WASHINGTON, April 4. Underlying a debate that has been raging between Assistant Attorney General Alan M. Schwartz, director of the research and evaluation department for the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai Brith, and civil rights advocates over whether racial violence in the country has increased lies a fundamental dispute: there are not reliable data on racial, religious or ethnic violence.

Mr. Schwartz, who heads the Justice Department's civil rights division, has repeatedly asserted that there has been no increase in overall racial violence since highly publicized racial attacks in the Howard Beach section of Queens and Forsyth County, Georgia.

Civil rights groups say there is no evidence to back up Mr. Schwartz'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 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 1986.

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.

Current Justice Department 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 by 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.

Col. Leonard Supenski of the Baltimore 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 end up with is a lot of under-reporting or over-reporting of incidents.

Loyalties and private organizations that gather information on crimes motivated by hatred indicated that their numbers did not accurately reflect the extent 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, records are often recorded simply as assaults, cross burnings are variously categorized as malicious mischief or hate crimes, and granting a permit. Swastika paintings are often cataloged as graffiti incidents or mischief.

Alan M. Bewsart, director of the research and evaluation division of the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai Brith, 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.

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

CONGRESSIONAL RECORD — Extensions of Remarks

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 at the Trinity 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 April 1. 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 church was 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 disaster relief programs.

Trinity Church also supports the Halfway Houses of Michigan Program which provides shelter to troubled and runaway youth. 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.