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August 2017

The Real Threat of White Supremacy Coming to Terms with America's Past

by Nicholas Mitchell, Ph.D.

JSRI Future Activities

September 12

Fr. Fred Kammer will attend a meeting of the Mission Committee of Christus Health in Dallas, TX.

October 2

Fr. Kammer will chair an Ignatian Solidarity Network (ISN) strategic planning meeting in Washington, D.C.

October 19

JSRI will co-sponsor a film screening of *13th* with [Loyola Institute for Ministry](#) and others. Details to be determined.

JSRI Recent Activities

August 11

Dr. Sue Weishar and JSRI associate Mary Baudouin co-presented a paper on Catholic Teach-Ins on Migration at the Commitment to Justice in Jesuit Higher Education Conference at Seattle University.

August 11

Dr. Alí Bustamante presented Institutional Response to Social Justice Issues at the Commitment to Justice in Jesuit Higher Education Conference.

The Guidelines for the Study and Teaching of the Church's Social Doctrine in the Formation of Priests states that people are required to denounce unjust situations, which includes describing social evils in their totality.[1] Following this maxim, we must recognize that on August 12, 2017, Heather Heyer was murdered during a White race riot, when a member of the racist mob tried to kill scores of people with a car—a preferred tactic of recent terrorist attacks in Europe. In addition, Deandre Harris was nearly beaten to death in a parking garage. They were the victims of one of the most consequentially destructive ideologies in human history—White supremacy. From the Americas to Africa and Asia to Europe, the historical record shows that everywhere White supremacy has spread it has brought havoc.



Source: Ryan Patterson, Public Domain

In *Brothers and Sisters to Us*, the U.S. Catholic Bishops state, "Racism is not merely one sin among many; it is a radical evil that divides the human family and denies the new creation of a redeemed world." [2] The history of White supremacist terrorism in the United States proves this maxim to be true. Men like Robert E. Lee went to war to defend a society that celebrated the forced labor, rape, and murder

August 9

Fr. Kammer chaired a strategic planning meeting for ISN in Washington, D.C.

August 8

Dr. Weishar attended a board and staff event in Biloxi, MS, for El Pueblo, a ministry that serves immigrants in southern Mississippi.

August 2-3

Fr. Kammer gave five talks in El Paso, TX, to clergy, religious, and public on Catholic Social Thought and Immigration.

August 2

Dr. Weishar participated in a planning meeting of the Symposium for Systemic Change at the offices of St. Vincent de Paul in Baton Rouge, LA.

July 26

Brendan Gottschall, S.J., completed his summer internship with JSRI.

July 9

Dr. Weishar participated in a planning meeting of the New Orleans Interfaith Sanctuary Coalition.

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of millions of people as its cultural and economic foundation. Noted scholar W.E.B. Du Bois wrote about Lee, "Either he knew what slavery meant when he helped maim and murder thousands in its defense, or he did not. If he did not, he was a fool. If he did, Robert Lee was a traitor and a rebel—not indeed to his country, but to humanity and humanity's God."^[3] White supremacy, of course, continued far past slavery with the butchery of the Jim Crow era with its 4,084 lynchings and the pogroms of Black settlements such as Rosewood, Florida, in 1923.^[4]

By the early 20th century, White supremacy would be elevated to a pseudo-science that has left its residue on us even today with eugenics which was popularized by such texts as Madison Grant's *Passing of the Great Race*.^[5] Even the Nazis, when they needed inspiration for their own White supremacist policies focusing on citizenship and reproduction—the *Nuremberg Laws*—turned to the United States for a model. James Whitman writes, "In both respects they found, and welcomed, precedent and authority in American law, and by no means just in the South. In the 1930s, the United States, as the Nazis frequently noted, stood at the forefront of race-based lawmaking."^[6] This history shows that, in many ways, the United States has been the vanguard of White supremacist thought but it has also been on the vanguard of combatting that same racist ideology.

White supremacy is one of a multitude of expressions of the radical evil that is racism. All forms of racism—interpersonal, institutional, and systemic—are radical evils that threaten society in material ways. White supremacy has been the most virulent expression of racism for over 500 years. It swallowed many of the indigenous nations of North America, South America, Africa, and Asia and has brutalized the descendants of those continents wherever they live on the planet. This ideology even laid waste to Europe itself with the rise and fall of the Nazi party. People of good faith are called to confront and denounce evils for what they are; therefore, it is incumbent upon us to recognize what the multiple iterations of White supremacy truly are—the path to our collective destruction. We ignore or underestimate it at our own peril.

[1]The Guidelines for the Study and Teaching of the Church's Social Doctrine in the Formation of Priests. Office for Publishing and Promotion Services United States Catholic Conference. 1988. p. 11

[2] Brothers and Sisters to Us. retrieved from <http://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/cultural-diversity/african-american/brothers-and-sisters-to-us.cfm>

[3] Du Bois, W.E.B. Robert Lee. 1928. retrieved from <http://cwmemory.com/2017/05/30/w-e-b-dubois-on-robert-e-lee/>

[4] Equal Justice Initiative, *Lynching in America: Confronting The Legacy of Racial Terror* Third Edition. 2017. p. 4

[5] Grant, Madison. *The Passing of the Great Race*. Charles Scribner's Sons. 1916

[6] Whitman, James Q. *Hitler's American Model: The United States and the Making of Nazi Race Law*. Princeton University Press, 2017. p. 24

Monthly articles reflect the opinions of the authors and not necessarily those of Loyola University New Orleans. Please send feedback to jsri@loyno.edu

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