

CONSPIRACY THEORIES

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ABSTRACT

This essay is about something that happens all the time around us and something that we usually do not know much about, so we cannot explain it. Great tragedies happen every day. Someone dies in a traffic accident. Someone else kills himself or gets killed. And someone else dies because of a larger amount of drug. Usually many of them are celebrities. The real truth of their death is hidden from the public view. The gossip about these events begins not long after the event itself. And after a while, people start believing that what we think is truth is actually a lie. We get to know and want to believe that it was someone's plot. I think that there are many people that are interested in finding out what actually the plots are and that is why I have decided to write about conspiracy theories.

Key words: conspiracy, conspiracy theories, plot, tragedy, death

REZIME

Ovaj esej je o nečemu što se stalno dešava oko nas i o čemu obično ne znamo mnogo, pa to ne možemo ni objasniti. Velike tragedije se događaju svaki dan. Neko umre u saobraćajnoj nesreći. Neko drugi se ubija ili ga neko ubije. A neko drugi umre zbog veće količine droge. Obično su mnogi od njih poznate ličnosti. Prava istina o njihovoj smrti je sakrivena od očiju javnosti. Tračevi o ovim događajima počinju ne dugo posle samog događaja. Nakon nekog vremena ljudi počinju da veruju da je ono što smo mislili da je istina u stvari laž. Saznajemo i želimo da verujemo da je to bila nečija zavera. Ja mislim da je puno ljudi koji su zainteresovani da saznaju šta su u stvari zavere i zato sam odlučila da pišem o teorijama zavere.

Ključne reči: zavera, teorije zavere, zaplet, tragedija, smrt

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Conspiracy theories

Conspiracy theories explain important events that are the product of secret plots. The most of those events are unknown to the general public.

Usage

The term conspiracy theories is mainly used by scholars. It identifies secret actions. During the political upheaval of the 1960s it acquired a somewhat derogatory sense which implies paranoia. Proven conspiracy theories are usually referred to something else, like investigative journalism or historical analysis.

There are a lot of scholars that investigate the conspiracy theories. One of them, Michael Barkun, the political scientist, thinks that the conspiracy theories are beliefs which explain an event as the result of a secret plot. In his opinion the conspiracy theories are an attempt to explain something that science cannot prove. He thinks that for the conspirators, people are brainwashed herd.

According to some of the other scientists the conspiracy theories could be the replacement of the democracy. Because there are many people who believe in conspiracy theories, a belief in conspiracy theories has become the main topic for the sociologists, psychologists and experts in folklore since the 1960s.

Some psychologists hold that if someone believes in one conspiracy he usually believes in the other. According to some of them people who believe in conspiracy theories may fall sick of paranoia, schizophrenia, mean world syndrome. After reading some conspiracy theory their opinion is changing a lot and they do not notice it.

Kinds

Michael Barkun has categorized all conspiracy theories in three groups:

1. Event conspiracy theories;
2. Systemic conspiracy theories;
3. Super-conspiracy theories.

Historians show that every real conspiracy has at least four characteristics.

Conspiracism

Academic Frank P. Mintz thinks that conspiracism denotes “belief in the primacy of conspiracies in the unfolding of history”. According to him it identifies elites and blames them for economic and social catastrophes.

From the point of view of Berlet and Lyon conspiracism is a special narrative form of scapegoating. It covers enemies as a part of plot against the common good.

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During the human history, political and economic leaders, like Hitler and Stalin, have caused a lot of death, and they sometimes have engaged in conspiracies and promoting conspiracy theories about their target. Those conspiracy theories later proved to be true.

Top conspiracy theories

Pentagon



If you believe the conspiracy theory, the airplane crash into the Pentagon on September 11, 2001, was not an accident. It was planned and executed by conspirators. But, it is still not discovered who the conspirators were. There is a guess that it was Osama Bin Laden and the hijackers. That could be President Bush and Vice-President Dick Cheney, or top Bush advisors, including Paul Wolfowitz and Donald Rumsfeld, too. But, Popular Mechanic magazine refused claims about it by simple logic: If it wasn't the hijacked airplane that crashed into the Pentagon, then where's Flight 77 and its passengers?

Princess Diana's Death

On August 31, 1997, in a Paris highway tunnel, a great tragedy happened. Princess Diana and her boyfriend Dodi Al-Fayed died. Conspiracy theories about their death started right away. According to one of them, it wasn't an ordinary accident, but it was an assassination requested by the Royal Family. Though this conspiracy theory had a billionaire - Dodi Al-Fayed's father promoting, it was dismissed as baseless by a 2006 inquiry. Mohamed Al-Fayed's statement was precisely examined and it was concluded that his theory was without any

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substance. On April 7 of this year the jury concluded that Diana and her boyfriend were killed because of the negligence by their drunken chauffer and pursing paparazzi.



Subliminal Advertising



If you ever suddenly get the irresistible urge to buy a new car or anything else while watching TV, you may be the victim of a subliminal advertising conspiracy. When person is under the impression subconsciously means very little by itself. Some of subliminal advertising conspiracies have caused teen's suicide. A benefit of subliminal advertising conspiracy is

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huge, but, the consequences are, too. However, the subliminal advertising conspiracy does exist, and that could be proved.

The Moon Landing Hoax



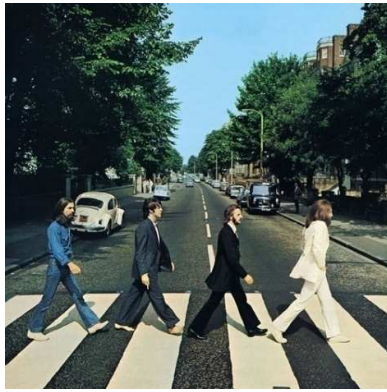
One of the greatest people successes is the moon landing. But, did it really happen? In 2001, Fox television aired the program “Conspiracy Theory: Did We Land on the Moon?” This program had many discrepancies between the official version of the moon landing and photographs about it. But, there are a lot of moon rocks that prove that we really landed on the moon. Many astronauts have been offended because they were blamed that they faked the moon landing. Buzz Aldrin, one of the astronauts, punched Bart Sibrel in the jaw because he called him a “coward and a liar”.

Paul McCartney’s death

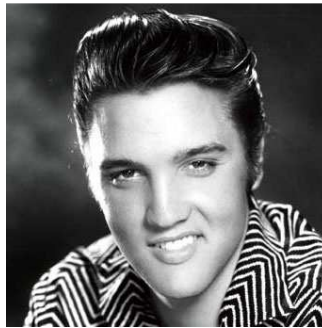
According to some conspiracy theories Beatles guitarist Paul McCartney died in 1966. The remaining members of Beatles conspired to keep his death in a secret. They found someone who look-alike and sound-alike to replace him. They did a great job and successfully kept Paul McCartney’s death in secret. But, they left clues in album cover and music. For example,

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all members of Beatles are photographed striding across a zebra crossing, but only McCartney is barefoot and out of step with the other three.



Elvis Presley faked his own death



A lot of fans persist in claims that “the King” (Elvis Presley) did not die in 1977, that he is still alive and that he had various reasons to hide from the public. The main reason for the belief that he faked his death is that, on his grave, his middle name Aron is spelt as Aaron (“Aaron” is the genuine middle name for Presley). Well, apparently, either Presley or his parents tried to change the name “Aron” to make it more similar to Presley’s stillborn twin, Jesse Garon Presley. Since his supposedly faked death in 1977 there have been thousands of alleged sightings of ‘the King’ all over the world. Unsurprisingly, none have ever been substantiated as being in any way genuine.

Death of Marilyn Monroe

The death of Marilyn Monroe has since become one of the most debated conspiracy theories of all time. Namely, on August 5, 1962 LAPD police sergeant Jack Clemmons received a call at approximately 4:25 a.m. from Dr. Ralph Greenson, Marilyn Monroe’s psychiatrist. He told Jack Clemmons that Marilyn Monroe was found dead at her home in Brentwood. She was 36 years old at the time of her death. 8 milligrams of Chloral Hydrate and 4.5 milligrams of

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Nembutal were found in her system. According to the autopsy the cause of her death is “acute barbiturate poisoning” – “probably suicide”. There are many theories that she was murdered, some of them includes John and Robert Kennedy and the other suggested CIA or Mafia complicity.

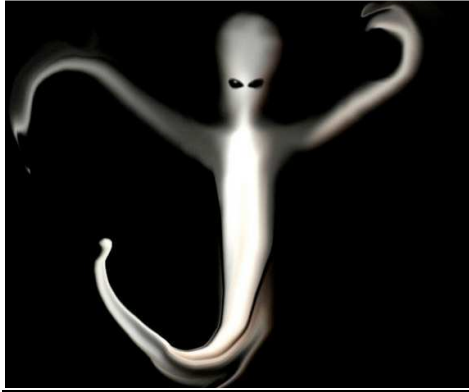


John F. Kennedy's Assassination



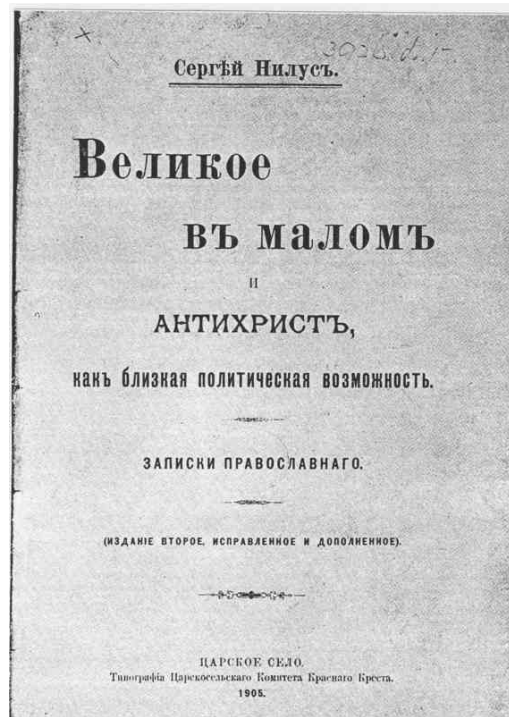
After John F. Kennedy was killed in 1963, in a Dallas motorcade, conspiracy theories started swirling. A lot of films, books and articles are dedicated to his death. Many conspiracy theorists admitted that Lee Harvey Oswald shot Kennedy. But, there's a question - was he alone? Did someone give him the orders? The Warren Commission report concluded that Oswald acted alone, but, report by The House Select Committee on Assassination suggested there was in fact a conspiracy, and more than one shooter.

The Roswell Crash Cover-Up



Something crashed on a remote ranch outside of Roswell, New Mexico in 1947. The government at first stated that it was some kind of saucer. Then retracted the statement and declared it was a weather balloon. But, later it was proved that it was neither a flying saucer nor a weather balloon. Actually it was a top-secret military balloon dubbed Project Mogul. No one thought that Roswell crash was something extraterrestrial until thirty years later, when a book about it was published.

Protocols of the Elders of Zion



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According to some sources “The Protocols of the Learned Elders of Zion” is a hoaxed book which goal is to reveal a Jewish conspiracy to achieve world domination. At first it appeared in Russia in 1905. In the 1930s it was used by the Nazis (in fact, by Adolph Hitler) as justification for its genocide against Jews. Although the book has been proclaimed as a deceit it's still selling.

Big Pharma



Drugs cost too much. They're allegedly safe until someone dies because of its undesirable effects. And because of it, we have a little suspicion about it. Kevin Trudeau, the author of “Natural Cures They Don't Want You To Know About”, claims that between the medical establishment and big drug companies exist conspiracy theories that hid important medical information. *Big Pharma* is the nickname given to the pharmaceutical industry. Critics of the industry often use this nickname when discussing abuses by the industry, including:

- Trying to suck every penny out of the pockets of the sick, injured, dying, and hypochondriacs;
- Inventing new maladies so people will buy more drugs;
- Renaming old maladies so people will think their conditions are more serious, making them more willing to pay higher prices for prescriptions.

A Survey

I surveyed 100 people. The age range was 15, 16, 18 and 19. They were asked to say what they thought about the following questions:

- 1 Do you know what the conspiracy theories are? YES / NO
- 2 Do you believe in conspiracy theories? YES / NO
Why YES? Why NO?
- 3 Can you name the conspiracy theories you know?
- 4 Do you think there is any truth in conspiracy theories? YES / NO
- 5 In your opinion:
 - a) Conspiracy theories can easily be proven.
 - b) Conspiracy theories are rumours without real evidence.
 - c) Conspiracy theories are a complete nonsense.
 - d) Sometimes the conspiracy theorists get proven right.
- 6 In your opinion, people who believe in conspiracy theories...

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- a) ...are paranoiacs/paranoids and everywhere see a conspiracy.
- b) ...are poor, stupid and uneducated.
- c) ... are people who cannot trust the people in power (or the people defending the event) so they are more likely to believe that they are being lied to and something else is behind it.

7 In your opinion, people who make conspiracy theories...

- a) ... are smart, educated and rich.
- b) ... spread the rumours intentionally to cover the truth.
- c) ... believe in them because every now and then a 'rumour' is shown to be true.

8 Why do people make conspiracy theories?

- a) Because of the trust betrayed (numerous examples in institutions of Government, etc...)

How does anyone believe in the "facts" presented around a specific event, when there are numerous examples of people in positions of authority lying to the public?

- b) Because of the complexity of the issues people try to understand (Some things are beyond the comprehension of a large number of people.)
- c) Because it's hard to cope with reality (we seek to make sense of horrifying historic events and make tragedies of life more bearable).
- d) Conspiracy theories tend to spring up whenever the official version of events does not add up, or sounds fishy. (if a set of facts does not add up, you do not believe it is correct because it does not match other information that you already have)

9 Why do people believe in conspiracy theories?

- a) People need to believe in something. (That's one of the reasons for religion.)
- b) Everyone knows the government is dishonest.
- c) Humans question everything; that's what makes us human.(for example: no other animal can question its own existence)
- d) Every myth is based on some fact.

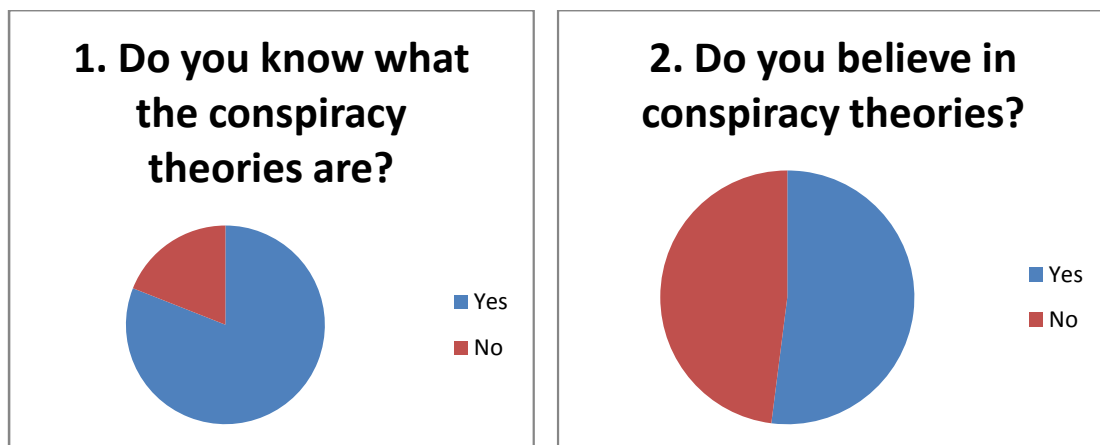
10 Do you agree with the quote?

"But here is truth: there is a lot more going on around us every day than we could ever think or imagine - just because we can't see or measure the spiritual world with a slide rule or microscope doesn't mean it isn't there, or that it is not affecting / effecting each and every one of us." YES / NO

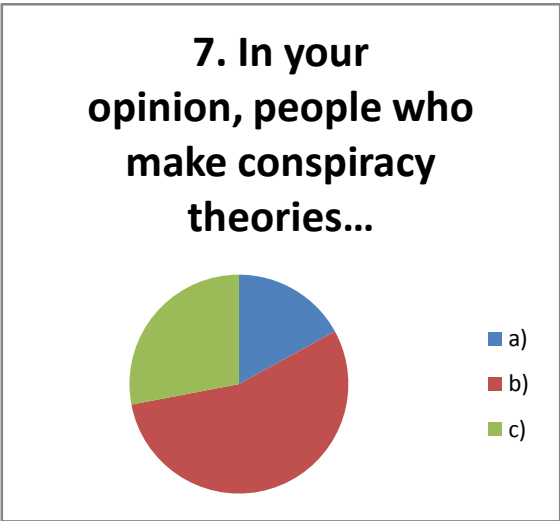
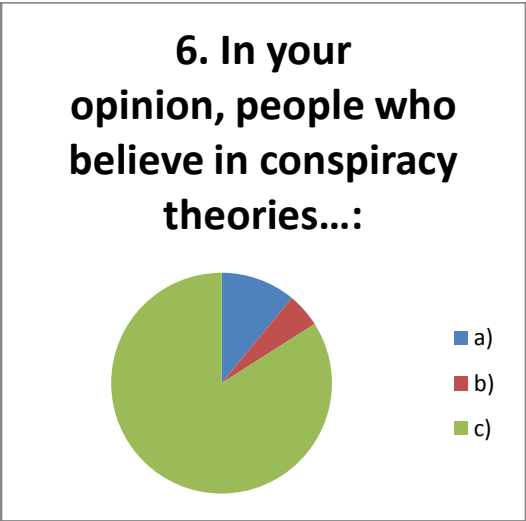
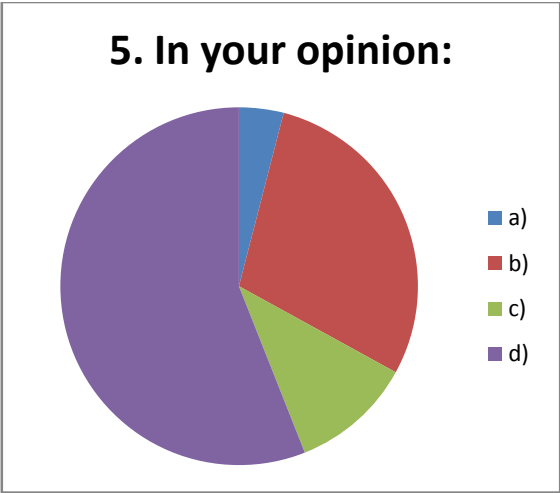
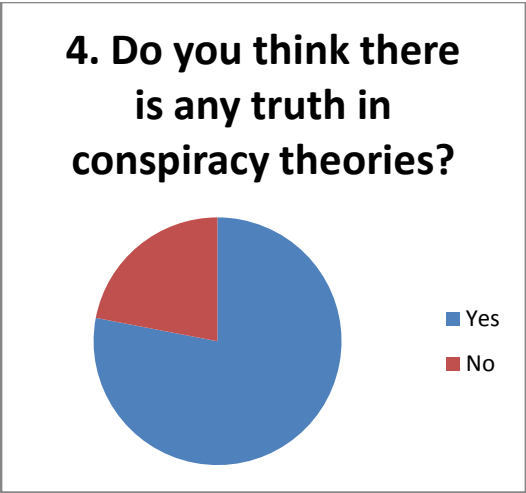
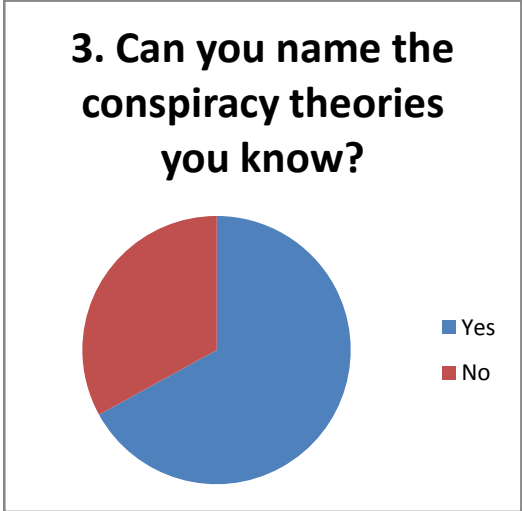
11. Do you agree with the quote?

Every person has the right to believe in whatever the person sees fit. YES / NO

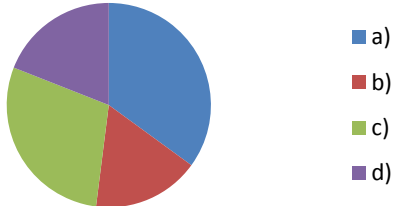
The results are as follow:



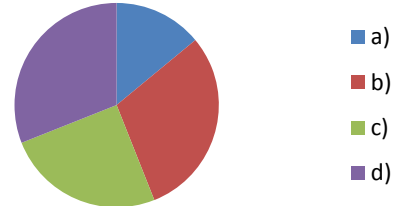
3. The Moon Landing, Princess Diana's Death, Elvis Presley's death, Death of Marilyn Monroe, JFK assassination...



8. Why do people make conspiracy theories?



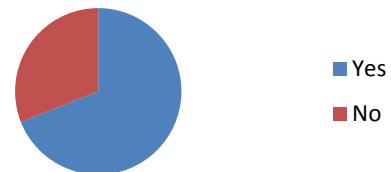
9. Why do people believe in conspiracy theories?



10. Do you agree with the quote: "But here is truth: there is a lot more going on..."



11. Do you agree with the quote: EVERY PERSON HAS THE RIGHT TO BELIEVE...



By analyzing the results of this survey I have concluded that 81% of surveyed people know what the conspiracy theories are and more than a half of them (52%) believe in conspiracy theories. The names of the conspiracy theories that they know are some of the greatest conspiracy theories such as: The Moon Landing, Princess Diana's Death, Elvis Presley's death, Death of Marilyn Monroe, JFK assassination...

78% of surveyed people think that there is some truth in conspiracy theories, only 4% of them think that conspiracy theories can be easily proven, 29% believe that conspiracy theories are rumors without the evidence, but most of them (56%) agree that sometimes the conspiracy theories get proven right.

84% think that people who believe in conspiracy theories are the people who cannot trust the people in power so in their opinion it is better to believe that they are being lied to and something else is behind it and more than a half of them (55%) think that they spread the rumors intentionally to cover the truth. 35% of them state that they do that because they cannot trust the people in power, 17% think that they do that because it is hard to understand some things, 29% think that it is because it is difficult to deal with reality, the rest of them (19%) think that they do that because there is something strange in official version of some event.

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There is a small number of surveyed people (14%) who think that people believe in conspiracy theories because they have to believe in something, 30% think that is because of the dishonest government, 25% think that it is in human nature to ask and doubt, 31% think that it is because every myth is based on some fact. The vast majority of surveyed people (71%) agree with the quote that there is the world around us that cannot be logically explained, but still exists while the rest of them (29%) do not agree with the quote. 69% said that they agree that everyone has the right to believe in whatever he wants, but 31% do not agree with it.

Conclusion

After I had finished this essay, I realized that people, who believe in one theory, believe in others, too. Conspiracy theorists make conspiracy theories because they cannot believe that someone rich, famous and often young has died tragically. Some surveys show that people after reading conspiracy theories change a lot and they do not notice that. People prefer to imagine living in a safe world. Some conspiracy theories help us to feel “safe” or “predictable” and that’s why most of us believe in conspiracy theories. Well, if someone feels safe believing in some conspiracy theories why not let him? Personally, I agree with the quote: EVERY PERSON HAS THE RIGHT TO BELIEVE IN WHATEVER THE PERSON SEES FIT.

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