TREE OF LIFE SYNAGOGUE ATTACK WORD CLOUD

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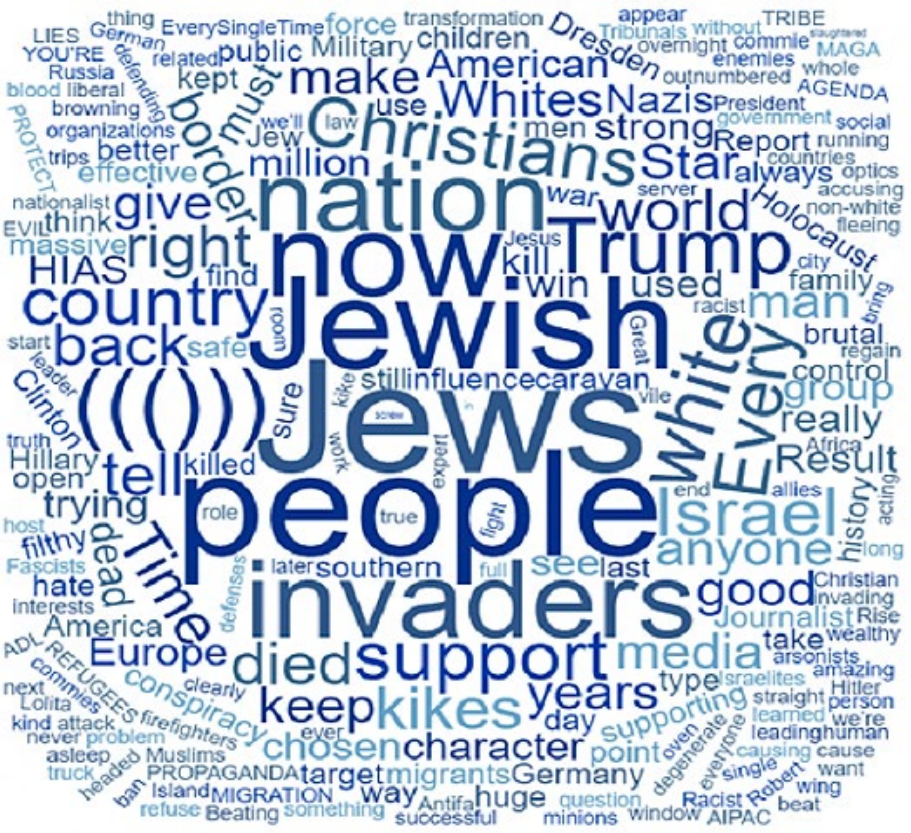
On the morning of October 27, 2018, Robert Bowers entered the Tree of Life Synagogue in Pittsburgh, Penn. yelling "All Jews must die" and opening fire upon congregants, killing 11 and wounding six others. Bowers told a law enforcement officer that Jews "were committing genocide against his people." Authorities later found virulent antisemitic, xenophobic, and anti-immigrant posts on Bowers' social media profiles. The last of his posts reflecting his belief that Jews are enabling undocumented immigrants to enter the U.S. stated that "[Jewish organizations] like to bring invaders in that kill our people. I can't sit by and watch my people get slaughtered. Screw your optics, I'm going in." The Tree of Life shooting is the deadliest attack on the Jewish community in U.S. history.

The word cloud below represents the language that Bowers used on a right-wing extremist social media site between July and October of 2018. The size of each word reflects how frequently he used it on his profile.

- What words stand out?
- What clues do they provide about Bowers' motivation to act with such hate and violence against the Jewish community?



Source: ADL (2018, October 27). Deadly Shooting at Pittsburgh Synagogue. Retrieved from adl.org/blog/deadly-shooting-at-pittsburgh-synagogue.

DEFINITIONS:

((())): Triple parentheses is an antisemitic symbol used to expose the names of Jewish individuals or organizations thought to be owned by Jews.

HIAS: Founded as the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society in 1881, HIAS is a Jewish American nonprofit organization that provides humanitarian aid and assistance to refugees.

ADL: Founded as the Anti-Defamation League in 1913, ADL is an anti-hate organization that protects the Jewish people and works to secure justice and fair treatment for all.

AIPAC: The American Israel Public Affairs Committee is a bipartisan organization of U.S. citizens committed to strengthening, protecting and promoting the U.S.–Israel relationship.

MAGA: "Make America Great Again" is a campaign slogan used in American politics that was popularized by Donald Trump in his 2016 presidential campaign.

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