

"Concern Lingering over last week's anti-Semitic incident," by Robert Lebowitz

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Following Last week's defacement of two buildings in Riverdale with anti-Semitic and anti-Western graffiti, local police are still investigating the crime and community leaders remain vigilant.

A sawastika, along with the words "Nov 17" and the letter "A" in a circle, were scrawled on the side of the Valentina beauty salon on the corner of 236th Street and Riverdale Avenue sometime early Tuesday morning. The building is opposite Rolan Bagels, a kosher eatery frequented by members of Riverdale's Orthodox Jewish community.

On the next block, the same graffiti minus the swastika, was also painted on the side of of the Corner Cafe on 236th Street and Johnson Avenue.

Local clergy and political leaders responded quickly, condemning the attack and convening on the site of the Corner Cafe in order to wash away the offending inscriptions. Rabbi Shmuel Herzfeld, assistant rabbi of the Hebrew Institute of Riverdale and National Vice-President of Coalition of Jewish Concerns-Amcha, addressed the crowd.

"This is a symbol of hate," he stated. "What concerns us especially is that this is not the work of kids. There have been recent anti-Semitic remarks in Greece. But this is not about Jews being discriminated against. This is about everyone."

Herzfeld was referring to recent statements made by a Greek composer. November 17, one of the scrawls, is an anti-western terrorist organization responsible for a number of murder, attempted murders, and bombing charges in Greece.

Another bias statement was reported to be painted on a Riverdale building over this past weekend, but Rabbi Herzfeld was unable to verify this.

These events follow a series of other anti-Semitic attacks in and around the City. Recently, 38 cars were vandalized in a heavily Jewish neighborhood in Brooklyn, and a swastika was carved into the door of a Queens synagogue.

Police from the 50th precinct are still investigating all crimes, but as of yet they have not arrested any suspects. Those with any information are encouraged to call the precinct at (718) 543-5700.

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