

INTIMIDATION AND VIOLENCE

***RACIAL AND RELIGIOUS
BIGOTRY IN AMERICA***

A Restatement of the United States
Commission on Civil Rights
Clearinghouse Publication 96
September 1990

U.S. COMMISSION ON CIVIL RIGHTS

The U.S. Commission on Civil Rights is a temporary, independent, bipartisan agency established by Congress in 1957 and reestablished in 1983 and directed to:

- Investigate complaints alleging that citizens are being deprived of their right to vote by reason of their race, color, religion, sex, age, handicap, or national origin, or by reason of fraudulent practices;
- Study and collect information concerning legal developments constituting discrimination or a denial of equal protection of the laws under the Constitution because of race, color, religion, sex, age, handicap, or national origin, or in the administration of justice;
- Appraise Federal laws and policies with respect to discrimination or denial of equal protection of the laws because of race, color, religion, sex, age, handicap, or national origin;
- Serve as a national clearinghouse for information in respect to discrimination or denial of equal protection of the laws because of race, color, religion, sex, age, handicap, or national origin;
- Submit reports, findings, and recommendations to the President and Congress.

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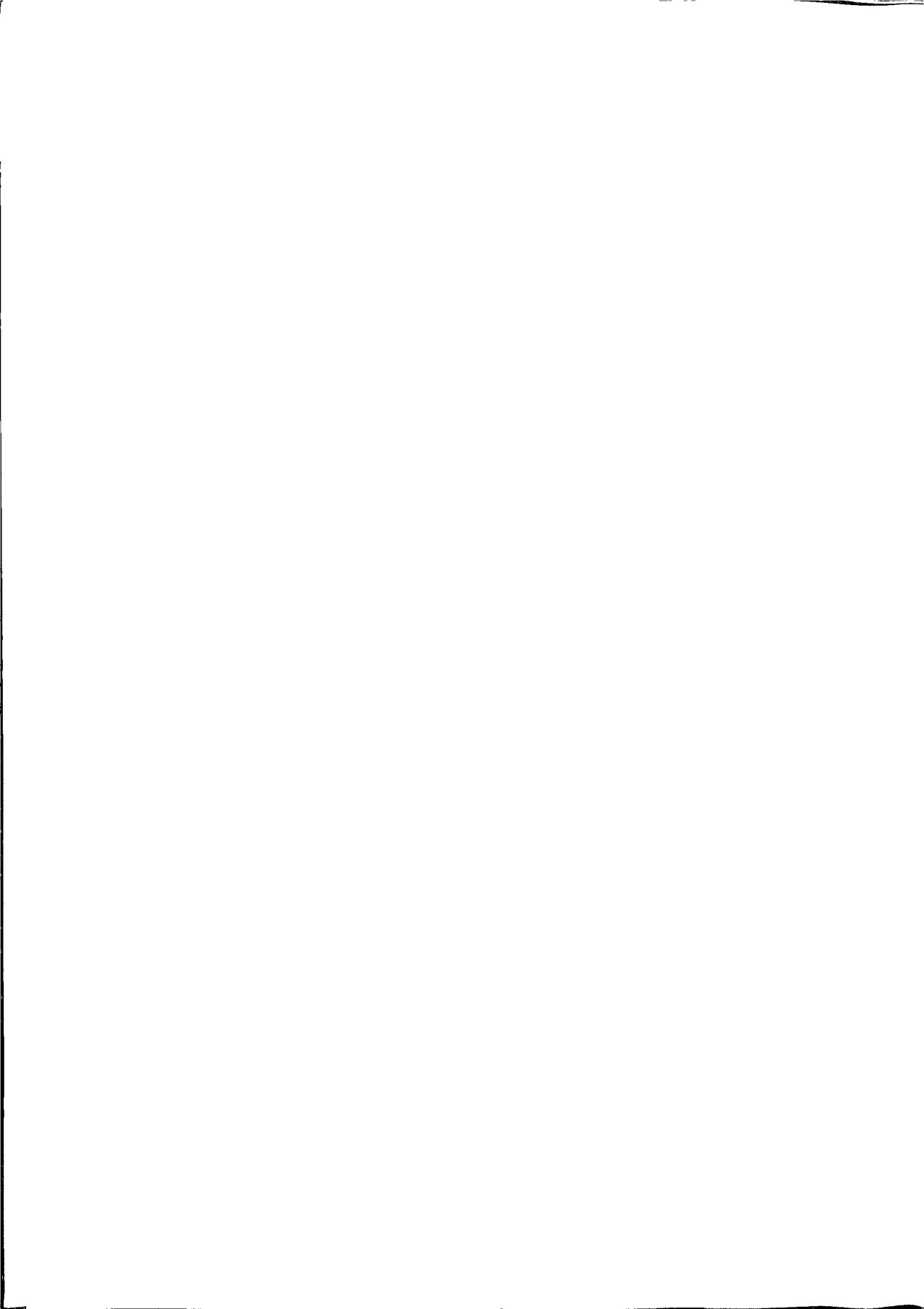
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Chapter 1

Introduction

In 1983 the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights published a statement entitled *Intimidation and Violence—Racial and Religious Bigotry in America*. That statement is now out of print. The Commission remains deeply concerned, however, about acts of violence perpetrated against racial and religious minorities. The media bring recurring accounts of intimidating and violent activities, which include cross burnings; defacement, destruction, and desecration of religious property, infliction of personal injury, and, in some cases, the deaths of human beings. In this statement, an updated reprint of the 1983 publication, the Commission seeks not only to express its continuing concern over the senseless and intimidating acts of violence motivated by racial and religious bigotry, but also to share its view of the nature and extent of the problem, to describe promising responses of public officials and community leaders to combat the problem, and to urge upon others a posture of condemnation against those who would violate the enduring values of a pluralistic society.

In preparing this statement, the Commission drew extensively upon information provided by some of its 51 State Advisory Committees, who have been monitoring related developments at State and local levels.¹ Additional data were drawn from a variety of publications, reports, and the news media.

¹ In each State and the District of Columbia, the Commission has established Advisory Committees that keep the Commission abreast of civil rights developments at the State and local levels.

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Introduction

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The Problem Illustrated

In Colorado on May 4, 1982, five persons were arrested for an alleged plot to kill two Federal judges and blow up Internal Revenue Service headquarters in downtown Denver. Police confiscated bombs, automatic weapons, and other firearms. One of those arrested was president of a local chapter of the United Klans of America. Media accounts alleged that all five persons had Klan connections.²

On March 10, 1982, a Jewish female student was shot five times with a BB gun on the University of Maryland campus at College Park, Maryland. The attacker shouted "Heil Hitler" as he fired and used other epithets that indicated anti-Jewish feelings. An underground campus newspaper hailed the assailant as a hero and suggested that next time he use a flamethrower on the victim.³

In 1984 a Massachusetts State official reported physical assaults, such as beatings and rock throwings, vandalism of cars, arson, intimidation, and the use of racial epithets and slogans, against Cambodian, Vietnamese, and Laotian refugees resettled in the State.⁴ The State attorney general said, "Often, these individuals cannot even walk along the public streets without being physically attacked and threatened because of their race or national origin."⁵

In 1986 five white cadets at the Citadel in South Carolina, masked and wrapped in white sheets, entered the room of a black cadet, uttered obscenities, and left a charred paper cross. The black cadet subsequently withdrew from the school.⁶

In 1988 the Los Angeles County Human Relations Commission reported that hate crimes directed mostly at blacks and Jews reached the highest level since the agency began collecting data in 1980.⁷

² *Rocky Mountain News*, May 5, 1982, p. 1.

³ *Baltimore Sun*, May 18, 1982, p. 1.

⁴ Diana Tanaka, assistant attorney general, Civil Rights Division, Massachusetts Department of the Attorney General, interview in Boston, Mass., Dec. 6, 1984, cited in U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, *Recent Activities Against Citizens and Residents of Asian Descent* (1988), p. 46 (hereafter cited as *Commission Asian Report*).

⁵ Francis X. Bellotti, attorney general, "Bellotti Obtains Court Order Protecting Vietnamese Refugees," news release, Massachusetts Department of the Attorney General, Sept. 21, 1984, p. 1, cited in *Commission Asian Report*, p. 46.

⁶ Richard Green, Jr., "5 Citadel Cadets Indicted Under Mask Law," *Charleston News and Courier*, Oct. 7, 1987.

⁷ The commission said it did not think the growing numbers were a result solely of improved reporting, but that "such crimes are actually increasing." Los Angeles County Commission on Human Relations report to the Los Angeles County board of Supervisors, *Hate Crime in Los Angeles County 1988* (February 1989), p. 1.

These incidents illustrate the phenomenon of central concern in this statement, namely, intimidation and violence against racial and religious minorities that is rooted in unmitigated bigotry.

Working Definition

A bigot is "one obstinately or intolerantly devoted to his own church, party, belief, or opinion."⁸ Bigotry in the context of this statement is a rigid intolerance of differences and of those who hold such differences. It is this blind, unreasoned intolerance that makes racial and religious bigotry a form of racial and religious discrimination. When manifested in violent or intimidating ways, racial and religious bigotry represent a desire to deny the rights and freedoms of persons of different creed, color, race, or national origin. In sum, racial and religious bigotry result frequently in tactics to destroy "enemies" who are perceived as enemies only because they are "different." These tactics include a variety of efforts to intimidate, frighten, injure, ridicule, and, on occasion, kill those who hold different religious beliefs, subscribe to different cultural values, or exhibit racial characteristics unlike those of the bigot.

The particular focus of this statement, therefore, is upon the potential and actual denials of civil rights by groups or individuals whose racial and religious bigotry foment violence and social disruption. This Commission is concerned when the promulgation of hate and hostility based on extremist concepts of racial purity or religious certitude leads to illegal acts of force and violence. Lest the vision of America as a democratic and pluralistic society becomes a nightmare of hatred and divisiveness, we urge a heightened public awareness of the threat to civil rights posed by proponents of racial and religious bigotry.

⁸ *Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary* (1979).

Chapter 2

Extent and Significance of the Problem

Although it is impossible to measure with precision the extent of the problem of racial and religious bigotry in the United States, this chapter reviews the limited statistical data and shares the perceptions of knowledgeable observers in various parts of the country. In addition, the chapter focuses on the relationship of the problem to persistent racism, anti-Semitism, and other kinds of religious bigotry.

Extent of the Problem

Not all acts of religious discrimination and bigotry are anti-Semitic in character. But incidents of other kinds of religious bigotry and violence have been difficult to record. However, the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) of B'nai B'rith has maintained over the past decade a count of anti-Semitic incidents reported to its regional offices across the country.¹ ADL records show that since 1980 there has been a significant increase in reported episodes of anti-Semitic vandalism (377 in 1980, 715 in 1984, and 823 in 1988).² In 1980 the ADL also began to compile statistics on reports of a more serious form of anti-Semitic intimidation and violence, namely, "harassments, threats, and assaults." The number of such incidents reported in 1988 was more than quadruple the 1980 figure (458, up from 112).³

¹ The most recent of these annual reports is *1988 Audit of Anti-Semitic Incidents* (Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith, 1989) (hereafter cited as *1989 ADL Report*).

² *Ibid.*, app. C, p. 40.

³ *Ibid.*

With respect to the national distribution of anti-Semitic vandalism, the ADL reports the following pattern:

The States of New York (208), California (121), Florida (89), and New Jersey (67) reported the most incidents in 1988.

The 1988 figure from Florida (89) shows a noticeable increase over 1987 and the most acts of such vandalism ever reported in an ADL audit for that State.

Maryland (36), Massachusetts (35), Pennsylvania (33), Illinois (29), Texas (23), and Georgia (22) constitute a second tier of States reporting 20 or more incidents of vandalism in 1988.

The Northeast continued to be the region reporting the greatest number of incidents.⁴ The data also indicated that most of those arrested in connection with these incidents were young persons. ADL went on to note that:

In 1988 police departments in 19 states reported 124 arrests in connection with 57 of the incidents. Of those arrested, 111—approximately 90%—were under 21 years of age. In 1987, 58 incidents in 15 States had resulted in the arrest of 78 individuals, nearly 22% of whom were 21 or older—the highest percentage of arrests in that age group noted in any ADL audit. The fact that 1988 saw many more arrests than 1987, in connection with a comparable number of incidents, may indicate that many acts of anti-Semitic vandalism are being perpetrated by groups or gangs of youths, rather than by individual miscreants.

Among those arrested for vandalizing Jewish institutions in 1988 were a number of teenage members of local "Skinhead" groups. They were arrested in Mobile, Alabama; Dallas, Texas; Oklahoma City, Oklahoma; and in Ventura, and San Diego, California.⁵

While the ADL collects anti-Semitic bias incident data nationwide, there is no uniform, comprehensive data collection nationally with respect to incidents involving racial bias and other forms of religious bigotry and violence. It, therefore, is impossible to measure whether such incidents are increasing generally. As the Los Angeles County Commission on Human Relations report indicates, such data now are being collected by some State or local agencies and

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 8–10.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 9.

organizations.⁶ The Commission has continued to rely also on monitoring of bias incidents by its State Advisory Committees, and other sources, such as the Community Relations Service of the U.S. Department of Justice.⁷

Information is available, therefore, on patterns of incidents in various States and the role of Ku Klux Klan and neo-Nazi type organizations in them. For example, the Idaho Advisory Committee informed the Commission in 1986 that it had been told by an Idaho police official that racial and religious harassment had become a potential problem because of the numbers of various groups and persons sharing their philosophies, and their ability to disseminate their message.⁸ This same official further noted that persons with criminal backgrounds reportedly had become involved with these groups, there was an increased presence of the Ku Klux Klan, and the groups had been conducting paramilitary activities.⁹

The Pennsylvania Advisory Committee informed the Commission in 1986 that it understood there had been a decline in incidents and rallies by extremist groups in most parts of the State.¹⁰ However, the regional director of the ADL noted that several incidents had occurred in western Pennsylvania, including the distribution of racist literature by Aryan Nations, a white supremacy group.¹¹ Incidents including a firebombing of a black family's home in a predominantly white suburb of Pittsburgh also were reported.¹²

The Georgia Advisory Committee heard a report in 1987 from a close observer that Klan influence in the State was waning as a result of Federal probes but that an auxiliary group had increased its membership from 12 in 1985 to 385 in 1986.¹³

⁶ See *Hate Crime in Los Angeles County 1988*, p. 8.

⁷ Community Relations Service (CRS) staff reported that they responded to 276 racial incidents in 1986, compared to 166 incidents in 1982 and 44 in 1979. Dennis Wynn, media affairs officer, CRS, Department of Justice, letter to Tom Olson, press officer, U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, Jan. 21, 1987.

⁸ Idaho Advisory Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, *Bigotry and Violence in Idaho* (1986), p. 9.

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ Pennsylvania Advisory Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, "The Status of Bigotry and Violence in Southwestern and Southeastern Pennsylvania in the Mid-1980s," briefing memorandum to the Commission (March 1986), p. 5.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

¹² *Ibid.*, Aryan Nations flyers also had appeared in the Pittsburgh metropolitan area.

¹³ Leonard Zeskind, research director, Center for Democratic Renewal, Atlanta, in Georgia Advisory Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, *Bigotry and Violence in Georgia* (1989), p. 6.

A New Jersey State Police official told the New Jersey Advisory Committee in 1986 that racial and ethnic graffiti and vandalism were the types of incidents most often reported to the State police and that most such incidents were not the work of organized groups but juveniles.¹⁴

The Illinois Advisory Committee reported activity by several categories of groups that espouse bigotry and violence, including the Ku Klux Klan, neo-Nazis, and the Christian Identity Movement and other church-related organizations.¹⁵

Further, the Rhode Island Advisory Committee received reports that there is a wide gap between the minority communities and the community at large. Members of the Southeast Asian community receive the brunt of interracial hostility from white citizens and feel unprotected by the police. Members of the Hispanic community are frequently the targets of ethnic harassment and intimidation by employers and coworkers, and are also victims of "bureaucratic bigotry" committed by public officials and employees.¹⁶

While the role of organizations and individuals in fomenting or carrying out bias incidents thus apparently varies from community to community, one relatively new hate organization has emerged as of particular concern. According to the Southern Poverty Law Center, neo-Nazi Skinheads represent a "unique and frightening phenomenon in the history of white supremacism in America."¹⁷ Originally teen gangs, they are now being organized into a national network by older white supremacist groups, such as the White Aryan Resistance and the Aryan Nations. "Not since the Ku Klux Klan of the 1950s has a white supremacist group been so obsessed with violence, and so reckless in its disregard for the law," the center observed.¹⁸ The targets of its violence were said to have included not only blacks and Jews but Asian Americans, American Indians, Hispanics, and some whites as well.¹⁹

According to the Anti-Defamation League:

¹⁴ New Jersey Advisory Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, *Incidents of Bigotry and Violence in Essex County* (1988), pp. 9-10.

¹⁵ Illinois Advisory Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, *Bigotry and Violence in Illinois* (1988), p. 2.

¹⁶ Rhode Island Advisory Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, *Bigotry and Violence in Rhode Island* (1990), p. 25.

¹⁷ Southern Poverty Law Center, "Skinheads Blamed for Year's Worst Attacks," *Klanwatch Intelligence Report*, February 1989, p. 1.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 1.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

The rise in the number of Skinheads has been paralleled by an increase in the amount of violent crime they have committed, including two homicides and numerous shootings, beatings and stabbings, mostly directed against members of minority groups. Skinheads have also been responsible for a significant number of vandalisms of synagogues and other Jewish institutions.²⁰

Campus Bias Incidents

Bias-related incidents on college campuses have been the subject of numerous disturbing media reports in recent years. The ADL reported a sharp increase in incidents against Jews on campuses in 1988.²¹ For example, "spray-painted swastikas and anti-Semitic slogans such as Kill the Kikes' and 'Zionazi racists' were found on the wall of the Jewish Student Center at SUNY at Binghamton." The report also noted that abusive remarks and slurs, "combining anti-Semitism and sexism, have proliferated on numerous campuses."²²

The Missouri Advisory Committee was told that some extremist groups have targeted colleges and universities in the State to express hate philosophy. These groups have perpetrated 70 percent of the hate violence against black students, 12 percent against Hispanic students, and about 7 percent against Southeast Asian students.²³

A racial brawl was reported at Amherst University in October 1986; racial epithets reportedly were carved in desks at Providence (R.I.) College; a black woman cyclist was harassed at the University of California at Berkeley; the American Indian president of the student body at Macalester College in St. Paul, Minnesota, received threatening letters with racial slurs after she wrote a campus newspaper article on racism; and University of Michigan students staged a sit-in to protest racial incidents, including the telling of racist jokes on a campus radio station.²⁴ The Southern Poverty Law

²⁰ Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith, Civil Rights Division, *Young and Violent: The Growing Menace of America's Neo-Nazi Skinheads* (1988), p. 1.

²¹ 1989 ADL Report, p. 7.

²² *Ibid.*, pp. 7-8.

²³ Missouri Advisory Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, *Bigotry and Violence on Missouri's College Campuses* (1990), p. 2.

²⁴ Hayes Johnson, "Racism Still Smolders on Campus," *USA TODAY*, May 10, 1988, p. 10. See also, e.g., Robert Barr, "Campus Unrest Sign of Racial Tensions," *Binghamton Press and Sun-Bulletin*, Apr. 19, 1988; Christopher Connell, "Campus Incidents Lead to New Push for Minority Enrollments," *Washington Times*, May 16, 1988; Michele N-K Collison, "Racial Incidents Worry Campus Officials, Prompt U. of (continued...)

Center reported that white supremacist groups appear to have renewed attempts to recruit college youth, citing, for example, flyers distributed at Northwest Missouri State University asking students to join the Klan and warning that "The Knights of the Ku Klux Klan are watching you."²⁵

As is the case with hate activity generally, it is not certain whether an actual increase in campus bias incidents has occurred in recent years or, rather, there is greater attention to such incidents.²⁶ Nonetheless, as an ADL official observed, "These are the future leaders of our country, and it's disturbing to see on campuses, manifestations of the crudest form of bigotry and racism."²⁷ A newspaper editorially pointed out that "Crude, overt racial bigotry has again come out of campus closets and onto the quads" when "[a] society's universities ought to be among its chief civilizing influences."²⁸

Significance of the Problem

The significance of the problem does not lie exclusively in the existence and activity of particular organizations that promulgate spurious doctrines of racial superiority and advocate religious persecution. What is significant, however, is the fact that these groups advocate openly the racist and discriminatory beliefs that surface in individuals and institutions despite efforts at their eradication. Were hatred and violence based on race, religion, or national origin practiced only by members of such groups, the problem would pale in scope as well as significance. Not all anti-Semites join a neo-Nazi organization, but every anti-Semite is a threat to the religious freedom of others. Not all racists join a hooded order, but every person who holds his or her own race to be

²⁴(...continued)

Massachusetts Study," *Chronicle of Higher Education*, March 1987; Lee A. Daniels, "Prejudice on Campuses is Feared to be Rising," *New York Times*, Oct. 31, 1988; and Robert Zausner, "Racism Charges Trouble Penn State," *Philadelphia Inquirer*, Feb. 18, 1988, p. 1-A.

²⁵ Adam Cohen, Southern Poverty Law Center, "White Supremacists Find Recruits on Campus," *Klanwatch Intelligence Report*, February 1989, p. 15.

²⁶ A Community Relations Service (CRS) official told the Commission in May 1989 that CRS casework on campus has "increased significantly," with the staff filings of "alerts" increasing from 48 in 1987 to 77 in 1988. Grace Flores-Hughes, Director, CRS, Department of Justice, remarks at May 18, 1989, briefing of U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, transcript, p. 9.

²⁷ "Anti-Semitic Incidents in 1988 Put at 5-Year High," *New York Times*, Jan. 29, 1989, p. 20, quoting Jeffrey P. Sinensky, director of ADL's civil rights division.

²⁸ "Racism: From Closet to Quad," *New York Times*, Apr. 1, 1987.

superior or inviolate denigrates another and threatens its survival. Not every person who believes his or her culture, race, or religion is in jeopardy takes to paramilitary training, but every person who does so and gains the weaponry and skills requisite to armed violence is a menace to social cohesion and tranquility. In the final analysis, the problem is the continuing existence of racism, anti-Semitism, and other religious bias that surface in the acts of some individuals and compose the rhetoric of a number of extremist organizations.

That an undercurrent of racism and religious prejudice persists is evidenced by the fact that groups espousing such views persist. Some have developed computer networks to communicate with each other, sophisticated telephone message systems, and cable television programs to spread their message.²⁹ Prejudice and animosity survive, not just in organizations known for creating divisive tension and intimidation, but also in numerous acts of religious and racial violence committed by persons similarly infected. Although the organizations themselves and the ideas expressed by their spokespersons are repugnant to most Americans, their significance to the Commission rests in the fact that such ideas are often expressed in illegal acts of discrimination based on race and religion. In the next chapter, an attempt is made to identify the probable causes and contributing circumstances of such behavior. By understanding the causes and precipitative mechanisms, it may be possible to identify some useful remedies.

²⁹ See, for example, Stephen Miller, "Hi-Tech Racism," *Black Enterprise*, October 1987, p. 22, and National Institute Against Prejudice and Violence, *Bigotry and Cable TV, Legal Issues and Community Responses* (1988).

Probable Causes and Contributing Circumstances

A number of explanations have been offered for the acts of bigotry and intimidation, reports of which have become so commonplace. For example, some believe that racial integration of neighborhoods is an important factor in bias incidents. The Southern Poverty Law Center reported that "move-in violence," such as arson attempts and cross burnings at the homes of minorities who had recently moved into mostly white areas, has been a serious problem in many metropolitan areas, such as Baltimore, Chicago, Cleveland, and Philadelphia, as well as Atlanta.¹ By the same token, there is a school of thought that suggests that campus bias incidents tend to reflect white backlash in the face of increased minority student enrollments on formerly white campuses and resentment by some white students at what they consider "preferential" treatment of minority persons through "set asides," "affirmative action," and other "race conscious," college-endorsed programs.²

¹ See generally Southern Poverty Law Center, Klanwatch, *"Move-In" Violence: White Resistance to Neighborhood Integration in the 1980's* (1987). A Justice Department official also suggested that racial incidents are the "unfortunate by-product of an essentially positive underlying development, the increasing integration of neighborhoods across the country." John Bolton, Assistant Attorney General, Office of Legislative Affairs, U.S. Department of Justice, letter to Susan J. Prado, Acting Staff Director, U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, Mar. 30, 1987.

² See, for example, Shelby Steele, "The Recoloring of Campus Life," *Harper's Magazine*, February 1989, pp. 47-55, and John Adams Wettergreen, "The New Bigotry on Campus" (1989, available from U.S. Commission on Civil Rights). Dr. (continued...)

A fundamental cause of bigotry-bred violence in the United States, according to some who have studied the problem, is the continuing presence and tenacious survival of deep-seated racism, anti-Semitism, and other kinds of religious bigotry. One author, a Roman Catholic theologian, documents in scholarly detail the persistence through history of anti-Semitism and traces its manifestations from the classical Greek period to the present time.³ Edward H. Flannery's historical analysis of religious bigotry suggests that all forms of hostile prejudice against members of a particular group are often rooted in narrow theological concepts. These theological underpinnings account for the fact that institutionalized forms of racism and religious bias frequently take on the appearance of religion itself, as well as the fact that acts of intimidation and violence are encouraged and perpetrated at times with zealous devotion to a contrived and convoluted set of racist beliefs.

The foregoing insights are illustrated in two major and infamous historical developments: the treatment of Jews in Nazi Germany and the perpetuation by the colonial settlers of America of the institution of slavery. The fanaticism of the Holocaust and the dehumanizing bondage of blacks in the United States provide evidence of the depths of degradation to which humanity can descend when bigotry and intolerance are institutionalized and officially condoned. In these situations the zeal of the racial and religious bigot can be seen clearly as ultimately antireligious, antidemocratic, and a perversion of humanistic as well as theological ideals.

Though contemporary America will never become a latter-day Nazi state or repeat the ignominy of slavery, the inescapable fact remains that the perverse traits of racism, anti-Semitism, and other religious bigotry exist and are expressed in alarming, sometimes violent, ways by individuals and groups who make no secret of their prejudice against racial and religious minorities. It should also be clear that racism, anti-Semitism, and other kinds of religious bias are not caused by Klan and Nazi-like organizations; these groups

²(...continued)

Wettergreen argues that such programs actually are divisive in that they place high value on "cultural pluralism," rather than unity. "In other words, the greatly heightened racial and ethnic consciousness of the American university means both that there will be more incidents of bigotry and that many incidents which are not racially or ethnically bigoted will be thought to be so." *Ibid.*, p. 13. See also Joseph Berger, "Campus Racial Strains Show 2 Perspectives on Inequality," *New York Times*, May 22, 1989.

³ Edward H. Flannery, *The Anguish of the Jews* (New York: Macmillan, 1965).

simply attract persons whose beliefs are already developed. The organizations provide an enclave of support for expressing and implementing ideas that are formed by a host of other influences encountered in the family, schools, and other situations.

This observation is not made to minimize concern over the groups themselves and the crucial role they play. Some reported acts of racial and religious intimidation are committed by persons who are said to have, or profess to have, past or present connections with organizations that preach hatred and advocate violence to vent that hatred. Even the perpetrators with no known or professed connection with such groups are clearly imitators of them and adopt their symbols of terror—the swastika, the burning cross, and the graffiti of hate and intimidation. In all cases, however, a major role of extremist groups is to provide the rhetoric of justification for acts perpetrated either by the groups themselves or individual imitators. As far as the victims are concerned, it matters little whether a group or an individual is responsible for the act; the terrorizing effects are the same.

Another role of hate groups, more ominous than the rhetoric of hate and advocacy of violence, has emerged in the past decade. Paramilitary training sites have been established where persons are trained in the use of sophisticated weapons, the manufacture of bombs, and the skills of guerrilla warfare. It has been claimed that these tactics are intended to prepare members to defend “the faith” from the enemies of “White Christian America” or to ensure survival in an anticipated race war.⁴

Ted Gurr, an authority on violence in America, gave still another reason for taking these groups seriously when, before a congressional subcommittee on crime of the House Judiciary Committee, he identified a characteristic that runs directly counter to the American political tradition. Professor Gurr said:

The contemporary Ku Klux Klan, National Socialist Party, and similar extremist groups are distinctively anti-democratic in their political beliefs and practices. The victims of anti-democratic violence have included, but were not limited to, ethnic minorities (blacks, Mexican-Americans) and religious minorities (Catholics, Jews). Whites of Protestant background also were often victimized because of their alleged criminality, immorality, or

⁴ Georgia Advisory Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, *Perceptions of Hate Group Activity in Georgia* (1982), pp. 2, 3.

radical political views. Black Americans are not the only ones who need fear the resurgence of anti-democratic groups.⁵

Although one cause of racial and religious terrorism is widely acknowledged as being the persistence of racism and religious bigotry, many observers appear in general agreement in identifying a number of circumstances and perceptions that contribute to the precipitation and exacerbation of overt acts of violence. In addition to the resentment by some whites of gains for minorities in housing and higher education, contributing circumstances are economic conditions, the mechanism of scapegoating, media treatment of advocates of violence, perceptions of retrenchment in civil rights enforcement, and failure on the part of law enforcement agencies to respond appropriately to specific incidents.⁶

Economic Conditions and Scapegoating

Rising unemployment, business failures, cuts in government programs and subsidies, increases in mortgage defaults, shrinking retail sales, declines in housing starts, and troubles in the auto and oil industries—these have been among components of the daily litany of economic news in some regions of this Nation. Although these conditions adversely affect a wide segment of the population, they have particularly severe repercussions on the poor and on racial minorities. Such circumstances do not create bigots or cause acts of violence against others based on race or religion, but coupled with the human propensity to find someone to blame, these conditions give rise to scapegoating, wherein negative and retaliatory feelings toward those perceived as causing economic difficulties are

⁵ Professor Gurr characterizes these groups as "anti-democratic" because of "two characteristics that set them sharply apart from almost all other groups on the right of the American political spectrum. First, they reject some basic principles of democratic American society. They are prepared to deny equality of treatment or opportunity to ethnic and religious minorities, and they oppose the free expression of political and social opinions which contradict their own views. Second, they are prepared, collectively, if not in all individual instances, to use violence and to provoke violent confrontations in order to promote their objectives." The total statement and oral testimony appear in U.S. Congress, House, Committee on the Judiciary, Subcommittee on Crime, *Increasing Violence Against Minorities*, 96th Cong., 2nd sess. (Dec. 9, 1980), pp. 2, 4-23 (hereafter cited as *Increasing Violence Against Minorities*).

⁶ See, for example, Abt Associates, "Research Application Review—The Response of the Criminal Justice System to Bias Crime," Oct. 5, 1987, citing "increased economic competition from minorities...ethnic neighborhood transition, and a perceived decrease in government efforts to prevent discrimination in education, housing, and employment" as reasons behind bias crimes, p. 1 (hereafter cited as Abt Associates).

heightened. Under such circumstances, some whites severely affected by economic hardships believe that their hard times result from "reverse discrimination" in employment and a tax burden imposed upon them to support government programs that in their view provide undeserved advantages to minorities. Immigrants may also be perceived as threatening the economic well-being of such persons.

The report of the Commission's Advisory Committee in Michigan expanded on the theme that economic difficulties intensify the appeal of extremist groups to some whites who feel they must compete unfairly with blacks and other minorities for fewer jobs and shrinking resources:

Private organizations in Michigan ranging from New Detroit to the Detroit Urban League have drawn similar conclusions. Public officials including U.S. Attorney Gilman, Wayne County Sheriff Lucas and representatives of the Detroit Department of Human Rights, the Saginaw Human Relations Department, and the Detroit Mayor's office have also pointed to the depressed economy. As Alexander Luvall, Special Assistant to the Mayor of Detroit observed, "when the economy is bad, it seems like the Klan starts marching again."⁷

Professor Gurr also described the role of economic conditions and added additional insight:

We know that most of the historical episodes of anti-democratic action occurred in times, in places and among people who suffered from economic dislocation

The evidence suggests that people who hold anti-democratic beliefs today are more likely than not to be economically marginal. They also tend to live in rural and small town America, areas where wages tend to be lower and economic opportunities fewer. These are the people who are most likely to be especially hard-pressed by inflation, by rising unemployment, and by static or declining real wages.

Their grievances in those circumstances tend to focus on the Federal Government and on minorities: on the Federal Government because of tax policies, and because they believe Federal spending policies have contributed

⁷ Michigan Advisory Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, *Hate Groups in Michigan: A Sham or a Shame* (1982), p. 16 (hereafter cited as *Michigan Report*).

to inflation; and minorities because they are believed to receive unfair advantage from Government programs.⁹

Media Treatment

White robes, masked hoods, storm trooper uniforms, swastika arm bands, and visible automatic weapons understandably attract media attention. Furthermore, the wearers of such regalia are hungry for press coverage and not beyond staging media events in an effort to spread the message of hostility and intimidation.

Journalist Dean Calbreath, writing for the *Columbia Journalism Review*, admits that he himself was used by the Klan and unwittingly served its publicity purposes on many occasions. He also describes how other elements of the mass media have been similarly duped. Calbreath quotes one former Klan official as having claimed: "We used the press. We lied and did anything we could to make reporters happy. We intentionally staged things just to get coverage."¹⁰

Although the press has a responsibility to report the news, it has not always done so with accuracy and appropriate perspective. Often statements, patently false, go unchallenged by interviewers of hate group spokespersons, thereby perpetuating stereotypic myths about racial and religious minorities. When the significance of events is exaggerated or inordinate attention is paid to minor side issues, the coverage is distorted. An example cited by the Michigan Advisory Committee illustrates the problem: "While over 3,000 attended the celebration [of the thirty-third anniversary of Israel] most of the media attention went to fewer than 20 Nazis who briefly demonstrated."¹¹ In Missouri, a television report of racial tensions at a college included an interview with a Klan representative, sandwiched between other campus interviews, conveying the erroneous impression that the Klan was active on the campus and leading to a deluge of calls to the school from frightened parents.¹¹

⁹ *Increasing Violence Against Minorities*, pp. 7-8. See also U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, *Recent Activities Against Citizens and Residents of Asian Descent* (1986), p. 39, in which the Commission found that factors contributing to anti-Asian sentiments in the U.S. included "competition between low-income refugees and other low-income groups for jobs and housing."

¹⁰ "Kovering the Klan: How the Press Gets Tricked into Boosting the KKK," *Columbia Journalism Review*, March/April 1981, pp. 42-45.

¹¹ *Michigan Report*, p. 20.

¹¹ Missouri Advisory Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, *Campus Bias in Missouri*, transcript of community forum in Columbia, Mar. 22, 1989.

Perceived Retrenchments in Civil Rights Enforcement

There is a widespread perception that the Federal Government in recent years relaxed its enforcement posture in the area of civil rights and cut back on social programs that have benefited many Americans. Bigots, reportedly, have been quick to interpret these initiatives as a lack of government concern for minorities who are now fair game for attacks that are expected to go unchallenged.¹²

In addition to the perception that government authority will not be imposed upon violators of civil rights, there may be those who assume that the perceived shift toward a conservative political philosophy in recent years provided license to express and act out their racial and religious hostility. These people frequently describe themselves as true (white) patriots who place (white) America first and are prepared to defend (white) democracy from its enemies. Professor Gurr pointed out:

I want to make it very clear that anti-democratic attitudes of the kinds I have identified are not part of the American conservative philosophy.

. . . In general it has become more widely acceptable to oppose equal rights for women, to support legislation against forced busing, to restrict affirmative action programs and to oppose government intervention in social and economic affairs. These policy preferences all are associated in the public's eye with conservatism. Why not go several steps further and retaliate against the liberals, the blacks, the public officials who are responsible for, or who benefit from, these kinds of programs and activities?

I am suggesting that this is the kind of mental process going on among people whom I have called anti-democratic. Right wing anti-democratic views probably are not more common now than they were 15 years ago. What has changed is that the shift in general public opinion has led extremists to feel that it has become more acceptable to express their views openly and to act upon them.¹³

Law Enforcement Response

Effective police responses to incidents of racial and religious violence are necessary to keep such incidents from spreading. If the

¹² *Michigan Report*, pp. 16-17. See also Minnesota Advisory Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, *Bigotry and Violence in Minnesota* (presentation by Elaine Valadez, chair, Governor's Task Force on Prejudice and Violence) (1989). For a more comprehensive statement of this view, see Frederick A. Hurst, commissioner, Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination, "Racism in the Reagan Years, Resurgence or Reaffirmation?" (1989, available from U.S. Commission on Civil Rights).

¹³ *Increasing Violence Against Minorities*, p. 8.

police fail to respond, or respond in ways that clearly demonstrate a lack of sensitivity, perpetrators can interpret the police inactivity as official sympathy or even sanction. A knowledgeable observer expressed the importance of effective official response well when he said:

What is problematic, at least for members of anti-democratic organizations, is how much the police, prosecutors, judges, and juries are prepared to let them accomplish without imposing legal sanctions. What the Klans and the neo-Nazis are doing now can be regarded as a kind of testing, both of public opinion and of official response. Official responses which are tolerant, apathetic, or simply ineffective are likely to encourage more extremist action.¹⁴

The effectiveness of police response is enhanced when the racial, ethnic, and religious composition of the force reflects the community it serves. Although writing about factors that may precipitate urban race riots, Morris Janowitz cites a study that sheds light on this contributing factor to effective police response. The carefully matched comparison of riot and nonriot cities by Lieberman and Silverman, covering 76 race riots between 1913 and 1963, revealed that riots are less likely to occur in "cities with more racially integrated police forces."¹⁵

The Commission's Michigan Advisory Committee highlighted the importance of integrated police forces in responding effectively to incidents of racial and religious violence. Among the Committee's major findings was: "The Detroit Police Department has been particularly effective in responding promptly to reported incidents, in part because the racial and ethnic composition of the personnel reflects that of the community."¹⁶

¹⁴ Ibid. It should be noted that the U.S. Justice Department has vigorously prosecuted cases involving racial violence. One observer said the Department in recent years had the best record in this regard in three decades. Morris Dees, Southern Poverty Law Center, remarks at Northeast Regional Conference on Prejudice and Violence, National Institute Against Prejudice and Violence, New York City, Mar. 3, 1988, as quoted in John C. Eastman, staff memorandum to Melvin L. Jenkins, Acting Staff Director, U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, Oct. 13, 1988. Attorney General Richard Thornburgh cited the ADL's assessment of the Department's "superb job" in attacking the hate movement and pledged that this "unrelenting effort will continue." *1989 ADL Report* (frontispiece).

¹⁵ Morris Janowitz, "Collective Racial Violence," in R. Graham and T.R. Gurr, eds., *Violence in America* (Beverly Hills & London: Sage Publications, 1979), chap. 9, p. 263.

¹⁶ *Michigan Report*, p. 35.

Another factor that affects police response is the widespread lack of hard, comprehensive, and comparative data concerning the number, location, and types of crime that are motivated by racial or religious bigotry. The slaying of a spouse in a domestic quarrel and the murder of a black person for "race-mixing" are both reflected in crime statistics as homicides. This Commission has learned of the existence of few statewide efforts to gather and report discretely those crimes apparently motivated by racial and religious bigotry.¹⁷ Police and community response can be affected adversely by the absence of reliable data on criminal violence motivated by bigotry because this gap in knowledge makes it difficult for police to measure trends, develop enforcement strategies, and allocate personnel. The lack of data also impairs the ability of policymakers and other concerned groups and individuals to assess the extent of the problem and develop adequate measures of prevention.¹⁸

Finally, some question whether bias crimes are vigorously prosecuted at State and local levels. For example, it has been argued that:

For the most part, the criminal justice system—like the rest of society—has not recognized the seriousness of the hate violence problem. Police officers, prosecutors, and judges tend to regard most incidents as juvenile pranks, harmless vandalism, private matters between the involved parties, or acceptable behavior against disliked groups. Many criminal justice system personnel do not believe that hate violence exists in their community. Others are aware it exists but are reluctant to publicize the fact for fear their communities will be branded as racist or hotbeds of violence. Lack of police and prosecutor attention to bias crime often reflects the attitude of local residents who do not want minorities in their community.¹⁹

¹⁷ Such States include Connecticut, Illinois, Maryland, Minnesota, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, and Virginia. Adele Terrell, program director, National Institute Against Prejudice and Violence, telephone interview, Apr. 3, 1989.

¹⁸ Col. Leonard Suppenski, Baltimore County Police Department, remarks at briefing of the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, Feb. 13, 1987.

¹⁹ Abt Associates, p. 2. See also Center for Democratic Renewal, *They Don't All Wear Sheets: A Chronology of Racist and Far Right Violence—1980–1986*, which concluded that "Bigoted violence has become a critical criminal justice issue of the late 1980s...[s]ections of our society remain unconvinced of the necessity to redress immediately the violence directed at some classes of victims...[I]n the overwhelming majority of instances, bigoted violence is simply ignored, dismissed as the work of young pranksters' or simply left unexplained." p. 18.

Promising Responses

With respect to the fundamental cause of acts of bigotry and intimidation, the persistence of racism, anti-Semitism, and other forms of religious bias, there are no easy or quick solutions. Some State and local government and community leaders, however, have undertaken important steps to counter the influence of extremist groups and to minimize the incidence of bias-motivated acts. For example, in 1981 the Governor of Maryland established a task force on violence and extremism, which was the counterpart of the private sector Coalition Opposed to Violence and Extremism. During 6 years of meetings and public hearings, the Governor's task force led, among other things, to the establishment in Baltimore of the National Institute Against Prejudice and Violence to conduct relatively comprehensive research in this area.¹ Similar task forces and coalitions have been established by government officials or community leaders elsewhere to air the problem and prepare strategies against it.²

Further, various State and local governments have strengthened laws against bias-motivated crimes and amended or passed new laws prohibiting, among other things, paramilitary training, cross

¹ State of Maryland, Office of the Governor, *Final Report of the Governor's Task Force on Violence and Extremism* (1987), p. 149.

² See, for example, the discussion of the Kootenai County Task Force on Human Relations in the Idaho Advisory Committee to the United States Commission on Civil Rights, *Bigotry and Violence in Idaho* (1986), pp. 39-44.

burnings, and the wearing of hoods or masks.³ In addition, various State agencies and higher education institutions have reacted to incidents of bigotry and violence on campus by studying apparent causes and proposing possible remedies.⁴

Improving Police Intervention

A number of police departments have responded to acts of racial and religious violence by forming specialized units. These units are responsible for gathering intelligence, preventing illegal acts and conspiracies, and swiftly apprehending persons who commit racially or religiously motivated crimes. In Boston a community disorders unit was created by special order of the police commissioner. The New England Regional Office described its work:

The unit works closely with district police personnel, assisting them in identifying and investigating crimes which are racially motivated [It] has been successful in educating the rest of the department about the seriousness of racially motivated crimes [and] . . . diligent in investigating [them] . . . [It also] works closely with the Civil Rights Division of the State Attorney General's Office and the local district attorney in prosecuting these cases. According to the director of the unit, in neighborhoods where civil rights violations have been successfully prosecuted, the number of such incidents has decreased.⁵

³ For a recent, detailed compilation of such State-by-State legal initiatives, as well as related Federal laws, see National Institute Against Prejudice and Violence, *Striking Back at Bigotry: Remedies Under Federal and State Law for Violence Motivated by Racial, Religious, and Ethnic Prejudice* (1986) and the *1988 Supplement* (1988).

⁴ See, for example, South Carolina State Human Affairs Commission, *A Report on Hazing/Race Relations at the Citadel* (1987), which reported that most black cadets found that forms of racial intimidation by white cadets, including name calling and ethnic jokes, "were not uncommon" (p. 21) and that the lack of black role models, such as black executives or professors, created "an environment lacking in ethnic diversity and cultural sensitivity." (p. 25). See also "Racism Report Praises Penn State But Outlines Room for Improvement," *Philadelphia Inquirer*, Mar. 9, 1989, which noted that a group of social scientists recommended, among other things, establishing a committee to define racial and sexual intolerance and to develop sanctions and consideration of a "crime stoppers" program with cash incentives for anonymous information on racial crimes. Another study, by the National Institute Against Prejudice and Violence, surveyed the frequency and awareness of "ethnoviolence" at the University of Maryland Baltimore County campus. *Ethnoviolence on Campus, The UMBC Study* (1987).

⁵ U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, New England Regional Office, "Regional Response," Nov. 13, 1981, p. 4-5. For a discussion of how Massachusetts uses its Civil Rights Act to prosecute hate crimes, see Massachusetts Advisory Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, *Stemming Violence and Intimidation through the Massachusetts Civil Rights Act* (1988).

In Providence, Rhode Island, a somewhat different approach was taken:

An undercover police unit called the Terrorist-Extremist Suppression Team was formed by the Mayor and the Police Chief to track the Klan, neo-Nazis and other extremist groups. Formed in May [1981], the Mayor explained that its members are experienced officers who would work full-time to obtain information. In July, evidence against five members of extremist groups was presented to a jury The unit functions as an independent unit within the department to investigate all complaints of harassment which fall under both new and old laws. The unit is under the direct supervision of the chief of police Thus far the unit has generated evidence presented to the grand jury based on old laws as well as the recent statute. [The police chief] believes that the long-term success of the unit depends on the public's awareness and utilization of it. He reported that the unit is in contact with ADL and is working with other community groups to encourage community support.⁶

Another police strategy was employed to respond to a planned Klan rally in Windham, Connecticut. Since earlier rallies in the State led to violence, the State's chief attorney and the head of the State department of public safety were able to obtain a court order banning weapons and allowing the State police to search persons going to the site and their vehicles. As a result of this authority and the announced intention to use it, violence was avoided.⁷ Similarly, police and the State bureau of investigation's handling of counterdemonstrations against civil rights marches in Forsyth County, Georgia, was praised by observers before the Georgia Advisory Committee.⁸

Prompt and effective police response to reported incidents requires careful, detailed planning. The Michigan Advisory Committee described the process used in Saginaw:

In anticipation of potential disruptions, the city of Saginaw drew together representatives of the Human Relations Commission, law enforcement agencies, business leaders, media representatives and other community leaders to develop an appropriate response. An emergency mobilization plan for police personnel was created which spelled out lines of authority, operational procedures, use-of-force policies, procedures for arresting

⁶ Ibid., p. 11.

⁷ Ibid., p. 12.

⁸ The bureau's antiterrorism task force handled security for the marchers during the counterdemonstrations. Georgia Advisory Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, *Bigotry and Violence in Georgia* (forthcoming).

juveniles and adults, where individuals would be temporarily held, and guidelines governing other contingencies.⁹

Further, several States now collect and report information on hate incidents. State Advisory Committees have reported how these efforts are working.¹⁰

On the Federal level, President Bush, on April 23, 1990, signed the Hate Crime Statistics Act. The act requires the Attorney General to collect data about crimes that show "evidence of prejudice based on race, religion, sexual orientation, or ethnicity, including where appropriate the crimes of murder, non-negligent manslaughter; forcible rape; aggravated assault, simple assault, intimidation; arson; and destruction, damage or vandalism of property."¹¹ In signing the law, the President also announced that the Department of Justice had established a new toll-free telephone number for reporting complaints of hate crimes (1-800-347-HATE).

It is conceivable that some of these attempts to improve law enforcement, i.e., those having to do with heightened surveillance and undercover operations, could border on questionable or illegal invasions of privacy. In the Providence situation, for example, the American Civil Liberties Union expressed concern that the undercover team posed a possible threat to first amendment rights.¹² Similar questions were raised about the State police searches connected with a Klan rally in Windham, Connecticut.¹³ In any event, care must be exercised to ensure that all measures taken are proper and lawful. To violate constitutional liberties in order to protect civil rights would be self-defeating. It is improper to fight extremism with extremism.¹⁴

⁹ *Michigan Report*, p. 23.

¹⁰ See, for example, Connecticut Advisory Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, *Collecting Data on Bias-Related Incidents in Connecticut* (1987); New York Advisory Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, *Reporting on Bias-Related Incidents in New York State* (1988); and Pennsylvania Advisory Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, *Reporting on Bias-Related Incidents in Pennsylvania* (1988).

¹¹ Pub. L. No. 101-275 (1990).

¹² New England Regional Office, "Regional Response," Nov. 13, 1981, p. 15.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 12.

¹⁴ See also National Institute Against Prejudice and Violence, *Bigotry and Cable TV* (1988), for an analysis of first amendment rights and the efforts of communities, including Cincinnati, Ohio, the East Bay area of California, and Pocatello, Idaho, to fight racist TV programs.

Education and Public Awareness

As noted earlier in this statement, the Anti-Defamation League monitors anti-Semitic activities through its regional offices and issues periodic reports.¹⁵ Klanwatch of the Southern Poverty Law Center is engaged primarily in factfinding activities and the provision of legal services.¹⁶ Further, the Center for Democratic Renewal in Atlanta publishes various reports on hate groups and activities, as well as a bimonthly newsletter on the activities of the Ku Klux Klan, the Aryan Nations, and other such groups.¹⁷

Media Response

Sensitive and nonsensational news coverage of acts of racial and religious violence and intimidation should be encouraged. One way of doing so is reflected in earlier descriptions of public and private commissions, coalitions, or task forces. In most of these cases, newspaper editors, television producers, and other media representatives serve on such bodies established to examine the problem and recommend solutions. On other occasions, community organizations with civil rights interests have taken the initiative to contact opinionmakers to suggest existing or potential programs that provide factual and historical information about hate group activity and the ways in which it is best countered.

The television industry has a code that sets forth standards of responsible programming. In the treatment of news and public events, the code calls for reporting that is factual, fair, and unbiased. It advocates against the airing of "morbid, sensational or alarming details not essential to the factual reports" and states further that "pictorial material should be chosen with care and not presented in a misleading manner." The code acknowledges that "television provides a valuable forum for the expression of responsible views on public issues" and urges broadcasters to "seek out and develop with accountable individuals, groups and organizations, programs relating to controversial public issues of import to his/her fellow citizens."¹⁸ Were relevant portions of this code followed circumspetly by the electronic media, and similar principles by the

¹⁵ ADL is headquartered at 823 United Nations Plaza, N.Y., N.Y. 10017.

¹⁶ The Southern Poverty Law Center is located at 400 Washington Avenue, Montgomery, Ala. 36104.

¹⁷ The center's mailing address is P.O. Box 50469, Atlanta, GA 30302. The address of the National Institute Against Prejudice and Violence, whose studies have been cited in this report, is 525 West Redwood Street, Baltimore, MD 21201.

¹⁸ *Broadcasting/Cablecasting Yearbook 1982*, pp. D-15 to D-17.

print media, many of the problems arising in coverage of hate group activity might be eliminated.

Speaking Out

Running through virtually all the material on the subject of racial and religious violence is a belief in the indispensable need for strong and unambiguous statements from community leaders and elected officials that acts of racial and religious intimidation will not be tolerated. Members of hate groups of the kind discussed here view themselves as true patriots who stand as the last defenders of the American way. They must learn from repeated public statements, as well as the determined enforcement of law, that they are the most anti-American among us. Were they to succeed in having a one-race, one-ancestry Nation, then any semblance of the pluralism that is America would be destroyed. What is needed, according to most observers, is for more public officials to take repeated opportunities to express their disapproval in increasingly strong terms and definitive action.

Conclusion

The U.S. Commission on Civil Rights concludes that the phenomenon of racial and religious violence and harassment is a continuing threat to the maintenance of a peaceful, democratic, and pluralistic society. Bigotry-bred violence and intimidation are manifestations of racism, anti-Semitism, and other forms of religious bigotry that still survive even after the years of effort spent on their eradication. The basic cause, the complex network of contributing circumstances, and the social and psychological dimensions that surround the increasing display of racial and religious violence and intimidation are easily understood in broad outline:

- When persons or groups derive primary satisfaction or esteem in thinking themselves superior to others;
- when a sense of group racial or religious superiority is evoked to advance the group itself at the expense, disadvantage, or persecution of another group;
- when religious doctrine is wittingly used to place guilt or to establish hostility toward another group;
- when competition increases or is perceived to increase for limited numbers of jobs, economic resources, government assistance, and college admissions;
- when government is perceived as either covertly supporting or unwilling to take punitive action with respect to entrenched discrimination;
- when the public perceives a lack of even-handedness in the enforcement of fundamental guarantees;

then the circumstances are right for hatred and bigotry that can result in confrontations of serious proportions. Furthermore, when these are perpetrated in a spirit of righteous indignation and fueled by an expectation of media exposure and public tolerance, violence or harassment is not surprising.

The Commission further concludes that:

1. Precise measures of the extent of racial and religious violence and intimidation do not exist primarily because most Federal, State, and local law enforcement agencies have not devised methods for reporting and compiling statistics on crimes that involve clear signs of racial and religious motivation. President Bush recently signed a bill requiring the Attorney General to take steps to collect such data for research and statistical purposes. Such data are needed to measure trends, develop preventive programs, allocate resources, and adjust public policy.

2. The criminal justice system is more likely to inspire confidence that it will respond swiftly and effectively to apprehend offenders, press for prosecutions, and exact appropriate punishments when the composition of the criminal justice work force is acceptable to the community.

3. Some national, State, and local leaders have not been as vocal as they should be in expressing outrage over criminal acts that deny constitutional rights to persons because of their color, creed, religion, or national origin. Whether this is due to unintentional insensitivity, or to a deliberate conspiracy of silence, it too becomes the ground for believing that illegal acts of racial or religious violence will not be challenged seriously.

4. Although antidemocratic extremist groups contribute much of the rhetoric of hatred and provide an enclave of emotional support for those who act out the hatred, the groups themselves are not always directly responsible for acts of racial and religious violence. Many of these acts are carried out by unthinking imitators; others are committed by individuals who happen to hold the same views espoused by group members.

5. Education is one key element in efforts to eradicate racism and prevent violence. Effective educational strategies can be developed by public and private school systems, police training academies, the mass media, universities, religious institutions, and a host of community-based organizations.

6. New legislative initiatives aimed at outlawing specific tactics of racial and religious bigots have been taken by a number of State and local legislative bodies in apparent recognition that adequate legal tools as well as improved educational strategies are important

in the fight against overt bigotry. On the basis of these conclusions, the Commission urges:

1. The criminal justice system, especially law enforcement components, should intensify efforts to ensure that staff who confront incidents of racial and religious terrorism are broadly representative of the racial, ethnic, and religious makeup of the communities they serve.

As this Commission has noted before, confidence in the cause of justice is served best when it involves personnel who by training and background are personally sensitive to the dynamics of life in a multiracial society.

2. The President of the United States should continue to take the lead in denouncing overt acts of racism, anti-Semitism, and other kinds of religious bigotry as being the epitome of intolerable and irresponsible behavior on the part of any American.

Outbreaks of violence subside when officials make it clear that anti-American behavior is repugnant and subject to full enforcement of the law and constitutional guarantees. President Bush should issue forthright, powerful, and clear statements on this issue.

3. Parents, educators, leaders of religious institutions, and other opinionmakers should work together to develop educational programs designed to produce cognitive and emotional change with respect to racism, anti-Semitism, and other kinds of religious bigotry.

Promising efforts in this regard are underway in a number of communities. What may be needed to intensify educational activity is leadership and seed money from the National Endowment for the Humanities and private philanthropies. The need for such education and training on the part of law enforcement officers, who stand as the first line of defense in dangerous and explosive situations, should not be overlooked.

4. The Civil Rights Division of the U.S. Department of Justice should maintain intense prosecution of racially and religiously motivated violence.

The Commission notes with satisfaction that prosecutions of cases involving racial violence have been vigorous in recent years. The U.S. Department of Justice should continue to treat such prosecutions as one of the most critical responsibilities of its Civil Rights Division. The Commission urges the Civil Rights Division to make public awareness of a policy of even-handedness a high priority in its continuing enforcement of provisions against violence and harassment.

We urge upon all Americans a cooperative and relentless effort, by all legal means, to excise from American life the roots of bigotry and violence that deny the rights of racial, religious, and ethnic minorities. We believe swift and effective action is needed, but conclude with a caution against the use of extreme measures wherein the government's interest is not balanced against the deprivation of individual rights.

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