

Two arrested in New York City for allegedly planning an anti-Semitic attack

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The New York City Police Department (NYPD) has reported that two men, Christopher Brown, 21, from Aquebogue, New York, and Matthew Mahrer, 22, of Manhattan, were arrested in Pennsylvania Station early Saturday, November 19, in response to what was termed a “developing threat” to the Jewish community.

The men were allegedly armed with “a large hunting knife, an illegal Glock 17 firearm and 30-round magazine, and several other items,” according to a statement by NYPD Commissioner Keechant Sewell. Brown also had a swastika armband. A later search of an apartment occupied by one of the individuals yielded a handgun.

Brown had come to the attention of the FBI/NYPD Joint Terrorism Task Force the day before for making terroristic threats online. Cell phone tracking alerted police to the presence of the suspects in the Penn Station vicinity.

Sewell stated that police are “strategically deploying assets at sensitive locations throughout New York City,” suggesting that there may be information indicating that these individuals were not acting alone. However, he provided no further details.

The *New York Times*, citing two law enforcement officials with knowledge of the situation, reported “threats about violence to Jewish sites, including ‘shooting up a synagogue,’ were recently made in social media posts and there was a reference to a violent act occurring on Friday.”

Earlier this month, the FBI had issued an alert of a “broad threat” against New Jersey synagogues.

This past April, the Anti-Defamation League reported that anti-Semitic incidents in New York state during 2021 had risen 24 percent over the previous year and were at the highest level in decades. That included 51 physical assaults. This was part of a nationwide trend,

which saw a 167 percent increase from 2020.

One need only cite the massacre of Jews at the Tree of Life Synagogue in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, in 2018 and the “Unite the Right” rally in Charlottesville, Virginia, in 2017 during which white supremacists chanted “Jews will not replace us,” to understand the milieu in which this trend gestated. Trump later pronounced that there were “very fine people on both sides,” (i.e., the fascists and the counter-protesters).

The latest New York City incident and the broader national trend exist in a wider context within which ultra-right and fascistic forces are promoting racist and religious bigotry, gender bias and xenophobia in order to divide and disorient the working class as the capitalist crisis continues to deepen. This is leading to an escalating series of violent acts.

On the same day as the arrests in New York, at least five people were shot dead at an LGBTQ nightclub in Colorado. While a specific motive is yet unknown, the suspect is reported to have entered the nightclub wearing body armor and wielding an AR-15-style assault rifle, clearly intent on mayhem at a gay social club. The attack came just before a scheduled event commemorating victims of anti-transgender hate crimes. A similar incident took place in 2016 at the Pulse LGBT nightclub in Orlando, Florida.

The stoking of violence against various groups by right-wing forces is spearheaded by former President Donald Trump, who throughout his tenure in office and subsequently has vilified immigrants as “drug dealers” and “rapists,” instituting brutal measures against those who are forced by economic deprivation to attempt entry into the US. He recently made thinly veiled anti-Semitic statements against Jews who did not sufficiently “appreciate” his support for Israel. He repeatedly invokes the fascist QAnon “storm” trope

which predicts a violent uprising against a Jewish-communist plot to “replace” white Christians with “inferior stock” from Africa, South America and Asia.

The fascistic filth of violent bigotry of all sorts is creating an atmosphere in which individuals, some of whom are suffering from mental illness, feel emboldened to commit brutal acts. This environment is promoted not only by the Republicans but by the Democrats. Their embrace of identity politics and nationalist warmongering against Russia and China serve the same purpose as the policies of the Republicans—to divide the working class along a variety of racial, gender, religious and other lines in order to subjugate it to the interests of the financial and corporate elite.

For example, far from countering the Republican narrative, as enunciated by Trump, vilifying immigrants crossing the southern border to flee the effects of the capitalist crisis, the Biden administration during Fiscal Year 2021 removed 2.8 million immigrants from the United States, more than in any year in American history, in this way reinforcing racist ideology against Hispanic and other immigrants. Furthermore, in their drive toward imperialist war with Russia and China, the Democrats have fomented cultural and racial hatred, including physical attacks on people of Asian descent.

The antithesis of this ruling class-promoted bigotry and violence is epitomized by the campaign of socialist Will Lehman for the presidency of the United Auto Workers union, the UAW. As numerous articles and videos on the *World Socialist Web Site* attest, workers of all races, genders, religions and nationalities from around the world are uniting in support of Will’s campaign to forge a common struggle against the oppression they all face under the decaying capitalist system.



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