

Jersey City Shooting and the Rise of Anti-Semitism

David Rubin, former mayor of Shiloh, Israel

Is anti-Semitism rearing its ugly head again? It seems that way, as it has now been discovered that the recent Jersey City shooting suspect had published anti-Semitic posts prior to the shooting.

Ordinarily, news of such an apparent hate crime at a kosher supermarket would shock people into speaking out against anti-Semitism. However, with congresswomen like Ilhan Omar and Rashida Tlaib spewing out periodic anti-Jewish vitriol and an increasing number of national leaders calling for the boycott of Israel, the fuel for anti-Semitism is being poured into the court of public opinion.

As a former mayor of Shiloh, Israel, I can relate to what Jersey City mayor Steven Fulop and its city fathers must be going through. Plus, as a Jew who was raised in one of the toughest areas of New York and New Jersey, I can doubly relate.

I've been asked why I believe that the Jersey City shooting was rooted in anti-Semitism. To me, it's fairly simple. I believe what the Jersey City mayor tweeted, that after an "extensive review" of the city's closed-circuit cameras, it was clear that the two suspects specifically targeted the kosher market location. Kosher as in Jewish. Jewish as in a target of hatred and prejudice.

It has been reported that the attack specifically targeted Jewish civilians in that kosher market. How do we know that? According to Mayor Fulop, the perpetrator stopped in front of the market, calmly opened the door with two long rifles – his and the other perpetrator's – and began firing from the street into the store. Most of the people who shop in a kosher food market are Jews, so obviously they were aiming for Jews.

As a dual resident and a regular guest on US talk shows, I'm asked, "Is this an isolated incident of anti-Semitism or does it represent a trend?" My answer is that, unfortunately, with people like Congresswoman Ilhan Omar fueling the fires of anti-Semitism, calling for boycotts of Israel which are consistent with terrorist aims of driving Israeli Jews into the sea, anti-Semitism is on the rise. As inexplicable as it may seem, there are some people

who align themselves with that kind of hate speech, which frequently leads to violence.

But the trend differs from the past where people would be more blatantly anti-Jewish. Today the most pernicious form of modern-day anti-Semitism is anti-Zionism. Zionism is the term that defines the return of Israel as a sovereign nation in our times. The canard that one can deny Israel's moral right to exist in its ancient homeland, where we were sovereign for many hundreds of years, without being anti-Semitic is one of the most malicious lies in our times. In fact, the French Parliament recently acknowledged that indeed anti-Semitism = anti-Zionism.

Not many years back, my son and I were victims of an anti-Semitic attack by Muslim terrorists that left both myself and my son injured.

I was driving home from Jerusalem with my three-year-old son when our car was ambushed by Muslim terrorists who were perched on the side of the road with AK-47 assault rifles. I was shot in the leg and my son was shot in the head. In fact, the bullet that went into his head and through his neck missed his brain stem by one millimeter. In short, I eventually managed to restart the car to get away from the terrorists and to get to the hospital where we had several operations over a span of several months. But the psychological trauma that my son experienced caused me to start the Shiloh Israel Children's Fund where we create integrative therapeutic-educational programs to heal the trauma of thousands of Israeli children and to restore some of the lost innocence of childhood to their young lives.

Our work also helps heal parents of child terror victims. I'm one such parent since doctors told me after that terror attack and hospitalization that had the bullet been one millimeter farther over, my son would have been dead. •

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