

USA: White Supremacist Terror - Three recent mass shootings

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Three mass shootings in a little over a week have changed the political discussion in the U.S., bringing to the fore white supremacy and the terrorist mass murder it has produced.

Many in the media and Democratic presidential candidates have cited Trump's racist themes and actions as furthering white supremacy and white domestic terrorism.

The first shooting was at the Gilroy Garlic Festival on July 28. Gilroy is a town south of the San Francisco Bay Area known as the garlic capital of the country for its farms producing the crop, which every year holds the Festival, bringing large crowds to the town.

The shooter was Santino Legan, a 19-year-old white man, who killed three people and wounded 15 before he was shot dead by police. Among the dead were a six-year-old Latino child and his mother. The boy's grandmother was among the wounded.

Police found an Instagram post by Legan praising an old book that has become resurrected and widely read in white supremacist circles. He urged his followers to read it. The book is titled "Might is Right," published in 1896, that was notorious for being sexist, racist and anti-Semitic, as well as a rant against democracy, equality and socialism.

Legan also said in his post, "Why overcrowd towns to pave more open space to make room for hordes of *mestizos* [mixed race]?"

The Gilroy police initially said there was no evidence of a racial motive, but now the FBI has opened an investigation of the shooting as domestic terrorism.

Eight days later, a 21-year-old white man, Patrick Crusius, opened fire inside a crowded Walmart in El Paso, Texas, killing 22 and injuring 25. Crusius had written a racist manifesto in preparation for his attack, which used Trump's language in ranting against an "invasion" of Latinos at the border. Unlike other mass shooters, he wasn't shot dead by police or by his own hand, but turned himself in to police, and told them he deliberately came to El Paso to kill Mexicans.

Apparently, he wants to use his trial as a forum to espouse his murderous racism.

Crusius posted his manifesto on the far-right message board 8chan, which also posted the writings of Brenton Tarrant, a 28-year-old white Australian who went to Christchurch, New Zealand, where he attacked mosques, killing 51 Muslims and injuring 49.

In his manifesto, Crusius wrote: "I support the Christchurch shooter and his manifesto. This attack is a response to the Hispanic invasion of Texas.

They are the instigators, not me. I am simply defending my country from cultural and ethnic replacement brought on by an invasion."

Crusius drove 600 miles from his home near Dallas to target largely Latino El Paso, a border city. This population includes those who are U.S. citizens, those Mexicans with work permits (green cards), and the

undocumented. Also, there are many Mexicans who come over to El Paso from Ciudad Juarez, just across the border, to shop and socialize with families for a day or two. Seven Mexican citizens were among those killed.

Fernando Garcia, the director of the Border Network for Human Rights, based in El Paso, said on Democracy Now that many of the wounded undocumented did not report their injuries, and went to clinics and hospitals on their own, because they saw so many Border Patrol agents and vehicles. So the actual number of injured was higher than the official report.

Thirteen hours after the El Paso shooting, a 24-year-old white male, Conner Betts, opened fire just after 1 a.m. outside a bar in Dayton, Ohio, in the city's crowded historic Oregon District, known for its night life. Nine people were killed and 27 injured. Of the nine killed, six were African American. Betts also killed his sister, who was in the crowd. She was one of three whites killed.

Days after the Dayton shooting, in the midst of wide condemnation in the media of white supremacist terrorism, Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) raided seven poultry plants in Mississippi and arrested 680 immigrants, most of whom have been in the U.S. for years and decades.

The raids were timed to coincide with the start of the new school year. Some children walked home from school to find their parents missing. A video was repeatedly broadcast on many TV stations of an 11-year-old girl crying, and saying between choking sobs, "Government, please show some heart. Let my parents be free and with everybody else I need my dad and mommy. My dad didn't do nothing. He's not a criminal."

In the wake of the bad publicity ICE released some 300 people for "humanitarian" reasons (the others are in the maw of the deportation machinery) and some officials tried to explain away the timing. Trump then jumped in, saying that the raids were a great thing, and that all immigrants in the country "illegally" would be thrown out. Its unlikely that all 11 million such immigrants could be deported, but the raids and Trump's rant were meant to further stoke fear among Latinos nationally who already knew they were the targets of the El Paso gunman.

The raids targeted plants operated by Koch Foods, one of the largest poultry producers in the U.S. Last year the company paid out \$3.75 million to settle a federal Equal Employment Opportunities class-action lawsuit charging the company with sexual harassment, discrimination based on race and national origin, and retaliation against Latino workers who protested, at one of its plants.

Labor activists say this raid was the latest to target factories where immigrant workers have organized unions, fought back against discrimination or challenged unsafe and unsanitary conditions. ICE raids are coordinated with the owners.

On August 10, a gunman attempted to kill people at a Mosque in Norway, citing the shootings in Christchurch and El Paso as his inspiration. One of the people in the Mosque tackled the shooter before he could open fire. The defender was injured. Police, who didn't give the attacker's name, said he was white, about 20 years old. They also found the body of his step-sister in his home, killed before he went to the Mosque. Misogynist writings were found together with racist threats.

White supremacy in international.

Another major discussion has been re-ignited, that of gun regulations in this gun-crazed country. In this article I will not discuss that, but briefly look at what motivates the white supremacists.

Investigations of the white supremacist Internet sites which most of the shooters frequent tie together their racism with anti-immigrant militancy, Islamophobia, and so forth with the belief that white people are under siege by Blacks, Latinos, LGBTQ people, feminists, and others. They believe that white people – especially white males – are being "replaced" by these groups.

The El Paso shooter referred to this in his manifesto concerning the “invasion” of Latinos at the border. Two years ago, at the Alt-Right rally in Charlottesville, Virginia, there was a night-time torchlight march by neo-Nazis who chanted “You will not replace us!”

This chant was soon modified to “Jews will not replace us!” What the white supremacists believe is that all the groups that are “replacing whites” are organized and financed by the Jews behind the scenes. This anti-Semitism runs through all these sites. The man who opened fire on a synagogue in Pittsburg, Pennsylvania, last year, shouting “Kill all Jews!” also attacked that particular synagogue for a Jewish group that met there who supported immigrants. The shooter wrote that the group “likes to bring invaders in who kill white people.”

New attention is being paid to another white supremacist theme, that of misogyny. It’s become more widely noted that almost all mass shooters in the past decades have been young white males.

An article in the August 11 New York Times began, “The man who shot nine people to death last weekend in Dayton, Ohio, seethed at female classmates and threatened them with violence. [He had a ‘rape list’ as well as a ‘kill list’ when in high school - BS].

“The man who massacred 49 people in an Orlando nightclub [frequented by gays] in 2016 beat his wife while she was pregnant, she told authorities.

“The man who killed 26 people in a church in Sutherland Springs, Tex., in 2017 had been convicted of domestic violence. His ex-wife said he once told her that he would bury her body where no one would find it.”

While noting that the motives of mass shooters are often unknown, the article said, “one common thread that connects many of them ... is a history of hating women, assaulting wives, girlfriends and female family members or sharing misogynistic views online, researchers say.”

As we have seen, some kill women family members during or before their murderous rampages. Another example was the notorious shooting at an elementary school in Newtown, Pennsylvania, in 2012. The 20-year-old white shooter first killed his mother (little noted at the time) before killing 20 children between six and seven years old and six adult staff at the school.

While white supremacist organizations including neo-Nazis, the Ku Klux Klan, and other violent groups with names like the Proud Boys are not large at present, much of their message about whites being under siege strikes a chord with tens of millions of whites with racist leanings. These are Trump’s base.

As Noam Chomsky has pointed out, “this is a very racist country.”

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