



# Who is George Soros?

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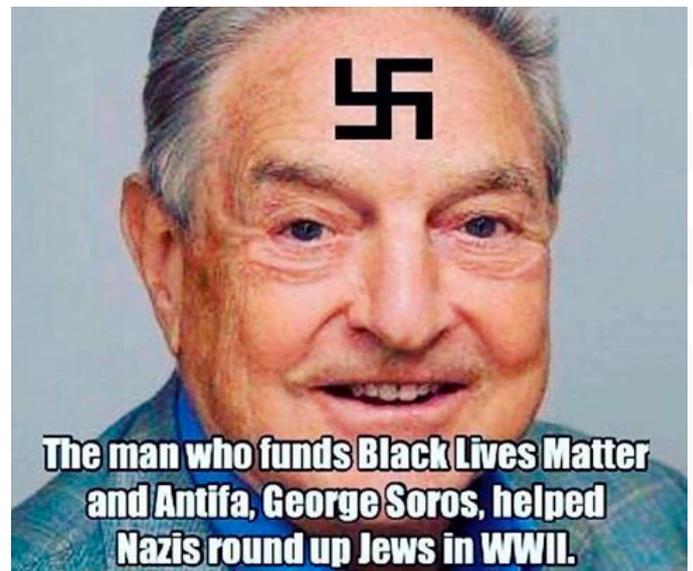
# George Soros

## Who is George Soros?

George Soros is a Hungarian-born American financier and investor. Born in 1930, Soros survived the Nazi regime in Hungary thanks to his father securing false identity papers; changing the last name from Schwartz and disguising their religion. Soros fled Hungary as the Second World War drew to a close, and moved to the UK, where he worked as a railway porter, and studied at the London School of Economics, before working in merchant banks and moving to the United States. Soros's subsequent success as a hedge-fund manager has made him one of the wealthiest men in the world. He is a major political donor, funding US Democratic and other candidates, and has given billions through his philanthropic organisation, Open Society Foundations, which supports human rights and progressive causes in over 100 countries.

## Why have conspiracy theories developed about George Soros?

George Soros is one of the richest men in the world, and he is Jewish - a combination that is irresistibly fertile ground for some conspiracy theorists. For centuries, tropes of the rich Jewish financier pulling political strings behind the scenes, or a shadowy cabal of Jews controlling and manipulating world events, have been used to try and cast doubts on the motivations or aspirations of Jewish people.<sup>1</sup> The Rothschilds were once the focus of these conspiracy theories. Over the past few decades, and exponentially across social



1. <https://antisemitism.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/myths-and-misconceptions-may-2020-1-1.pdf>

media in recent years, Soros has become the conduit for this infamous trope.<sup>2</sup> Across these various conspiracy theories, Soros embodies the age-old antisemitic canard of the globalist, disloyal Jewish mastermind who is working to undermine white, Christian social order to achieve global control. His overt political activism is often used to falsely evidence such a plan.

In general, conspiracy theories about George Soros have been given prominence through their amplification by world leaders and others. Many individuals with significant platforms have suggested that Soros is in some way plotting a destructive revolution against the current world order. In 2018, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan accused the “famous Hungarian Jew Soros” of trying to divide and destroy nations by allegedly funding the 2013 Gezi Park protests.<sup>3</sup> In 2018, President Donald Trump accused Soros of paying people to harass Senator Jeff Flake in an elevator, in order to pressure him into voting against Supreme Court nominee Brett Kavanaugh.<sup>4</sup> Rudy Giuliani, Donald Trump’s personal attorney, called Soros the “anti-Christ”<sup>5</sup> and separately said he was “intent on destroying our government for some sick reason of his that goes back to his sick background.”<sup>6</sup>

## What are some of the conspiracy theories about Soros?



Both on the far-left and far-right, conspiracy theories about George Soros have included that he is responsible for: illegal immigration, voter fraud, violent protests and Coronavirus, another repackaging of a classic antisemitic trope.<sup>7</sup> Specific claims include that he was ‘behind’ or ‘owned’ protests against Donald Trump, and the Black Lives Matter demonstrations, this despite other prominent donors to the BLM movement, like Beyonce, making their involvement public.<sup>8</sup>

Soros has also been accused of collaborating with the Nazi regime, turning in fellow Jews to be murdered. This, despite the fact that he was a child when the Nazis invaded Hungary (aged

2. <https://antisemitism.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/myths-and-misconceptions-may-2020-1-1.pdf>; <https://apnews.com/article/f01f3c405985f4e3477e4e4ac27986e5>

3. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-us-canada-46347975>

4. <https://twitter.com/realDonaldTrump/status/1048196883464818688>

5. <https://www.haaretz.com/us-news/.premium-rudy-giuliani-called-george-soros-the-anti-christ-is-that-anti-semitic-1.6534666>

6. <https://www.jpost.com/american-politics/giuliani-says-soros-wants-to-destroy-government-due-to-his-background-639285>

7. <https://antisemitism.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Coronaviru-antisemitism-May-2020.pdf>

8. <https://www.forbes.com/sites/sethcohen/2020/09/12/the-troubling-truth-about-the-obsession-with-george-soros/?sh=5336bc6d4e2e;>  
<https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-factcheck-false-george-soros-claims/fact-checkfalseclaims-about-george-soros-idUSKBN23P2XJ>

between 9 and 14). Soros moved to London at the age of 17, by which time the war was over. He says that as a younger teenager, he was placed with a government official, posing as the latter's godson, and that he witnessed the confiscation of Jewish property. Soros's biographer Michael T Kaufman goes into some detail about this particular event, specifying the name of the bureaucrat Soros was placed with and the task that man, Baumbach, was asked to carry out - namely an inventory of an estate left behind by a Jewish aristocrat fleeing the Nazis.<sup>9</sup>

## Where are the theories about **Soros spreading?**

Predominantly online. Whilst antisemitic conspiracy theories about powerful Jewish financiers have circulated for centuries, these dangerous tropes travel much further and faster through social media. Analysis conducted by the Anti-Defamation League demonstrated that during a four-day period in May 2020, negative and antisemitic tweets about George Soros soared from some 20,000 a day to more than 500,000 in a single day, rising in tandem with the US-wide demonstrations against the murder, at police hands, of George Floyd.<sup>10</sup> The Institute for Strategic Dialogue also identified a significant spike in mentions of George Soros on Facebook, reaching the all-time high of 68,746 mentions in the month of May alone.<sup>11</sup> George Soros is also one of the main targets of the increasingly-mainstream conspiracy theory, QAnon, which baselessly suggests that a secret cabal of Satan-worshipping Democrats and billionaires is running the world, engaging in paedophilia and human trafficking.



9. <https://www.snopes.com/fact-check/george-soros-ss-nazi-germany/>

10. <https://www.adl.org/blog/soros-conspiracy-theories-and-the-protests-a-gateway-to-antisemitism>

11. [https://www.isdglobal.org/digital\\_dispatches/soros-conspiracies-on-facebook-and-twitter-surge-during-george-floyd-protests/](https://www.isdglobal.org/digital_dispatches/soros-conspiracies-on-facebook-and-twitter-surge-during-george-floyd-protests/)

As with many other contemporary conspiracies, QAnon is rapidly transitioning from obscure online message boards to well-known social media platforms, gaining even wider audiences for antisemitic conspiracy theories.

## What are the **consequences of Soros conspiracies?**

The online world can have significant and serious consequences for offline behaviours.<sup>12</sup> Following news reports of a migrant caravan approaching the US-Mexico border, Cesar Sayoc, a Floridian man, named Soros repeatedly on social media, before sending pipe bombs to newsrooms, Democrat politicians and to Soros himself. Despite there being no evidence of a connection between Soros and the caravan, President Trump said of Soros's involvement:

***"I wouldn't be surprised.  
A lot of people say yes"***<sup>13</sup>

## Is it **possible to criticise George Soros at all?**

Of course, it is. Anyone is well within their rights to disagree with George Soros's political and philanthropic philosophy and activity. However, there is a difference between criticising Soros's political donations or outlook and accusing Soros of plotting a revolution to destroy world order. Unfortunately, anti-Soros rhetoric is increasingly becoming what academic and former-politician Micahel Ignatieff calls a "faithful reprise of every single trope of antisemitic hatred from the 1930s."<sup>14</sup> It is important to maintain a clear and unambiguous distinction between legitimate political criticism of George Soros and antisemitic conspiracy theories. Memes and tropes of Soros as a global puppet master should act as a warning sign: behind them sits age old tropes waiting to be reborn.

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12. <https://antisemitism.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/Online-Harms-Offline-Harms-August-2020-V4.pdf>

13. <https://www.snopes.com/ap/2020/06/21/george-soros-conspiracy-theories-surge-as-protests-sweep-us/>

14. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/stories-49584157>

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