WHAT IS HATE?

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This page provides an introduction to many of the types of hate that exist on the web.

**INTRODUCTION**

The Anti-Defamation League (ADL) is very concerned about the increase of anti-Semitic and racist material on the Internet. Children who explore the Internet, whether visiting Web sites, reading E-mail messages, or conversing in chat rooms, run the risk of encountering hate propaganda. Many hate groups specifically target the young, and hateful messages can deeply influence and affect our children.

Practically and legally, combating online extremism is enormously difficult. The First Amendment's protection of free speech shields most extremist propaganda, and Internet Service Providers, the private companies that host most extremist sites, may freely choose whether to house these sites or not. When providers choose not to host hateful sites, these sites migrate easily to the computers of services without such restrictions. Furthermore, the size of the Web, which contains hundreds of millions of distinct pages, complicates efforts to identify extremist material. Hundreds if not thousands of Web pages, some of which are not listed by search engines, contain bomb-making formulas.

The following is an introduction to the many types of hate that exist on the web and gives insight into the differing varieties of hate.

**INTERNET HATE**

Internet Hate describes the rapidly expanding practice utilized by racists and extremists to place anti-Semitic, racist, and other hateful material on the World Wide Web. The growth of the Internet has enabled bigoted and sometimes violent messages to reach a much wider and broader audience than ever before. Consequently, these messages of hate have become widely accessible online - in homes, offices, schools, and libraries.

For years extremists have used printing of every kind -- books, pamphlets, posters, newspapers, magazines -- to get their message out. They have also tried to use modern inventions such as movies, radio, television, recorded audio and video tape and even telephone messages to spread their beliefs. So it is not surprising that they have decided to take their
hate to the Internet. The Internet lets them reach millions with a click of a mouse.

Haters use the World Wide Web with its colorful web pages, sounds, and images to push propaganda attacking their enemies. Some of these pages suggest that violent action is needed. Old lies are reprinted and new ones are created. Neo-Nazi Skinheads try to sell the latest CDs filled with calls for "racial holy war."

In newsgroups and chat rooms on Internet Relay Chat (IRC) they can talk to one another. They also can try to peddle their racist and anti-Semitic messages to anyone who surfs in. In addition, they can write private e-mail to the people they meet on line.

People who had only heard about such ideas can now read them up-close and personal. Pictures of burning crosses, claims that groups with a particular skin color or religion are inferior, the assertion that others are out to control the world - this is the stuff of hate group propaganda. Haters used to reach relatively few people. Today, on the Internet, they can reach a very large audience with little effort and money.

It is fairly easy to create a simple Web page. Many bigots have. They often try to create the false impression that many people are involved in their activities. This frightens their targets and encourages supporters. The number of racists and anti-Semites is small compared to the rest of the population; in addition, they are fairly spread out. Yet, on the Internet, they can find people who think like them, which strengthens their beliefs and makes them feel less isolate.

Because extremists on the Internet can hide their real identity behind screen names and addresses (like anyone else), they feel free to attack those they hate. They realize there is no way for anyone to know who they are.

**ANTI-SEMITISM**

The belief or behavior hostile toward Jews just because they are Jewish. It may take the form of religious teachings that proclaim the inferiority of Jews, for instance, or political efforts to isolate, oppress, or otherwise injure them. It may also include prejudiced or stereotyped views about Jews.

Hostility toward Jews dates to ancient times, perhaps to the beginning of Jewish history. From the days of the Bible until the Roman Empire, Jews were criticized and sometimes punished for their efforts to remain a separate social and religious group - one that refused to adopt the values and the way of life of the non-Jewish societies in which it lived.

The rise of Christianity greatly increased hatred of Jews. They became seen not merely as outsiders but as a people who rejected Jesus and crucified him - despite the fact that the Roman authorities ordered and carried out the crucifixion. By the high middle ages (11th - 14th centuries), Jews were widely persecuted as barely human "Christ-killers" and "Devils." Forced to live in all-Jewish ghettos, they were accused of poisoning rivers and wells during times of disease. Some were tortured and executed for supposedly abducting and killing Christian children to drink their blood or to use it in
baking matzoh - a charge known as the "blood libel." A large number were forced to convert to Christianity to avoid death, torture, or expulsion, though many secretly practiced Judaism after their conversions. (In recent times, the Catholic church and other Christian churches have rejected these anti-Semitic falsehoods.)

In the 18th century, as the influence of Christianity began to lessen during the Enlightenment - which celebrated the rights and possibilities of men and women to a far greater extent than ever before - religiously based hatred of Jewishness gave way to non-religious criticism: Judaism was attacked as an outdated belief that blocked human progress. Jewish separatism was again targeted. As European countries began to take modern shape in the 19th century and national pride grew, Jews, who were still usually deprived of civil rights and lived throughout Europe as outsiders, were subjected to further hostility. This hostility resulted at times in deadly persecution, as in the late-19th century Russian pogroms -- violent attacks on Jewish communities with the aid or indifference of the government.

At the same time, in response to the decline of Christian belief and the growing number of Jews beginning to join the mainstream of European society (a trend known as "assimilation"), anti-Semites turned to the new "racial science," an attempt, since discredited, by various scientists and writers to "prove" the supremacy of non-Jewish whites. The opponents of Jews argued that Jewishness was not a religion but a racial category, and that the Jewish "race" was biologically inferior.

The belief in a Jewish race would later become Germany's justification for seeking to kill every Jewish person in lands Germany occupied during World War II, whether the person practiced Judaism or not. In fact, even the children or grandchildren of those who had converted to Christianity were murdered as members of the Jewish race. The Holocaust, as this systematic mass extermination between 1939-1945 is known, resulted in the death of six million Jews -- more than a third of the world's Jewish population. While the rise to power of the Nazis (Germany's leaders during World War II) in the 1920s and 1930s involved numerous social and political factors, the views that helped turn anti-Semitism into official government policy included belief in the inborn superiority of "Aryans," or whites; belief that Jews destroyed societies; that Jews secretly worked together to gain control of the world; and that Jews already controlled world finance, business, media, entertainment, and Communism.

In the half-century since World War II, public anti-Semitism has become much less frequent in the Western world. While stereotypes about Jews remain common, Jews face little physical danger. The hatred of Jewishness and the conspiracy beliefs of past eras are for the most part shared only by tiny numbers of those on the fringes of society (although as the World Trade Center and Oklahoma bombings showed, even a handful of extremists can carry out acts of great violence). There are exceptions, of course: disagreement over policy toward the State of Israel has created opportunities in which the expression "Zionist" - support for Israel as the Jewish homeland - is often used as an anti-Semitic code word for "Jew" in mainstream debate. Holocaust denial and other recent re-writings of history - such as the false claim that Jews controlled the Atlantic slave trade - lie about the events of the past in order to make Jews seem underhanded and evil.

More seriously, many nations in Europe and in the former Soviet empire are struggling, mostly due to unsettled or chaotic economic and social conditions, with movements opposing "foreigners" - including recent immigrants and traditional enemies. These movements champion racial or national supremacy, and call for the type of charismatic, authoritarian leader that historically persecuted Jews and other minorities.
But while parts of Europe remain caught up in racial unrest, the Middle East is home to the harshest anti-Semitism in the world today. Nazi-like language is regularly expressed by the media and governments in the countries that oppose Israel and the West. And as dozens and dozens of terrorist incidents have demonstrated, there are many in Middle Eastern countries willing to act on these beliefs.

RACISM

Racism is the belief that a particular race is superior or inferior to another, that a person's social and moral traits are predetermined by his or her inborn biological characteristics. Racial separatism is the belief, most of the time based on racism, that different races should remain segregated and apart from one another.

Racism has existed throughout human history. It may be defined as the hatred of one person by another -- or the belief that another person is less than human -- because of skin color, language, customs, place of birth or any factor that supposedly reveals the basic nature of that person. It has influenced wars, slavery, the formation of nations, and legal codes.

During the past 500-1000 years, racism on the part of Western powers toward non-Westerners has had a far more significant impact on history than any other form of racism (such as racism among Western groups or among Easterners, such as Asians, Africans, and others). The most notorious example of racism by the West has been slavery, particularly the enslavement of Africans in the New World (slavery itself dates back thousands of years). This enslavement was accomplished because of the racist belief that Black Africans were less fully human than white Europeans and their descendants.

This belief was not "automatic": that is, Africans were not originally considered inferior. When Portuguese sailors first explored Africa in the 15th and 16th centuries, they came upon empires and cities as advanced as their own, and they considered Africans to be serious rivals. Over time, though, as African civilizations failed to match the technological advances of Europe, and the major European powers began to plunder the continent and forcibly remove its inhabitants to work as slave laborers in new colonies across the Atlantic, Africans came to be seen as a deficient "species," as "savages." To an important extent, this view was necessary to justify the slave trade at a time when Western culture had begun to promote individual rights and human equality. The willingness of some Africans to sell other Africans to European slave traders also led to claims of savagery, based on the false belief that the "dark people" were all kinsmen, all part of one society - as opposed to many different, sometimes warring nations.

One important feature of racism, especially toward Blacks and immigrant groups, is clear in attitudes regarding slaves and slavery. Jews are usually seen by anti-Semites as subhuman but also superhuman: devilishly cunning, skilled, and powerful. Blacks and others are seen by racists as merely subhuman, more like beasts than men. If the focus of anti-Semitism is evil, the focus of racism is inferiority -- directed toward those who have sometimes been considered to lack even the ability to be evil (though in the 20th century, especially, victims of racism are often considered morally degraded).
In the second half of the 19th century, Darwinism, the decline of Christian belief, and growing immigration were all perceived by many white Westerners as a threat to their cultural control. European and, to a lesser degree, American scientists and philosophers devised a false racial "science" to "prove" the supremacy of non-Jewish whites. While the Nazi annihilation of Jews discredited most of these supposedly scientific efforts to elevate one race over another, small numbers of scientists and social scientists have continued throughout the 20th century to argue the inborn shortcomings of certain races, especially Blacks. At the same time, some public figures in the American Black community have championed the supremacy of their own race and the inferiority of whites - using nearly the identical language of white racists.

All of these arguments are based on a false understanding of race; in fact, contemporary scientists are not agreed on whether race is a valid way to classify people. What may seem to be significant "racial" differences to some people - skin color, hair, facial shape - are not of much scientific significance. In fact, genetic differences within a so-called race may be greater than those between races. One philosopher writes: "There are few genetic characteristics to be found in the population of England that are not found in similar proportions in Zaire or in China....those differences that most deeply affect us in our dealings with each other are not to any significant degree biologically determined."

**HOLOCAUST DENIAL**

Holocaust Denial is an Anti-Semitic propaganda movement active in the United States, Canada, and Western Europe that seeks to deny the reality of the Nazi regime's systematic mass murder of six million Jews during World War II. It generally depicts historical accounts of this genocide as propaganda, generated by a Jewish, or "Zionist," conspiracy.

One of the most notable anti-Semitic movements to develop over the past two decades has been an organized effort to deny the established history of Nazi Germany's extermination of six million Jews during the Holocaust. In the United States the movement has been known in recent years primarily through the publication of advertisements in college campus newspapers. The first of these ads claimed to call for "open debate on the Holocaust." While discussion of historical events is certainly useful and educational, "debating" the Holocaust would be like debating whether American colonists even, in fact, fought for independence from England in 1776. Another ad questioned the authenticity of the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, D.C. These ads have been published in several dozen student newspapers on campuses across the country.

Similar examples of such propaganda have begun to appear on the Internet as well. In addition to creating their own home pages, Holocaust deniers have sometimes crashed the sites of legitimate Holocaust and Jewish discussion groups in an effort to spread false information and harass Jews. In addition, Holocaust deniers have advertised their Web sites in classified ads in college and community newspapers.

These paid advertisements and Internet activities have appeared continuously since 1991. Though there is no evidence that they have persuaded large numbers of students to doubt the settled record of events which make up the Holocaust, the ads have sparked controversy between Jewish and non-Jewish students. In fact, this is exactly the goal of the Holocaust deniers.

By attacking the facts of the Holocaust and maintaining that their attack is merely an unorthodox point of view, Holocaust deniers demonstrate their subtle but hateful anti-Semitic beliefs. They try to spread the
view that Jews are only using the Holocaust to take advantage of non-Jewish guilt and that Jews control the media and academic world. Some of these beliefs, in fact, are similar to those which helped bring Hitler to power in Germany during the 1930s.

The roots of Holocaust denial - or Holocaust "revisionism," as its adherents refer to the movement - can be found in the language of the Nazis itself, which tried to hide acts of imprisonment, slave labor, and mass murder under euphemisms such as "relocation" and "The Final Solution." After World War II, former Nazis and their supporters similarly claimed that Hitler’s hatred of the Jews had been misinterpreted, and that the numerous confessions of Nazi leaders describing the genocide had been coerced by the Allies. This neo-Nazi movement also dismissed the testimony of survivors from the concentration camps as exaggeration and lies. Other political extremists in the 1960s and 1970s, such as radical anti-Israel groups or fringe conspiracy theorists, echoed the views of these right-wing anti-Semites.

As an organized movement, Holocaust denial began in 1979 with the founding of a group called the Institute for Historical Review (IHR). The IHR publishes a magazine (the Journal of Historical Review), holds conferences, and distributes a variety of anti-Jewish books - all devoted to the idea that Hitler’s record of atrocities is a fraud concocted by a powerful, secret conspiracy of Jews. Among those connected to the IHR is Bradley Smith, the man responsible for most of the Holocaust denial advertisements in college newspapers.

Many proponents of Holocaust denial claim that their propaganda has been misrepresented, and that they are victims of yet another conspiracy, also led by Jews, to suppress independent research. In making these claims, Holocaust deniers try to exploit the sympathy of most people, especially students, for academic debate and honest critical thinking. These arguments are dishonest, though, for three main reasons:

(1) Holocaust deniers reject all evidence and research that contradicts their views. Rather than promote honest research, these propagandists wish to challenge the historical record with their own views, which have no credibility.

(2) The "research" the deniers use comes to conclusions that are false. Among the untruths routinely promoted are the claims that no gas chambers existed at Auschwitz, that only 600,000 Jews were killed rather than six million, and that Hitler had no murderous intentions toward Jews or other groups persecuted by his government.

(3) Holocaust deniers conceal the true motivation for their propaganda. Though the deniers often try to assume a scholarly, reasonable tone in their public statements, in their more private newsletters, conferences, and e-mails they typically display hatred of Jews, admiration for Nazism, and contempt for free speech and democracy.

**NEO-NAZI SKINHEADS**

Neo-Nazi Skinheads can generally be recognized by their shaven heads and the Nazi symbols they wear on their clothing and have tattooed on their skin. Their threatening style of dress is just one way in which they express their violent hatred of Blacks, Jews, gays, and other minority groups. In recent years, Skinheads have become a dangerous force in cities across the United States and Europe. In the U.S., neo-Nazi
Skinheads have been responsible for up to 45 murders during the last two decades. Some even dream of starting a race war in this country.

The Skinhead movement began in the early 1970s in England, where gangs of menacing-looking, tattooed teenagers in combat boots started to hang out in the streets. Their original style of dress and behavior was meant to symbolize tough, patriotic, anti-immigrant, working-class attitudes. But slowly racist and neo-Nazi beliefs also started to become popular among many of these Skinhead groups. (Some Skinheads did not become racist, however, just as some are not today; in fact, some actively oppose racism.)

In the years that followed, the Skinhead movement began to spread from England to the rest of Europe and the United States. Today, racist Skinheads are active in 33 countries on 6 continents. The movement is especially strong in countries with high rates of immigration and unemployment. Its members almost always range in age from 13 to 25.

The Skinhead look is easily recognizable: a shaved head or very short hair; jeans; thin suspenders; combat boots or Doc Martens; a bomber jacket, sometimes with Nazi symbols sewn on; and tattoos of Nazi-like emblems. The average neo-Nazi gang ranges in size from fewer than ten to several dozen members. While their look is important to them, being a Skinhead is not just a way to dress - it is an entire way of life. The Skinheads glorify Adolf Hitler and dedicate themselves to fulfilling his dream of a world run by Aryan, or white, people.

The Skinheads' neo-Nazi ideology and gang lifestyle give them a sense of power, belonging, and superiority over others, often in troubled environments and at an age when they are trying to find their place in their world. It also creates an atmosphere in which violence is the norm. In the United States, Skinheads have demonstrated their willingness to attack or even kill for their cause: they are responsible for as many as 45 murders of racial minorities, homosexuals and even other skinheads. Wherever their gangs have surfaced, hateful crimes have followed. The new young faces and raw energy of the Skinheads provide a boost to the organized hate movement in America.

**KU KLUX KLAN**

Originally founded at the end of the Civil War, the Ku Klux Klan is a white supremacist group that uses violence and intimidation in order to reassert white domination in the United States. The Klan's attacks have been directed at Blacks, Jews, Catholics, immigrants and other minority groups. It has long been notorious for its use of white robes and hoods, and the burning of large crosses at its gatherings.

The Ku Klux Klan is perhaps the most famous of all hate groups in America. Even without extensive knowledge of its history or views, many Americans recognize the unmistakable symbols of the KKK -- the robe, the hood, and the burning cross.

Although there have always been different branches of the KKK, all of them have held a common goal: to maintain the supremacy of the white race over Black Americans. While membership in the Klan has risen and fallen during its 130 year history, the scope of its hatred has expanded, adding Jews, Catholics, homosexuals, and immigrants.
The KKK was born on Christmas Eve, 1865, when six Confederate soldiers, just out of uniform, met in Pulaski, Tennessee, to form a secret fraternal order. Deriving its name from the Greek word "kuklos" (circle), the organization was originally social in nature. Soon, however, the group began terrorizing Blacks by raiding their homes at night while wearing white sheets (their horses were sometimes clad in sheets as well).

While the Klan grew larger, it was hurt by fighting between competing factions, financial troubles, and congressional and legal investigations. In the 1870s, the KKK was all but destroyed.

However, after more than 40 years of inactivity, the "Invisible Empire," as the Klan called itself, rose again in the autumn of 1915. Within a decade, the movement had reached the height of its power: no longer merely a southern organization, it became a national phenomenon. Several prominent politicians, including governors, senators, and congressmen were active Klan leaders. Overall Klan membership reached between four and five million during this period (mid-1920s).

However, the Klan experienced another round of internal disputes, financial gaffes, and legal probes, and its membership and influence dropped significantly until the mid-1950s.

Spurred on by racial desegregation and the start of the civil rights struggle, Klan activity was on the rise again by 1956, with units springing up in several states. The group terrified Blacks and white civil rights workers with cross burnings, beatings, bombings, death threats, even murder.

Klan membership has been in steady decline since the mid-eighties. The combined membership of all Klans today, including splinter groups, is 2500-3000, due largely to disputes among Klan leaders, its failure to recruit younger extremists, strong law enforcement, and litigation brought by civil rights groups that has bankrupted Klan treasuries.

IDENTITY CHURCH MOVEMENT

Identity churches use Christianity to justify racism and anti-Semitism; they became widely-known as a violence-prone movement in the United States in the late 1970’s and early 1980’s. Identity followers believe that white Anglo-Saxons - not Jews - are the real Biblical “Chosen People;” that Jews are descendants of a sexual union between Eve and Satan; that the white race is superior to others, and that Blacks and other nonwhite races are “mud people” on the same level as animals, and therefore have no souls.

The Identity Church movement promotes the view that Christianity, when properly understood, supports anti-Semitic and racist beliefs and extremist violence. In actuality, of course, the Identity version of Christianity completely distorts traditional Christian teachings. In 1987, the National Council of Churches, the leading organization representing mainline Christians, forcefully rejected all of the Identity movement’s teachings.
Identity has its roots in a belief called Anglo-Israelism, which arose in England in the late 1800s. Anglo-Israelites believed that white Anglo-Saxons were descended from the Ten Lost Tribes of Israel, who were exiled by invaders in biblical times. According to Anglo-Israel doctrine, England and the United States were the true Israel of the Bible - the lands in which biblical promises to the "Chosen People," Anglo-Saxons, were to be fulfilled.

Identity leaders hope that if hate and bigotry are presented as religion more people will listen and accept at least some of these beliefs. In the United States Identity groups have even tried to convince the government that they are actually "churches," and therefore deserve the tax benefits and respectability that true religious organizations receive.

Any examination of the activities of Identity Church followers would quickly reveal their true nature. In 1983 and 1984 members of a group called The Order committed a series of violent crimes, including murder, bombing, and armed robbery in support of their extremist views. This group closely followed Identity teachings and attended Identity churches (most of which celebrate Hitler as a prophet or even messiah). According to the testimony of one member of the group, "the end goal, bluntly, was the annihilation of the Jewish race.”

Most recently, the Identity movement's bitter racist ideology and anti-Semitic philosophy has linked together an assorted collection of extremist groups. Organizations ranging from the neo-Nazi National Alliance to some militia groups have embraced Christian Identity beliefs. These racists have all found the Identity Church's views helpful in promoting and defending their violent and hateful ideas and actions.

**NATION OF ISLAM**

Minister Louis Farrakhan has led the Nation of Islam, a Black Muslim sect, for the past twenty years. He and his followers have expressed prejudice against whites, Catholics, the United States, and homosexuals, but their most extreme statements are directed at Jews. Farrakhan has said that whites are "blue eyed devils," that Jews are "bloodsuckers," that Jews controlled the slave trade, and currently control the government, the media, and various Black individuals and organizations. The group's newspaper The Final Call promotes anti-Semitic literature and an anti-white statement of beliefs called "The Muslim Program.”

Minister Louis Farrakhan has been the leader of the Nation of Islam for the past twenty years. Elijah Muhammad founded this American Black Muslim group during the 1930s, teaching that Allah (God) had appeared to him in human form and appointed him as a special prophet.

Muhammad died at the age of 77 in 1975 -- by which time he had built a following of half a million. His son, Wallace Deen Muhammad, inherited the leadership: he changed the organization's name and turned it toward Orthodox Islam and cooperation with whites. In response, Farrakhan formed a separate group - the Nation of Islam -- which upheld Elijah Muhammad’s original beliefs. These beliefs range from the creation of whites by an evil Black scientist to the "The Great Decisive Battle in the Sky," in which a space ship will bomb the earth, destroying white people and bringing in a new world. Muhammad also believed in racial separation and announced that America was for Blacks only -- white people should go back to Europe.
Farrakhan came into public view in 1984, during Jesse Jackson’s presidential campaign. Farrakhan endorsed Jackson’s candidacy and encouraged his followers to do the same, ending NOI’s policy of non-involvement in American politics (Jackson has criticized the bigotry expressed by Farrakhan).

Farrakhan’s participation in the campaign attracted a lot of attention, mostly concerning his anti-Semitic and racist statements. During this time he stated: "...the Jews don’t like Farrakhan, so they call me Hitler. Well, that’s a good name. Hitler was a very great man..." In 1985, Farrakhan said of whites, "It is an act of mercy to white people that we end your world...We must end your world and bring in a new world." Attacking Black leaders he considered "traitors," he said, "we will tar and feather them, we will hang them from the highest limb, we will chop off their heads, and roll them down the street.”

Farrakhan continues to consider Jews to be "bloodsuckers" who control the media, the government, and Black individuals and politicians. Farrakhan asked in 1993, "Who controls black arts? Who controls Black sports figures? Who controls black intellectuals, black politicians....?" He has also said of the Holocaust: "German Jews financed Hitler right here in America... Little Jews [were] being turned into soap while big Jews washed themselves with it."

The Final Call, the Nation of Islam’s weekly paper, often advertises anti-Semitic books for purchase, such as the NOI publication, The Secret Relationship Between Blacks and Jews (alleging Jewish control of the slave trade). NOI members at speeches and events are often found selling this book and others, including the famous anti-Semitic forgery, The Protocols of the Learned Elders of Zion.

Farrakhan also supports and has met with leaders of such anti-democratic nations as Libya, Iraq, and Sudan - as he did on his 1997-98 "World Friendship Tour." Upon arrival in these countries, Farrakhan has denounced the U.S. government and its policies.

**HOMOPHOBIA**

Homophobia is the hatred or fear of homosexuals - that is, lesbians and gay men - sometimes leading to acts of violence and expressions of hostility. Homophobia is not confined to any one segment of society, and can be found in people from all walks of life. Organized hate groups have viciously attacked homosexuals and have used especially violent language in attempting to persecute and intimidate them.

Discrimination against homosexuals comes in many forms. At times homophobic beliefs lead people toward prejudiced actions at work, at schools, at clubs and in many other areas as well. Prejudiced views directed at homosexuals often stem from the perception that homosexual activity is immoral. Homophobia makes some people think that they are superior to homosexuals. In fact, studies show that anti-gay bias is far more accepted among large numbers of Americans than is bias against other minorities.

Many researchers claim that homosexuals still find themselves the target of bias within institutions like churches and professional organizations. Many church and religious groups maintain that homosexual behavior is a sin and runs counter to the will of God as expressed in certain Biblical passages. Up until 1980, many psychiatrists still looked upon homosexuality as a mental disorder. Today, medical professionals believe that homosexuality is not an illness, mental disorder or emotional problem.
Homophobia is most dangerous when it serves as the justification for violent action against homosexuals. In recent years attacks on homosexuals have risen. While the violent crime rate in many areas continues to drop, anti-gay crime is moving in the other direction. What is most disturbing is the cruelty and viciousness of many of these attacks.

The severity of many of these crimes helps to show the strong hatred that homophobia can create.

Many conservative religious leaders have, at some point, spoken out against the gay community and warned of the danger they supposedly pose to America. 700 Club television host Pat Robertson said that, "Many of those people involved in Adolf Hitler were Satanists, many of them were homosexuals - the two things seem to go together." Former Congressman William Dannemeyer also compared homosexuals to Nazis when he wrote that "the homosexual blitzkrieg has been better planned than Hitler's..." Clearly, it is ridiculous to compare homosexuals in America to Germany's Nazi government which believed in warfare and mass murder as a means for taking over the world.

Apart from these views, many violent extremist groups also hold homophobic beliefs. The neo-Nazi National Alliance has allegedly been involved in anti-gay violence, while racist skinheads around the country have attacked and beaten homosexuals.