



Antisemitism in the Gaming Community: The Types of Jewish Hate within Video Games

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Abstract

*There are two parts of this research paper. (i) Part one is an analysis of utterly antisemitic video games. The two games I discuss in part one are titled: *Ethnic Cleansing* and *ZOG's Nightmare* -- both of which were created by neo-Nazi organizations. These types of games are created with the specific intent of breeding extreme hatred. Throughout part one, I exhibit photo evidence of the immense hatred found within the games themselves (i.e., in the design of each game). Moreover, I postulate that antisemitic video games are a new and effective tool in the spreading of Nazi propaganda. (ii) Part two focuses on the prevalence of Jewish hatred within gaming communities.*

Keywords: Ethnic Cleansing, ZOG's Nightmare, Games, Hate-filled language

Introduction

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I.

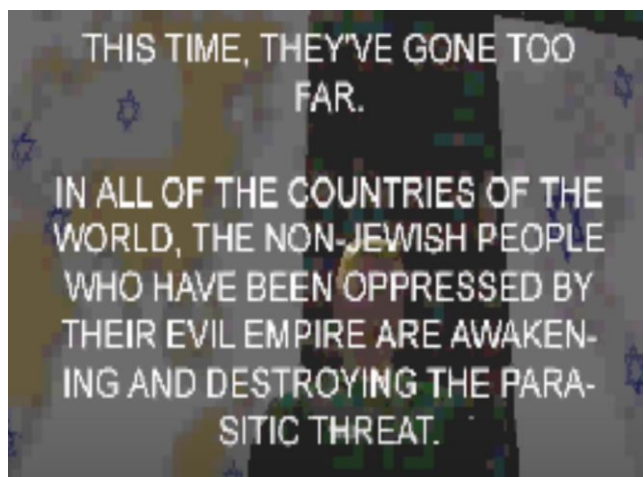
Ethnic Cleansing:

The video game *Ethnic Cleansing* was created by a white supremacist organization known as the National Alliance. As the game is launched, the player is given two options: (i) play as a Klansman or (ii) play as a neo-Nazi skinhead. Once the player model has been selected, the player spawns into a New York City ghetto. The player is then tasked with killing a multitude of Black and Latino people. After the Blacks and Latinos have been shot and killed, the player descends into the New York City subway to kill the Jewish people. Then, the player must move through the subway murdering Jews until he/she arrives at the "Yiddish Control Center" where the Jews are planning their world domination. In the control center, the player must kill Ariel Sharon, a past Israeli Prime Minister, to complete the game and stop the Jewish people from conquering the world.

One of the most prevalent themes found within *Ethnic Cleansing* is the idea that Jews are taking over the world. At many different parts of the game, the player is shown antisemitic posters about Jewish people dominating the world. Games like *Ethnic Cleansing* are a clear "safe harbor for launching [and spreading] campaigns of antisemitism" ("Antisemitism on Twitter", 1). Moreover, the ubiquitous nature of gaming has given these white supremacist organizations a powerful tool to spread their hateful ideologies ("A Quantitative Approach to

Understanding Antisemitism”, 1). Also, a central motif found within the game is the suggestion of destroying the state of Israel. For example, in the game, the player is presented with maps of earth over time. In these maps, the earth becomes covered by the ever-expanding Israeli flag to display the subjugation of the world by the state of Israel.

The following are pictures taken from *Ethnic Cleansing*:



ZOG's Nightmare

As the player begins downloading *ZOG's Nightmare*, a brief description of the video game pops up. The description reads:

America's Nazi party now stands poised to take the White House. Seeing the foreign aid to Israel soon stopped the kikes respond with lethal force. Dr. Abraham Kikenstein (Proctologist) orders his death squad into action. The terror team deploys to NSM [National Socialist Movement] Party Headquarters in Washington D.C. Backed by black gangsters lusting for white blood the unclean hordes shoot their way in and infest the building. Your job Whitey: Ethnically Cleanse. Liquidate all subhumans [sic] (*ZOG's Nightmare*).

The acronym "ZOG" means: "Zionist-occupied government." This term has been used to support the conspiracy theory that the Jewish people control the entire world for many years. The main goal of the game is the extermination of Jewish soldiers. Throughout the entirety of the game, the player is exposed to horrific amounts of antisemitic propaganda. Besides the obvious fact that the player is shooting and killing a myriad of Jews, a great deal of the game's focus is centered around Hitler and encouraging Nazism. At every point in the game, the player is exposed to extremist game designs (e.g., pictures of Nazis and swastikas). *ZOG's Nightmare* also suggests that the destruction of the Israeli state is necessary for a better world -- a better world for pure white people.

Although the immense hatred and violence found within games like *Ethnic Cleansing* and *ZOG's Nightmare* is quite disturbing, the viewer should not be too surprised by this deranged form of hatred. Media has "always been a tool for disseminating hate," and video games are simply a new form of media -- a sort of anonymous media ("Us and Them", 1). One major drawback of anonymity within gaming is the ability to spread hateful and antagonistic content at extreme speeds with no fear of punishment, even the game creators can and do use aliases to hide their true identity ("Us and Them", 1). Furthermore, the power of game design allows these

game creators to easily spread their propaganda by making minorities targets of aggression and violence within their games (“ICCA Report”, 11).

The following are pictures taken from *ZOG's Nightmare*:



II.

Online Gaming

In the early 1980s, video game culture entered a new phase of gaming -- online gaming. Before the progression into online gaming, players would only be able to game alone, killing and fighting pre-programmed Artificial Intelligence. However, once online gaming was created, players were able to game with one another. Almost immediately, online gaming took over the entirety of gaming culture. People were absolutely amazed that they could game with anyone around the world. Even to this day, online gaming dominates in popularity over offline games (i.e., video games that must be played alone). Nearly every well-known video game published in the last ten years is an online video game.

Anonymity

One major element to online gaming is the anonymous nature that comes along with it. As an example, to play any online video game, the player must first create an alias. Moreover, this alias may be changed at the whim of the player at any point. As another example, games do not show players I.P. addresses to anyone other than the game creators -- making it impossible to identify anyone. Over time, online gaming culture has become more revolved around this anonymity. The anonymity of gaming has promoted the spread of an abhorrent amount of antisemitism. The ICCA's report on antisemitism mentions:

The internet is a vehicle of hate that Hitler and the Nazis could never have dreamed of. Instead of being under the central control of a political party or group, the power of [gaming] lies in its viral nature. Everyone can be a publisher, even the most vicious antisemite (“ICCA Report”, 5).

This progression in gaming history has created a new breeding grounds for hatred against the Jewish people. Antisemites are taking to gaming to spread their hateful messages (“Us and Them”, 1). Furthermore, nothing is

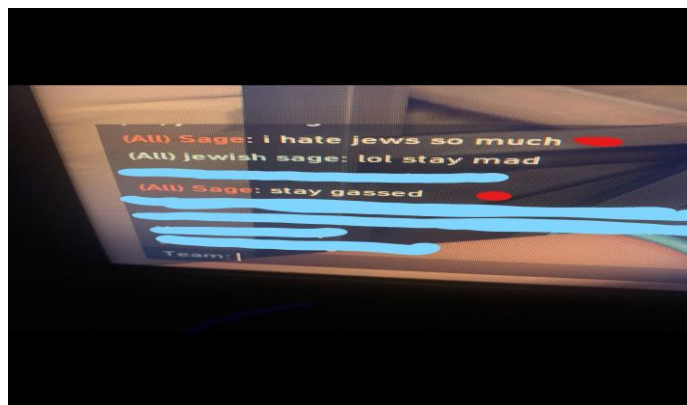
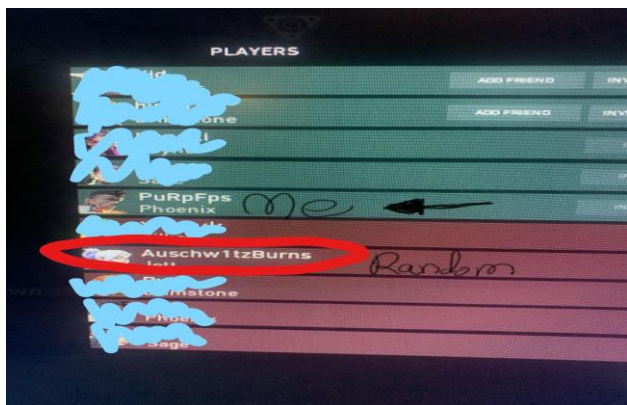
ever done to punish these antisemitic players because, as previously mentioned, their identity is completely concealed. As a matter of fact, antisemitism within the gaming community goes largely unpunished due to the immense difficulties in policing online gaming spaces (“Us and Them”, 1).

Popular Gaming Culture

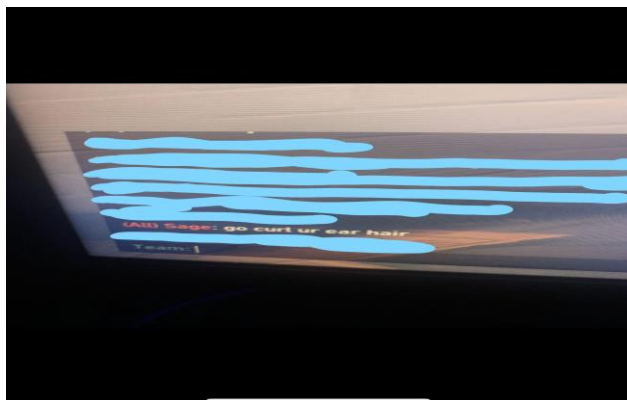
There are antisemites at every corner in this world and it would be ignorant to think that there would be no antisemitic peoples in the gaming community; however, the sheer amount of antisemitism seen on a daily basis is suggestive of a serious issue -- a lack of morality within the gaming culture and community. In every game I have played, there has been a clear spread of negative expression toward minority groups, such as: Jews, Blacks, Latinos, and Asians (“Antisemitism on Twitter”, 1). Antisemitic and racist notions are voiced constantly in these games by random people. When confronted, these antisemitic people often cover their antisemitism by claiming it is “humor.” Other times, when confronted, antisemites will continue speaking ferociously about Jews and other minorities for absolutely no reason.

Throughout all my years in the gaming community, it has become increasingly clear that the spread of hatred is something that is widely encouraged by the popular gaming culture. Many people within these video games celebrate and encourage their fellow gamers in their preaching of hatred against the Jews, even when unprovoked. Furthermore, these online video games have put hate content directly in the hands of children and teenagers, which contributes to the continuation of antisemitism throughout generations (“ICCA Report”, 9). Young children and teenagers (10-16 years old), who barely understand what they are saying, repetitively spew extremist language to random players because they have been molded to do so since the beginning of their gaming careers -- this is a dangerous issue. In recent years, online gaming has taken off in popularity, and children/teenagers have been spending more and more time gaming than ever before. Young teenagers and children no longer do ‘normal stuff’ on their free time (e.g., playing baseball, running around town with their friends, etc.), rather, children and teenagers are spending that time gaming. Thus, they are also being exposed to massive amounts of hatred at a ridiculously young age. The painful truth is that the gaming community is single handedly ruining a generation of children and teenagers by destroying their moral compasses. Ultimately, gaming has become a home for online hatred and bigotry (“ICCA Report”, 8). Individuals with prejudicial views toward Jewish people and other minority groups are taking to gaming in a successful attempt to spread their hateful ideologies; and young people are essentially being indoctrinated by these extremists online (“Us and Them”, 1).

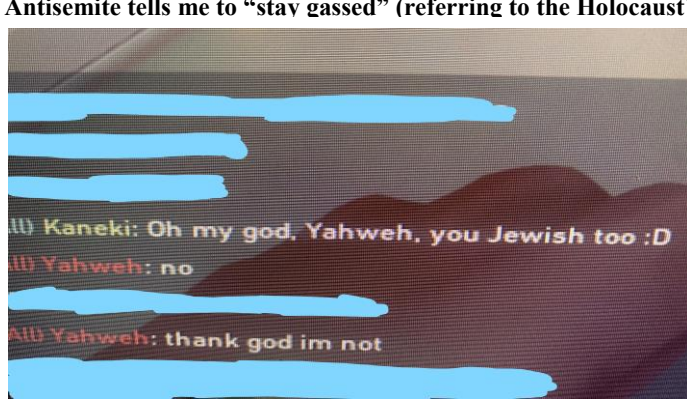
The following are pictures taken from *Valorant* -- a new and famous video game:



Antisemite tells me to “stay gassed” (referring to the Holocaust).



Antisemite refers to Payot as “ear hair.”



Antisemite names himself ‘Yahweh’ -- when questioned about his religion in a perfectly kind way, he/she proceeds to ‘thank God’ for not being a Jew.

Personal Account

As the previous images depict, antisemitism runs rampant within the gaming community. Even in popular games such as *Valorant*, it is nearly impossible to play without hearing an antisemitic slur or notion at least once during the gaming session. As a result of this vile antisemitism, I have stopped playing games as frequently as I used to. These antisemites are successfully pushing Jews and other minorities away from the gaming community because of their intense and vocal hatred -- this is a massive problem, and something must be done about it. The gaming community is not a safe place for people of color or Jews. The people within the community encourage this hatred constantly.

Throughout my childhood and early teenage life, I had to come to terms with the fact that so many different people, even individuals that I considered 'online friends,' would constantly berate me and my real friends with racist and antisemitic messages. The people in the gaming community made me think that these antisemitic jokes about the Holocaust and Jews were permissible and even funny! It took me many years to fully understand the pain I was instilling in other people and my own self when I would joke and laugh about these serious topics. One thing that is often overlooked in the spread of antisemitism is the contagious nature of it. I, a Jew, was molded by the gaming community to become a hate and anger filled individual -- I would make jokes about the Holocaust even in real life. The gaming culture makes young individuals believe that true hatred is just comedy and nothing more. Of course, now, after participating in many courses about Jewry and the Holocaust, I have finally arrived at a place in my life where I can reflect and understand that the hatred I spread as a young teenager was vicious and terrible. But now, my main goal must be to stop other young children and teenagers from being poisoned by this constant hate in video game culture. It is abundantly important not only to identify sources of antisemitism, but to act and work towards a solution to the problem ("Berlin Conference", 16). Though there has not been much action taken against online hatred in video games because of the anonymity within the games themselves, I believe that, if gaming corporations focused more time and energy to combatting antisemitism, genuine change could and would occur.

Solutions

The first major change that must occur within the gaming community is the abolishment of the ability to hide one's identity. This may sound 'impossible,' but let me propose a few reasons as to why this may be more possible than most people would think. First, the ability to form aliases must go -- real names would make it much harder for the average antisemitic or racist person to voice their hatred because their identity would be exposed. You may ask me, how could gaming corporations ensure that people use their real names? Well, short answer, they cannot fully guarantee it; however, if the player's in-game name is based on the email that they used to create their gaming account, the odds are that the average player's email has his/her actual name linked to it. Of course, true antisemites and racists can create fake emails with fake names to get around this system, but the immediate goal must be to stop the average players from preaching this disgusting hatred.

The second change that must occur within online gaming is that game creators must dole out severe punishments to antisemitic players. The game creators are literally the only people who have access to every player's identity. As of now, if a player were to go on an antisemitic rant, the *maximum* punishment tends to be a short ban for 2-7 days, then the antisemitic player is allowed right back on the game. If games took a much more serious approach to this hatred, and banned people for months, years, or even life, this would become a huge dissuasion. Furthermore, game creators have the ability to ban IP addresses from ever playing their game again. In other words, gaming corporations can ban an individual's internet (i.e., banning them even if they create new accounts), which stops online hatred right in its tracks. Gaming corporations should be banning individual IP addresses for hate-speech -- the fact that they are not already doing so makes no sense to me. There would be a visible change in the gaming community if people were finally held responsible. People must answer for their hate-filled actions, even if they are playing a video game -- hatred ought to have no home, neither online nor offline.

Although antisemitism manifests itself in-game as hate-speech, it can and must be addressed offline, as well ("Berlin Conference", 15). Since medieval times, antisemitism has been rooted in misinformation and the fear of the unknown. With misinformation being the heart of antisemitism, it should be quite clear that there is a drastic need for more education about antisemitism and Judaism as a whole ("Berlin Conference", 15). Consequently, there must be increased support for organizations that educate people about antisemitism ("Berlin Conference", 14). Furthermore, children and teenagers need to understand the dangers of the internet, more specifically, the dangers of misinformation on the internet. An entire generation of people are currently growing up in a place full of lies, deceit, and graphic violence. How will this affect their psyche? How has it already affected their psyche? Unless major changes occur online and offline, rampant hatred will continue to spread, and antisemitism will only continue to get worse as the gaming culture constantly increases in popularity.

Conclusion

Can antisemitism ever be fully abolished? No. Can antisemitism within the gaming community be stomped out? Yes. The goal is not to destroy antisemitism because, as history suggests, an ideology seemingly never fully dies. Rather, the goal is to chase out antisemitism from the gaming community and culture. Far too many people, like myself, cannot feel comfortable playing video games that were intended to be joyous. Video games were meant to be a place for people to relax and escape from all the viciousness of the real-world; however, antisemitic and racist people destroy the one virtual place of peace for many gamers.

“I imagine one of the reasons people cling to their hate so stubbornly is because they sense, once hate is gone, they will be forced to deal with pain” ~ James Baldwin

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