Stop Scapegoating Zionist Jews for American Racism
Hen Mazzig, 1/8/2020
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The Monsey attack at a rabbi’s home during his Hanukkah celebration, where a man wielded a machete, comes after a surge of recent anti-Semitic incidents in New York City.¹ Witness Aron Kohn, who was in the rabbi’s home, recalled, “We saw him pull a knife. ... It was about the size of a broomstick. He started attacking people right away.”

Federal prosecutors said the suspect, Grafton E. Thomas, who was charged with stabbing five Jewish people in a hate crime, had searched online in the weeks before the attack for “German Jewish Temples near me” and “Zionist Temples.”

This was not the first time in December that an anti-Semitic terror attack had started online, sparked by anti-Zionism. Social media posts tied to the suspected Jersey City kosher supermarket shooter,² David Anderson, pushed anti-Semitic conspiracies. Comments on a post linked to Anderson talked about the belief that Jews were using the police to further a violent agenda against black people.

This conspiracy theory, which makes Israel a scapegoat for U.S. police brutality against blacks, was developed and distributed by anti-Zionists. One of the most prominent anti-Israel groups, Jewish Voice for Peace (JVP),³ marketed a mass campaign called “Deadly Exchange” to disseminate this talking point. JVP claimed Israel was the root of anti-black police brutality such as “extrajudicial executions, shoot-to-kill policies, police murders and racial profiling.” This document spread quickly and supported the theory that Jews are responsible for modern-day racism in America.

This conspiracy theory was furthered by the anti-Zionist co-chairs of the Women’s March. Former co-chair Linda Sarsour called the Anti-Defamation League (ADL)⁴ “an organization

¹ A string of 2019 anti-Semitic hate crimes in New York City included several beatings in Brooklyn. Of those assaulted, at least two were small children.
² In December of 2019, two shooters attacked a Kosher market in Jersey City, New Jersey. Attached to the market was a yeshivah in which dozens of Jewish children were studying. Two Jews and two non-Jews were killed in the shootings, in addition to the two perpetrators.
³ Jewish Voice for Peace is a controversial, partially Jewish group (although many of its members and even leaders are not Jewish) that specializes in appropriating Jewish texts, ideas, and religion for an eliminationist campaign against Israel. Its long record of anti-Semitic statements and affiliations with violent anti-Semites has largely rendered it unpalatable to American Jews. One of its central campaigns in recent years, for example, has been in support of Rasmea Odeh, who was tried and convicted for her role in a string of bombings that killed two Hebrew University students. JVP’s more moderate off-shoot, IfNotNow, which advocates for the obliteration of Israel in more subtle terms and without clear, official policy statements, does much of the work of rallying Jews to anti-Zionism that JVP itself is no longer capable of effectively doing, freeing JVP to unapologetically provide “Jewish” cover to anti-Semitic people, ideas, and campaigns.
⁴ The Anti-Defamation League is a leading Jewish organization that combats bias in the United States and around the world. In addition to being one of the most prominent institutions combating anti-Semitism today, it has long been a prominent organization in the battle against anti-Black racism and white supremacy of all sorts. The ADL does manage several programs that deal with American police, including anti-bias police trainings that seek to decrease the prevalence of police brutality. A recent article by Steven L. Pomerantz, who
that takes police officers from America to Israel, funds their trips, so they can be trained ... and then they come back here and do what? Stop and frisk, killing unarmed black people across the country.” Another former co-chair, Tamika Mallory, took it a step further. The activist demanded people boycott Starbucks because it planned to enlist in the ADL’s anti-bias training, claiming in a tweet that the ADL is “CONSTANTLY attacking black and brown people.”

Mallory was widely criticized for failing to condemn the anti-Semitic leader of the Nation of Islam, Louis Farrakhan, whom she lauded. Farrakhan is the author of “The Secret Relationship Between Blacks and Jews,” a book released in 1991 by the Nation of Islam that asserts Jews dominated the Atlantic slave trade.

In other words, it was the classic version of this modern anti-Zionist conspiracy, that Jews are responsible for racism in America, which is the same notion KKK grand wizard David Duke promoted. All of the aforementioned has done nothing to convince JVP leadership to stop promoting its anti-Semitic conspiracy theories, which led to the shedding of Jewish blood on synagogues’ floors. In fact, JVP has doubled down and absurdly featured Sarsour as the leader of a recent rally against anti-Semitism, drawing many anti-Zionists.

Mainstream media made a special effort to ignore these facts, instead connecting “expansion of Hasidic communities into New York’s suburbs” to the “flare-ups of rhetoric that some say is cloaked anti-Semitism” as the Associated Press reported. But if “gentrification” and not anti-Semitism is driving the attacks on Orthodox Jews in Brooklyn, why aren’t we seeing any hipsters with smashed Kombucha bottles? Evidently, the answer is that it is more complicated than a lazy talking point.

Notwithstanding the background on the assailants, it’s imperative we realize these attacks are not just anti-Semitic, but anti-Zionist in nature. The violence in Jersey City and Monsey were committed by virulent haters of the Jewish state, the latter of which sought out a pro-Israel house of faith to attack.

The era of claiming one is “not anti-Semitic, just anti-Zionist” is gone. We no longer can afford to hold philosophical debates about the validity of this ideology and its place in our community. Anti-Zionist organizations, their rhetoric and online incitement have furthered

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is the Director of the Homeland Security Program at the Jewish Institute for National Security of America (JINSA), explained the nature of a US-Israel police exchange program that he built, writing that it focused on anti-terrorism in the wake of 9/11 and not on techniques such as those routinely employed by American police officers to murder Black American civilians. See Steven L. Pomerantz, “I am the Architect of the U.S.-Israel Police Exchange. Don’t Believe the Lies,” The Forward, 19 June, 2020.

5 After two Black men were arbitrarily arrested in a Philadelphia Starbucks, the coffeehouse chain pledged to offer anti-bias training to its employees. The training was to involve several organizations, including the ADL. After public pressure against the inclusion of the ADL in those trainings, Starbucks revised its plan and reduced the ADL’s role.

6 Some examples of Farrakhan’s anti-Semitism can be found on the ADL webpage entitled “Farrakhan: In His Own Words.” In addition to his anti-Semitism and anti-Judaism, Farrakhan is publicly and virulently homophobic and transphobic.
the wedge between black and Jewish communities — and it has cost us lives. We must put human lives first, before any more blood is spilled.