Fears that anti-Semitism is on the rise are borne out by the most deadly attack on Jews in U.S. history at the Tree of Life synagogue in Pittsburgh, as well as recent reports in both the U.S. and Europe.

In an annual report released in mid-November, the FBI reported 1,564 religion-based hate crimes in 2017, a 23 percent increase over the prior year. Anti-Semitic attacks accounted for 60 percent of the religion-based crimes. The number of anti-Semitic attacks was 37 percent higher than in 2016. The total number of hate crimes in the U.S. in 2017 hit 7,175 incidents, marking the third-worst year since the FBI began collecting hate-crime data in 1992.

On Shabbat morning, Oct. 27 in Pittsburgh, Robert Bowers, who had posted anti-Semitic statements on social media, stormed into the synagogue, killing 11 people and wounding six others. Shouting anti-Semitic slurs, he gunned down innocent people because of their faith, according to FBI agent Robert Jones. Bowers was charged with 29 criminal counts, including obstructing the free exercise of religious beliefs, a hate crime. This was the third mass shooting in a house of worship in three years.

President Trump called the Pittsburgh attack “a terrible, terrible thing” and stated that “something has to be done.” However, critics have said he is partially to blame for the upsurge in violence because of hateful speech toward immigrants, refugees and others.

Brian Levin, director of the Center for the Study of Hate and Extremism at California State University, San Bernardino, told the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC) that a lack of national leadership on the issue of hate crimes appears to be a factor in the increase. He pointed out that U.S. presidents from Ronald Reagan through Barack Obama took public stands against hate crimes. Trump, who said there were “very fine people on both sides” of the violence at a “Unite the Right” rally in Charlottesville, Virginia, in August 2017, hasn’t done so, Levin said.

The Charlottesville marchers chanted racist and anti-Semitic slogans, and displayed Nazi and other hate symbols. During the rally, a self-identified white supremacist rammed his car into a crowd of counter-protesters, killing one person and injuring 19. The perpetrator was charged with multiple hate crimes. “There is a line that wouldn’t be crossed with regard to over-the-top bigotry, which apparently no longer exists,” Levin told the SPLC.

The Anti-Defamation League, which fights anti-Semitism and all forms of hate, is calling for more to be done to “address the divisive climate of hate in America.” According to ADL CEO and National Director Jonathan A. Greenblatt, “That begins with leaders from all walks of life and from all sectors of society forcefully condemning anti-Semitism, bigotry, and hate whenever it occurs.”

The FBI data is consistent with the ADL’s findings in its annual audit of anti-Semitic incidents, which includes criminal and noncriminal acts. The audit found that anti-Semitic incidents rose 57 percent in 2017 to 1,986, the largest single-year increase on record.

Unfortunately, the FBI data doesn’t tell the whole story. It is based on reports from about 16,000 U.S. law enforcement agencies, but at least 91 cities with populations of 100,000 or more either didn’t report any data to the FBI, or reported no hate crimes.

In Europe, a new report released in late November found that anti-Semitic stereotypes persist. The study was based in part on a survey of 7,000 adults across seven European countries.

According to CNN, more than a quarter of Europeans surveyed believe Jews have too much influence in business and finance across the world. In individual countries the numbers are often higher. For example, 42 percent of Hungarians think Jews have too much influence in media and politics. One in five respondents said Jews have too much influence in media and politics.

 Asked why anti-Semitism is growing, Poland’s Chief Rabbi Michael Schudrich told CNN he is not sure the problem ever went
Remember NA’AMAT at year’s end

By Susan Brownstein and Jan Gurvitch
Co-Vice Presidents, Fundraising

As we head into a new year, we would like to thank you for your support of our NA’AMAT programs in Israel. Because of you, we were able to help fund our daycare centers, educate at-risk teens and help women with work-related legal issues. We helped provide young women with professional scholarships and created a safe place for domestic violence victims at our Glickman Center.

As you’re thinking about year-end charitable giving, remember NA’AMAT. If you are 70.5 or older and have an Individual Retirement Account (IRA), you are obliged to take a “required minimum distribution” each year. To avoid paying taxes on those funds, consider donating to NA’AMAT USA. Imagine how good it will feel to end the year making a positive impact on Israeli women and children in need. If you have questions, please call the national office at 818-431-2200.

Our last two fundraising campaigns — the summer campaign and Giving Tuesday brought in a total of $21,000, with more still coming in. Thank you to all who contributed.

You can support NA’AMAT USA throughout the year by shopping at our online Marketplace (https://naamat.org/marketplace/), including iGive and Smile.Amazon.com, donating to our annual appeals, and becoming a Platinum Life Member. Let’s make 2019 the best year ever for NA’AMAT USA.

Membership drive a sweet treat

By Gail Simpson
Vice President, Membership

October marked NA’AMAT’s first successful national membership drive. Many clubs around the country held “Ice Cream Socials,” told the story of NA’AMAT and gained new members. Keep up the good work!

Thank you to our Platinum Life Members for recommitting to NA’AMAT USA and making this one of our most successful membership campaigns ever. We now have 181 Platinum members. You can become a Platinum member until Jan. 31, 2019. Just send a check to the national office, or fill out the form online at www.naamat.org. The cost is $70 for current life members, or $320 for new life members, plus Platinum.

Our new membership brochure is complete. You can use the brochures to introduce people to NA’AMAT. Make copies available at meetings and events, and encourage your members to give them to their friends! The brochures are available in your council or area office, or you can request them from the national office (maya.stark@naamat.org).

We are now working on a new Facts In Brief. It will be updated and eye-catching. Look for it in the next two months.

The National Membership Office is here for you. We want to start as many new clubs as we can this year. We are committed to growing our organization nationally. If you know anyone who would like to be a member, and there isn’t a club in her city, let us know. Membership is the life blood of NA’AMAT USA!
Message from the President

By Chellie Goldwater Wilensky
President

This has been a difficult time for Jews around the world, but especially for American Jews. Our security was shattered on that fateful Shabbat in Pittsburgh, when 11 innocent Jews were shot and killed just because they went to shul to pray and celebrate the birth of a new baby boy. Joyce Fienberg, Richard Gottfried, Rose Mallinger, Jerry Rabinowitz, Cecil and David Rosenthal, Sylvan and Bernice Simon, Daniel Stein, Melvin Wax and Irving Younger did nothing more egregious than to try to celebrate Shabbat, a right that all Americans have to pray as they see fit. Now we live with locked doors in synagogues and security guards everywhere.

Then on Nov. 13, we received an email from NA’AMAT Israel telling us how in one day more than 400 rockets were launched against cities and towns within a 30-kilometer range of Gaza. The government ordered all daycare centers and schools in the area to close. The psychological trauma to the residents was enormous. Thankfully, a ceasefire was reached and we pray it will stay in effect, but the physical and emotional damage had been done. Psychologists and social workers at our daycare centers, schools and Women’s Centers have their work cut out for them, trying to help children and their parents learn to cope with horrible stress.

Sadly, this has been the norm for Israelis for the entire existence of the state, but this is a new reality for us in the U.S. We will need to cope with this resurgence of anti-Semitism and be vigilant to fight it.

But I would like to end on a positive note. On Oct. 21, I was in Israel for the International NA’AMAT Meeting. There I met leaders from NA’AMAT Canada, Mexico, Brazil and Belgium. It was fascinating to hear how NA’AMAT works in countries around the world and meet women with the same goals and ideals we have. We started by visiting the NA’AMAT Technological High School in Hadera. There we saw the work of NA’AMAT firsthand. Our technological high schools are “second chance” schools for students who come from poor economic conditions, have low self-esteem and have had many educational failures.

Tali, the principal, said they have two goals for their students: to study for the bagrut (Israel’s high school graduation exams) and improving education. France is spending millions of dollars trying to combat anti-Semitic feelings and I don’t know if the number has grown, but this new situation today is they feel that it’s more acceptable socially.”

Some countries are taking action. Germany has appointed an anti-Semitism czar, who is working to create a nationwide network for reporting anti-Semitism and on improving education. France is spending millions of dollars trying to combat anti-Semitic hate speech online, according to CNN.

In the United States, organizations such as the ADL advocate responding to hate speech with more speech. The First Amendment protects hate speech, but Americans also have the right to speak up when they encounter hate.

There are more people of goodwill than hate-mongers. We have to drown them out.

Anti-Semitism

Continued from page 1

Platinum and Life Members

The following people are new Platinum or Life members.

Platinum
Audrey Abitbol
Terri Andretta
Linda Andron
Ostrow
Bobbie Babbitt
Floyd Babbitt
Linda Bear
Tina Berkowitz
Rhoda Birnbaum
Jane Blitz
Marilyn Brenner
Liliana Brown
Phyliss Caplan
Laurie Dubin
Sherry Stein
Epstein
Berta Feldman
Irene Gelman
Karen Jirik
Claire Kaplan
Selma Katz
Matilde Landman
Naomi

Ledersnaider
Ginger (Ethelle)
Lesky
Donna Levin
Lael Lubing
Rudy Lubov
Anita Okrend
Ann Richman
Rochelle Rickoff
Wilensky
Rysa Rozenblum
Suzanne
Schweitzer
Inna Stavitsky
Connie Sussman
Rochelle Suster
Deborah Troy-Stewart
Hanna Wiener
Chai Wilensky
Dvora Wilensky
Jacob Wilensky
Moshe Wilensky
Lenore Wolf
Naomi Yadin-Mendick
Asher Zarkowsky
Barbara Zimmer-Kann

Life
Fay Azizian
Sue Bass
Debbie Callen
Rhonda Callen
Elayne Cohen
Ellen Deker
Riva Feiner
Annette Feldman
Miriam Gardner
Leslie Glater
Marilyn Golden
Madelon Goldstein
Rosette Haim
Elaine Handelman
Karen Joseph
Sara Karoll
Susan Kessler
Fay Kosnoff
Linia Lessnick
Leah Livingston
Mary Rita Luecke
Jaleh Makabi
Suri Mansouri
Randi Levitt Miller
Sylvia Novick
Bonnie Rothman
Anne Rubin
Melanie Sachs
Diane Samuels
Andrea Scalis
Phyllis Schub
Gina Sheade
Lynn Shevenenko
Rebecca Spiegel
Ita Sturman
Shauna
Tannenbaum
Ellen Tilman
Aleene Zawada

I want to wish you a happy and healthy 2019 and pray it will be a more peaceful year for Israel and the world.
SAN FERNANDO VALLEY, CA — Caryn Gussin and Ilene Barnet chat over bites of ice cream at a membership event hosted by the Mitzvah Council.

PHOENIX — Susan Sparago and Larry Goldsmith visited the Shay Day Care Center in Rehovot, to which they have contributed generously.

LONG ISLAND, NY — Attendees at the Long Island/Queens membership event in October.

CHICAGO — The Nitzan B’ir Club organized a bingo fundraiser benefiting the Phyllis Sutker Day Care Center in Tiberias. Fourth-generation NA’AMAT members Elana Dermer (left) and Jennifer McGowan-Tomke talked about the project.

For more photos, visit “News and Events” at www.naamat.org