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# Strage in sinagoga, riparte il confronto sulle armi

## Il sindaco di Pittsburgh: serve più controllo

**Il killer, Robert Bowers, è comparso in tribunale su una sedia a rotelle ammettendo le sue responsabilità. Sono 29 i capi d'accusa per «crimini d'odio», ora rischia la pena di morte. Oggi la visita del capo della Casa Bianca. Accolta con toni diversi dai leader della comunità ebraica locale. Unanime la condanna del mondo**  
**Il Papa: «Il Signore ci aiuti a spegnere i focolai di odio»**

**LORETTA BRICCHI LEE**

NEW YORK

**I**l mondo intero ha condannato la strage di sabato scorso nella sinagoga di Pittsburgh, in Pennsylvania, e mentre si piangono le 11 vite falciate dall'odio di Robert Bowers, si riapre negli Stati Uniti il dibattito sulle armi. Non ci sono dubbi sul fatto che il 46enne che sabato mattina alle 9:45 ha fatto irruzione durante la preghiera della comunità ebraica "Tree of Life" e, armato di tre pistole Glock e un fucile semiautomatico, ha ucciso 11 persone, ferendone altre 6 tra cui quattro poliziotti, sia stato spinto dall'antisemitismo.

Quel grido «a morte tutti gli ebrei» prima della strage, è la firma dell'orrore. Quando era all'interno della sinagoga ha dichiarato: «Non posso rimanere seduto ad osservare il genocidio del mio popolo che gli ebrei stanno portando avanti». Bowers si è lasciato alle spalle una scia di odio distribuito sui social network popolari tra i nazionalisti bianchi e i membri dell'alt-right, come Gab. A popolare le pagine social del killer – che i vicini descrivono come uno qualunque, con la sola strana abitudine di guardare i programmi d'informazione a tutto volume a notte fonda – sono state per mesi anche le accuse verso l'organizzazione "Hebrew immigrant aid society" per l'aiuto fornito agli immigrati (tra cui la Carovana che dal Messico si sta dirigendo verso gli Stati Uniti), definiti dallo sparatore come «invasori».

Ecco perché l'incriminazione formale di Bowers, composta di 29 capi d'accusa, comprende il crimine d'odio e la violazione dei diritti civili Usa, escludendo invece l'atto di terrorismo. Ieri, dopo due

giorni in ospedale per le ferite riportate durante lo scontro con le forze dell'ordine, l'uomo è apparso in tribunale su una sedia a rotelle e ha riconosciuto le accuse contestate. Il giudice gli ha negato la libertà su cauzione. «Tali azioni rappresentano il peggio dell'umanità», ha sottolineato il procuratore Scott Brady, a cui ha fatto eco il ministro della Giustizia Usa Jeff Sessions, che ha ventilato la possibilità che venga richiesta, per Bowers, la pena di morte. Subito si è riaperto il dibattito sulle armi. Il sindaco democratico di Pittsburgh, Bill Peduto, ha lanciato un appello affinché «vengano tolte le armi – denominatore comune di ogni sparatoria di massa negli Usa – dalle mani di coloro che cercano di esprimere l'odio attraverso l'omicidio», respingendo in tronco la proposta di porre guardie armate nei luoghi di culto avanzata dal presidente Donald Trump subito dopo la strage. Una proposta che, insieme alle accuse di aver favorito l'estremismo di destra e tenuto un comizio elettorale nonostante il lutto nazionale, hanno posto il capo della Casa Bianca al centro delle critiche. Anche la comunità ebraica della cittadina della Pennsylvania è divisa sulla visita di Trump, preannunciata dalla Casa Bianca per oggi. E i rabbini hanno usato toni diversi: alcuni esprimendosi a favore, altri contro l'arrivo del presidente. Papa Francesco ha pronunciato parole di conforto per la famiglie delle vittime al termine dell'Angelus di domenica in cui ha ricordato che «tutti, in realtà, siamo feriti da questo disumano atto di violenza». «Il Signore ci aiuti a spegnere i focolai di odio che si sviluppano nelle nostre società – ha detto Francesco –, rafforzando il senso di umanità, il rispetto della

vita, i valori morali e civili, e il santo timore di Dio, che è amore e Padre di tutti». La condanna di Bowers è stata unanime e globale. Durante l'apertura settimanale del Consiglio dei ministri, dopo un minuto di silenzio per le vittime, il premier israeliano Benjamin Netanyahu ha sottolineato che «Israele si schiera in un unico fronte con la comunità ebraica di Pittsburgh», contro «l'antisemitismo e questi fenomeni di barbarie». Con un messaggio via Twitter la cancelliera tedesca Angela Merkel ha fatto appello ad «opporsi con decisione all'antisemitismo». Particolarmente dure le parole del ministro della Difesa americano, Jim Mattis che ha definito l'assalitore un «cattivo», «uno che non è degno di essere chiamato uomo».

A prevalere, però, è il senso di solidarietà con la comunità ebraica americana e con le famiglie delle vittime. Almeno 2.500 persone si sono riunite domenica nella comunità colpita dalla strage, a pregare per le undici persone uccise: otto uomini e tre donne, di età compresa tra i 54 e i 97 anni, tra cui due fratelli, inseparabili. In varie città d'America si sono tenute veglie e raccolte di fondi per la sinagoga. Un gruppo musulmano ha raccolto quasi 80mila dollari. Mentre un immigrato iraniano, con una colletta online, è arrivato a 400mila dollari.

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## DOLORE

Un uomo depone un mazzo di fiori davanti alla sinagoga di Pittsburgh teatro della strage di sabato: undici le persone rimaste uccise dalla furia antisemita di Robert Bowers

(Ansa)

# IL FISCHIETTO PER I CANI

Perché i discorsi della politica americana che a noi suonano quasi innocui eccitano l'estrema destra razzista

## Gli antisemiti e il fischietto per cani

Le frequenze su cui viaggia l'odio per gli ebrei, nell'America del 2018

*Il "dog whistle" permette ai gruppi dell'estrema destra di pensare "questo è un messaggio rivolto a noi"*

*"Io non sto dicendo che sei un razzista, sto semplicemente dicendo che i razzisti pensano che tu sia un razzista"*

*L'AntiDefamation League dice che tra il 2016 e il 2017 c'è stato un aumento del 57 per cento degli atti di antisemitismo in America*

*Il bisillabo Soros evita alla destra radicale americana e anche a molti sovranisti in Italia l'incomodo di dire "ebrei", ma evoca il complotto*

DI DANIELE RAINERI

New York. Un fanatico è entrato in una sinagoga di Pittsburgh con un fucile e tre pistole e ha ucciso undici ebrei. In America c'è un'espressione politica sempre più frequente che è "the dog whistle", "il fischietto per cani". Se ne parla molto, è il concetto centrale che ha portato alla strage di sabato ed è il modo di dire che si usa per indicare quando un politico nasconde messaggi che eccitano i razzisti, i nazisti e i suprematisti bianchi dentro un discorso apparentemente normale. Per esempio, il politico dal podio dice che i globalisti vogliono aprire le frontiere così i migranti potranno invadere il paese e minacciare lo stile di vita dei cittadini rispettosi della legge e i nazisti sentono "globalisti" uguale "gli ebrei" e "cittadini rispettosi della legge" uguale "i bianchi" e nella loro testa traducono "gli ebrei vogliono aprire le frontiere così i migranti spazzeranno via i bianchi". Così finisce che in una nazione armata come l'America un fanatico prende il fucile e va in sinagoga a sparare e poi dice agli agenti di polizia che lo catturano: "Volevo uccidere solo gli ebrei perché loro vogliono il genocidio dei bianchi". Questo concetto si chiama dog whistle perché funziona come i fischietti per i cani, che emettono frequenze che noi non sentiamo ma i cani sì. In una puntata della vecchia serie televisiva "The West Wing" la leader di un gruppo di fanatici religiosi cristiani dice a due consiglieri della Casa Bianca: "Il vostro umorismo da newyorchesi non mi piace" e quelli la sgambano subito: "Intendeva dire: il nostro umorismo da ebrei?". A ripensarci oggi era un esempio molto leggero.

Negli ultimi anni questo fischietto è stato usato molto. Nell'ottobre 2016 durante la campagna elettorale Donald Trump accusò Hillary Clinton "di incontrarsi in segreto con banchieri internazionali per pianificare la distruzione della sovranità americana e arricchire i poteri finanziari globali". Che ne fosse consapevole oppure no, stava citando uno dei motivi ricorrenti

della destra estrema americana: c'è un complotto ebraico mondiale per distruggere l'America bianca e va avanti grazie al fatto che gli ebrei controllano il governo, i media e le banche. Una settimana fa durante un comizio elettorale per le elezioni di metà mandato Trump ha rivendicato di essere un "nazionalista". Dal punto di vista formale è ineccepibile. Il presidente degli Stati Uniti è per definizione un nazionalista, protegge e cura gli interessi della nazione americana. Ma è una definizione ambigua perché ammette anche altri significati molto meno neutrali. In America con nazionalismo si può intendere anche la dottrina che vuole la maggioranza bianca in lotta contro le minoranze per non cedere la sua supremazia. Nessuno dice "sono un nazionalista americano" a Harlem, il quartiere nero di New York, o a Little Havana, il quartiere cubano di Miami. Esiste il nazionalismo bianco, che vuole uno stato etnico bianco e il ritorno del paese allo status precedente il Civil Rights Act del 1964 e il Nationality Act del 1965.

Il primo dei due Act appena citati pose fine alla segregazione razziale – per esempio i bus divisi in due parti, bianchi davanti e neri dietro, negli stati del sud – e vietò la discriminazione basata sulla razza nelle assunzioni sul lavoro. Il secondo cambiò il sistema che regolava l'arrivo degli stranieri in America e stabilì che i ricongiungimenti familiari potevano superare le quote di arrivi prestabilite per nazionalità: in pratica, se prima per ipotesi l'America decideva di accettare l'arrivo soltanto di cento tedeschi e di cento messicani ogni anno, dopo cominciò ad accettare che arrivassero più tedeschi e più messicani se il motivo era il ricongiungimento familiare. Ovvio che la legge favoriva le ondate migratorie più recenti: i tedeschi non vanno più in America dall'Ottocento, i messicani invece sì e chiamano mogli e figli. I nazionalisti guardano con nostalgia a quell'epoca come se fosse l'età dell'oro e sognano che l'America torni com'era a quel punto. Ma



ke America Great Again. Se la consideriamo in questo contesto, "nazionalismo" è una parola passepartout e quindi si presta bene al gioco. Da una parte ispira commozione patriottica nei "normies", i normali, quelli che non percepiscono il fischio, dall'altra solletica quelli che vogliono uno stato etnico. Il dog whistle ti permette di dire quello che non puoi dire in modo esplicito, permette ai gruppi dell'estrema destra di pensare "questo è un messaggio rivolto a noi" e lascia tutti gli altri in uno stato di sospensione dubbiosa: "Avrà pronunciato quelle parole in modo innocuo oppure stava lanciando un messaggio che io non colgo?". Ti permette persino di dire cose che non pensavi di dire. La settimana scorsa il candidato governatore della Florida, il nero Andrew Gillum, in un dibattito tv ha fulminato così l'avversario Ron De Santis, con una definizione che resterà nei manuali: "Io non sto dicendo che sei un razzista, sto semplicemente dicendo che i razzisti pensano che tu sia un razzista".

Trump è il re del fischetto per cani. Intendiamoci: sarebbe folle dire che il presidente americano fa propaganda esplicita per i neonazisti. Suo genero Jared marito della figlia prediletta Ivanka è un ebreo osservante educato in una yeshiva. Il suo grande sponsor alle elezioni è il mogul ebreo dei casinò di Las Vegas, Sheldon Adelson. La sua decisione di spostare l'ambasciata americana da Tel Aviv a Gerusalemme è stata applaudita dal governo israeliano. Il suo staff alla Casa Bianca è pieno di consiglieri che hanno lavorato e che lavoreranno di nuovo per Goldman Sachs, la regina di quelle banche d'affari internazionali che secondo i fanatici dovrebbero essere in combutta con i Clinton. Eppure quello che il presidente dice e quello che fa eccitano in modo dimostrabile la destra estrema. Secondo l'Anti Defamation League, l'organizzazione che monitora gli atti di antisemitismo in America, tra il 2016 e il 2017 c'è stato un aumento del 57 per cento degli atti di antisemitismo. Dalla loro fondazione nel 1979 non avevano mai visto nulla del genere. Tra il 2015 e il 2016 c'era già stato un aumento del 35 per cento e il sospetto è che fosse legato al clima politico della campagna elettorale – la stessa in cui ottocento giornalisti americani ricevettero 19 mila messaggi e minacce antisemiti. Ricordate il meme che circolava e mostrava un Trump trionfale che chiude dentro un forno crematorio questo o quell'avversario politico? Non era molto sottile, diciamo.

A ottobre Trump ha deliberatamente trasformato una non-notizia, la carovana di migranti partita dall'Honduras per raggiungere il confine meridionale degli Stati Uniti, nella notizia che ha dominato i media americani per due settimane. Il corteo non è niente di speciale, ce ne sono stati altri prima e non hanno creato alcun panico, si muove a piedi e di questo passo potrebbe metterci due mesi prima di arrivare al confine. E se anche succedesse? I partecipanti non sono migranti illegali, nel senso che hanno diritto di fare domanda di asilo. Chi ne ha diritto sarà preso e gli altri saranno rispediti via, come succederebbe sotto qualsiasi Amministrazione,

repubblicana o democratica. Ma tra una settimana ci sono le elezioni di metà mandato, i democratici sono in vantaggio sui repubblicani nei sondaggi e Trump ha trasformato il nulla in uno show. Ha twittato che fra i migranti in marcia si nascondono "mideasterners", persone del medio oriente, una bufala talmente artificiale che persino lui se l'è rimangiata, ha autorizzato lo spostamento di truppe sul confine – prima ottocento, poi cinquemila, il Pentagono per ora studia la faccenda ma intanto i media ci fanno i titoli-, ha fatto spargere la voce di un ordine esecutivo pronto per bloccare tutte le richieste d'asilo al confine, ha dipinto la carovana come un tentativo di sfondamento imminente invece che per quello che è nei fatti, un problema gestibile che potrebbe come non potrebbe presentarsi entro la fine dell'anno. La copertura data dai media è stata l'elemento scatenante per Robert Bowers, un camionista solitario che abita a sud di Pittsburgh. Bowers pensa che Trump sia troppo sottomesso agli ebrei, anzi ai "kike" come li chiama lui. "Non ho mai votato per Trump, non ho mai avuto un berretto Maga", scriveva su una piattaforma social di destra estrema. Quattro giorni prima di attaccare aveva pubblicato una vignetta molto eloquente: un uomo indeciso davanti al bivio della politica non sa se andare a destra oppure a sinistra ma non vede che è una falsa scelta, è un'illusione, entrambe le direzioni portano infine allo Zog, che è la sigla del "governo di occupazione sionista".

"Kike" è un termine gergale per insultare gli ebrei e la sua origine non è chiara. Una versione dice che è dovuto alla sillaba finale "ky" così comune nei nomi dell'est Europa, da dove provenivano molti degli ebrei arrivati in America. Un'altra dice che kike era il nome (storpacciato) del cerchietto tracciato sui registri dagli ebrei che sbucavano a Ellis Island perché non sapevano scrivere in caratteri latini e perché non volevano mettere una X, troppo simile a una croce cristiana. Lo stragista Bowers è pazzo furioso con le organizzazioni di volontari che aiutano i migranti e tra quelle una è la HIAS, la Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society, creata nel 1861 per aiutare i rifugiati ebrei in America e poi diventata una ong che aiuta tutti senza distinzioni. "Alla HIAS piace importare gli invasori che uccidono la nostra gente. Non posso starcene seduto da una parte mentre la mia gente è massacrata. Fanculo alle apparenze, io entro in azione", scrive sul social. Fanculo alle apparenze è una mia traduzione approssimativa di "screw your optics", che in inglese suona molto più preciso: "Fanculo al modo in cui voi vedete le cose". È la caratteristica dominante dei gruppi dell'estremismo razzista. Credono di avere un punto di vista unico e privilegiato e censurato dai media: "Voi non avete ancora capito, noi invece abbiamo capito cosa sta succedendo". Bowers esce a uccidere ebrei perché a quel punto nella sua mente sparare a una donna di 97 anni che il sabato mattina prega in una sinagoga equivale a frenare l'emergenza immigrazione che secondo lui minaccia i bianchi americani.

“Complotto pluto-giudaico-massonico” era troppo lungo, per questo nell’era dei social si è imposto il bisillabo ‘Soros”, hanno scritto a inizio 2017 quelli della Wu Ming Foundation (che di solito non sono citati molto sul Foglio, ma in tempi di neonazismo stragista si recupera tutto). E’ una definizione perfetta. George Soros è un magnate ungherese ebreo di medio livello sfuggito a nazismo e comunismo che dona soldi a progetti di beneficenza ispirati all’opera del filosofo tedesco Karl Popper, che predicava trasparenza e tolleranza. Da qualche anno la propaganda lo ha trasformato in una figura d’odio, il grande burattinaio ebreo. In questi giorni per esempio sui social media trovate una falsa foto di una SS nazista, dicono che sia Soros ma in realtà lui durante la Seconda guerra mondiale aveva nove anni e la foto è di un tale Oskar Groening. Il bisillabo “Soros” evita alla destra radicale americana e anche a molti sovrani in Italia l’incomodo di dire “ebrei”, ma evoca l’idea sempre seducente di un grande complotto finanziario ed elitista. Hai un avversario che non sai come liquidare? Si tratta di certo di qualcuno “pagato da Soros”. La gente scende in piazza contro di te e la tua linea politica? “Sono manifestanti pagati da Soros”.

Il fischetto per cani funziona anche per omissione. Nell’agosto 2016 i gruppi di estrema destra organizzarono una marcia a Charlottesville in Virginia per protestare contro la rimozione di una statua in memoria di un generale della Confederazione (che quindi combatteva per il lato schiavista). I temi erano quelli del nazionalismo bianco: uno degli slogan cantato dai portatori di fiaccola era “You won’t replace us”, non ci sostituirrete – che era ovviamente rivolto dai bianchi alle “altre etnie”. A un certo punto lo slogan si trasformò per facile assonanza in “Jews won’t replace us”, gli ebrei non ci sostituiranno. Un altro slogan usato era “Blood and soil”, traduzione inglese di Blut und boten, sangue e suolo, una formula giuridica tedesca per indicare i criteri che definiscono la nazionalità tedesca che fu poi usata così tanto dai nazisti da diventare un loro motto. A Charlottesville in quei due giorni arrivarono anche molti manifestanti che protestavano contro la presenza così aperta dell’estrema destra. Il giorno dopo un fanatico appartenente ai gruppi nazionalisti lanciò la sua macchina a tutta velocità

contro un corteo di persone che manifestavano contro, uccise una donna e ferì molti altri. Trump disse che “there were fine people on both sides”, “c’erano brave persone da entrambi i lati”.

Una volta che il discorso pubblico è inquinato così, è difficile scappare. Tutto è un’illusione, tutto rimanda a uno schema per iniziati, tutto fa brodo nel calderone. A metà 2016 risale la diffusione dell’uso delle tre parentesi nella propaganda della destra estrema. Le tre parentesi erano utilizzate per racchiudere i nomi degli ebrei e quindi sottolineare il fatto che prima di tutto fossero ebrei. Per esempio se i fanatici dovevano scrivere che il regista Steven Spielberg aveva incontrato l’ex sindaco di New York Michael Bloomberg scrivevano (((Spielberg))) e (((Bloomberg))). Qualcuno programmò persino un’estensione di Google (le estensioni sono software che personalizzano software già esistenti) per mettere sempre le tre parentesi in automatico attorno ai nomi ebrei. Leggevi un qualsiasi pezzo su internet e il computer ti metteva le tre parentesi attorno ai nomi ebrei. In quel modo qualsiasi articolo sui soggetti più svariati – gossip di Hollywood, finanza, politica – che menzionasse un nome ebreo prendeva subito un colore complottista: vedete? Sono dappertutto. Google rimosse quell’estensione ma il concetto c’entra molto con quello che stiamo dicendo sul fischetto per cani. Quando credi nei complotti anche un articolo sul cinema del New York Times, il giornale dei liberal newyorchesi, può diventare antisemita. Figuriamoci quando i testi sono scritti apposta per spargere allusioni antisemite, in quella galassia di siti e contrositi che ha fiancheggiato l’ascesa di Donald Trump alla Casa Bianca.

C’è un problema ulteriore ed è che di recente i fischietti per cani sono stati sostituiti da megafoni. Giovedì, due giorni prima della strage, Fox news ha invitato un ospite (Chris Farrell) a parlare della carovana dei migranti e quello ha citato il “Soros occupied State Department”: “il dipartimento di Stato occupato da Soros”, che assomiglia molto al Zog che abbiamo già incontrato, il “governo di occupazione sionista”. Non c’è ovviamente alcun fondamento per dire che un dipartimento del governo americano guidato da Trump sia controllato per qualche motivo da George Soros. Fox ha trasmesso una replica della trasmissione anche sabato, ma ieri ha realizzato l’errore e si è scusata.



La manifestazione dei nazionalisti bianchi a Charlottesville nell'agosto del 2014 (foto Reuters)

# L“europeizzazione” degli ebrei americani

## “Pittsburgh cambia tutto”. Le sinagoghe negli Stati Uniti corrono ai ripari

DI GIULIO MEOTTI

Roma. “Non voglio vivere in un paese dove ogni sinagoga ha bisogno di guardie armate”, ha detto ieri il sindaco di Pittsburgh, Bill Peduto, in risposta al presidente Donald Trump che aveva parlato delle necessità di proteggere i siti ebraici dopo la strage alla sinagoga Tree of Life. Fino a sabato scorso l’ebraismo americano sembrava un gigantesco paradiso uscito dai romanzi di Philip Roth. La strage a opera di un suprematista bianco che ha lasciato a terra undici ebrei cambia tutto e porterà all’“europeizzazione dell’ebraismo americano”, ha detto ieri Joel Rubinfeld, presidente della Belgian League Against Anti-Semitism. Scrive il Wall Street Journal che le sinagoghe negli Stati Uniti hanno già aumentato la protezione dopo il “peggior attacco a una comunità ebraica nella storia degli Stati Uniti”. L’Fbi rileva che il 54 per cento dei 1.538 reati di odio anti-religioso nell’ultimo anno sono stati motivati da antisemitismo. Eppure, fino ad alcuni anni fa scriveva il Washington Post, soltanto due sinagoghe avevano un direttore della sicurezza.

Le congregazioni di Milwaukee, Washington, Seattle e San Francisco, tra le altre, ieri hanno adottato nuovi protocolli di sicurezza. L’Adas Israel Congregation, una sinagoga di Washington, aveva già agenti di sicurezza sul posto. Ma il suo rabbino capo, Aaron Alexander, ha definito Pittsburgh un “game changer” e ora il tempio aggiungerà personale intorno al perimetro della sinagoga. Don Aviv, direttore di Interfor International, una società di sicurezza che fa consulenza a numerosi gruppi ebraici, ha detto che si è registrato un aumento del 70 per cento della domanda di servizi di sicurezza tra le organizzazioni ebraiche nell’area di New York. “La sicurezza relativamente scarsa nelle sinagoghe americane mi ha impressionato e mi ha preoccupato allo stesso tempo”, ha detto il belga Ru-

binfeld, che frequenta spesso gli Stati Uniti e che era presente nella Grande Sinagoga di Bruxelles quando un terrorista ferì due persone durante il capodanno ebraico del 1982. “Pensavo che questa fosse una differenza fondamentale con gli Stati Uniti, ma non lo è più”. La strage di Pittsburgh “rappresenterà un punto di svolta per gli ebrei americani”.

La comunità ebraica in Norvegia spende in sicurezza metà del budget. La metà del contingente militare dell’Operazione Sentinelle, in Francia, è oggi a protezione dei siti ebraici. Ogni anno la famiglia Rothschild contribuisce a finanziare una miriade di richieste di budget per proteggere gli ebrei di Francia. In Inghilterra è schizzato alle stelle il budget del Community Security Trust, la forza di difesa ebraica meglio organizzata in Europa (è passato da due a tredici milioni di sterline in otto anni). Il suo direttore, Mike Whine, ha definito le comunità ebraiche “la prima linea” di attacco per l’estremismo in tutto il mondo. La Kind David High School, una scuola ebraica di Manchester, ha installato altoparlanti sui tetti della scuola per richiamare gli studenti all’interno in caso di attacco, come avvenne a Tolosa, dove tre bambini furono uccisi. “Spendiamo una parte enorme del budget in sicurezza, è ridicolo”, ha detto il rabbino Miriam Berger della sinagoga riformata di Finchley, a Londra. L’ex presidente del Consiglio centrale degli ebrei tedeschi, Charlotte Knobloch, ha dichiarato che “la vita ebraica è possibile in pubblico solo sotto la protezione della polizia”. E’ dal 1982, quando ci fu l’uccisione del piccolo Stefano Taché, che la comunità ebraica di Roma è sotto tutela. In Italia numerosi rabbini sono sotto scorta e non c’è evento ebraico di qualsiasi tipo che non si svolga senza sicurezza. Fino a sabato pomeriggio, tutto questo era impensabile negli Stati Uniti. Adesso, per spiegare il cambiamento epocale, si agita lo spettro dell’Europa.



# Après la fusillade de Pittsburgh, les juifs américains sous le choc

Onze personnes, la plupart âgées, ont été tuées dans une synagogue par un suprémaciste blanc antisémite, samedi

## «Quand Trump dit "George Soros", c'est un code pour désigner les juifs»

JOY KATZ

juive de gauche installée à Pittsburgh

PITTSBURGH - envoyé spécial

**T**homas Holber, 63ans, fait partie des vieilles familles juives qui s'installèrent dans la cité sidérurgique de Pittsburgh au milieu du XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle et y prospérèrent dans le quartier cossu de Squirrel Hill. Jusqu'à ce samedi matin 27 octobre, lorsque, au cri de «*Tous les Juifs doivent mourir!*», Robert Bowers, 46 ans, est entré dans la synagogue de la congrégation Tree of Life («arbre de vie») et a assassiné, avec un fusil d'assaut et trois pistolets, 11 fidèles. «*J'ai vu cela en Europe, en Union soviétique, mais je n'ai jamais pensé que cela arriverait en Amérique, s'afflige ce dentiste. Désormais, je regarderai derrière mon épaule et j'identifierai les sorties de secours.*»

L'attaque antisémite est la plus meurtrière ayant jamais eu lieu aux Etats-Unis. Le précédent le plus grave remonte à 1985, lorsqu'un homme avait tué quatre membres d'une même famille à Seattle, croyant à tort qu'ils étaient juifs. En 2014, un suprémaciste blanc avait ouvert le feu sur un centre communautaire juif du Kansas, tuant trois personnes. Mais jusqu'à présent, les juifs américains se sentaient protégés. «*J'ai été très surprise que cela arrive dans un quartier aussi calme, aussi juif,*», confie l'étudiante Abigail Fowner, 18ans, venue se recueillir à la mémoire des victimes. Un sentiment partagé par l'ancien rabbin de Tree of Life, Alvin Berkun, interrogé par le *New York Times*: «*Les deux lieux les plus sûrs que je connaisse sont Squirrel Hill et Jérusalem. J'ai vécu aux deux endroits.*»

Dimanche soir, en se rendant sur place, on aurait voulu le croire. Une avenue commerçante, avec

ses magasins et son centre communautaire juifs – dont la piscine avec ses quelques heures d'ouverture non mixte –, mais aussi des restaurants italiens, des commerces asiatiques et une énorme église protestante. Puis une rue arborée bordée de maisons bourgeoises, et sur la colline, en face de l'université Chatham, la synagogue. Un lieu jusque-là paisible.

### «Je ne suis pas surprise»

La police a donné le nom des victimes. La plus âgée, Rose Mallinger, avait 97ans. Lorsque les coups de feu ont retenti, un de ses amis a immédiatement pensé à elle: jamais elle ne manquait un service, arrivant toujours parmi les premiers. Elle a été emportée dans ce qui fut, selon le FBI, une boucherie. Les victimes étaient âgées – le plus jeune avait 54ans –, notamment parce qu'en ce jour «normal» de shabbat, où aucune mesure de sécurité particulière n'avait été prise, seuls les membres les plus actifs et donc âgés de la communauté étaient présents.

Pittsburgh a fait corps. Les policiers sont intervenus immédiatement – quatre ont été blessés –, à la différence de ce qui s'était passé pour le lycée de Floride en février (19 morts). «*Ils ont couru sous le feu pour aider les autres*», a salué le chef de la police, Scott Schubert. Une cérémonie œcuménique a été organisée dimanche après-midi, tandis que le maire de la ville, le démocrate Bill Peduto, a appelé au rassemblement: «*Nous savons que la haine ne nous divisera jamais.*» Cette attitude était patente, à 100 mètres de la synagogue, bouclée par la police: des fleurs et des mots de concorde avaient été déposés, tandis qu'on y croisait des juifs et des non-juifs venus se recueillir.

Ce dimanche, chacun se rassemble... contre Donald Trump, accusé de faire passer l'extrême droite des paroles aux actes, alors que les «incidents antisémites» ont augmenté de 57% en 2017 (1986 cas, selon l'Anti Defamation League, association historique de lutte contre l'antisémitisme). «*M. Trump encou-*

*rage la frange des gens qui sont borderline*», accuse Thomas Holber, qui rappelle qu'en 2017 à Charlottesville (Virginie), «*des néonazis ont pu défilé à visage découvert*» et que «*Donald Trump a renvoyé dos à dos les deux camps*», alors qu'un néo-nazi avait écrasé une militante de gauche avec sa voiture.

Joy Katz, juive new-yorkaise de gauche installée à Pittsburgh depuis neuf ans, avait senti le vent mauvais. «*Je ne suis pas surprise. Cela arrive partout dans le monde. Je m'attendais à quelque chose de ce genre.*» Cette écrivaine de 54ans, professeure de poésie, dénonce la rhétorique de M. Trump. «*Quand il dit "George Soros", c'est un code pour désigner les juifs. Quand il dit "globalisme", aussi. Par ses propos, il alimente les antisémites.*»

L'attentat de Pittsburgh s'inscrit dans une série interminable de fusillades de masse et de crimes haineux: contre une boîte gay d'Orlando (49 morts en 2016) ou une église noire de Caroline du Sud en 2015 (9 morts). La tuerie de la synagogue est-elle d'une même essence? «*Ce n'est pas très différent d'une tuerie dans une église. Pour moi, le crime est le même*», hésite Joy Katz. La protestante Dawna Duff, professeure d'université venue se recueillir, est plus mitigée. «*C'est comme dans une église, mais il y a quelque chose de différent, une histoire, une résonance différentes.*» En réalité, l'angoisse est de savoir si les juifs américains sont rattrapés par l'antisémitisme qu'ils avaient cru – en partie – laisser derrière eux en franchissant l'Atlantique. «*J'ai peur de dire que nous pourrions être au début de ce qui est arrivé à l'Europe, des attaques antisémites consistantes*», a déclaré au *New York Times* le rabbin Marvin Hier, fondateur du centre Simon-Wiesenthal de Los Angeles. ■

ARNAUD LEPEMENTIER



Dopo la sparatoria di Pittsburgh, gli ebrei statunitensi sono sotto shock



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# Tree of Life Rabbi Speaks of Horror, but Also Healing

*'My cup overflows with love. That's how you defeat hate.'*

By AMY HARMON

In a blog post last summer, three months before a man with an AR-15-style assault rifle opened fire on his Pittsburgh congregation, Rabbi Jeffrey Myers railed in sharp tones against the failure of lawmakers to address gun violence.

"I fear that the status quo will remain unchanged," Rabbi Myers wrote, invoking the words of Rabban Gamliel, a second-century Jewish scholar: "Be wary of the authorities! They do not befriend anyone unless it serves their own needs."

On Monday, as Rabbi Myers sought to make funeral arrangements for congregants killed in the mass shooting on Saturday, some other Jewish leaders in Pittsburgh rejected a proposed visit by President Trump, saying his rhetoric encouraged white nationalist violence. But Rabbi Myers offered a message of healing.

"The president of the United States is always welcome," he said in an interview on CNN. "I'm a citizen, he's my president. He is certainly welcome."

Mr. Trump later confirmed plans to visit Pittsburgh on Tuesday.

Rabbi Myers, who was hired just over a year ago by the Tree of Life congregation, which numbers a few hundred families, has found himself serving as a spiritual leader to an entire country in shock after the massacre, which left 11 people dead.

At a vigil in Pittsburgh and in a series of television interviews, the rabbi has warned that the attack was aimed at the American ideal of freedom of worship, and at America itself.

He has also reiterated his belief that good will prevail over evil.

He awoke on Monday to hundreds of emails from strangers, he told CNN, sent by people of all faiths and from all around the world. He has said the synagogue

will not close down or cede any ground to violence. And he has called on politicians to avoid hateful rhetoric.

"My cup overflows with love," Rabbi Myers said at the vigil in Pittsburgh on Sunday, according to an account in The Pittsburgh Post-Gazette. "That's how you defeat hate."

Rabbi Myers made the first 911 emergency call on Saturday morning when the gunman began his deadly assault. Until two months ago, he rarely carried his cellphone on the Sabbath, when some Jewish people avoid using technology and electronics, he has said in interviews. But at a training session in August, he said, a security expert told him he should start.

"I learned a number of important things from him," Rabbi Myers said in an interview Monday on "Good Morning America." "He said, 'Rabbi, it's a different world, and you need to carry it.' I'm so grateful for his presence, and teaching me."

The rabbi said that about five minutes after the Saturday service began, at 9:45 a.m., he heard a loud sound in the synagogue lobby on the floor below him. It sounded like a coat rack had fallen, he recalled. But then he heard another loud bang.

"It was apparent to me — instinct — that it was not the sound of a piece of metal falling down," he said. "It was rapid fire."

With about 12 people in the sanctuary, Rabbi Myers said, he yelled for everyone to drop to the ground and stay quiet. He then started to evacuate the congregants to safety, beginning with a handful of people at the front of the sanctuary. There were still eight people in the room, all in the rear.

The gunfire was getting louder. The gunman was moving closer to the sanctuary.

Seven of the eight people were

killed, he said, and the eighth was injured; she is expected to recover.

"There was no way for me to get back," Rabbi Myers said on CNN. "I live with that, the sounds that are seared in my brain, for the rest of my life."

The gunman also killed four others at the synagogue, members of two other congregations who use the same building.

Rabbi Myers grew up in Newark and started his career as a teenage soprano in his congregation's choir, according to The Pittsburgh Jewish Chronicle. When Mr. Myers was 15, the cantor at his synagogue had a stroke just before the High Holy Days, and Mr. Myers was called to step in and lead the choir.

He has served much of his professional career as a cantor and a Jewish educator in a congregation on Long Island and later in Ventnor City, N.J. He sought ordination as a rabbi to improve his job prospects, he told The Chronicle, at a time when American synagogues were consolidating.

One reason he was an appealing candidate when the Tree of Life/Or L'Simcha congregation in Pittsburgh sought a new rabbi was his ability to perform the roles of both rabbi and cantor.

At the vigil on Sunday, The Post-Gazette reported, Rabbi Myers told an audience of more than 2,000 people in the Soldiers & Sailors Hall that when he could not sleep after the attack, he reminded himself of the portion of the 23rd Psalm about one's cup overflowing.

Then he began singing "El Rachamim," a funeral lament.

Il rabbino della sinagoga Tree of Life parla di orrore, ma anche di guarigione



# FOR JEWS IN U.S., A SHOCKING BURST OF ANTI-SEMITISM

## SENSE OF EASE RATTLED

### Attack on Synagogue in Pittsburgh Is a Blaring Wake-Up Call

By LAURIE GOODSTEIN

Until recent years, many Jews in America believed that the worst of anti-Semitism was over there, in Europe, a vestige of the old country.

American Jews were welcome in universities, country clubs and corporate boards that once excluded their grandparents. They married non-Jews, moved into mixed neighborhoods and by 2000, the first Jew ran for vice president on a major party ticket.

So the massacre on Saturday of 11 people in a Pittsburgh synagogue, by a man who told the police when he surrendered that he “wanted all Jews to die,” was for many a shocking wake-up call.

“This kind of evil makes me think of the Holocaust and how people can be so cruel, that there is so much evil in the world, still,” said Moshe Taube, 91, a retired cantor from Congregation Beth Shalom in Pittsburgh and a survivor of the Holocaust.

But it did not come out of nowhere, said experts in anti-Semitism. At the same time that Jews were feeling unprecedented acceptance in the United States, the climate was growing increasingly hostile, intensifying in the two years since Donald J. Trump was elected president. And it comes at a time when attacks on Jews are on the rise in Europe as well, with frequent anti-Semitic incidents in France and Germany.

The hate in the United States came into full view last year as white supremacists marched in Charlottesville, Va., with lines of men carrying torches and chant-

ing, “Jews will not replace us.”

Swastikas and other anti-Semitic graffiti have been cropping up on synagogues and Jewish homes around the country. Jews online are subjected to vicious slurs and threats. Many synagogues and Jewish day schools have been amping up security measures.

The Anti-Defamation League logged a 57 percent rise in anti-Semitic incidents in the United States in 2017, compared with the previous year — including bomb threats, assaults, vandalism, and anti-Semitic posters and literature found on college campuses.

A spokesman for the Anti-Defamation League said that before Saturday’s shooting, the deadliest anti-Semitic attack in recent United States history was in 1985, when a man killed a family of four in Seattle. He had mistakenly thought they were Jewish.

There was also an attack by a white supremacist on a Jewish Community Center filled with children in Los Angeles in 1999 that injured five. More recently, in 2014, a white supremacist opened fire outside a Jewish Community Center in a suburb of Kansas City, Mo., killing three people.

“I’m not a Chicken Little who’s always yelling, ‘It’s worse than it’s ever been!’ But now I think it’s worse than it’s ever been,” said Deborah E. Lipstadt, a professor of Holocaust history at Emory University in Atlanta and the author of an upcoming book on anti-Semitism.

Ms. Lipstadt said she did not wish to be seen as alarmist, because in some ways “things have never been better” for Jews in America.

But she likened anti-Semitism to a herpes infection that lies dormant and re-emerges at times of stress. It does not go away, no matter how “acculturated” Jews have become in America, because “it’s a conspiracy theory,” said Ms. Lipstadt, whose win at trial against a Holocaust denier in England was

portrayed in the 2016 movie “Denial.”

What has changed, said several experts in interviews, is that conspiracy theories and “dog whistles” that resonate with anti-Semites and white supremacists are being circulated by establishment sources, including the president and members of Congress. Bizarre claims about Jews have moved from the margins to the establishment.

Prominent recent examples include unfounded conspiracy theories about George Soros, a wealthy donor to Democratic Party causes and a Jewish émigré from Hungary who survived the Nazis.

On Oct. 5, President Trump asserted on Twitter that the women who stopped Senator Jeff Flake in an elevator to plead with him to vote against advancing the nomination of Justice Brett M. Kavanaugh for the Supreme Court were “paid for by Soros and others.” In a rally in Missoula, Mont., on Oct. 19, the president told the crowd that the news media prefers to interview protesters who were paid for by “Soros or somebody.”

Mr. Soros has also been accused of financing the caravan of Hondurans and Guatemalans fleeing north on foot through Mexico — another claim with no factual basis.

A day after a pipe bomb was discovered at Mr. Soros’s home in Westchester, Representative Kevin McCarthy, the House majority leader, wrote on Twitter, “We cannot allow Soros, Steyer and Bloomberg to BUY this election! Get out and vote Republican Nov. 6.”

Tom Steyer is an Episcopalian and is of Jewish descent. Michael

Per gli ebrei in America, una sconvolgente esplosione di anti-semitismo



Bloomberg, the former mayor of New York City, is Jewish. After more explosive devices were found in the homes and offices of other Democratic leaders and supporters, Mr. McCarthy deleted the tweet.

Anti-Semitism has also become a charged topic on many American college campuses, with Israel as the detonator.

Activists on the left — sometimes including young Jews — call for boycotts and divestments from companies doing business in Israel, or the occupied territories. Mainstream Jewish groups are now branding such campaigns as anti-Semitism. Where to draw the line between criticism of Israel and anti-Semitism is a growing source of friction in many colleges and state capitals.

In Europe, Jewish leaders have been confronting open hatred toward Jews, also sometimes linked to animosity toward Israel.

In France, Jews have increasingly faced attacks and insults from members of the country's large Muslim community. In March, an 85-year-old Holocaust survivor, Mireille Knoll, was knifed to death in her apartment by a young man who shouted "Allahu akbar." Prosecutors classified it as an anti-Semitic hate crime.

In a 2015 study, 42 percent of French Jews surveyed said that they had suffered insults or aggressive acts at the hands of Muslims.

In Germany, anti-Semitism remains a daily occurrence, sometimes taking on the form of criminal attacks on Jews or Jewish institutions in the country, but often in more casual insults or the questioning of the country's post-World War II commitment to "never again" repeat the Nazi

Holocaust.

One of the most prominent anti-Semitic attacks this year, in which a young Syrian struck a man wearing a skullcap on the street of a trendy Berlin neighborhood, prompted the head of Germany's main Jewish organization to warn Jews against openly wearing skullcaps, or other public displays of their religion.

A demonstration in support of the country's Jews drew thousands of people to the streets, but months later, in the midst of violent demonstrations by neo-Nazis in the eastern city of Chemnitz, masked assailants threw rocks and bottles at a local Jewish restaurant and shouted anti-Semitic insults, the owner told the police.

Nadine Epstein, editor in chief of Moment, an independent Jewish magazine in the United States, said that in 2014 the magazine did a special section on anti-Semitism, interviewing a wide range of scholars and leaders in the field. She said that her conclusion was that anti-Semitism, while persistent, was mostly a problem in Europe. But "it wasn't really an issue in the U.S.," she said.

"Four plus years later," she added in an email, "we live in a very different world where nationalism, and with it anti-Semitism, is on the rise, stirred up by the rhetoric of one candidate in the 2016 presidential campaign. It's been building ever since, and now that we are in the run-up to the midterms, the first national election since, we are seeing the consequences of such dangerous rhetoric."

Moment magazine now has a web page to monitor anti-Semitism around the world, something Ms. Epstein said she never imagined doing.

# With Growth, Social Media Spread Harm

## A scramble to better counter extremist messages.

### Companies Struggle to Curb Violent Speech

This article is by Sheera Frenkel, Mike Isaac and Kate Conger.

SAN FRANCISCO — On Monday, a search on Instagram, the photo-sharing site owned by Facebook, produced a torrent of anti-Semitic images and videos uploaded in the wake of Saturday's shooting at a Pittsburgh synagogue.

A search for the word "Jews" displayed 11,696 posts with the hashtag "#jewsdid911," claiming that Jews had orchestrated the Sept. 11 terror attacks. Other hashtags on Instagram referenced Nazi ideology, including the number 88, an abbreviation used for the Nazi salute "Heil Hitler."

The Instagram posts demonstrated a stark reality. Over the last 10 years, Silicon Valley's social media companies have expanded their reach and influence to the furthest corners of the world. But it has become glaringly apparent that the companies never quite understood the negative consequences of that influence nor what to do about it — and that they cannot put the genie back in the bottle.

"Social media is emboldening people to cross the line and push the envelope on what they are willing to say to provoke and to incite," said Jonathan Albright, research director at Columbia University's Tow Center for Digital Journalism. "The problem is clearly expanding."

The repercussions of the social media companies' inability to handle disinformation and hate speech have manifested themselves abundantly in recent days. Cesar Sayoc Jr., who was charged last week with sending explosive devices to prominent Democrats,

appeared to have been radicalized online by partisan posts on Twitter and Facebook. Robert D. Bowers, who is accused of killing 11 people at the Tree of Life synagogue in Pittsburgh on Saturday, posted about his hatred of Jews on Gab, a two-year-old social network.

The effects of social media were also evident globally. Close watchers of Brazil's election on Sunday ascribed much of the appeal of the victor, the far-right populist Jair Bolsonaro, to what unfolded on social media there. Interests tied to Mr. Bolsonaro's campaign appeared to have flooded WhatsApp, the messaging application owned by Facebook, with a deluge of political content that gave wrong information on voting locations and times, provided false instructions on how to vote for particular candidates and outright disparaged one of Mr. Bolsonaro's main opponents, Fernando Haddad.

Elsewhere, high-ranking members of the Myanmar military have used doctored messages on Facebook to foment anxiety and fear against the Muslim Rohingya minority group. And in India, fake stories on WhatsApp about child kidnappings led mobs to murder more than a dozen people this year.

"Social media companies have created, allowed and enabled extremists to move their message from the margins to the mainstream," said Jonathan A. Greenblatt, chief executive of the Anti-Defamation League, a nongovernmental organization that combats hate speech. "In the past, they couldn't find audiences for their poison. Now, with a click or a post or a tweet, they can spread their ideas with a velocity we've never seen before."

Facebook said it was investigating the anti-Semitic hashtags on

Instagram after The New York Times flagged them. Sarah Pollock, a Facebook spokeswoman, said in a statement that Instagram was seeing new posts and other content related to this weekend's events and that it was "actively reviewing hashtags and content related to these events and removing content that violates our policies."

YouTube said it has strict policies prohibiting content that promotes hatred or incites violence and added that it takes down videos that violate those rules.

Social media companies have said that identifying and removing hate speech and disinformation — or even defining what constitutes such content — is difficult. Facebook said this year that only 38 percent of hate speech on its site was flagged by its internal systems. In contrast, its systems pinpointed and took down 96 percent of what it defined as adult nudity, and 99.5 percent of terrorist content.

YouTube said users reported nearly 10 million videos from April to June for potentially violating its community guidelines. Just under one million of those videos were found to have broken the rules and were removed, according to the company's data. YouTube's automated detection tools also took down an additional 6.8 million videos in that period.

A study by researchers from M.I.T. that was published in March found that falsehoods on Twitter were 70 percent more likely to be retweeted than accurate news.

Facebook, Twitter and YouTube



Crescendo, i social media hanno diffuso il male

have all announced plans to invest heavily in artificial intelligence and other technology aimed at finding and removing unwanted content from their sites. Facebook has also said it would hire 10,000 additional people to work on safety and security issues, and YouTube has said that it planned to have 10,000 people dedicated to reviewing videos. Jack Dorsey, Twitter's chief executive, recently said that although the company's longtime principle was free expression, it was discussing how "safety should come first."

But even as the companies throw money and resources at the problems, some of their employees said on Monday that they were rethinking whether the social media services could have a positive effect.

At Twitter, for example, employees are increasingly concerned that the company is floundering in its treatment of toxic language and hate speech, said four current and former employees who asked for anonymity because they had signed nondisclosure agreements.

The employees said their uncertainty surfaced in August, when Apple and other companies erased most of the posts and videos on their services from Alex Jones, the conspiracy theorist and founder of the right-wing site Infowars — but Twitter did not. (Twitter only followed suit weeks later.) Saturday's shooting at the Pittsburgh synagogue led employees to urge Twitter's leader-

ship to firm up a policy on how to deal with hate speech and white supremacist content, two of the people said.

Twitter did not address questions about its employee concerns on Monday, but said it needed to be "thoughtful and considered" in its policies.

"Progress in this space is tough but we've never been as committed and as focused in our efforts," Twitter said. "Serving public conversation and trying to make it healthier is our singular mission here."

Instagram, which was created as a site for people to share curated photos of their food, adorable pets and cute children, has largely avoided scrutiny over disinformation and hate content — especially when compared with its parent, Facebook. But social media researchers said that the site had over the last year become more of a hotbed for hateful posts and videos meant to provoke discord.

That was evident after the Pittsburgh synagogue shooting, with the mushrooming of new anti-Semitic content on the site. On Sunday, one new video added to Instagram claimed that the state of Israel was created by the Rothschilds, a wealthy Jewish family. Underneath the video, the hashtags read #conspiracy and #jew-worldorder.

By late Monday, it had been viewed more than 1,640 times and shared to other social media sites, including Twitter and Facebook.

# Massacre Exposes Fractures in Jewish Solidarity in Israel and America

## Sectarian rifts and nationalism complicate reactions.

By DAVID M. HALBFINGER

BEIT SHEMESH, Israel — The slaughter of 11 Jews in Pittsburgh elicited responses in Israel that echoed the reactions to anti-Semitic killings in Paris, Toulouse and Brussels: expressions of sympathy, reminders that hatred of Jews is as rampant as ever, reaffirmations of the need for a strong Israel.

But Saturday's massacre also brought to the surface painful political and theological disagreements that are tearing at the fabric of Israeli society and driving a wedge between Israelis and American Jews.

Israel's chief rabbi took pains to avoid the word "synagogue" to describe the scene of the crime — because it is not Orthodox, but Conservative, one of the liberal branches of Judaism that, despite their numerous adherents in the United States, are rejected by the religious authorities who determine the Jewish state's definitions of Jewishness.

And the attacker's anti-refugee, anti-Muslim fulminations on social media prompted some on the Israeli left — like many American Jewish liberals — to draw angry comparisons to views espoused by the increasingly nationalistic leaders who now hold sway in their governments.

The result has been a striking and lightning-fast politicization of the sort of tragedy that until now had only galvanized Jews across the world — not set them at one another's throats.

Here in Israel, the decades-old animosity between left and right has reached new levels of enmity. Ultra-Orthodox parties that play a kingmaker's role in the right-wing government are pressing to increase their influence and that of Jewish law on daily life, sparking bitter fights over everything from who serves in the military to whether trains can run and stores can open on the Sabbath. Jews from liberal American denominations feel increasingly alienated from Israel's religious life.

With the Israeli government, like

many across Europe, also taking a decidedly nationalistic turn, the election of President Trump has only compounded that strife, widening the rift between Israeli and American Jews. Politically liberal American Jews have been repelled by Mr. Trump's solid support for Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, and by Mr. Netanyahu's effusive embrace of Mr. Trump and his granting of a wish list's worth of political gifts. Those include scrapping the Iran nuclear agreement, repeatedly punishing the Palestinians and recognizing Jerusalem as Israel's capital.

All of that, and more, bubbled up when one of Israel's most influential politicians, Naftali Bennett, leader of the right-wing Jewish Home party, jumped on a plane to Pittsburgh in his capacity as minister of diaspora affairs. Mr. Bennett gave voice only to unifying ideals: "Together we stand, Americans, Israelis — people who are, together, saying no to hatred," he told a vigil there Sunday night. "The murderer's bullet does not stop to ask: 'Are you Conservative or Reform, are you Orthodox? Are you right-wing or left-wing?' It has one goal, and that is to kill innocent people. Innocent Jews."

No sooner had Mr. Bennett's plane departed Ben-Gurion Airport than he was assailed by liberal Israeli critics, who among other things resurfaced a 2012 Facebook post in which he had accused leftists of promoting "crime and rape in Tel Aviv" because they wanted to allow African migrants who had entered the country illegally to stay.

"Is the Trump-supporting, African-migrant-bashing Naftali Bennett really the best person to represent Israel in Pittsburgh right now?" Anshel Pfeffer wrote in Haaretz, the liberal daily.

Others cited a pro-Jewish Home party text message sent to Haifa residents in advance of Tuesday's municipal elections. It warned Jewish voters fearful of "the flight of young Jews" and a "takeover" by "the sector" — shorthand for Is-

raeli Arabs — to vote for the Jewish Home slate.

"That's almost word for word the spirit of Jews will not replace us," Dahlia Scheindlin, a left-wing political consultant in Tel Aviv, said, recalling the chant of neo-Nazi marchers in Charlottesville, Va., in 2017.

Even Michael Oren, the American-born deputy minister from the right-of-center Kulanu party, faulted Mr. Bennett for having sided with the ultra-Orthodox Israeli rabbinate, which refuses to recognize non-Orthodox denominations as sufficiently Jewish to participate fully in Israeli religious life.

"Liberal Jews were Jewish enough to be murdered, but their stream is not Jewish enough to be recognized by the Jewish State," Mr. Oren wrote in Hebrew on Twitter, adding: "I call on Minister Bennett not to suffice with condolences, but to recognize liberal Jewish streams and unite the people."

On the right, veteran activists in Likud, Mr. Netanyahu's party, circulated an email on Sunday — which Mr. Netanyahu's aides and party leaders disavowed within hours — noting that the Pittsburgh killer had denounced the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society, which "encouraged immigration" and "acted against Trump."

"Did we or did we not say that the Left is guilty of encouraging anti-Semitism?" wrote the email's author, who responded to queries but declined to identify himself.

Many Israelis, of course, reacted with horror and grief as they tuned into coverage of the Pittsburgh massacre. In Beit Shemesh, a largely ultra-Orthodox city 20 minutes west of Jerusalem, Elisheva Gutman, 24, a social worker, said her parents had vacationed in

Il massacro mette in mostra le fratture nella solidarietà ebraica in Israele e in America



Dir. Resp.: Dean Baquet

Pittsburgh two weeks earlier and had attended Sabbath services down the street from the Tree of Life synagogue, the killing site. “When they go to Europe, my father takes off his kipa and puts on a hat” for fear of attack, Ms. Gutman said. “It’s not supposed to be that way in the U.S.”

Chaim Zaid, 62, a paramedic from Kedumim, a West Bank settlement, said the shooting belied Israelis’ ideas of the United States as a “paradise” for Jews. “You think the big U.S., with the big F.B.I., will protect them, and nothing will change,” he said. “But that was a change point. My sister lives in Brooklyn and was afraid to come to my home. So Sunday morning I sent her a message: ‘Rivka, you were afraid to come to me?’”

If other Israelis were quick to score political points over the Pittsburgh killings, though, in a sense they had been preparing for this moment. The disagreements between American and Israeli Jews have been piling up.

Only last week, the Jewish Federations of North America’s yearly General Assembly drew hundreds of Americans to Tel Aviv for a three-day conference focused on the strains in the relationship, titled “We Need to Talk.”

In a provocative keynote, the head of Israel’s largest real estate company, Danna Azrieli, recited the litany of friction points. For Americans, she said, there are Mr. Netanyahu’s effusive embrace of Mr. Trump, whom most American Jews oppose; the Israeli occupation and Jewish settlements on the West Bank, which many American Jews believe block peace with the Palestinians; Mr. Netanyahu’s renegeing on a deal last year to significantly upgrade and grant equal status to a mixed-gender, Reform and Conservative prayer space at the

Western Wall; and Israel’s new nation-state law, which opponents call racist and anti-democratic because it enshrines the right of national self-determination in Israel as “unique to the Jewish people.”

For Israelis, Ms. Azrieli said, Americans don’t serve in the Israeli army, pay Israeli taxes or live under the threat of rockets, but they also don’t let those realities stop them from trying to impose their views on Israelis.

Long as it was, that list had big omissions. Israelis on the left would add, at a minimum, the Netanyahu government’s warming up to increasingly authoritarian leaders in countries like Hungary and Poland, and its demonization of the Hungarian-born, liberal Jewish financier George Soros — who is also a frequent target of anti-Semitic attacks in the United States and Europe — for underwriting activist groups that oppose Mr. Netanyahu’s policies. Mr. Netanyahu’s own son even posted a meme attacking Mr. Soros with anti-Semitic imagery that drew praise from the likes of David Duke.

And Israelis on the right would add their lingering resentment of American Jews’ support for the Iran nuclear deal struck by President Obama, which Israelis saw as a life-or-death matter, according to the author Yossi Klein Halevi, a New York-born Jerusalemit.

Mr. Halevi said the Pittsburgh shootings had exposed an even deeper and more worrisome divide between the two populations. “Each sees the other as in some sense threatening its most basic well-being,” he said. “American Jews don’t understand the depth of the Israeli sense of betrayal over the Iran deal. And Israelis don’t understand why American Jews regard Trump as a life-and-death

threat to the liberal society that allowed American Jewry to become the most successful minority in Jewish history.”

How damaged is the relationship? In her keynote, Ms. Azrieli felt compelled to plead, “Don’t give up on our country,” adding: “Don’t walk away because your liberal sensibilities are insulted. Don’t assume that nothing can change. Things do change — just painfully, slowly, incrementally, and with all of our help.”

And yet among Israeli leaders, some already have given up on American Jews, said Mr. Oren, the deputy minister and a former Israeli ambassador in Washington, who also cited some American Jews’ opposition to President Trump’s recognition of Jerusalem as Israel’s capital.

“One school of thought is, ‘These are our people, we have to do everything possible to reach out,’” he said. “The second school says: ‘It’s too late; they’re gone. After Iran, after Jerusalem, if we have limited resources, we should invest in our base — evangelicals and the Orthodox.’”

He added: “The first school, which is mine, is a beleaguered school. The burden of doubt is on us; we have to prove that we’re still correct. It’s not easy.”

In Beit Shemesh, Zion Cohen, 66, a mall manager, lamented the acrimony. “I’m Likud, but what’s happened between Israel and America, I’m against it,” he said. “I know it’s painful to Jews in America how Israel acts toward them. The influence of the Orthodox and Haredim on the Israeli government is a catastrophe. And we need help from the Jews of the U.S., especially given how much anti-Semitism there is now in the world.”

He added: “We have to unite the whole Jewish people.”

# What Israel Owes American Jews

The Jewish state must  
recognize Conservative  
and Reform Judaism.

Michael B. Oren

JERUSALEM

**T**HE massacre of 11 worshipers in a Pittsburgh synagogue has profoundly shocked Israelis. Though seemingly desensitized by years of terror on our buses and streets, much of this volatile country has been left speechless by the news of Jews being gunned down during Shabbat prayers by a ranting anti-Semite.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and President Reuben Rivlin fiercely condemned the massacre and expressed full solidarity with our American brothers and sisters. Naftali Bennet, the minister for diaspora affairs, flew immediately to Pennsylvania. And yet, for all these expressions of sympathy, Israel still refuses to recognize the Conservative movement to which all 11 victims belonged.

Conservative as well as Reform weddings and conversions performed in Israel are not accepted by the country's chief rabbinate. The Tree of Life synagogue where the massacre took place was not even a real synagogue according to Israel's chief rabbis. The victims, murdered solely for being Jewish, practiced a brand of Judaism that, along with all other liberal streams of Judaism, is not deemed sufficiently Jewish for the Jewish state.

Such disrespect contrasts starkly with American Jewish contributions to Israel. The record is everywhere: The names of American Jewish philanthropists are emblazoned on our ambulances, university dorms, homes for the elderly and centers for disabled veterans. American Jews have helped forest our hills and raise up our poor, unearth our past and forge our technological future. According to Israeli government statistics, investments and contributions from Jews living overseas — the bulk of them Americans — accounted for 6.35 percent of our gross domestic product, the equivalent of Israel's defense budget.

Given all of this, why would Israel refuse to recognize the Conservative and Reform streams, which represent the majority of American Jews?

One reason is democracy. Though steadily growing, the Reform and Conservative communities in Israel remain small, while the Orthodox and Ultra-Orthodox together account for 20 percent of the electorate and are rapidly expanding. Most of them view the liberal strains of Ju-

diasm as heresy.

Such views are not shared by the majority of Israelis, yet Orthodox and Ultra-Orthodox parties wield enormous political weight in our parliamentary system. Their support gives Israeli coalitions the stability necessary to grapple with our complex social and security challenges. Confronted with Orthodox opposition to the liberal American Jewish streams, Israeli governments must often choose between acknowledging their legitimacy and effectively managing and defending the state. Accordingly, not only our current government but also every coalition going back to 1948, right and left, has refrained from recognizing the Reform and Conservative movements.

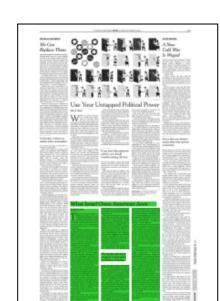
Another reason for the current situation is longstanding disagreements over core Jewish issues. For decades, the world's two largest Jewish communities differed over the definition of "who's a Jew" — the Israeli government hews to the traditional requirement of matrilineal descent and Orthodox conversions, while liberal American congregations admit members born only of Jewish fathers and even those unwilling to undergo any conversion — so-called Jews of choice.

More recently, numerous American Jews supported the Iran nuclear deal, which Israelis viewed as disastrous to our security, and opposed moving the American Embassy to Jerusalem, celebrated by Israelis as a long-awaited acceptance of our eternal capital.

These schisms and more have eroded the willingness of many Israeli legislators to please American Jews at the price of political instability. The June 2017 decision by the Israeli government to withdraw from those parts of the Western Wall agreement that would have guaranteed equal status for all the streams at our holiest site reflected this tension.

But such disputes cannot be allowed to fracture the Jewish unity on which Israel is predicated. Beyond the financial, political and even strategic considerations, Israel is morally obligated to preserve Jewish peoplehood. Even before we received the Ten Commandments, as slaves in Egypt, we were a people — as Moses demanded: "Let my people go."

Israel was founded as the nation-state of the Jews, irrespective of where they live or how they practice — or do not practice — their Judaism. All Jews should regard Israel as their ancestral homeland, the re-



Cosa deve Israele agli ebrei americani

alization of thousands of years of yearning, devotion and dreams, no less if they live on Long Island than in Jerusalem or Tel Aviv. And if Israelis expect Reform and Conservative Jews to consider Israel as their spiritual homeland, then the recognition must be reciprocal. It fulfills our raison d'être.

It is also mandated by law. Last July 19, our Knesset passed the "Basic Law: Israel as the Nation-State of the Jewish People." Though controversial in Israel and abroad, the nation-state law commits Israel to uphold its role as the national home of all Jews and to strengthen ties with the Jews of the diaspora, especially those threatened because they are Jews. It calls on Israel "to preserve the cultural, historical, and religious heritage of the Jewish people," including those in America. The nonrecognition of Conservative and Reform Judaism is incompatible with both the intent and the spirit of the law.

In the aftermath of this horrific massacre, the Israel government must do more than express condolences. Threatened by rising anti-Semitism, American-Jewish communities need to know that Israel is behind them and not only in words. Now is the time to realize our historic mission, comply with our own law and reinforce the unity that has sustained us for thousands of years, through exiles, expulsions, genocide and rebirth.

By recognizing Conservative and Reform Jewry, Israel will not only defy the anti-Semites but also, more important, reaffirm itself. □

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**MICHAEL B. OREN**, a former Israeli ambassador to the United States, is a member of the Knesset and the deputy minister in the office of the prime minister.

# When hate becomes mainstream

The Pittsburgh massacre is only the latest, worst instance of rising anti-Semitism.

There are those who rail against "globalists" that are ruining the country, a term those on the far-right use as code for Jews.

**Jonathan A. Greenblatt**

## OPINION

This has been a very difficult few days for the Jewish community — and for America. What started as a normal Sabbath for Jews — a time to be with family and community, celebrate bar and bat mitzvahs, hold baby namings, pray to God — ended with news of the massacre at the Tree of Life synagogue in Pittsburgh. This was the deadliest anti-Semitic attack in American history.

While the horror of this massacre is shocking, it is not entirely surprising.

At the Anti-Defamation League, we have been tracking and fighting anti-Semitism for over a century. And while Jews have enjoyed a degree of acceptance and achievement in the United States perhaps unrivaled in our people's history,

recent trends have been alarming.

While the overall trend in anti-Semitic incidents has been a downward one, last year we saw the largest single-year increase since the A.D.L. began this annual audit in 1979 — a 57 percent increase in anti-Semitic incidents in 2017. These incidents include high-profile ones such as neo-Nazis marching in Charlottesville, Va., chanting "Jews will not replace us," physical assaults, vandalism and attacks on Jewish institutions.

Part of this sharp rise comes from a large increase in anti-Semitic incidents in grade schools and on college campuses, which nearly doubled for the second year in a row. The latest F.B.I. statistics corroborate what our researchers found: a 5 percent increase in reported hate crimes, with more than half of faith-based hate crimes —

53 percent — against Jews.

Feeding this upsurge in hate is the toxic soup of anti-Semitism found online. According to a report that the A.D.L. released just a day before the Pittsburgh attack, far-right extremists and the so-called alt-right have stepped up their efforts on social media to attack and intimidate Jews, and especially Jewish journalists, in the run up to the midterm elections. These radicals engaged in "Twitter bombing" of Jews, barraging our community with an estimated five million highly politicized and anti-Semitic tweets per day.

Social media creates its own realities for individuals, where people feed off the anonymity and tailor what they read and whom they speak with so that it can feel that everyone thinks and talks as you do. As much as this is distorting, it also can be empowering.

Similarly emboldening is when anti-Semitism and hateful rhetoric is elevated or tolerated, either through appropriating the anti-Semites' rhetoric outright, "dog-whistling" to them, or allowing their hate to go unanswered. And this is what has accelerated over the past few years.

Anti-Semitism is being normalized in public life.

As you read this, there are television ads being run by mainstream political candidates and parties that invoke the specter of the Jewish philanthropist George Soros to instill fear in voters' hearts. This year, there are a record number of right-wing extremists and bigots running for office. There are those — including the president of the United States — who rail against "globalists" that are ruining the country, a term those on the far-right use as code for Jews.

Earlier this year, a member of Congress, Representative Matt Gaetz of Florida, invited a Holocaust denier to be his guest at the Capitol to watch the State of the Union. A council member in our nation's capital, Trayvon White, claimed that the Rothschilds — a legendary Jewish banking family — con-

trolled the weather. Neither of these elected officials was censured or disciplined by their respective bodies.

Over the past few weeks, another member of Congress, Representative Steve King of Iowa, endorsed a neo-Nazi for elected office and met with a far-right, anti-Semitic political party in Austria, and faced no consequences. Earlier this month, Louis Farrakhan, the leader of the Nation of Islam, called Jews "termites," and too many leaders — many of whom have dedicated their lives to social justice — excused it, said nothing or continued to embrace him nonetheless.

These incidents seem small, but add them together, nurture them with silence and acquiescence, and what grows is the poisonous weed of anti-Semitism. This must end.

All Americans — online and in their communities — and all responsible leaders from across our society must step forward and clearly denounce this hate. People of all faiths and ideologies must speak out clearly and forcefully against anti-Semitism, scapegoating and bigotry in our society.

If your candidate is attacking George Soros or the "globalists," or a member of Congress from your party is embracing Holocaust deniers, you must stand up and tell them to stop.

If your allies in a range of social justice causes either explain away the anti-Semitism of the Nation of Islam by citing the good work they may do or justify demonizing the Jewish state of Israel and its existence, the far-right



Quando l'odio diventa convenzionale



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then they need to  
know that they can  
no longer be your  
ally.

If your favorite  
social media platform continues to  
refuse to remove anti-Semitic garbage  
from its site, then vote with your clicks  
and deactivate your account.

More than 100 years ago, the lynching  
of a Jewish factory superintendent, Leo  
Frank, in Marietta, Ga., shocked the  
Jewish community and the nation. It  
directly led to the formation of the  
A.D.L. to fight anti-Semitism. The Pitts-  
burgh massacre should be a similar  
shock to us today, waking us up to the  
anti-Semitism and hate in our midst and  
reminding us all that the fight against  
them must be diligently fought at every  
turn by each and every one of us.

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**JONATHAN A. GREENBLATT** is the chief  
executive and national director of the  
Anti-Defamation League.

# America — and Judaism — at its best

The man accused of the synagogue massacre in Pittsburgh seemed fixated on HIAS, the refugee organization that helped save my family.

Lev Golinkin

**EAST WINDSOR, N.J.** For many years, I have wished more Americans would know about HIAS. Now I am heartbroken by why they will.

The man charged with killing 11 people on Saturday at the Tree of Life Synagogue in Pittsburgh posted a message online just a few hours before the massacre: "HIAS likes to bring invaders in that kill our people. I can't sit by and watch my people get slaughtered. Screw your optics, I'm going in."

Many Americans are now wondering what HIAS is and who it brings to America. I first heard of those four letters in 1989, when I was nine years old and my family fled anti-Semitism in the Soviet Union. At the time, we didn't know HIAS stood for "Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society," or that it had been helping migrant Jews since 1881. All we knew was to head for the main train station in Vienna where, rumor had it, people who worked for this strange acronym would help.

For the next six months, HIAS became the most important entity in my life. It was HIAS workers who were pulling us, and tens of thousands of others, off the trains in Austria; HIAS that got us settled in refugee camps; HIAS that rallied American Jewish communities to sponsor refugees in the United States. "HIAS will help," I silently intoned, as we hitchhiked like phantoms along Austrian roads and went through awful asylum interviews at the American embassy.

HIAS was what remained when the rest of your life had disintegrated,

when there was no money, no way to communicate, no going back. HIAS was what kept you tethered to the world when you became a ghost, but weren't yet ready to die.

Two decades after I came to America, HIAS found itself at the crossroads. For the first time in memory, there weren't large numbers of Jews in need of resettlement. It was other people who needed help: children fleeing gang violence in Central America, victims of wars in East Asia, and most of all, refugees from the wars in the Middle East — people who had endured horrors that make my family's experience seem like a luxury cruise in comparison.

Some felt it was inappropriate for HIAS, a Jewish group, to devote resources to aiding Muslims; HIAS, to its eternal credit, disagreed. As Mark Hetfield, the president and chief executive of HIAS, once told me, "We decided to help, not because they are Jewish, but because we are Jewish." On Oct. 19, HIAS organized a national refugee Shabbat.

The Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society became simply HIAS, to reflect the fact that about 90 percent of its clients were no longer Jewish. Offices sprang up in Kenya, Greece, Venezuela and Chad. The group engaged the same American Jewish communities that had adopted families like mine; today, more than 400 Jewish communities — including Pittsburgh's — have committed themselves to helping refugees. And after Donald Trump became president, HIAS became one of the most vigorous and vocal opponents of the White House's attempts to ban refugees.

What does HIAS mean today? To refugees around the world, it's become an international word for hope, in dozens of tongues and for numerous faiths. To me, it symbolizes America — and Judaism — at its best. And it's easy to see how HIAS stands for everything white supremacists hate: tolerance, understanding and empathy.

And who does HIAS bring into this country? I could easily rattle off a list of refugee all-stars: celebrity actors, Olympic athletes, pathbreaking inventors, acclaimed musicians and writers and artists. You might not know they were once refugees, but I can assure you — you know who they are. But that would be missing the point. HIAS didn't help them because they could

sing or write code; it helped them because they needed help.

The majority of HIAS's clients aren't famous, and while you probably don't know their names, they're part of your world nonetheless. They are people who used to be merchants and goat herders and professors. Some have stayed in their fields in America; many did not. They drive your taxis, dress your wounds, clean your houses. They watch over your businesses while you sleep. They know that the United States can give you a new life, but they also know it comes with a cost.

Two weeks ago, I've had a chance to reflect on just who it is that HIAS brings to this country after another HIAS client passed away: my mother.

Mom, like many older immigrants, had discovered firsthand that there's a steep admission price to America. For 30 years, she had been a doctor in Ukraine, but the language barrier made that impossible when she came to America. The first few years here were awful: She felt she went from being a physician to being useless. It wasn't until she began working as a night security guard that she finally felt happy again.

Immigration left my family strewn across three continents, which meant that more than half of those attending Mom's funeral were native-born Americans. And so on a sunny fall afternoon, I watched a small caravan of Russian and English speakers wind across a patch of forest next to the office park in suburban New Jersey that Mom used to guard.

I watched these people honor Mom's last wish: scatter her ashes at the place where she was reborn in America. I watched them celebrate the life of an immigrant who had every reason to be bitter at her lot in this country, and yet loved it and worked in it with honor. And I silently thanked HIAS for the strength and the grace it imports to America.

That's what HIAS stands for. That's who HIAS brings to this country.

**LEV GOLINKIN** is the author of the memoir "A Backpack, a Bear and Eight Crates of Vodka.

America - ed ebraismo - al meglio



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# A dark turn traced through social media

**When he was arrested in bomb case, suspect showed a familiar profile**

BY KEVIN ROOSE

Until 2016, Cesar Altieri Sayoc Jr.'s life on social media looked unremarkable. On his Facebook page, he posted photos of decadent meals, gym workouts, scantily clad women and sports games — the stereotypical trappings of middle-age masculinity.

But that year, Mr. Sayoc's social media presence took on a darker and more partisan tone. He opened a new Twitter account and began posting links to sensational right-wing news stories, adding captions like "Clinton busted exposed rigging entire election." On Facebook, his anodyne posts gave way to a feed overflowing with pro-Donald Trump images, news stories about Muslims and the Islamic State, far-fetched conspiracy theories and clips from Fox News broadcasts.

By the time he was arrested in Florida on Friday, charged with sending pipe bombs to at least a dozen of President Trump's critics, Mr. Sayoc appeared to fit the all-too-familiar profile of a modern extremist, radicalized online and sucked into a vortex of partisan furor. In recent weeks, he had posted violent fantasies and threats against several people to whom pipe bombs were addressed, including Representative Maxine Waters, a California Democrat, and former Vice President Joseph R. Biden Jr. His vehicle, a white van plastered with right-wing slogans, came to resemble a Facebook feed on wheels.

"He went from posting pictures of women, real estate, dining and cars to posting pictures of ISIS, guns and people in jail," said Jonathan Albright, the research director for Columbia University's Tow Center for Digital Journalism. "It's a remarkable change."

Twitter was warned at least once about Mr. Sayoc's threatening behavior, but failed to act. On Friday, the company took down Mr. Sayoc's accounts after he was named as a suspect.

Facebook, which also took down his account on Friday, condemned his actions in a statement. "There is absolutely no place on our platforms for people who attempt such horrendous acts."

But before Mr. Sayoc's accounts were taken down, The New York Times archived their contents. And a closer study of his online activity reveals the evolution of a political identity built on a foundation of false news and misinformation, and steeped in the insular culture of the right-wing media. For years,

these platforms captured Mr. Sayoc's attention with a steady flow of outrage and hyperpartisan clickbait and gave him a public venue to declare his allegiance to Mr. Trump and his antipathy for the president's enemies.

On social media, none of this behavior is particularly out of the ordinary. In fact, to many of his followers, Mr. Sayoc may have appeared to be just one of many partisan keyboard warriors working through their rage.

"There are tons of people like this," said Shannon McGregor, an assistant professor of communication at the University of Utah who studies social media. "He took these memes to their most violent extreme, but this is a pretty big world on social media."

The genesis of Mr. Sayoc's partisan awakening may never be known, but hints of it first appeared on his Facebook feed in early 2016, as the primary season for the presidential election was starting. That February, he posted a link to a conspiracy theory video on YouTube titled, "Is Barack Obama THE ANTI-CHRIST — 100% PROOF Is There!" Days later, he posted a second YouTube video, "Satan Sent Obama to Destroy America," and a clip featuring Sean Hannity, the Fox News host, which was called, "MUST HEAR: Sean Exposes Illegal Immigrant Crime Stats." He posted several anti-Obama videos multiple times on his feed, interspersed with stories about personal finance and his favorite soccer players.

By the summer, Mr. Sayoc's social media activity was all politics, all the time.

On Facebook, he posted stories from Infowars, World Net Daily, Breitbart and other right-wing websites. His posts, which rarely included commentary apart from the links, showed a fascination with Islamist terrorism, illegal immigration and anti-Clinton conspiracy theories. (On one post, a YouTube link, he wrote: "The Clinton have funneled two billion dollars through Clinton foundation.")

In October, a month before Mr. Trump's election, Mr. Sayoc posted a series of photos of himself at a Trump campaign rally, watching from the crowd in a red "Make America Great Again" hat.

Despite his prolific posting, Mr. Sayoc does not appear to have gained a wide audience. His Twitter account was followed by fewer than 1,200 people as of Friday morning, and although he had nearly 3,000 friends on Facebook, many of his posts were never commented on or shared. He did, however, display an unusual tendency to post stories and images over and over again, sometimes dozens of times.

But while Mr. Sayoc may have been

an outlier in frequency, the content he posted resembled the kind of highly charged outrage bait that is a staple of partisan internet circles. On social platforms, where polarized content is often better at generating engagement than nuanced conversations, there can be a temptation to veer into more extreme territory to stand out.

"People find people with similar interests, and it naturally leads them to encounters and relationships and information they wouldn't necessarily find offline," Mr. Albright said. "Being able to find similar communities can really lead you down a path of radicalization."

For years, many of Mr. Sayoc's posts simply reshared existing images, links and videos. But in recent months, he began to create more of his own posts. He began posting less on Facebook and dialed up his efforts on Twitter, where he could engage directly with his political heroes and foes.

In March, he cheered on Republican tax policies, saying, "You don't have pay taxes on bonus yea Trump Trump Trump."

In June, he tweeted a birthday card to Mr. Trump and wrote: "Happy Birthday to greatest gift from God President Trump Trump Trump. The greatest result President ever and economy for all American Soaring 2016-2024 Trump Trump Trump."

And on Twitter, he began to attack prominent liberals, especially those who had either criticized or been criticized by Mr. Trump.

He became obsessed with David Hogg, a student who survived the Stoneman Douglas High School shooting in Florida and had become a prominent advocate for gun control. He tweeted out dozens of photos of Mr. Hogg, accusing him of being a "fake fraud" and being paid by the billionaire George Soros, a benefactor of liberal causes and a frequent target of the right.

In recent months, Mr. Sayoc's behavior changed. His posts took on a darker, more obsessive tone, often accompanied by threats of violence and gory images of bloody animal carcasses. No longer unmistakable as an everyday internet partisan, he posted repeatedly about "unconquered Seminoles," a reference to the tribe that he appears to have adopted. (It also appeared on his van.) And



Un risvolto macabro tracciato attraverso i social media



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on Twitter, his messages turned dark and sinister.

He directed a tweet at Ms. Waters, the California Democrat, with a photo of what appeared to be her house. The message read: “see you soon.”

He sent another to Eric H. Holder Jr., an attorney general under Mr. Obama, that read, “See u soon Tick Tock.” And he told Zephyr Teachout, a Democrat who ran unsuccessfully for attorney general in New York, that he had a surprise waiting for her. “We Unconquered Seminole Tribe have a special Air boat tour lined up for you here in our Swamp Everglades,” he wrote. “See u real soon. Hug your loved ones.”

Many recipients of Mr. Sayoc’s social media wrath most likely disregarded it, or wrote him off as just another overzealous troll. But the few who tried to sound the alarm appear to have been ignored. This month, Rochelle Ritchie, a Democratic political commentator, complained to Twitter that Mr. Sayoc had sent her a threatening message after she appeared on Fox News. The company replied that Mr. Sayoc’s tweet did not violate its rules against abuse.

On Friday, after Mr. Sayoc was named as the bombing suspect, Twitter apologized for the decision, saying Mr. Sayoc’s threatening tweet to Ms. Ritchie “clearly violated our rules and should have been removed.”

“We are deeply sorry for that error,” Twitter added.

Dir. Resp.: Giovanni Maria Vian

*Undici persone uccise nella sinagoga*

## Gli Stati Uniti piangono le vittime di Pittsburgh

PAGINA 2

Undici persone morte nell'attacco antisemita alla sinagoga

# Gli Stati Uniti piangono le vittime di Pittsburgh

WASHINGTON, 29. Migliaia di persone in lutto hanno partecipato a una veglia in memoria delle vittime della sparatoria di sabato all'interno della sinagoga di Pittsburgh, durante la quale un uomo armato ha aperto il fuoco contro un gruppo di persone prevalentemente anziane dichiarando che «tutti gli ebrei devono morire».

L'auditorium della sinagoga era molto affollato ieri sera per la cerimonia ecumenica durata 90 minuti, aperta da un canto di un coro afro-americano. Migliaia di persone si erano radunate anche fuori sotto la pioggia per partecipare a questo momento di preghiera trasmesso da altoparlanti. Una donna ha cantato a cappella l'inno nazionale americano e un altro cantante ha intonato la Hatikvah, l'inno nazionale israeliano. L'identità delle undici vittime nella sinagoga Tree of Life era stata comunicata poco prima,

tra loro anche una donna di 97 anni, una coppia di ottantenni e due fratelli.

«Le parole di odio non sono benvenute a Pittsburgh», ha detto il rabbino Myers, sotto gli applausi dei presenti, prima di indirizzare un messaggio ai leader politici. «Signore e Signori, questo deve iniziare con voi, nostri dirigenti, cessate i messaggi di odio», ha poi proseguito Myers, prima di recitare la preghiera del ricordo in lingua ebraica, lui che aveva personalmente aiutato alcuni fedeli a uscire dalla sinagoga.

Altre ceremonie si sono svolte dovunque negli Stati Uniti e nel mondo, e la comunità ebraica americana, la più importante al di fuori di Israele, ha ricevuto il sostegno dei dirigenti europei.

L'autore della sparatoria, Robert Bowers, arrestato dopo uno scam-

bio di tiri con la polizia, è incriminato con 29 capi di accusa, e rischia la pena di morte per questo attacco contro la sinagoga, il più violento nella storia recente statunitense.

Il presidente Donald Trump ha dichiarato che si recherà a Pittsburgh per presentare le sue condoglianze, anche se alcune famiglie hanno espresso il desiderio di non incontrarlo, perché lo accusano di fomentare odio. Jonathan Greenblatt, direttore dell'Anti-defamation league, la principale organizzazione di lotta contro l'antisemitismo negli Stati Uniti, ha sottolineato che le parole del presidente sono incoraggianti ma suonano anche come un avvertimento. Gli atti antisemiti negli Stati Uniti sono infatti aumentati del 34 per cento dal 2015 al 2016 e del 57 per cento nel 2017, la più forte crescita registrata, sempre secondo Greenblatt.



L'esterno della sinagoga Tree of Life all'indomani della strage (Afp)

L'OSSEVATORE ROMANO

Nella comunione e con franchezza



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il portale dell'ebraismo italiano

pagine ebraiche

IL GIORNALE DELL'EBRAISMO ITALIANO

Il presidio

# Comunità ebraica riunita preghiera alla Sinagoga per la strage di Pittsburgh

GILIA DIAMANTI

Joyce Fienberg, Richard Gottfried, Rose Mallinger... i nomi delle vittime della strage della sinagoga di Pittsburgh, in Pennsylvania, rimbalzano dentro il Tempio maggiore israelitico di Firenze come un monito. Ieri sera erano più di 80 i fedeli che si sono riuniti per commemorare gli 11 ebrei uccisi sabato 27 ottobre dall'estremista di destra Robert Bowers. Alla presenza della presidente della comunità ebraica Daniela Misul, del rabbino capo Amedeo Spagnolotto e del console americano a Firenze Benjamin Wohlaue, sono stati letti i salmi con l'esclusione del kaddish, la preghiera per i morti, dal momento che le vittime non sono state ancora interrate. «È l'attentato più efferato contro gli ebrei successo negli Stati Uniti», dice Misul, che poi commenta il caso della maglietta con la scritta "Auschwitzland" indossata da una militante di Forza Nuova, durante la manifestazione per l'anniversario della marcia su Roma a Predappio. «Questo non può più accadere. Non dobbiamo essere indifferenti a quello che ci succede intorno». Anche il rabbino Spagnolotto usa parole forti per l'attentato: «Sono state uccise delle persone che erano già state tormentate in passato dall'Olocausto – e ha aggiunto – a chiunque voglia farci paura diciamo che la battaglia contro l'antisemitismo l'abbiamo già vinta in passato». Presenti alla commemorazione il sindaco Nardella e l'ex premier Renzi, che ha deciso di partecipare in segno di solidarietà: «In un luogo come la Sinagoga in cui la comunità si è riunita per pregare e ricordare i morti di Pittsburgh, tutti noi ci siamo per dire che non accetteremo mai una deriva totalitaria e antisemita che porta nell'80esimo anniversario delle leggi razziali a vedere le scene vergognose di Predappio».

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# Hatred of the Jews unites far right and left

The Pittsburgh massacre was a predictable result of rising antisemitism and cultural sickness

Melanie Phillips



@MELANIELATEST

## Trump isn't blameless but the Democrats also toxify debate

A few days ago, on the Media Diversified website, a writer called Nafeez Ahmed accused me of promoting genocide. I was apparently the "acceptable face" of "far-right extremist ideology" which remains "inspired by antisemitic ideology" and promotes "stereotypical negative tropes about Muslimised foreigners and minorities".

Ahmed seized upon a piece I had written about the truly genocidal antisemitism coursing through the Islamic world. For stating that the Jews would defend themselves I found myself, as a Jewish person, accused of promoting genocide. This is as obscene as it is unhinged. For Jews are the principal targets of genocidal white supremacists.

Last Saturday a man called Robert Bowers allegedly walked into a Pittsburgh synagogue where the congregation was celebrating the sabbath and opened fire screaming: "All Jews must die." Eleven were killed and many others wounded.

In New York that day, where I attended a synagogue guarded as a matter of routine by two armed police officers, grief and horror were compounded by two contradictory emotions. The first was shock that this could have happened in America, where Jews have felt so safe. The second was that, like Jewish communities in Britain which now have to be permanently under guard, American Jews have been dreading precisely this. That's because of the toxic atmosphere of hatred, violence and hysteria. Antisemitism has exploded across the internet, social media and university campuses.

According to the US Extremist

Crime Database, since 9/11 there have been 85 attacks by both radical Islamist and far-right extremists. This affects people across all faiths and cultures but Jews fear that they are particular targets. In Pittsburgh, this fear turned into horrific reality.

Sickeningly, the attack was instantly turned into a political weapon. No matter that Bowers denounced Trump for being "a globalist, not a nationalist" — the very opposite of the left's charge against the president. The left rose as one and blamed Trump for having incited the massacre through his nationalist rhetoric.

Both Bowers and Cesar Sayoc, the Florida man accused of posting more than a dozen bombs to left-wing figures, are far-right conspiracy theorists. At the same time there are conspiracy theorists on the left who, like the far right, think that the Jews run American foreign policy in the interests of Israel. Left-wingers have been behind many violent political attacks on conservative targets in recent times. Last year the Republican congressman Steve Scalise was wounded by a Bernie Sanders supporter who opened fire on his party at a baseball practice. Republicans have been harassed in restaurants, egged on by the Democratic representative Maxine Waters, who urged anyone to make them feel unwelcome anywhere.

The Nation of Islam leader, Louis Farrakhan, has called Jews "satanic" (in almost identical language to Bowers) and expressed his admiration for Hitler. Yet at Aretha Franklin's funeral he was seated in a place of honour on the dais near the former president Bill Clinton.

People on the left simply can't believe that anyone on their side can be guilty of antisemitism. They think it only comes from the far right and that Trump has empowered them.

In fact, white supremacists have turned against Trump because he is so philosemitic. After the Pittsburgh attack American Jews noted that he spoke against antisemitism in terms stronger and more passionate than ever used by any other president.

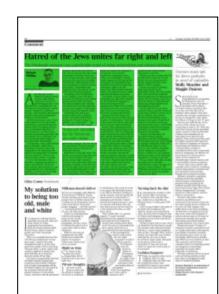
The far right clearly poses a threat to minorities. What is overlooked, though, is the alarming nexus it has formed with both the far left and Muslim extremists. The far left marches alongside Islamists carrying Hezbollah flags and shouting "death to the Jews". Islamists share identical tropes about global Jewish power with white supremacists and neo-Nazis. And the American white supremacist David Duke and the British neo-Nazi Nick Griffin have supported Jeremy Corbyn over remarks by the Labour leader denounced as anti-Jew.

Muslims are also victimised by the far right. But in both the US and Britain Jews are the group most heavily targeted for hate crime relative to their numbers.

Trump is accused of enabling white supremacists by his nationalistic stance. But such people don't come out of the woodwork because politicians are talking up the nation. On the contrary, they do so when the nation is imploding and people stop pulling together and start fighting each other.

The far right thrives on chaos, anarchic violence and the erosion of social norms. Which is where we've got to in Britain and America. Hatred and intimidation course through social media. People hurl

L'odio per gli ebrei unisce l'estrema destra e l'estrema sinistra



insults at each other, destroying reputations and careers. At the Brett Kavanaugh confirmation hearings, protesters were being recruited to disrupt the proceedings.

Trump is not blameless: his incendiary rhetoric against opponents raises the temperature. But the Democrats also toxify debate by regularly calling him Hitler and the Republicans Nazis. In short, there is a hate-fuelled, incipiently violent, dangerous atmosphere. There's a culture war over western identity and values and a terrifying repudiation of reason on all sides.

When a culture falls apart, people invariably turn on the Jews. Antisemitism is always the sign of a terminal cultural sickness. The Pittsburgh massacre was not just an attack on Jews. It was yet another warning to the West.

# Pittsburgh Attack Puts Spotlight on Fringe Platforms

**Gab had already been pushed off several major tech companies' platforms.**

Hours after Robert Bowers allegedly opened fire at a Pittsburgh synagogue on Saturday, the right-wing social-media platform where he had posted anti-Semitic messages lost the partners that kept it running.

By Keach Hagey,  
Georgia Wells  
and Dan Frosch

In quick succession, Gab.com was dropped by its web-hosting firm, Joyent Inc., and GoDaddy Inc., the domain registrar that allows it to have an address on the web. It also was cut off by payment processors PayPal Holdings Inc. and Stripe. By Monday, Gab.com was seemingly out of commission.

As mainstream social-media companies such as Facebook Inc., Twitter Inc. and Reddit try to push racist commentary and hate speech off their platforms, those conversations are finding homes in other corners of the web.

They are happening on Discord, a chat service for video-gamers, and message boards such as 4chan, where a politics thread Monday incorrectly said the French president was calling for a "black genocide." Gab, created two years ago, was founded explicitly to be a haven for free commentary, no holds barred.

Discord says its rules prohibit harassment, threatening messages and calls to violence, and it has shut down accounts over those issues. 4chan didn't respond to a request for comment.

Grappling with such web speech is proving challenging. It is thrusting an array of companies—from web hosts to payment processors—into the position of being arbiters of

free speech. And it has left law-enforcement officials struggling to keep track of hate-filled conversations in remote parts of the web as they search for early tipoffs to tragedy.

Marc Randazza, the First Amendment lawyer representing far-right website Infowars in connection with a ban by PayPal, contends that the efforts of big tech companies to crack down on hate speech are likely to make people who are inclined to radicalization more radicalized, not less.

"If you take people and you kick them out into the cold, guess what?" he says. "They're in an echo chamber of their beliefs."

David Lazer, a computational social scientist at Northeastern University who has studied social networks and misinformation on the internet, says any company that is helping to keep the lights on at a site trafficking in hate content, including web hosts and payment processors, will face difficult questions. "Each company has some potential control," he says. "Which are the ones we decide should be held accountable?"

GoDaddy said Monday it had received complaints about Gab over the weekend, and after investigating them, discovered "numerous instances" of content on the site that promotes and encourages violence against people. The company told Gab it had 24 hours to move the domain to another registrar, saying Gab had violated GoDaddy's rules.

GoDaddy said it generally doesn't take action against sites that include such content. "While we detest the sentiment of such sites, we support a free and open internet," the company said. "Similar to the principles of free speech, that sometimes means allowing such tasteless, ignorant content."

Where Gab crossed the line

with GoDaddy was in promoting violence. "In instances where a site goes beyond the mere exercise of these freedoms...we will take action," the company said.

Mr. Bowers, 46, lived alone in a ground-floor apartment in an apartment complex in the Pittsburgh suburb of Baldwin. Neither immediate family nor friends have been located. A few neighbors recall him saying hi, never having guests, and sitting in his car and smoking on occasion.

In the 19 days before the shooting, he posted or re-posted memes and comments at least 68 times on Gab, according to an analysis by the Southern Poverty Law Center of his activity.

"In the small window into his account currently available, it's evident he engaged with numerous anti-Semitic conspiracy theories that have long been in circulation among neo-Nazis and white nationalists," the analysis said. He also seemed to have a "conspiratorial focus" on other white nationalist fixations, including a caravan of Central Americans.

Before the shooting, which left 11 dead, a Gab account under his name posted a message about HIAS, a global Jewish agency that resettles refugees. "HIAS likes to bring invaders in that kill our people. I can't sit by and watch my people get slaughtered. Screw your optics, I'm going in," it said.

According to a study cited by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, over half of active shooters had previously signaled their intent to commit violence, while 88% of active shooters age 17 and younger

had communicated their thoughts or fantasies to a third party.

Michael German, a former FBI agent who infiltrated anti-government and neo-Nazi groups in California and Washington during the 1990s, says it is easier to identify bad actors when fringe sites aren't shut down.

"If you suppress that activity, people are not going to go away, and their ideas are not going to go away," he says. "They'll find other ways to communicate. It will be actually harder for law enforcement to understand what is going on."

Gab had already been pushed off several major tech companies' platforms. Both Alphabet Inc.'s Google and Apple Inc. had blocked the Gab app from their app stores last year, and earlier this year Microsoft threatened to ban Gab from its Azure platform in response to anti-Semitic posts, which were ultimately deleted.

A message Monday on Gab.com said the site would be "inaccessible for a period of time" after it was "systematically no-platformed by App Stores, multiple hosting providers, and several payment processors." The company on Monday called itself "the most censored, smeared, and no-platformed startup in history, which means we are a threat to the media and to the Silicon Valley Oligarchy."

Gab was founded in 2016 to be a "platform for conservatives in the West and dissidents globally," according to a lawsuit the company filed in 2017 against Google. Gab said at the time that it had acquired 268,000 users in just



L'attacco di Pittsburgh accende i riflettori sulle piattaforme degli estremisti



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over one year of operation.

While some of the content on Gab is innocuous, the site has been a haven for individuals who were kicked off Twitter for violating its rules against hate speech and harassment. Milo Yiannopoulos, who Twitter banned weeks before Gab's creation, has been one of the most popular users of Gab.

A study from the Cyprus University of Technology, the Princeton Center for Theoretical Science and University College London found that 5.4% of all Gab posts include a hate word—more than twice as often as Twitter posts, but much less frequently than on 4chan's Politically Incorrect message board. The study said popular hashtags on Gab included "Pizzagate," a conspiracy theory, and "Ban Islam."

The cutting off of online speech through so-called no-platforming is less common on the political left.

Last year, the left-wing website ThinkProgress launched a campaign to sign up paying members, arguing that the site's coverage of white nationalism and other controversial topics was leading it to be classified as "inflammatory politics and news" by ad networks. "We are being financially punished for our work exposing racism," the site said last year.

Companies considered communications platforms have the greatest leeway to enforce policies that bar certain users, legal experts say. After the August 2017 white-nationalist rally in Charlottesville, Va., Google and GoDaddy stopped providing hosting support for the Daily Stormer, a neo-Nazi site that they said violated their terms of service. The website reappeared under various country-specific domains

in the ensuing months.

In September, PayPal terminated its relationship with Infowars after a review it conducted "found instances that promoted hate and discriminatory intolerance against certain communities and religions that run counter to our core value of inclusion." Weeks later, the company that owns Infowars filed a lawsuit against PayPal in federal court in California in which it accused the payments company of illegally discriminating against Infowars based on its political affiliations.

**Free Speech Systems LLC**, Infowars' parent company, said in the lawsuit that PayPal's ban was "a bridge too far and, if allowed, sets a dangerous precedent for any person or entity with controversial views." It asked a judge for a temporary restraining order to force PayPal to continue processing payments for the company.

PayPal said Free Speech Systems' activities "are contrary to PayPal's own core values of diversity and inclusion" and that making PayPal process its payments "would violate PayPal's exercise of its constitutionally protected right to free speech." The judge ultimately denied the motion for a restraining order.

In June, Stripe stopped processing payments for three far-right websites—Bitchute, MakerSupport and FreeStartr—which had been created as alternatives to YouTube, Patreon and Kickstarter, respectively.

FreeStartr, which set out to do crowdfunding for controversial causes such as the legal defense of white supremacist Richard Spencer, shut down soon after.

—Peter Rudegeair  
contributed to this article.

# The Old Anti-Semitism in the New World

Attackers scapegoat Jews for both hurting and helping Muslims.

By Eliora Katz

**A**s the sun set in Paris Saturday, I returned from synagogue. I opened my phone after 25 hours of abstaining from electronics to read that Robert Bowers had allegedly opened fire in a Pittsburgh synagogue, murdering 11.

Such news is more common in France. French Jews today are murdered in synagogues, supermarkets, schools and their homes. The Fifth Republic has deployed military guards in front of Jewish institutions throughout the country. Will America also resort to this ugly Band-Aid, which fails to address the underlying malady?

While in form the slayings in Pittsburgh and France seem similar, they differ notably in their motives. In France most attacks are part of what is sometimes called "the new anti-Semitism," stemming from France's growing Muslim population. Mohamed Merah murdered three young children and a rabbi outside a French Jewish school in 2012 because, he said, "the Jews kill our brothers and sisters in Palestine." Amedy Coulibaly, who killed four people in a kosher grocery store in 2015, did so in the name of "oppressed Muslims."

Mr. Bowers's complaint appears to have been precisely the opposite. He posted on the social network Gab: "Open you Eyes! It's the filthy evil jews Bringing the Filthy evil Muslims into the Country!!" Anti-Semitism defies the law of noncontradiction, and that's nothing new. Jews have been persecuted and blamed for both capitalism and communism.

Yet Baroness Jenny Tonge, a member of the British House

of Lords, attempted to tie Pittsburgh to Israel. She posted: "Absolutely appalling and a criminal act, but does it ever occur to Bibi [Netanyahu] and the present Israeli government that it's [sic] actions against Palestinians may be reigniting anti-Semitism?"

Similarly, in April 2016 a Black Lives Matter supporter asked Sen. Bernie Sanders: "What is your affiliation to the Jewish community?" The man prefaced the question with the claim that "the Zionist Jews . . . run the Federal Reserve, they run Wall Street, they run every campaign."

Mr. Sanders replied that he is "proud to be Jewish." But instead of challenging the question's premise, he said that although he supports Israel, "we have got to pay attention to the needs of the Palestinian people." By responding to a Jewish conspiracy theory with his views on Israel, Mr. Sanders lent legitimacy to the cloaking of anti-Semitism in anti-Zionism.

The success of American Jews means that, in the game of identity politics, Jews are classified as "white," and therefore the racist character of anti-Semitism is denied. The liberal political scientist Yascha Mounk tweeted Saturday that an unidentified editor had told him, in Mr. Mounk's paraphrase: "You cannot, in 2018, call the murder of Jews in the United States racist in a left-leaning publication."

The atrocity in Pittsburgh illustrates that anti-Semites target Jews because they object to our existence, not what we believe. In a sense this is liberating. It means we should continue to stand up for what is important to us—be it Israel or refugees.

*Ms. Katz is a former Robert L. Bartley Fellow at the Journal.*

Il vecchio antisemitismo in un nuovo mondo



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## REVIEW & OUTLOOK

# The Oldest Hatred

All good Americans  
stand in solidarity  
against anti-Semitism.

**T**he massacre at the Tree of Life synagogue in Pittsburgh is an awful reminder that there are human hatreds far more virulent and ancient than those that animate our current political divisions. The killer of 11 human beings on the Sabbath Saturday morning was an anti-Semite who was out to kill Jews.

"All Jews must die," alleged killer Robert Bowers yelled as he burst into a religious service and opened fire. As our friends at the New York Sun note, anti-Semitism is not aimed at Jewish behavior, or support for Jewish immigration, or support for Israel. Robert Bowers simply hated Jews.

This irrational hatred is one of humanity's oldest and manifests itself in murder almost daily in the Middle East. Jews are killed simply because they are Jews, as they have been throughout history. This is why millions have sought refuge in a Jewish state, Israel, and also in the religious protections embedded in the Constitution of the United States.

The outpouring of support and grief for the victims of the Pittsburgh massacre is a reminder of America's unique role as a refuge for the world's religious. Muslim states often persecute non-Muslims as well as Muslims who do not share their brand of Islam. China persecutes people of all faiths. America protects them.

The U.S. has seen an increase in anti-Semitic acts in recent years, according to the Anti-Defamation League. But there are still fewer in America than in most of the rest of world, and the sources of anti-Semitism range across the political spectrum, including some on the right like Robert Bowers but also from the pro-Pales-

tinian left, especially on university campuses.

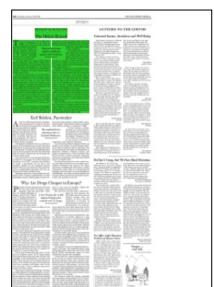
In America the most stalwart supporters of Israel and the Jewish people are evangelical Christians and orthodox Catholics. Perhaps this is because as people of faith themselves they know what it is like to be mocked and shunned in a popular culture that is increasingly secular, often aggressively so.

President Trump says he'll visit Pittsburgh, and well he should. That trip would be a statement of national solidarity with the victims and against anti-Semitism. This being 2018 in America, the political left nonetheless jumped immediately to shift blame for the murders from the killer to Mr. Trump. The Washington Post ran off multiple pieces on the theme. No matter that Mr. Trump's daughter has converted to Judaism and she and her husband are raising their children in the faith.

Americans would do well to ignore this toxic habit of political blame for murderous acts by the racist, anti-Semitic or mentally disturbed. We are all responsible for our rhetoric, and that includes Mr. Trump, as well as Hillary Clinton and Eric Holder.

But the blame artists are distracting attention from the real sickness, which in this case is anti-Semitism, a hatred that goes back millennia. That is the toxin to banish as much as possible from American life, even if it can't be purged entirely from human souls.

L'astio più antico



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