

# **National Analytical Study on Racist Violence and Crime**

**RAXEN Focal Point for SWEDEN**

EXPO FOUNDATION

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The single comprehensive source on racial violence and crime in Sweden is annually compiled by the Constitutional Branch, the Protection of the Constitution Section of the Swedish Security Police (Säpo), which is somewhat similar to the German Verfassungsschutz. An annual report titled *Brottslighet kopplad till rikets säkerhet* (Crimes relating to the internal security of the nation) is published each autumn, focusing on the previous year. Very little or no independent data exists. The few independent sources that exist are from local media or local activist groups and usually not reliable in terms of scientific accuracy or definitions and sources.

Scientific methods used for the annual police compilation, which is the basis for conclusions in this paper, have improved markedly in recent years. The police compilation includes a majority of crimes with a racial or extreme right motivation reported to local police authorities during the previous year. The largest fault is that far from every crime is actually reported, and therefore this contributes to an unknown amount of hidden statistics. Although hidden statistics can be expected, even a large amount of hidden statistics for certain types of crimes, the existing compilation is broad and accurate enough to indicate changes in trends and developments. Police statistics focuses on what is considered “threat against the security of the realm” and separates xenophobic, anti-Semitic and homophobic crimes, which are all defined as “crimes against minority”.

Compared with the early 1990s (in a period when police reporting was considered more unreliable) long term statistics indicate a distinct growth of crimes associated with race hate or extreme right political activism. Figures since 1997 (when methods for improving scientific reliability for police statistics were instituted) indicate a slow but steady increase of such crimes, although there are certain diverging figures for certain types of crime.

However, in 2002, for the first time since such statistics began to be compiled in the early 1990s, the total figure for xenophobic crimes (excluding anti-Semitic and homophobic crimes) decreased. 2002 was an election year, which might have contributed to this decrease due to the fact that extreme right parties made serious attempts to avoid being mentioned in unfavourable media reports.

**Figure 1: Xenophobic crimes (a) 1997-2002<sup>1</sup>**

Year	Number of crimes
1997	1 752
1998	2 210
1999	2 363
2000	2 572
2001	2 670
2002	2 260

(a) *Excluding anti-Semitism, homophobia and related white power scene criminality.*

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<sup>1</sup> Statistics based on RPS/Säkerhetspolisen, PCS Report 1997 to 2002, p.19.

An annual compilation by the SOM Institute at the Gothenburg University<sup>2</sup> maps out current political attitudes among the population with regard to, among other things, attitudes towards immigrants and the willingness to accept political refugees.

SOM figures since the early 1990s – during the period that reports an annual increase of racial violence and racial crime – show a steady increased willingness among the population to accept immigrants and welcome political refugees.

Curiously, this curve was also broken for the first time in 2002, when a markedly increased number of Swedes stated a larger unwillingness to accept political refugees into the country. This increased unwillingness to accept immigrants coincides with a decrease of xenophobic crimes.

In the 2002 general election the xenophobic party the Sweden Democrats (SD) made a significant advancement. SD increased from 20 000 votes and eight seats in municipal assemblies, to 76 300 votes and 50 local seats in the election in 2002. The election result gave the SD 1.4 percent of the national vote , which makes it the largest party outside parliament.

A study analysing the disposition for “leading members of the Sweden Democrats” to commit crime gave an astonishing result.<sup>3</sup> Investigating leading SD members (a leading member defined as having been either a member of the national party executive or having appeared as an official election candidate for the party) in the ten year period 1988-1998 showed that no less than 23 percent had been sentenced for a crime in a court of law. This included all type of crimes from arson and assault to sentences for insurance fraud or drunk driving.

Although any political party, including mainstream democratic parties, certainly has its score of “black sheep”, the survey concluded that the Sweden Democrats by a wide margin was the most criminally inclined party in Sweden.

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<sup>2</sup> Demker, Gothenburg University, Political Science department.

<sup>3</sup> Stieg Larsson & Mikael Ekman, Sverigedemokraterna – den nationella rörelsen (Sweden Democrats – the national movement) Ordfront 2001

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## GLOSSARY

The single comprehensive source on racial violence in Sweden is the annual compilation by the Constitutional Branch of the Swedish Security Police (Säpo). The Constitutional Branch, formally the **Protection of the Constitution Section (PCS)**, is somewhat similar to the German Verfassungsschutz. An annual report titled *Brottslighet kopplad till rikets säkerhet* (Crimes relating to the internal security of the nation) is published each autumn, focusing on the previous year.

Crimes against the internal security of the nation are defined in several chapters of the Swedish penal code, in particular the Criminal law, although no legislation is actually giving a precise definition of what constitutes breaches of internal security.

**Race:** The word “race” and consequently the term “race hate crime” are used with caution; although the word “race” is used in most definitions of racism (including in the phrasing of the Swedish legislation) the term itself is seen as disputable. A Swedish parliament finding<sup>4</sup> claim there is no scientific basis for classifying different human beings or ethnic groups into “races”. The word “racism” is therefore used as a term describing attitudes and actions towards minority groups, not as a definition of the minority groups.

**Hate crime:** PCS definitions and reporting include all forms of “hate crime”, equalling race hate, anti-Semitism and homophobia. PCS reporting separates hate crimes perpetrated by individuals organised in known race hate groups, (i.e. the white power scene), and crimes perpetrated by individuals not known to be affiliated with any specific political organisation (i.e. individuals of the broader public).

**Racism:** The word “racism” in PCS reports is used to describe an attitude or a viewpoint claiming supremacy of one’s own ethnic group based on a perceived difference in “race”, national, cultural or ethnic background.

**Xenophobia:** The word “xenophobia” is used in a broader sense than “racism”, and describes a negative attitude, fear or resentment towards other ethnic groups.

**Racist and xenophobic crimes:** A term used by the PCS to describe crimes against individuals or groups of people based on their “race”, cultural, ethnic or national origin. This includes crimes directed against property and ranges from insult to violence.

**Anti-Semitism:** crimes based on hatred or animosity against Jewish people or religion, or ideologically related crimes against Jewish property.

**Homophobia:** The word homophobia is used as an expression of hatred or animosity towards homosexuals. The PCS defines homophobia as a core sentiment of the white power groups, but also as a sentiment among individuals of the broader public.

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<sup>4</sup> Betänkande 1997/1998: KU29, Rskr 1997/98:185.

**White power group, white power movement, white power milieu, white power sub culture:** the term “white power” is used to describe crimes relating to activists or adherents to the ideological supremacist subculture including neo-Nazi organisations, skinheads, certain anti-Semitic conspiracy theory groups etc. For the purpose of this EUMC report the phrase “*white power scene*” is used. Crimes committed under the auspices of the white power scene are not only related to members of specific racist or neo-Nazi groups, but also to the milieu as such; this includes crimes committed at for instance a white power rock concert etc, by individuals who can not be linked to specific groups by membership cards etc.

The PCS hate crime reporting doesn't make any distinction between hate crimes of “xenophobic”, “anti-Semitic” or “homophobic” nature although cases are analysed under separate chapters. White power scene crimes are included although they may not have any immediate bearing of racism – for instance illegal arms trading, burglaries, attacks on local politicians etc, are included as crimes carried out by race hate groups. Following the attack on World Trade Centre on September 11, 2001, it has been suggested that “Islamophobia” should be singled out as a fifth category, although this has not yet been enacted upon.

**Islamophobia:** Events following September 11, 2001, as well as due to the increased tension in the ongoing conflict in the Middle East, have sharpened anti-Islamic propaganda among xenophobic groups. Incidents of racial crime motivated by “Islamophobia” are reported under xenophobia and not distinguished as a category of its own. The term Islamophobia in this report is used broadly to indicate specific anti-Muslim or anti-Arab sentiments.

**The “national movement”** is a term used to describe the political universe of the extreme right through the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. The “national movement” is used to describe a multitude of groups, parties, ad hoc organisations and friendship circles making up what is in popular terms often described as the “extreme right”. The term “extreme right” is per definition temporary and not useful; what is “extreme” depends on what is considered extreme by the mainstream of the society at a given moment – this may change dramatically over time and from country to country.

The “national movement” is by no means a uniform movement; on the contrary it is often contradictory and riddled by factional warfare. The unifying factor is a basic anti-democratic ideology, often based on conspiracy theories, racism or anti-Semitism, and contempt of democratic politicians and institutions. Activists of the “national movement” often move from one group to another.



# 1. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study is to map out trends and developments of racially motivated crimes and violence in Sweden. The latest available statistics concerns year 2002.

This study will describe available figures on changing attitudes among the Swedish population with regard to immigration and political refugees.

This study will also describe the developments and emergence of a politically active group so called “national movement”, which is made up of the two forks a xenophobic extreme right as well as the white power scene, the so called Nazi Movement. The study will describe strength, political aims and propaganda methods.

## 2. THE POLITICAL CLIMATE

### 2.1. OVERVIEW OF XENOPHOBIC/POPULIST, RACIST AND RIGHT WING EXTREMIST ORGANISATIONS

Traditionally, right extremism – indeed, extremism of any kind – has never had much of a market among the Swedish voters. This was as true in the “Golden Era of Fascism”, as it is today. When, in the 1920s and 1930s, fascist organisations developed into mass parties in several European countries, the Swedish working- and middle class looked to Liberalism and Social Democracy and its promise of social stability and economic progress, rather than to political adventurism of either the extreme left or the extreme right.

This is not to say that fascist organisations did not exist in Sweden – only that compared with other countries they were small and relatively insignificant.

The 1930s saw the forming of several National Socialist parties, of which the **National Socialist Workers Party/Swedish Socialist Assembly (NSAP/SSS)** led by Sven Olof Lindholm, was the most important.<sup>5</sup> This and similar parties adopted brownshirt uniforms and a virulent anti-Semitism. Although “Nazi parties” held about 100 seats in municipal assemblies in the late 1930s, the actual national vote was low and no fascist party ever managed to win entrance to parliament through a general election. In 1934 three members of parliament defected from mainstream parties to the fascist **Swedish National League**, but remained in parliament for the rest of their terms. With this exception no fascist has ever had a voice in the Swedish parliament. As the war drew to an end the membership melted away.

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<sup>5</sup> For a background of Swedish National Socialism, see Helene Löw, *Hakkorset och Wasakärven*, doctoral thesis, Gothenburg University 1990.

## 2.2. POST-WAR RIGHT-WING EXTREMISM

After 1945 Swedish fascism hibernated in small and politically insignificant groups. The SNF maintained an activity through various front organisations, often moulded as historical, pseudo-royalist societies such as the **Narva Association** and the **November 30 Association** – the latter commemorating the death of Sweden's 18th century warrior king Karl XII.

Post-war development in Sweden has to a large extent focused on **Nysvenska Rörelsen (NSR) - the New Swedish Movement**, led by wartime fascist Per Engdahl. A shrewd political organiser during the war he was one of the few Swedish fascists who enjoyed a certain respect in the international movement. Adopting a Mussolini style of ideology, Engdahl formed the NSR in 1946 as a gathering point for intellectual fascists. He became a key organiser of the Nordic »lifeline« that safe housed escaping German war criminals en route to Latin America. In 1951 he hosted the international meeting of key European fascist leaders in the south Swedish city of Malmö, which led to the forming of the so called **Brown International**, perhaps better known as the Malmö Movement. It was at Engdahl's suggestion that the international network was given the formal name **Europäische Soziale Bewegung** - the European Social Movement.

Briefly a key player in the international movement, Engdahl was largely ignored in Sweden and although his organisation had perhaps several hundred followers at its peak in the 1960s, he was unable to recruit a significant amount of youngsters and the membership withered away. Curiously, shortly before his death in 1994, Engdahl again became fashionable among young fascists, as he became the mentor and guiding spirit of the **Reich Front**, for a time a cornerstone of the young militant fascist movement.

A third post-war organisation of significance was **Nordiska Rikspartiet (NRP) - the Nordic Reich Party**, formed in 1956 by Göran Assar Oredsson and his German born wife Vera. The NRP became a gathering point for die-hard Hitlerites and traditional National Socialists. In the 1980s the party youth organisation, the so called **Reich Party Actions Groups (RAG)**, recruited a number of skinheads in large city areas and became notorious for violent assaults and harassment of immigrants. In 1985 about 30 RAG activists were convicted in a much-publicised trial in Gothenburg for crimes ranging from arsons and violent assaults to murder.

## 2.3. EMERGENCE OF A NEW "NATIONAL MOVEMENT"

Having survived the post-war years the extreme right gained new ground in the 1980s. A new generation of activists, largely contemptuous of the old guard veterans of the NRP and similar groups, looked abroad for new inspiration.

s1979 marked the forming of **Bevara Sverige Svenskt (BSS) – Keep Sweden Swedish**, an anti-immigration campaign organisation largely based on a British National Front blueprint. Although the founding members were all active in the extremist Nazi fringe – in the NSR, the NRP or the SNF, the political rhetoric changes markedly. BSS strongly denied being “racist”, but focused on “cultural differences” to foster suspicion against immigrants. The claim was no longer that “foreigners are inferior to the Swedish race”

(although such sentiments still remained), but rather that “foreigners are threatening the cultural stability of the Nordic countries” or “foreigners are taking all the jobs from Swedes” etc.

Although never large in numbers – the BSS peaked with about 400 members – the organisation captured the headlines and gave ideological orientation to a large section of the extreme right. Briefly the extreme right ranging from uniformed Nazis to revisionist historians, racists and suit & tie” populists were united in the BSS. Already in the mid-1980s a division was emerging.

## 2.4. EMERGENCE OF A NEW NATIONAL SOCIALIST MOVEMENT”

One faction of the BSS donned boots and uniforms forming the modern Nazi (or “neo-Nazi”) movement. This faction took its inspiration primarily from various anti-Semitic conspiracy theories and groups in Britain and the United States, as well as from the skinhead movement. At the core of their beliefs is a vision of “RAHOWA”, a Racial Holy War to be spearheaded by a militant white underground in the struggle against “ZOG”, a “Zionist Occupation Government”. By 1991 this movement formed White Aryan Resistance (VAM), a group of Nazi skinhead who imitated the American terrorist organisation The Order. VAM carried out bank robberies and a hi-jacking of a Stockholm police station in order to steal arms for the revolution.

VAM was briefly in the headlines in the early 1990s. Several leading members were captured by the police and eventually sentenced to various short terms in prison. By 1993 the so-called “white power industry” had formed, producing a multitude of race hate propaganda in the form of CD-records, videos, magazines and Internet home pages. By 1996 Sweden was among the worlds leading producers of race hate material.

It can be said that all of today’s Nazi organisations stem from BSS and VAM. They are:

**The National Socialist Front (NSF)**, headquartered in Karlskrona in south Sweden. This is a traditionalist national socialist party with 250-500 supporters taking their inspiration from the 1930s.

**Swedish Resistance/National Youth (SMR/NU)** is a Stockholm based Nazi organisation with a few hundred members/supporters and with a leadership made up of former activists in VAM. SMR is the most pro-terrorist conspiracy group in Sweden.

**Blood & Honour (B&H)**, headquartered in Helsingborg in south Sweden, is the centre for white power activities and skinhead groups aligned with the international Blood & Honour movement. B&H have a few hundred members who, again, may simultaneously be members of other groups.

A few smaller organisations are of significance among which **Info-14** is regarded as the “intelligence service” of the extreme right; small organisations such as the **Aryan Brotherhood** or the **Yellow Cross** organises so called Nazi “prisoners of wars” – nazis who have been sentenced to prison, and extreme outfits such as the paramilitary **Legion**

**Wasa** which negotiated to join as mercenaries by Saddam Hussein to fight against the U.S. invaders.<sup>6</sup>

## 2.5. EMERGENCE OF A XENOPHOBIC NATIONALIST MOVEMENT

The other faction of the BSS of the 1980s took its inspiration from Jean-Marie Le Pen and the Front National in France. In 1988 they renamed BSS and formed a new party, the **Sweden Democrats (SD)**.

SD's ambition from the outset was gaining influence by parliamentary campaigning. In the late 1980s and during most of the 1990s the party remained an isolated fringe sect with precious little credibility. At the time the strong influence by known Nazi activists populating the party leadership was too obvious for voters in general to accept the party.

While xenophobia is the single issue of importance the SD cannot be described as a "Nazi organisation" but rather as a populist and nationalist movement drawing on dissatisfaction with the political establishment. The party propagates a number of issues, of which the most important are:

- Politicians of the established democratic parties are "traitors", "carrying out un-Swedish activities" and are spearheading support for a "foreign occupying power" – the immigrants. Established politicians are corrupt and have abandoned the ordinary Swedes.
- Violent crime in Sweden is the result of mass immigration; immigrants arriving in Sweden are behind most rape cases, robberies, drug running etc.
- Islamophobia.

Although many SD claims are outlandish, the propaganda has been efficient and has reached an audience, which can be seen in the election results over the past years:

**Figure 2: Sweden Democrats election results 1988-2002<sup>7</sup>**

	Votes*	Percent	Seats in local municipalities
1988	1 100	-	-
1991	5 000	-	2
1994	13 000	0,2	5
1998	20 000	0.3	8
2002	76 000	1.4	50

\* Rounded figures

The dramatic increase of SD's vote in 2002 made it the largest party outside parliament in Sweden. The increase is partly a result of SD having soaked up a number of other

<sup>6</sup> Detailed information about all neo-Nazi organisations are regularly published by *Expo Magazine*.

<sup>7</sup> Elections results, <http://www.val.se> (2003)

populist or xenophobic parties, but also a sign that the propaganda of the party is gaining support among general voters.

Finally the **National Democrats (ND)** should be mentioned. A splinter from the Sweden Democrats formed in 2001, ND is a virulently xenophobic organisation appearing with clean-cut suit & tie exterior but which draws a large portion of its membership from national socialist rather than xenophobic groups. The ND considers SD to be a treacherous anti-nationalist party and devotes much of its propaganda to slandering the SD.

Surprisingly the party won close to 7 000 votes and four seats in local municipalities in the 2002 election.

## 2.6. ATTITUDES TOWARDS MIGRANTS AND MINORITIES

According to a 1999 study by Krzysztof Laczak at the University of Malmö<sup>8</sup> about 54 percent of the Swedish population believes Sweden should be more restrictive with accepting political refugees, while only 14 percent believed Sweden should accept more refugees. The figures were based on a 1998 study compiled by the SOM Institute at the Gothenburg University, which analyses trends in media, democracy, politics and related issues.

Attitudes towards political refugees became a topic in the late 1980s, as the local branch of the mainstream Center Party in Sjöbo, south Sweden, rebelled against the party line and refused to accept refugees in the local municipality. Following an extremely heated debate in 1988-1989, the Sjöbo branch was excluded from the mother organisation. The local chapter went on to launch a populist and xenophobic party, the Sjöbo Party, which won the 1991 municipal election by a landslide. Momentarily Sjöbo became a household name and even gained international attention, putting the anti-immigration card on the national agenda. There is no doubt that this debate increased anti-immigration sentiments in Sweden.

Studies on attitudes towards immigrants and refugees have annually been compiled since the early 1990s by the SOM Institute at the Gothenburg University. While a large portion of the Swedish population is tentatively “against” or “unsure about” accepting additional refugees, statistics actually indicates that the “willingness to accept refugees” in fact has steadily increased since 1993, following the height of the Sjöbo debate.

A study published by the SOM Institute in June 2002 indicates a dramatic shift in attitudes over a ten-year period. In 1991 56 percent of a total of 6 000 participants in the study believed that it was a “good suggestion” to accept less refugees in Sweden and only 22 percent believed it was a “bad suggestion”. By 2001 the same figures were 44 percent and 28 percent respectively. The gap between those who were for or against refugees had decreased from 34 percent to 16 percent.<sup>9</sup>

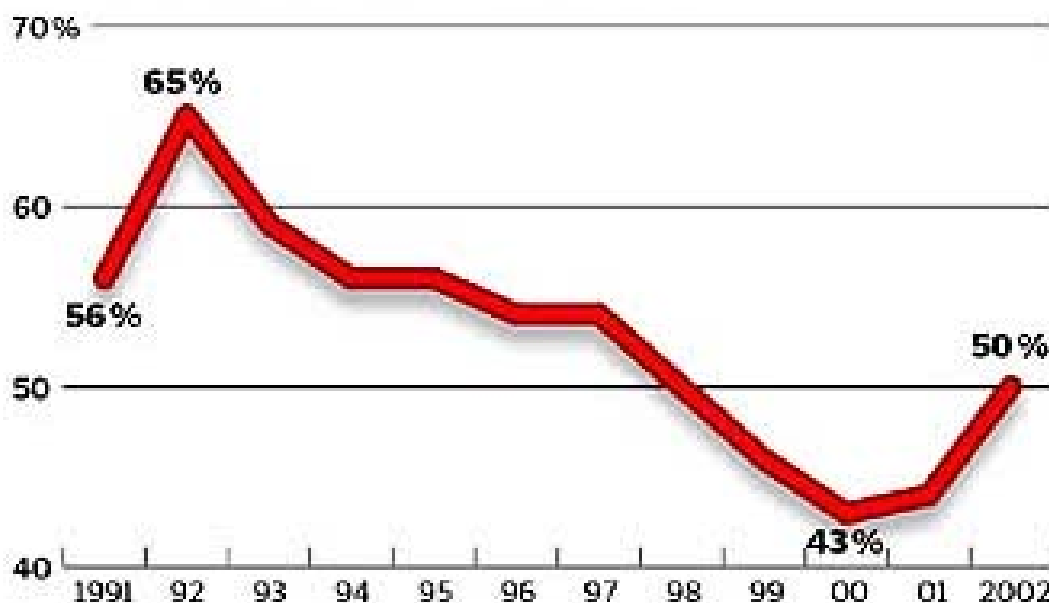
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<sup>8</sup> Krzysztof Laczak, *1990-talets svenska attityder till invandrare och invandring* (Swedish attitudes towards migrants and migration in the 1990's) (Malmö University, 1999)

<sup>9</sup> Marie Demker, Gothenburg University, Political Science department, summaries and conclusions in *Dagens Nyheter*, 2002-06-11.

However, there are indications on that this positive trend may have been broken. While “anti-refugee” figures for 2000-2001 were at the lowest during the ten-year period, already SOM-figures for 2002 showed a shift in response for “anti-refugee” sentiments.<sup>10</sup> According to political scientist Marie Demker there is also a generation gap, indicating that people below age 30 are more positive towards refugees while older people have become more negative.<sup>11</sup>

**Figure 3: Percentage of individuals answering “yes” to the suggestion: “We should not accept additional refugees in Sweden.”**



*Graph based on SOM Institute figures*

## 2.7. KEY ISSUES OF RACE HATE PROPAGANDA AND IDEOLOGY

Together the xenophobic Sweden Democrats and the white power movement broadly make up the organisations of the modern Swedish “national” movement. Although it has never been demonstrated in any formal study, it can be safely assumed that the absolute bulk of the race hate propaganda published in Sweden is either produced by or distributed by this political sphere.

The propaganda is often based on emotional and unfounded speculations about immigrants, has become increasingly professional over the years, and is in certain respects a thriving industry of white power CD-records, concerts, video films, Internet home pages and mail order firms etc. Beginning with the forming of BSS in the early 1980s, the caseload of racially motivated incidents has indeed mounted.

<sup>10</sup> Summarised in *Svenska Dagbladet*, 2003-10-06

<sup>11</sup> *Svenska Dagbladet*, 2003-10-06

Race hate propaganda follows certain guidelines:

- **Racism.** The fostering of anti-immigrant sentiments is the single most important propaganda issue – the glue that keeps members of the various organisations together.  
Standard propaganda claims a cultural incompatibility between Swedes and immigrants. Immigrants are portrayed in terms of a violent “occupying force” that is waging a war on Swedish citizens and account for a majority of all crimes committed in Sweden. The Sweden Democrats, for instance, have launched a core argument claiming that group rape is a phenomenon that has arrived in Sweden together with immigration since the 1960s. The argument is of course historical nonsense, but has been used in emotional and successful propaganda campaigns in a number of schools.
- **Conspiracy theories.** Both Sweden Democrat and white power propaganda claim that the political establishment has “betrayed” the Swedish people, and that democratic politicians in various forms are acting as “agents of foreigners”.
- **Contempt of democracy and democratic institutions.** Democratic institutions and democratic politicians are described as “anti-democratic and un-Swedish elements” who are working hand in glove with “the militant left” to combat the unsung heroes of a democratic struggle. In this propaganda the Sweden Democrats, for instance, is described as a group of freedom fighters under the oppression of the state and state organs.  
Closely related to this propaganda are attacks on media (who hide the truth from the people), teachers (who help brainwash the Swedish youth), police organisations (who are physically suppressing the nationalist freedom fighters) etc. These arguments are in one or the other form disseminated by all “national” groups, but become wilder and more absurd the more openly Nazi an organisation is.
- **Anti-EU sentiments.** To be opposed to the European Union is by no means considered “extreme” in Swedish politics. While the majority of the population voted in favour of EU membership, all mainstream parties foster dissidents in one form or another. The “national” movement, however, doesn’t mean exactly the same thing as “normal” opposition to the EU.

The European Union is seen as an evil federalist ambition to combat nationalist sentiments among the European peoples. In its place the “national” movement argues for a “regionalist Europe” with “increased local democracy”. The slogans are almost attractive; Scotland to the Scottish people, the Flanders to the Flemish people etc. – in other words: re-draw the European map according to ethnic borders.

There are two objections associated with this policy formula. One is that this was tried in former Yugoslavia for several years of the 1990s – the experiment was not entirely successful and not without certain ethnic dilemmas. The other objection is that some ethnic groups are never even mentioned in the visionary propaganda of regionalist Europe – Jews and Roma. Where, in Europe, is a line to be drawn on a map establishing a “Jewish national state” or a “Roma homeland”? And if such a piece of land can’t be identified – what then will happen to such ethnic minorities? This issue is rarely addressed in any “national” text.

Anti-EU propaganda also includes a number of conspiracy theories. For instance, one Swedish group running anti-EU campaigns on the brink of obsession is the small Christian religious party **Ny Framtid (NF) – New Future**, which claim the EU is a “Catholic strategy” to regain control of the Protestant north.<sup>12</sup>

From a propaganda point of view there is very little difference in content and emphasis between the “parliamentary xenophobic” and the “Nazi” wing of the movement. Arguments and sources are often borrowed between the two wings; for instance statistics on the cost of immigration, claims of immigrant violence against Swedes and claims that group rape is a phenomenon imported to Sweden together with mass immigration.

The only absolute difference in the propaganda is that the national socialist groups still to some extent include traditional race biology in their propaganda, and that the white power movement remains obsessed with anti-Semitism while the “parliamentary” wing has desperately avoided any mention of Jews in the 1990s.

Following the 11 September attack on the World Trade Centre this distinction may develop into the first serious ideological difference since the days of the BSS.

While the national socialist groups, in particular the National Socialist Front, have expressed understanding for “anti-American sentiments in the Islamic world” and claimed the United States only had itself to blame for years of support to Zionism, the Sweden Democrats used the event to foster additional suspicion about Islam. Two days after the WTC attack, the Sweden Democrat homepage claimed that the Swedish government was partly responsible for the attack because Arab immigrant organisations (as do all larger immigrant organisations) in Sweden receive an amount of economic sponsoring.<sup>13</sup> Following 11 September, party organiser Tommy Funebo has also written a few texts broadly supporting Israel in the ongoing conflict in the Middle East; his position has been ridiculed on various extreme right chat sites on the Internet, as being “pro-Zionist”.

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<sup>12</sup> Although conspiratorial, Ny Framtid is not a racist party and should not be included in the “national” movement. NF is rather a devout fundamentalist Christian party with certain rightwing ambitions who is supported by factions among the Pentecostals and other small independent congregations.

<sup>13</sup> *SD-Kuriren*, the party Internet homepage on [www.sverigedemokraterna.se/sd-kuriren](http://www.sverigedemokraterna.se/sd-kuriren), 13 September 2001.



### 3. LEGISLATION AND POLICIES CONCERNING RACIST VIOLENCE AND RACIST CRIMES

Swedish legislation contains several regulations aiming to fight racist crimes and to counteract discrimination. The Penal legislation has different sections aiming at this and if the crime is racist it may also affect the penal value through a paragraph in the Penal Code on increased sanctions.<sup>14</sup>

This area is also covered outside of the penal system in legislation aiming at defending the rights of individuals belonging to a minority group.

#### 3.1. THE INSTRUMENT OF GOVERNMENT

The Instrument of Government is one of the four fundamental laws of the Swedish Constitution Chapter 1, section 2 states that:

*Public power shall be exercised with respect for the equal worth of all and the liberty and dignity of the private person.*

It also states that:

*Opportunities should be promoted for ethnic, linguistic and religious minorities to preserve and develop a cultural and social life of their own.*

The following amendment is in force since 1 January 2003:

*The public institutions shall combat discrimination of persons on grounds of gender, colour, national or ethnic origin, linguistic or religious affiliation, functional disability, sexual orientation, age or other circumstances affecting the private person.*

The Instrument of Government in Chapter 2 deals with fundamental freedoms and rights. Article 1, section 6 decrees the freedom of worship, that is the freedom to practise one's religion either alone or in the company of others.

In Article 2 every citizen is protected in his relations with the public institutions...

*...against any coercion to divulge an opinion in any political, religious, cultural or other such connection, against any coercion to participate in a meeting for the formation of opinion or a demonstration or other manifestation of opinion, or belong to a political association, religious community or other association for the manifestation of opinion.*

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<sup>14</sup> The chapter on legislation is prepared by Nanna Holst, lawyer, Forum Syd.

In the context of this report, the most important provision is Chapter 2, article 15, which states that

*No act of law or other provision may imply the unfavourable treatment of a citizen because he belongs to a minority group by reason of race, colour, or ethnic origin.*

### 3.2. ACT ON AGITATION AGAINST A NATIONAL OR ETHNIC GROUP

The Act on Agitation against a National or Ethnic Group is regulated in parallel in the Penal Code Chapter 16, section 8, the Freedom of the Press Act Chapter 7, section 4 and the Fundamental Law on Freedom of Expression Chapter 5, section 1.

The main difference between these laws is basically that the Freedom of the Press Act and the Fundamental Law on Freedom of Expression protects the freedom of opinions and consequently they target infringements committed in printed matter and media such as film, radio, television or sound recordings such as CD-discs. The Penal Code targets all other infractions. These laws also define the perpetrator of the deed in different ways.

One problem is that the regulations on responsibility differ for different websites on the Internet. For example, web places of newspapers and other media are subject to the regulations stipulated by the Freedom of the Press Act and the Fundamental Law on Freedom of Expression; that is web places have the same liability as a printed or broadcasted edition. Other WebPages produced by private companies or individuals are regulated by ordinary legislation such as the Penal Code.

In 1948 the Act on Agitation against a National or Ethnic Group was introduced in the Penal Code. The act was introduced after a proposal by the Committee on Punishment and meant that anyone who in public threatened, slandered or insulted a population group of certain origins or beliefs would be sentenced to fines or prison for agitation against a national or ethnic group.

In 1970 the area of legal application for agitation against national and ethnic groups was expanded. The purpose was to align Swedish legislation to the UN Convention on Racial Discrimination. According to Article 4 of the Convention on Racial Discrimination the states that have ratified the convention condemn all organisations and all propaganda based on views or theories that any race or group of people of certain ethnic origin or colour of skin are superior to any other, or those who strive to justify or promote racial hatred and discrimination in any form. This shall among other things be upheld by the states taking the actions stipulated in the article. However at the same time the convention states must consider the principles expressed in the general declaration on human rights, which among other things mean that freedom of opinion and assembly must not be infringed upon by imposing article 4.

Three criteria must be fulfilled for something to be regarded as agitation against a national or ethnic group. The first is that the deed must contain threat or express contempt. Threats are to be understood by common use of language, which means a wider definition than those of unlawful threat or unlawful coercion. Contempt not only

refers to smearing or slander, both punishable by law, but also other abusive expressions which degrade or ridicule the group concerned. Criticism based on facts is allowed though.

The Act on Agitation against a National or Ethnic Group does not protect individuals but only people defined as a collective. The person aggrieved can report the crime to the police but is not regarded as a plaintiff and entitled to compensation in the criminal proceedings.

For the threat or contempt to be considered as agitation against a national or ethnic group it must also be presented in a statement or otherwise be distributed as a message. It is not a prerequisite that these statements or messages are spread among the public or made public. This prerequisite is made to hinder the activities of racist organisations. Otherwise punishable statements are allowed within the fully private sphere, but similar statements within for example an organisation are punishable. The spreading of statements not only includes personal views but also the spreading of hearsay.

The punishment for agitation against a national or ethnic group is imprisonment for a maximum of two years and fines if the crime is considered minor.

During recent years discussions and investigations have taken place on which changes are needed in the area due to the increased activity of racist organisations and the developments of new techniques for spreading of information.

In January 2003 the legislation on agitation against a national or ethnic group partly changed. Among other things it will be possible to define incitement as serious crime with a penal scale ranging from 6 months to four years imprisonment. The decisive factor for a message to be regarded as a serious crime is if it had a particularly degrading or threatening content and was spread to a large number of people in ways meant to attract considerable attention. The area of application will according to the new legislation also be extended to encompass agitation related to sexual orientation.<sup>15</sup>

Medias regulated by the Freedom of the Press Act and the Fundamental Law on Freedom of Expression have special rules of limitation. A periodical and a radio programme must be prosecuted within six months after the message was printed or spread, while other media have limitations of one year, with two exceptions. This leads to some difficulties to prosecute.

The legislation which, among other things, deals with changes and clarifications on limitations to prosecute for some media gain legal force 1 January 2003. This is an answer to a growing realization of the necessity to make it easier to rebut allegations that the case is beyond limitations of prosecution. The problems in prosecution are only partly due to short limitations, and mainly due to problems of defining when the limitations shall commence, since it mostly defined as the date of publication, which can be difficult to establish.<sup>16</sup> It is suggested that a clarification of the date of publication for technical recordings is to be the same as for printed matter, that is the day it was handed over for distribution in Sweden. The limitations are consequently counted from that date.

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<sup>15</sup> Proposition 2001/02:59

<sup>16</sup> Government Bill 2002/02:74

On 1 January 2003 some changes to the statutes of limitation for media protected by Fundamental Law were also made. The purpose is to make it easier to refute claims that the material has passed the time limit defined by the statutes of limitation.<sup>17</sup>

Examples of such changes concerns lengthening of the statute of limitation which allows prosecution against CD-records that are lacking so called IFPI data, defining origin and date of issue, and that the statute of limitation for crimes against Freedom of Speech in data bases will be counted from the date when a file was deleted from a web page.

### 3.3. UNLAWFUL DISCRIMINATION<sup>18</sup>

According to the Penal Code Chapter 16, section 9:

*A businessman who in the conduct of his business discriminates against a person on grounds of that person's race, colour, national or ethnic origin or religious belief by not dealing with that person under the terms and conditions normally applied by the businessman in the course of his business with other persons, shall be sentenced for unlawful discrimination. The provisions also apply to a person employed in a business or otherwise acting on behalf of a businessman and to a person employed in public service or having a public duty.*

It is also punishable for any organiser of a public assembly or gathering, and any collaborator of such organiser, to discriminate against a person on grounds of his race, colour, national or ethnic origin or religious belief by refusing him access to the public assembly or gathering under the terms and conditions normally applied to other persons.

The sentence for unlawful discrimination is fines or imprisonment for a maximum of one year.

### 3.4. THE PENAL CODE'S PARAGRAPH ON INCREASED SANCTIONS

Punishments shall according to the Penal Code 29:1 be determined within the penal scale according to the penal value of the crime or crimes committed. In assessing the penal value, special consideration shall be given to the damage, wrong or danger occasioned by the criminal act and to what the accused realised or should have realised about this, and to the intentions or motives he may have had.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Proposition 2001/02:74

<sup>18</sup> (SFS1987:610)

<sup>19</sup> SFS 1988:942

Section two enumerates the aggravating circumstances that shall be given special consideration in addition to the penal scale that is related specifically to each and every type of crime. Among these, one aggravating circumstance is:

*“whether a motive for the crime was to aggrieve a person, ethnic group or some other similar group of people by reason of race, colour, national or ethnic origin, religious belief, sexual orientation or other similar circumstance.”<sup>20</sup>*

The meaning of this sentence is that the court shall consider it an aggravating circumstance and increase the sentence of the perpetrator, if for example somebody of non-European origin is assaulted by somebody who in connection with the assault in any way expresses racist or xenophobic motives.

The Swedish Parliament has voted on the parts of the Government Bill to include grievances due to sexual orientation within the paragraph above.<sup>21</sup> The changes gain legal force in 1 January 2003.

### 3.5. ACT ON RESPONSIBILITY FOR ELECTRONIC BILLBOARDS

According to this act the supplier of a service (such as a web hotel or a chat channel) must have a supervision »within reasonable demand to the direction and scope of the activity«. The person responsible is according to section 5 of the act obliged to remove messages if the contents are regarded as agitation against an ethnic or national group. If that is not done, a maximum penalty of two years in prison can be sentenced if the crime is considered serious.

The law applies to all electronic billboards (web sites, intranet etc. except those regulated by the Freedom of the Press Act and the Fundamental Law on Freedom of Expression).

Despite that the Act on Responsibility for Electronic Billboards is established to regulate some areas of the internet, some problems and uncertainties are linked to it, for example how available it is to the public or how frequently it is updated.

### 3.6. THE UNIFORMS ACT

According to the Uniforms Act that it is forbidden to wear uniform or similar outfits that serve to mark the wearer's political opinions. The ban also includes parts of uniforms, armbands with insignias or other comparable and noticeable signs. This means that people who wear nazi symbols in public break the law, but also that this targets all other types of political uniforms such as sweaters worn by any party members during election periods.

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<sup>20</sup> Sweden, 2002:801, changes in the Freedom of the Press Act 1949:105, (01.01.2003)

<sup>21</sup> Government Bill 2001/02:59

Since the act hinders freedom of expression and freedom of opinions and consequently is in conflict with the constitution, two Supreme Court rulings have with reference to the act acquitted people wearing nazi symbols and the act is considered obsolete. The Uniforms Act was repealed all together on July 1, 2002<sup>22</sup>, after it was established by the courts that the wearing of emblems or certain clothing may be regarded as a message and therefore may violate the Act on Agitation against National or Ethnical Groups. Since the wearing of racist symbols is already covered by the Act on Agitation, there is no need for a specific ban on the wearing of racist symbols.<sup>23</sup>

### 3.7. DISCRIMINATION

Swedish legislation does not contain any coherent law on discrimination. Instead the issue is regulated in a number of laws. There are some current proposals and an ongoing debate suggesting that a coherent law on discrimination should be adopted.

During 2003 all member states of the European Union were suppose to have transposed Council's directives 2000/43/EG and 2000/78/EG to the domestic juridical framework. The former deals with enforcement of the principle of equal treatment regardless of race or ethnic origin, the latter aims at establishing a general framework for equal treatment in working life viewing discrimination on the grounds of religion or beliefs, disability, age and sexual orientation. On 1 July 2003 the new legislation came into force.

There is also an ongoing investigation on a coherent legislation on discrimination. The proposals will be presented no later than 31 January 2006.<sup>24</sup>

### 3.8. WEARING OF NEO-NAZI SYMBOLS

The public wearing of certain neo-Nazi symbols (e.g. the Swastika) may be prosecuted as agitation against a national or ethnic group.. In practical terms there are a number of other symbols in a grey area. This includes for instance certain runes, the sun cross etc, which may have a racist slant depending on the situation it is used, but which may also be worn for strictly non-political purposes. One such example is the "Tor's hammer", which is an ancient Swedish symbol worn by many youngsters, but which has also been picked up by skinheads and several neo-Nazi groups.

### 3.9. IS HATE SPEECH CONSIDERED A CRIME?

The legislation on hate speech often conflict with the Fundamental law of Freedom of expression. Hate speech falls under the office of the Chancellor of Justice. If a text or a speech includes immediate contempt of a specific group of people it may be prosecuted as inciting or inflammatory.

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<sup>22</sup> Swedish Code of Statutes (SFS) 2002:333

<sup>23</sup> NJA 1996, page 577

<sup>24</sup> According to the Swedish Cabinet Office and the Ministries

Expressions in certain media – such as newspapers, sound radio, television, films and recordings of sound, picture or text – are embraced by two constitutional acts, namely the Freedom of the Press Act and the Fundamental Law on Freedom of Expression. These acts protect the right of freedom of expression. The acts also include rules about criminal responsibility for expressions that are regarded as offences against the freedom of the press and the freedom of expression. Hate-speech could be such an offence.

## 4. HATE CRIME AND RACIAL VIOLENCE IN SWEDEN 1997-2002

Given the limitations of hidden statistics, the Protection of the Constitution Section (PCS) branch of the Swedish Security Police reports a steady increase of racial crimes in Sweden all through the 1990s. This trend was broken in 2002, which showed a decrease in the total number of recorded crimes. The number of crimes relating to the white power movement remains almost identical to the previous year.

In this study only statistics from 1997 and onwards, which are based on the refined data collection technique, will be used. A compilation of figures shows that the number of xenophobic crimes reported to local police offices have increased from 1 752 in year 1997 to 2 260 in 2002.<sup>25</sup> The total number of “hate crimes” including anti-Semitism, homophobia and “other white power related crimes” was 3 736 in 2002.

**Figure 4: Distribution of recorded hate crimes, all categories, 2002<sup>26</sup>**

	White power related	Not related to white power	Total
Xenophobic	301	1 959	2 260
Anti-Semitic	23	108	131
Homophobic	22	214	236
TOTAL, crime against minority	346	2 281	2 627
Other hate crimes(a)	1 028	81	1 109
TOTAL	1 374	2 362	3 736

(a)Crimes perpetrated by white power scene activists, but not immediately related to racist activities – for instance illegal arms trading, robbery etc.

The statistics show that white power scene activists account for 15 percent of all racially motivated crimes against minority groups (xenophobic, anti-Semitic and homophobic combined).

<sup>25</sup> *Brottslighet kopplad till rikets inre säkerhet 2002*, (RPS/Säkerhetspolisen, PCS Report 2002) report written by Michael Johnsson, Security Police analysis attached to the Protection of the Constitution Section (RPS/Säkerhetspolisen, 2003) ISBN 91-87203-82-0

<sup>26</sup> *ibid*

This leaves 85 percent of all racially motivated crimes as being committed by individuals who are not related to the white power movement, i.e. common Swedes with no particular political background.

However, if the category “other white power related crimes” is included in the statistics (e.g. hate crimes not directed towards a specific group of people) the white power activists dominates, and account for 58 percent of race hate crimes in Sweden.

## 4.1. XENOPHOBIA

Xenophobic crimes are defined as crimes against an individual of ethnic minority background due to colour of skin, language, and cultural or religious background.

**Figure 5: Total number of recorded xenophobic crimes<sup>(a)</sup>, 1997-2002  
(white power related and non-white power related)<sup>27</sup>**

Year	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
Crimes reported	1 752	2 210	2 363	2 572	2 670	2 260

*(a) Excluding anti-Semitism, homophobia and related white power scene criminality.*

**Figure 6: Recorded xenophobic crimes, 1999-2002<sup>(a)</sup>  
(White power related crimes compared with non-white power related)<sup>28</sup>**

Year	White power related	Non-white power (other)	Percent white power of total
1999	317	2 046	13,4
2000	538	2 034	20,9
2001	373	2 297	13,9
2002	301	1 959	15,4

Figures 2 and 3 demonstrate that although the number of recorded white power related cases of xenophobia decreased in 2002, the total number of xenophobic crime is steady above 2 000 crimes annually.

Somewhat inexplicably, the PCS 2002 report<sup>29</sup> argues that the increase in the number of cases between 1997 and 1998 is partly due to a large number of arrests made at two single incidents. During a New Year white power concert in Brottbys outside Stockholm close to 300 individuals were arrested, and on the 1 May no less than 73 young Nazis were arrested during an illegal National Socialist Front riot in the mid-Swedish town of Nora. While the argument has some validity in the Nora situation, the Brottbys arrests only resulted in eight specific charges. Nor does this argument explain why the number of reported white power scene related cases have remained high and even increased in the ensuing years when such “mass arrests” have not taken place.

A much more convincing argument is that the large increase in white power related crime between 1997 and 1998 can be explained by the fact that several leading neo-Nazi groups (National Youth/Swedish Resistance, Info-14, Blood & Honour and Nordland) were in a

<sup>27</sup> ibid

<sup>28</sup> Statistics based on RPS/Säkerhetspolisen, PCS Report 1999 to 2002.

<sup>29</sup> ibid, PCS Report 2000, page 23.



period of transition and re-organisation between 1996-1998, following several years of high profile activities in the first half of the 1990s.

Due to the relatively loose structure of white power organisations, some of the figures should be taken with a measure of caution. The dramatic increase of white power related crime in year 2000 followed by a decrease in 2001 compared to crimes committed by non-white power scene related individuals may very well be co-incidental rather than due to an increase of activities in specific white power groups.

Long-term statistics indicate that white power crimes account for one third of all crimes relating to racism and racist group's activities.

**Figure 7: Type of crime 1997–2002: total number of recorded xenophobic crimes (white power related and non-white power related)(a)<sup>30</sup>**

Type of crime	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
Murder, manslaughter	0	0	1	0	0	1
Gross assault(b)	19	32	31	29	25	16
Assault	327	382	435	377	409	334
Threats/harassment	608	780	852	1 003	1 038	855
Slander	217	311	319	337	360	333
Vandalism	108	112	118	165	134	73
Graffiti	60	40	58	76	74	58
Incitement of racial hatred	166	257	249	354	391	353
Illegal discrimination	165	193	210	158	160	155
Other crime	82	83	68	52	51	42
Lacking specific crime category	0	20	22	21	28	40
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1 752</b>	<b>2 210</b>	<b>2 363</b>	<b>2 572</b>	<b>2 670</b>	<b>2 260</b>

(a) Excluding anti-Semitic crimes, homophobic crimes and crimes relating to the white power movement.

(b) Includes attempted murder or attempted manslaughter.

The PCS statistics show a sudden increase in the number of recorded crimes between 1997 and 1998, followed by a smaller but steady growth in the ensuing years. There may be several reasons explaining the sudden increase in the late 1990s. One factor which should not be dismissed is that both media and authorities have focused very much on racially motivated crime in the last decade, which may have increased not only the willingness for individual victims to come forward and press charges but also increased the readiness of civil servants – for instance headmasters at schools – to report cases under their jurisdiction. Another reason is that the attitude of the society has sharpened. Cases – particularly when it comes to what is judged to be incitement of racial hatred – which might have been thrown out of court ten years earlier, may now result in convictions. An example of such sharpened attitudes is the carrying of swastika armbands or patches, which would not have been charged in the early 1990s, which is now considered to be an act of incitement.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid, PCS Report 1997, 1998 and 2001.

At the same time the propaganda activities and spreading of material has increased, not only in the white power milieu but also among populist and other extreme nationalist groups with xenophobic leanings.

- The most common racially motivated crime is found under the category of “threats and harassment”.

This is one of the categories where it is most difficult to determine the origin of the crime – white power related or not. Only about ten percent of the cases have a clear connection to a national socialist ideology or white power group – for instance that an anonymous hate letter has been signed with a swastika or a verbal statement has referred to ideology. A similar situation exists for the category of slander.

- The crime category that has increased the most in the five-year period is incitement of racial hatred.
- The annual caseload of the categories “assault” and “gross assault” remain relatively constant between 350 and 500 reported incidents every year, although figures for 2002 are the lowest since 1997.
- The 16 cases of gross assault reported in 2002 include one attempted murder; the perpetrator soaked the victim in a flammable liquid and set him on fire.
- The single case of murder reported in 2002 was a fatal stabbing of an immigrant in the greater Gothenburg area. The perpetrator, who was also convicted of an arson against an immigrant, sent letters to a local television station claiming to be from “Stormabteilung Adolf Hitler”. The perpetrator was not a member of any group and committed the crimes on his own.

## 4.2. ANTI-SEMITISM

Crimes of anti-Semitic nature are defined by the Protection of the Constitution Section as crimes against individuals of Jewish descent, against Judaism as a religion or against Jewish property etc. To be classified as an anti-Semitic crime it is not necessary for the victim to be Jewish; it is defined as anti-Semitic if the perpetrator believes the victim to be Jewish or for expressing specific anti-Jewish sentiments, for instance when apprehended by a policeman etc.

The PCS Report views anti-Semitic crimes of special interest due to the strong tradition of anti-Semitism connected to the extreme right. As in the case of xenophobia, there is an unknown amount of hidden statistics. Violent crimes against Jews or Jewish property are usually reported, while cases of harassment, intimidation or threats may sometimes be played down for fear of encouraging other anti-Semites or copycats through media publicity.

**Figure 8: Total number of recorded anti-Semitic crimes, 1997-2002 (white power related and non-white power related)<sup>31</sup>**

Year	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
Crimes reported	99	119	125	131	115	131
Related to white power	na	na	36	28	21	23

<sup>31</sup> ibid, PCS Report 1997, 1998 and 2001.

Percent white power	na	na	28,8	21,4	18,2	17,6
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Although the absolute number of anti-Semitic cases is much smaller than the number of xenophobic incidents, which make statistical comparison uncertain, it should be noted that the percentage of white power related incidents are higher than for xenophobic incidents.

White power xenophobic crimes account for an average of 15 percent, while white power anti-Semitic crimes account for 21.5 percent.

The crime types of slander and incitement, pose a certain contradiction. It is the experience of researchers monitoring far right propaganda – not the least on the Internet – that the number of articles and statements made has increased dramatically over the past ten year period. A possibility is therefore that a certain process of accustoming is taking place; texts and propaganda that would have caused media attention and would have been taken to court 20 years ago are now so common that it is not seen worthwhile to file a complaint.

A typical example of this is the treatment of Ahmed Rami's so called Radio Islam (which is basically a vehicle for traditional Nazi anti-Semitic conspiracy theories that has little to do with Islam as a religion).

Following two trials against Ahmed Rami in the late 1980s and early 1990s, Radio Islam closed its broadcasts and moved to the Internet. For several years the same type of statements that earned Rami convictions in the previous trials have been propagated on the Internet without any visible reaction.

The Internet propaganda is far more gross and vulgar than the original radio broadcasts; indeed, the 2002 homepage includes a hate list of Jews living in Sweden.<sup>32</sup>

**Figure 9: Type of crime 1997-2002: total number of recorded anti-Semitic crimes (white power related and non-white power related)<sup>33</sup>**

Type of crime	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
Gross assault(a)	1	0	1	0	1	1
Assault	9	7	10	8	7	5
Harassment	35	41	39	43	41	47
Slander	3	5	10	9	9	9
Vandalism	10	13	9	3	8	11
Graffiti	5	6	17	8	12	10
Incitement of racial hatred	27	36	32	50	33	42
Illegal discrimination	0	0	0	1	0	1
Other crime	9	7	3	8	1	4
Lacking specific crime category	0	4	4	1	3	1
TOTAL	99	119	125	131	115	131

<sup>32</sup> Following media attention in September 2002, Justice Minister Thomas Bodström ordered an investigation into the Radio Islam internet page.

<sup>33</sup> PCS Report 1997, 1998 and 2001

*(a) Includes crimes defined as attempted murder or attempted manslaughter.*

As in the xenophobia case file, incitement of racial hatred and harassment are the two most common anti-Semitic crimes. Almost all anti-Semitic crimes are perpetrated in the large city areas of Stockholm, Gothenburg and Malmö, which also harbour the largest Jewish groups in Sweden.

The single case of gross assault was the stabbing a screwdriver into the stomach of a Jew outside the Stockholm synagogue. The perpetrator was a white power activist.

### 4.3. CRIMES RELATED TO THE WHITE POWER MOVEMENT

Activists in the white power movement generate a surplus of crimes which are not necessarily racist in character or immediately targeting a minority group, but which are seen by the activists as carried out “in the name of the cause”. This is regardless of being arms theft, assaulting a local politician or bank robbery. White power crimes are therefore included in every PCS Report as crimes of ideological nature – hate crimes or “racially motivated crimes”.

Anti-Semitic conspiracy theories constitute a key motivating factor in white power ideology and criminality. Since the late 1980s, the prevailing theory among Swedish neo-Nazi organisations is the concept of ZOG, a Zionist Occupation Government or a Jewish conspiracy to rule the Western world. The concept of ZOG originates with American conspiracy theories developed in the 1970s and 1980s by among others William Pierce (National Alliance), Ben Klassen (Church of the Creator) and Richard Butler (Aryan Nations).

The concept of RAHOWA, a Racial Holy War carried out by an armed and revolutionary “white underground”, further encourages neo-Nazis and young “race warriors to take up arms in the struggle against ZOG”.

The enemy is defined as authorities, police officers, the “state”, politicians, media and teachers. In this situation a bank robbery – even if it is carried out for personal gain – can be explained as a “militant”, “legitimate” and “politically acceptable” action.

For that reason it is not difficult to explain why prisons house so many neo-Nazis – who by themselves constitute a very small minority group of about 2 000 activists in Sweden. Nor is it difficult to explain why groups of nazi have developed in prisons. Convicted Nazis consider themselves POWs, “prisoners of war”, and often branch out to other criminal organisations such as outlaw biker clubs etc.

**Figure 10: Total number of recorded white power crimes, 1997-2002<sup>34</sup>**

Year	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
Crimes reported	598	1 198	1 331	2 092	1 377	1 374

<sup>34</sup> PCS Report 1997, 1998 and 2001.

Figure 9 shows a total increase of white power related crimes; from close to 600 in 1997 to almost twice as many, 1 200, in 1998.

To some extent this statistical development can be explained by the fact that in 1997 the PCS was still developing the tools for data collection and quite possibly many white power convictions were never reported as such. Another explanation is that the organised neo-Nazi or white power groups were at an all time low in the year 1997; several groups such as the National Alliance, the Reich Front and others had become defunct and the movement was in a state of reorganisation.

The number of reported crimes have since been reasonably steady between 1 000 to 1 500 annual complaints, with a peak in year 2000 with 2 092 reported crimes. The PCS report believes this may be coincidental rather than proof of a real statistical increase. Statistics show that the bulk of the increase was made up of “lesser crimes” such as vandalism, graffiti and incitement, while “harder crimes” such as gross assault and assault only increased slightly.

**Figure 11: Type of crime 1997-2002: total number of white power crimes<sup>35</sup>**

Type of crime	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
Murder/manslaughter	0	0	4	0	0	1
Gross assault	na	9	20	29	16	14
Assault(a)	35	34	100	108	61	97
Harassment/harassment	59	105	272	440	223	232
Slander	5	9	21	40	17	18
Vandalism	84	197	226	389	242	233
Graffiti	91	184	258	423	361	367
Incitement of racial hatred	153	246	330	534	378	344
Illegal discrimination	0	0	0	0	2	5
Other crime	53	150	80	103	57	50
Lacking specific crime category	na	9	20	26	20	13
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>469</b>	<b>940</b>	<b>1 331</b>	<b>2 092</b>	<b>1 377</b>	<b>1 374</b>

(a) Figures for 1997 are not compiled in a similar manner as in the ensuing years. The category “assault” in this graph includes causing bodily harm (1 case), violence against a public servant (7 cases), violent resistance (3 cases). The statistics does not separate gross assault from assault.

#### 4.4. NUMBERS OF RECORDED RACIST CRIMES (OFFICIALLY AND UNOFFICIALLY)

Statistics on racially motivated crimes in Sweden are recorded by the Protection of the Constitution Branch of the Security Police. No other comprehensible long-term statistics are available. For special purposes the Criminal Intelligence Service (Kriminalunderrättelsetjänsten) may at certain times record data. One such case was a

<sup>35</sup> PCS Report 1997, 1998 and 2001.

compilation of Islamophobic crimes in the aftermath of the September 11, 2001, attack on World Trade Centre. Such data is kept for investigative purposes.

The Crime Prevention Council (Brottsförebyggande Radet) analyses statistical data and occasionally compile independent data on specific types of crime. The CPC watches developments of race hate crime, although the data is drawn from the police records.

There are no comprehensive and reliable “independent” compilations of data on race hate crime, with the possible exception of cases of anti-Semitism recorded by the Jewish congregation. Such data, however, is not made public. The Muslim Council has debated the possibility of compiling independent statistics, as has the gay organisation RFSL and the Ombudsman against Homophobia. No actual such studies have materialised.

Local anti-racist organisations may at times record incidents at a local level, although such data is rarely verified.

#### 4.5. TYPE AND NUMBERS OF CASES GIVEN PUBLICITY IN THE MEDIA

As a thumb rule, spectacular crimes including murders and gross assault are given wide publicity in national media, but rarely any broader analysis of ongoing hate campaigns, while local media are more likely to report local incidents of minor importance.

Traditionally, an overwhelming majority of media reports concerning the extreme right focus on the militant neo-Nazi movement, who make up a few percents of the “national movement”, while only a small minority of media reports focus on the broader xenophobic groups who make up the largest portion of the movement. This focus has tended to change following the Sweden Democrat advance in the 2002 election.

### 5. ANALYSIS OF RACIST VIOLENCE AND RACIST CRIMES

There are two meanings of the term “racist crime”. The first describes crimes committed against members of a minority group and where the underlying motivation is based on racism, contempt, ideologically motivated white supremacy, xenophobia etc. The second describes other crimes committed by a racist group or an individual belonging to a racist group. Crimes committed in the second category are not necessarily targeting immigrants or members of a minority group – indeed the crime itself may be seemingly unrelated to the ideological foundation of the group. Such crimes are sometimes disregarded in official compilations of racist crime and make up a portion of the hidden statistics.

In this analysis the author uses a broader definition of racist crime – crimes, regardless of the character of the crime, which is committed by individuals or a group of individuals belonging to an organisation which is defined as racist, supremacist or xenophobic.

Individuals may join a racist organisation for a multitude of personal reasons, but it is the experience of researchers that racist groups often attracts a set of people who are already at odds with society and who tend to cluster into political activism or – perhaps more accurate – uses political activism and ideology as an excuse to commit crimes.

A typical example of this can be found in several of the active neo-Nazi organisations in Sweden, whose membership is largely made up of individuals who have previous sentences for crimes. In certain organisations, for instance the Aryan Brotherhood, it is indeed a prerequisite for membership to have been sentenced to prison; in this case the crime does not have to be politically motivated but can be almost any crime for personal gain or any other number of reasons. It is common for members of such groups to consider crimes carried out for personal gain, for instance robbery, as a “strike against the Jewish society” etc.

## 5.1. SWEDEN DEMOCRAT CRIMINALITY

The “crime factor” is not limited to militant neo-Nazi activist groups or skinhead groups forming a sub-culture; the same argument goes for groups trying to form a more respectable “suit and tie” type of xenophobic or nationalist group.

Authors Stieg Larsson and Mikael Ekman published an Expo Foundation study on the criminal records of leading Sweden Democrats in 2001.<sup>36</sup> The study focused on “leading Sweden Democrats” in the ten-year period 1988-1998, from the official forming of the party and up to the year of the most recent national election the party participated in.

The authors defined a “leading Sweden Democrat” as (a) either having been a member of the national party executive at some time in the ten year period, or (b) having appeared as an official candidate for the party in the elections in 1991, 1994 and 1998. (The election year of 1988 was eventually excluded due to the fact that there was a controversy on exactly who was a member of the party executive and who actually volunteered for the ballot.) Using this definition the authors identified a list of 330 activists as “leading Sweden Democrats” – a small but statistically significant figure – and compared those names with court records of criminal sentences.

The outcome of the study showed rather dramatically that the Sweden Democrats was by a wide margin the most criminally inclined political party in Sweden, compared to any democratic mainstream party. A compilation of court sentences showed that leading party members had been sentenced for a multitude of crimes, which were not necessarily racially or ideologically motivated. The crimes included arson, assault, gross assault, insurance fraud, drunk driving, wife abuse, insults, extortion, drugs offences etc. The compilation of data showed:

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<sup>36</sup> Sverigedemokraterna – den nationella rörelsen (Sweden Democrats – the national movement) by Stieg Larsson & Mikael Ekman (Ordfront 2001)

- Of a total of 311 public SD election candidates no less than 72 candidates (23,2 percent) had been sentenced on a total of 125 occasions. Together they had been found guilty of up to 250–500 individual crimes.<sup>37</sup>
- Of a total of 84 members of the SD party executive 17 individuals (20,2 percent) had been sentenced on at least 40 separate occasions.

**Figure 12: Crime statistics: members of the SD national executive 1988–1998<sup>38</sup>**

Year	Percent members of the SD national executive sentenced for a crime by a court of law
1988	Excluded
1989	30,3
1990	12,5
1991	44,4
1992	42,9
1993	53,8
1994	46,2
1995	15,8
1996	21,1
1997	13,6
1998	12,0

It should be noted that the number of sentenced SD activists peaked in the mid 1990s. In 1993 a majority of the party executive had been sentenced and in the 1994 election almost 40 percent of the public candidates had a criminal record.

**Figure 13: Crime statistics for public election candidates Sweden Democrat party, election years 1988–1998<sup>39</sup>**

Year	Percent public election candidates of the SD sentenced for a crime by a court of law
1988	Excluded
1991	16,5
1994	38,5
1998	17,0

Since then the SD has attempted to lower the figures and for the 2002 election the figure would be 5-10 percent. One reason for this development is the 2001 split in the Sweden Democrats which resulted in the forming of the competitive party the National Democrats (ND); a large number of the most criminally inclined members at a leadership level has since joined the ND. A similar compilation of data regarding ND would in all likelihood surpass the peak figures of the SD.

<sup>37</sup> It is impossible to determine the exact number of individual crimes since several crimes may be included in a single sentence.

<sup>38</sup> Sverigedemokraterna – den nationella rörelsen (Sweden Democrats – the national movement) by Stieg Larsson & Mikael Ekman (Ordfront 2001)

<sup>39</sup> Sverigedemokraterna – den nationella rörelsen (Sweden Democrats – the national movement) by Stieg Larsson & Mikael Ekman (Ordfront 2001).



It should be noted that the crime statistics regarding the SD is the lowest possible figure and only includes the sentences that the authors actually found in various court districts. Since the study was published an additional score of sentences has been found and the actual figure is higher – approximately 25-27 percent.

The authors also made an attempt to compare SD statistics with crime statistics for ordinary mainstream democratic parties. They selected the national executives of the youth organisations for three mainstream parties for the year of 2001 – a list of 42 individuals – and managed to find only one single sentence – one individual had refused to do military service and had been fined. The conclusion is that SD crime statistics for leading members are far above the national median (5-7 percent) and certainly far above mainstream political parties; no ordinary party will run in an election campaign with a quarter of the public candidates sentenced for crimes. In this context it is almost impossible to give a clear definition of the term “racist crime”.

What can be determined, however, is that all statistics available indicate that race hate groups, xenophobic parties, white supremacy groups and others who make up the “national movement” are generally far more criminally inclined than the bulk of the population. When such individuals cluster to form local activist groups it can be expected that an amount of activities will be unlawful. It can also be expected that when new young recruits join such group (for instance a local skinhead gang) even if they are previously not sentenced, they will to a certain extent enter a ready made criminal milieu and will stand a risk of being drawn into activities that will end up in court.

## 5.2. VICTIMS OF RACE HATE CRIMES

It is a misunderstanding that victims of racist crimes or so called “hate crimes” are exclusively immigrants or stereotyped specific ethnic or minority groups such as “Jews” or “Muslims”. Certain crimes such as insults, unlawful discrimination, incitement of racial hatred, expressions of Islamophobia, anti-Semitism and homophobia etc, are of course by necessity directed towards members of such minority groups.

When it comes to violent crimes such as assault or robbery etc, almost any member of the Swedish society is a potential victim.

The official statistics doesn't separate victims by ethnic origin, class or gender. However, independent research by Expo Foundation indicate that possibly the individual most likely to become victim of a violent assault by members of a racist gang is an ordinary Swedish anti-racist grassroots activist who has become known in a local community.

Other potential victims, again depending on the nature of the crime, are journalists or local politicians or members of the police. In this case the most usual type of crime is unlawful threats and insults. It should be noted that during 1999 when a series of very violent incidents occurred, none of the victims were actually immigrants. During 1999 two Swedish police officers and one trade unionist were murdered, and a car bombing seriously injured a journalist. Neo-Nazi activists carried out all attacks and none of the victims were immigrants.

One well-known case of local racist activity concerns Haninge, south Stockholm, where the Sweden Democrats won two seats in the local municipality in the 1998 election.<sup>40</sup> Members of the mainstream democratic parties in Haninge were largely unprepared for how normal political life would change. Several leading local politicians, including mayors John Glas (liberal party) and Staffan Holmberg (social democrat party) were targeted in vicious hate campaigns that included death threats from the public gallery during sessions of the municipality council. By the end of 1999 the situation had deteriorated so much that mayor Staffan Holmberg as a precaution felt it was necessary to temporarily move his family to the nearby Berga navy facility for protection.

### 5.3. PERPETRATORS OF RACE HATE CRIMES

With few exceptions, there are no conclusive studies on perpetrators of racist crimes. The studies that do exist almost always focus on local areas “after the fact”, that is after a racist organisation has emerged and notable incidents have occurred. Some evidence may be inferred from such studies.

One study, *Rasismens yttringar* (Expressions of racism) was made in 2001 by Berit Wigerfelt and Anders Wigerfelt.<sup>41</sup> This study focuses on the town Klippan where a number of incidents occurred all through the 1990s, including a 1995 murder of a political refugee. Due to the many problems Klippan received status as a “racist town”, although almost every incident was perpetrated by a small group of local neo-Nazis.

The conclusion of the Klippan study indicate that a number of local youngsters for a variety of reasons were attracted to several white power organisations, first the now defunct so called Reich Front and later by Blood & Honour and the National Socialist Front. Since Klippan is a very ordinary southern Swedish town we reckon that the activists were pretty ordinary working class or middle class youngsters.

A similar “after the fact” study was published in 1997 and focused on the mid-Swedish small town of Valberg, where a specific family of immigrants were targeted in a hate campaign which went on for several years until the family eventually was forced to move.<sup>42</sup> The descriptions of perpetrators again indicate ordinary young, working- or middle class kids. In both Klippan and Valberg the influence of race hate propaganda and white power music are named as factors contributing to the forming of racist attitudes. In the Valberg example, however, it is also noteworthy that several adults markedly encouraged some of the harassment of the immigrant family.

The conclusion that racist attitudes are formed among young people from primarily the working- or lower middle class is echoed by an Expo Foundation study of the election results in Western Sweden in the 2002 election.<sup>43</sup> Authors Daniel Poohl and Daniel

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<sup>40</sup> Analysed in *Expo* no 1-1999.

<sup>41</sup> *Rasismens yttringar* (Expressions of racism) by Berit Wigerfelt and Anders Wigerfelt, ISBN 91-44-01670-0 ([www.studentlitteratur.se](http://www.studentlitteratur.se))

<sup>42</sup> *Rasistiska trakasserier* (Racial harassment) by Ulla Rantakiesu, Sabina Almgren and Bengt Starrin (Centrum för folkhälsoforskning 1997) ISSN: 1100-9594.

<sup>43</sup> *Den västsvenska extremhögern* (The extreme right in Western Sweden) by Daniel Poohl and Daniel Olsson (Expo)

Olsson analysed the voting pattern in three towns – Gothenburg, Mölndal and Trollhättan – where the Sweden Democrats ran in the municipal election and won seats in the two latter towns. Poohl and Olsson conclude that the SD received its largest support in traditional working class areas with low or mid-low income. These areas are traditional strongholds of “socialist” or “leftist” parties. Again analysing the voting pattern in mock school elections in 2002, Poohl and Olsson concluded that the largest support for rightwing extremist organisations was found in schools with practical work-oriented lines while the smallest support was found in pre-academic schools.

## 5.4. GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION OF CRIMES

In absolute figures, large city areas such as Stockholm, Gothenburg and Malmö account for a larger portion of the complaints filed with the police, while more remote areas – particularly in the north of Sweden and a belt south of the great lakes in southern Sweden – account for a minor number of cases. This conclusion remains when figures are translated into cases per 100 000 inhabitants, often regardless of the number of immigrants in the area.

**Figure 14: Year 2002 geographic distribution of xenophobia: number of complaints (main crimes) per 100 000 inhabitants, and total number of cases<sup>44</sup>**

County	Complaints per 100 000 inhabitants 2002	Figures for 2001	Total number of complaints 2002	Figures for 2001
Örebro	25,2	43,9	69	120
Stockholm (a)	26,9	35,9	498	654
Södermanland	23,2	30,5	60	78
Västmanland	30,9	28,8	80	74
Skane (b)	21,9	28,6	251	323
Blekinge	15,3	22,6	23	34
Kalmar	18,8	22,5	44	53
Västra Götaland (c)	12,6	19,8	190	296
Halland	18,7	19,3	52	53
Uppsala	22,4	19,0	67	56
Dalarna	16,3	18,7	45	52
Gävleborg	15,9	16,8	44	47
Värmland	11,0	15,6	30	43
Jönköping	12,8	15,3	42	50
Västernorrland	20,9	14,6	51	36
Östergötland	17,7	13,1	73	54
Norrbottn	16,6	12,1	42	31
Kronoberg	22,0	11,3	39	20
Västerbotten	10,2	11,0	26	28
Jämtland	13,3	7,7	17	10
Gotland	7,0	3,5	4	2

<sup>44</sup>

- (a) Including city of Stockholm.
- (b) Including city of Malmö.
- (c) Including city of Gothenburg

As the overall number of hate crimes decreased in 2002 most individual counties report a reduced number of complaints. The county of Örebro, which topped the 2001 statistics, reports the largest decrease but also Stockholm, Skane and Södermanland report a marked decrease. A few counties, most notably Kronoberg and Jämtland report a dramatic increase by almost hundred percent.

One question debated over the years is what relationship exists between active xenophobic groups/white power groups and xenophobic crimes. Statistics indicate that white power groups represent approximately 1/6 of all recorded xenophobic crimes. The group “other”, (non-white power related perpetrators) which represent 84 percent of all xenophobic crimes, is much more difficult to define. This group includes (a) perpetrators never identified, (b) perpetrators identified but where no obvious link to the white power scene is established, (c) perpetrators representing xenophobic groups not connected with the white power scene, for instance members of the Sweden Democrats etc; and of course (d) perpetrators with no specific political affiliation; i.e. “ordinary Swedes”.

Although no formal scientific study has ever been made, establishing a direct relationship between racial violence and the presence of race hate groups, it is often assumed that racial violence is linked to the emergence of a racially motivated extremist right. Certainly, much evidence points to this conclusion; skinhead violence and attacks carried out by Nazi activists often make media headlines, and a number of court sentences also link well known activists to crimes.

However, certain findings contradict a unambiguous conclusion. In the last two years of the 1980s, a period when a large number of political refugees arrived in Sweden, a series of fire bombings (i.e. Molotov cocktail attacks) were carried out against political refugee centres in mid-Sweden. While many of the perpetrators were never apprehended a surprising number of those that were proved to be local youngsters with no formal membership in or relationship to organised racist groups; in many cases there wasn't even an active racist group in the immediate neighbourhood.

Figure 16 (below) shows the geographic distribution of complaints for xenophobic crimes per 100 000 inhabitants compared with counties with active white power or xenophobic groups.<sup>45</sup> With some exceptions, the counties leading the hate crime statistics also have the largest presence of race hate groups.

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<sup>45</sup> The definition of “active groups” for Figure 16 is not absolute; for instance, the Sweden Democrats boasts about local branches in almost every county, many of which in reality are only made up of one or two activists with a post box and little activity. Selection of areas with “active groups” indicate a real and substantial organisation with regular activity and ability to carry out propaganda campaigns etc.

**Figure 15: Presence of major white power group or xenophobic/extreme nationalist party compared with geographic distribution of recorded xenophobic crimes per 100 000 citizens<sup>46</sup>**

County	Complaints per 100 000 inhabitants	Active white power organisation (d)	Active extreme nationalist/populist party (d)
Västmanland	30,9	NSF	SD
Stockholm (a)	26,9	B&H, NSF, NU, Info14	SD(*), ND(*)
Örebro	25,2	NSF	SD(*), ND
Södermanland	23,2	NSF	ND
Uppsala	22,4		SD(*), ND
Kronoberg	22,0	B&H, NSF	
Skane (b)(e)	21,9	B&H, NSF, NF	Populists(*), SD(*), ND
Västernorrland	20,9		SD(*)
Kalmar	18,8	B&H, NSF	
Halland	18,7	NSF	SD
Östergötland	17,7	NU, NSF	
Norrbottn	16,6		
Dalarna	16,3	NSF	SD(*)
Gävleborg	15,9	NSF	
Blekinge	15,3	NSF	SD(*)
Jämtland	13,3		
Jönköping	12,8	NU	
Västra Götaland (c)	12,6	NSF, NU, NS	SD(*), ND
Värmland	11,0		SD(*)
Västerbotten	10,2		
Gotland	7,0		

(a) Including city of Stockholm.

(b) Including city of Malmö.

(c) Including city of Gothenburg;

(d) Bold letters indicates strong group or strong presence.

(e) An election alliance made up of local populist parties, Welfare of Scania, won 47 seats in local municipalities in the 1998 election; these parties include Sjöbopartiet, Skanepartiet, Kommunens Vål, CentrumDemokraterna, Burlövs Vål, Framstegspartiet and others.

(\*) Counties where the Sweden Democrats or the National Democrats have won seats in local municipalities in the 2002 election.

<sup>46</sup> Based on PCS Report 2001; organisational presence established by Mikael Ekman, Expo Foundation, September 2002.

## 6. STRATEGIES, INITIATIVES AND GOOD PRACTICES

**ANTI-RACIST CENTRE.** In 2003 a “Anti-Racist Centre” was established among NGOs set up with government funding. It is still too early to determine if this centre will have an impact or if it will become yet another paper organisation. However, such an anti-racist centre that takes a broader view on racist activities and identifies methods to combat racism and racially motivated violence is badly needed and has been asked for many years in Sweden. While judgement on this particular initiative is still pending, it is good sign that anti-racism is moved from the pocket of “special interest issue” to an issue of national concern.

**THE ASSOCIATION DEFEND DEMOCRACY.** The schools often constitute the most important battleground for emerging racist groups and most existing extreme right parties devotes large efforts on propaganda directed towards students. The Association Defend Democracy was formed primarily among teachers in March 2003. The aim of this non-partisan group is to bring teachers in various schools and towns together to exchange ideas and identify common problems and methods on how to deal with emerging problems. Due to the fact that the organisation is still very recently formed it is too early to determine what impact it will have. The organisation is sadly lacking of public funding and support.

**THE MUNICIPALITY NETWORK.** Beginning in 2002 the government asked the Integration Board to take the initiative to form networks between elected local politicians and public employees to focus on methods to combat racism, discrimination and xenophobia in local municipalities. The Integration Boards together with the county administrative board in primarily the greater Stockholm area and in some local counties who are functioning as pilot testing ground, has carried out training seminars and been tentatively successful in establishing such networks. This must be considered as a very important initiative with a large potential.

Sadly a national strategy for dealing with organised racism is lacking. This is partly due to the difficulty in establishing a consensus among diverging democratic parties, but also due to the fact that it remains a large confusion as to why extremist groups emerge, what is the nature of such groups and how should they be dealt with. While for instance some parties and politicians – certainly at the local level – are taking the development of parties such as the Sweden Democrats or the National Democrats very seriously indeed, other politicians are still largely ignoring the political challenge such groups constitutes. The idea that racism is a “sub-culture” or a phase – not a political movement – remains among many of the authorities that have to deal with such groups.

**INITIATIVES TO DEAL WITH THREATS AGAINST POLITICIANS ETC.** In August 2001 the Government took the initiative to form a forum for discussion involving, inter alia, the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and the Federation of County Councils, the Office of the Prosecutor General and several other public authorities, as well as a number of individual politicians with experiences of threats or violence. Later on, a working group was formed with the aim of preventing threats and violence directed against politicians in municipalities and county councils. The group worked for about a

year and functioned as a forum for exchange of experiences and knowledge, as well as for discussion on the needs for new strategies, information material, legislation etc. The working group also produced an information leaflet and the handbook “A Threat Against Democracy”, which includes, among other things practical advice on how to deal with threats.

Several initiatives for co-operation between different actors regarding threats against politicians, such as democratic political parties, municipalities and county councils have been taken, for instance in the counties of Västra Götaland, Stockholm and Skåne. In 2001, all the political parties represented in the Parliament formed a network in the county of Östergötland in order to deal with violence with political connotations. The activities of the network include, *inter alia*, information in schools, the formation of study groups, co-operation with the police and other public authorities and with the university, as well as the joint proposing of motions.

## 7. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Following a number of years of slow but steady increase, statistics for xenophobic crimes showed a marked decrease in 2002. It is too early to determine if this development is a new trend or a temporary reduction; statistics for anti-Semitic and Homophobic crimes are much smaller but remain at the same level.

At the same time research by the SOM Institute at Gothenburg University, which is analysing trends in political opinions and attitudes among the population, for the first time in ten years indicated an increase of negative attitudes towards political refugees. Again, it is too early to conclude if this is a temporary development or the beginning of a new long-term trend. In this respect, 2002 statistics for Sweden must be regarded as somewhat vacillating and uncertain.

Although no formal study has been made into the subject, Expo Foundation researchers have noted a curious pattern of “peak years” with regards to extreme violence.<sup>47</sup> While the overall statistics indicate a steady increase of race hate crime reports through the 1990s, with certain variations, it would seem that extreme violence relating to specific organisations occurs in specific years. This observation is based on media reporting, specifically what years media headlines would focus on racial violence and racist activities. Going back to the early 1980s, it was concluded that the following years were of importance:

**1986** – Several clashes between skinhead and anti-racist groups; two youngsters killed in violence.

**1989** – A number of arsons against political refugee camps were reported; this was at the height of the Sjöbo debate.

**1991/1992** – The forming of the pro-terrorist White Aryan Resistance (VAM), which resulted in bank robberies, arms thefts and other incidents.

**1995** – At least seven people murdered in Nazi related violence; outbreak of notable violence and harassment campaigns in Klippan and Valberg.

**1999** – The murders of two police officers in Malmö, the murder of trade unionist Björn Söderberg and the car bombing of an anti-racist journalist.

There are also examples that indicate that peak years are preceded by a period of intensified militant rhetoric and propaganda. For instance, the seven murders in 1995 were preceded by two years of increased distribution of white power music and extremely militant papers such as *Nordland*. A curious deduction from the list above is that all peak years are post-election years. At the same time it would seem that election years are relatively low on extreme violence and notable headlines about racial or Nazi violence. An European study on “patterns of violence” should shed some light on the existence of a pattern. The study should analyse if there is a connection between militant propaganda and outbreaks of militant violence. If this suggestion is correct it would offer an

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<sup>47</sup> Topic discussed at an internal Expo seminar; no formal study has been made.



instrument for the authorities and others to predict outbreaks of violence and identify potential problem areas before the fact.

What is certain however is that in spite of a number of efforts to combat rightwing extremism and organised racism, voting support for the xenophobic parties increased dramatically in 2002. With 76 000 votes (1.4 percent) and 50 seats in local municipalities the Sweden Democrats emerged as the largest party outside parliament. Including the competing National Democrats (7 000 votes and four seats in local municipalities) and a score of local populist parties, the support for an anti-immigration agenda is reaching above 2 percent. (Sweden has a 4 percent limit for entering parliament). This gives the xenophobic extreme right a genuine window of opportunity to enter parliament in the 2006 elections.

A national consensus among established democratic parties on how to meet the challenge of the xenophobic right is lacking, although the result of the 2002 election has sparked a renewed interest among several parties.

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