

**HATE CRIME STATISTICS ARE NECESSARY AS TOOL TO BATTLE THE TERRORISM OF HATE CRIMES**

**HON. MARIO BIAGGI**

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 15, 1987

Mr. BIAGGI. Mr. Speaker, I would like to call to the attention of my colleagues an article which recently appeared in the New York Times, entitled "Lack of Figures on Racial Strife Fueling Dispute." This article highlights the need for legislation such as H.R. 993, which Congressman KENNELLY introduced, and which I have proudly cosponsored, which would require adequate and accurate statistics be kept on hate crimes.

In the past 3 years, only 3 of the almost 600 New York State Police agencies have recorded hate crime statistics. These three police agencies have reported 1,500 incidents of criminal activities motivated by racial or religious prejudice. In 1985, of the 595 reported complaints of hate crimes to these three agencies, 191 resulted in arrests. The time has come for us to address the scandal of hate crimes. In order to fight this problem however, it is critical that we have adequate and accurate statistics on hate crimes.

I am especially disturbed by the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith's annual report that the incidents of hate crime have increased dramatically among our youth. Combined with the reports of incidences on college campuses of racially motivated crimes, this presents a dismal picture of the tolerance of our youth. I urge my colleagues to read the following article, and to join me in seeking a solution to the travesty of hate crimes.

**LACK OF FIGURES ON RACIAL STRIFE FUELING DISPUTE—JUSTICE DEPARTMENT AND RIGHTS GROUPS DO NOT AGREE**

(By Lena Williams)

WASHINGTON, April 4. Underlying a debate that has been raging between Assistant Attorney General William Bradford Reynolds and civil rights advocates over whether racial violence in the country has increased lies a fact that neither side disputes: there are not reliable data on racial, religious and ethnic violence.

Mr. Reynold, who heads the Justice Department's civil right division, has repeatedly asserted that there has been non increase in overall racial violence despite highly publicized racial attacks in the Howard Beach section of Queens and Forsyth County, Georgia.

Civil right groups say there is no evidence to back up Mr. Reynold's assertion. Indeed, they report that all available evidence collected on such matters indicates the opposite.

Justice Department officials said Mr. Reynolds had based his assertion on informal surveys of Federal prosecutors and on the number of civil rights complaints filed with the department.

**RISE IN INCIDENTS REPORTED**

Civil rights leaders countered that they, too, had relied on information supplied by the Justice Department through its Community Relations Service. The service found that the number of racial incidents reported to the Government rose to 276 last year from 99 in 1980.

But officials at the agency cautioned that their figures were only an aggregate count

of the number of situations to which they respond in a given year.

Currently, no Government agency or private organization collects national data on incidents of racial, religious and ethnic violence. Moreover, only a handful of law-enforcement agencies keep records of incidents of violence motivated by hatred, although several major cities, including New York, have created special units to handle crimes motivated hatred.

In the absence of systematic nationwide data, there is no way to determine the level of hate-violence activity against members of minority groups, or whether the number of incidents has increased, decreased or stayed the same in recent years, according to statisticians.

"Without better data, no one can say with certainty whether violent racism is actually on the upswing or whether it is merely receiving more attention from social workers and the media alike," said Morris Dees, executive director of the Southern Poverty Law Center in Montgomery, Ala.

**FILES REFLECT INCREASES**

"Several major cities have recently reported increases," he added, "and our organization's files reflect an increase in major incidents in both 1985 and 1986 over 1984. But because those agencies which track incidents have begun to do so only in the last two or three years, it is difficult to characterize their current crop of statistics as either reliable or indicative of a trend."

The resulting confusion has fueled a debate both inside and outside Government, with civil rights groups accusing Reagan Administration officials of dismissing a series of recent racist incidents as isolated events, rather than developing an effective strategy to prevent such crimes.

"We know it exists whether we collect it or not," said Mary Frances Berry, a member of the United States Civil Rights Commission, speaking of racial violence. "Each time we reduce the discussion to the issue of statistics, we stop talking about the problem."

This year, for the third year in a row, a bill has been introduced in Congress that would require the Attorney General to collect and publish annual statistics on crimes motivated by racial, religious or ethnic hatred.

Col. Leonard Supenski of the Baltimore County Police Department, which has developed procedures for handling incidents and crimes motivated by hatred, was critical of the proposed legislation.

**INCIDENTS WITHOUT CRIME**

"One of the main problems with the bill is that it fails to include the collection of data on bigotry-related incidents that were not connected to a crime," Colonel Supenski said. "A large part of our incidents have nothing to do with a crime. Unless that point is cleared up, what you'll end up with is a lot of under-reporting or over-reporting of incidents."

Localities and private organizations that gather information on crimes motivated by hatred indicated that their numbers did not accurately reflect the nature of the problem, because the systems are imperfect and because of the difficulty in establishing bias as a motivating factor in an offense.

As a result, race-related assaults are often recorded simply as assaults, cross burnings are variously categorized as malicious mischief, vandalism or burning without a permit. Swastika paintings are often catalogued as graffiti incidents or mischief.

Alan M. Schwartz, director of the research and evaluation department for the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith, said the league had compiled and published an annual audit of anti-Semitic incidents since

1979. He said the league's experience highlighted the difficulties involved in compiling hate-crime statistics.

"Our audits have shown that the overwhelming majority of those arrested for bias crimes—more than 80 percent for a number of years—have been teenagers acting on their own," said Mr. Schwartz. "Some police departments do not keep records of acts by juveniles as criminal offenses. This is understandable, but it also complicates the gathering of accurate statistics."

**A TRIBUTE TO TRINITY EPISCOPAL CHURCH: 100 YEARS OF WORSHIP AND SERVICE IN THE CHURCH OF THE LIGHT-ED CROSSES IN BAY CITY, MI**

**HON. BOB TRAXLER**

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 15, 1987

Mr. TRAXLER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to mark the centennial year of worship and service in Trinity Episcopal Church. Although Trinity has grown and changed over the years, the purpose has remained the same: To serve and to improve the lives of the people of the community.

Trinity was active in the community long before it built its church on its present sight in 1887. Trinity was conceived in the hearts of two heroic missionary priests of the Episcopal Church, the Reverend Daniel Brown, and the Reverend Voltaire Spalding, along with a small handful of settlers who had come to settle on the banks of the Saginaw River. With the procurement of the Reverend V. Spalding to make regular visits and the perseverance of its members, the church slowly began to grow. It was on March 4, 1854, that the parish was organized under the name "Trinity Church, Lower Saginaw." For the first 2 months services were held in "the Ball Alley," then the new schoolhouse being completed. The church has grown steadily from those early days of just five communicants to 325 families today.

In addition to meeting the spiritual needs of its members today, Trinity is a hub of activity that provides many services to the community. Currently it provides facilities for daily senior citizens meals, which not only provide balanced and nutritious meals for the elderly but also fulfill a social function for these people. The church actively supports the counselling efforts of Alcoholics and Narcotics Anonymous programs. The church is also active in supporting various fundraising efforts for both local and overseas diocesan relief programs. Trinity Church also supports the Halfway Houses of Michigan Program which provides shelter to troubled and runaway youths. Trinity is also a member of the local Food Pantry which provides food to needy families and individuals in the community.

To grow in grace is to grow in service. As one recent Archbishop of Canterbury put it, "A church that lives to itself, dies to itself." Trinity has come to be known as a parish that opens its doors to the community. May it be said of Trinity today and 100 years from now, that it continues to be dedicated to the service of God and to its fellows, and that age has not dimmed its vision.