

## Hate, Oppression, Repression, and the Apocalyptic Style: Facing Complex Questions and Challenges

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### ABSTRACT

As we build the field of Hate Studies we need to scrupulously inspect our own work. Blee and Ferber have already suggested a number of complex questions for scholars to answer. This paper argues that understanding the interrelated dynamics of hate, apocalyptic dualism, institutionalized oppression, and political repression is crucial to increasing the accuracy and effectiveness of our research and answering these questions.

Organized hate groups defend unfair power and privilege by promoting collective action frames and constructing narratives that use dualism and apocalypticism to demonize scapegoats and allege sinister conspiracies. These dynamics, however, are modeled on pre-existing prejudice and bigotry that exist in muted forms in the larger society. Individuals who commit hate crimes often appear to have internalized scapegoating frames and narratives, but seldom are they members of organized supremacist groups. We need to place the study of organized hate groups in the context of the larger study of systems of oppression that generate hate. As Buechler observes, issues of class, race, and gender are “omnipresent in the background of all forms of collective action” as both overlapping and distinct forces. Apocalyptic dualism takes systemic oppression and mobilizes it into hate.

At the same time, systems of social oppression exist along with systems of political repression by state agencies. Activist groups such as the Audre Lorde Center and the American Friends Service Committee have suggested the emphasis on enhanced criminal penalties and incarceration in most hate crimes laws is misguided. Not all members of hate groups violate the law, and sometimes organizations or movements are labeled hate groups using less than rigorous criteria. At a time of increased government surveillance of dissident political groups, it is important for scholars to avoid demonization and apocalyptic rhetoric. We must balance our demand for civil rights with a defense of civil liberties.

## I. INTRODUCTION

Establishing the field of Hate Studies will increase the quality and quantity of research on the reality of hate crimes, prejudice, discrimination, organized supremacist groups, and ideologies and institutions that promote inequality. Blee (2002) and Ferber (2004) have already challenged us to broaden our field of vision; and we must be willing to inspect our own work for weaknesses. We also face a number of critics, including other scholars and academics, progressive activists, civil libertarians, political libertarians, and even apologists for supremacist ideology.

While it is important to stand up against apologists for supremacist ideology, their arguments are overwhelmingly specious. Political libertarians oppose most state action through legislation or regulation, and while we need to craft answers to their complaints against hate crimes laws, our responses will be based on a fundamental ideological disagreement that is largely irresolvable. Our work will be improved, however, if we pay attention to the arguments of critical scholars (from a variety of political viewpoints), progressive activists, and civil libertarians.

This paper starts by examining how our language shapes our focus; and how the idea of “hate” needs to be imbedded in the study of systems of oppression. It then discusses the dynamics of demonization, scapegoating, and conspiracism generated by apocalyptic dualism—a stylistic tool used by social movement leaders to recruit and motivate followers. Finally, it explores the relationship between oppression and repression. I have expanded the bibliography to point out interesting research currents. Some will find this paper provocative, but I seek to be a constructive critic.

## DYNAMICS, BOUNDARIES, AND TERMINOLOGY

How we describe an area of study and the ideas and actions of various groups and individuals under observation can shape the subsequent scholarship. Some analysts even suggest that instead of using the term “hate crime,” we should call acts of violence and intimidation based on prejudice and hate “ethnoviolence” (Prejudice Institute [1997] 1999; Erlich 1999).

There are different types of ethnoviolence, with variations related in complex ways to the perceived identity of the target; the location of the incident; the demographics of the perpetrators; and whether the perpetrator acts alone, in a group, or alone at the behest of a group. We also need to determine whether an incident is a symbolic crime or an actuarial crime, the role of uncertainty in the event, the combination of expressive and instrumental motives, the extent of premeditation involved, and the role of initial causes or proximate causes or their blending (Berk, Boyd, and Hamner 1992).

The vast majority of acts of ethnoviolence are carried out by persons who

do not appear to be directly associated with organized supremacist groups. How do these perpetrators pick their targets?

According to Ehrlich, ethnoviolence can occur as:

- a way to defend turf, territory, or property;
- a defense of what is seen as sacred;
- a way to affirm or reject a status as being “normal”;
- an indication of affiliation to a group or ideology;
- a form of conformity and submission to peer pressure or the demands of the state or a religion (1992, 108-109).

Ethnoviolence can also be a form of destructive youth “recreational” violence, committed primarily by teenage boys (Harry 1992). This is an attempt by young people to “shock” adults in general and authority figures in particular; to generate a “thrill;” or to gain “bragging rights” (Levin and McDevitt 1993; 2002). Even “shock” ethnoviolence involves at least the subconscious understanding that the target is demonized in some way by some segment of the society. Ethnoviolence and vandalism that is intended as a “shock” crime has the same effect on the target group and the surrounding community as crimes motivated by intentional ideological hate, yet these dynamics and motives are understudied and undertheorized.

Organized supremacist groups utilize and amplify the same elements of prejudice, supremacy, demonization, and scapegoating that already exist in mainstream society. The ideologies, styles, frames, and narratives used by organized supremacist groups are drawn from pre-existing systems of oppression buried in mainstream society. Perpetrators of ethnoviolence are influenced to varying degrees by both the rhetoric of organized supremacist groups and normative societal systems of oppression.

#### A. *Systems of Oppression*

Ehrlich explains that patterns of prejudice “are normative, the result of social and historic processes.” He adds that even “most violence is instrumental, that is, a habitual pattern of behavior adopted to achieve a set of personal needs or ends” (1992, 107-108).

Because of this, we need to place the study of ethnoviolence and organized hate groups in the context of the larger study of systems of oppression that generate prejudice, demonization, and hate. Buechler observes that issues of class, race, and gender are “omnipresent in the background of all forms of collective action” as both overlapping and distinct forces (2000). Felice adds that we must recognize that the successful assertion of “collective human rights” or “group rights” depends on the “linking of ethnicity/race, class, gender, and sexuality,” because this linkage “mutes supremacist tendencies by

denying the right of any one group to assert supremacy over a different group” (1996, 1-4).

These ideas challenge older theories of hate and ethnoviolence. An academic school of thought popular in the 1950s and '60s—called the “classic” or “pluralist” school—shaped the study of prejudice. Proponents of this model tended to study prejudice as primarily an individual psychological malady; and they tended to see social movements as a form of irrational collective behavior. The idea of the ideal center besieged by “extremists” of the left and right was a core precept of this model, which has been dubbed “centrist/extremist” theory by its critics (Berlet and Lyons 1998; 2000, 13-17).

The use of the centrist/extremist paradigm to analyze hate groups by major human relations organizations has not “abolished the movement, nor diminished racism in general, and may, in fact, unwittingly support racist beliefs,” suggests Ferber (1996, 121). “While the focus is on the fringe, mainstream, everyday racism remains unexamined.” Ferber argues that a discussion is needed on the “points of similarity between white supremacist discourse and mainstream discourses,” especially since any discursive narrative used by white supremacist groups gains its power “precisely because it rearticulates mainstream racial narratives” (1996, 121; see also Ferber 1998, 9-12, 156; 2004).

Ezekiel agrees, noting that organized white racism exploits feelings of “lonely resentment.” It does this by weaving together ideologies already present in mainstream culture: “white specialness, the biological significance of ‘race,’ the primacy of power in human relations” along with “the feeling of being cheated” (1995, 321). Aho did field research in the Pacific Northwest and rejects the idea that racial or religious bigotry is caused by people who are stupid or crazy. He found that most of the racists and bigots he studied seem to be within the bounds of normal psychological health typical of the community in which they lived (1989; 1990).

The centrist/extremist model actually impedes anti-racist efforts and other struggles against oppression, because it dramatically focuses on individual and psychological explanations at the expense of institutional and systemic dynamics. This is not to suggest that psychological factors are not involved. As Young-Bruehl argues, however, there are diverse types of prejudice and bigotry, and to understand them we need to explore the “interplay of psychological and sociological factors” (1996, 23, 460).

The rhetoric of some human relations groups—“extremists of the left and right,” “religious political extremists,” “lunatic fringe,” “wing-nuts”—undermines civil liberties, civil rights, and civil discourse by demonizing dissent and veiling the complicity we all share in institutionalized forms of oppression in our society: racism, sexism, heterosexism, antisemitism, and many more. Increasingly we can add Arabophobia and Islamophobia to this list.

The Rev. Martin Luther King at first bristled at being labeled an “extremist” in the 1960s by a group of clergymen upset with his activism. In his “Letter

From Birmingham Jail” King wrote that he thought for a while, and then realized that in their respective days, the Biblical Amos, Abraham Lincoln, and Thomas Jefferson had all been thought of as extremists by mainstream society. King responded, “So the question is not whether we will be extremists, but what kind of extremists we will be. Will we be extremists for hate or will we be extremists for love? Will we be extremists for the preservation of injustice—or will we be extremists for the cause of justice?” (1963).

Two issues are raised by King’s clever reversal of the attack on him as an “extremist.” First is that the term “extremist” has only relative meaning in terms of how far outside the “mainstream” norms of society a particular idea or act is located by some observer who claims a “centrist” position. Second, King suggests it is important to determine whether any non-normative idea or action defends or extends justice, equality, or democracy—or whether it defends or extends unfair power or privilege.

Ultimately, the concept of “extremism” is of little value in studying prejudice and ethnoviolence. Himmelstein argues the term “extremism” is at best a characterization that “tells us nothing substantive about the people it labels,” and at worst the term “paints a false picture” (1998, 7). Often, analysts use the term “extremism” in a way that implies that ideas and methodologies are always linked. This is not the case. We need to separate ideology from methodology. King’s ideas may have been outside the mainstream for his day, but he promoted non-violence; and while civil disobedience often involves a minor criminal act, it is not the same as an act of terrorism. Given the way the term “extremist” is sometimes used, it can serve as a justification for state action that is repressive and undermines Constitutional guarantees. We need to use terms that are more precise. We are studying people and groups that promote supremacy, prejudice, discrimination, bigotry, and hate. We are studying people and groups that use intimidation and violence against a targeted group or individual based on their perceived identity. This language teaches people to see the dynamics of societal oppression, rather than allowing them to dismiss acts of ethnoviolence as caused by not-like-us “extremists” from hate groups.

### B. *Ideology, Frames, and Narratives*

Members of organized supremacist groups are not the primary perpetrators of ethnoviolence, but they do help exacerbate and spread prejudice in a society. People (including supremacists) construct social movements to help them gain attention for their ideas and increase their cultural and political influence through collective action. While there are psychological factors involved, most sociologists now reject the idea that people who join social movements are irrational or psychologically dysfunctional. Instead, they look at movement members as people with a grievance who are strategic and instrumental in the way they mobilize resources, exploit political opportunities, develop their own

culture, frame ideas, and create slogans (McAdam, McCarthy, and Zald 1996). Aho (1990) found these dynamics at work in his study of Christian Patriots in Idaho, as did Dobratz and Shanks-Meile (1997) in their study of white separatists, and Blee (2002) in her study of women in organized hate groups.

Until the late 1970s, most scholarly studies of social movements focused on the political left. Scrutiny of right-wing social and political movements accelerated with broad studies such as those of Eatwell ([1989] 1990), Diamond (1995), and Bobbio (1996); as well as those with a more narrow focus—Aho (1990), Hamm (1994), Ferber (1998), and Blee (2002), to name but a few. The increased attention to the political right prompted criticism that some scholars were using less than rigorous criteria to label the groups and movements they studied (Durham 2000; Berlet and Lyons 2000; Berlet 2004). Even more critical are Kaplan (1997) and Chermak (2002), who are especially skeptical of research by “watchdog” groups. On the other border of the debate, attempts by scholars to use more nuanced approaches are often met with the skepticism that greeted “*White Power, White Pride!*” *The White Separatist Movement in the United States*, by Dobratz and Shanks-Meile (1997). What Dobratz and Shanks-Meile, Durham, Lyons, and I are arguing is that it is important to pay attention to the distinctions and boundaries that exist in right-wing social movements. Different groups frame their ideologies and ideas in different ways. The stories (or narratives) they tell to educate and mobilize their followers reveal who is to be the scapegoat, and what actions against them are considered heroic.

In sociology the idea of studying “frames” has allowed scholars to better understand how social movements gain the attention and loyalty of groups of people in a society (Goffman 1959, 1974; Snow and Benford 1988, 1992; Johnston 1995). Frames help translate ideologies into action by crafting culturally-appropriate perspectives from which to view a struggle over power (Zald 1996; Gamson 1995; Oliver and Johnston 2000). According to Klandermans, the “social construction of collective action frames” involves “public discourse, that is, the interface of media discourse and interpersonal interaction; persuasive communication during mobilization campaigns by movement organizations, their opponents and countermovement organizations; and consciousness raising during episodes of collective action” (1997, 45). Frames can be constructed to appeal to different audiences, including leaders, followers, potential recruits, and the public (Snow et al. [1986] 1997; Johnston 1995; Gamson 1995). Brasher has suggested that apocalypticism is a master frame used by a variety of groups.<sup>1</sup>

In the same way, the study of “narratives” reveals much about how heroes and villains are identified by a social movement (Polletta 1998; Davis 2002). The way narratives are constructed can either assist in unraveling systems of oppression or merely replicate existing paradigms of dominance (Ewick and Silbey 1995). Narratives can be used to demonize a target group and facilitate scapegoating. During the last century, for example, frames and narratives

involving anticommunism often spilled over from political criticism into near hysteria in American society (Kovel 1994). Antisemitic groups have a long history of using frames and narratives that portray Jews as wicked, evil, greedy, and parasitic (Cohn [1967] 1996; Postone 1986; Billig [1989] 1990; Smith 1996).

By analyzing the ideologies, styles, frames, and narratives used by overt supremacist groups, we can look for their precursors in the mainstream society, and study how they help maintain systems of oppression.

## II. DUALISM AND THE APOCALYPTIC STYLE

Organized hate groups defend unfair power and privilege by promoting collective action frames and constructing narratives that use a dualistic form of apocalypticism to demonize scapegoats and allege sinister conspiracies. Apocalyptic dualism takes systemic oppression and mobilizes it into hate. How does this work?

The word “apocalypse” refers to an approaching confrontation, cataclysmic event, or transformation that marks the end of an epoch and signifies significant changes in a society. A handful of people have been given a warning so they can make appropriate preparations. Apocalyptic (and millennialist or millenarian) social movements sometimes combine demonization, scapegoating, and conspiracism with a sense that time is running out so that quick action is needed (Boyer 1992; Barkun [1994] 1997a; O’Leary 1994; Kovel 1994; Strozier 1994; Fuller 1995; Lamy 1996). Many scholars are unfamiliar with these terms and concepts as applied to ethnviolence and organized supremacy.

Thompson argues that the conspiracy theories Hofstadter described as the “paranoid style” in right-wing movements are really derived from apocalyptic beliefs (Hofstadter 1965; Thompson [1996] 1998, 307). Apocalyptic social movements are sometimes called millenarian (Worsley 1968) or millennialist, especially if they feature a reference to a one-thousand year time span (Cohn [1957] 1970; 1993). In Western societies millenarianism—even when secularized—is based on prophecies in the Christian Bible, especially the book of Revelation (Boyer 1992; O’Leary 1994). One reading of Revelation sees it as warning of global conspiracies by political and religious leaders to build a One World Government to assist Satan and his henchman, the Antichrist, in the End Times that precede the return of Jesus Christ (Fuller 1995).

Dualism (or Manichaeism) is a form of binary thinking that divides the world into good versus evil, with no middle ground tolerated. There is no acknowledgment of complexity, nuance, or ambiguity in debates; and hostility is expressed toward those who suggest coexistence, toleration, pragmatism, compromise, or mediation. Dualism generates three related processes: demonization, scapegoating, and conspiracism (Allport 1954, 243-260; Fenster 1999; Berlet and Lyons 2000; Goldberg 2001).

Anthony and Robbins describe how some persons may be able to rebuild a fractured self-image through their participation in a “totalist movement” such as an ideological or religious group with “highly dualistic worldviews” and “an absolutist apocalyptic outlook,” where they can engage in the “projection of negativity and rejected elements of self onto ideologically designated scapegoats.” Anthony and Robbins identify a form of apocalypticism they call “exemplary dualism.” In this worldview, “contemporary sociopolitical or socioreligious forces are transmogrified into absolute contrast categories embodying moral, eschatological, and cosmic polarities upon which hinge the millennial destiny of humankind” (Anthony and Robbins 1997, 264, 267, 269; see also Anthony and Robbins 1996; Neiwert 2003).

Apocalyptic dualism facilitates the targeting of a scapegoated “Other.” The “effect of the scapegoat is to reverse the relationship between persecutors and their victims,” writes Girard (1986, 44). Persons in scapegoated groups are often described as having brought attacks on themselves because of their alleged bad behavior (Noël 1994, 129-144). According to Allport, scapegoating evokes hatred rather than anger, as the “hater is sure the fault lies in the object of hate” (1954, 363-364). Ruth Benedict explains that people who are frustrated, angry, and desperate “easily seize upon some scapegoat to sacrifice to their unhappiness; it is a kind of magic by which they feel for the moment that they have laid [down] the misery that has been tormenting them” (1961, 151).

Not all apocalypticism is dualistic, or even socially destructive. All social movements are to some extent apocalyptic in the sense that they seek relatively rapid social transformation. Apocalypticism, especially the dualistic variety, can be a powerful force in generating support for dramatic, even revolutionary, changes in a society (Katz and Popkin 1998; Robbins and Palmer 1997). For instance, apocalyptic dualism is evident in the most militant branches of the anti-abortion movement (Herman 1997; Mason 2002). A racialized version of apocalyptic dualism is employed by antisemitic sectors of the Christian Identity movement (Barkun [1994] 1997a; 1997b). Fascism has been described as a form of millenarianism or apocalypticism (Rhodes 1980; Fenn 1997; Ellwood 2000). Griffin defines fascism as a palingenetic form of revolutionary populism, using the term palingenesis in a way that is almost identical to the concept of apocalyptic dualism (1991, xi).

Scapegoating often appears in the form of allegations that the “Other” is engaged in a vast sinister conspiracy against the wholesome community of “Us.” Goldberg traces the concept of conspiracy thinking back to the “Latin word *conspirare*—to breathe together,” which implies some type of dramatic scenario (2001, 1). Conspiracism is a particular narrative form of scapegoating that frames demonized enemies as part of a vast insidious plot against the common good, while it valorizes the scapegoater as a hero for sounding the alarm (Berlet 1998; Berlet and Lyons 2000, 9). Fenster (1999) argues that persons who embrace conspiracy theories are trying to understand how power is exercised in a society that they feel they have no control over. Often they have real

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grievances with the society—sometimes legitimate—sometimes seeking to defend unfair power and privilege. Conspiracism evolves as a worldview from roots in dualistic forms of apocalypticism. Conspiracist thinking has appeared in mainstream popular discourse as well as in various subcultures in the United States throughout its history (Davis 1971; Mintz 1985; Goldberg 2001; Barkun 1998, 2003).

On the political left, conspiracist theories are the avenue by which antisemitism is introduced into internal discussions and debates (Berlet and Lyons 2000). This sometimes emerges into public statements by persons on the left who make hyperbolic and stereotypic claims about manipulation of U.S. foreign or domestic policies by Jews, Jewish institutions, the state of Israel, or the Israeli government (Kaplan 2002). At the same time, some have implied that criticism of Israel, or its policies, or Jewish institutions, is a new form of antisemitism, when this is not always the case. This is an area that needs more discussion and debate.

On the political right, conspiracy theories are a common element in dualistic narratives of good and evil. In the contemporary United States, these right-wing conspiracist theories can be found in the Christian Right, the Patriot Movement, and the Ultra Right (Extreme Right), but they use different frames and point to different primary targets (Berlet 2004). Apocalyptic conspiracism across the political right, however, shares a masculinist narrative that engenders confrontation (Quinby 1994; Ferber 1998; Kimmel and Ferber 2000; Berlet 2004).

Conspiracism is often used to construct frames and narratives in right-wing populist groups. Populism is a rhetorical style that seeks to mobilize “the people” as a social or political force. It can be employed by groups across the political spectrum. Populism can challenge or defend the status quo. It can promote or undermine democratic civil society (Canovan 1981, 3-16, 46-51, 289-301; Brinkley 1982, 165-168; Berlet and Lyons 2000, 4-6). The central motif of many historic right-wing dissident movements is a form of populist anti-elitism that portrays the current government regime as indifferent, corrupt, or traitorous (Betz 1994; Kazin 1995; Junas 1995; Berlet and Lyons 2000). These episodes of right-wing populism are often generated by economic, social, or cultural stress that assists right-wing organizers in the mass mobilization of alienated cross-class sectors of a population (Laclau 1977; Berlet and Lyons 2000).

Populism plays different chords in each sector of the right—but the recurring melody is a particular form called producerism. Producerist narratives portray a noble middle class of hard-working producers being squeezed by a conspiracy involving secret elites above and lazy, sinful, and subversive parasites below (Canovan 1981, 54-55; Kazin 1995, 35-36, 52-54, 143-144; Stock 1996, 15-86; Berlet and Lyons 2000, 4-6). Producerist white supremacy helped fuel the attack on newly gained Black rights after the Civil War (Kantrowitz 2000, 4-6, 109-114, 153). Producerist antisemitism was central to the success

of German Nazi ideology in attracting an alienated audience for a mass base (Payne 1995, 52-53; Postone 1986). The idea that right-wing populism is an ingredient of fascist social movements is an argument that has a long pedigree (Ferkiss 1957; Laclau 1977; Germani 1978; Dobratz and Shanks-Meile 1988; Fritzsche 1990; Griffin 1991; Eco 1995; Berlet and Lyons 2000).

The use of populist rhetoric by right-wing groups in the U.S. and Europe increased in the early 1990s (Mozzochi and Rhinegard 1991; Phillips 1992; Betz 1994; Kazin 1995; Betz and Immerfall 1998). With the collapse of Communism in Europe, the U.S. political right turned more attention to generating populist resentment over federal government policies (Marsden 1991; Junas 1995; Berlet and Lyons 2000). Hardisty calls this process “mobilizing resentment” (1999). This includes some sectors of the Christian Right where issues of gender such as sexism and heterosexism are obvious, but where subtexts of white supremacy and antisemitism also appear (Herman 1997; Berlet and Lyons 2000; Burlein 2002).

When studying organized supremacist groups in the U.S., it is useful to understand the role of right-wing populism and apocalyptic dualism in framing issues and scripting bigoted narratives that employ demonization, scapegoating, and conspiracism. We can then look at “mainstream” society and see—in less dramatic and more muted forms—similar frames and narratives that operate to sustain systems of oppression. This helps us probe differences and similarities in the actual underlying ideologies in both organized supremacist groups and mainstream society.

### III. HUMAN RIGHTS: DEFENDING CIVIL RIGHTS AND CIVIL LIBERTIES

Systems of social and cultural oppression exist along with systems of political repression. We must balance our demand for civil rights with a defense of civil liberties. Not all members of hate groups violate the law, and sometimes organizations or movements are labeled hate groups using less than rigorous criteria. Kaplan, for example, argues, “The right wing talks a better revolution than it is prepared to fight” (1997, 170).

Levitas (2002) and some other progressive activists imply that the neonazi, Christian Identity, Christian Patriot, white nationalist, armed citizens militia, and Patriot movements are merely variations of a terrorist-prone extremist radical right. Stern (1996) made a strong case for the relationship between militias and hate groups in his book, *A Force Upon the Plain: The American Militia Movement and the Politics of Hate*. These relationships exist; but are all militia units accurately described as hate groups? I argue that this is an overly broad assertion (Berlet 2004). Certainly there are white supremacy and antisemitism woven into militia narratives; and in some cases leaders of organized hate groups have helped organize some militia units or influenced their ideology. The central focus of the militias, however, is not racial antago-

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nism, but a distrust of the government rooted in right-wing populism (Berlet and Lyons 2000; Berlet 2004).

Other studies of paramilitary culture and the Patriot/militia movements have emphasized the intersection of class and race (Gallaher 2002), gender (Gibson 1994), apocalypticism (Lamy 1996; Berlet 1998), the potential for fascism (Rupert 1997), and the way in which economic and cultural issues influenced the formation of militia units (Van Dyke and Soule 2002).

#### A. *Repression*

Repression is a form of oppression in which governments or paramilitary units use force in a systematic way against a target group based on their perceived actions, ideas, or identity. At a time of increased government surveillance of dissident political groups, it is important for scholars to avoid demonization and apocalyptic rhetoric. We hear the assertion that law enforcement agencies need increased surveillance and infiltration of right-wing dissident groups to reduce hate crimes. There is no evidence to support that claim.

David Cole writes that given the spate of hate crimes in 1999, it is easy to “understand why Abraham Foxman, president of the Anti-Defamation League, would write an op-ed for *The New York Times*, calling for increased FBI surveillance of hate groups.” Cole noted that the ADL also took out a full-page ad in the newspaper making a similar call. “But as comprehensible as the turn to the FBI may be, it is a wrong turn. In fact, the history of FBI political spying suggests that the last thing we need to do is expand FBI power in this area,” wrote Cole (1999).

Bruce Fein, an Associate Deputy Attorney General in 1981-82 under Ronald Reagan, was concerned enough to respond to Foxman in a letter to the *New York Times*:

Abraham H. Foxman ignores Supreme Court Justice Felix Frankfurter’s observation that the history of liberty is the history of procedural safeguards against investigatory or prosecutorial abuses. The Federal Bureau of Investigation’s history of spying against citizens without cause to suspect criminality confirms Frankfurter’s words. Thick dossiers were compiled that served political blackmail more than law enforcement. Mr. Foxman urges relaxation of balanced restraints on the F.B.I. with the goal of shadowing every government-perceived “hatemonger” without evidence of a threatened crime. He warns that “hatred can still destroy.” Yes, but the F.B.I. has destroyed as well when it has snooped around as thought police (Fein 1999).

Back in the 1960s, a few months after King’s “Letter From a Birmingham Jail” was released, a dynamite bomb killed Denise McNair, Addie Mae Collins, Cynthia Wesley, and Carole Robertson while they were in a Birmingham

church. At the time the FBI was busy assembling its dossier on King, a known “extremist.” A former attorney general of Alabama, Bill Baxley, accused the FBI of hiding evidence against the bomber, who was finally convicted in 2001. “How can the F.B.I. justify this to the families of four precious girls? I don’t know. I do know that rank-and-file FBI agents working with us were conscientious and championed our cause. The disgust I feel is for those in higher places who did nothing,” wrote Blaxley (2001).

In Birmingham in the 1960s some local police officers worked closely with the KKK, even to the extent of cutting a deal whereby white supremacists would have free time to savagely beat civil rights activists arriving on a 1961 Freedom Ride. The FBI knew of this plan and chose not to act on the information in order to protect its informer inside the KKK. In 1965 that same informer watched silently as his fellow Klansmen murdered civil rights worker Viola Liuzzo (Cunningham 2003).

This is not a blanket indictment of federal, state, and local law enforcement personnel, many of whom can and do play an important role in investigating incidents of ethnoviolence. It is a caution that scholars need to be aware of the potential that some law enforcement personnel may be part of the problem rather than part of the solution, and that civil liberties issues need to be acknowledged.

In the same way, not all “experts” in the private sector are actually experts. This is especially true in the field of terrorism, with a glaring example being the rush of talking heads on television declaring—as did Vincent Cannistraro and Steven Emerson—that the Oklahoma City federal building bombing had the hallmarks of Middle Eastern groups or Islamic radicals. In a similar fashion, we need to be careful of claims by scholars such as Daniel Pipes and Samuel Huntington, whose work on occasion slides into stereotyping of Arabs and Muslims.

### B. *Prejudice, Tolerance, and Respect*

Early studies of prejudice were an attempt to promote tolerance in a world that had just witnessed the horrors of the Nazi genocide of Jews and others designated enemies of a totalitarian state (Allport 1954). In recent years, authors such as Noël (1994), Guillaumin (1995), and Young-Bruehl (1996) have revisited the concepts of prejudice and intolerance and expanded the scope of the discussion. There has even been a study that revised and extended our understanding of the authoritarian personality (Altemeyer 1996). The relationship between power and ideology, and the intersectionality of race, class, and gender have also seen exciting new work (Guillaumin 1995; Wing 2000; Buechler 2000; Bonilla-Silva 2001; Ferber 2002, 2004).

The interaction between social movements and policy is important to watch. Bias crimes became hate crimes, and this language change helped gen-

erate calls for special legislation in the 1980s as part of the social movement strategies of various identity groups (Finn and McNeil 1987; Jenness and Broad 1997). By the year 2000, hate crimes statistics had stabilized to an extent (despite chronic underreporting), and sociologists had studied the issue enough to issue a summary report on hate published by the American Sociological Association (Jenness, Ferber, and Grattet 2000).

Libertarian critics of hate crimes legislation generally argued that hate crimes legislation was an example of identity politics forcing the government to intrude too far into private and personal realms (Jacobs and Potter 1998; Sullivan 1999). Defenders of hate crimes legislation offered detailed rebuttals (B. Levin 1993; 1999; J. Levin and McDevitt 1993; J. Levin 2002).

Between these two diametrically opposed positions are progressive critics who recognize the reality of hate crimes—and the need for government intervention—but who fear the methodology for punishment is flawed. Activist groups such as the Audre Lorde Center and the American Friends Service Committee have suggested the emphasis on enhanced criminal penalties and incarceration in most hate crimes laws is misguided. This critique emerged primarily from progressive activists in the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender (LGBT) community.

An example of this is the work of Katherine Whitlock. Based in Montana, Whitlock authored a report for the national American Friend Service Committee (AFSC), *In a Time of Broken Bones: A Call to Dialogue on Hate Violence and the Limitations of Hate Crimes Legislation*. The report led to AFSC stating that it “believes that most hate crimes laws are seriously flawed by their emphasis on penalty enhancements, which produce consequences antithetical to the good intentions of their proponents” (Whitlock 2001, viii).

Carolina Cordero-Dyer, a board member of the Audre Lorde Project (a New York City LGBT resource center), articulates three major objections to current hate crimes legislation:

- Enhanced criminal penalties rely on a criminal justice system that is racist and is increasingly punitive and there is no assurance that this legislation would not be used against traditionally marginalized groups.
- There is no evidence that enhanced penalties will prevent hate crime.
- Supporting enhanced criminalization of hate crime allies the LGBT movement with tough-on-crime advocates and drives a wedge between LGBT activists and social justice/prison reform movements. Our movement is divided and weakened by adopting tough-on-crime strategies (2001).

Other critiques have appeared in the feminist publication *Sojourner* (Jakobsen 1999) and the liberal *Nation* magazine (Kim 1999), as well as other publications on the political left.

Another provocative trend is represented in the slogan used by some progressive activists: “In Tolerance There is No Respect.” This is an argument that we need to tolerate ideas different from our own, but should respect cultures different from our own—a small but important distinction. As Perry suggests, embracing a “positive politics of difference” involves “much more than efforts to assimilate Others or merely ‘tolerate’ their presence” (Perry 2004, 95).

#### IV. CHALLENGES

Loretta Ross of the Center for Human Rights Education in Atlanta argues that we should see ourselves as part of the global movement to assert, defend, and expand basic human rights. This is a movement that transcends many political and ideological boundaries, and participation should not pose serious ethical quandaries for scholars. At the same time, as we are not only critics of prejudice, bigotry, and hate, but also scholars, we need to discern the complexity, nuances, and distinctions in the groups and individuals we study. If we condemn demonization, scapegoating, conspiracism, and apocalyptic dualism in the organized supremacist groups and perpetrators of ethnoviolence we study, then we have a special obligation to consider the possibility that we may be tempted to fall into the same rhetorical traps we criticize.

Along with challenging ourselves, we should challenge those in law enforcement who claim terrorists and other criminals are imbedded in dissident social movements and ethnic communities rather than spinning off the periphery of these movements in hard-to-penetrate cells. We should challenge researchers, watchdog groups, and scholars to debate the value of Centrist/Extremist theory and defend their use of the term “extremism” when many social scientists have abandoned both the concept and the term. We should challenge liberal groups to explain why it is ethical to use a term such as “religious political extremist.” This term was selected after focus groups said it covered both conservative Christian evangelicals and armed neonazi terrorists. This term conflates First Amendment protected political ideas and activities with the violent criminal activities of organized hate groups.

We can guard against terrorism without gutting the First Amendment. We can defend our society against violence without spies peering over our shoulder taking notes. We can respect diversity without ransacking democracy. We can challenge hate and systems of oppression by adopting a human rights framework that balances civil rights and civil liberties.

#### V. ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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#### NOTES

1. Conversations with sociologist Brenda Brasher, 2003.