

Survey says anti-Jewish acts increasing in U.S.

By Hope Nealon
Emerald Reporter

A nation-wide survey has revealed the highest level of anti-Jewish acts in the United States in 13 years.

And Eugene is no exception. However, the city has not seen as large an increase as other areas of the country.

The Anti-Defamation League, an organization that compiles anti-Jewish acts across the nation, reported in its annual 1991 survey that for the first time in more than a decade, there were more attacks on Jewish individuals than on their property.

According to the report, in 1991 there were 950 incidents of harassment, including physical assaults, and 929 incidents of vandalism — an increase of 200 percent in five years.

In Lane County, anti-Jewish incidences increased in 1991, jumping from 10 to 30 reported incidents, according to a statewide survey by a Law Enforcement Data System report.

Public information officer Tim Birr said Eugene had two racial verbal attacks in 1991.

The question of concern when dealing with anti-Semitism, Birr said, is what is protected as free speech, and when does it become a criminal act? With the recent political correctness craze, the boundaries between freedom of expression and hate speech are blurring, he said.

Most hate statutes, Birr said, label a

verbal threat, physical assault, or damage to property as a criminal act.

The ADL also reported 101 incidents of anti-Semitism occurring on 60 college campuses last year.

At the University, the alternative newspaper *The Student Insurgent* has received criticism for publishing articles that some claim are anti-Jewish.

Rabbi Myron Kinberg, a member of the Eugene Human Rights Commission, said the slight increase of anti-Semitism in Eugene has come from the University campus in this type of discriminatory literature.

"In the *Insurgent*, the articles were written in a way that they are not making a strong distinction between anger of Jews and anger of government policy in Israel," he said.

"They are sort of saying all Jews are responsible rather than government policy," Kinberg said.

But Kinberg said it has not been to a degree to cause great concern to the local community.

University Jewish Student Union Co-director Phil Zuckerman wrote a commentary in the *Emerald* accusing the *Insurgent* of "Jew-bashing" and asking the community for support.

But he said it was hardly worth the negative criticism and recrimination he received.

"When I wrote one article about what I felt was anti-Jewish, I did not mention a

single name, yet I was virulently, personally slandered," Zuckerman said.

"We're deeply offended, but at the same time, we don't want to bring more negative attention to the Jewish Student Union," he said.

Gary Murrell, the author of the *Insurgent* articles, said he submitted a commentary to the *Emerald* in response to Zuckerman's article, but it hasn't been printed yet.

Murrell said his response is in the commentary, and would not elaborate on Zuckerman's claims.

But Murrell did say he does not advocate anti-Semitism, calling it a disease.

"It's sick and it has no place in our society," Murrell said.

Zuckerman said dealing with the different types of anti-Semitism is a difficult task due to the subtle ways of discriminating, such as literature downplaying Jewish oppression.

"This fad to claim Jews are not the victims of oppression is the first sign of someone who doesn't like Jews," he said.

These subtle attacks, Zuckerman said, can lead to blatant discrimination, adding anti-Semitism is hard to reconcile due to the intensity of emotion on both sides.

"Whenever you are dealing with issues, namely anti-Semitism or racism, people's emotions rise to the level of fear and defense on both sides," he said.

"This causes anger and revenge rather than reconciliation."

Zuckerman said there were flyers circulated with the phrase "Kill Jews" and "Kill Zionists," and they were left at the JSU.

But Kinberg said the individual who made them was mentally confused. He said the individual wasn't totally balanced, and wouldn't have meant how it came across.

The ADL wrote in its report that the increased level of harassment and assault incidents signaled a change in tactics of harassment, adding it represented "a new willingness to engage in direct, provocative confrontations with Jews, a kind of 'in-your-face' intimidation, reflecting an erosion of the taboo against such open bigotry."

On the positive side, anti-Jewish incidents by Neo-Nazi skinheads were down significantly, from 62 acts of vandalism in 1990 to 36 acts in 1991, according to the ADL report.

In Eugene, one of the two anti-Semitic incidences involved a skinhead racially slurring and saluting a Jewish University professor.

The ADL survey also cited more communication between communities and law enforcement, and more prejudice-awareness programs in schools and the workplace, as effective ways to combat anti-Semitism.

The JSU is currently forming a group to combat anti-Semitism.

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