

Illinois white supremacist leads rally as police keep demonstrators at bay

Chicago Tribune - January 13, 2002

Author: Items compiled from Tribune news services.

Witnesses reported minor confrontations Saturday as police kept hundreds of protesters at bay during a rally by white supremacists.

White supremacist Matthew Hale of East Peoria, Ill., spoke to about 70 supporters at a library as police tried to maintain order outside. Police said 25 people were arrested, mostly for disorderly conduct, and several guns were confiscated.

Hale's group, the World Church of the Creator, has been accused of helping shape the racist beliefs of Benjamin Smith, who in 1999 killed two people and wounded nine in Illinois and Indiana before killing himself. His victims were Jewish, black or Asian.

Hale has said he picked York, a racially mixed city of 41,000 in central Pennsylvania, for his appearance because of its high profile in race relations and because the state has been a hotbed of racial division.

The city's former mayor was among nine white men charged last year in the 1969 slaying of a black woman after riots erupted because of a shooting.

Caption: PHOTO

PHOTO: Matthew Hale of Illinois, who leads a white supremacist group, speaks to supporters Saturday at a library in York, Pa. AP photo by Bill Kalina.

Edition: Chicagoland Final

Section: News

Page: 11

Column: ACROSS THE NATION.

Index Terms: PENNSYLVANIA ; GROUP ; VIOLENCE ; DISCRIMINATION

Dateline: YORK, PENNSYLVANIA

Record Number: CTR0201130518

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