

After Pittsburgh massacre: New York Times covers up Trump's role in instigating fascist violence

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30 October 2018

The editorial published Sunday by the *New York Times* on the massacre of 11 Jewish congregants at a synagogue in Pittsburgh is an expression of political bankruptcy and cowardice. The leading US newspaper, the longtime voice of the Democratic Party and the agenda-setter for the bulk of the corporate media, effectively absolves President Trump of any political responsibility for the anti-Semitic atrocity on Saturday and the mail bombs sent to more than a dozen prominent Democrats and other Trump targets last week.

Under the headline “The Hate Poisoning America,” the editorial treats anti-Semitism as a psychological disorder, not a specific form of ultra-right-wing politics that has invariably been whipped up by factions within the capitalist ruling elite in preparation for war and dictatorship.

It notes that the killer, Robert Bowers, was a gun enthusiast and an active user of social media, drawing the conclusion that laws or regulations should be enacted to crack down on both the “hardware of hate” and its “software”—i.e., guns and social media. The editorial thus seeks to direct popular revulsion over the Pittsburgh massacre in a reactionary, anti-democratic direction, bolstering the campaign for internet censorship launched by the *Times* and the Democratic Party based on bogus allegations of “Russian meddling” in the 2016 US presidential election.

As for Trump, the moral author of the Pittsburgh massacre, the *Times* has this to say:

“So it was reassuring to hear President Trump condemn the attack in Pittsburgh, as he did the pipe bombs. And it was disappointing to see him immediately head back out on the campaign trail, as he

did on Saturday, to disparage his opponents and critics all over again.

“As a candidate and as president Mr. Trump has failed to consistently, unequivocally reject bigotry, and he has even encouraged violence at some of his rallies. He has adopted a temporizing moral equivalency in the face of anti-Semitic hate, most notoriously after neo-Nazis and white supremacists marched in Charlottesville last year ...”

The *Times* editors present Trump as an inconsistent opponent of bigotry, rather than an avid promoter of it. They claim to find it “reassuring” when he utters, in perfunctory language devoid of any sincerity, the words of condemnation drafted by his White House spin doctors, and “disappointing” when he drops the “presidential” mask and begins his usual ranting, including, only hours after the massacre, the vilification of several prominent Jewish critics.

The editors must take the *Times*’ readers for complete fools.

At the heart of this willful blindness is the refusal to characterize the *politics* of Trump and his ultra-right followers. The *Times* focuses on Trump’s “smashmouth tactics” and his incitement of supporters “to think of his critics as traitors and enemies.” But the editorial does not use the word “fascist,” and makes no analysis of the actual connections, established through aides like Stephen Bannon and Stephen Miller and publications like *Breitbart News*, between the Trump administration and the fascist elements who masquerade under the label alt-right.

Similarly, the editors refuse to characterize the *political* nature of the crime committed in Pittsburgh and the *political* perspective that evidently animated the

actions of Robert Bowers, the gunman who attacked the synagogue. Bowers is an anti-Semite and neo-Nazi, who sympathizes with the Trump administration's actions persecuting immigrants, but regards them as insufficient. He decided to take matters into his own hands, targeting the Tree of Life synagogue because of its affiliation with a Jewish charity that helps resettle immigrants and refugees in the United States.

The *Times*, which has the closest and most active ties to the US intelligence establishment, does not want to alert the working class to the severity and urgency of the danger it faces to its basic democratic rights.

The *Times* editorial cites a statement by Rabbi Marvin Hier of the Simon Wiesenthal Center, who told the newspaper, "I'm afraid to say that we may be at the beginning of what has happened to Europe, the consistent anti-Semitic attacks." But that is the only reference to Europe, and the *Times* makes no mention of Germany, where for the first time since the defeat of Nazism and the death of Hitler, an openly fascist party, Alternative for Germany, has entered parliament and is playing a major role in politics, spearheading racist attacks on Jews, Muslims and immigrants.

Sunday's editorial is not an aberration on that score. The *Times* has consistently downplayed or directly covered up the growth of fascist and neo-Nazi political movements in Europe, particularly in Germany, but also in Hungary, Austria, Poland, Italy and France. This is itself to be explained politically: the *Times* is aligned with those bourgeois parties, mainly the Social Democrats and Christian Democrats, whose embrace of austerity policies and attacks on workers' jobs and living standards has opened the way for the ultra-right to make gains by posturing as the defender of the masses against the elites.

The Democratic Party plays the same role in the United States, and it was eight years of the Obama administration, which funneled trillions into bailing out Wall Street while imposing brutal austerity on the working class, which made Trump's victory in 2016 possible.

The *Times* editors seek to cover up this connection as part of their campaign for the Democratic Party in the November 6 midterm elections. Only three days prior to their groveling before Trump after the Pittsburgh massacre, the same newspaper published an editorial headlined, "How a Democratic House Could Work

With Trump."

This editorial set out a perspective for collaboration between the Democrats and Trump if the Democratic Party wins at least a narrow majority in the House of Representatives next Tuesday. The editors claimed that under pressure of the election, "Mr. Trump has also begun revisiting broadly popular policy themes of the sort that he campaigned on in 2016 but then largely abandoned—or actively worked against—once he settled into the Oval Office."

These supposedly include protecting health insurance coverage for pre-existing conditions, reducing the high cost of prescription drugs, and investing in public infrastructure such as roads and mass transit. The *Times* expresses the hope that this could constitute "a starter map to policies on which the president and Democratic lawmakers might actually be able to get something done," and even, if the Republican-controlled Senate rejects such measures, "drive a wedge between Republican lawmakers and the president."

For all their hand-wringing about the evils of anti-Semitism and the horrors of the synagogue massacre, the *Times* is mainly concerned that the atrocity in Pittsburgh could become a roadblock to their perspective of future Democratic Party collaboration with the Trump administration.



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