

New strategy of hate groups is to infiltrate the mainstream

By Brenda Goldstein (CUP)

Hate groups are undergoing a revival, capitalizing on the discontent of youth and a new friendlier image.

"They've shifted their focus because they're dying out. They knew that if they didn't get a great infusion of young blood, they would go the way of the dinosaur," says Bernie Farber, national director of community relations at the Canadian Jewish Congress.

Farber has been researching hate groups in Canada for more than 10 years. When he began his research, he says Nazis were a dying breed -- mainly groups of senior citizens. He says the average age has dropped drastically since 1989.

"The numbers have not changed, but the shift in image is startling. It's a serious red flag that society is going to have to wake up and listen to," he says.

Detective Dino Doria of Metro Toronto police's hate crimes unit agrees the ages of those committing crimes has gone down. "The average person who commits a hate crime is under 20 years old. In the U.S. [and Europe] it's 17," he says. Doria describes offenders as young people who feel disconnected. Racist movements give them a chance to be accepted into a group.

Warren Kinsella is a former journalist and executive assistant to cabinet Minister David Dingwall and author of the book, *Web of Hate*. Kinsella says home-grown hate groups have learned the lessons of the past, and are paying particular attention to youth's feelings of being marginalized and disenfranchised.

He says the rise of skinheads in Britain is similar to our own situation. "In 1967-68, the National Front started recruiting young skinheads. They were from a class that was chronically unemployed and had nowhere to go. They were

frustrated with politicians, and frustrated with unemployment," says Kinsella.

"The same thing is happening here. It wasn't until 1988-89 that Terry Long, Wolfgang Droege... started bringing these people in. Overnight the ranks of the Canadian racist movement were rejuvenated by hundreds of young skinheads."

But it is not only skinheads that are being drawn in. Farber says the current generation is an attractive target because it is not expected to do better than its parents. Angry, frustrated youth looking for reasons for their bleak future are easily manipulated.

"There are a lot of scared kids out there. It says they are more vulnerable," he says. "How do we reach young people, when economically they aren't sure if they are going to get a job, and here comes a soft-spoken, reasonable man -- Wolfgang Droege -- with a formula for their ills?"

Kinsella says it is no accident that people like Malcolm Ross and Jim Keegstra are teachers in the education system. He says they are there to recruit young people.

"It's a deliberate attempt to reach a young audience who is not critical, and naive," says Kinsella.

Doria says groups have not changed -- their tactics have. Hate now comes in a glossy package with its true message disguised in moral, principled tones.

"They have to go with the 90s and the legalities involved. The main thing is promoting hate in a 'PR' mode. They don't 'hate' anymore; they are there to promote their rights."

According to Kinsella and Farber, racist leaders like Wolfgang Droege of the Heritage Front and Don Andrews of the Nationalist Party of Canada realized in 1989 that they had



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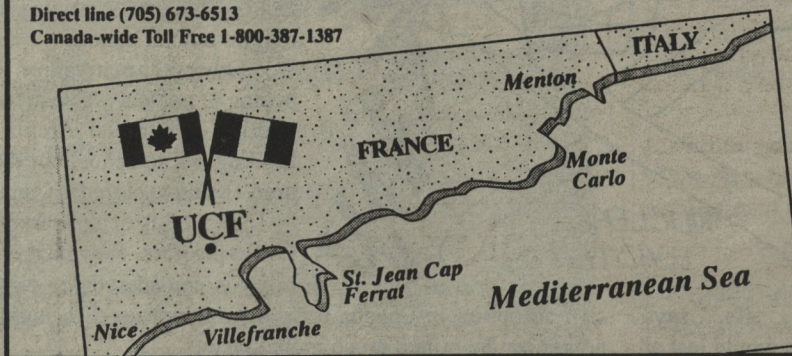
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