

Léa Glaenger, Bard 2021  
Bard Center for the Study of Hate Internship Summary  
Summer 2021

It is not often that conversations about hate leave you feeling more hopeful, passionate, and motivated than before broaching the subject. I was lucky enough to have many of these conversations with people who have studied and fought hate as their primary occupation through my summer internship with the Institute for Research and Education on Human Rights (IREHR). This was made possible through Bard's own Center for the Study of Hate (BCSH), who accepted my application despite my recent graduation from Bard.

As a post-graduate internship, IREHR provided me with meaningful and exciting experiences in the field alongside much-needed flexibility in hours. I was able to take on several projects throughout my time working with Charles Tanner Jr. (or Chuck, once you're familiar), a longtime civil and human rights activist who has worked to counter the organized white supremacist and anti-Indian movements who sits on the IREHR Advisory Board.

One of the first projects involved monitoring Ammon Bundy's far-right group People's Rights. I also cross-referenced members of other online far-right groups with those involved in People's Rights. This allowed IREHR to pinpoint and track members planning marches, attacks, and other potentially violent activities. This is the project that subsequently inspired my final project for BCSH in which I interviewed Chuck and Devin Burghart, a board member for IREHR, on the age of hate on the internet. I.E.:

- (Assuming one of the primary changes to hate which the internet promotes is its accessibility to the public) In your experience, how has the increased accessibility of hate changed the demographics of the populations and groups you keep tabs on?
- What is harder about tracking hate on the internet? What has become easier?
- Are you worried about being surveyed yourselves?

Their answers were quite nuanced as we explored the potential counterproductivity of suppressing expressions of hate online, the insufficiency of de-platforming, the very framing of

“hate” groups creating artificial distinctions, and eventually, the slow unraveling of the social fabric which holds American society together.

Another project that lasted until the end of my internship was the Sheriffs Project, in which I was granted access to IREHR’s database of sheriffs across the country that had been involved in some way or another with far-right extremism or white-supremacist groups. My task was to research which sheriffs were still in office and collect recent news about them. The project took the research skills I had honed throughout my final year at Bard and applied them to real-time data to hold our police accountable. Chuck extended my internship to include helping to write the final paper on the data we collected and be credited in its publication.

Though this is simply a quick summary of my internship experience, I cannot speak highly enough of IREHR and the work they do. This internship was more than simply fetching coffee and printing handouts (in part due to its remote nature), but allowed me to gain truly valuable practice rooted in our American reality. Despite the sometimes depressing theme to hate studies, Chuck and Devin left me feeling more empowered and capable to affect the paradigm in which our society exists today.