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The Antisemitic Meme of the Jew



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Report: IR14-1
Dr Andre Oboler

The antisemitic Meme of the Jew

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Published in Melbourne by:

Online Hate Prevention Institute

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Website: <http://www.ohpi.org.au>

ISBN: 9780987429452

National Library of Australia

Cataloguing-in-Publication entry is available from the National Library of Australia:

<http://catalogue.nla.gov.au/>

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About the Online Hate Prevention Institute

The Online Hate Prevention Institute (OHPI) is an Australian Charity on the Register of Harm Prevention Charities maintain by the Australian Government. We aim to be a world leader in combating online hate and a critical partner who works with key stakeholders to improve the prevention, mitigation and responses to online hate. Ultimately, OHPI seeks to facilitate a change in online culture so that hate in all its forms becomes as socially unacceptable online as it is in “real life”.

OHPI is a charity that accepts public donations; within Australia donations over two dollars are tax deductible. As a new organisation, established in 2012, we are still in the early process of building a support base and establishing relationships with grassroots supporters, major donors, foundations and grant makers. More information about OHPI can be found on our website: www.ohpi.org.au and offers of support are most welcome.

About the Report’s Author, Dr Andre Oboler

Dr Oboler is CEO of the Online Hate Prevention Institute and co-chair of the Online Antisemitism Working Group of the Global Forum to Combat Antisemitism. Since coining the term ‘Antisemitism 2.0’ in 2008, his work has stood at the leading edge of efforts to combat the rising problem of internet based antisemitism and online Holocaust denial, particularly in the area of social media. Dr Oboler holds a PhD in Computer Science from Lancaster University (UK) and completed a Post Doctoral Fellowship in the Department of Political Science at Bar-Ilan University (Israel) and a Juris Doctor from Monash University (Australia). He is a Senior Member of the IEEE and a member of the IEEE Computer Society and the IEEE Society for the Social Implications of Technology.

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Help stop online hate

The Online Hate Prevention Institute encourages users to report all instances of hate speech they see on online platforms through the platforms internal reporting mechanisms. We are also in the process of building a third party reporting system to enable these incidents of hate, and the response by online platforms to users' reports, to be monitored. This will increase transparency in an area of growing concern. We encourage users to make use of this system once it is available.

As OHPI is a charity tackling a large and significant problem in today's society. We rely on public support to undertake this important work. You can also help combat online hate by supporting us.

Contribute to support our work



OHPI is reliant on donations from the public for our funding. Your financial support helps ensure we can continue to operate and expand our work.

Donations are accepted from around the world. In Australia we are a Registered Harm Prevention Charity and all donations over \$2 are tax deductible.

Credit Cards: Donations can be made online via credit card:

<http://ohpi.org.au/donate/>

Cheques: We also accept cheques payable to the "Online Hate Prevention Fund" which can be mailed to: OHPI, 306 Hawthorn Road, Caulfield South, Vic 3162, Australia.

Non-financial support

You can also assist us by joining our [mailing list](#), our [Facebook page](#), and following us on Twitter [@onlinehate](#). This shows your support for the work we do and will keep you informed of new reports, projects, campaigns and opportunities to take a stand against online hate.

OHPI is also looking to connect with other experts in the field, foundations that may support our work and journalists that may be interested in reporting on future stories related to our work. If this is you, please contact us: <http://ohpi.org.au/contact-us/>

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Executive Summary

The Antisemitic Meme of the Jew is a cartoon picture depicting a negative stereotype of a Jewish man with a black beard, long hooked nose, a hunched back, crooked teeth, and hands being wrung in glee. The image was created by a white supremacist cartoonist and has been online in neo-Nazi circles since at least 2004.

This report highlights an effort to give the image public acceptance as a part of mainstream online culture. This would increase the acceptability of using the image and significantly contribute to further normalising antisemitism in online society. It would help take the racist portrayal of Jews from the neo-Nazi fringe into the mainstream. This report provides recommendations to help prevent that occurring.

The effort to gain public acceptance for the image take place in three parts. The first push to gain acceptance for the image took the form of an effort to have the image entered as a recognised meme on the “know your meme” website, an authority on the online culture of memes. The second push related to the name the meme was given, part of an effort to associate it with an entirely non-notable thread on an online forum, but in doing so, this effort would erase the neo-Nazi history and origin of the image. Finally, a Facebook page was created to make the image appear mainstream.

The Online Hate Prevention Institute published a briefing on the Facebook page and shared a draft of this report with Facebook. Facebook swiftly unpublished the page, pending further review. While we welcome Facebook’s fast action in response to OHPI’s investigation into this matter, we note that this followed repeated rejection of complaints lodged by users.

Facebook does need to improve its systems so negative feedback back (rejecting users’ reports) is minimized and those already upset and taking the time to notify Facebook of racist content are not given a message that Facebook considers the content acceptable. Even if the content is eventually removed, such a message sends a signal that the dignity of minority groups is of little value to the company.

This report also addresses the question of whether such an antisemitic meme belongs on the “know your meme” website. We conclude that a carefully controlled entry would be an appropriate form of counter speech. It could serve as a warning that this meme is known to be racist and associated with neo-Nazis. If it were done carefully, such an entry could avoid glorifying the racist hate, while serving a reference point that those speaking out about the hate can refer others to when seeking the memes removal from social media sites and online forums.

A short section in this report highlights two other current issues related to online antisemitism, one related to a Facebook page promoting the classical antisemitic charge of blood libel. The page is blocked in Australia but remains visible in other countries. The page is one of the clearest examples of hate speech on the Facebook platform and urgently needs to be reviewed by Facebook. The other is the problem of a Holocaust denial page which OHPI previously had closed, but which has since been recreated. Facebook need to improve its systems to rapidly close such phoenix pages.

Dr Andre Oboler
CEO, Online Hate Prevention Institute
Melbourne, February 2014

Table of Recommendations

#	Who	Recommendation
1	Facebook	Facebook should ensure staff are trained to recognise this particular antisemitic image of a Jew as an example of a racial slur, and that staff act on future occurrences of it.
2	Facebook	Facebook should permanently close the antisemitic Facebook page " Organización-Anticomunista " (page ID# 621527911243604) on the grounds that the primary purpose of this page is the promotion of hate speech which violates Facebook's community standards.
3	Facebook	Facebook should permanently close the antisemitic Facebook page "The Merchant" (page ID# 504555959664212) (currently unpublished, but not removed) on the grounds that the primary purpose of this page is the promotion of hate speech which violates Facebook's community standards.
4	Facebook	Facebook should permanently close the antisemitism Facebook " Jewish Ritual Murder " / "truthaboutjews" (page ID# 322140667835235) on the basis that the page exists to promotion hate speech which violates Facebook's community standards.
5	Facebook	Facebook should make available educational material covering issues such as blood libel for the education of its staff. Compulsory training for staff reviewing complaints should cover this topic.
6	Facebook	The Facebook reporting system should check if the name of a page being reported by a user matches, or is close to, the name of a page the user has previously reported and which Facebook has closed. If so, ask the user if this is "the same" page. If the user says yes, the report should be treated as a report of a phoenix page.
7	Facebook / all social media platforms	A report of a phoenix page should be assess if the page is the same as the previous page, rather than looking for fresh evidence of a violation of the Community Standards. A page should be deemed to be the same (and closed) if it is created by the same person, or if the content or meta-data (such as the about information) is similar.
8	Facebook / all social media platforms	When checking if the user is the same in the context of a phoenix page, a match on the user account's ID, the IP address, or a substantially similar name should be sufficient. Sanctions should apply not only to the creator of the page, but to any administrators present on both the previously banned page and the phoenix page.
9	Facebook	Facebook should permanently close the antisemitic Facebook page "The Untold History" (page ID# 401047213364410), which is currently unavailable not removed, on the basis that it is a phoenix page which has replaced a page which has already been closed for violation of Facebook's community standards.
10	Know Your Meme	Know Your Meme should reject the current proposal for the entry named "The Merchant", it is not notable.

#	Who	Recommendation
11	Know Your Meme	Know Your Meme should add a static page for a meme related to the image itself under the name such as “Antisemitic Image of a Jew”. The page should feature just the original cartoon and the original cut out image of the Jew character. Other examples of its use should be avoided in order to stop them being popularised. The page should highlight the origin of the image and that is commonly used in neo-Nazi and other antisemitic circles. It should clearly state the image is racist and a form of hate speech and is provided on know your meme in the interest of public education and to help others recognise that memes using this image are likely hate speech and may be against the terms of service of online platforms.
12	Cheezburger Inc	The words ‘words or phrases’ in the Community Guidelines should be replaced with ‘words, phrases, images, audio, video or any other forms of content’.
13	Cheezburger Inc	The words ‘natural origin’ in the Community Guidelines should be changed to ‘national origin’ as this appears to be an error.
14	Cheezburger Inc	The Community Guidelines should be linked from the two places they are referred to in the terms of service page.
15	Cheezburger Inc	The Community Guidelines should be linked from the two places they are referred to in the terms of service page.
16	Cheezburger Inc	The legal information page at http://corp.cheezburger.com/legal/ should include a link to the Community Guidelines.
17	Cheezburger Inc	Know Your Meme and other sites should include a link to the Community Guidelines next to the link to legal information in the footer of each page. This will help Cheezburger Inc community what it expects, and thereby help it achieve its stated mission.
18	Facebook	Facebook needs to improve its systems so legitimate complaints about hate speech are not initially rejected a move which sends the wrong message to the public
19	Facebook	Facebook needs to implement procedures to watch pages that are experiencing viral growth and receiving many complaints; this may indicate a problem requiring priority attention.
20	Users	Users should continue to report content to platform provides through their complaint mechanisms, even if it appears those complaints are rejected. Complaints to NGOs like OHPI should be made only after such reports are rejected.

Introduction

The Online Hate Prevention Institute has previously look at hate speech in the forms of memes in the content of our reports into Antisemitism,¹ Aboriginal Memes,² anti-Muslim online content.³ Memes have also been present in our briefings on pages promoting online hate such as Holocaust denial,⁴ Centrelink Memes,⁵ and pages mocking the recently deceased.⁶ This report is different as it focuses on a single meme and exposes a concerted effort, across multiple platforms, to take the meme mainstream when it is in reality only popular in a particular fringe online group, that of white supremacists / neo-Nazis.

The antisemitic meme of the Jew is certainly something we have seen many times before and immediate recognise. The creation of a Facebook page specifically about this one meme, however, was particularly usual. It was made more unusual by a name for the meme whose origin was not immediately obvious and had no bearing on the context in which we had seen it used. This anomaly led OHPI to the concerted effort to game the website “know your meme” in an effort to make not just this meme but also antisemitism generally more acceptable in mainstream online culture.⁷

The gaming involved the adoption of a false history to the image. This promoted the obscure use of the meme on a forum while hiding the actual origin and far greater and older use of the image by neo-Nazis. The pinnacle of effort to game “know your meme” was the creation of a Facebook page called “The Merchant” (ID# 504555959664212) on January 24th 2014. This promoted the false history that the image was called “The Merchant aka Le Happy Merchant” and that it was “a famous meme”, it also falsely asserted the image was not hate and was just “fun”.

The Facebook page follows the pattern of other antisemitic pages on Facebook and the phenomena of antisemitism 2.0.⁸ Such efforts at denying the content is hate are designed to protect the page from removal by staff of social media companies who are more likely to consider the issue “contentious” in light of the claim that there is no intent to spread hate. The fact such claims are made explicitly should instead serve as a warning to the staff who review user reports of online hate.

This report discusses the campaign at know your meme, the origin of the image, the origin of the name, and the nature of the Facebook page. We also briefly discuss a couple of other antisemitic pages currently causing concern. The report concludes with a recommendations for responding to the underlying effort to make this particular image, and antisemitism generally, more acceptable online though the use of specific memes.

¹ Andre Oboler, *Recognizing Hate Speech Antisemitism on Facebook* (OHPI, 2013) online at <http://ohpi.org.au/recognizing-hate-speech-antisemitism-on-facebook/>

² Andre Oboler, *Aboriginal Memes and Online Hate* (OHPI, 2012) online at <http://ohpi.org.au/aboriginal-memes-and-online-hate/>

³ Andre Oboler, *Islamophobia on the Internet: The growth of online hate targeting Muslims* (OHPI, 2013) online at <http://ohpi.org.au/islamophobia-on-the-internet-the-growth-of-online-hate-targeting-muslims>

⁴ <http://ohpi.org.au/holocaust-denial-on-facebook-an-untold-story/>

⁵ <http://ohpi.org.au/centrelink-memes-and-anti-aboriginal-racism/>

⁶ <http://ohpi.org.au/the-hitler-shield-mocking-the-dead-at-facebook/>

⁷ Know Your Meme: Internet Meme Database, www.knowyourmeme.com

⁸ Andre Oboler, *Online Antisemitism 2.0. “Social Antisemitism on the Social Web”*, Post-Holocaust and Antisemitism Series, JCPA, (April 2008, No. 67)

The “Know Your Meme” Campaign

In November 2011 a page on “Jewspiracies” was added to the “know your meme” website which archives internet memes. It was [rejected](#) as not being notable. The page was renamed to [“Le Happy Merchant”](#) in October 2013 based on suggestions to help save the page. This led to [requests on various forums](#) for people to share different versions of this meme, presumably so they could be added to the “know your meme” page. The nature of a successful meme is that people want to spread it, as such the creation of the page on “know your meme” served as a trigger event leading to further sharing and popularisation of this racist meme.

The “Le Happy Merchant” page is currently being researched and edited before being again considered for inclusion at “know your meme”. As mentioned “The Merchant” Facebook page with its assertion that this “is a famous meme” is directly related to this effort to popularise the meme and gain it acceptance as part of mainstream online culture through inclusion in the “know your meme database”.

While the image itself is a racist meme repeatedly used to represent Jews, the name “Le Happy Merchant” and the specific use of it in this context has failed to gain any notable level of acceptance. It is a later minor use of the image not worth of note. The origin of the image, and the separate and later origin of the name, is presented below. Recommendations for “know your meme” are provided at the end of this report.

The origins of the image

The image is an internet meme, that is, an image that is spread online, often morphing into new version in the process. It is not mainstream, but is popular in antisemitic circles. The image itself reflects a negative stereo type of a Jewish man with a black beard, long hooked nose, a hunched back, crooked teeth, and hands being wrung in glee. The image was created by a white supremacist cartoonist going by the pseudonym "A. Wyatt Mann" (a white man) and was originally part of a cartoon whose message was that a world without Jews and Blacks would be like a world without rats and cockroaches.

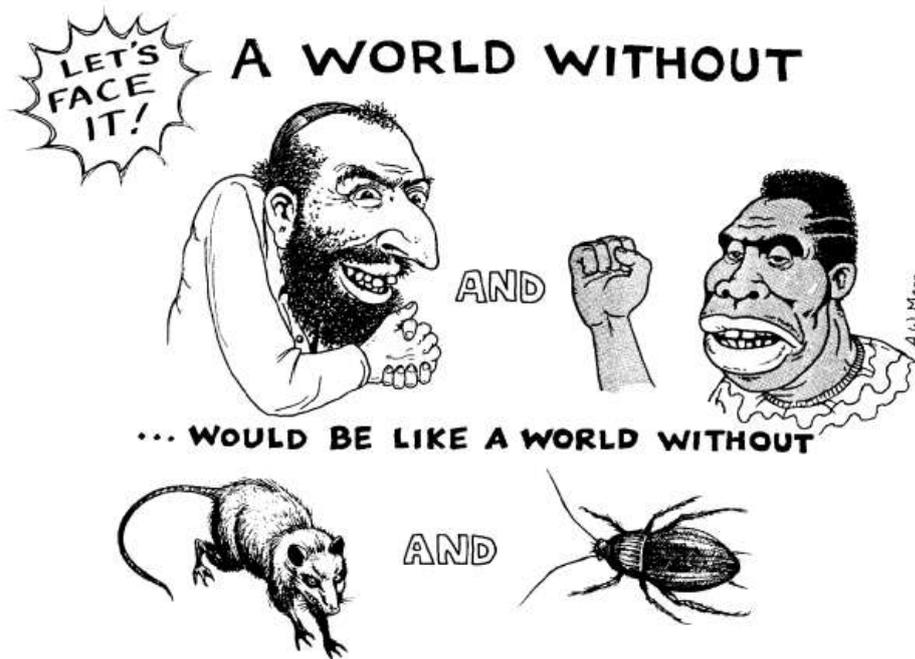


Figure 1 The original full image

The original cartoon dates back to at least November 2004 when it appeared in the first version of the racist image gallery on Tom Metzger's 'White Aryan Resistance' website. The cut out of "the merchant" along with the racist slur "Kikes" was used as a header for the section of the gallery on Jews. The section was accessed by clicking on the words "Oven Magnets".⁹ It may well be Tom Metzger who created the meme by separating the image of the Jew from the rest of the cartoon.



Figure 2 The extracted image of the Jew used as a heading

The image was one of many that appeared in a thread “Get Your Kike Face Avatar Here!” on the neo-Nazi Vanguard News Network forums in March 2009.¹⁰

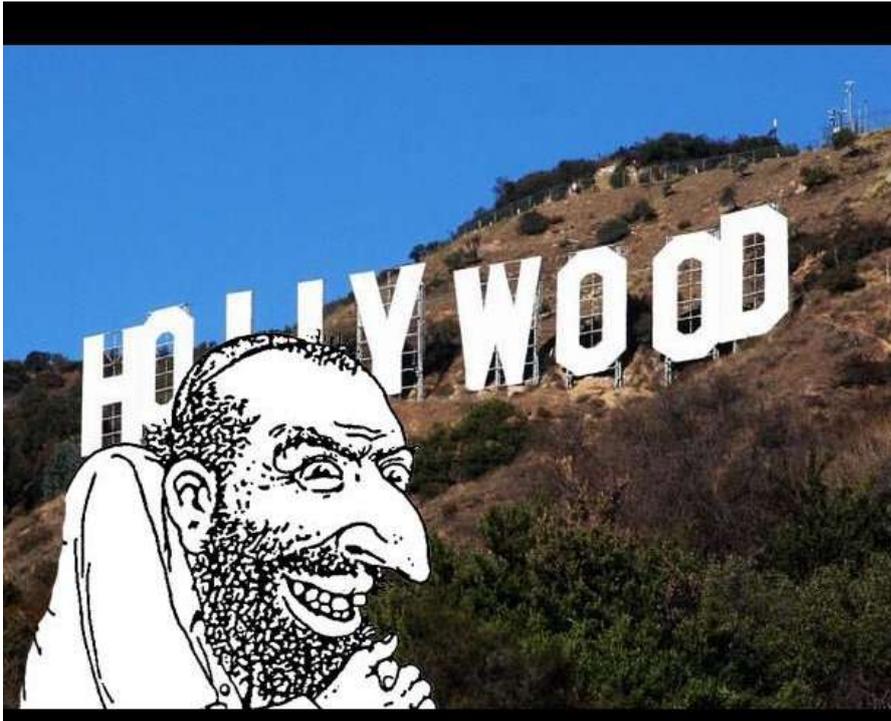
The image [was also used](#) by the American branch of Al-Muhajiroun, an Islamist group that is proscribed in Britain, in racist banners in 2008 and 2009. In 2011 a page about Wyatt Mann was added to Encyclopaedia Dramatica, it included cartoon in a small sample of A. Wyatt Mann’s work. More recently in June 2013, a stub (a very brief entry) called “Happy Merchant / Merchant Face” relating to the image was created at Encyclopaedia Dramatica. The page describes the image as “Happy Merchant, aka Merchant Face aka Jew Face”. Encyclopaedia Dramatica, sometimes described as Wikipedia’s evil twin, is an archive of the internet’s racism and hate. While the site argues it is satire, the [Australian Government considered it a hate site](#) and had Google remove some links to it in 2010.



Figure 3 The American branch of Al-Muhajiroun at the 2008 New York Israel Day parade

The image has been seen repeatedly by OHPI on various antisemitic pages in social media over a significant period. Two different versions of it, for example, appeared on the Holocaust denial Facebook page “The Untold History” in June 2013.

¹⁰ <http://vnnforum.com/showthread.php?t=90188>



The Untold History
Like This Page · June 26

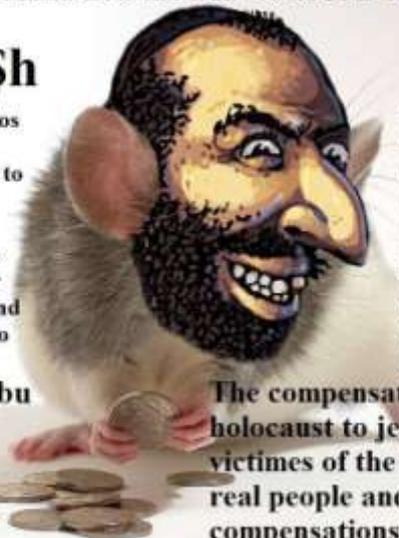
Like · Comment · Share

likes this.

1 share

Gas chambers never existed its a Hoax

Holoca\$h
The millions of euros and dollars for compensations due to the hoax of gas chambers that are proven to be hoax and still hidden for political,military and economic reasons to benefit a few.
Break The Tabu



HoloHoax
The Truth fear no question, the evidance about the hoax are real and the lie about the gas chambers need to be break to have justice and peace in this world. its unfair to have take hostage civilization,economie and politic because of gas chambers that never existed
The compensation money of alleged holocaust to jews its a outrage. The victimes of the holocaust in gaza are real people and dont receive compensations money..

The Untold History
Like This Page · August 3, 2014

Like · Comment · Share

likes this.

1 share

Most recently a version of the meme appeared on the Spanish language antisemitic Facebook page "[Organización-Anticomunista](#)" (page ID# 621527911243604) on February 5th 2014.



Recommendation 1: Facebook should ensure staff are trained to recognise this particular antisemitic image of a Jew as an example of a racial slur, and that staff act on future occurrences of it.

Recommendation 2: Facebook should permanently close the antisemitic Facebook page "[Organización-Anticomunista](#)" (page ID# 621527911243604) on the grounds that the primary purpose of this page is the promotion of hate speech which violates Facebook's community standards.

The origins of the name “The Happy Merchant”

Referring to the image as “The Merchant” or “Le Happy Merchant” is a much more recent invention and has no notable significance.

In November 2012 an image called “Le Happy Merchant” was submitted as a suggested new meme to Reddit. It received no traction.

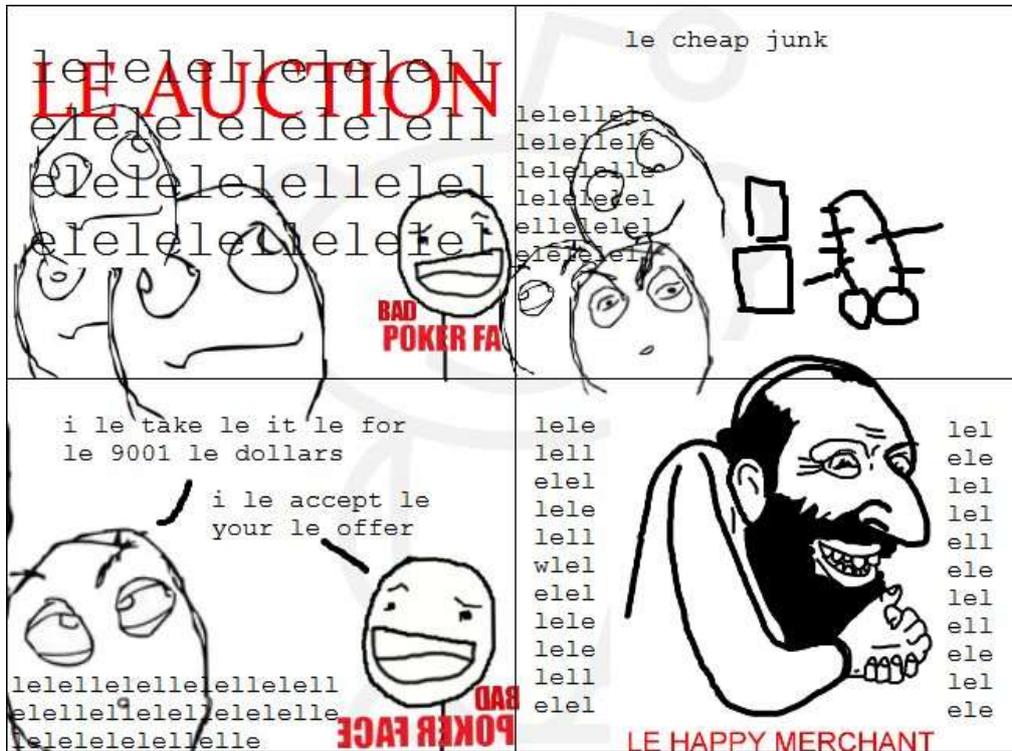


Figure 4 The Reddit submission

In February 2013 a thread on the 4chon forums titled “le adventures of le american bear & le happy merchant” features a bear character and occasional images of the Jew images in a series of over 50 images.¹¹ Some of the images in this thread use other names for the meme, such as “Der Happy Merchant Face” further weakening the argument that the name “Le Happy Merchant” is a recognised part of the meme.

¹¹ <https://4chon.net/h/res/43798.html>



Figure 5 The 4Chon thread



Figure 6 "Der Happy Merchant Face" on the 4Chon thread

In April 2013 a small number of the images from the 4chon thread were uploaded to neo-Nazi site Stormfront.



Figure 7 The 4Chon cartoon migrates to Stormfront

The 4chon cartoons are not notable except for the fact that a couple of them are being used in the Facebook page. This again looks like an effort to increase the significance of the 4chon content and help validate the meme.

“The Merchant” Facebook Page

The Facebook page “The Merchant” (ID# 504555959664212) was created on January 24th 2014. It’s about page read: “The Merchant aka Le Happy Merchant is a famous meme... The page is just for fun, its not hate, so please dont be offended”. This formulation with its combination of spreading hate, claiming it isn’t hate, and telling those being attacked not to be offended is typical of the phenomena of antisemitism 2.0 which allows hate to go viral on social media platforms such as Facebook.¹²

The Facebook page grew to 747 fans in its first week, and then in 17 hours grew to 979 fans (a growth rate of over 30% in less than a day). Reports made to Facebook through the user reporting system were being rejected with a message that the content did not breach Facebook’s community standards. OHPI contacted Facebook and warned them that the page was in the early stages of going viral and urgent action was required to mitigate the potential damage. Facebook responded promptly and unpublished the page. While it has not been permanently removed, and may therefore be republished, for now this action has effectively mitigated the problem.

In order to promote the false history of the origin of the meme, “The Merchant” Facebook page uses one of the images from 4chon as its cover image. The image features the American bear driving a truck of money to Israel as he follows a hamburger the Jew is dangling in front of him.



A second image from the 4chon collection (which also appeared on Stormfront) is also featured on the Facebook page. It has the title “Le Happy Merchant” and shows the Jew as a matchmaker charging a Swedish person for finding them a girlfriend, and then giving them a large, angry, black lady with a sign saying equality now.

¹² Andre Oboler, [Online Antisemitism 2.0. “Social Antisemitism on the Social Web”](#), Post-Holocaust and Antisemitism Series, JCPA, (April 2008, No. 67)



LE HAPPY MERCHANT

To promote the normalisation of antisemitism, the page also includes a range of Ben Garrison cartoons which have been photo edited to change their meaning and include the Jew image. This gives the impression such views are mainstream.

Ben Garrison's cartoons are regularly manipulated by Nazis and his website carries the following disclaimer:¹³

DISCLAIMER: Nazis and anonymous cretins are routinely hacking up Ben Garrison's cartoons and adding in offensive Jewish caricatures and racist stereotypes drawn by another anonymous cretin who is too gutless to put his own name on his filth. These libelous people put Ben Garrison's name on this garbage and they're out to ruin his reputation... Ben Garrison is not against Jews, Muslims, African Americans, Hispanics or any other religion or ethnicity. This is a battle of ideas, not skin color, country of origin or religious heritage. Ben Garrison is against racism, bigotry and libel. Ben is for freedom and the Constitution.

Ben Garrison's cartoons against big government and cronyism are converting discussions about Jews. This uses antisemitic conspiracy theories which claim the Jews control governments, the banks, and the media.

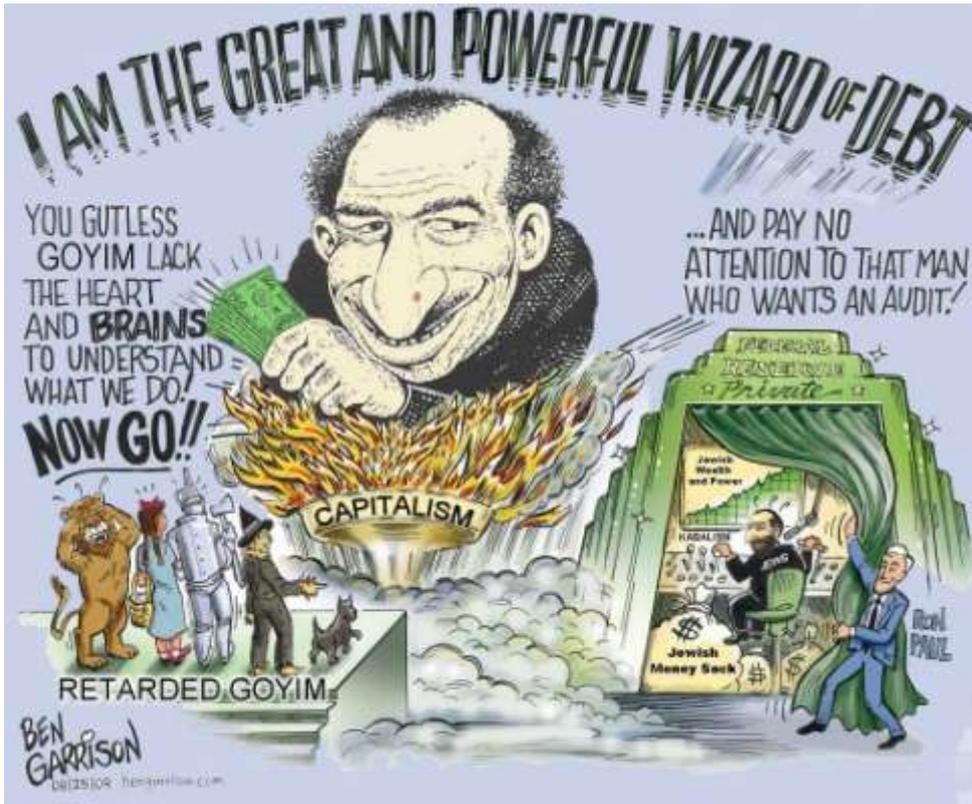
¹³ http://grrrgraphics.com/slideshow_older.html



Figure 8 Edited version of Ben Garrison's cartoon, as it appears on the "The Merchant" Facebook page



Figure 9 The original Ben Garrison image "Big Government Bug"



The Merchant
Like This Page January 28, 2011

Ben Garrison
Like · Comment · Share
20 · 20 people like this

Figure 12 Edited version of Ben Garrison's cartoon, as it appears on the "The Merchant" Facebook page

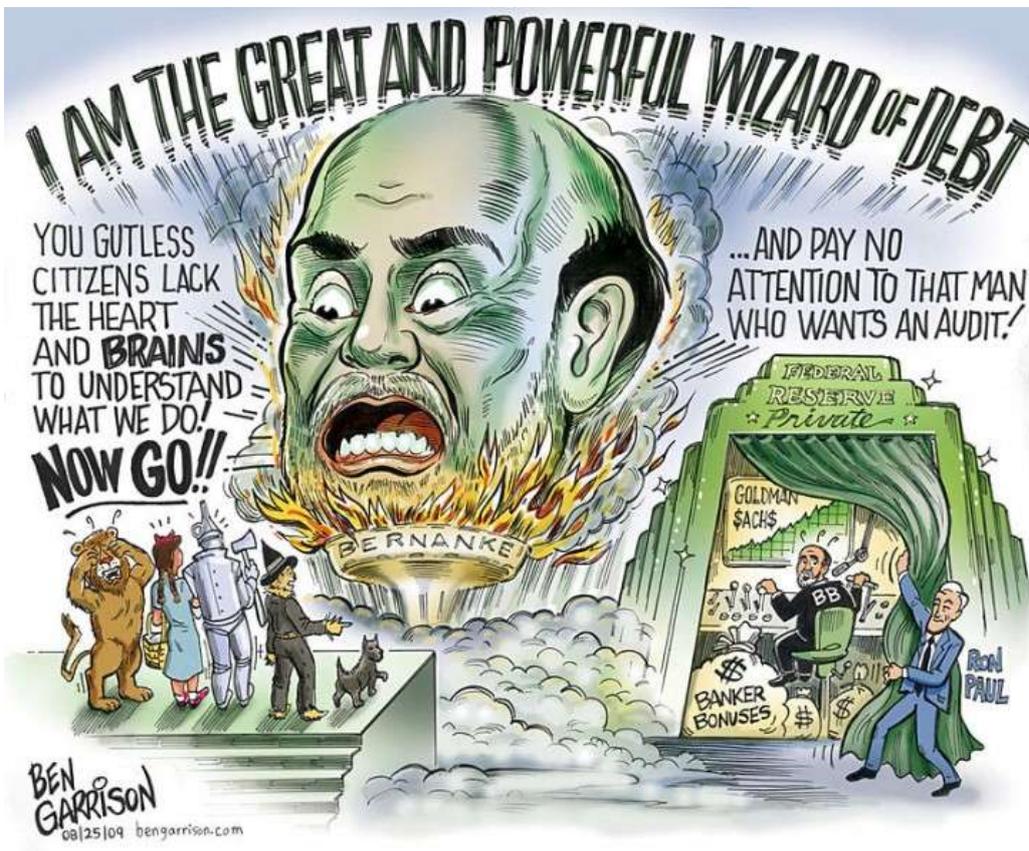


Figure 13 The original Ben Garrison image "Bernanke wizard of debt"

The Facebook page also includes a range of other antisemitic cartoons. The image of Goldman Sacks as a vampire with fangs dripping blood plays back on the blood libel. The blood libel is an antisemitic trope dating back to 12th century medieval Europe where Jews were accused of using the blood of Christian children in their rituals.



Figure 14 Goldman Sacks image from the Facebook site

The image of the Jew as an octopus dates to the Nazis who represented the Jews as an octopus encircling the globe. It is part of the antisemitic canard of Jews controlling the world, most famously expressed in the antisemitic forgery, 'The Protocols of the Elders of Zion'.

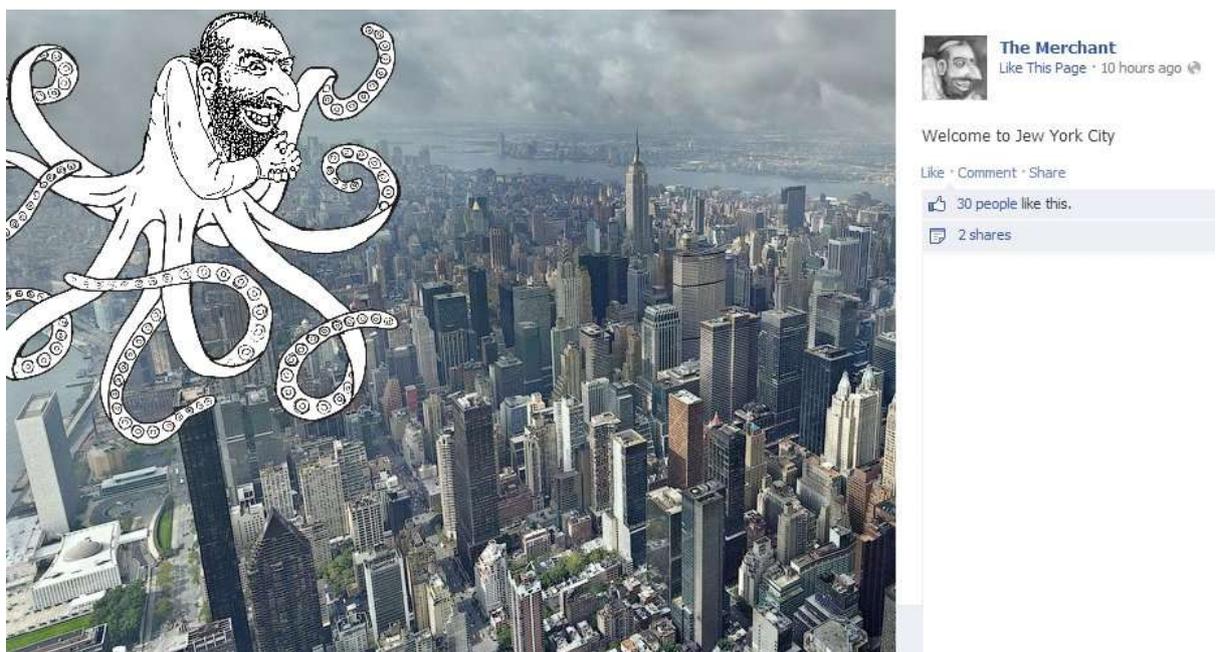


Figure 15 Octopus image from the Facebook site



Figure 16 Nazi image of the Jew as an Octopus (circa 1938)

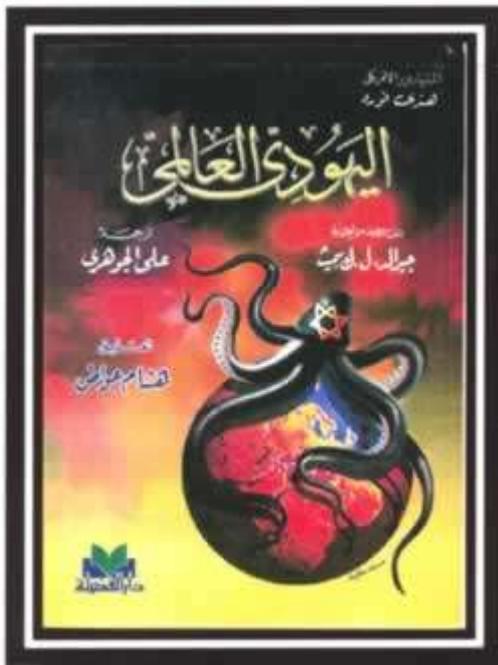


Figure 17 Jewish Octopus on the cover of "The International Jew" (a version of the Protocols of the Elder of Zion) 2001, Egyptian Edition.

The antisemitic canard of Jews as money hungry is presented through an image of the Jew pleading below a picture of money being burnt and through an image depicting a Jewish Scrooge McDuck with his money.



The Merchant
Like This Page · Yesterday

nooooooooo!

Like · Comment · Share

69 people like this.

13 shares



The Merchant
Like This Page · 6 hours ago

Like · Comment · Share

34 people like this.

1 share

Conclusion on the Facebook page

The Facebook page is clearly antisemitic using multiple antisemitic tropes in addition to the use of the antisemitic meme image itself. The page is also libellous to Ben Garrison, by attributing to him antisemitic cartoons which are adaptations of non-antisemitic work he created. This is not just a matter of not removing his signature from the images, the posts themselves claimed to be him. The page also breaches Ben Garrison's copyright.

The entire purpose of the Facebook page is tied to the message that appears on its "about page". The page is dedicated to promoting the idea that this image in question is known as 'The Merchant' or 'Le Happy Merchant' and that it 'a famous meme' and is 'just for fun' and 'not hate'. It is an effort at normalisation, at creating a new more sanitised history for the image (at least hiding its neo-Nazi past), and at fabricating the idea that this is a well recognised part of mainstream online culture.

The Facebook page is part of the effort to game "Know your Meme" and make the use of antisemitic images more acceptable online.

Recommendation 3: Facebook should permanently close the antisemitic Facebook page "The Merchant" (page ID# 504555959664212) (currently unpublished, but not removed) on the grounds that the primary purpose of this page is the promotion of hate speech which violates Facebook's community standards.

Other issue of antisemitism on Facebook

Jewish Ritual Murder – a blood libel page

The Facebook page "Jewish Ritual Murder" / "truthaboutjews" (page ID# 322140667835235) is dedicated to promoting the blood libel. The blood libel is a false accusation that Jews use the blood of non-Jews, particularly children, in Jewish rituals.¹⁴

The first historic record of Jews being accused of blood libel is that of William of Norwich, in 1144.¹⁵ The boy was, according to his family, enticed away by the Archdeacon of Norwich. His family later found him in the woods, covered with sand and with his head shaved and his skin punctured by thorns. Although there were signs of life in the body, their response was to rebury him on the same spot. The family claimed he was murdered by the Jews and the body was claimed as a religious relic. William was declared a martyr. On the basis of their relationship to the martyr his family achieved rewards from the church. The Royal Sheriff refused to take notice of the accusation, but the story of the young martyr lingered and grew.

One of the most well known cases is that of Simon of Trent in 1475.¹⁶ In this case a two year old boy was found dead in the cellar of a Jewish family's house. All the Jewish men of the town were arrested as well as one Jewish woman. Under judicial torture the men confessed and were condemned to death. The Jewish women and children of the town were forced to convert. An

¹⁴ "Blood accusation" in *The Jewish Encyclopaedia*, 1906. Online at <http://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/articles/3408-blood-accusation>

¹⁵ "William of Norwich" in *The Jewish Encyclopaedia*, 1906. Online at <http://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/articles/14930-william-of-norwich>

¹⁶ R. Po-chia Hsia, *Tent 1475: Stories of a Ritual Murder Trial* (Yale University Press, 1992)

enquiry by the Pope into judicial misconduct in Trent caused word of the case to spread widely. A detailed trial record sought to justify the death sentences and bolster the claim to canonize Simon.

Cases like these popularised the blood libel in medieval Europe, but Jews continue to be accused of blood libel even today. The “Jewish Ritual Murder” page is an example of this, collecting allegations and presenting these lies as fact, or as the page address says, as the “Truth About [the] Jews”.

The blood libel is explicitly described as one of “the symbols and images associated with classic antisemitism” in the EUMC Working Definition of Antisemitism.¹⁷ It was also included as one of five key categories of antisemitic discourse in a US State Department report into antisemitism prepared for the US Congress in 2008.¹⁸ The Blood Libel is indisputably a form of hate speech, and one that has led to significant deaths. Due to the history of violence and death associated with blood libel accusations they need to be opposed in the strongest possible terms.

While the “Jewish Ritual Murder” page is already blocked in Australia, its continued presence is causing distress for Jews around the world. This has an impact on the Australian Jewish community as well. The page is one of the clearest examples of hate speech on the Facebook platform and urgently needs to be reviewed by Facebook. While the page has not had new material posted since 2012, there does appear to be an active administrator. Recent news and blog coverage of this page highlights the community disgust that Facebook would allow such content to remain online.¹⁹

Recommendation 4: Facebook should permanently close the antisemitism Facebook “[Jewish Ritual Murder](#)” / “truthaboutjews” (page ID# 322140667835235) on the basis that the page exists to promote hate speech which violates Facebook’s community standards.

Recommendation 5: Facebook should make available educational material covering issues such as blood libel for the education of its staff. Compulsory training for staff reviewing complaints should cover this topic.

The Untold History – the recreation of a Holocaust denial page

In the process of producing this report OHPI discovered that the “The Untold History” Facebook page (page ID# 354953651282010) which has been closed down in late October 2013 following a [campaign by OHPI](#), had been recreated on January 23rd 2014 under the same name as a new page (Page ID# 401047213364410).

This phenomenon of “phoenix pages”, where a page which has been found to breach Facebook’s community standards and closed is simply recreated, could pose a significant threat to the viability of efforts to clean up hate on Facebook. This is because the effort to create a page is significantly less than the effort that seems to be required to get a page removed. The result is an online version

¹⁷ <http://www.european-forum-on-antisemitism.org/working-definition-of-antisemitism/english/>

¹⁸ United States Department of State, “Contemporary Global Anti-Semitism: A Report Provided to the United States Congress”, March 2008. Online at <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/102301.pdf>

¹⁹ <http://secure.isidewith.com/news/article/facebook-says-jewish-ritual-murder-page-is-not-hate;>
[http://www.sdjewishworld.com/2014/02/05/fb-remove-jewish-ritual-murder-page-adl/;](http://www.sdjewishworld.com/2014/02/05/fb-remove-jewish-ritual-murder-page-adl/)
[http://www.algemeiner.com/2014/02/04/why-is-facebook-enabling-anti-semites/;](http://www.algemeiner.com/2014/02/04/why-is-facebook-enabling-anti-semites/)
<http://www.algemeiner.com/2014/02/05/on-10th-anniversary-facebook-says-jewish-ritual-murder-page-doesnt-violate-community-standards/>

of the carnival “whack-a-mole” game, but with the odds tipped against those seeking to remove hate speech from online platforms.

In this instance OHPI was able to speak to Facebook about this recreated hate page and the page was swiftly closed. We commend Facebook for their swift action on this matter. A more systematic approach to deal with other phoenix pages is, however, required.

OHPI believes an effective solution to the problem of phoenix pages would be for Facebook to address the problem as a different sort of report. Where a page which Facebook has closed has been recreated, the question Facebook should ask is not whether the page is again engaging in hate speech, but whether it is the same page. If it is the same page it should be closed in order to prevent Facebook’s own terms of service being circumvented. The recreation of page Facebook has closed is the Facebook equivalent of contempt of court, an offence which may be far more serious than the original violation. It shows a wilful disregard for Facebook’s Terms of Service.

OHPI makes the following recommendations for handling phoenix pages:

Recommendation 6: The Facebook reporting system should check if the name of a page being reported by a user matches, or is close to, the name of a page the user has previously reported and which Facebook has closed. If so, ask the user if this is “the same” page. If the user says yes, the report should be treated as a report of a phoenix page.

Recommendation 7: A report of a phoenix page should be assess if the page is the same as the previous page, rather than looking for fresh evidence of a violation of the Community Standards. A page should be deemed to be the same (and closed) if it is created by the same person, or if the content or meta-data (such as the about information) is similar.

Recommendation 8: When checking if the user is the same in the context of a phoenix page, a match on the user account’s ID, the IP address, or a substantially similar name should be sufficient. Sanctions should apply not only to the creator of the page, but to any administrators present on both the previously banned page and the phoenix page.

Recommendation 9: Facebook should permanently close the antisemitic Facebook page “The Untold History” (page ID# 401047213364410), which is currently unavailable not removed, on the basis that it is a phoenix page which has replaced a page which has already been closed for violation of Facebook’s community standards.

Additional Recommendations

There is a role for counter speech so people learn to recognise and reject racial hatred such as the meme this report discusses. Know Your Meme can play a valuable counter speech role in exposing racism and preventing its spread. This requires the site to provide sufficient information to allow the public to identify a racist meme, while avoiding additional material or language which may glorify it or make it seem acceptable. The racist nature of the image should be highlighted and a statement opposing such hate should be provided by the websites operator. It should be made clear that the image is only included in the database to help others identify and report uses of such hate that may occur elsewhere on the internet.

In this case of this meme in particular, OHPI believes Know Your Meme would be providing a public service if it included page (without the ability for users to comment) that showed the original cartoon, the extracted image, and highlighted the racist nature of this image and the historic origins of it in the neo-Nazi and white supremacist movements.

The Online Hate Prevention Institute publishes our reports under a creative commons license and makes them freely available online in an effort to help reduce online hate and the harm it causes. In this instance we additionally grant Cheezburger Inc a license to publish any extracts from this report on the Know Your Meme website. This license is transferable to any successor owner of the “Know Your Meme” website. We hope this will assist with the creation of an appropriate page.

Recommendation 10: Know Your Meme should reject the current proposal for the entry named “The Merchant”, it is not notable.

Recommendation 11: Know Your Meme should add a static page for a meme related to the image itself under the name such as “Antisemitic Image of a Jew”. The page should feature just the original cartoon and the original cut out image of the Jew character. Other examples of its use should be avoided in order to stop them being popularised. The page should highlight the origin of the image and that is commonly used in neo-Nazi and other antisemitic circles. It should clearly state the image is racist and a form of hate speech and is provided on know your meme in the interest of public education and to help others recognise that memes using this image are likely hate speech and may be against the terms of service of online platforms.

OHPI commends Cheezburger Inc, owner of the “Know Your Meme” site, for their Community Guidelines which begin with the introductory statement that:²⁰

Cheezburger’s mission is to make the world a happier place, so we don’t allow certain words and phrases to be used on Cheezburger that promote negativity and hate.

The Community Guidelines prohibit the use of ‘words or phrases that are directly... defamatory, abusive, harassing, threatening... bigoted, hateful, or racially or otherwise offensive... [or] discriminatory (based on race, sex, religion, natural origin, physical disability, sexual orientation or age)’.²¹ We believe there is a very positive intention here to prevent hate and that this is reinforced by the terms of service where section 5(E) requires users to agree that their “conduct on the Website will comport with the Community Guidelines”.²² We do, however, have a number of recommendations.

Recommendation 12: The words ‘words or phrases’ in the Community Guidelines should be replaced with ‘words, phrases, images, audio, video or any other forms of content’.

Recommendation 13: The words ‘natural origin’ in the Community Guidelines should be changed to ‘national origin’ as this appears to be an error.

²⁰ <http://support.cheezburger.com/support/articles/54125-community-guidelines>

²¹ <http://support.cheezburger.com/support/articles/54125-community-guidelines>

²² <http://corp.cheezburger.com/legal/terms-of-service/>

Recommendation 14: The Community Guidelines should be linked from the two places they are referred to in the terms of service page.

Recommendation 15: The Community Guidelines should be linked from the two places they are referred to in the terms of service page.

Recommendation 16: The legal information page at <http://corp.cheezburger.com/legal/> should include a link to the Community Guidelines.

Recommendation 17: Know Your Meme and other sites should include a link to the Community Guidelines next to the link to legal information in the footer of each page. This will help Cheezburger Inc community what it expects, and thereby help it achieve its stated mission.

This report also highlights two additional general areas where Facebook could improve their systems:

Recommendation 18: Facebook needs to improve its systems so legitimate complaints about hate speech are not initially rejected a move which sends the wrong message to the public

Recommendation: Facebook needs to implement procedures to watch pages that are experiencing viral growth and receiving many complaints; this may indicate a problem requiring priority attention.