called	71,635
hate	196,489	media	80,714	3	71,482
black	193,914	hitler	78,519	nazis	71,153
american	193,726	nazi	75,882	trumps	68,339
israel	178,691	donald	75,390		
antisemitism	168,707	holocaust	74,106		

The most common words already give us strong clues about the most important topics in conversations about Jews during that period. Many of them relate to the three controversial statements by Ye, former president Trump, and Irving, including antisemitic stereotypes of Jewish control of the media and antisemitic ideas that are promoted by some Black Hebrew Israelites, namely accusing Jews to be imposters and being responsible for the transatlantic slave trade of Black people. These themes are likely to be reflected in tweets with the keywords “Kanye, Trump, Antisem*, Blacks, and control.” We added the word “Israel” to see if the Israeli elections on November 2 might have had a significant impact on conversations about Jews. We added the timeline of these additional keywords to see if they help us explain the peaks, see Graph 4.

Graph 4: All tweets with the keyword “Jews” and tweets that also include the words “Kanye/Ye/KW, Trump, Antisem, Blacks, control, and Israel” between Oct. 1 and Nov. 6, 2022*



And indeed, tweets with these additional keywords make up the majority of tweets in conversations about Jews. The light green timeline shows all tweets that have at least one of these additional keywords. It peaks on the same days as the timeline of all tweets with the term “Jews.” Taken together, these peaks of additional keywords covering different topics might explain the peaks of the conversations about Jews. The Israeli elections do not seem to play a significant role. Tweets with the term Israel peaked on the day when Trump made his controversial statement about Jews and Israel but not on the Israeli election day on November 2.

The timeline of tweets with the words Kanye, Ye, or KW (within tweets with the word Jews) accounts for a large portion of the peaks on October 9 and 10, as expected. The timeline of tweets with the word Trump shows a peak on October 16 and 17, as also expected. The peaks on October 25 and 30 and

November 4 can be mapped by an accumulation of all these topics, see the light green timeline in Graph 4.

The timeline of tweets with the word antisem* indicates that there is a discussion around this topic. Many users denounce antisemitism, others contribute to this discussion by claiming that certain antisemitic statements in their opinion were not antisemitic. Both were the case in the annotated sample.

The 20 most popular retweets account for 10 % of all tweets between Oct. 1 and Nov. 6

A look at the top 20 retweets also indicates that the major conversations were on Ye (top 1, 4, 5, 6, and 18 retweets) and on Trump’s controversial message about Jews and Israel (top 2, 9, 12, 14, 17, and 20 retweets), see Table 3. Others are related to general fears of more hate and antisemitism since Musk’s takeover (7, 16) and antisemitism in the past (8, 11). The top 8 retweet, however, is also part of a thread that includes the top 2 retweet, which is related to Trump’s controversial statement on October 16.

The sixth most popular retweet is antisemitic, implicitly claiming that measures against Ye showed that he was right in saying that Jews control everything. However, some of the top 20 retweets touched also other themes, such as rallies in Ukraine in support of fascist leader Stepan Bandera (15), Father Charles Coughlin (8), abortion (10), Evangelic Christians (3), (criticizing) President Joe Biden (13), and Hindus in India (19).

The majority of the most popular retweets in conversations about Jews denounced antisemitism. They account for 56 % of all the 195k top 20 retweets, 68 % including denouncing antisemitism implicitly (5, 16, 20).

Table 3: Text of the top 20 retweets in conversations about Jews between Oct. 1 and Nov. 6, 2022

Top 20 retweets in conversations about Jews between October 1 and November 6, 2022	count
1) Kanye threatened the Jews yesterday on twitter and it’s not even trending. Why do mostly only Jews speak up against Jewish hate? The silence is so loud	28,641
2) Today, having recently turned 100, I read Donald Trump’s appalling words about American Jews, and I am nine years old again. The phrase, a horse’s ass, was an everyday expression when I was nine and it occurs to me again now. 3/3	16,516
3) Jehovahs Witnesses don’t protest outside blood banks. Mormons don’t protest outside coffee shops that sell caffeine. Jews and Muslims don’t protest outside grocery stores that sell pork.Only Evangelicals think our business is their damn business.	14,020
4) Trump called Elaine Chao “Coco Chow.” Senator Tuberville said reparations are for “people who do crime.” Kanye West threatened Jews with “dead con 3.” Folks, this is NOT normal. We can’t become numb to this. We must call out all of their hateful, racist remarks.	13,531
5) Today, Musk reactivated Kanye’s Twitter account. On behalf of Jews everywhere: Fuck you, Elon.	11,859
6) If saying "Jews control everything" is a nasty, antisemitic stereotype... then erasing a man from every corner of the economy after he says that doesn't exactly disprove said stereotype... does it? https://t.co/4H4WIYPSrT	10,785

7) Right-wingers insisted that once Elon took over they'd be able to speak their mind. Finally, the MAGA message can be heard! And then as soon as they were "freed" to do this, they started screaming the n-word and bashing Jews. Lesson: hate IS the MAGA message. It always was.	10,775
8) I was 9 years old when my dad was found to have committed fraud & was sent to prison for a few years. Alone in bed one night, my father away, I was playing with a crystal set radio and came across the vicious antisemitic voice of Father Coughlin railing against American Jews. 1/3	9,922
9) congratulations to the literally zero Republicans who have stood up to denounce Donald Trump's attack on American Jews. take a victory lap, you spineless fucking cowards	7,932
10) Three Jewish moms are suing the AG over KY's abortion ban, arguing it gives preference to Christian beliefs and diminishes Jews' religious freedoms. "In Judaism, reproductive health of a mother is between the mother, her rabbi and her doctor-- not the AG. https://t.co/moiFknArtr	7,815
11) Hi! The global Jewish population has still not rebounded from the Holocaust. There were 16.6 million Jews in 1939, then 6 million of us were annihilated in a genocide that happened when "It's A Wonderful Life" came out in movie theaters, and now there are 14.8 million of us.	7,196
12) BREAKING: Donald Trump ominously warns "U.S. Jews" to "get their act together" and "appreciate" what he has done for Israel "before it is too late," drawing on the infamous "dual loyalty" antisemitic canard. RT IF YOU THINK THAT TRUMP IS A VILE BIGOT!	6,998
13) Joe Biden was raised in the Puerto Rican community (total lie), went to synagogue more than Jews (he didn't), graduated at the top of his class (76th out of 85 people) with 3 degrees (actually 1) on a scholarship (no scholarship) and Hunter Biden's the smartest guy he knows.	6,779
14) American Jews will not be pushed around by a Fascist Criminal.	6,716
15) Ukrainian paratroopers singing "Our father is Bandera, our mother is Ukraine". Bandera was the leader of Ukraine's Nazi organization and murdered over 100,000 Poles and Jews in 1943-1944. Just in case you still think the Ukrainian military and government isn't filled with Nazis! https://t.co/NThATvkJZX	6,339
16) Dear @elonmusk I am a Holocaust survivor teaching about the past and living my best life now. Will you make sure that #Twitter is a safe place for #Jews ? Please stand with marginalized communities & speak up against #Hate. #Antisemitism #endhate #betterworld ps write me back. https://t.co/MCI3NvTMjv	6,187
17) First it was calling Elaine Chao "Coco Chow." Now it's saying "Jews have to get their act together...before it's too late." What will it take for every American to realize Donald Trump is fundamentally racist, anti-semitic, xenophobic, & an evil person who doesn't belong in power?	6,163
18) Exclusive: we obtained unaired footage from Tucker Carlson's interview with Ye, in which the artist makes numerous inflammatory comments about Jews and describes a bizarre claim that "fake children" were planted in his home to manipulate his own kids. https://t.co/CMn0sGfK58	5,828
19) Kashmiri Hindus are Jews but unfortunately India is not Israel.	5,757
20) There's a simple question that must be asked of every GOP elected official right now-whether they agree with Trump that Jews must "get their act together..before it's too late." It's a yes or no question. No one should be permitted to waffle out of. The media has a role to play.	5,580
SUM #	195,339

One of the top 20 tweets is antisemitic (6). With 10,785 retweets this represents 5.5 % of the top 20 retweets. It is likely that thousands of users shared the sentiment that Ye might be right about the Jews. White nationalists used this sentiment in a campaign that promoted the phrase "*Kanye is right about the Jews.*" Members of the antisemitic "Goyim Defense League" hung a banner with these words over a

major freeway in Los Angeles on October 22.¹¹ On October 29, it was projected onto a stadium just after a popular game in Jacksonville, Florida.¹²

Only 18 % of all top 20 retweets were unrelated to antisemitism, past or present. However, the top 20 retweets account for less than 10 % of the 21 million tweets that included the term Jews from October 1 to November 6, 2022. What is the percentage of antisemitic tweets in peaks of conversations about Jews after Musk's takeover?

A closer look at the day of the first peak of conversations about Jews after Musk's takeover of Twitter

Looking at the texts and images of a representative sample of tweets is perhaps the only reliable way to determine the percentage of antisemitic tweets. We drew a random sample of 100 tweets from the first peak after Musk took over Twitter, the peak on October 30.

Both authors annotated the tweets of the sample in their context, that is, live on Twitter, and then discussed their discrepancies. Both annotators agreed that 18 % of the tweets were antisemitic according to the IHRA Definition of Antisemitism.¹³ This is significantly higher than the average in the years 2019 (6.9 %), 2020 (10.7 %), and 2021 (8.6 %), according to our annotation of representative samples in each of these years.¹⁴ More than 50 % of the tweets in the sample of October 30, 2022, called out antisemitism in one way or another. 93 % of the conversations touched at least one of the themes that we covered with the keywords "Kanye/Ye/KW, Trump, Antisem*", Blacks, control, and Israel." This is also the case for the antisemitic tweets (94 %). However, the distribution differs between antisemitic and non-antisemitic messages. A quarter of all tweets in our representative sample of conversations about Jews on October 30 touched on the scandal around Ye. Among the antisemitic tweets, the percentage was 39 %. These are mostly messages that endorse some of Ye's antisemitic statements. 71 % of the conversations were related in some way or another to discussions about antisemitism, mostly calling out antisemitism. However, 44 % of the antisemitic tweets also touched on debates about antisemitism, mostly rejecting the accusation of antisemitism.

Israel was a significant part of the conversation with 25 % of the tweets relating to Israel, mostly in a critical or hostile way and sometimes (3 %) in antisemitic ways, denying the Jews the right to self-determination. Antisemitic ideas related to the Black Hebrew Israelites or antisemitism among Black people were touched on in 20 % of the tweets that day; 6 % that were related to these themes were

¹¹ Philissa Cramer, "'Kanye Is Right about the Jews,' Antisemitic Group Says on Los Angeles Highway Banner," *Jewish Telegraphic Agency*, October 23, 2022, <https://www.jta.org/2022/10/23/united-states/kanye-was-right-about-the-jews-antisemitic-group-says-on-los-angeles-highway-banner>.

¹² Anders Anglesey, "Antisemitic Kanye Message Projected On to Stadium at Florida Football Game," *Newsweek*, October 30, 2022, <https://www.newsweek.com/antisemitic-kanye-west-message-beamed-stadium-florida-football-game-1755640>.

¹³ Gunther Jikeli, Damir Cavar, and Daniel Miehl, "Annotating Antisemitic Online Content. Towards an Applicable Definition of Antisemitism," *ArXiv:1910.01214 [Cs.CY]*, arXiv preprint, 2019, <https://doi.org/10.5967/3r3m-na89>.

¹⁴ The percentages of antisemitic tweets from 2019 to 2021 are results of an ongoing research project of the Social Media & Hate Research Lab at Indiana University's Institute for the Study of Contemporary Antisemitism. They have only partly been published, see Jikeli et al., "Differences between Antisemitic and Non-Antisemitic English Language Tweets."

antisemitic, that is, 33 % of the antisemitic tweets. Jewish control was a topic of 13 % of the tweets on conversations about Jews, half of them were antisemitic, see Table 4.

Table 4: Topics in a representative sample of conversations about Jews on October 30, 2022.

Topics	in all tweets	in antisemitic tweets
kanye	24 (24 %)	7 (39 %)
trump	0	0
antisemitism	71 (71 %)	8 (44 %)
blacks	20 (20 %)	6 (33 %)
israel	25 (25 %)	3 (17 %)
control	13 (13 %)	7 (39 %)
one of the above	93 (93 %)	17 (94 %)

The vast majority (78 %) of antisemitic tweets were related to classic antisemitic stereotypes, tropes that are covered by the second example of the IHRA Definition of Antisemitism that reads, *“Making mendacious, dehumanizing, demonizing, or stereotypical allegations about Jews as such or the power of Jews as collective — such as, especially but not exclusively, the myth about a world Jewish conspiracy or of Jews controlling the media, economy, government or other societal institutions.”* 17 % of the antisemitic tweets denied the Jewish people their right to self-determination and 6 % expressed hatred of Jews by insinuating that Adolf Hitler was right about Jews. 44 % of the antisemitic tweets doubled down on antisemitic stereotypes voiced by Ye and 22 % expressed antisemitic stereotypes that are part of the film that Irving linked.

The top 20 retweets on October 30, 2022: 41 to 64 % are calling out antisemitism

The top 20 retweets, see Table 5, account for one-third (33 %) of the total tweets for that day (32,436 of total 98,222 tweets), significantly more than the percentage (10 %) that the top 20 retweets of the period from October 1 to November 6, 2022, represent. Very popular retweets accounted for a large percentage of tweets on the first peak of conversations about Jews after Musk’s takeover.

The first two most popular retweets touched on the fear that Musk’s takeover of Twitter might lead to more antisemitism on the platform. However, many tweets called out antisemitism. Many users were concerned about the projection of the words *“Kanye is right about the Jews”* at a football game in Florida (top 3, 13, 14, and 19). Others called out alleged antisemitism by American politician Doug Mastriano and his wife in the 10th most popular retweet or did so indirectly in a comment about an anti-Jewish belief about the role of Jews in Israel that is somewhat common among Evangelic Christians (17). A rally in Ukraine that celebrated the Nazi Waffen SS was called out in two popular retweets (7, 18), using the same text but linking to different videos. One popular retweet (11) was originally by the British Daily Mail linking an article with the headline *“Kanye West doubles down on claim Jews control the media by sharing SPREADSHEET ‘filled with names of Jewish execs at top entertainment corporations!’”* The ninth most popular retweet was about Paul Pelosi’s attacker and included information that he had published hateful messages against *“Jews, Black people, Democrats, media and transgender people.”*

Together, these retweets denouncing antisemitism accounted for 41 % of all retweets in the list of top 20 retweets, 64 % if the top 1 and 2 retweets are included that voice fears about a rise of antisemitism and condemn it implicitly.

23 % of the top 20 retweets on October 30 defend Irving or Ye

The 12th most often retweeted message is probably antisemitic. The user denies that the film that Irving linked in his message is antisemitic and rather sees it as proof for the claim that Black people are Jews. What is more, the message accuses “you,” presumably the Jews, to have made Rolling Stone magazine say that the film is antisemitic, alluding to the power of the Jews in the media. Another antisemitic message in defense of Irving was the 20th most popular tweet that day. It alleges that “the Jews” are targeting Irving unjustly and thus accuses all Jews of imagined wrongdoing by some Jews.

The fifth most popular retweet that day is the same antisemitic tweet that is the sixth most popular tweet over the entire period from October 1 to November 6. It claims implicitly that measures against Ye showed that he was right in saying that Jews control everything. The top 16 retweet has a similar message about Jewish control of the media.

The fourth most popular retweet that day is not directly antisemitic according to the IHRA Definition of Antisemitism, but it is a sarcastic comment by white nationalist Paul Ray Ramsey who poses as a Jew in this tweet and denies Ye’s antisemitism. One of his earlier tweets reads “*If the Jews have a right to a homeland, so do we. Simple as.*”¹⁵ His tweet is an invitation to antisemites to voice antisemitic ideas about Jewish power, which can be seen in many of the comments that he received on this message.

The eighth most popular retweet is a tweet by a self-declared anti-Zionist rejecting the accusation of antisemitism. The tweet disseminates a very negative view of Israel, but it is not antisemitic according to the IHRA Definition of Antisemitism.

However, antisemitic retweets are among the top 20 retweets of Twitter conversations about Jews that day. They account for 16 % of the top 20 retweets according to classification with the IHRA Working Definition of Antisemitism, 23 % if Paul Ramsey’s tweet is included, and 28 % if the anti-Zionist’s tweet is included.

The Auschwitz Museum sends out messages every day about historical events and victims during the Holocaust that happened on that day. The Museum has 1.4 million followers and posts often get retweeted hundreds or several thousands of times. One of their tweets about a transport from Auschwitz to Bergen-Belsen on October 30, 1944, that might have included Anne and Margot Frank made it into the top 20 list of retweets.

Remarkably, all top 20 retweets address antisemitism in one way or another, either by expressing fear of increasing antisemitism, denouncing antisemitism, remembering the events of the Holocaust, rejecting accusations of antisemitism, or promoting antisemitic ideas.

¹⁵ <https://twitter.com/ramzpaul/status/1581278263187451906>

Table 5: Text of the top 20 retweets in conversations about Jews between October 30, 2022

Top 20 retweets in conversations about Jews between October 30, 2022	count
1) Dear @elonmusk I am a Holocaust survivor teaching about the past and living my best life now. Will you make sure that #Twitter is a safe place for #Jews ? Please stand with marginalized communities & speak up against #Hate. #Antisemitism #endhate #betterworld ps write me back. https://t.co/MCI3NvTMjV	4,697
2) Right-wingers insisted that once Elon took over they'd be able to speak their mind. Finally, the MAGA message can be heard! And then as soon as they were "freed" to do this, they started screaming the n-word and bashing Jews. Lesson: hate IS the MAGA message. It always was.	2,709
3) "Kanye is right about the Jews!!!" was projected at the Florida v Georgia game, which Ron DeSantis attended He hasn't condemned it He won't ever condemn it Why? The same reason Trump won't Cuz his base consists of anti-Semites and he doesn't wanna offend their Nazi feelings	2,521
4) My fellow Jews, please stop saying the Kanye is antisemitic. Antisemitism is prejudice plus power. Only Whites have power in our system. As such, it is impossible for a black man to be antisemitic. Read a book and get educated.	2,464
5) If saying "Jews control everything" is a nasty, antisemitic stereotype... then erasing a man from every corner of the economy after he says that doesn't exactly disprove said stereotype... does it? https://t.co/4H4WIYPSrT	2,090
6) When asked to condemn anti-Semitic comments about Josh Shapiro and his association with white nationalist platform Gab, Mastriano's wife steps in and says, "We probably love Israel more than a lot of Jews do." https://t.co/hHaW9Say6k	2,062
7) Every year in Lviv, Ukrainians celebrate the creation of the Nazi Waffen SS Galizien division. The division was famous mainly for the genocide against Russians, Poles and Jews. Ukrainians are proud of the work of their ancestors as you can see. It is very sad https://t.co/o2QeQuVUTr	1,903
8) Don't conflate Jews with Zionists. Many of us anti-Zionists are Jews. Many of us Jews simply aren't Zionists. The largest Zionist orgs in the USA are Evangelical Christians. Stopping Israel's brutality against Palestinians is not antisemitism. https://t.co/ePji4fVrud	1,554
9) David DePape, 42, published hundreds of blog posts in recent months sharing memes in support of fringe commentators and far-right personalities. Many of the posts were filled with screeds against Jews, Black people, Democrats, media and transgender people. https://t.co/7xfFgO6u8u	1,485
10) Doug Mastriano asked by an Israeli reporter (@nathanguttman of @kann_news) to respond to antisemitic attack on Josh Shapiro and association with Gab. His wife Rebbie steps in and says: "I'm gonna say we probably love Israel more than a lot of Jews do." #PAGov https://t.co/Pczpz2IYgJ	1,474
11) Kanye doubles down on anti-Semitic claim Jews control the media by sharing SPREADSHEET 'filled with names of Jewish execs' https://t.co/AH72zZJHA5	1,297
12) Kyrie Irving posted a documentary about the PROOF of history that black ppl are Jews and you got rolling stone saying it's "antisemitic" Kyrie didn't even mention a word... just posted the link to the documentary.	1,185
13) 1/ This is the Mayor of Jacksonville, FL. He took to Twitter to thank Gov DeSantis for being at the Florida-Georgia game, but hasn't tweeted against the rash of anti-Semitism in his city this weekend, incl'ing a projection at the game reading "Kanye was right about the Jews" &... https://t.co/YtFg4ky76s	1,160
14) My god—This projected sign reads "Kanye is right about the Jews". Jacksonville, Florida football game at @UF— FL Governor @RonDeSantisFL flipped the coin at the start of the game, and his family attended the game. https://t.co/JGPxFP27QE	1,057
15) 30 October 1944 An evacuation transport of 1,308 female Jews from #Auschwitz reached the Bergen-Belsen concentration camp. Among them probably sisters Anne & Margot Frank. They died there of typhus most probably in February 1945. https://t.co/9ldWqqB5mj	931
16) Jews Admitting They Control The Media (Thread) - - - Kanye West has been in the headlines recently for suggesting that Jews control the media. The ADL has attacked Kanye, saying that his comments are antisemitic. Kanye is being punished; however, is he lying? (Cont.) https://t.co/ONvawvAEIJ	929

17) As a Jew who grew up in the heartland, I remember my friends' parents casually telling me how sad it was that my family was going to hell. So when a gentile says they love Israel more than a lot of Jews do, I hear: "We need Jews to housesit Israel until the rapture arrives." https://t.co/llqPd5kTlq	858
18) Every year in Lviv, Ukrainians celebrate the creation of the Nazi Waffen SS Galizien division. The division was famous mainly for the genocide of Russians, Poles and Jews. Ukrainians are proud of the work of their ancestors as you can see. https://t.co/QLgbdryxDn	853
19) It reads: "Kanye was right about the Jews." https://t.co/DD2mTzr80C	638
20) Kyrie is aboriginal to this land — his ancestors built America for free #ChattelSlaves — but now he's a target of The Jews bc he shared a doc he watched. Meanwhile, The Jews didn't have a problem with anyone sharing Jeffrey Dahmar doc bc his victims were predominantly BLACK MEN. https://t.co/xq0XcND0ef	569
SUM #	32,436

Conclusions

Conversations about Jews have increased significantly since early October 2022. The average number of daily conversations about Jews has more than doubled and peaks have been much higher than in the first nine months of the year. The higher volume and the peaks in October and early November are largely due to conversations about Ye's antisemitic comments, discussions about a controversial statement by former President Trump, and general fears of an increase in antisemitic messages on Twitter after Musk's takeover.

The top 20 retweets accounted for 10 % of all tweets in conversations about Jews from October 1 to November 6, 2022. Only 18 % were unrelated to antisemitism, past or present. The large majority of popular retweets denounced antisemitism. However, one popular message implicitly claimed that measures against Ye proved that he was right in saying that Jews control everything. It was retweeted more than 10,000 times and accounted for 5.5 % of all top 20 retweets alone. Apparently, thousands of users shared the sentiment that Ye (Kanye West) might be right about the Jews. However, direct slurs against Jews, such as the K-word, are rare on Twitter and if they are used, they are often used to denounce antisemitism by other users.

A closer look at the first peak of conversations about Jews after Musk's takeover is revealing. On October 30, 2022, there were close to 100k messages that included the term "Jews."

Our manual annotation of a representative sample found that 93 % of the conversations touched on at least one of the topics related to antisemitism, Israel, the idea of Jewish control, anti-Jewish attitudes within black communities, or controversial statements by Ye, former president Trump, or Irving. 71 % of the conversations were related to discussions about antisemitism, mostly calling out antisemitism. 18 % of the tweets were antisemitic according to the IHRA Definition of Antisemitism. 44 % of the antisemitic tweets also touched on debates about antisemitism, mostly rejecting the accusation of antisemitism. The vast majority (78 %) of antisemitic tweets were related to classic antisemitic stereotypes, tropes that are covered by the second example of the IHRA Definition of Antisemitism that reads, "*Making mendacious, dehumanizing, demonizing, or stereotypical allegations about Jews as such or the power of Jews as collective — such as, especially but not exclusively, the myth about a world Jewish conspiracy or of Jews controlling the media, economy, government or other societal institutions.*" 17 % of the antisemitic tweets denied the Jewish people their right to self-determination and 6 % expressed hatred of Jews by insinuating that Hitler was right about Jews. 67 % of the antisemitic tweets that day doubled down on antisemitic stereotypes voiced by Ye or antisemitic stereotypes that are part of the film that

Irving linked. Christian antisemitism (“the Jews killed Jesus”), stereotypes of rich, abusive Jews, anti-Zionist forms of antisemitism, and Nazi-type antisemitism (endorsing Hitler) accounted for the rest of the antisemitic themes.

A closer look at the top 20 retweets that day confirmed our manual annotation of a representative sample of conversations about Jews. All top 20 retweets addressed antisemitism in one way or another, either by expressing fear of increasing antisemitism, denouncing antisemitism, remembering the events of the Holocaust, rejecting accusations of antisemitism, or promoting antisemitic ideas. 41 % of all top 20 retweets on October 30, 2022, denounced antisemitism explicitly, and a further 23 % implicitly. However, 23 % of the top 20 retweets defended Irving or Ye, and most of them were antisemitic according to the IHRA Definition of Antisemitism.

Many conversations about Jews in the Twittersphere in October and early November 2022 are a reaction to one the controversial statements about Jews by Ye, former president Trump, and Irving, including antisemitic stereotypes of Jewish control of the media and antisemitic ideas that are promoted by some Black Hebrew Israelites and the Nation of Islam.

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