

# Hate Groups and Acts of Bigotry: Connecticut's Response

October 1982

—A report based on a factfinding meeting sponsored by the Connecticut Advisory Committee to the United States Commission on Civil Rights, on September 24, 1981, published for the information of the Commission and the citizens of Connecticut. This report will be considered by the Commission, which will make public its reaction. In the meantime, the contents of this report should not be attributed to the Commission but only to the Connecticut Advisory Committee.

## THE UNITED STATES COMMISSION ON CIVIL RIGHTS

The U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, created by the Civil Rights Act of 1957, is an independent, bipartisan agency of the executive branch of the Federal Government. By the terms of the act, as amended, the Commission is charged with the following duties pertaining to denials of the equal protection of the laws based on race, color, sex, age, handicap, religion, or national origin, or in the administration of justice: investigation of individual discriminatory denials of the right to vote; study of legal developments with respect to denials of the equal protection of the law; appraisal of the laws and policies of the United States with respect to denials of equal protection of the law; maintenance of a national clearinghouse for information respecting denials of equal protection of the law; and investigation of patterns or practices of fraud or discrimination in the conduct of Federal elections. The Commission is also required to submit reports to the President and the Congress at such times as the Commission, the Congress, or the President shall deem desirable.

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# Hate Groups and Acts of Bigotry: Connecticut's Response

## ATTRIBUTION:

The findings and recommendations contained in this report are those of the Connecticut Advisory Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights and, as such, are not attributable to the Commission.

This report has been prepared by the State Advisory Committee for submission to the Commission, and will be considered by the Commission in formulating its recommendations to the President and the Congress.

## RIGHT OF RESPONSE:

Prior to the publication of a report, the State Advisory Committee affords to all individuals or organizations that may be defamed, degraded, or incriminated by any material contained in the report an opportunity to respond in writing to such material. All responses received have been incorporated, appended, or otherwise reflected in this publication.

LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL

Connecticut Advisory Committee to  
the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights

October 1982

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John Hope III, Acting Staff Director

Dear Commissioners:

The Connecticut Advisory Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, pursuant to its responsibility to advise the Commission on civil rights issues in its State, submits this report on Hate Groups and Acts of Bigotry: Connecticut's Response. The report is based on an investigation conducted by the Advisory Committee, including a factfinding meeting on September 24, 1981, in Hartford.

The Advisory Committee, in response to your request, undertook this study of hate groups and hate-motivated activity, and attempted to assess as well governmental responses to these phenomena.

Our findings indicate that there have been increases in the number of incidents of vandalism and intimidation directed against racial and religious minorities in Connecticut since the late 1970s, and in the visibility and activity of the Ku Klux Klan; but there is no evidence of a direct link between the two. Some community leaders believe, however, that the publicity given to the hate groups may be indirectly responsible for the perpetration of the acts. Underlying causes according to several authorities were economic insecurity and ignorance. In addition, it was suggested that if society does not speak out against such acts, an atmosphere will be created that will make it appear that such acts are acceptable.

Governmental responses in Connecticut included public condemnations by municipal and State elected officials of extremist groups and of acts of vandalism and violence; the formation of committees to address the problem at the municipal and State levels; and the passage of legislation punishing the desecration of property, banning paramilitary training camps, and increasing penalties for civil rights violations committed by persons wearing masks or hoods.

The recommendations of the Connecticut Advisory Committee address underlying causes by calling for economic well-being and job security as an antidote to that lack of self-respect which generates envy and hate, and for education to counter the myths and ignorance about minority groups. In addition we believe public officials and all people should speak out forcefully in opposition to acts of hate, and should demonstrate support for the victims of such acts. The State should vigorously enforce its laws against racially and religiously motivated acts of vandalism and violence, and law enforcement agencies should act to prevent violence at rallies of extremist groups by banning weapons and maintaining high visibility.

It is our hope that the Commission will support these recommendations and that this study, together with similar Advisory Committee studies, will help shed light on this disturbing problem.

Respectfully,

Richard M. Brown, Chairperson  
Connecticut Advisory Committee

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## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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The Connecticut Advisory Committee wishes to thank the staff of the Commission's New England Regional Office for its help in the preparation of this report.

The factfinding meeting and report were the principal staff assignment of Elpidio Collazo, with assistance from Larry Riedman, Mary Lee Walsh, and Annette Lang, and clerical support from Marilyn Kittle and Sylvia Cooper. The project was carried out under the overall supervision of Jacob Schlitt, Director, New England Regional Office.

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## Introduction

Since 1980, the Connecticut State Advisory Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, and other Advisory Committees to the Commission, have monitored and have been troubled by the increasing number of incidents of violence, vandalism, and intimidation aimed at racial and religious minorities. In addition, they have observed increasing evidence of organized hate group activity, particularly the Ku Klux Klan.

Around the country, acts of violence have ranged from bombings, firebombings, and arson directed at homes of minority group members and at houses of worship, to attempted murder directed against individuals because of their race or religion. Vandalism and desecration encompass the painting of racial epithets and swastikas, and the destruction of property owned by minority group members. Intimidation runs the gamut from anonymous phone calls and letters to displays of weapons and cross-burnings, both covert and overt.

In April 1981, the Commission requested that several State Advisory Committees study this phenomenon and look especially at the responses of public officials. The members of the Connecticut Advisory Committee elected to participate in the study largely because of the increase in cross-burnings and other acts of vandalism directed at religious and racial groups in the State, as well as the resurgence of the Klan.

One objective of the Advisory Committee's effort was to identify and evaluate governmental responses to racially and religiously motivated violence and vandalism. The Committee was also interested in determining the extent of hate group activity in the State, and the perceptions held by the State's leadership concerning these groups. The Advisory Committee sought information from more than 100 persons, including State agency heads, State and local elected

officials, Federal, State and local law enforcement officials, community and State organization representatives, and media representatives.

On September 24, 1981, the Connecticut State Advisory Committee held a public factfinding meeting at the State House in Hartford to obtain additional information from those directly involved in the issue. The Committee heard Lt. Governor Joseph Fauliso announce the formation by the Governor of a Task Force on Racial Harmony as a response to this problem. In addition, State legislators including the Chairs of the House and Senate Public Safety Committees and the Chair of the House Judiciary Committee discussed legislative concerns and responses. Spokespersons for the State Education Department, the Connecticut Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities, the State Police, the State Attorney's office, and the Commission on the Status of Women shared their perceptions and described their activities. Local officials from affected communities, leaders of community relations organizations, and concerned Federal agency officials also participated.

It is clear that there is concern about the spread of racial and religious hatred and its manifestation in the form of acts of vandalism and violence attributed to it. It is also clear that over the last several years these acts have become more frequent.

What is not clear is why. Some observers attribute it to increasing economic insecurity which may lead people to seek simplistic answers and scapegoats. Extremist groups historically have emerged during periods of social unrest and economic uncertainty, attempting to capitalize on people's fears and prejudices.

It is also unclear whether the acts of vandalism and violence are perpetrated by hate group members, or by individuals with no connection to these groups. If individuals are not affiliated, why

do they engage in anti-black or anti-Semitic acts? According to some of the people with whom the Committee spoke, a climate of hate, violence, and ignorance is growing that makes such acts acceptable. Therefore, the answer appears to relate to the social climate and the economy, to the role of leadership (particularly its role in making clear that acts of bigotry are reprehensible), and to education as an antidote for ignorance.

This report attempts to summarize the troubling events of the recent past and the responses of officials who must deal with them. It is the hope of the members of the Connecticut Advisory Committee that in presenting this information as well as its findings and recommendations, the report will serve to stimulate both thought and action.

## Chapter 1 -- BACKGROUND

Concern with the growing number of acts of racially and religiously motivated vandalism in Connecticut, especially cross-burnings, caused the Connecticut Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities (CHRO) to hold a series of fact-finding hearings in November and December 1979 in Danbury, Norwalk, Bridgeport, and Hartford.

### The CHRO Hearings

According to the CHRO, the first of 17 cross-burning incidents reported to the State Public Safety Department occurred on Christmas Eve of 1978 in front of a black family's home in Ridgefield. The next cross-burning incident took place in Stamford in June 1979. Stamford subsequently experienced more cross-burnings (six incidents during the five-month period of June-November 1979) than any other Connecticut city. New Haven had two cross-burnings in August 1979 and Norwalk had two the next month. Bridgeport, Milford, New Britain, and Waterbury had crosses burned during the fall of 1979, and the last of these 17 crosses was burned on January 29, 1980.<sup>1</sup>

Cross-burnings were not the only racially motivated form of vandalism that the CHRO was told about. Ku Klux Klan graffiti, swastikas, and racial slurs had been painted on public sites and on private property. For example, the Martin Luther King, Jr. statue in New Britain and the Holocaust Memorial in New Haven were defaced. Vandals painted racial slurs and the letters KKK on a private driveway. KKK markings on public and commercial buildings and on automobiles were reported in Hamden and New Haven. A total of 28 cities or towns experienced such incidents during 1979-80.<sup>2</sup>

Racially motivated violence also was reported during this time. Several black families had to abandon their efforts to settle in the predominantly white East Shore section of New Haven because of acts of violence against them. The East Shore was also the scene of an unprovoked attack on a bus-load of black children and adults who were attending a church picnic, and there also was an unprovoked attack and severe beating of a black man who was changing a tire in the neighborhood.<sup>3</sup>

Other acts of violence against black families in the East Shore area included rocks thrown through windows, slashed tires and crowds of youths gathered outside the residences and shouting, "Get out, nigger!"<sup>4</sup>

In November 1979, Malcolm Webber, Regional Director of the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) of B'nai B'rith, testified at the Bridgeport hearing of the CHRO that within the last year in the town of East Haven a firebomb was thrown through the window of a house where a black family was living. The house was located in a predominantly white neighborhood.

Webber described the contrasting responses of West and East Haven to the firebombings:

Six or seven years ago, there was a fire bomb thrown through the front window of a house in West Haven...The town of West Haven at that stage really became aroused, petitions were passed asking that family to stay there. There was a demonstration in their favor; the neighbors volunteered for all kinds of aid that came through the churches; the police themselves went out and they found the person. It was a young man who thought he had community approval for such kinds of acts...The reaction of the community was very, very clear. The man was caught; we have not had a repetition.

Within the last year in the town of East Haven there was a fire bomb thrown through the window of another house, a black family living in an almost all-white neighborhood...The amount of publicity that this "act of God" created was almost nil.

...If the East Haven community politically had done what West Haven did, we probably wouldn't see another repetition of that act in that area...The people that conduct these kinds of acts must know that the community, the total community, does not support them, that they are pariahs.<sup>5</sup>

Who is responsible for acts of bigotry? The President of the Hartford chapter of the NAACP blamed the Klan. Thomas Wright told the CHRO in December 1979:

Homeowners who are black have experienced the wrath of a resurgence of Klan activities in Ansonia, Bridgeport, Fairfield, Westport, Norwalk, Greenwich, Danbury, Waterbury, Enfield, UConn at Storrs, Rocky Hill, Glastonbury, Ridgefield and most recently in Vernon, Connecticut, and Conard High School in West Hartford.<sup>6</sup>

According to Bernard Fisher of the Greenwich NAACP:

In the State of Connecticut right now there are approximately 200-300 members of the Klan, and it is very easy to join the Klan. It only costs you \$45 and you can join it through the mail with a picture and they have their own computer set-up. You are a member once you receive the card.<sup>7</sup>

Danbury's Mayor-elect Dyer told the CHRO in November 1979:

I believe...there is an active Klan group in the city of Danbury and they have been active in leafletting in the area; specifically at Western Connecticut State College and in local schools and also the retail area, which is Main Street.<sup>8</sup>

However, according to Chief State's Attorney Austin McQuigan, "We have no hard evidence to indicate...that we have an organized conspiracy here in the State of Connecticut. But I think that bears watching," he cautioned.<sup>9</sup>

When he spoke before the CHRO, U.S. Attorney Richard Blumenthal reported that "...so far as the individuals involved as potential defendants in prosecutions are concerned, we have found no evidence to link their actions to the Ku Klux Klan."<sup>10</sup>

Others believe that youngsters are responsible for these acts. Stamford Police Sgt. William Schmidt told the CHRO:

I believe these incidents are isolated and they are not necessarily racially motivated. I think perhaps the notoriety of other communities and the publicity the news media is giving these incidents is causing some of our younger people to act in that manner. I personally feel that this type of behavior will phase out in the near future.<sup>11</sup>

Norwalk Police Chief Joseph W. Beres, Jr. held a different view:

We in the Department of Police Services very definitely do not consider [such incidents] pranks. We consider them a gross affront to the residents of our community, and the people who have engaged in such disorderly conduct should be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law. And the Department of Police Services will pursue that into the courts to make sure that the courts take cognizance of the seriousness of the crime."<sup>12</sup>

Webber observed:

If there [are] no organized activities in Connecticut, that does not lessen the problem, because the problem is one of racism and anti-Semitism, and if it comes out of spontaneous acts on a large enough part of our population, I think in the long run it is even more dangerous than if it is sparked by an organization.<sup>13</sup>

The CHRO at its four hearings also heard descriptions of hate group activities in schools and colleges. Several witnesses described the responses of these institutions.

Dr. Barbara Riley, an educational consultant and co-director of the Anti-Racism Project in the Danbury school system, told the CHRO that when Ku Klux Klan literature was handed out in the high school, the administration wanted to keep the incident relatively quiet. As Danbury School Superintendent Pasquale V. Nappi explained, the principal of the school took a strong stand and he supported him. They both indicated publicly that any student caught distributing

KKK literature in the school would be suspended in accordance with the discipline code.<sup>14</sup>

John Jakabowski, Affirmative Action Officer of Western Connecticut State College, told the CHRO that racist literature had been distributed on campus and that the administration abhorred it and plans to take whatever "action is legally permissible should this unfortunate incident reoccur."<sup>15</sup>

In April 1980, CHRO released its Report of Incidents of Cross-Burnings and Vandalism Motivated by Racial and Religious Prejudice in Connecticut. It noted that since 1978 Connecticut had experienced an increase in such incidents. There were more than 83 reported occurrences statewide. The incidents include cross-burnings, harassing phone calls, physical attacks, firebombings, KKK and Nazi graffiti, and vandalism of property owned by racial and religious minorities.

No evidence was found to indicate that these incidents were the result of organized hate group activity. The CHRO reached the same conclusion and indicated in its report "that these incidents are not the result of any organized activity within the State but were the random acts of individuals."<sup>16</sup> Unknown young adults were believed responsible. The report also found that the responses of public officials and community leaders to these incidents have been uneven and that the media coverage was also uneven and often lacking in depth.<sup>17</sup>

If the CHRO found consensus, it was that racism was the problem, and that "cross-burnings and other deplorable incidents were the manifestation of the problem."<sup>18</sup> Underlying causes probably included economic insecurity, psychological disorder, and ignorance.



Recommendations from participants included: human relations education; more specific statutory prohibition of and more severe penalties for cross-burnings and related incidents; strong official condemnation of such incidents; desegregation of housing and schools; better enforcement of the statutes; victim assistance and restitution to victims; more responsible media coverage of incidents; and improved collection and analysis of data on incidents.<sup>19</sup>

The Commission made five recommendations to local and State officials and educators:

--Elected officials, law enforcement officials, local community leaders, and school officials, should respond to racially and religiously motivated incidents with swift and strong public statements of disapproval, and they should offer assistance to victims where appropriate.

--The State Board of Education and all local school boards should implement human relations curricula in accordance with Connecticut law.

--The criminal statutes should be rigorously enforced by prosecutorial officials to act as a deterrent to this type of crime.

--A clearinghouse should be designated and maintained by law enforcement officials, for the collection, analysis, and dissemination of information concerning incidents of cross-burnings and vandalism motivated by racial and religious prejudice.

--The General Assembly should consider adopting legislation which addresses the problems of cross-burnings and swastika markings.<sup>20</sup>

## Since the CHRO Hearings -- A Chronology

Despite the CHRO hearings in November and December 1979 and the publication of its report in April 1980, most people in Connecticut paid little attention to the emergence of the Klan and manifestations of hate-motivated acts of vandalism. At the factfinding meeting of the Connecticut Advisory Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights in September 1981, State NAACP Director Ben Andrews stated:

There are many parts of our society who felt that the coming of the Klan was not a terribly important issue or that it was a matter of an erratic incident, and that we need not be concerned because this is just a small band...

It was a matter of gossip at that point: "Did you hear the guy that drove the truck for such and such company...had a KKK membership card?"<sup>21</sup>

In September 1980, flyers began to appear in the Willimantic area announcing an upcoming rally in Scotland by the Invisible Empire of the Ku Klux Klan, the first major public activity of the KKK in Connecticut in 50 years.<sup>22</sup> Some 100 new Klan members were supposedly signed up at the event, which was attended by 800 to 1,000 persons consisting of media people, counter-demonstrators, curiosity seekers and Klan sympathizers. Some violence occurred at the rally, when anti-Klan demonstrators confronted Klan supporters and fist-fights broke out. State police arrested eight persons on weapons and assault charges.<sup>23</sup> The event received national media exposure.

In October 1980, a Molotov cocktail was thrown through the window of a black family's home in Manchester. A 10-year-old family member told investigators that she saw a man dressed in a white sheet and white pointed hat running from the house.<sup>24</sup> Three white men were subsequently arrested and charged with the firebombing. Charges of civil rights and weapons violations against one of the

accused were dropped after he pleaded nolo contendere (no contest) to the crime of third-degree arson. A second accomplice also pleaded guilty to a reduced charge of third-degree arson. The third person arrested in this incident testified on behalf of the prosecution and as a result was not prosecuted.<sup>25</sup>

On March 21, 1981, a major KKK rally took place in Meriden. Anti-Klan protesters assaulted demonstrating Klan members and 21 persons were injured. The Klan had scheduled the rally to support a local police officer who had shot and killed a black shoplifting suspect. Twenty-two robed and hooded Klan members marched, while the principal opposing group was the International Committee Against Racism (INCAR).<sup>26</sup>

On June 14, 1981, a cross was burned on the Fort Trumbull beach. A week later, a Milford man became a suspect when a search of his apartment turned up a KKK hood and robe along with KKK newspapers, and outside his apartment police found foam rubber similar to the material used in the cross-burning.<sup>27</sup>

On June 23, 1981, the Klan announced plans for a second rally in Meriden, and in the ensuing weeks Klan members met with police officials to discuss the event. The rally was to initiate a recruitment drive and protest the police's handling of the earlier march.<sup>28</sup>

The KKK again marched in Meriden on July 11, 1981, and again was assaulted by opposing groups. Seven people, including three police officers, were injured, but no one was seriously hurt. On the next day, there were Klan recruitment activities in Cheshire, Ansonia, Naugatuck, and Seymour, which occurred without incident.<sup>29</sup> At first some officials believed that the Klan activity was being carried out by out-of-state Klansmen. However, at the second Meriden KKK rally, Klansmen said all but two of their members were local residents. Local Klansmen also appeared at a city council

meeting to oppose the proposed ordinance to prevent further KKK rallies in the city.<sup>30</sup>

On July 21, 1981, Scotland was again the site of a small rally. There was a cross-burning and an exchange of racial slurs. Several dozen persons attended.<sup>31</sup>

In early August, a cross reportedly was burned in Westfield near the middle school. Klan literature was found at the site, but because it was mimeographed material, Westfield police judged the incident a prank.<sup>32</sup>

On August 11, 1981, Imperial Wizard Bill Wilkinson of the Invisible Empire of the Ku Klux Klan announced plans to demonstrate again in Meriden because the U.S. Justice Department had refused to prosecute the individuals arrested for assaulting Klan members at the March rally. He also announced that a statewide rally would be held in September.<sup>33</sup>

On August 29, 1981, James Farrands, head of the Connecticut Klan, and 10 Klansmen attended a town meeting in Windham, and commented that the Klansmen are considering buying land in Windham as a site for a State office.<sup>34</sup> Two days later in Seymour, Ansonia, and Shelton, the Klan made appearances in an attempt to stimulate recruiting.<sup>35</sup>

In Southbridge, Massachusetts, on September 5, 1981, a group of 11 Connecticut Klansmen, eight clad in white-hooded robes, distributed literature for about an hour in front of the local police station. Townspeople protested the Klan while Southbridge police officers kept the two groups apart.<sup>36</sup>

On September 12, 1981, while the KKK was distributing literature in Plainville, members became involved in a shouting match with residents. The Klan left within an hour; there were no arrests and

no injuries.<sup>37</sup>

On September 26, 1981, Connecticut Klan Leader James Farrands and six Klansmen showed up outside the Connecticut Education Association(CEA)-sponsored Anti-Klan Educational Conference in Hartford. He was arrested for disorderly conduct when he began arguing with a member of INCAR and tried to enter the CEA Conference. After his arrest, the Klan announced it would hold a news conference at a commuter parking lot in Wallingford, Connecticut.<sup>38</sup> A Meriden Klansman was also arrested at the news conference and charged with disorderly conduct, resisting arrest, and having a concealed weapon.<sup>39</sup>

On September 27, 1981, the Connecticut leader of the Ku Klux Klan announced that it now accepts Catholics as members, a response to the charge that the Klan historically was anti-Catholic.<sup>40</sup>

During the months of September, October, and November 1981, a series of racially motivated incidents occurred in Manchester. On September 16, 1981, a cross was burned near Camp Meeting Road. The homes of two black members of the Manchester Human Relations Commission were vandalized on October 30, 1981. A cross with a note saying "courtesy of the Ku Klux Klan" was found on the steps of the Town Hall and Ku Klux Klan graffiti were spray painted on the side of the Herald newspaper building.<sup>41</sup> On November 19, 1981, a cross was burned on Finley Street, the sixth racially related incident to occur during the three months.<sup>42</sup>

In Sterling on October 4, 1981, State police arrested four men wearing the white robes and hoods of the KKK as they marched down the main street carrying American and KKK flags. All four men were charged with breach of peace; two were also charged with carrying dangerous weapons.<sup>43</sup> Another Klan faction, United Klans of America, is based in Sterling, but has not been as active as the Invisible Empire of the KKK.<sup>44</sup>

On October 11, 1981, Bill Wilkinson, Imperial Wizard of the Invisible Empire of the KKK, addressed 125 people at a Klan rally in Windham. More than 200 State police were assigned to the rally, at a cost estimated by police officials at over \$100,000. Twenty robed Klansmen held a cross-burning ceremony at the end of the rally. There were no arrests and no violence. Said Connecticut Governor William O'Neill a few days before the rally: "The KKK is not welcome in our State. The Klan is clearly seeking publicity. People should not give credence to their cause."<sup>45</sup>

On the same day, about 75 anti-Klan protesters staged two separate rallies-- one in Willimantic and the other in North Windham-- to protest the Windham rally. State police obtained an injunction prohibiting weapons at the rally. Their search of vehicles resulted in the arrest of five persons for possession of arms. This action by the State police was viewed as instrumental in preventing violent confrontations between pro- and anti-Klan groups.<sup>46</sup>

On November 4, a U.S. District Court Judge dismissed four suits brought by the Klan against the State police for searching persons and vehicles attending Klan rallies. The Klan and its attorney failed to show up at the hearing.<sup>47</sup>

On January 31, 1982, about a dozen Klansmen distributed literature for about 10 minutes on Main Street in Seymour. They left after they were confronted by the police chief who suggested that they make their stay short. Milford Police also reported that the Klan conducted a recruitment drive in their city on January 31.<sup>48</sup>

On February 2, 1982, about 15 Klansmen interrupted an anti-Klan seminar sponsored by the Valley Citizens for Racial Equality in Ansonia by asking that their side of the story be heard.<sup>49</sup>

On March 4, 1982, the Meriden police chief announced that Klan literature had been distributed at the high school and other city schools. A high school student is suspected of being the Klan Youth Corps leader and the one responsible for distributing fliers directed to young people.<sup>50</sup>

On March 6, 1982, about 125 persons attended an Anti-Klan Rally sponsored by the Middletown Area Coalition for Racial Unity to protest the "White Christian Solidarity Day" Klan Rally planned for March 20 in Meriden. Organizers of the Middletown rally also urged opponents of the Klan to attend a counter-demonstration on March 20 in Hartford.<sup>51</sup>

After the town council granted and then revoked a parade permit to the Klan to hold its rally on March 20, 1982, and after the Connecticut Civil Liberties Union obtained an injunction barring the revocation, the March 20 Meriden rally was held. About 30 Klansmen gathered on the steps of Meriden City Hall while a crowd of 1,000 booed and drowned out the address by Klan Imperial Wizard Bill Wilkinson. About 300 State and municipal police kept the two groups apart and searched anyone entering the area. Firearms and other potential weapons were banned at the demonstration. Three persons were arrested and charged with breach of peace.<sup>52</sup>

Two demonstrations were held in opposition to this Klan event. On the eve of the rally, more than 250 religious and community leaders gathered at St. Andrew's Episcopal Church in Meriden to hold a prayer vigil for racial harmony. The next day in Hartford, more than 1,000 persons attended an anti-Klan rally sponsored by the Connecticut Coalition Against Racism, a group formed several months earlier by religious, community and labor organizations in response to the resurgence of the Klan in Connecticut.<sup>53</sup>

The Connecticut Klan also announced in March that it would launch a northern New England membership drive that would culminate

with a cross-burning in Vermont in June.<sup>54</sup> The head of the Connecticut Klan was quoted as saying that the "Yankee stock" in northern New England would make prime candidates for the Klan, and indicated that there already were local Klansmen in Wilmington, Vermont; Manchester, New Hampshire; and Portland, Maine.<sup>55</sup>

On March 22, 1982, the Klan announced that it was going to make Meriden the site of an annual rally, and it filed an application for a March 21, 1983, rally in Meriden.<sup>56</sup>

During the weekend of March 27, 1982, the letters KKK and a swastika appeared on the door and window of a building on Main Street in Manchester.<sup>57</sup>

On May 16, 1982, Connecticut Klansmen staged a rally and recruitment drive in Wilmington, Vermont, and were shouted down by 150 Klan opponents. Prior to the rally four Klansmen, including the Connecticut leader, were arrested and jailed on charges of carrying a loaded gun.<sup>58</sup> A former Klansman now living in Vermont said that he does not believe the KKK movement will spread in northern New England.<sup>59</sup>

On June 15, 1982, a group of Klansmen was arrested in Danbury, Connecticut, and charged with five counts of carrying dangerous weapons in a car.<sup>60</sup> Two weeks later, deportation proceedings were started against a West German national, one of the six men arrested. The deportation hearings will be based on past convictions and not on Klan membership, according to the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service.<sup>61</sup>

On July 29, 1982, anti-Semitic messages were scratched on the windows of a delicatessen in Stamford, and soon after, a swastika and Nazi slogans were spray-painted on the street in North Stamford.<sup>62</sup>



On August 4 and 6, 1982, swastikas were found on sheets on which equipment operators in New Haven's East Shore Sewage Disposal Plant record flow measurements. A Jewish computer programmer was apparently the target of the symbols. He filed a complaint, police investigated and a suspect was arrested.<sup>63</sup>

On August 7, a highly publicized Klan rally at the Spruce Mountain Road home of a Danbury resident was attended by about 25 Klansmen and more than 75 media representatives. A cross was burned, and a weapons search resulted in one arrest for carrying a black-jack type device.<sup>64</sup>

The question of whether acts of violence and vandalism occurring in Connecticut have been perpetrated by organized groups such as the KKK or by individuals was raised again at the Advisory Committee's factfinding meeting.

ADL's Webber indicated that he does not believe that the Klan is responsible for these acts.<sup>65</sup> NAACP's Andrews did not dismiss the possibility that acts of violence and vandalism were the result of organized activity. According to Andrews, the NAACP conducted its own investigation to determine if the cross-burnings were acts of organized groups and concluded that though they could not establish a connection as it would have to be in a court of law, there is enough circumstantial evidence to establish a link. The incidents were in the vicinity of the "companies where there has been an appearance of Klan material," said Andrews.<sup>66</sup> In another example, soon after a visit in 1979 by Klan leader David Duke, Waterbury was the scene of several incidents, including a cross-burning, racial slurs on supermarket and high school walls, and the distribution of hate literature.<sup>67</sup>

## Notes to Chapter 1

1. Connecticut Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities, Report of Incidents of Cross-Burnings and Vandalism Motivated by Racial and Religious Prejudice in Connecticut (April 1981), pp. 121-26 [hereafter referred to as CHRO Report].
2. Ibid, pp. 121-26.
3. Connecticut Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities, Factfinding Hearing on Incidents of Cross-Burnings and Vandalism Motivated by Racial and Religious Prejudice, held in Bridgeport, Connecticut, November 26, 1979, transcript, pp. 18-19 [hereafter referred to as CHRO Bridgeport Transcript].
4. CHRO Report, p. 11.
5. CHRO Bridgeport Transcript, pp. 77-78.
6. Connecticut Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities, Factfinding Hearing on Incidents of Cross-Burnings and Vandalism Motivated by Racial and Religious Prejudice, held in Hartford, Connecticut, December 14, 1979, transcript, p. 99 [hereafter referred to as CHRO Hartford Transcript].
7. Connecticut Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities, Factfinding Hearing on Incidents of Cross-Burnings and Vandalism Motivated by Racial and Religious Prejudice, held in Norwalk, Connecticut, November 20, 1979, transcript, p. 89 [hereafter referred to as CHRO Norwalk Transcript].
8. Connecticut Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities, Factfinding Hearing on Incidents of Cross-Burnings and Vandalism Motivated by Racial and Religious Prejudice, held in Danbury, Connecticut, November 13, 1979, transcript, pp. 6-7 [hereafter referred to as CHRO Danbury Transcript].

9. CHRO Bridgeport Transcript, pp. 47-48.
10. CHRO Hartford Transcript, p. 24.
11. CHRO Norwalk Transcript, p. 74.
12. Ibid., p. 14.
13. CHRO Bridgeport Transcript, p. 89.
14. CHRO Danbury Transcript, p. 151.
15. CHRO Bridgeport Transcript, p. 50.
16. CHRO Report, p. 15.
17. Ibid., p. 26-32.
18. Ibid., p. 5.
19. Ibid., p. 5.
20. Ibid., pp. 46-50.
21. Connecticut Advisory Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, Factfinding Meeting, Hartford, Connecticut, September 24, 1981, transcript, p. 30 [hereafter cited as Advisory Committee Transcript].
22. Willimantic Chronicle, September 3, 1980.
23. New England Black Weekly, September 23, 1980.
24. Hartford Courant, October 15, 1980.

25. Manchester Herald, November 1981.
26. Hartford Courant, May 3, 1981.
27. New Haven Register, September 18, 1981.
28. Meriden Record Journal, July 8, 1981.
29. Hartford Courant, July 21, 1981.
30. New Haven Register, October 11, 1981.
31. Hartford Courant, July 21, 1981.
32. Manchester Herald, August 10, 1981.
33. Bristol Press, August 11, 1981.
34. Hartford Courant, August 29, 1981.
35. New Haven Register, August 31, 1981.
36. Norwich Sunday Bulletin, September 6, 1981.
37. Bridgeport Sunday Post, September 13, 1981.
38. Boston Herald American, September 28, 1981.
39. Hartford Courant, September 27, 1981.
40. Bridgeport Post, September 28, 1981.
41. Manchester Herald, November 6, 1981.
42. Manchester Herald, March 31, 1982.

43. Norwich Bulletin, October 5, 1981.
44. Norwich Bulletin, October 6, 1981.
45. Stamford Advocate, October 16, 1981.
46. Norwich Bulletin, October 12, 1981.
47. Washington Post, November 4, 1981.
48. Bridgeport Post, February 1, 1982.
49. Ansonia Evening Sentinel, May 12, 1982.
50. Manchester Herald, March 5, 1982.
51. Hartford Courant, March 7, 1982.
52. New York Times, March 21, 1982.
53. New Haven Register, March 19, 1982.
54. Caledonia Record (St. Johnsbury, Vt.), March 12, 1982.
55. Rutland Daily Herald (Vt.), March 12, 1982.
56. Hartford Courant, March 22, 1982.
57. Manchester Herald, March 31, 1982.
58. Washington Post, May 16, 1982.
59. Rutland Daily Herald (Vt.), March 13, 1982.
60. Hartford Courant, June 16, 1982.

61. Bethel Home News, July 7, 1982.
62. Stamford Advocate, August 25, 1982.
63. New Haven Register, August 24, 1982.
64. New Haven Register, August 9, 1982; Bridgeport Post, August 11, 1982.
65. Advisory Committee Transcript, p. 15.
66. Ibid., p. 31.
67. CHRO Report, p. 125.

## Chapter 2 -- GOVERNMENTAL RESPONSE

A central concern of the Advisory Committee was the response of governmental officials to violence and vandalism sparked by racial or religious hatred. Invited to the fact-finding meeting were public officials from several communities that experienced such disruptions. (The role of law enforcement agencies is presented in Chapter 3.)

### Local Government Response

#### Meriden

The city of Meriden has struggled to respond to the disruptive presence of hate groups since it became the target for a Klan demonstration on March 21, 1981. The demonstration was ostensibly to protest the reassignment of a white police officer who had fatally shot a black youth who allegedly was a shoplifter and had tried to run over the officer. (There previously had been a demonstration by the Inner City Exchange, a civil rights advocacy group based in Hartford, protesting the dismissal of the charges against the police officer.)

Meriden is "no more or no less racist a town than anywhere else in Connecticut," according to Reverend Kevin Bean of St. Andrew's Episcopal Church.<sup>1</sup> Its racial problems "are probably less than most cities of a comparable size," estimated Assistant City Manager Eliot Stretch.<sup>2</sup> And racially motivated violence has been "very minimal," observed Police Chief George Caffrey.<sup>3</sup>

However, State Representative Robert C. Sorenson, a lifetime resident of Meriden, expressed concern about the racial hatred and the support for the Klan revealed at the Klan rallies in Meriden.<sup>4</sup>

Following the March 1981 KKK rally, the Meriden city manager formed a Racial Tension Committee to deal with the problems of race relations and the issue of the KKK. The committee is composed of municipal and community leaders, including the police chief and city manager, and has eight subcommittees: education, finance, public relations, legislation, religion, municipal affairs, law enforcement, and philosophy and goals.

However, the local newspaper observed in June that there appeared to be confusion about the committee's organization and sponsorship.<sup>5</sup> Four months later, it was reported that the Racial Tension Committee had not met since the spring, and only two of the eight subcommittees had met at all.<sup>6</sup>

City Manager Dana A. Miller indicated that the private sector had formed a "Pride in Meriden" Committee in 1977 which responded to hate group activity by placing an ad deploring the activities of the Klan. Public forums were also held to address issues of race relations but these forums were not well attended.<sup>7</sup>

After the June 1981 rally, Miller directed the town's police chief to arrest any robed Klan member making a publicly announced appearance, on grounds of inciting to riot. (No arrests were made on these grounds.) Miller recounted that the presence of more than a hundred police officers and efforts to disarm counter-demonstrators had not been effective in preventing violence earlier, and cited dangers to bystanders and Klan members themselves. Insistence on demonstrating, he said, "is inciting to riot. It is not a peaceful assembly. It's an invitation to a battle."<sup>8</sup>

The city does not have a long-term plan to deal with the problem of hate groups and disruption. The city manager said that he held informal planning meetings with the State and local police officials in order to develop a strategy to deal with this problem without violating civil rights and civil liberties protections.<sup>9</sup>



Police Chief Caffrey explained that the Meriden Police Department does not have a special program to monitor, collect information, or maintain records on the activities of hate groups, nor does it conduct routine surveillance of hate groups. It does have a community relations unit composed of a sergeant and a police officer which works with tenant and youth organizations on issues of police-community concern.<sup>10</sup>

In addition to the Racial Tension Committee, the Pride in Meriden Committee, the forums, public statements, police training, and the development of a revised social studies program for the public schools, an ordinance was drafted to limit demonstrations. Under the proposed ordinance, the city could deny a permit to demonstrate if it determined that a disturbance was likely to occur or that traffic would be interrupted.

When Meriden's ordinance was pending, officials of several other Connecticut towns were asked by the Ansonia Evening Sentinel about the applicability of such measures to their communities.

Mayor Edward J. Cecarelli of Derby said that he was waiting to observe developments in Meriden before recommending a similar proposal. He expressed concern for the rights of groups the Klan opposes, asserting that "a Klan rally...is a direct violation of their rights...[and] violates the rights of the citizens of my town."

Daniel Brandon, First Selectman in Seymour, expressed concern that such a ban would be too broad, encompassing religious and other groups.

Mayor James Finnucan of Ansonia observed, "Because the Klan staged a recruitment drive here does not mean anyone takes them seriously." Until the legality of such a ban was ascertained, he would not consider such a proposal.

In Shelton, Mayor Eugene Hope also referred to the need for legal clarification before imposing a ban. He termed the Klan a "group that should not have any accepted place in our society."<sup>11</sup>

At the Connecticut Advisory Committee's September 24, 1981 meeting, William Olds of the CCLU said that he warned the Meriden City Council "that they are walking into a trap if they pass it. It is clearly an unconstitutional ordinance."<sup>12</sup> Ben Andrews of the NAACP concurred with Olds and noted that "the Meriden ordinance may play into the hands of the Klan by giving them an issue, to claim that their civil rights are being violated."<sup>13</sup> Malcolm Webber of the ADL commented that if "...the ordinance would be found unconstitutional, I'm afraid that would be absolutely counterproductive."<sup>14</sup>

In response to these objections, Chief Caffrey indicated that a new proposal was being drafted in conjunction with the CCLU. The new ordinance would focus on limiting the number of simultaneous demonstrations in the town, as well as geographically isolating adversarial factions.<sup>15</sup>

On October 5, 1981, the Meriden City Council approved an ordinance by a 15-to-two vote, requiring that 10 or more people must get permits from the police chief to demonstrate, distribute leaflets, or rally on public property. The ordinance gives the city police chief the authority to grant or deny a permit depending on whether he thinks it will impede pedestrian or motor vehicle traffic and whether it poses a threat to public safety. He also has the power to order the rally moved to another site. The ordinance exempts labor picketing, sports events, and city celebrations.

The ordinance's constitutionality was questioned by the CCLU, which pointed out in a four-page letter to the council that, in the past, the courts have permitted ordinances requiring prior approval of demonstrations only under very limited circumstances. The

Meriden ordinance, according to the CCLU, is too broad because it applies to most public gatherings even if they pose no danger to public safety or traffic control, and is contrary to numerous U.S. Supreme Court decisions. The exemptions raise still other questions about its constitutionality since the ordinance discriminates against non-exempt groups.<sup>16</sup>

### Scotland

The Eastern Connecticut town of Scotland experienced the first nationally publicized KKK rally in Connecticut in September 1980 and two unpublicized cross-burnings the following year on July 18 and August 8, 1981. Life since has been quiet and uneventful, according to First Selectman Nelson Perry.<sup>17</sup>

The Scotland schools have not experienced any problems with respect to Klan literature or recruitment activity. Religious and civic leaders have not addressed the issue of hate groups.

The town did pass a local ordinance which requires groups to obtain parade permits in advance. The groups are also required to list time, place, number of participants, and names and addresses of leaders. The ordinance also requires the posting of a liability insurance bond of \$300,000. Other than the enactment of the ordinance, the town has taken no additional action.<sup>18</sup>

### Willimantic

The city of Willimantic, which borders Scotland, also has experienced hate group activity. According to O. Paul Shew, Willimantic city manager, the Klan held several meetings in the city and it was rumored that it planned to buy property in Willimantic. Shew was critical of the amount of news coverage that the Klan has received for insignificant activity, while important city announcements go unnoticed.<sup>19</sup>

There was an anti-Klan rally in Willimantic on October 11, 1981, but Police Chief John Hussey stated that hate group activity in Willimantic was not a significant problem and that Willimantic does not conduct surveillance of Klan activity; such surveillance was a State police function, he added.<sup>20</sup>

Chief Hussey had met with local leaders of the NAACP in September 1980, prior to the Scotland Klan rally. The NAACP was planning to hold a prayer vigil to protest the rally, and after the meeting, the local NAACP decided that the best way to deal with the Klan was to ignore it; members were asked to stay away from the rally.<sup>21</sup> The Willimantic Clergy Association also urged community members to stay away.

City manager Shew believes that the amount of hate group activity in Willimantic does not require the city to have an organized effort to deal with these groups. The city has existing ordinances which deal with demonstrations and require parade permits.<sup>22</sup>

#### Windham

With the announcement of an October 11, 1981, Klan rally in Windham to be addressed by national Klan leader Bill Wilkinson, the Windham Zoning Commission voted unanimously to seek an injunction to block the KKK rally. The Zoning Commission was advised by town counsel that it could seek an injunction because of the expanded use of the proposed rally site, a private recreational area. Town officials went into Windham Superior Court to obtain the injunction forbidding the rally on the grounds that it violated the town's zoning ordinance, but withdrew it before it could be acted on, probably because they recognized that it might violate the First Amendment rights of the demonstrators.<sup>23</sup>

The Zoning Commission also moved to strengthen regulations affecting new buildings in residential areas for nonprofit groups, because of rumors that the Ku Klux Klan planned to locate its State headquarters in Windham. The new requirements would limit hours of use and prohibit demonstrations.<sup>24</sup>

## Cheshire

The town of Cheshire, according to Edward T. O'Neill, town manager, had not had any significant problems with hate groups except for one incident in July 1981, when the Klan attempted to recruit members. Town officials were informed by the State police that the Klan was expected to be in Cheshire on July 12. They were aware of the violent occurrences which had taken place in neighboring Meriden the previous day, and took precautionary measures to prevent a recurrence.<sup>25</sup>

George Merriam, chief of police of Cheshire, limited the Klan's demonstration to the parking lot of the Town Hall, and mobilized the police force as a precautionary measure. As a result, the Klan's visit to Cheshire was very controlled. According to Merriam, a small crowd watched about 18 robed and masked Klansmen but did not approach them to receive their literature, and after 35 or 40 minutes the Klan left and the small crowd dispersed.<sup>26</sup>

After the demonstration, Town Manager O'Neill expressed his regret that Cheshire was selected as the site and complimented the police for their handling of the demonstration. Scores of citizens complimented the town manager and the police chief for their response to the demonstration. The town manager also credits the citizens for staying away from the demonstration.

Asked why he thought Cheshire was chosen by the Klan as a site for a demonstration, the town manager replied that it was a spillover effect from Meriden. The Klan held membership drives in

three other communities as well.

O'Neill said that the town is considering some kind of ordinance to control demonstrations and to guarantee public safety. But he recognizes the difficulty in trying to protect people from the Klan and at the same time protect the Klan's constitutional rights of free speech and assembly. O'Neill urged an educational program to make youngsters aware of what the KKK and similar organizations represent.<sup>27</sup>

Police chief Merriam underscored this approach by indicating that the educational process is the way to attack any problem whether it is the Klan, racism, burglary, or robbery. Prevent it before it happens by educating people, he advised.<sup>28</sup>

### State Government Response

#### Governor's Task Force on Racial Harmony

In March 1981, State Senator John Daniels of New Haven wrote to Governor O'Neill and urged him to "form a special task force to develop strategies for combating racism, hatred, violence, and prejudice within our State."<sup>29</sup> The Anti-Defamation League and the Connecticut Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities also endorsed the establishment of a task force composed of business, religious and community leaders and State agency officials.<sup>30</sup>

On September 24, 1981, in his opening remarks at the Connecticut Advisory Committee's factfinding meeting, Lieutenant Governor Joseph Fauliso announced that Governor O'Neill had directed that a special Task Force on Racial Harmony be formed, and had named the Lieutenant Governor to chair it. The Lieutenant Governor went on to say that it "will consist of representatives of both the private and public sector. The membership will have as wide a basis of representation as possible, and the Commission's goals will be to develop and

recommend programs and policies in the field of human relations."<sup>31</sup>

The Governor subsequently appointed the CHRO as secretariat and named a 23-member Task Force to carry out the following tasks:

- To develop an educational film to focus on the problems of racism and its consequences and possible solutions;
- To develop community programs for use in all 169 towns throughout Connecticut;
- To review and recommend legislative action for implementation on the State and local levels.<sup>32</sup>

The initial response of participants at the meeting to the announcement of the new Commission was mixed. Most felt that a study commission was not the answer to deal with the issue of hate groups. Representative Sorensen of Meriden observed, "We know what the problems are. We want solutions."<sup>33</sup>

Representative Dominick Swiczkowski, Chair, House of Representatives Public Safety Council, said: "I personally disagree with the formation of the Commission...What we need are dedicated teachers to indicate to the younger generation what the KKK stands for...The formation of the Commission on Racial Harmony, I think, is window dressing."<sup>34</sup>

Arthur Green, Executive Director of the CHRO stated that the CHRO had recommended several months prior that the Governor create a body of citizens, broadly based, not to study the problem, but rather to take action.<sup>35</sup>

Ben Andrews, State President of the NAACP, indicated that "the establishment of a Commission which is supported publicly and issues reports which focus on the problems and citizens' needs was a positive thing, but it was not the answer to the issue of hate group activity."<sup>36</sup>

William Olds, Director of the CCLU, doubted that the Commission "would lead to any tangible answers," but hoped "that the Governor and Lieutenant Governor and legislative leaders would be somewhat outspoken on the issue of legislative action."<sup>37</sup>

After extensive preliminary research, the Commission issued its first report on March 9, 1982. Among the report's recommendations were the following:

-- Intergroup relations training should be required for teacher certification in Connecticut.

-- Multicultural education and intergroup relations programs should be a part of the curricula of all Connecticut schools.

-- Local government officials should be encouraged to establish or strengthen local Human Rights Commissions.<sup>38</sup>

After the release of its report, the Commission engaged in a major public relations campaign. Members appeared on numerous radio and television programs to talk about the Commission's work and race relations in general. In the belief that positive publicity is essential to its success, the Commission has also made attempts to establish a cooperative working relationship with media executives.

In addition to its research, report, and public relations campaign, the Commission has also advised local officials on an individual basis on ways to counter planned hate-group demonstrations.<sup>39</sup>

### Legislative Action

As noted in Chapter 1, the CHRO's 1980 report recommended that the General Assembly consider adopting legislation addressing the problems of cross-burnings and swastika markings. The State



legislature responded by passing laws which make cross-burning and racially and religiously motivated vandalism a Class A misdemeanor. However, the cross-burning legislation as enacted makes it a Class A misdemeanor only if one places or burns a cross on public property or on private property without the written consent of the owner. In other words, cross burning on private property can be legal under this law.<sup>40</sup>

Richard D. Tulisano, Chairman of the House Judiciary Committee, informed the Connecticut Advisory Committee about the General Assembly's efforts to deal with the problems of cross-burnings, desecration of property, and the establishment of paramilitary training camps:

We made it a crime, and a violation of our civil rights statute, a Class A misdemeanor, with a term of up to one year in jail, to place a burning cross on public property or the property of another, without permission. We also made it a Class A misdemeanor to intentionally desecrate any public property, house of worship, or private structure.

In addition to the cross burning and swastika statute, the General Assembly this year [1981] enacted legislation which prohibited the establishment of paramilitary camps that encourage civil violence. Admittedly difficult to enforce, it is one more protection against activities of hate groups.<sup>41</sup>

The law dealing with the desecration of property took effect on October 1, 1980. Violation of the law is punishable by up to one year in jail and a fine of up to \$1,000.

The paramilitary training camps bill, sponsored by State Senator John Daniels, passed the legislature almost unanimously and took effect on October 1, 1981. The law makes it a crime to teach, train or take instruction in the use or manufacture of firearms, explosives or fire-producing devices for the purpose of carrying out violent public disturbances. Violation is punishable by a maximum fine of \$5,000 and/or up to 10 years' imprisonment. Peace officers

who engage in the lawful discharge of their duties are exempted from the law's prohibitions.<sup>42</sup>

Tulisano also believes that it is incumbent upon "public leaders to speak out on the issue...Those who hold positions of responsibility have a duty to condemn not only acts, but groups which perpetrate hate and distrust among our people."<sup>43</sup>

During the 1981 session, a bill was introduced by Representative Sorenson which would have banned the wearing of masks. It was defeated, but it was reintroduced and passed in the 1982 session of the legislature. When the bill was first introduced, the Hartford Courant opposed it. It sympathized with Sorenson's concerns but supported the First Amendment rights of groups such as the Klan to "strut their inflammatory bile through town...The right to demonstrate does not, and should not, require that protestors put themselves in danger by unmasking."<sup>44</sup>

In March 1982, Governor O'Neill signed the law increasing the penalty for certain civil rights violations, if those violations were committed by a person or persons wearing a hood, mask, or other device. The civil rights violations include desecration of property, burning a cross on public or private property without the owner's permission, and depriving someone of his or her constitutional rights. These violations are currently considered Class A misdemeanors and carry penalties of up to one year in jail and up to \$1,000 fine. Under the new law, if these violations are committed by someone wearing a mask or hood, the crime becomes a Class D felony and is punishable by up to five years in prison and a \$5,000 fine.<sup>45</sup>

#### State Education Department

According to Theodore S. Sergi, Deputy Commissioner of Education, the State Education Department has responsibility in a

number of areas with regard to intergroup relations. He felt its greatest impact is "through the education and training of the roughly 40,000 certified staff in the State that work in the public schools and prepare young people for their adult life."<sup>46</sup>

Having trained teachers to teach "respect for human diversity and personal rights," the department also has the responsibility to ensure that the textbooks and materials used in the classroom present the achievements of all ethnic groups.<sup>47</sup> The department either assists in the production of those materials, such as the documents on the Holocaust, or encourages the use of available materials which Sergi said are in short supply.

Still another responsibility of the Department is enforcing the Racial Balance Law.<sup>48</sup> Sergi explained that the Department has a civil rights section within the Equity and Intergroup Education Bureau and members of this section work with school districts throughout the State. They also serve as a crisis intervention team.<sup>49</sup>

Sergi does not believe that hate group activity in the schools is a significant problem. He told the Advisory Committee that his office is aware of only one incident, in 1980 in Norwich, involving two students who allegedly said that they were members of the KKK. However, Sergi believes that the recent hate group activities in Meriden, Scotland, and Willimantic have "crept into the public schools and we must be on guard."<sup>50</sup>

When the department became aware of the activity in Norwich, it dispatched the crisis intervention team. According to Sergi, three of the staff members spent two or three weeks with school committee members and school officials, and assisted in developing mechanisms to prevent hate group activity. Prior to the Norwich incident, the crisis intervention team had not been involved in similar activity since 1975 when racial problems occurred in Danbury.<sup>51</sup>

According to Sergi, the State Board of Education has not issued, nor is it planning to issue, a policy statement with respect to hate groups, but it has adopted a policy statement on academic freedom which has relevance to the subject of teaching about hate groups and other controversial subjects. (See Appendix) He noted that in the last two years concerns were raised about censorship of materials and teachers' comments in the classroom. Without a strong academic freedom policy, a teacher wanting to deal with a controversial subject, such as the KKK, could be prevented from doing so. Sergi used as an example the new materials on the KKK developed by the Connecticut Education Association. "There may be groups such as the Klan who might oppose the use of these materials in the schools, and they will look to the community for support," Sergi warned.<sup>52</sup>

When asked if there were any State laws which prohibited hate groups from using school buildings for their activities, he said that in Connecticut the local school boards have responsibility for the use of buildings and for setting policy with respect to their use. However, Sergi said his own view was that hate groups should not be allowed to use school property. He cited the position taken by the American School Board Journal:

Protect your school system with a policy that specifies the types of groups that will be allowed to use school facilities. To permit the Klan to use the auditorium would be irresponsible...To rent to just any group is to abdicate your responsibility as leaders of your school system.<sup>53</sup>

Sergi added that the use of school buildings is protected by local ordinances and local Board policies, but to capitulate to extremist groups in this area would be misinterpreted as a sign of support.<sup>54</sup>

## Notes to Chapter 2

1. New York Times, July 18, 1981.
2. Advisory Committee Transcript, p. 127.
3. Ibid., p. 125.
4. Ibid., p. 80.
5. Meriden Record, June 23, 1981.
6. New Haven Register, October 11, 1981.
7. Staff Interview, September 1, 1981; New Haven Register, October 11, 1981.
8. New Haven Register, July 14, 1981.
9. Staff Interview, September 1, 1981.
10. Advisory Committee Transcript, p. 132.
11. Ansonia Evening Sentinel, July 17, 1981.
12. Advisory Committee Transcript, p. 43.
13. Ibid., pp. 45-47.
14. Ibid., pp. 47-48.
15. Ibid., pp. 128-29.
16. Hartford Courant, October 7, 1981.
17. Staff Interview, August 21, 1981.
18. Ibid.
19. Staff Interview, September 14, 1981.
20. Staff Interview, September 15, 1981.
21. Ibid.
22. Staff Interview, September 14, 1981.
23. Bristol Press, October 8, 1981.
24. Hartford Courant, October 22, 1981.

25. Advisory Committee Transcript, p. 123.
26. Ibid., p. 147.
27. Ibid., p. 150.
28. Ibid., p. 152.
29. Connecticut State Senator John C. Daniels, letter to Governor William A. O'Neill, March 23, 1981.
30. Executive Director Arthur L. Green, Connecticut Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities, letter to Governor William A. O'Neill, March 25, 1981.
31. Advisory Committee Transcript, pp. 4-7.
32. Governor William A. O'Neill, Letter to Executive Director Arthur L. Green, Connecticut's Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities, November 6, 1981.
33. Advisory Committee Transcript, p. 89.
34. Ibid., p. 90.
35. Ibid., p. 57.
36. Ibid., p. 49.
37. Ibid., p. 49.
38. Connecticut Governor's Task Force on Racial Harmony, Status Report to Governor William O'Neill, March 9, 1982, pp. 34-42.
39. Jurate L. Vaitkus, Connecticut Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities, "The Emergence of Hate Groups and Processes for their Neutralization: The Connecticut Experience" (paper presented to the 34th Annual Conference of the International Association of Human Rights Agencies, in Halifax, Nova Scotia, July 13, 1982).
40. An Act Concerning the Desecration of Property, 1980 Conn. Acts 54 (Reg. Sess.) (codified at CONN. GEN. STAT. ANN. S. 53-57 (West 1982)).
41. Statement submitted to the Connecticut Advisory Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, Factfinding Meeting, Hartford, Connecticut, September 24, 1981 [hereafter cited as Tulisano Statement].
42. An Act Concerning Paramilitary Camps, 1981 Conn. Acts 243 (Reg. Sess.).

43. Tulisano Statement.
44. Hartford Courant, September 29, 1981.
45. An Act Concerning the Deprivation of a Person's Civil Rights by A Person Wearing A Mask or Hood, 1982 Conn. Acts 14 (Reg. Sess.).
46. Advisory Committee Transcript, p. 59.
47. Ibid., p. 60.
48. Ibid., p. 64.
49. Advisory Committee Transcript, p. 63.
50. Ibid., p. 59.
51. Ibid., p. 61.
52. Ibid., p. 63.
53. American School Board Journal, "What Would You Do If...The KKK Wanted to Rent Your Auditorium?," July 1981.
54. Advisory Committee Transcript, p. 62.

### Chapter 3 -- RESPONSE OF LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES

Law enforcement agencies such as the local and State police, State prosecutor's offices, and the FBI play important roles in the effort to curtail and prosecute racially and religiously motivated violence and vandalism. The major responsibilities of these agencies are to enforce the criminal laws and to maintain public safety. In responding to racially and religiously motivated crimes, these agencies employ the same tools and techniques as they do in responding to other kinds of criminal activity. Likewise, in performing their duty to ensure public safety, law enforcement officials apply similar procedures and are bound by similar limitations in responding to acts of violence or demonstrations whether by the Ku Klux Klan or by other organizations.

How have law enforcement agencies responded to crimes motivated by racial and religious hatred, and how have they dealt with the issue of maintaining public safety and preventing violence at Klan demonstrations in Connecticut?

#### Attitudes Toward Racially and Religiously Motivated Crime

The attitude of law enforcement officials concerning the seriousness of racially and religiously motivated crime is of concern to many in Connecticut. New Haven Jewish Federation representative Louise Etkind told the CHRO in 1979 that the way in which cross-burnings and swastika markings are viewed and responded to by local police can affect the recurrence of these incidents:

If a police chief calls a Klan marking a prank it is going to encourage others to go out and indulge in similar pranks....However, where there are arrests and trials, it is going to deter others from doing and engaging in the same such activities.1



Law enforcement officials who appeared at the CHRO hearings as well as at the Advisory Committee's factfinding meeting said they consider racially motivated incidents very serious, even if the criminal offense committed constituted only a misdemeanor. They are not considered pranks.

Chief State's Attorney Austin McGuigan told the Advisory Committee that his office would continue to investigate crimes that appear to be racially or religiously motivated and to prosecute with "dispatch and commitment."<sup>2</sup> In his submission to the Advisory Committee, McGuigan stated, "While it is impossible for man to eradicate the cancer of racial or religious prejudice, we consider it part of our mission to see that the violent expression of that prejudice is contained and, where possible, punished."<sup>3</sup>

Richard Blumenthal, U.S. Attorney for the Connecticut District, informed the CHRO in 1979 that his office regarded the investigation and prosecution of such incidents of such high priority that it would take agents from other types of work and assign them to investigate that offense. He asserted, "Each one must be taken seriously and none can be dismissed simply as playful doings of pranksters or juveniles."<sup>4</sup>

If police attitudes in pursuing racially and religiously motivated crimes are important, their representations to the community are equally important. Police Chief George Caffrey of Meriden emphasized the leadership role he and former Mayor William M. Tracy assumed before the Meriden Klan rallies. He said that they had issued statements on several occasions concerning the Klan and describing its doctrines in an attempt to educate the residents of Meriden.<sup>5</sup>

While it was agreed that prompt, vigorous law enforcement on the part of police and prosecutors was important, some did not believe that law enforcement officials had taken racially and religiously

motivated incidents as seriously as they should. Ben Andrews of the NAACP indicated that law enforcement officials, did not, at first, take early detection seriously, and did not pursue the racial incidents to determine whether they were isolated or perpetrated by groups. "We found it very difficult to...convince police chiefs and detectives of the much broader connection," said Andrews.<sup>6</sup>

Malcolm Webber of the ADL commented that law enforcement people have difficulty giving the necessary importance to racially and religiously motivated violence. Incidents such as cross-burnings constitute crimes usually classified as misdemeanors. Webber felt that from a law enforcement viewpoint, it was difficult to differentiate between a regular case of vandalism and one with racial or religious implications.<sup>7</sup>

#### Adequacy of State and Federal Laws

Under State law, officials may proceed against racially and religiously motivated violence by invoking either the general criminal statutes, such as those prohibiting vandalism, arson and trespass, or by invoking the recently enacted laws specifically designed to apply to cross-burning, religious desecration, paramilitary camps, and civil rights violations committed by someone wearing a hood. Law enforcement officials contend that Federal and State laws now are sufficient to prosecute those committing acts of religiously and racially motivated violence. However, this was not always the case.

Prior to the enactment of the new State laws, cross-burnings and other hate-motivated vandalism and violence were prosecutable only under the broad criminal statutes such as those prohibiting "reckless endangerment," breach of the peace, trespass or arson, which do not take into account the motivation of the perpetrator. This problem was brought out at the CHRO hearings in 1979.

At those hearings, Chief State's Attorney McGuigan explained that cross-burnings were prosecuted under a law making "reckless endangerment" a crime, and were considered misdemeanors punishable by a maximum six months' imprisonment. McGuigan pointed out that within the criminal law, the motive is not relevant to the inquiry. McGuigan added, "The difference between burning a broomstick and burning a cross is a real substantial difference and a difference that the criminal law at this time doesn't really given cognizance to."<sup>8</sup>

The legislature has since enacted the laws described in Chapter 2, aimed at racially and religiously motivated crimes, in part, to remedy the problems identified by McGuigan. These statutes provide law enforcement officials with tools to address this specific type of behavior. In addition, making cross-burning, a crime brings this problem to the attention of the public. Likewise, the desecration of property provision serves to differentiate painting swastikas from painting initials by designating the former act as a specific crime.

The Federal criminal statutes under which acts of racially and religiously motivated violence are prosecuted include those prohibiting conspiracy to deprive persons of their civil rights,<sup>9</sup> deprivation of civil rights under color of law<sup>10</sup> and interference with persons' rights to fair housing.<sup>11</sup> U.S. Attorney Blumenthal told the Advisory Committee that most of the prosecutions of this kind of activity undertaken by his office were brought under the provision in the United States Code which prohibits interference with people's right to live where they choose regardless of race or color.<sup>12</sup> While the above-mentioned laws deal specifically with civil rights violations, other Federal criminal laws are sometimes invoked in the cases such as Federal laws governing transporting firearms interstate.<sup>13</sup>

It was generally agreed that existing laws were sufficient to

prosecute civil rights violators. Alonzo L. Lacey, Jr., FBI Special Agent in Charge of the New Haven Office, said that he thought that the Federal criminal statutes were adequate to deal with violations of civil rights.<sup>14</sup>

Speaking to the Advisory Committee after the new Connecticut statutes were passed, McGuigan said, "rather than legislation, we need committed public officials, and we need the manpower to handle the cases. We can do the job with the statutes we have now."<sup>15</sup>

William Olds, Executive Director of the Connecticut Civil Liberties Union, also told the Connecticut State Advisory Committee that he thought the laws were sufficient:

I think the larger problem lies in that sometimes many public officials or police departments are not as swift at enforcing the law in those particular areas as they might be in other areas. I'm not persuaded that law is necessarily the problem.<sup>16</sup>

### Cooperation Among Prosecutors

Often there are several law enforcement agencies which have jurisdiction over the investigation and prosecution of criminal civil rights violations. For example, both the FBI and the local police could investigate a cross-burning incident. Likewise, prosecutions could be carried out by the Chief State Attorney's Office if the defendant were charged with violation of State law, or by the U.S. Attorney's Office if charged with Federal law violations. Sometimes, both Federal and State prosecutions are initiated. In civil rights cases, cooperation among law enforcement agencies is important. Most of the law enforcement officials described cooperation among the agencies as generally very good.

Regarding two cross-burnings in Norwalk, Police Chief Beres told the CHRO that both incidents were immediately referred to the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and the Bridgeport office of the

FBI was most helpful and did a very thorough and complete investigation.<sup>17</sup> Similarly, Stamford Police Sgt. William Schmidt told the CHRO that it is standard procedure in the Stamford Police Department to contact the U.S. Attorney's office in cross-burning incidents.<sup>18</sup>

U.S. Attorney Blumenthal told the CHRO that his office contacted local authorities in each incident it had investigated, and "found them thoroughly cooperative, extremely interested in investigating these types of incidents."<sup>19</sup>

The decision whether to initiate a Federal or a State prosecution for an offense, Blumenthal indicated, was made in cooperation with the State prosecutor. If the violation seemed more easily prosecutable under State law, the State prosecutor would handle it, since "very often local and State police are on the scene and have the evidence before the Federal authorities are called in."<sup>20</sup>

Chief State's Attorney McGuigan told the Connecticut State Advisory Committee that there should be statewide, coordinated efforts to share advice.<sup>21</sup> He explained that the principal source of State investigations is the State police, who work closely with his office. McGuigan's office has never been refused any cooperation from the State police "even when they're in dire manpower straits." In contrast, McGuigan has encountered "some resistance from local officials."<sup>22</sup>

### The Role of Law Enforcement Agencies

While local, State and Federal law enforcement agencies attempt to share information and to coordinate their response to racially and religiously motivated criminal activity, each agency has specified designated powers and responsibilities. Local police departments investigate violations of State criminal statutes which

occur within their municipality. The State police perform that function in rural areas which have no local police force. They also conduct investigations in cooperation with the Chief State's Attorney's office, which is the prosecuting arm of State government.

At the Federal level, the Federal Bureau of Investigation investigates complaints of violation of Federal criminal civil rights laws, and Federal prosecutions are brought by the U.S. Attorney's Office. FBI Agent in Charge Lacy explained that in each one of the 59 FBI field offices across the United States, "There is an agent who is responsible for investigating civil rights violations."<sup>23</sup>

FBI Special Agent J.T. McCarthy estimated that on the average about 10 civil rights investigations are underway at any given time in his office. He reported that the number has remained fairly constant over the last few years and that there had not been an increase in Connecticut. However, these investigations include complaints of police abuse as well as complaints of racially or religiously motivated violence. The FBI categorizes both as civil rights cases. According to McCarthy, the length of the investigations undertaken by the FBI varies with the severity of the incident and the number of witnesses.<sup>24</sup>

At the State level, investigations are conducted by the local or State police. The State's Attorney's office has had a special assistant assigned to civil rights matters.<sup>25</sup> However, McGuigan was unable to cite the number of recent prosecutions for racially and religiously motivated crimes because State criminal justice statistics do not include a motivation factor. Such crimes are usually charged under traditional penal statutes, unless someone is charged under one of the new statutes specifically aimed at this type of crime.<sup>26</sup>

According to McGuigan, there had been no prosecutions under the

new statutes as of September 1981. However, there had been an informal survey of police chiefs conducted by the Division of Criminal Justice to determine the extent of racially and religiously motivated criminal activity in the State:

That survey, together with other data, disclosed that there are infrequent incidents of serious criminal conduct that are or may be racially or religiously motivated in Connecticut. Sporadic occurrences of cross-burnings were reported, and some relatively minor criminal activity reported in New Haven and Bridgeport was said to be anti-Semitic.

Two serious racially motivated incidents occurred in Waterbury during the spring of this year when the home of a black person and, a month later, the home of a black family, were barraged with gunfire. One person was arrested for both incidents, was charged, convicted, and was sentenced to a prison term.<sup>27</sup>

#### Limitations of Criminal Law Enforcement

Merely having laws on the books which can be invoked to prosecute those who commit crimes motivated by racial or religious animus is only part of the solution to this problem. These laws must be enforced and, even with vigorous enforcement, the problem of violent acts stemming from racial and religious hatred will still be with us according to many of the law enforcement officials.

When violence of any sort occurs, the public expects law enforcement agencies to apprehend and punish the culprits and to prevent its reoccurrence. Although vigorous law enforcement is important to curtail racially and religiously motivated crime, it is not a panacea, any more than strong laws and vigorous law enforcement can eliminate the occurrence of murder and robbery.

The limited role of law enforcement was described by Martin Walsh, Regional Director of the U.S. Department of Justice's Community Relations Service (CRS). Walsh asserts that irrespective of what the police and other law enforcement officials do, racially motivated violence will not disappear so long as racial tension and

hatred exists. The role of police is limited to enforcing existing laws and preventing volatile situations from exploding into violence. However, it is the community at large that must deal with these underlying conditions that cause racial and religious hatred.<sup>28</sup>

In 1979, U.S. Attorney Blumenthal explained to the CHRO how the *criminal justice* system is of limited application in eliminating the *problem* of racial and religious violence:

The criminal law is a blunt instrument. It does not readily lend itself to promoting racial peace and harmony. It may have a deterrent effect if wisely wielded, but its application depends always ultimately on proving beyond a reasonable doubt each and every one of the elements of the crime, including criminal intent.

Even where the offender can be identified, it may be difficult to prove that his or her purpose in performing a malicious act is to intimidate the victims; to drive them from a neighborhood, for example. This burden of proving criminal intent is one that often is excruciatingly difficult to satisfy as well it should be.<sup>29</sup>

Blumenthal pointed out that problems encountered in prosecuting civil rights cases include insufficient evidence, and juries that are often sympathetic to the defendants because they have no prior criminal record. He observed, "We do not shirk from the duty to pursue them, but we must recognize that the deterrent effect of a successful civil rights prosecution, if there is such an effect, depends upon its success."<sup>30</sup>

When asked by the Advisory Committee what changes he would recommend in the Federal statutes regulating civil rights violations, Blumenthal suggested increased penalties, but added that this might not be much of a deterrent because judges usually did not impose the maximum sentence on civil rights



convictions.<sup>31</sup> McGuigan concurred, noting that increasing the criminal penalties would probably not be a deterrent due to judges' reluctance to apply the maximum penalty in civil rights cases.<sup>32</sup>

Captain John Bandelli, Commander of Labor Relations for the State Police, also believes that the criminal justice system is not the best tool against hate group activity or hate-generated violence.<sup>33</sup>

Walsh observed that often local and State laws rather than the Federal laws were more appropriate vehicles for dealing with extremist groups. Sometimes, he claimed, local and State officials want to escalate the issues to the Federal level but with the types of laws and resources at the local and State level, some of the problems can be dealt with better there.<sup>34</sup>

#### Civil Suits: An Alternative to Criminal Prosecution

Blumenthal encouraged private attorneys and organizations to initiate civil suits for damages against extremists as an alternative to criminal prosecution: "The possibilities for action by citizens here is very real." He believes that private actions against the Klan for civil rights violations offers a greater likelihood for success than criminal prosecution because civil suits do not have to meet the criminal standard of proof beyond a reasonable doubt.<sup>35</sup>

Austin McGuigan also endorsed private civil rights actions: "The State has serious limits as to what the criminal law can do in this area. I would welcome a private suit."<sup>36</sup>

Randolph McLaughlin, attorney for the Center for Constitutional Rights in New York, explained that the strategy to initiate civil suits against the Klan was developed in 1979 by the Legal Task Force of the National Anti-Klan Network. McLaughlin indicated that civil

suits can be filed against hate groups or individuals under those sections of the U.S. Code passed in 1871 as part of the "Anti-Klan Acts."<sup>37</sup> He explained that under one provision two or more people can be held liable for conspiring to deprive people of their civil rights.<sup>38</sup> According to McLaughlin, these laws enable persons to seek an injunction against certain threatening and intimidating conduct of the Klan. McLaughlin believes that the whole organization could be found in contempt if the Klan in fact sanctioned the threatening or intimidating conduct. Between 1980 and 1981, 12 civil suits were filed against Klan members, although no private actions were taken in Connecticut.<sup>39</sup>

### Maintaining Public Safety

In addition to questions about the role of law enforcement agencies in preventing and responding to acts of racially and religiously motivated violence, there are questions about how demonstrations with their potential for violence between demonstrators and counter-demonstrators are to be handled by law enforcement authorities.

If the role of law enforcement agencies in response to individual civil rights violations is investigation and prosecution, their role expands when Klan demonstrations are at issue. In these situations, especially where counter-demonstrations are anticipated, law enforcement officials are expected to take measures to prevent violence. The main preventive measures employed by law enforcement authorities at the public Klan rallies in Connecticut are court injunctions prohibiting weapons at the rallies, and coordination of crowd control responsibilities among participating police units. At the March 1981 Klan rally in Meriden, where violence did erupt, there was a breakdown of communications between the State and local police and many blamed the violence on this breakdown of communications.<sup>40</sup>

In addition to these measures aimed at preventing violence, Federal law enforcement officials have been assisting local officials in attempting to ease racial tensions, and State and local police are being trained in conflict management. Finally, municipalities are drafting ordinances to limit demonstrations. It must be borne in mind that the constitutional rights of freedom of speech and freedom of association apply to most Klan activity, thus making the role of law enforcement officials delicate when dealing with the potential violence at Klan appearances.

Several persons at the Advisory Committee meeting spoke about the need for more information about Klan operations. Meriden Police Chief Caffrey suggested that "more intelligence on the part of the Connecticut State Police and the FBI and Federal organizations is necessary as well as more funding for intelligence operations."<sup>41</sup> Cheshire Town Manager O'Neill felt that more funding was needed so that the FBI and the other agencies could monitor what was going on.<sup>42</sup> Cheshire Police Chief Merriam expressed the concern that monitoring the Klan was not a high priority for Federal and State agencies.<sup>43</sup>

FBI Special Agent in Charge Lacey explained that the FBI's authority to conduct surveillance and intelligence activity was restricted by guidelines established by the U.S. Attorney General. These guidelines prohibit the kind of surveillance of extremist groups at both ends of the spectrum that the FBI had previously conducted. Lacey asserted:

It was a good faith effort on our part to anticipate violence, trying to head off problems, and so forth. Having run aground some years ago because of the ever widening scope of those investigations on both extremes, the guidelines gave us a set of regulations by which to handle our investigations. We are brought back pretty much to investigate the criminal act itself.<sup>44</sup>

There is no Connecticut statute forbidding the monitoring of hate groups. While the State police do not routinely monitor hate groups, they do conduct surveillance when they have reason to believe a developing situation presents a "high risk of civil strife or criminal activity."<sup>45</sup>

In anticipation of the Klan rally in Windham in October 1981, Chief State's Attorney McGuigan filed for an injunction to ban weapons at the rally.<sup>46</sup> The judge granted the injunction which gave police the authority to search demonstration participants, motor vehicles, and the rally site for weapons.<sup>47</sup>

In 1980, a judge had granted an injunction against weapons at the Scotland rally, but had limited the permissible search to persons and motor vehicles. Such an injunction was also granted for the March 1981 rally in Meriden. The request to search the site of the rally for the Windham demonstration was motivated by reports that the Klan may have hidden weapons at the site before the demonstration.<sup>48</sup> Securing injunctions prohibiting weapons at Klan rallies has proved successful at preventing violence and preserving the constitutional rights of the demonstrators.

#### Coordinating State and Local Police Efforts

Because the violence that occurred at the March 1981 Klan rally in Meriden was blamed in part on the failure of coordination between the State and local police, the Public Safety Committee of the State legislature conducted a hearing and then recommended appropriate police cooperation procedures.

Senator Steven C. Casey, Chairman of the Public Safety Committee, explained to the Advisory Committee that the recommendations have been partially implemented by Governor O'Neill.<sup>49</sup> A subcommittee of the Public Safety Committee is monitoring the actions of the State Police, and it believes the

department is doing well. The Public Safety Committee also recommended that a written policy be developed to determine exactly when the State police would be called in. This has not yet been implemented, although an old policy has been discovered and is being publicized, said Casey.<sup>50</sup>

Senator Casey was quick to point out that the problem encountered in Meriden was the exception:

I would like to put the incident on March 21 in perspective. I think it is the one sore spot in the recent history of the State Police and local police. It is one problem in a series of many other incidents that were handled perfectly.

I would like to cite two other incidents in the last year: one in Scotland last fall, and a second incident in Meriden last July, where the KKK was involved. There was total cooperation and excellent State Police handling. I do not foresee the problem with the State Police response in the future.<sup>51</sup>

Police Chief Caffrey of Meriden agreed with Casey's assessment. While acknowledging that there was a communication problem with the State police at the March 1981 rally, he said that the problem has been corrected. At the July 1981 demonstration Caffrey said that there was 100 percent cooperation from all police units, which helped stem violence.<sup>52</sup>

In addition to cooperation between local and State police, various municipal police departments assist one another. Eighteen towns in south central Connecticut are part of a Municipal Aid Compact which requires police from one town to assist those of another during a time of crisis.<sup>53</sup> Police Chief Merriam of Cheshire commented: "If I feel that more than the State police...is needed, I would then start invoking the Municipal Aid Compact."<sup>54</sup> This would provide him with a larger team of officers trained in handling large groups of people.

## The Federal Role

Staff of CRS assisted the City of Meriden in connection with the Klan demonstrations, according to Meriden Police Chief Caffrey.<sup>55</sup> Director Martin Walsh and Community Relations Specialist Joshua Liburd provided suggestions for easing racial tensions and improving race relations within the city.

Liburd described the role of CRS in Meriden following the shooting which led to the Klan's demonstration:

We made contact with the Inner City Exchange, the ones that were protesting in Meriden before the Klan was involved. We talked to leaders in the group, tried to understand their side of the story. We met with Police Chief Caffrey to try to learn what his plans were. We met with the City Manager in Meriden and with the Mayor in Meriden. We met with the NAACP people and we talked to several other community people to try to get a feel for what the community felt about the shooting; we tried to learn how the police were feeling and were going to respond.

As a result of that, we made certain recommendations to the community groups, to the Chief of Police and his staff, to the Mayor and the City Manager, in terms of what they should do, how they should react and respond. Of course, these were just suggestions. That is the role we play.<sup>56</sup>

The FBI also assisted Meriden. According to Agent McCarthy, the FBI established a liaison very early with the Meriden police and the State police when they learned of the Klan's intention to go to Meriden.<sup>57</sup>

Another form of assistance provided by the FBI is training. The FBI conducts a national training program to improve the capability of local police to handle civil rights violations. Agent Lacey said that 1,000 management-level police officers a year are trained at the FBI National Academy in Virginia in the area of civil rights.<sup>58</sup> Chief Merriam of Cheshire said that he and seven

members of his department went through a special reaction training program conducted by the FBI in New Haven. Merriam hoped he could continue putting officers through the program to upgrade their ability to handle this type of serious situation.<sup>59</sup>

### Notes to Chapter 3

1. CHRO Danbury Transcript, pp. 100, 105.
2. Statement Submitted to the Connecticut Advisory Committee, Factfinding Meeting, Hartford, Connecticut, September 24, 1981, [hereafter referred to as the McGuigan Statement].
3. Ibid.
4. CHRO Hartford Transcript, pp. 10-11.
5. Advisory Committee Transcript, p. 151.
6. Ibid., p. 32.
7. Ibid., pp. 16-17.
8. CHRO Bridgeport Transcript, p. 41.
9. 18 U.S.C.A. 241 (1969).
10. 18 U.S.C.A. 242 (1969).
11. 42 U.S.C.A. 3631 (1977).
12. Advisory Committee Transcript, pp. 95-96.
13. Ibid., p. 173.
14. Ibid., p. 174.
15. Ibid., p. 120.
16. Ibid., p. 27.



17. CHRO Norwalk Transcript, p. 19.
18. Ibid, pp. 73-74.
19. CHRO Hartford Transcript, p. 17.
20. Advisory Committee Transcript, p. 98.
21. Ibid., p. 118.
22. Ibid., p. 109.
23. Ibid., p. 155.
24. Ibid., pp. 158-59.
25. CHRO Bridgeport Transcript, p. 35.
26. McGuigan Statement.
27. Ibid.
28. Advisory Committee Transcript, pp. 162-63.
29. CHRO Hartford Transcript, pp. 11-12.
30. Ibid., p. 19.
31. Advisory Committee Transcript, pp. 98-99.
32. Ibid., p. 120.
33. Ibid., p. 119.
34. Ibid., pp. 171-72.

35. Ibid., p. 99.
36. Ibid., p. 105.
37. 42 U.S.C.A. 1981 et seq. (1981).
38. 42 U.S.C.A. 1985 (1981).
39. Staff Interview, November 20, 1981.
40. Hartford Courant, April 11, 1981; April 25, 1981; May 1, 1981.
41. Advisory Committee Transcript, p. 135.
42. Ibid., p. 142.
43. Ibid., p. 141.
44. Ibid., pp. 174-75.
45. Lt. Doris M. Hughes, Community Affairs Officer, Connecticut State Police, letter to Elpidio Collazo, Connecticut Field Representative, New England Regional Office, U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, September 14, 1981.
46. Norwich Bulletin, October 9, 1981.
47. Stamford Advocate, October 10, 1981.
48. Norwich Bulletin, October 9, 1981.
49. Advisory Committee Transcript, p. 76-78.
50. Ibid., pp. 76-78.

51. Ibid., pp. 78-79.

52. Ibid., p. 135.

53. Ibid., p. 136.

54. Ibid., p. 137.

55. Ibid., p. 134.

56. Ibid., pp. 164-66.

57. Ibid., p. 159.

58. Ibid., pp. 154-55.

59. Ibid., p. 146.

## Chapter 4 -- COMMUNITY RESPONSE

Many in Connecticut have been puzzled that the Klan should choose their State as a promising area for activity. Citizens' attitudes do not seem hospitable either to the Klan or its beliefs.

The Connecticut Poll reported in December 1979 and again in September 1980 on Connecticut residents' attitudes toward race relations generally and toward racial incidents such as cross-burnings and KKK rallies specifically.

Over half (52 percent) of all persons polled in 1979 believed that black-white relations were improving; this figure slipped to 47 percent the next year. Those who believed the situation was getting worse rose from 11 percent to 15 percent during this period. The nonwhite perception of race relations was recorded only in 1979, and differed from the overall perception in that only 30 percent of blacks thought things were getting better while 20 percent thought there was a deterioration.

In 1979, 74 percent of those polled were aware of the cross-burnings; 40 percent found them a "serious problem that must be stopped" while only 11 percent dismissed them as "harmless pranks." Sixty-three percent of nonwhites judged those incidents to be so serious that they had to be stopped.

A year later, 89 percent of those polled had heard of the KKK rally in Scotland. Fifty percent of respondents believed that such rallies should not be allowed, while 45 percent believed they should. Men favored permitting the rallies by a margin of 62 percent-35 percent, while women just as strongly favored banning them, 62-30. Younger persons and more educated persons were more likely to favor the right to stage such rallies.

In both years, those questioned were asked whether the KKK should "have the right to march in their robes through a black neighborhood." In 1979, opposition to this right was 65-27, and the 1980 figure was a similar 63-32. Asked the parallel question as to whether Nazis should be permitted to march in uniform through a Jewish neighborhood, disapproval was expressed 68-25 in 1979 and 68-28 in 1980.<sup>1</sup>

Attitudes tend to be shaped by environment, experience and the public positions of leadership. And, frequently, those positions are shaped by leadership's perceptions of the public's attitude. As noted earlier, spokespersons for both the NAACP and the Connecticut Civil Liberties Union (CCLU) believe that public officials have not done enough to deal with the race problem in Connecticut. Ben Andrews, State NAACP President, is of the opinion that "there is obviously a growth in racial hatred incidents" and it is not being addressed adequately.<sup>2</sup>

William Olds, CCLU Director, stated that "the urban problem is a race problem to a large extent, and we need stronger leadership from governmental leaders to deal with it." Furthermore, so long as society finds discrimination and exclusion acceptable, it "contributes to the public atmosphere which makes it easier for people to commit overt acts," Olds observed.<sup>3</sup>

However, with the emergence of hate groups and acts of bigotry, community leaders have spoken out.

### Institutions of Higher Education

When the September 1980 Scotland rally was announced, Isnoel Rios, director of the University of Connecticut Puerto Rican Center, urged support of the counter-demonstration in Scotland. He stated, "I think it [the Klan] is like a cancer that has to be stopped before it gets any bigger."<sup>4</sup> Curtis Daye, director of the

Afro-American Center, asked people to stay away from Scotland and attend instead an Islamic appreciation celebration at Bushnell Park in Hartford.<sup>5</sup>

Yale University President A. Bartlett Giamatti in an address to Yale students on August 31, 1981, condemned extremist groups, labelling them "peddlers of coercion" for their "dangerous, malicious nonsense:"

Those voices of coercion speak not for liberty but for license, the license to divide in the name of patriotism, the license to deny in the name of Christianity. And they have licensed a new meanness of spirit in our land, a resurgent bigotry that manifests itself in racist and discriminatory postures; in threats of political retaliation, in injunctions to censorship; in acts of violence.<sup>6</sup>

A rally was held October 12, 1981 at Wesleyan University in Middletown to protest Klan activities and racism. The rally was sponsored by WJAMMA, an organization of black students and five other student groups. Michael D. Young, Wesleyan associate dean, in addressing the gathering warned that the Klan is "only symbolic of deeper problems in the country."<sup>7</sup> A "Friendship March" through Willimantic's business district was held the same day and ended at the Eastern Connecticut State College campus, protesting both the Klan and the violence of anti-Klan groups.

### Religious Leaders

Religious leaders who responded to Klan activity included the Rector and Curate of St. Andrew's Episcopal Church in Meriden, who called upon all churches to issue statements opposing the Ku Klux Klan, after the Klan announced its July 11, 1981 gathering.<sup>8</sup> The Rev. Ralph Lord Roy, of the First United Methodist Church, released a statement calling for rejection of "the Klan whose long and notorious record of anti-black, anti-Catholic and anti-Jewish violence is inimical to American ideals and Christian teaching."<sup>9</sup>

And the Rev. Robert Lysz of Holy Angels Church reaffirmed the Meriden Clergy Association's statement condemning the Klan after its first rally in March.<sup>10</sup>

The Willimantic Clergy Association responded to the Klan's October 1981 rally in Windham by conducting a prayer vigil and urging community members, through radio and press announcements to send the Klan a non-violent message by staying away. Reverend Malcolm McDowell, group spokesman and rector of St. Paul's Episcopal Church, warned that curiosity-seekers would be seen as supporting the Klan.<sup>11</sup>

The Capitol Region Conference of Churches, representing the Christian community in 29 towns in the Greater Hartford Area, had adopted a resolution condemning Ku Klux Klan activity in 1979.<sup>12</sup>

#### Connecticut Education Association

A concerted response to the KKK Rally in Scotland was initiated in October 1980 by Connecticut teachers when 15 members of the Connecticut Education Association (CEA) were appointed by then CEA President Robert Chase to a Special Study Task Force on the Ku Klux Klan.

Dimples Armstrong, Chairperson of the task force, explained to the Advisory Committee that the task force members felt the Klan posed a serious threat to students in classrooms throughout the State and the country, and that there was a need "for classroom materials to assist teachers in effectively and constructively coping with the rising challenge of the Klan nationwide." According to Armstrong, the group felt:

...that the reality of Klan hatred and violence must be faced...[and] that classroom teachers at all grade levels can be the strongest and most effective instruments for peacefully and creatively countering the force of the Ku Klux Klan and for upholding and

advancing the American ideal of universal human equality.<sup>13</sup>

Dr. Robbins Barstow, CEA's Director of Professional Development, told the Advisory Committee that representatives from government, education, and the community were invited to participate in the development of the material. Over the course of a year, the task force developed an informational and instructional kit entitled, "Violence, the KKK and the Struggle for Equality." The 72-page kit is designed for junior and senior high school use, and is composed of an informational section about the history of the Klan and an instructional section that includes 11 lesson plans. It is being distributed by the Council on Interracial Books for Children.<sup>14</sup>

The task force was in touch with the State Department of Education, the State Superintendents' Association, the State School Board Association, and the Secondary School Principals' Association. With the assistance of these groups, the task force plans to distribute copies of the kit to every school in Connecticut. Use of the material will be entirely optional with the school, according to Dr. Barstow.<sup>15</sup>

Asked whether he envisioned such a program as being mandated by the legislature, Barstow responded that there is a law recommending that teachers receive human relations training, but it has not been fully implemented, nor has the right kind of material been available. He believes that the kind of material in the informational and instructional kit will help prepare teachers and will "provide a useful tool on a voluntary basis at least to begin with."<sup>16</sup> Barstow reported that CEA has urged mandatory human relations education for teachers.

CEA President Robert Egan, commenting on the association's sponsorship of the program, asserted:

This country is committed to the concept of human



equality. Educators cannot sit idly by in the face of an organization like the Klan, which preaches race hatred and white supremacy and whose entire past and present is marked by violence and terrorism.

We have a duty as teachers actively to make known the full facts about the Klan, to seek to dispel its myths, and to provide a foundation of knowledge and inquiry on the basis of which students can arrive at informed judgments of their own.<sup>17</sup>

Within a month after its publication, local school districts began using the kit, and the CEA expects that many schools will integrate it into their standard curricula. According to Barstow, schools in Danbury, Deep River, Clinton, Simbury and Windham have begun using the teaching guide.<sup>18</sup>

The Valley Citizens for Racial Equality (VCRE) was established in response to efforts by the Klan to recruit members in Naugatuck Valley communities. The group contacted teachers in the Seymour and Shelton schools to acquaint them with the kit and to make it a part of the curricula in Valley schools. According to Jan Stackhouse, VCRE co-chairperson, the group wants young people to be aware of the fact that the Klan is "a racist, violent organization that functions on intimidation and terror."<sup>19</sup>

### The Media

The media, viewed by many as the single most important force in shaping public thinking about hate groups, has been criticized as giving them too much or too little attention, sensationalizing or ignoring their activities, and assisting or distorting their efforts.

The coverage given the Klan in Meriden has made that community particularly sensitive. Meriden City Manager Miller claimed that media coverage in Meriden was irresponsible, that it was used by the Klan to attract attention, and to increase attendance at its rallies.<sup>20</sup> Meriden Police Chief Caffrey said that if the media

had played down the Klan, it would have been helpful to the police and would have kept down the number of participants.<sup>21</sup> Meriden's Reverend Bean believes that responsible journalism should:

...focus on the wider racism and classism in our multitude of institutions in our political economy. To be diverted from that focus and to focus only on the Klan is to fail to see the deeper, bigger problems. Also, if these wider issues of economic and political racism and classism are focused on, part of the inherent frustration among poor whites which ferments into the Klan's violent hate-ideology may be remedied.<sup>22</sup>

In the view of Meriden State Representative Sorenson, the Klan is manipulating the news media in order to promote itself, make money and increase its membership.<sup>23</sup>

The question of whether it is best to ignore or expose hate group activity has posed a dilemma for many. Ben Andrews of the NAACP indicated that "we have [different] schools of thought within our organization [but our] bottom line position: Expose it...The good people of the State will reject it, but will not have the opportunity if not aware."<sup>24</sup>

Governor William O'Neill however, suggested that the media should pay less attention to the Klan: "They thrive on media attention. The less attention they get, the better."<sup>25</sup>

Charles Sardeson, Executive Director of the National Conference of Christians and Jews, told the CHRO in 1979:

We just don't need continuing days of seven-column headlines concerning the Ku Klux Klan's activities in Danbury, because that activity is not yet on a scale that warrants that kind of coverage or that sort of anticipation or the acknowledgment that here is a group with national dimensions that deserves such recognition. In no sense is that true in our society today.<sup>26</sup>

Two years later, Sardeson reiterated his belief that the level of press coverage has been out of proportion with the level of hate

group activity, and that news coverage has been "emotional" rather than "analytical." Getting into print establishes a kind of legitimacy, said Sardeson. Ku Klux Klan leaders can then use their press clippings to promote their next event.<sup>27</sup>

According to columnist Dick Polman of the Hartford Courant, the September 1980 Klan cross-burning in Scotland drew 150 reporters. Polman, writing a year later, noted its newsworthiness but judged that some local coverage had been excessive. He reported that the Ansonia Evening Sentinel had carried five stories in its July 13, 1981, edition, including a front-page, first-person article by a reporter assigned to travel with the local Klan.<sup>28</sup>

Sentinel editor Robert Pollack told Polman, "If our media blitz causes people to shy away from the Klan, I feel we will have done our job. If the Klan increases its membership, I obviously misplayed it." And Sentinel reporter Joseph T. Brady responded that he exposed Klan leader Farrard's status as a Scoutmaster, and by penetrating the Klan let it hang itself with its own words. Polman expressed the belief that the debate about Klan coverage obscured a deeper conflict, which is that "...the press, by focusing on the quick and dirty Klan story, will give short shrift to the far more insidious forms of racism that permeate society."<sup>29</sup>

The New Haven Register also asked reporters and editors to assess the quality of their Klan coverage. Editorial writer Larry Cohen of the Hartford Courant replied, "I think it's important for the news media to explain this social phenomenon....I do not find that even the most aggressive coverage of the Klan was too much." A similar response was offered by WTNH-TV News Director Tom Kirby: "It's my personal opinion exposure of the Ku Klux Klan in the press is healthy to the extent we can't allow them to operate as a supersecret agency. People have to see and understand them."<sup>30</sup>

The following month, The New Haven Register continued the discussion of news coverage of the Klan by quoting from the editor of the Charlotte (North Carolina) Observer:

Do newspapers and television stations strengthen hate groups like the Ku Klux Klan, magnifying their vicious influence in our society? The answer far too often is yes...We must not treat them as benign oddities, rushing their every word into print because of their freakishness. If the Klan activity engendered violence, arrests or some other significant public commotion, we would report it. Otherwise, a reporter's notes would be filed away for possible later use.<sup>31</sup>

This policy suggests that although many reporters believe it is their role to expose the Klan for public judgment, that approach is not universally held.

## Notes to Chapter 4

1. Institute of Social Inquiry, Roper Center, University of Connecticut; Connecticut Poll, #3 (December 20, 1979) and #9 (September 30, 1980).
2. Advisory Committee Transcript, p. 28.
3. Ibid., p. 41.
4. Hartford Courant, September 4, 1980.
5. Ibid.
6. Manchester Herald, September 1, 1981.
7. Hartford Courant, October 13, 1981.
8. New Haven Register, July 10, 1981.
9. Ibid.
10. Ibid.
11. Bristol Valley Press, October 9, 1981.
12. CHRO Hartford Transcript, p. 76.
13. Advisory Committee Transcript, p. 181.
14. Ibid., p. 186.
15. Ibid., p. 187.
16. Ibid., p. 189.
17. New Haven Register, September 3, 1981.
18. Bridgeport Post, October 26, 1981.
19. Stamford Advocate, October 11, 1981.
20. Staff Interview, September 1, 1981.
21. Advisory Committee Transcript, p. 146-47.
22. Rev. Kevin Bean, letter to Elpidio Collazo, Connecticut Field Representative, New England Regional Office, U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, August 13, 1981.
23. Staff Interview, August 21, 1981.

24. Advisory Committee Transcript, p. 33.
25. Norwich Bulletin, July 14, 1981.
26. CHRO Hartford Transcript, p. 154.
27. Staff Interview, August 21, 1981.
28. Hartford Courant, July 21, 1981.
29. Ibid.
30. New Haven Register, July 26, 1981.
31. New Haven Register, August 8, 1981.

## Chapter 5 - FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The following findings and recommendations are submitted under the provisions of Section 703.2 (e) of the Commission's regulations calling upon Advisory Committees to "initiate and forward advice and recommendations to the Commission upon matters which the State Committees have studied."

In view of the Commission's interest in this issue, the Connecticut Advisory Committee is confident that its findings and recommendations will be seriously considered by the Commission as it formulates its approach to this complex problem.

### Findings

#### The Acts of Hate and the Actors

1. In the late 1970s, an increase in the amount of vandalism and intimidation directed at racial and religious minorities in Connecticut was observed by such groups as the Connecticut Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities (CHRO). As a result of its 1979 hearings CHRO reported that 28 cities experienced 83 incidents, including 17 cross-burnings, for the period from late 1978 to early 1980. Since then, the number of cross-burnings appears to have declined, although no complete count is available. Newspaper reports indicate that from January 1980 to June 1982, seven cross-burnings occurred in four cities. Underlying causes according to CHRO were economic insecurity and ignorance.
2. Racially and religiously motivated violence appears to represent a small percentage of violent crime in the State. In the past three years, five serious crimes were identified as racially or religiously motivated. However, crime statistics collected

nationally by the Uniform Crime Reports section of the FBI and the National Crime Survey do not indicate whether the reported acts are racially or religiously motivated.

3. Other than the organized cross-burnings, there is no evidence of a link between organized hate group activity and the acts reported above. Some community leaders assert that even if hate groups such as the Klan are not directly responsible for these acts, the emergence of such groups and the publicity given to them may spur people to perpetrate such acts.
4. There appear to be two Klan factions in Connecticut with a total estimated membership of less than 300. No more than 30 Klan members have ever appeared at any single gathering.
5. The visibility and activity of the Klan have increased since 1979. It has held six public rallies, conducted recruitment drives in nine towns, and distributed literature on several high school and college campuses. The Klan in Connecticut has initiated out-of-state recruitment rallies in Massachusetts, Vermont, and Rhode Island, and avowed Klan members have attended public meetings in Windham, Meriden, and Ansonia. The Klan here does not portray itself as a hate group and is attempting to change its image, denying it is anti-Catholic.
6. From March 1981 to June 1982, State and local police made 19 arrests at 5 Klan gatherings, and charged those arrested with crimes ranging from disorderly conduct to carrying concealed and dangerous weapons.
7. Community groups have sponsored meetings and rallies to protest the Klan's presence and to urge people not to attend Klan rallies. However, militant anti-Klan groups have sought confrontations with Klan demonstrators and the ensuing violence was the result primarily of these confrontational tactics and



the inability of law enforcement officials to keep the two groups apart.

### Governmental Response

8. The involvement of the Federal Government included investigation and making available of information by the FBI to law enforcement agencies; prosecution by the U.S. Attorney's office of civil rights violations; and technical assistance to local communities by the Community Relations Service of the U.S. Department of Justice.
9. The State legislature has passed three laws addressing this problem: a law concerning desecration of property deals with racially and religiously motivated vandalism and cross burnings; a law banning paramilitary training camps addresses the potential problem of organized hate group violence; and an anti-mask law increases penalties for civil rights violations committed by persons wearing masks.
10. In response to the growing concern with hate group activity, the Governor established a 21-member Task Force on Racial Harmony. Its purpose is to develop community programs against discrimination; to recommend legislation at the State and local levels; and to develop an educational film focusing on the problems of racism.
11. State law enforcement officials have obtained court orders prohibiting the carrying of weapons at Klan rallies, and permitting the search of persons and vehicles by State police. This action apparently prevented violence and confrontations with anti-Klan groups.

12. The CHRO has contributed to increasing public awareness by conducting factfinding hearings on cross-burnings and vandalism and publishing a report of the hearings including recommendations. The agency called for community leaders and public officials to respond to acts of racially or religiously motivated violence with strong statements of disapproval and assistance to victims; local boards of education and the State Board of Education to implement human relations curricula; criminal statutes to be rigorously invoked; and the General Assembly to adopt legislation addressing the problem of cross-burnings and swastika markings.
13. Two municipalities, Meriden and Windham, which were the sites of Klan rallies, sought to enact municipal ordinances limiting demonstrations. The Connecticut Civil Liberties Union opposed the proposed Meriden ordinance on the grounds that it violates the Constitutional rights of freedom of speech and freedom of assembly.
14. In Meriden, public and community leaders issued strong statements against the Klan, formed a racial tension committee to deal with the problem of racism and the issue of the KKK, developed a revised social studies curriculum, and provided police training in controlling crowds and avoiding violence.
15. Since 1979 when the Klan began to manifest its presence in Connecticut through demonstrations, rallies, and recruitment drives, law enforcement agencies have increasingly had to direct their energies toward the prevention of hate group-related violence.

#### Community Response

16. Despite the increased visibility of hate groups in Connecticut, there is little evidence that the citizens of Connecticut have

been infected by their racial or religious hatred. In fact, citizens of Connecticut oppose the emergence of the Klan and the Klan's apparent assumption that Connecticut is fertile ground for its appeal. Opposition is manifested in the legislative responses of affected towns and the State legislature, as well as in a variety of peaceful protests.

17. Community leaders have been unanimous in condemning the actions of hate groups, but there is a distinct difference of opinion between those who advocate exposure of such activity and those who believe that such publicity may play into their hands and may even encourage imitation. This difference of opinion is shared as well by the media.
18. The informational and instructional materials on the KKK developed by the Connecticut Education Association were prepared in response to the absence in the schools of curricular material to address this issue, and have been well received by local boards of education and school personnel.

### Recommendations

#### Recommendations for Preventing Acts of Racial and Religious Hatred

1. Basic to ensuring that racially and religiously motivated violence and vandalism will disappear from the American scene is to eliminate their root causes. Among these root causes is economic insecurity. Economic well-being and job security would foster self-respect without hatred and envy, and a sense of belonging without joining hate groups. Both the public and private sectors of the economy should take steps to ensure a secure economic life for all.

2. Ignorance is another root cause of racial and religious hatred and accompanying acts of violence. In its recommendations following its 1979 hearings, the Connecticut Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities called for all local boards of education and the State Department of Education to implement "human relations curricula designed to foster good will among the racial and religious groups and elements of the population of the State, in accordance with C.G.S. Section 10-226g." This recommendation should be acted upon immediately. In addition, efforts such as that of the Connecticut Education Association to develop informational and instructional material on the Klan should be encouraged.
3. To enable such educational programs to be executed successfully, the State Board of Education should require all teachers to take courses in intergroup relations, and the history and contribution of minority groups.
4. Public officials and community leaders should speak out forcefully against racially and religiously motivated vandalism and violence and should assist in organizing groups in the community to address the problem. Such acts must not be ignored, but their importance must not be exaggerated.
5. To alert citizens to the problem of racially and religiously motivated violence and vandalism, each municipality should establish a broadly-based commission to study its manifestation and recommend solutions. The group should work closely with local human rights commissions, the Governor's Task Force on Racial Harmony, and the CHRO.
6. The State of Connecticut should vigorously enforce its current laws against cross-burnings, swastika-painting, and paramilitary training, and other criminal laws which may apply to acts of bigotry.

## Recommendations for Reacting to Acts of Racial and Religious Hatred

7. Individual citizens as well as community leaders should speak out against racial vandalism and violence in actions as well as words. It should be made clear that hate groups and acts of hatred do not have the community's approval, through individual expressions of condemnation and aid to the victims of race-motivated vandalism. Vandals and hate group members must not be allowed to think that they represent a "silent majority" of citizens. Any act of vandalism should be countered by an outpouring of support for the victims by the entire community.
8. State and local police, as well as the FBI, should treat acts of violence and vandalism which are racially or religiously motivated, as serious crimes, and this should be made clear to all.
9. Public officials and community leaders should encourage and support the victims of racially and religiously motivated violence and vandalism to seek redress through private civil suits, even if a criminal suit has been brought. These suits may serve two purposes: to obtain damages for victims and to deter perpetrators from committing such acts in the future.
10. A statewide campaign should be developed to urge the public to report racially or religiously motivated vandalism and violence to their police departments. Local and State law enforcement agencies should collect, maintain and forward such information concerning incidents of racially and religiously motivated violence and vandalism to the CHRO which should serve as a central repository or clearinghouse for such information.
11. Federal, State and local law enforcement agencies should share information regarding incidents of racially and religiously motivated vandalism and violence as well as information

regarding the activities of extremist groups to plan effectively for future events.

12. Specific numbers of incidents of racially motivated violence are difficult to obtain because crime statistics do not indicate motivation. The Uniform Crime Reports of the FBI and the National Crime Survey should therefore explore the possibility of identifying crimes which are racially or religiously motivated.
13. Where hate group-organized rallies take place, local and State law enforcement agencies should emphasize the prevention of violence by banning weapons at such rallies, by maintaining high visibility, and by coordinating their efforts where appropriate.

## APPENDICES

- A. Findings and Recommendations of the Report of Incidents of Cross Burnings and Vandalism Motivated by Racial and Religious Prejudice in Connecticut Issued by the Connecticut Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities, April 1980.
- B. Letter of State Representative Richard Tulisano to Chairperson John Rose, Connecticut Advisory Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, August 31, 1981.
- C. Letter of U.S. Representative Sam Gejdenson to Chairperson John Rose, Connecticut Advisory Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, September 23, 1981.
- D. Letter of U.S. Representative Lawrence J. DeNardis to Chairperson John Rose, Connecticut Advisory Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, September 24, 1981.
- E. Joint Memorandum of Connecticut Permanent Commission on the Status of Women and Connecticut Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities on Activities of the Ku Klux Klan in Connecticut, September 11, 1980.
- F. Proposed Policy of Connecticut State Board of Education on Academic Freedom and Public Education

FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE REPORT OF  
INCIDENTS OF CROSS BURNINGS AND VANDALISM  
MOTIVATED BY RACIAL AND RELIGIOUS PREJUDICE IN CONNECTICUT  
ISSUED BY THE CONNECTICUT COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS  
AND OPPORTUNITIES, APRIL 1980

FINDINGS

1. That in recent years, and in particular since 1978, Connecticut has experienced a significant increase in the number of incidents motivated by racial and religious prejudice, specifically cross burnings, terrorism, vandalism to property, and harassment.
2. That the victims of these incidents have been and continue to be seriously affected by them.
3. That these incidents are not the result of any organized activity within the state but were the random acts of individuals.
4. That although in the majority of these incidents the perpetrators remain unknown, where perpetrators have been observed or apprehended they were said to be juveniles and young adults.
5. That literature bearing out-of-state return addresses has been widely distributed in Connecticut.
6. That state and municipal facilities were the sites of literature distribution and recruitment, but that no direct official involvement has been shown.
7. That official and community response to these incidents has been uneven.
8. That media coverage of these incidents is helpful but often lacking in depth.
9. That among the underlying causes of these incidents are economic insecurity, psychological disorder, and ignorance.
10. That there is a lack of human relations education to young students and to educators.
11. That current Connecticut statutes available for the prosecution of these incidents are too broad to address the sensitivities offended.
12. That Connecticut lacks an adequate central data collection, analysis and distribution capacity to facilitate investigation of these incidents and prosecution of the perpetrators.



## RECOMMENDATIONS

### Recommendation #1:

to local elected officials, to local law enforcement officials, to local community leaders and to local and state school officials: that they respond to the above referenced incidents swiftly and with a strong public statement of disapproval, and that they offer assistance to victims where appropriate.

This is based on the findings: #1 #2 #7

### Recommendation #2:

to local boards of education and to the state board of education: that all local boards implement human relations curricula designed to foster good will among the racial and religious groups and elements of the population of the state, in accordance with C.G.S. Section 1--226g.

This is based on the findings: #1 #3 #4 #5 #6 #9 #10

### Recommendation #3:

to prosecutorial officials: that criminal statutes that address the above-referenced incidents be rigorously invoked, so that persons who would perpetrate such incidents will be on notice that engaging in such incidents will, upon conviction, lead to incarceration or fine.

This is based on the findings: #1 #2 #7

### Recommendation #4:

to local and state law enforcement officials: that a clearing house be designated and maintained for the collection, analysis and dissemination of information regarding incidents of cross burnings and vandalism motivated by racial and religious prejudice.

This is based on the findings: #1 #3 #5 #8 #12 #4

### Recommendation #5:

to the General Assembly: that it consider adopting legislation addressing specifically incidents of cross burnings and swastika markings.

This is based on the findings: #1 #2 #11



FILED  
AUG 31 1981

State of Connecticut 4 A 2: 03  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
STATE CAPITOL  
HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT 06115

REPRESENTATIVE RICHARD D. TULISANO  
TWENTY-NINTH DISTRICT  
2606 MAIN STREET  
ROCKY HILL, CONNECTICUT 06067

CHAIRMAN  
JUDICIARY COMMITTEE  
MEMBER  
LEGISLATIVE REGULATION REVIEW COMMITTEE

August 31, 1981

Mr. John Rose, Jr.  
Chairperson  
Connecticut Advisory Committee  
United States Commission on Civil Rights  
55 Summer Street  
8th Floor  
Boston, Massachusetts 02110

RECEIVED  
SEP 8 1981  
LOUDEN, BYRNE, SHECHTMAN,  
SLATER & ROSE

Dear Mr. Rose:

I am writing in reference to you letter of August 10, 1981 in which you request information relative to the activities of the Connecticut General Assembly, and the Judiciary Committee in particular, in countering racial and religious hatred.

I have enclosed copies of legislation and policy statements which will indicate the Connecticut Legislature's position with respect to this issue. In addition, I have enclosed material which will summarize my position on this matter. Although I cannot speak for the entire membership of the Judiciary Committee or for the full General Assembly, I believe that my position is shared by a vast number of legislators and by many Connecticut residents as well.

During the 1980 session of the Legislature, two bills of particular significance were enacted into law. An Act Concerning Sexual Harassment As An Unfair Labor Practice was enacted in response to reports of specific instances of sexual harassment in the workplace in exchange for preferential treatment. The public hearings on this legislation were full of testimony indicating that sexual harassment occurs in all business environments and that the publicized reports were not merely isolated incidents. Although this cannot be strictly construed as a form of racial or religious persecution, it certainly falls within the general realm of civil rights.

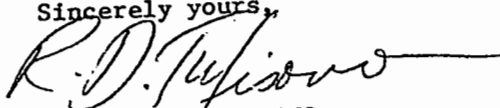
An Act Concerning the Desecration of Property was passed last year after a number of cross burning incidents occurred in the State. With the increasing visibility of groups such as the Ku Klux Klan appearing across Connecticut, this legislation was enacted at an opportune time and has served to deter those who would display such a blatant symbol of racial hatred.

I have included two bills considered during the 1981 session of the Legislature which indicate, in different ways, Connecticut's response to hate groups. An Act Concerning Paramilitary Camps was passed into law this session and will ban the organization of camps to instruct in the use of firearms and explosives for the purpose of carrying out violent public disturbances. Enacted in response to the organization of such camps in various southern states, this law is a clear indication to hate groups that Connecticut does not condone their presence in this State and will vigorously prosecute those who seek to set up an unauthorized paramilitary camp.

Finally, in response to the much-publicized reports of brainwashing and kidnapping within various self-proclaimed religious organizations, many Connecticut legislators sought to pass An Act Concerning Temporary Guardians, or the so-called "anti-cult" bill. As some of the enclosed material will indicate, I was vehemently opposed to this legislation. I was concerned not only with the obvious procedural due process problems inherent in such legislation but also with the flagrant violation of First Amendment rights to free speech, religion and assembly. Ultimately, this bill was defeated on the floor of the House of Representatives.

I hope that this information will provide you with a starting point at which to assess Connecticut's response to racial and religious hate groups. Please contact me at your convenience if you need additional information or if you would like to discuss this matter with me personally.

Sincerely yours,



RICHARD D. TULISANO  
State Representative

House Chairman  
Judiciary Committee

RDT:tpc  
Enclosures



**SAM GEJDENSON**  
20 DISTRICT  
CONNECTICUT

**CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES**  
**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20515

**COMMITTEES:**  
**FOREIGN AFFAIRS**  
**INTERIOR**

September 23, 1981

Mr. John Rose, Jr.  
Chairperson, Connecticut Advisory Committee  
on Civil Rights  
Appropriations Committee Room  
State Capitol  
Hartford, CT 06115

Dear Mr. Rose:

I would like to express my sincere appreciation to you for inviting me to participate in this meeting. Unfortunately, legislation scheduled for action by the House of Representatives today does not permit me to be with you. I would, however, like to express some thoughts on the serious problem of racial and religious intolerance.

First, I would like to applaud you for holding this meeting. Hatred, particularly hatred that is aimed at a person's race, color, or religious beliefs, is extremely difficult to study in a detached manner. Yet, cool heads must prevail if we are to make any progress in promoting tolerance in these areas.

As you may know, on the federal level, the House Judiciary Subcommittee on Criminal Justice is in the process of holding hearings on racially motivated violence. The focus has been on analyzing existing civil rights laws to find out whether new laws are needed, or whether improved enforcement of our present laws would alleviate the problem. I have been following these hearings with great interest and am hopeful that the Subcommittee's final recommendations will provide concrete options for addressing the problem.

It is my belief that racial and religious hatred, as illustrated by the recent surge in activity of the Ku Klux Klan right here in Connecticut, is fuelled by economic pressures. When people feel their standard of living threatened, the urge to fight to protect what they have is a normal response.

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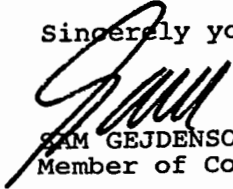
**THIS STATIONERY PRINTED ON PAPER MADE WITH RECYCLED FIBERS**

The prospect of sliding back down the socioeconomic ladder is met with a fierce determination to hold on. When the government and other institutions turn a deaf ear to these concerns, frustration turns to fear and striking out at neighbors and co-workers -- anybody that might want to "take what belongs to me" -- results. The concept of us-versus-them develops, and "them" is anybody who is different.

This attitude was, I believe, to a large extent responsible for the recent rioting and racial violence in England. The severe job shortages and sharp curtailment of government services there certainly contributed to the unrest. In light of our own dismal unemployment picture, and huge federal budget cuts, which will be implemented in the very near future, I fear that the same thing could happen here in the United States.

I don't have any quick-fix solutions to the problems of racial and religious hatred, but I feel strongly that the lack of confidence in our government's ability, and, more importantly, desire to deal with the social problems that occur when our economy is not working well is an issue that must be addressed. Only by creating an atmosphere in which government is perceived as, and is receptive to the very real concerns of those encountering severe economic hardship, can we hope to see a decrease in groups that feed on the fears of those who feel abandoned.

Sincerely yours,



SAM GEJDENSON  
Member of Congress

SG:mg

**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
**Washington, D.C. 20515**

September 24, 1981

Mr. Chairman, Members of the Commission:

Thank you for holding this hearing on the reemergence of the Klan..and for allowing me to make pertinent comments.

The events of last summer in the Town of Scotland, Connecticut..and more recent activity by the Klan in numerous Connecticut municipalities, give rise to the notion that those who would try to polarize us and play on the worst fears of some, have evolved into a stronger, more sophisticated network that must be met with equally strong determination.

When the Klan chose Scotland last year for its first major recruitment rally north of the Mason Dixon line since before the turn of the century, I thought it was of critical importance that public leaders join together in opposition to the Klan drive..and to formulate plans that would express the deep sense of outrage and concern that most Connecticut residents felt. There ensued wide-spread disagreement about whether to give the Klan more exposure than they were entitled to by calling attention to their activities ..or to ignore them and maybe they would go away.

Let there be no mistake. The Klan will not go away willfully. And, they cannot be wished away. Evidence the Meriden experience earlier this year. Evidence the recent appearance in many Connecticut towns..particularly in the area I represent in Congress..in front of major business establishments and town offices.

Let us not be beguiled. These are not peaceful persons. A three-piece business suit is sometimes worn by Klan members to gain acceptance and respectability, but every Klansman takes an oath which makes clear the organization is not a social one. Firearms and violence are the Invisible Empire's stock and trade.

Last summer, I was instrumental in bringing together concerned parties to hold a prayer vigil in Scotland a day before the Klan rally..and in organizing an ecumenical service held one week later. It is my belief that more of these positive and peaceful demonstrations will be a clear signal to the Klan that their activities will not be met with indifference and mistaken approval.

I look forward to seeing the product of this hearing.

APPENDIX E

M E M O R A N D U M

FROM: The Permanent Commission on the Status of Women and  
The Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities

RE: Activities of the Ku-Klux Klan in Connecticut

DATE: September 11, 1980

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The Permanent Commission on the Status of Women and the Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities are in firm opposition to the activities of the Ku Klux Klan in Connecticut. As state law mandates our Commissions to work toward the elimination of discrimination, a crippling and corrosive factor in society, we wish to emphasize that the activities of the Ku Klux Klan run counter to that purpose and serve to perpetuate a social climate which fosters not only prejudice and discrimination, but also, social disharmony, personal pain and deplorable acts of malice.

A report on Cross Burnings and Vandalism was published by the Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities in April, 1980. The report is the result of public hearings conducted by the CHRO in Danbury, Bridgeport, Norwalk and Hartford in 1979. The testimony of Governor Ella Grasso, presented at the Hartford hearing included the following statement:

"The actions by a few who burn crosses or seek to organize on behalf of groups which profess hatred are deplorable. It is clear that these actions have no place in our society. They are totally unacceptable.

"Cross burnings and other acts of racial violence are condemned by all responsible persons who believe that our society must be based on racial justice and harmony. An attack against the dignity of any one person is an affront to us all. We in New England and the entire country must react quickly and strongly against any insidious attempts to pit one racial or ethnic group against one another..."

The Permanent Commission on the Status of Women and the Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities concur with these statements and urge, in view of the planned meeting of the Ku Klux Klan scheduled for September 13, 1980 in Scotland, you to take a strong public stance against the presence of the Klan in your community.

A select panel of commissioners of the CHRO on review of all the testimony and exhibits presented at the hearings, made a number of recommendations. The first recommendation was addressed:

"to local elected officials, to local law enforcement officials to local community leaders and to local and state school officials, that they respond to the above referenced incidents swiftly and with a strong public statement of disapproval, and that they offer assistance to victims where appropriate."

The Permanent Commission on the Status of Women supports this recommendation. Moreover, the PCSW is dedicated to the eradication of racism and is certainly aware of the special plight of minority women, the traditional targets of both race and sex discrimination in society. In June 1980, the PCSW adopted an official policy statement to address the needs of minority women and also voted unanimous approval of the following resolution:

"WHEREAS, racism is a heinous, divisive and disabling factor in society, and

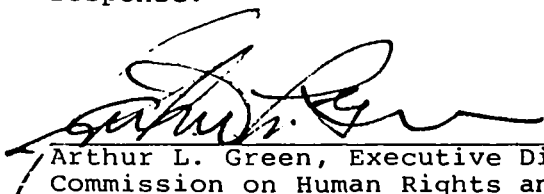
WHEREAS, minority women are forced to confront both racism and sexism and thus experience the adverse impact of double jeopardy in every area of legal, social, political and economic life, and,

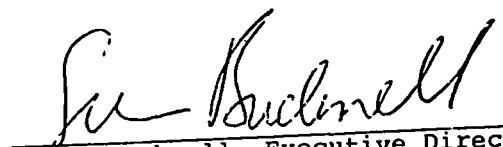
WHEREAS, minority women are exploited in the labor force and vastly overrepresented in low paying, dead end occupations, earning median incomes at the lowest level of the economic ladder,

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT, The Permanent Commission on the Status of Women pledges its total commitment to the elimination of racism and the full participation of minority women in all of the Commission programs."



Ultimately, the institution of racism has a harmful effect on every man, woman and child in society. The PCSW and the CHRO are concerned that inaction on the part of any public official or civil rights organizations may be viewed by the Klan as silent approval of its racist policies and practices. Moreover, such inaction may support any intention on the part of the Klan to pursue organized activities in other parts of the State. Therefore, the PCSW and the CHRO urge you to take a strong, public position against the activities of the KKK and that you take appropriate action to protect the lives, properties and liberty of individuals who are potential victims of the racism and attendant violent acts. We believe that as public officials and community leaders, you will act favorable upon this recommendation and we look forward to your response.

  
Arthur L. Green, Executive Director  
Commission on Human Rights and  
Opportunities

  
Susan Bucknell, Executive Director  
Permanent Commission on the  
Status of Women

cc: Town of Scotland

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## A Proposed Policy on Academic Freedom and Public Education

Academic freedom is the freedom to teach and to learn. In defending the freedom to teach and to learn we affirm the democratic process itself. American public education is the source of much that is essential to our democratic heritage. No other single institution has so significantly sustained our national diversity, nor helped voice our shared hopes for an open and tolerant society. Academic freedom is among the strengths of American public education. Attempts to deny the freedom to teach and to learn are therefore incompatible with the goals of excellence and equity in the life of our public schools.

With freedom comes responsibility. With rights come obligations. Accordingly, academic freedom in our public schools is subject to certain limitations. Therefore, the STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION affirms that:

Academic freedom in our public schools is properly defined within the context of law and the constraints of mutual respect among individuals. Public schools represent a public trust. They exist to prepare our children to become partners in a society of self-governing citizens. Therefore, access to ideas and opportunities to consider the broad range of questions and experiences which constitute the proper preparation for a life of responsible citizenship must not be defined by the interests of any single viewpoint. Teachers, school administrators, librarians, and school media specialists must be free to select instructional and research materials appropriate to the maturity level of their students. This freedom is itself subject to the reasonable restrictions mandated by law to school officials and administrators. At the same time, local school officials must demonstrate substantial or legitimate public interest in order to justify censorship or other proposed restrictions upon teaching and learning. Similarly, local boards cannot place conditions on the use of public school libraries which are related solely to the social or political viewpoints of school board members. At the same time, while students must be free to voice their opinions in the context of a free inquiry after truth, and respect for their fellow students and school personnel, student expression which threatens to interfere substantially with the school's function is not warranted by academic freedom. Students must be mindful that their rights are neither absolute nor unlimited. Part of responsible citizenship is coming to accept the consequences of the freedoms to which one is entitled by law and tradition. Similarly, parents have the right to affect their own children's education, but this right must be balanced against the right other parent's children have to a suitable range of educational experiences. Throughout, the tenets of academic freedom seek to encourage a spirit of reasoned community participation in the life and practices of our public schools.

And since teaching and learning is the mission of our public schools, the STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION affirms the distinction between teaching and indoctrination. Schools should teach students how to think, not what to think. To study an idea is not necessarily to endorse an idea. Public school classrooms are forums for inquiry, not arenas for the promulgation of particular viewpoints. While communities have the right to exercise supervision over their own public school practices and programs, their participation in the educational life of their schools should respect the constitutional and intellectual rights guaranteed school personnel and students by American law and tradition.

Accordingly, the STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION, in order to encourage improved educational practices, recommends that local school boards adopt policies and procedures to receive, review, and take action upon requests that question public

school practices and programs. Community members should be encouraged to and made aware of their rights to voice their opinions about school practices and programs in an appropriate administrative forum. The STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION further recommends that local school boards take steps to encourage informed community participation in the shared work of sustaining and improving our public schools.

Finally, the STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION affirms that community members and school personnel should acknowledge together that the purpose of public education is the pursuit of knowledge and the preparation of our children for responsible citizenship in a society of tolerance and shared freedom.

SOURCE: Theodore S. Sergi, Deputy Commissioner of Education, Connecticut State Board of Education, submission to Elpidio Collazo, Connecticut Field Representative, New England Regional Office, U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, Interview, Hartford, Conn., August 19, 1981.

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