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**Manifestations of Racism.
Racism and Nazism in a Local Community
in Southern Sweden.
By Berit Wigerfelt and Anders S Wigerfelt**

The murder

On a September day in 1995, a young man was found stabbed to death in shrubbery near the centre of a small town in Skåne, southern Sweden, called Klippan. The man turned out to be an asylum-seeker from the Ivory Coast, Gerard Gbeyo.

Prior to being found dead in the bushes, Gerard Gbeyo had got off the night bus from Helsingborg on his way to visit a good friend in the town and spend the night there. He was spotted by a group of young men and two of them, a 16-year-old and an 18-year-old, followed him. They quickly caught up with him and the 16-year-old stabbed Gbeyo in the chest with a knife.

Both the attackers were part of a gang referred to as the 'racist gang', a loose group of around 30-40 young people with Nazi sympathies. The explicitly racist views that some young people in the community held were soon exposed in the media. The murder of Gerard Gbeyo led to Klippan being branded as a nest of racists, and the town became a major focus of media interest over the ensuing years. Since the time of the murder, the media have described a number of violent acts with racist overtones that have taken place in Klippan, and we have also seen how a Nazi organisation has gained a foothold there. In recent years, the town has attracted Nazis from other parts of Sweden and acquired something of a cult status in Nazi circles.

Aims

In late 1996, the two of us – Berit Wigerfelt, ethnologist (specialising in youth culture), and Anders S Wigerfelt, historian (specialising in refugee policy) – were asked if we would be interested in studying the processes and root factors that led to the murder, as well as the open expressions of racism and Nazism in the area.

Originally, therefore, we focused on investigating the explicit racism and Nazism found in Klippan and the processes that led up to the murder in 1995, partly by studying the parties involved, the 'Nazis' and their networks/organisations, and partly by analysing the structures of the local community, such as the main aspects of its history, immigration process, business sector, labour market, social relations and levels of education. These are included in the study but we came to realise that it was not just a question of open racism and Nazism in Klippan but also the presence of what we chose to call 'latent racism' in Swedish society as a whole.

According to the Dutch researcher Rob Witte (1994), there are a number of good reasons for beginning at local level. Racist views and behaviour often develop locally first. It is also at this level that political decisions are implemented. Further, local reaction to things like racist violence are of central importance as they have an important effect on developments in the community, e.g. the mobilisation of the local population in various kinds of counter-movements.

The local community and the way it relates to manifestations of racism, however, must also be studied in a regional, national and global context, not least in an age of globalisation and international migration. Stephen Castles (1993) emphasises in his article, 'Perspectives for the 1990s: Eleven Hypotheses', that international migration is a natural part of today's globalised world. Migration today is often about network migration, and both the existing networks and the growing gap between South and North in terms of economic, social and demographic conditions

will probably lead to further increases in international migration. In contrast to the position taken by many politicians, Castles holds that increased aid to the Third World will not reduce migration. Instead, he says, it can be expected to enhance economic development in Third World countries with the result that the old social and economic structures will be broken up and that greater migration will ensue. The situation is more complicated than Castles suggests in his article. But it is generally accepted that international migration will increase. This will not necessarily mean an increase in racism in Europe and elsewhere. But as the global processes that affect socioeconomic structures in the Third World also affect structures in Europe, the resultant economic, social and political changes may strengthen racism here.

Manifestations of racism are cause-related in a highly complex way. As John Solomos and John Wrench (1993) observed in their article, 'Race and Racism in Contemporary Europe', there are no simple explanations for the racist views and behaviour evident in Europe today. What is happening in the individual European states and at local level needs to be contextualised at societal level (macrolevel), but group and individual levels must also be included in any analysis of the situation, which is what we have sought to do in the present study.

Our primary aim has been to study both open and latent racism in a Swedish local community, focusing on the 1990s in a regional, national and global context. We also seek to describe and analyse the national and local discourse relating in particular to racism and the stigmatising of a town. The present article is a short, selective summary of this study. (Further references and sources are to be found in our book, 'Rasismens yttringar' (Manifestations of Racism), 2001, available in Swedish from Studentlitteratur, Lund.)

Methods and materials

To understand the processes surrounding the Klippan murder, we felt it was important to interview a number of the parties involved. Consequently, we have interviewed about 50 individuals, most of them young people – Nazis, Nazi defectors and members of what was referred to as the 'racist gang'. In addition, we interviewed young people from immigrant backgrounds and a number of adults, of which several were municipal officials or local councillors. In order to reach a wider group of young people from different parts of the region, we chose to conduct a survey of Klippan upper secondary school, which has students from a number of local authority areas.

We have regularly discussed matters with officials of the Klippan local authority and in some cases have been directly consulted about our views on the measures being planned. Following our visits to Klippan, both to attend special events and in more 'everyday' situations, we have noted down our observations. In some cases, these observations were made in connection with our active participation in meetings with officials, parents and young people.

We have also studied municipal documents pertaining to a number of projects aimed at getting to grips with xenophobia and racism in the area. Further, we have used public statistics, public reports and similar documentation while critically analysing the source. Some of our material comprises legal documents amounting to thousands of pages.

As the public image of Klippan as well as the media picture of 'young immigrants' has been crucial to our work, we have studied both a large number of newspapers and magazines and a number of TV programmes with the aid of textual and discursive analysis. In addition, we have used relevant literature in this field both as theoretical points of departure and as support for our analysis.

One important starting-point, as we see it, is the notion that science involves the exercise of power. This is sometimes reflected in interview situations where the researcher has the upper hand by definition as it is his or her task to interpret and describe the 'Others'. This applies to representatives of both 'immigrant' and 'Nazi' categories. As researchers, we are responsible for the way in which the 'Others' are described. Naturally, our own values play a major part in the

scientific process, and writing about racism and Nazism without dissociating ourselves from it is a moral impossibility for us.

Since our early teens, we have been opposed to racism and oppression in a general sense. But as a result of the contacts we have subsequently had with people who have been exposed to racist acts of various kinds, we have come to realise that there is 'a different reality' to the one we ourselves live in, one in which people are routinely exposed to discrimination, marginalization and segregation. We have been influenced by this, a fact that is reflected in the present study.

Through our contacts with various officials, we have personally influenced, either directly or indirectly, some of the measures introduced by municipal representatives. Also, of course, our interviews and discussions – at times, we spoke with certain individuals several times a month – have generated processes and courses of action among individuals and groups. We may possibly have strengthened some people in their identities (as to be investigated is to be seen). The extent to which we have had an impact on developments is difficult to gauge.

In other words, we neither could nor wished to adopt a 'neutral' position as observers and simply take note of what was happening in Klippan or elsewhere in Sweden. We wanted to analyse, explain and understand but also to promote change. Our goal is for the present study to contribute to a discussion of feasible strategies in combating racism. We have been partly influenced by the 'postcolonial' perspective in that we have used the popular tendency to construct 'outsiders' as a way of questioning our own Western tradition and the 'Swedish norm' with its claim to both truth and moral superiority.

We contend that there is no single 'truth', that the version that 'wins' is dependent on the person telling it. The account given depends on power relations, ideologies and socioeconomic conditions in society. As a researcher, you are also a teller of people's stories and thus you define which voices are to be heard and which are to be silenced. We would advise the reader to avoid drawing any profound conclusions from the 'representations' we have studied. Interpretations of events, structures and interviews build upon the researcher's own basic premises and position. In other words, there are a number of different versions and stories that we have sought to reconstruct on the basis of different empirical observations and theoretical arguments. We are not prepared, however, to go as far as some 'post-modernists' and reduce actual experiences of assaults and abuse, for instance, to constructs. Even if language is important for the way we deal with our reality, there is nevertheless a reality outside language.

Klippan

Sweden, and Klippan with it, has changed considerably over the past decades in terms of the labour market and the basic structures of society. In no small part, the structural changes that have taken place in Klippan concern agriculture, which has lost ground significantly throughout the post-war period. Another tendency is the declining importance of industry. In Klippan, the number of industrial employees dropped in both relative and absolute terms particularly in the 1970s and 1980s and early 1990s.

While the industrial sector's share has waned, the production of private and to no small extent public services has waxed stronger. In the 1960s, there was widespread expansion of the public sector in Sweden in terms of health care, childcare and education. This development led to an increasing number of women entering gainful employment. In the 1980s, the public sector became the dominant category in Klippan. The economic crisis of the early 1990s, however, halted further expansion of the public sector and even reduced facilities.

The question is, are there any structural reasons why Klippan has become an arena for open racism and Nazism? A common explanation among some researchers is that certain places are afflicted by racist violence more than others because they are characterised by a patron-client relationship, in other words they resemble the old mill town structure (Björge 1997).

The label 'mill town', frequently used in connection with Klippan, no longer fits the bill, however. The paper mill, once the town's most important industry, no longer dominates. In

1996, some 300 people worked there. As a result of cuts in recent years, however, the labour force is now less than 200 strong.

A number of studies (Hernes & Knudsen 1994 and Gaasholt & Togeby 1995) show that there is a connection between the degree of xenophobia/racism and levels of education – the less education, the greater the xenophobia. In the Klippan local authority area, over 46% of the population are classed as lowly-educated, compared with the national average of 38%. Some researchers contend that social status and income levels also affect people's attitudes to outsiders. In the 1990s, Klippan found itself way down the list of Sweden's local authority areas in terms of taxable income.

On 1 January 1996, a few months after the murder of Gerard Gbeye, the municipality of Klippan had 16,351 inhabitants. Just over half, 8,233, lived in the old market town of Klippan. The number of foreign citizens was 969, or about 6% of the total population. The Danish community was comparatively large, numbering 232 persons. The conflict in former Yugoslavia had generated a community of 406 immigrants from that region, 169 of them from Bosnia. Many of the others were from Kosovo. The Immigration Board had a 350-bed reception centre for asylum-seekers in the area from 1 July 1992 to 30 June 1996, which meant that a large group of non-Swedish immigrants were living in central Klippan.

A small minority of the local voters voted for openly xenophobic parties. Importantly, however, parties that spread xenophobic propaganda won seats both on the local council and on neighbouring councils at some elections. These parties may well have contributed to the increase in prejudice and stereotyped thinking that has occurred in the local community. This in turn may have encouraged the racist dissemination of views and contributed to the emergence of open racism in several parts of north-western Skåne.

Nazism – past and present

Swedish historian Heléne Lööw has established in studies (Lööw 1995a and 1995b) a link between certain places where the Nazis were strong in the 1930s-40s and present-day organised Nazism. This observation tallies to a certain degree with the situation in Klippan in that during the 1930s and 1940s local units of Nazi sympathisers were to be found in nearby Ljungbyhed and in the surrounding area. But there is no tradition of Nazism in the town of Klippan itself. On the contrary, grassroots movements such as the labour movement have traditionally been well represented there. Nor have we found any direct links between earlier organised Nazis in the Klippan area and today's young activists.

After the war, however, when Nazism had become or less inconceivable to most people, the Nordic National Party (NRP), founded in 1956, persuaded a number of old Nazis to become active again. With the addition of young recruits, not least in the early 1980s, the party produced ideas and politically schooled activists that have found a place in today's organisations. The NRP was quite simply a link between the Nazism of old and today's version (Lööw 1998).

The leading Nazi organisation in Sweden today is *Nationalsocialistisk Front*, the National Socialist Front (NSF). It represents an open style of political endeavour in contrast to most other organisations in this category and has an extensive Nordic network of contacts as well as an international one. Despite its efforts to be accepted as an 'ordinary' political party, it continues to urge violence against police, journalists and others in its newspaper, 'The True National Socialist' (DSNS).

Most of the Klippan activists, about 15 in all, belong to the NSF. For some of these organised Nazis, most of what they do is related to Nazism, which has quite simply become a lifestyle for them, while a number of other activists lead more or less 'normal' lives.

The central elements of modern 'Swedish' Nazism are racism and anti-Semitism. External bodily features are regarded as a mark of mental, inner qualities, and at the head of the racial hierarchy is the white race. Much is heard about the existence or imminence of a race war and

there is also talk of a 'nativity war', the implication being that Nazis must ensure that they have as many white children as possible.

The Nazi racial credo identifies superior and inferior races and views the Jews as the main enemy, responsible for all evil in the world as the result of a global conspiracy. Both Marxism, global capitalism and democracy are considered a part of the Jewish bid for world supremacy. In the 1990s, anti-Semitism was amplified by means of the 'Zionist Occupation Government' (ZOG) concept. This concept is used to explain why the world is the way it is today – everything is controlled by the Jews. Many of the Klippan activists feel they are surrounded by enemies everywhere and ZOG is used to explain this and to explain the alienation found in modern society. In practice, ZOG thus becomes synonymous with society itself.

It is wrong to imagine that Nazism wants to end all immigration. 'White' immigration is often considered acceptable or even desirable by some activists. But 'non-white' immigration is regarded as a part of ZOG's attempt to destroy the white race. However, NSF members in Klippan are strongly divided on the question of immigration. Some want to stop it altogether and send away all those who are not considered 'real Swedes', while others think that certain kinds of Europeans should be allowed to migrate to Sweden. Many of the conflicts in Klippan that are often labelled 'gang trouble' have to do with racism and the desire to throw out all those who are not 'racially pure' Swedes.

The NSF is against democracy, preferring the country to be governed by an elite. Instead of political elections every four years, it wants to let people have a say on a consultative basis while the leader is always the one who takes the decisions. "Today, under democracy, Swedes are even equated with culturally and morally remote Negroes" (DSNS No. 2 1998). In other words, the party outlook is elitist and racist. The NSF seeks to exploit popular dissatisfaction with politicians – which found expression in the low turnout at the EU elections in 1999, for instance – in order to attract supporters.

The party advocates a simple life with small-scale farming and an 'archetypal' home of the people (*folkhem*). It idealises Swedish society of old in many ways, both the classic *folkhem* concept and the old agrarian society. Sometimes it does not distinguish between the two but speaks longingly and in general terms of a time when there was a sense of community among the 'racially pure Swedes'.

Women are seen both as a pillar of the white race due to the white children they produce, but also as a weak soul that the enemy, such as 'non-white immigrants', can tempt to destruction. Controlling female sexuality, therefore, is considered very important. Women are primarily viewed as housewives and thereafter as a labour reserve. Very few girls/women are involved with the NSF in Klippan. Some however have distinguished themselves by their part in some of the racist exploits that have attracted attention in and around Klippan in recent years.

Even if several leading Nazis in the Germany of the 1930s were homosexual, homophobia is an integral part of Nazi propaganda and ideology. This has not been toned down in recent years but remains one of the basic ideological tenets. A number of homosexuals were subjected to severe attacks by Nazis in the 1990s.

Finally, Nazism views life as a struggle in which there is a close link between the world of ideas and normative behaviour. The virtues it acclaims – courage, allegiance, duty, self-sacrifice and struggle, are woven into its outlook on the world. Thus activists are encouraged to practise violence against the 'enemy'.

The Nazis could be said to belong to a marginalized sect, but their ideology also corresponds in part to certain stereotyped thought patterns and views found among 'ordinary' people. Often, it is too easy to dismiss the Nazis as 'evil madmen'. By demonising them, we may be ignoring the presence of racism in our own everyday lives.

Latent racism and the construction of outsiders.

Racism expresses itself in various forms and the specific forms it takes are decided by the economic, political, social and organisational relations of society (Essed 1991 and Brah 1993). The various manifestations of racism are not geographically restricted even if racism is more evident in some places than others. It is convenient to be able to identify Klippan, for instance, as deviant, abnormal and thus unique. As 'the real thing' is said to be found in Klippan, this delivers the 'other citizens' of Sweden, the majority, from the racism. We 'ordinary folks' thus do not have to deal with the 'subtle' racist attitudes and actions that are evident around us. The stigmatising of Klippan could therefore be said to constitute a part of the denial of racism in our own everyday lives. By this, we do not mean to tone down the open, manifest racism found there but are seeking to describe how latent, everyday racism interacts with the open, manifest variety practised by Nazis and how the two forms of expression reinforce one another.

People perceived to be immigrants, often as a result of their appearance, their name, their accent or their religious beliefs, are frequently exposed to discrimination and exclusion based on racism. In the media, young men from immigrant backgrounds are usually featured in connection with crime, suburban gangs and unemployment (Brune 1998). The 'young immigrant' has been constructed as a deviant due to the countless articles and news items that describe him in these terms. Thus we have a ready-made picture of 'young immigrants' in Klippan and elsewhere. Everyone is lumped together. In our discussions, especially with boys from foreign backgrounds, we have heard time and again how they are viewed with suspicion wherever they go. This is particularly true in shops and stores, where they tend to be regarded as potential shoplifters: "When you came into the store, they looked at you as though you were planning to steal the whole place". And when they go out to bars or restaurants they often come up against high-handed doormen. When this occurs time and again, you are left in no doubt that the abusive behaviour you are constantly subjected to is related to the colour of your skin, the colour of your hair and so on. You have been marked down as a result of your origins. "It gets to you ... it really wipes you out," as one of the interviewees put it.

Latent racism – everyday racism – is often much worse than open racism. To be disparaged by those who openly declare themselves to be Nazis is one thing, but to be met by suspicion and abuse from the 'average Swede' day after day gradually destroys a person's self-esteem. Often, representatives of the predominant ethnic group deny that this goes on, and tend to talk in terms of the 'under-privileged' being over-sensitive or bringing it upon themselves. It was only through our survey material, interviews and conversations with people from different parts of Sweden that we came to realise how widespread this kind of latent racism is. Although we are aware that our impressions are subjective and that not everyone sees things in the same light, and also that the situation can be explained in other terms, it is our opinion that as such accounts recur so frequently, they need to be brought out into the light. Latent racism subverts human values and may create very severe problems in the future for Swedish society as a whole. In other words, this problem is not confined to Klippan.

Although it is usually private individuals that express or practise it, racism is based on group power and community structures (Essed 1991). Those who commit racist acts are often 'ordinary' people who would never consider themselves 'racists/xenophobes' and who dissociate themselves from open racism in various ways. But affinity and identity within the majority group are partially a result of drawing the line vis-à-vis the 'Others'.

With the help of prejudice, stereotyping and in some cases exotisation, the 'outsider' has been constructed and is still being recreated. As a result of exclusion mechanisms and power strategies such as marginalization and problematisation, the 'non-normal' are classed as outsiders or aliens. Categorisation and stereotyped images are created and change shape as a result of different discourses being ranged against one another and various groups and individuals offering resistance. In the case of the excluded and segregated, resistance may be expressed in counter-violence, sometimes in the form of criminal groupings. This in turn, as we have seen in Klippan,

may lead to greater opposition and violence on the part of Nazi activists, which further polarises the situation and fortifies both open and latent racism.

Many of the students from immigrant backgrounds who were interviewed in the survey conducted at the Klippan upper secondary school felt that racism in its various forms was more pronounced in the region and in Klippan itself than in many other places. In the interviews, too, several of our informants from immigrant backgrounds noted that both negative attitudes and discrimination had increased in Klippan in recent years. There is much to suggest that different forms of racism are mutually reinforcing. It appears that as a result of the racist violence some local inhabitants want to see not only the Nazis leave the area but preferably also the group classed as immigrants. They want peace and quiet and a return to the 'old Klippan'. Thus the actions and attitudes of 'ordinary people' vis-à-vis the 'Others' are also affected, more or less unconsciously.

During the 1990s, many immigrants failed to find acceptance in Swedish society and in the labour market. This may help to explain why the rate of criminal behaviour among young people from immigrant backgrounds is relatively high in Sweden. There are a number of criminals among the immigrants of Klippan. Most immigrants, of course, are not criminally inclined, however. But because they are classed as 'different' on the strength of their appearance, their language and their culture, etc, minorities are often subjected to abuse, which as we have noted leads to trouble and manifest conflicts (Gilroy 1987). At bottom, the conflicts are often caused by racism. Sometimes it is one or other of the Nazi activists who starts the trouble and sometimes one of the 'anti-fascists'. Often, youths in the town are loosely grouped together with people from a range of different countries, in a form of transcultural community. Racism and enforced subservience sometimes lead to desperation and frequently result in acts of violence. This is not to defend the violent actions that people in this group have been guilty of. Although their behaviour is to a certain extent understandable, society must act firmly to stop criminal behaviour, but also to deter it by combating racist manifestations such as segregation, marginalization and alienation.

Open and explicit racism – why in Klippan?

What is referred to here by the generic term 'latent racism' is evident in various parts of Sweden, as well of course as in many other countries. In certain circumstances, however, racism becomes open and explicit. An important question, then, is what factors and processes led to Klippan becoming the scene of open racism and racial violence? As open, explicit violence does not surface in a social and political vacuum, the public climate at regional and national level must be introduced into any discussion of developments at local level. One could also discuss the issue in terms of a societal level (macro) and a group and individual level respectively. There is no single factor to explain why open racism and organised Nazism grew so strong in the 1990s, either at national level or locally in Klippan. It seems that a number of different factors, both material and mental, interacted in various ways and at various levels, leading to the rise and further development of open racism. Individual participants and group dynamics also had an important impact on the train of events.

In a macroperspective, some researchers (Husbands 1993, Hobsbawn 1993 and Björge 1997) attribute the emergence of open, explicit racism in the 1990s partly to processes such as globalisation and individualisation. These processes may offer the individual greater opportunities but also impose tougher demands and involve a fear of losing control. Furthermore, they have reduced the importance of long-established structures like your family, your social class and your neighbourhood. In reaction to these processes, the attraction that constructed identities like race, ethnicity and nationality exerts on some individuals is clear to see. Many view these as 'natural' identities in an increasingly complicated and incomprehensible world (Heitmeyer 1993). Localism and the development of local gangs of working class youths in particular are part of this. Such factors, however, are not in greater evidence in Klippan than in most other small towns.

If by way of comparison we look at the neighbouring town of Bjuv (Lieberg 2000), which like Klippan is an old mill town in transition, we can see similar processes and social tensions at work among different youth constellations in both places. Bjuv also had groups of young people who considered the camaraderie of the gang more important than school and a future career. Experiencing alienation and a lack of meaningful occupation in their home towns, they are drawn to 'the gang', where they find the fellowship and the security that they never found in other circumstances. Collective identities develop within the gang framework (Melucci 1991). Lieberg concludes that there is a clear danger of these young people being tempted to join extreme right-wing groups.

It is also possible that the breeding ground for a more militant and open racism is more fertile in places that have been hit particularly hard by the transformation process of modern times, which has resulted in the severance of social ties that used to bind people together. Both Klippan and Bjuv had an old mill-town culture that bound their inhabitants together, but when the winds of change are blowing this kind of mill-town spirit may be inhibiting instead.

A common explanation, which was also heard in connection with the notorious local referendum on refugee reception in Sjöbo in 1988, is that there is a link between the Nazis of the 1930s and 1940s and today's organised Nazism. In those days, there may indeed have been local Nazi factions of various kinds in Ljungbyhed, another part of the same municipality, and in the villages around it. But in the urban centre of Klippan there is no tradition of Nazism. Rather, grassroots movements have featured strongly in the community. Nor have we come across any direct personal links between one-time Nazis active in the area and today's youthful recruits. It is conceivable, however, that there are specific structures in these parts that have long remained in place and that have contributed to the rise and advance of open racism and its reproduction in new forms. The fact that Klippan is considered a mill town could be one such factor. According to earlier research (e.g. Björger), a hostile attitude to 'outsiders' is a characteristic of this type of community. Regardless of whether such factors are important or not, Klippan can no longer be described as a mill town. There is a possibility, however, that a particular mind-set has survived from the 'mill days' and could be reactivated under certain circumstances. The question arises whether a mill town in which the mill has lost its importance is not in fact a vulnerable community. In other words, a mill town 'in decline' or in transition may perhaps be the kind of place in which open racism can flourish.

A growing sense of insecurity appears unavoidable when the decline of the dominant industry in a particular area is combined with general structural changes such as the diminished importance of agriculture and the downgrading of industrial society together with the economic crisis of the 1990s. Klippan is not unique in this respect but it was hit harder than many other areas. The economic crisis coincided with a rapid upswing in the number of asylum-seekers, due in part to the break-up of Yugoslavia. Many people linked the deterioration in their living conditions to the influx of refugees and, together with a number of politicians at both national and local level, singled out the 'immigrants' as the scapegoats. The trend towards a more restrictive climate of opinion in relation to refugee issues has affected the atmosphere in many local communities where asylum-seekers and refugees have been placed by the authorities, not just in Klippan. This applies not least to a number of neighbouring areas, which is why it is fair to say that a regional xenophobic/racist attitude has developed strongly in this part of the province. At local level, three xenophobic parties held seats on the Klippan local council at one point, having as part of their campaign exploited and reinforced negative attitudes concerning 'outsiders'. Open racism and racial violence are to some extent connected with this. Many activists feel they have the support of the 'silent majority'. Some established parties, too, contributed to this development by portraying refugee reception as a burden on Swedish society.

The low level of education in Klippan may be another contributing factor. Many studies indicate a link between poor education and open racism. Hopefully, education helps reduce racism. There are researchers (e.g. van Dijk 1993), however, who are critical of this view, contending that the well-educated, for instance, learn how to give the 'right' answers when

interviewed about their attitudes, and learn what expressions to use, etc. They dissociate themselves verbally from racism and attribute such inclinations to the 'lower' orders. But by accepting things like segregated housing, the well-educated in practice contribute to a reinforcement of racism. By means of their power and dominant position they may in fact be helping to reproduce it.

The media coverage and stigmatising of Klippan may have contributed to the open racism found there. The question is, in what way? One important outcome of the coverage of events such as those in Klippan is that the media can thereby help break down and counteract an openly racist and violent environment. Media attention can have a mobilising effect, as we have clearly seen in Klippan. The local population and the local authority become fully aware of the seriousness of the situation and mobilise to do something about it, even if this only involves tackling open racism. Another positive outcome is that young individuals who are not too embroiled in organised Nazism come to understand the gravity of their actions.

But the media may also reinforce open racism. Researchers (Lööv 1995c and Björge 1997) quote some young people as saying that an important reason for their having attacked refugees or immigrants was a desire to gain personal attention in the media. A centre-page spread in a newspaper can give young people who view themselves as losers in the local community a sense of power and importance. For more organised groups, media coverage may be a central motive for instituting racial attacks. They seek to underline their power and create respect within the organisation and at the same time attract greater support from people of like mind outside it. The attention of the Swedish media was crucial, for instance, to the upswing of *Vit Ariskt Motstånd* (White Aryan Resistance, VAM) and other groups espousing racial ideology in the early 1990s. Gangs and groups of friends around the country holding racist views or hostile to immigrants saw a way of expressing their ideas in a political form. They came into contact with those parts of the network that provided the requisite paraphernalia and propaganda and began establishing groups of their own.

In Klippan's case, the murder of Gerard Gbeye in 1995 proved a watershed. Many of those in the openly racist part of the movement left it while others were strengthened in their ideological convictions and intensified their contact with activists both in Sweden and abroad. The ideologically converted came to comprise the core of the local faction of the NSF, the National Socialist Front, a Nazi organisation set up in 1996. New acts of violence brought Klippan into the public eye once again in the late 1990s and known Nazis moved to the town.

Some researchers (e.g. Björge 1997) contend that open racism is more widespread in small communities with a large number of asylum-seekers/refugees as the people living there are not used to 'outsiders', which leads to cultural conflict. When a refugee reception centre was established in central Klippan in the early 1990s, segregation in this small town became conspicuous. Racism is to be found in various forms throughout Swedish society but it came out into the open in Klippan when a large group of 'outsiders' arrived. Open racism can, however, flourish in a local community without the presence of 'outsiders'. Vellinge, a prosperous municipality in south-western Skåne, represents an example of how Nazism can grow in a community where 'immigrants' are relatively few. Often, preconceptions about 'outsiders' and imagined threats are enough to persuade young local residents, with the help of propaganda such as White Power music, to organise themselves as Nazis.

The manifest conflicts that latent racism generates and provides a breeding ground for are an important factor in explaining how open racism was reinforced and turned into organised Nazism in the mid-1990s. Individual participants and group dynamics have played a major part in this development.

The emergence of Nazism

The openly racist acts of violence committed in Klippan in the early 1990s were dismissed by many as youthful protest, something that would pass after a while. When the media, for instance,

discussed and described racism in Klippan it largely focused on the actions of youth gangs in the town. There is, however, a strong link between these young people and the adult community.

When discussing refugees/immigrants today, many Swedes do so in certain specific terms, a discourse, claiming that they receive hefty government handouts, behave strangely, are criminal, etc. But the problem is not just about the way we discuss such people. It also to a great extent concerns the messages we are sending as a result of our actions or 'non-actions'. When people with an 'un-Swedish' name cannot find work despite having proper training and good qualifications, an important message is being sent – that those who migrate to Sweden are not welcome here. What is the significance of this way of discussing minorities and discriminating against them? As young people are often more sensitive to trends and easily snap up what is in the air, some of them may feel that in open racism and Nazism they have found the 'solution' to the problems that are constantly being raised in adult society. Some of the Klippan activists feel that what they are in fact doing is explicating and translating into action the anti-immigrant views held by many adults around Sweden. The adults talk a lot but do little, say the organised activists.

Several of the young people we have spoken with who are activists today say they began by being critical of Swedish government policy on immigration and refugees. They felt Sweden was accepting too many immigrants and that this group was taking the Swedes' jobs and living on generous social benefits at a time when many Swedes were having difficulties making ends meet. These were views they had snapped up from the adults around them or from political parties that were openly hostile to refugees. When they began at lower secondary school in Klippan they met others of the same mind and also encountered young immigrants, some of whom they felt provoked by and occasionally got into fights with. The fights consolidated their prejudices and more gang-like constellations emerged.

Meanwhile, being a 'racist' became 'fashionable' in certain youth circles in Sweden in general around this time. As a result of the White Power movement, racist propaganda was disseminated via music, newspapers and various badges and emblems pinned to clothing. Your dress and your shaved head showed what you stood for. What was happening was that young people were radicalising the views they had heard expressed by the adults. In Klippan, a small clique took matters a step further and began supporting the Nazi movement. They were the hard core of a much larger and looser grouping referred to as the 'racist gang'. Racist views of a more general nature hardened into a fully-fledged ideological package touted as a way of solving the problems that it was felt Sweden faced.

The escalating conflict between youth gangs in Klippan, usually racist-related, became more pronounced in the 1990s. The gangs met in combat. In 1995, the enmity was such that many young people feared something serious would happen soon. The 'racist gang' had grown into a loose grouping of some 30-40 young people with openly racist views and there was also a hard core of Nazis in the gang, some of whom belonged to the Nazi organisation *Riksfrenten* (National Front).

After the murder of Gerard Gbeyo, the situation in Klippan calmed down for a while. The 'racist gang' split up but a few activists with Nazi sympathies remained and bided their time. A number of incidents in Klippan, including one in connection with the release of the 18-year-old who had been convicted as an accomplice in the murder of Gbeyo, gave the movement a new lease of life. New young people were recruited and the movement came into closer contact with activists in other areas, not least as a result of having attracted media coverage.

During the latter part of the 1990s, further acts of violence once again brought the situation in Klippan to a head. A prominent local Nazi stabbed a young man from an immigrant background in early 1998. In late summer of that year, the same Nazi fired a gun through the same young man's window. Later, the sister of the 16-year-old who had killed Gbeyo stabbed a man from an immigrant background. There is much to suggest that these incidents while clearly of a racist nature also had a personal dimension. Hatred and anger on both sides are directed at individuals considered by their adversaries to be particularly dangerous or provocative. With the arrival in

Klippan of Marcel Schilf, a known German Nazi, and 'Blood and Honour', the situation has become even more precarious.

The question now is, will the Nazi movement become stronger? As in the case of the factors that served to reinforce organised Nazism in Klippan, the local perspective should be combined with the regional, national and global ones and the macroperspective with group and individual ones when discussing this question. What happens will depend on internal factors in the White Power movement such as skilled leadership and the ability to organise. The growth of the NSF at national level is essential to growth in Klippan. When the former leader of the NSF quit in the aftermath of the murder of two policemen in Malexander and the murder of a syndicalist activist, Björn Söderberg, the movement was weakened, at least for the time being. It should also be noted that even if the NSF is the dominant organisation in Sweden, the White Power movement is extremely divided. There is no single overall leader or clear-cut organisational set-up. This is also true at European and global level. Of equal importance is the social and political environment in which this internal development of the movement takes place. Global, national and local events and processes affect the 'framework' within which the various figures in the movement can operate. It is important, therefore, to consider which factors led to the increase in open racism that occurred both in Sweden as a whole and in Klippan during the 1990s. In other words, we have to consider which processes have influenced developments and what possibilities we have for reducing or preventing adverse repercussions.

Counter-measures in Klippan and future counter-strategies

What can we learn from the actions of political representatives and officials in Klippan in the 1990s? After the murder of Gerard Gbeyo in 1995, the area was branded as a place where people are cold-hearted and/or racist. The police interrogation of witnesses, reported in detail by the media prior to the Gbeyo trial, offered a chilling insight into the openly racist subculture that existed in the area. It is worth considering how this may have affected the town's identity and self-image. During the time that has elapsed since Gerard Gbeyo was murdered, officials, local councillors and others in positions of influence in Klippan have been engaged in trying to improve the area's image in various ways. Discussion has tended to focus on the stigmatising of Klippan and much time and energy has been spent since the murder on dealing with this issue, perhaps to the detriment of more important questions such as why and in what forms racism and Nazism are to be found in the local community. One lesson to be learnt from this is that it is always a mistake to try and conceal or tone down manifestations of racism.

In various connections, representatives of the local authority have expressed feelings of helplessness with regard to the strategies and measures required for dealing with the problem. In the aftermath of the murder of Gerard Gbeyo, municipal officials sought assistance from the National Agency for Education in drawing up strategies and approaches, and also from the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and various government ministries, but no-one could help. Instead, they were advised to record what had happened and was happening themselves so that the information could be used to help others. Klippan's municipal commissioner, Rune Persson, has several times this year (2000) approached the Government with the demand that a national task force be set up to combat Nazi activities in Sweden.

Some popular mobilisation was discernible, partly channelled through the traditional grassroots movements and expressed in torchlight processions and festivals against Nazi and racism. Popular resistance has largely centred on the slogan, 'we've had enough' – in other words, it was time for the Nazi activists to be driven out. But there has been no sign of a more general debate on racism in a broader sense, nor has there been any discussion of factors like marginalization, segregation and discrimination.

Municipal measures taken after the Klippan murder included the organisation of efforts to counter open racism by bringing schools, police, leisure-time centres and social services into closer touch with one another. Openly racist environments were identified with the help of the

police's preliminary reports and families with young people who had come under investigation were sought out. Home visits were carried out mainly by social services staff but also by the police. In some homes, they were scarcely allowed through the door – some parents were dismayed, others surprised. In most cases, however, these home visits led to further contacts, many of which ended successfully from the authorities' viewpoint in that several of the young people involved left the openly racist environments to which they had belonged.

A number of projects aimed at 'building bridges' between 'Swedes' and 'immigrants' were started. These projects focused on teenage boys and involved activities relating to endurance, hardship and the ability to work together. The projects were based partly on Norwegian experiences in this field. In Norway, young people belonging to Nazi groups have been offered the chance to escape their environment by becoming involved in 'extreme sports' such as mountain climbing. These ideas are based on the theory that young people do not join Nazi organisations primarily for political reasons but for psychological ones. One of the difficulties about this approach is that it tends to tone down racism and make it subordinate. Other problems include the tendency to view racist actions simply as examples of 'youthful excess' that will pass of their own accord. There is also a risk that the political motives behind racist actions are underestimated and that any counter-measures taken may thus prove ineffective or even serve to reinforce racism.

In schools in Klippan, both staff and pupils have taken steps that have largely centred on information and attitudes, for instance by inviting speakers to give talks. However, it is difficult to convince ardent Nazis of the error of their ways by means of rational and logical argument. Not because Nazis are stupid but because the logic of Nazi ideology is different. Myths and conspiracies play an important role and arguments are often dismissed as propaganda lies. It is usually better to appeal to Nazi's emotions than to their intellects. Attempts are made in many quarters to sway opinion by inviting Holocaust survivors to give talks. This sometimes works but at other times the truly devout Nazis view the survivors as part of 'the Jewish conspiracy of propaganda and lies'. There are also those among them who lack empathy or, when films about the concentration camps are shown, identify with the executioners.

Literature on racism and Nazism as well as the media often describe the openly racist young Nazis as victims of difficult family backgrounds. This applies in Klippan to some extent but most of the young people involved do not come from extreme home circumstances. Several of the families with children belonging to or sympathising with the NSF regularly met municipal officials for discussions in 1996. Partly taking their cue from Norway, some of these parents set up a parental group in the spring of 1997 comprising about a dozen parents and some municipal officials. This group has since met about once a month to discuss, swap experiences and listen to invited speakers. The group is happy to help parents in a similar situation, and via the media and an emergency phone line has in various ways made known what it has learnt and experienced in its struggle against Nazism. As a result of the support provided by both the Klippan parents' group and EXIT, an organisation that helps Nazi defectors, similar groups have been set up in other parts of Sweden.

In this connection, it is worth bearing in mind that some strategies and counter-measures may cause people in the Nazi environment to close ranks even more. This occurred when the parents' group was set up in Klippan. In several of the families, the conflicts between parents and their children supporting the NSF became acute. A few of the boys broke with their families completely, which led the parents to have doubts about the wisdom of joining the parental group. But most of the parents felt that the only way to bring about change was to start making demands on their children.

As we have seen, the strategy in Klippan has largely involved stopping further recruitment to the NSF and trying to convert the core of activists operating there in order to subdue the manifest conflicts in the town – not to combat racism as such. The efforts to prevent the NSF from recruiting new activists have been partially successful, but not entirely. A municipal action plan against violence and racism that was adopted in the autumn of 2000 constituted a sharp

rejection of Nazism in the local community. What is still largely missing from the plan is strategies for dealing with other forms of racism as well. One explanation could be that the work has hitherto not focused on combating latent racism. No steps have been taken to tackle the kinds of racism that are expressed in segregation and exclusion. The definition of racism commonly applied is too narrow. The anti-racist message must go out to the whole of the local community. It is not just a matter of a few activists, it is about a way of thinking and acting in everyday life that affects us all. Latent racism is a breeding ground for both open racism and Nazism as well as for marginalization and exclusion. It is reproduced through institutions and structures in society. So while the school as an institution combats Nazism it may also be helping other forms of racism to survive. Another important task is to show how the media present people from immigrant backgrounds as problems and also use imagery of a more or less 'colonial' nature in their reporting from Africa and elsewhere. This emphasis on dissimilitude, on the differentiation of people according to their appearance, ethnic background, language, etc, which is at the root of exotism and racism, must be exposed.

Latent racism is in itself just as serious as open forms of racism. When certain ingredients are added, it can develop into a more open and violent form. For some people, especially individuals with little self-esteem and problems with their social status, the 'differentiation' mechanism provides the impetus that takes them into Nazi organisations. Removing the preconditions for Nazism means creating a society that does not demand 'sacrifices' in the form of failed individuals and groups, something that applies to both the majority population and to minorities.

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