

**ATTORNEY GENERAL'S COMMISSION ON RACIAL, ETHNIC,  
RELIGIOUS, AND MINORITY VIOLENCE**



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April 26, 1988

ALL RERMV COMMISSION MEMBERS

Hooray! I have been advised that at the POST Commission meeting on April 21, 1988, the RERMV Commission recommendations on Hate Crimes training were approved. Congratulations!

Will keep you apprised on next step.

Very truly yours,

  
Marty Mercado  
Coordinator

MM:dah

**JOHN K. VAN DE KAMP**  
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December 29, 1987

TO ALL RERMV COMMISSION MEMBERS


Sorry to be so late in getting back to you regarding our meeting with the POST Commission's curriculum review committee. The meeting was very productive in terms of what we were able to accomplish and all of us left on a "high" over the Committee's acceptance of our recommendations! This is, of course, just the first step in the review and the final results may be somewhat different. Nevertheless, it is a first step.

I am attaching copies of the course guides indicating our recommended changes.

Thank you all for your assistance - looking forward to a positive, productive New Year - best wishes to you for a happy - healthy - and prosperous New Year!

Very truly yours,

JOHN K. VAN DE KAMP  
Attorney General

  
Marty Mercado  
Chief, Office of Community  
and Consumer Affairs

MM:dah

Enclosures



copy

# BASIC COURSE UNIT GUIDE

4

COMMUNITY SERVICE CONCEPT

This unit guide covers the following learning goals contained in the POST Basic Course performance objective document:

2.1.0, 2.2.0, 2.3.0



THE COMMISSION  
ON PEACE OFFICER STANDARDS AND TRAINING  
STATE OF CALIFORNIA

**PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVE**

**The student will recognize specific hate crimes motivated by racial, ethnic, religious or sexual orientation, including:**

- A - PC 1170.75**
- B - PC 1170.8**
- C - PC 11411**
- D - PC 11412**
- E - PC 11413**
- F - PC (AB 63)**

**The student will recognize indicators of hate-related crimes, including:**

- A - anti-religious symbols/slurs**
- B - racial/sexual/ethnic slurs**
- C - racial symbols**
- D - hate group symbols**
- E - anti gay/lesbian slurs**

**Learning Goal 2.2.0** : The student officer will understand community reactions to his/her conduct.

| Unit Outline & Presentation                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | Objectives & Instructional Cues                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>(2) Education and training</p> <p>(3) Knowledge of interpersonal communications</p> <p>b. Knowledge of community</p> <p>5. Classroom discussion</p> <p>a. Influences which affect the community's attitude toward the police:</p> <p>(1) School exposure</p> <p>(2) Media - TV, radio, newspaper</p> <p>(3) Family</p> <p>(4) Peers</p> <p>(5) Minorities</p> <p>B. Coping With Cultural Differences</p> <p>1. Definitions:</p> <p>a. "Cope" - "to contend with successfully, on equal terms"</p> <p>b. "Culture" - "training/refining of mind; emotions, manners, taste, environment; results of training concepts, habits, skills of given people, at given time."</p> <p>2. Establish who has leadership and influence within community groups.</p> <p>3. How the lack of knowledge of cultural differences <del> affect</del> the officer's performance.</p> <p><i>delete</i> <del>a. Destructive family influences</del></p> <p>a. Hostility/violence towards officer</p> <p>b. Limits officer's effectiveness</p> <p>c. Exacerbation of situation</p> <p>4. Class discussion on the "we-they" syndrome</p> | <p>2.2.1<br/>The student will identify a way in which he/she can individually influence and affect the community's attitude toward the police with the following groups:</p> <p>A. Schools</p> <p>B. Media-newspapers, TV, radio</p> <p>C. Family</p> <p>D. Friends and acquaintances</p> <p>2.2.3<br/>The student will identify basic methods of dealing effectively with cultural, social-economic differences.</p> |

New Section Added:

C. Coping with Consequences of Hate-Motivated Crimes

1. Introduction

- a. Emphasize that the consequences of hate-motivated crimes have far-reaching impacts on the individual, department, and the community.
- b. Emphasize that crimes motivated by hate occur in every community.
- c. Emphasize that the police response has a significant impact on whether victims cooperate with the prosecution or whether community tensions continue to build.

2. Definition of hate-motivated crimes

3. How lack of knowledge of hate motivated crimes affects officers performance

4. Class discussion/role play on hate-motivated crimes.

- A. Disturbance
- B. Property Damage
- C. Crime of Violence
- D. Personal Assault

New Performance Objective

Refer to AG's RERMV Commission report on Minority Violence

Refer to AG's RERMVC report for SB 2080 definitions

2.2.4

The student will identify the consequences of hate crimes motivated by racial, religious, ethnic, or sexual orientation including:

- a. differences of psychological effect on victim
- b. Denial of basic constitutional rights
- c. Divisiveness in community
- d. Potential escalation of violence

The officer will successfully handle a call for service involving:

- a. Racial Minority
- b. Ethnic Minority
- c. Women
- d. Sexual Orientation
- e. Economic Group
- f. Elderly
- g. Physically Handicapped
- h. Developmentally disabled

(Refer to victimology guide)

| Unit Outline & Presentation                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | Objectives & Instructional Cues                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>c. Official tone of voice</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) Attempt to over-control</li> <li>(2) Using vocal tone improperly</li> <li>(3) Manifestation of insecurity</li> <li>(4) Manifestation of immaturity</li> </ol> <p>d. Use of Body Language</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) Nonverbal cues</li> <li>(2) Establishing positive first impression</li> <li>(3) General demeanor</li> <li>(4) Body distance</li> </ol> <p>C. Factors That Develop A Negative Public Response</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Profanity                     <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Not to be used</li> <li>b. Negative effect on professional image</li> </ol> </li> <li>2. Derogatory language                     <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Detracts from professional effectiveness</li> <li>b. Generates complaints</li> <li>c. People will be reluctant to cooperate</li> </ol> </li> <li>3. <sup>RACIAL &amp; SEXUAL ORIENTED</sup> <del>A</del> Ethnical <sup>B)</sup> offensive terminology                     <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Turns people off - <sup>increases hostility</sup></li> <li>b. <del>Ethnical</del> awareness</li> <li>c. <sup>INS</sup> Sensitivity to feelings of others</li> </ol> </li> <li>4. Use of police jargon                     <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Any use with public is inappropriate</li> <li>b. People often cannot understand</li> <li>c. Use of jargon can confuse or demean</li> </ol> </li> </ol> <p>D. Role-Playing Situations</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Incorporated in other practical exercises (see Management Guide)</li> </ol> | <p>NOTE: Although the performance objectives cover only the negative aspects, the instructor should point out the positive aspects.</p> <p>5.1.2<br/>The student will identify the following as being factors which would contribute to a negative response from the public:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. Profanity</li> <li>B. Derogatory language</li> <li>C. <sup>ethnic</sup> <del>offensive</del> <sup>f. sexual</sup> <del>terminology</del> <sup>oriented</sup></li> <li>D. Inappropriate use of police jargon</li> </ol> <p>5.1.3<br/>Given practical exercises depicting stressful situations of interaction with the public, the student will communicate properly and effectively with the following types of persons:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. Hostile</li> <li>B. Angry</li> <li>C. Hysterical</li> <li>D. Drunk</li> <li>E. Deranged</li> <li>F. Very young</li> <li>G. Very old</li> <li>H. Racist / <sup>victim</sup></li> <li>I. <sup>gay/lesbian</sup></li> </ol> |

\* UNDER VICTIMOLOGY UNIT GUIDE (SEPARATE GUIDE) SHOULD ADDRESS DEALING WITH VICTIMS OF RERMV

*Map - name copy*

# BASIC COURSE UNIT GUIDE

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## INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATIONS

This unit guide covers the following learning goals contained in the POST Basic Course performance objective document:

5.1.0



**THE COMMISSION  
ON PEACE OFFICER STANDARDS AND TRAINING  
STATE OF CALIFORNIA**



**Learning Goal 2.2.0** : The student officer will understand community reactions to his/her conduct.

| Unit Outline & Presentation                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | Objectives & Instructional Cues                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p><i>D/c.</i> Development and Self-Concepts</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Theories of officer's personality development               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Heredity (physical makeup, intelligence, etc.)</li> <li>b. Environment (schools, religious background, family environment, etc.)</li> </ol> </li> <li>2. Prejudices and stereotyping               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. The problems of imposing our personal values on others.</li> </ol> </li> <li><i>INSERT NEW</i> &gt; 3. The student will identify and understand special problem groups.               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>delete</i> a. <del>Physically and mentally handicapped</del></li> <li><del>b. Developmentally disabled</del> } →</li> </ol> </li> <li>4. Taking self-concept, prejudices, and stereotyping into consideration - apply them to:               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Race and ethnic relations</li> <li>b. Moral issues<br/>(HOMELESS, MENTAL RETARDED)</li> <li>c. Victims of crimes</li> <li>d. Cultural groups</li> <li>e. <i>Sexual Orientation</i></li> </ol> </li> </ol> | <p><i>5</i><br/>2.2.5<br/>The student will identify the folkways, mores, values, and particular needs for police services of each of the following community groups:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. Racial Minority</li> <li>B. Ethnic Minority</li> <li>C. Women</li> <li>D. <del>Sexual Orientation</del> <i>GAYS/LESBIANS</i></li> <li>E. Economic Group</li> <li>F. Elderly</li> <li>G. Physically Handicapped.</li> <li>H. Developmentally Disabled</li> </ol> <p>See Handout #2</p> <p>2.2.6<br/>The student will identify factors in his/her self-development which affects how he/she deals with people.</p> |

Insert Under #2 above:

- b. The problems of not recognizing the personal values of others.
  - (1) problem of assimilation into American society
  - (2) history of immigration - why they are here

## Survey of Schools Finds Hate Crimes Widespread

By JEAN MERL  
TIMES EDUCATION WRITER

In what is believed to be the first comprehensive survey of its kind, the Los Angeles County Human Relations Commission and the county Office of Education found a "serious problem" with hate crimes and related incidents in the county's public schools. Blacks and Latinos are the most frequent victims.

The survey, sent in March to all 1,570 public schools—including the 646-campus Los Angeles Unified School District—was undertaken to "provide us, the schools and the community with a picture of what is happening," said Eugene Mornell, executive director of the Human Relations Commission.

Because this is the first such survey, Mornell said he cannot say whether such incidents are grow-

ing or declining, but the report, which found that incidents had occurred at 37% of all responding schools and "does indicate there is a serious problem" in the county. The area has seen explosive growth in Latino, Asian and immigrant populations.

Among the survey's key findings:

—More schools (168 of the 956 responding to the survey) reported anti-black incidents than any other type. Blacks, who make up 13.8% of the 1988-89 countywide school enrollment, were victims of about 29% of all incidents.

—Latinos, who account for 46.7% of the enrollment, were victims of racial incidents at 144 schools. With 651 incidents directed against them, Latinos accounted for about 30% of the victims.

—Anglos were the third-largest  
Please see HATE, A43

# HATE: School Survey Finds 'Serious Problem'

**Continued from A1**  
victims' group, with 91 schools reporting 337 incidents. Anglos make up 28.9% of the county school population, and represented 15.8% of all victims.

—Asians and Pacific Islanders, making up 8.6% of the school enrollment, suffered 14.5% of all incidents, 309 at 91 schools.

—Immigrants were the victims of more than 22% of all incidents against students. There were substantially fewer incidents against religious groups than racial groups. Jewish students made up the majority of anti-religious victims, with 40 incidents reported at 20 schools.

—Anti-gay and lesbian violence was the sixth most-common type reported. Twenty-four schools reported a total of 65 incidents.

The survey also found that only 4.5% of all incidents could be traced to such hate groups as the white-supremacist "skinheads." Yet, the presence of such groups on a campus appeared to contribute to an "atmosphere of intolerance" in that there were more hate crimes reported at schools where such groups were found.

Noting that 61% of all schools contacted completed the four-page survey, Mornell said the findings will be the subject of a Jan. 11 conference of school administrators, county officials and others to

seek solutions to conflicts among students of different racial and ethnic backgrounds or sexual orientation.

Mornell said the commission found its survey to be the first comprehensive study of crime and hate-related incidents in the public schools anywhere in the United States.

The study defined hate crimes as any criminal acts committed against an individual or an institution and motivated by bigotry based on race, ethnicity, religion or sexual orientation. It added such non-criminal acts as name calling and making racial slurs to its survey because such acts "occur so frequently on campuses, often reflect serious intergroup tension and . . . may lead to serious vandalism or assault."

The incidents occurred most frequently at junior high or middle schools (47% of those surveyed reported problems), followed by high schools (42%) and elementary schools (34%).

Racial slurs and name calling were the most prevalent type of incidents reported against students, representing 47% of all incidents reported. Physical violence was reported in 25% of the cases. Graffiti was the third most common type of incident.

Participating schools were promised anonymity. However,

two sample schools were selected, with names deleted, so the Human Relations Commission could compare results between a school with no reported incidents and one with many.

From these samples, the commission concluded that there was no clear relationship between the socioeconomic status of students and the incidents of acts of hatred. It also noted that such incidents tended to increase sharply when any given minority or ethnic group makes up at least 10% of a school's population.

Incidents against school employees were included in the survey, which found that punishment tended to be more severe when a student acted out against a teacher or other adult employed at the school.

Phil Kauble, of the county Office of Education's division of evaluation, attendance and pupil services, said he welcomes the survey as a way to "get a jump on the problem."

Like problems with drugs and gangs did a few years earlier, the issue of ethnic and other group tensions "just crept up on all of society, including the schools."

The Human Relation Commission's Mornell said the idea for the school survey grew out of the annual compilations the commission has been doing for nine years

of hate crimes reported to police throughout the county.

"We've had a feeling we should be looking at the schools for quite some time now," Mornell said.

Some dramatic differences in results between the crime reports and the comprehensive school survey have been noted, he said. For example, Anglo males are the most frequent perpetrators of hate crimes among adults, and are rarely victims, according to police reports. But, Anglos form a substantial group of victims in the schools, the survey found.

Mornell said crimes against immigrants make up only about 5% of those reported among adults, yet 22% of incidents reported in the schools were aimed at immigrants. Mornell attributed the difference to many immigrant adults' reluctance to report crimes against them. The schools' survey was filled out by school administrators or teachers and thus did not depend on the victims coming forward, he said.

# Hate Crimes in County on Rise, Panel Reports

By GINGER THOMPSON, Times Staff Writer

Steve Renteria of West Hollywood often walks to the grocery store in the evening—never really worried about getting mugged, but always cautious.

But one night a couple of months ago he let his guard down.

"My friend Peter and I were a couple of blocks from my house with the groceries in our hands when all of a sudden I felt this club hit me in my temple," said Renteria, 27, a hair stylist, who said he is homosexual. "My jaw was broken in two, and after I fell to the ground I got kicked and kicked and kicked. I thought I was going to die."

The attackers did not take Renteria's money or groceries and never uttered a word during the attack.

After the assault, Renteria said, the attackers looked down on their bloody victims, laughed and directed homosexual epithets at them.

In a report issued Thursday, members of the County Commission on Human Relations said they are alarmed by the increasing number of hate crimes being committed throughout Los Angeles County. The number of hate crimes has increased since the commission began recording them in 1980.

Although most of the crimes are acts of vandalism such as graffiti or defacement, the number of violent crimes is escalating, especially racially motivated crimes and crimes against homosexuals, according to the report.

The number of racially motivated assaults or attempted assaults increased nearly 5% over 1987, according to the report, while "gay-bashing" accounted for the majority of hate crimes committed against homosexuals—64%.

"Unfortunately homophobia is still the most widely accepted form of hatred in this society," said Tom Coleman of the Gay and Lesbian Community Services Center. "People think of homosexuality as a dirty secret and that it's OK to attack homosexuals because society is ashamed of them anyway."

Statistics for the 23-page report, which lists the 267 hate crimes that were reported in the county last year, were gathered from law enforcement agencies, community groups and religious organizations, said Eugene Mornell, executive director of the commission.

Racially motivated violence increased from 16 recorded incidents in 1987 to 23 in 1988.

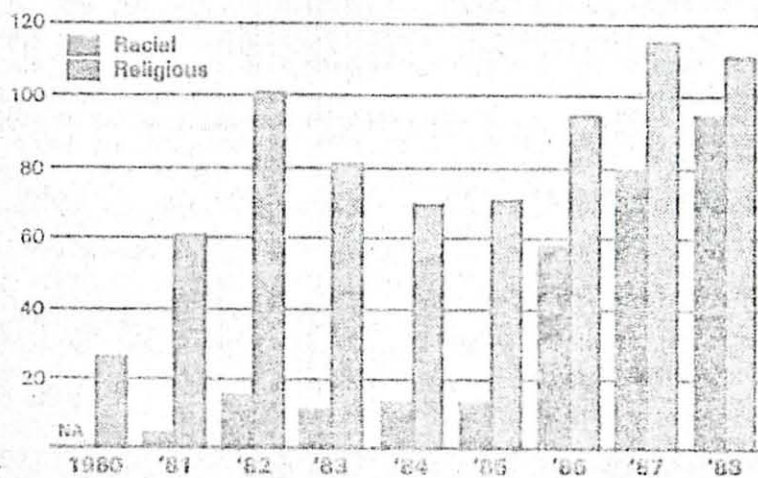
However, Stewart Kwoh of the Asian Pacific American Legal Center said those figures are the tip of the iceberg.

"We know for a fact that many victims, particularly in the Latino and Asian communities, do not report crimes to police because they come from countries where they learned not to trust police," Kwoh said.

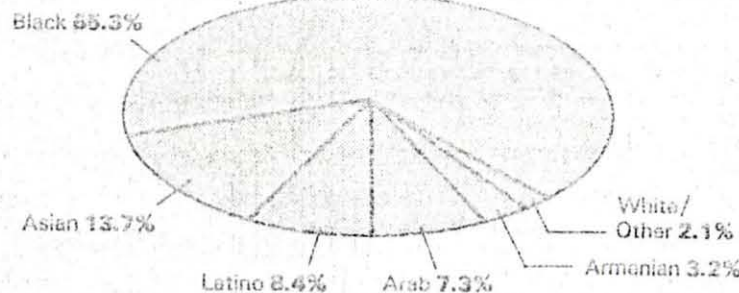
More than 65% of the racially motivated crimes listed in the report were committed against

## HATE CRIMES IN LOS ANGELES COUNTY

Hate crimes are defined as acts directed at an individual, institution or business expressly because of race, ethnicity, religion or sexual orientation.



## Ethnicity of Victims



Source: Los Angeles County Commission on Human Relations

Los Angeles Times

blacks and included incidents such as pit bulls being set loose on black children in Pacoima early last year and the summertime shooting of an 18-year-old black man in Playa del Rey by a white gunman.

To help stop such incidents, the county commission recommended that law enforcement agencies thoroughly investigate the incidents and prosecute hate crimes as felonies whenever possible.

L.A.  
DAILY  
Journal  
1-14-87

By LOUIS FREEDBERG

What is particularly troubling about the spate of racial attacks by whites on blacks and other racial groups is that so many of the reported incidents are bound by a common thread: youth.

In case after case, the assailants have been white teens or young adults in their early 20s. At Howard Beach in New York, two 17-year-olds and one 16-year-old have been arrested in the racial beating that left one person dead. In Charleston, South Carolina, a black cadet was harassed by white cadets dressed in KKK uniforms. And at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, white students, upset about the World Series defeat of the Boston Red Sox by the New York Mets, viciously assaulted a group of black students.

Unfortunately, blacks have not been the only targets of white youth bigotry. Earlier, in the San Francisco Bay area, a group of teenagers cruised the city's streets looking for gays to beat up — for "cheap thrills," police said. One gay man died as a result of the attack. In Santa Barbara, California, a teenager from an exclusive prep school stabbed and killed a local vagrant for no apparent reason. And a recent report described in detail 50 gang rapes or sexual assaults on women on college campuses around the nation.

#### 'Us Versus Them'

Why are young whites turning against people who have been victims of persistent discrimination? One answer is a racism honed by elements unique to the youth culture. Most teens hang out in groups. The adolescent peer group is probably one of the last examples of strong social bonding outside of family that exists across America. These groups are rarely mixed racially. One of their most characteristic features is that they breed an "us versus them" attitude in which "out" groups are not tolerated.

It is in this exclusive atmosphere, removed from adult leadership, that prejudices are magnified and have the potential to become more virulent than among their parents' generation.

The outcomes are often attacks that seem to come right out of the pages of "Lord of the Flies," William Golding's novel on youthful energy run amok in the absence of adult leadership.

Another answer is that teenagers of the late 1980s have not experienced the great social movements of the past several decades. They've grown up long after the civil rights movement, and after the woman's and gay rights movements reached their peaks. They've missed out on the civil rights marches, on the national debates on affirmative action, and on the need to make up for past discrimination.

A third has to do with the fact that in most

*Louis Freedberg is an anthropologist who has worked with youth for over a decade. From Pacific News Service.*

parts of the country, adults have been forced to be more circumspect about their prejudices. Admittedly, as the society has become more open and integrated, there is more racial tolerance among adults. But there are still millions of Americans who have not fully accepted the legally sanctioned progress towards racial equality in America. Their attitudes have been clothed and muted. Now they seem to be finding their fullest expression in teenage gangs.

"What we may be dealing with is a population who have picked up on their parents' negative attitudes," says Judith Porter, a sociologist at Bryn Mawr University who wrote a widely publicized book, "Black Child, White Child." Its disturbing conclusion was that by ages four to six, children already have well formed — and quite sophisticated — racial attitudes.

Compounding the problem is that teens have come to consciousness in the age of Ronald Reagan, who, according to Professor Thomas Pettigrew, a sociologist at the University of California at Santa Cruz, has "communicated a homespun kind of rac-

ism." Pettigrew, intimately involved with school desegregation in the 1960s, has studied all the comments made by Ronald Reagan on race since he came to the White House. He concludes that the message emanating from our national leadership is that "blacks don't quite belong, whites belong."

At the same time, surveys of racial attitudes over the past four decades indicate that a gradual liberalization of racial attitudes among young people has finally slowed in the 1970s.

Young people also feel threatened, especially in blue collar neighborhoods, by the decline of manufacturing jobs and fewer job opportunities for young people generally. They're most likely to blame their economic troubles on blacks — seen as getting unfair advantages through affirmative action — and on new immigrants who are felt to be siphoning off jobs that would ordinarily have gone to young adults.

None of this is to suggest that all teens are potentially KKK'ers, women haters, or gay bashers. Yet what cannot be ignored is that

teenagers — usually white males acting in groups — have been in the forefront of bigoted and brutal attacks being reported in towns and cities across America.

#### Dispelling the Darkness

The implications should be clear. Our society cannot simply wait for bigoted attitudes to pass with the older generation, because these attitudes are being picked up and perpetuated by their children. Young people must be educated about the historical struggles of blacks and other groups to gain their rightful place in American society. And ways must be devised to encourage more rather than less contact among racial groups beginning at an early age.

Right now, too many teen groups are instruments of terror, purveying the darker sides of American culture. Maybe it is too late to start an opening up process in the heated atmosphere of Howard Beach. But we must try to begin at an early age, so that when children become teens, the adolescent peer group might again become a center for more enlightened values.

Teen Peer Groups in U.S. Often Potent Fountainhead of Bigotry