

How Black people and Jews are linked by White supremacy

by [Yonat Shimron](#) in the [June 15, 2022](#) issue



People gather at the scene the day after a mass shooting at a supermarket in a predominantly Black neighborhood in Buffalo, New York. (AP photo/Matt Rourke)

The man authorities say opened fire in a Buffalo grocery store on May 14, killing ten Black shoppers, was an avowed White supremacist. But his agenda went far beyond Black people.

In the 180-page manifesto posted online two days before he carried out his attack, the 18-year-old gunman wrote that he chose the Tops Friendly Market on Buffalo's East Side because it is in an area with many Black residents. Eleven of the 13 people shot there were Black, law enforcement officials said, including all ten who were killed.

Black people, wrote Payton Gendron, come from a culture that sought to “ethnically replace my own people.”

But at the root of this xenophobic idea, known as replacement theory, are Jews—to whom the alleged shooter devotes just as much vitriol. Traditionally, Jews are depicted as stealth invaders who manipulate Western elites to disempower and replace White Americans.

Dozens of pages in the Buffalo shooter’s manifesto are devoted first to Black people and then to Jews, replete with photos, drawings, graphs, and caricatures.

Scores of American Jewish organizations loudly denounced the massacre, which the United States Justice Department is investigating as “a hate crime and an act of racially motivated violent extremism.”

This theory that binds racism and antisemitism was once an obscure extremist idea relegated to White supremacist forums. But in recent years replacement theory has become mainstream. Several congressional Republicans have echoed it or outright embraced the notion.

The theory holds not only that immigration to the United States is crowding out Whites but that a cadre of elites, including Jews, are intentionally encouraging that to happen.

That charge is not new, said Samuel Perry, professor of sociology and religious studies at the University of Oklahoma and a leading expert on White Christian nationalism. It’s core to many authoritarian movements, stretching back to Nazi Germany.

The idea, said Perry, is that White people aren’t fertile enough and that it is “everybody’s responsibility to outbreed the negative elements we don’t want in our society,” he said.

“It’s wrapped up in ethno-cultural outsiders: immigrants, Jews, and Muslims. They are a threat to White hegemony.”

The theory appeared to go dormant for some years but resurfaced in Norway in 2011 when Anders Behring Breivik killed 77 people. In 2019 in New Zealand, Brenton H. Tarrant killed 51 people in a pair of mosques while warning against “white genocide.”

About 30 percent of Gendron's manifesto appears to be plagiarized from the declaration left by the New Zealand shooter, according to an analysis conducted by the Khalifa Ihler Institute, a Sweden-based think tank that seeks to combat extremism, the *Washington Post* reported.

In the United States, White supremacy has a long history that has lately reemerged in mass shooting sprees such as the 2015 massacre of nine people at a Black church in Charleston, South Carolina.

Gendron praised the Charleston shooter in his manifesto. Dylann Roof, like Breivik, he wrote, "fought for me and had the same goals I did."

Three years later, Jews were the target when Robert Bowers gunned down 11 worshipers at Pittsburgh's Tree of Life synagogue, because he thought they were working to admit immigrant "invaders" into the United States.

For whatever reason, the Buffalo gunman sidestepped Jews this time, writing, "They can be dealt with in time." But he hardly spared them.

"The Jews are the biggest problem the Western world has ever had," the manifesto reads. "They must be called out and killed, if they are lucky they will be exiled. We can not show any sympathy towards them again."

White supremacists view American Jews as liberal and tied up with institutions, such as government, media, and academia, that are viewed as left-leaning and secular.

Black Americans, who are overwhelmingly Christian, are also on the wrong side of politics in the minds of xenophobes. Tending to vote Democratic, they are thought to support immigration—and to be a danger to White culture in themselves.

In the manifesto, Gendron writes about Black people nearly the same way as about Jews. "We must remove blacks from our western civilizations," his screed said.

Many Jewish groups issued statements of solidarity with Black Americans following the shooting.

"Today, our multiracial Jewish community sits in grief, extending our love, solidarity, and support to the Black community in Buffalo and all who are in pain," wrote Jamie Beran, interim CEO of Bend the Arc: Jewish Action. "Tomorrow, we rise in partnership to hold the politicians and corporations profiting from the spread of dangerous

conspiracies accountable.”

Many are hoping the two groups can come together to fight the onslaught of hate.

“There needs to be clear recognition that you can’t take on antisemitism without taking on the various forms of hate bound up in White supremacy,” said Amy Spitalnick, executive director of Integrity First for America, the organization that successfully sued organizers of the 2017 Unite the Right rally in Charlottesville, Virginia. “All of our lives are intertwined.” —Religion News Service