

"Signs of growing racism"

by Melynda Jarratt

What makes people prejudiced? No doubt, a lot of people would like to know the answer to that question after one of the most difficult years in recent memory for advocates of human rights and improved race relations.

Ironically, 1992 was a year that should have held great promise for racial minorities and oppressed peoples around the world. When the United Nations marked the close of the Second Decade to Combat Racial Discrimination it did so with a reminder to its member states - Canada among them - of their vow to combat racism through human rights awareness and education.

Instead, in 1992, more than any year in recent history, racism and racist-fueled violence fanned waves of hatred and discontent on an ever-increasing scale across North America and Europe, such has not been seen after decades of political and institutional reform.

In Germany, the frightening spectre of jack-booted Nazis became stark reality as Germany youths, unemployed and marginalized, found scapegoats for their frustrations by bombing refugee hostels and victimizing racial minorities.

In the United States, the Rodney King fiasco drove hundreds of thousands of Blacks and others into the streets of metropolitan U.S. cities to ransack and riot over what was clearly a case of American justice gone awry.

In the meantime, we in Canada sat in our comfortable living rooms watching the violence in Los Angeles while youths in Toronto and Montreal rioted in the darkened streets of our cities, smashing windows, looting stores and creating chaos.

And it didn't end there. Anyone reading the papers or listening to the television over the past few months could compile a long list of racially motivated incidents which point clearly to the growing problem of racial discrimination in our country.

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• In Toronto this week, over 300 anti-racist demonstrators were obstructed by mounted police as they protested against members of the Canadian white supremacist group The Heritage Front. Heritage Front members were appearing before a Canadian Human Rights Tribunal on charges that their telephone hotline incites hatred towards Native Indians.

• In Surrey and Delta B.C. last month, the Aryan Resistance Movement began recruiting high school students in the area, after the Movement relocated its operations from Vancouver. The Surrey-Delta area has a combined India-Canadian population of 35,000, which has recently been the target of racist graffiti. The Aryan Resistance Movement preaches self-rule for white and separation of the races.

• In Winnipeg last month, members of Ku Klux Klan were found guilty by the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal of promoting hatred towards minority groups and their leaders, including Sam Koshy of the Manitoba Intercultural Council and Wade Williams of the Manitoba Coalition Against Racism and Apartheid. The KKK hotline, which operated in Winnipeg between May and December 1991, was shut down as a result of the Tribunal's ruling.

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• In Montreal last month, four neo-Nazi skinheads were arrested after 51-year-old engineer Yves Lalonde was found near a path in Angrignon Park, a popular meeting place for gay men. Mr. Lalonde had been bludgeoned to death and robbed of \$92. A representative of the gay and lesbian community believes a recent spate of attacks against gays and lesbians are part of the white supremacist group, White Power Canada, which demands that aspiring members attack at least 10 gays and lesbians.

• In Halifax last month, a teen was charged with creating and distributing hate literature at Charles P. Allen School. The racist leaflets were headlined KKK White Power Lives! Join Us Now! They were found throughout the school in mid-October.

• On Halloween Night in Dartmouth Nova Scotia, cars and mailboxes in an entire neighborhood were blanketed with fliers from a racist group that promotes white power.

• In Fredericton in July, a foreign student alleged that a professor discriminated against him and other non-Canadians while they were taking a course in the Faculty of Business Administration at the University of New Brunswick.

• In Moncton, in September, a teacher who writes anti-Semitic books fought a New Brunswick Human Rights Commission ruling that put him out of the classroom.

• In Bathurst, in November, youths vandalized a downtown take-out restaurant and wrote "Death to Jews" on its walls.

SHOCKED? You should be. These and many other racist incidents like them are becoming commonplace across Canada, despite efforts to contain them by individuals and organizations committed to eradicating prejudice and discrimination. An un-

derstanding of the causes of prejudice may help us comprehend the scope of the problem and make Canada a safe place for racial, religious and ethnic minorities.

The Causes of Prejudice

We are all prejudiced to one degree or another. We all make prejudgements on certain kinds of people.

Hotline spewed hatred

from the Winnipeg Free Press, Dec. 16, 1992

Messages on a Ku Klux Klan hotline could be used against minority groups, an opponent of the tribunal yesterday.

"People could find these messages an encouragement to do something they may not have otherwise done," said executive secretary of the Manitoba Intercultural Council Sam Koshy.

Koshy appeared yesterday at the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal that is looking into complaints against the KKK hotline that operated in Winnipeg between May and December 1991.

Koshy said eggs were thrown at his car and a window was broken during the time the hotline was peering into homes. "One desperately wants to feel safe here," he said. "But I could not ignore this any longer."

Mahmood Randeree, vice-chairman of the Manitoba Coalition Against Racism and Apartheid, testified that he had received at the messages he heard on the hotline.

"It made me even more aware of how I felt," he said. "I received messages, as a person of color who sticks out in a crowd."

Dr. Susan Ehrlich, an associate professor at the University of Manitoba, prepared a 14-page report on the hotline.

Ehrlich testified that the messages would be used to incite hatred or contempt. She said the messages portended the bill for unjust minority programs.

The hearing continues.

ing anything about them. Fortunately, these messages, which are harmless and do not hurt anyone, are evidence that we have racist discrimination in evidence that we have views which are harmful to people. Wherever we go, we see evidence of prejudice.

Sociological studies of the cause of prejudice show that the value placed on race during one's childhood is the single greatest influence on whether a child grows into an adult with a negative or positive view of race. The same holds for religious, ethnic and nationalities which are passed on to a child or his own.

We learn these values from the most important people in our lives: our parents, families, peers, education and other institutions with which we come in contact during our formative years. These shape our own values and attitudes towards other people.

Ignorance too, contributes to racist prejudice. We know little of someone whose ways are different, whose opinions of people with a close influence on our own. Often, in doing so, we allow the ignorant to be a reason for prejudice.

hate groups *Swastikas on the streets of Ottawa* *Police sweeping Yugoslavia and the viciousness symbols in Ottawa's Byward Market?*

vandalism *5 charged in second hate slaying* *Police said Mr. Lalonde was bludgeoned to death by skinheads who had been drinking*

Nazi s *BY ANDRÉ PICARD Québec Bureau*