

Preachers of Hate Must Be Condemned

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THE INTERVIEW was chilling in its perverted logic and calm presentation.

Noah Adams, host of National Public Radio's "All Things Considered," was talking to Matthew Hale, leader of the Illinois white supremacy group that preaches against Jews, blacks and other minorities and that, until two months ago, claimed Benjamin Smith as a member.

Smith was the 21-year-old killer with the "Sabbath Breaker" tattoo who went on a rampage of hate in Illinois and Indiana last weekend. He gunned down a former Northwestern basketball coach and a Korean graduate student and wounded nine others who were either black, Asian or Jewish. He later killed himself while fleeing police.

By all indications, the white supremacist Hale, who himself is only 27 years old, was a mentor to Smith. It was horrifyingly instructive to listen to Hale matter-of-factly trying to justify his twisted philosophy of hate and superiority.

In a composed manner that was nightmarish in its icy certainty, Hale argued in the NPR interview that because Earth's creatures associate "with their own kind," it would simply be arrogant for humans to veer from nature's course. "The nonwhites are our rivals, they're our natural enemies, just as much as a snake and a mongoose."

He used the terms "subhuman" and "mud people" to describe nonwhites. He said whites were more intelligent than other races, but even if that were not the case, "we'd still do what we do . . . because they're not our kind."

What they do, which he said was neither illegal nor violent, was "motivate white people to love their own kind, to appreciate their own culture and just let the others take care of themselves." He said that "discrimination is a law of life," that integration is a "ridiculous charade," that he would say nothing of comfort to the parents of the people killed by Smith because "they're outside our sphere; they're outside our societal interests. We just don't have anything to say."

It is important that decent people recognize this kind of malignant idiocy -- delivered as if it were a benign lecture on the life cycle of a butterfly -- so they can rise up against it. The Matthew Hales of the world are gaining converts, and they are doing it without ranting or raving, which makes them even more dangerous.

Although his group claims it does not directly promote violence, how else could sane people interpret a call for a "racial holy war," or an exhortation in the sect's documents to "destroy and banish all Jewish thought and influence from society."

Americans have witnessed a host of hate crimes in the past year -- a black man was dragged to his death behind a pickup truck in Jasper, Texas; a gay student was tied to a fence, beaten and left to die; and just last month someone broke into three Sacramento synagogues, set them on fire and caused \$1 million in damage.

The outraged response of good people everywhere to the hate crimes was overwhelming and heartening. But it is not enough. The racist, anti-Semitic blather espoused by Hale and other cretins of his stripe must be recognized for what it is and condemned at every turn.

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