

A Snapshot of Hate



Joseph Goebbels, Hitler's Minister of Propaganda, anchoring one of his infamous broadcasts.

Hate on the Airwaves

Using mass media to spread ugly messages is hardly a new idea. Hate leaders have long used the latest technology to deliver their rants to the public.

From 1933 to 1945, Nazi Minister of Propaganda Joseph Goebbels used radio to incite German opinion against the Jews. His nightly broadcasts featured jazz tunes with anti-Semitic lyrics and fake news reports about evil Jewish "conspiracies." Goebbels's programs were remarkably effective shapers of public opinion. "I cannot convince a person," he once said, "unless I get to know the soul of that person, unless I understand how to pluck the string in the harp of his soul."

Radio's power was heard again in 1994 in the African nation of Rwanda. As that nation's ethnic Hutu majority slaughtered more than 800,000 members of the Tutsi minority, the government radio station mixed pop songs with calls to "finish off the Tutsi cockroaches," even broadcasting the names of Tutsis who were to be murdered.

Today's technology is light-years ahead of radio. But for hate groups, the strategy is the same. "A clever use of the media can make even the most evil message seem reasonable," says Mark Potok of the Southern Poverty Law Center. "The power to reach people's minds is an astonishing weapon."

— JOHN DI CONSIGLIO

The **BAD** news:

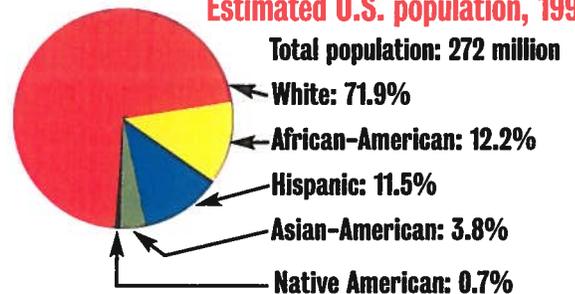
Thanks to recruiting success on the Internet and the popularity of its underground rock music with some teens, organized hate groups may be on the rise in the United States.

The **GOOD** news:

Thanks to better monitoring, tougher prosecution and louder opposition, those groups are having a harder time operating in secret. Here's a look at some key statistics on hate in America:

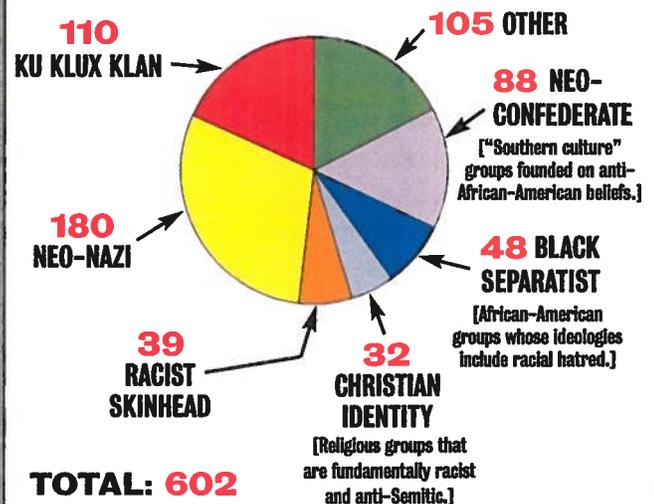
Who ARE Americans?

Estimated U.S. population, 1999:



? Do you think America's diversity should lead to more hate or more tolerance? Why?

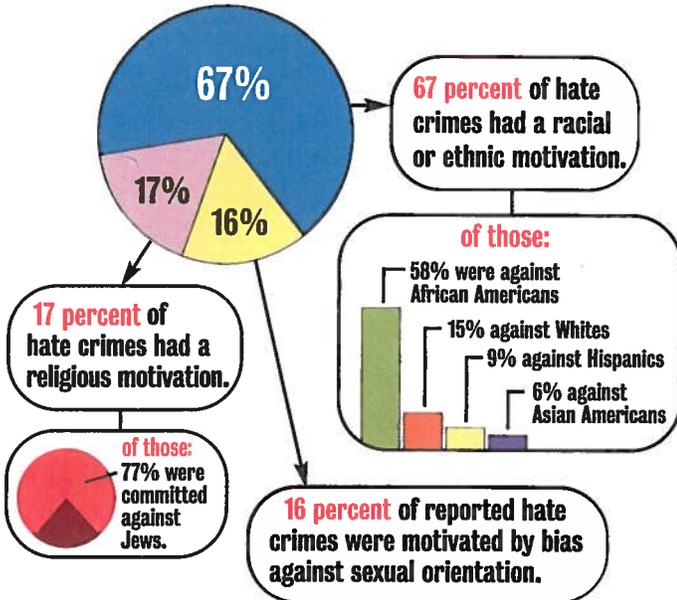
Known **HATE** groups operating in the U. S., 2000:



? Do the KKK and neo-Nazi groups make up more or less than half of all hate groups?

Who ARE THE victims?

Reported hate crimes by victim, 1999:



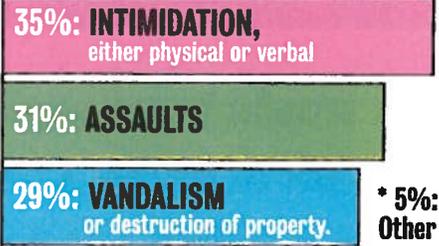
? Rank whites, African Americans, Jews, and homosexuals by the rate at which they are victimized by hate crimes. What categories of hate crimes might also have been included in the graph? Anti-hate watchdog groups believe that many more hate crimes go unreported. Why might that be?

ANSWER: AFRICAN AMERICANS, HOMOSEXUALS, JEWS, WHITES.

SOURCE: 1998 FBI HATE CRIMES REPORT

What ARE THE crimes?

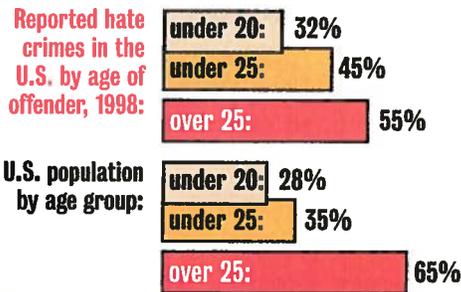
HATE CRIMES BY OFFENSE, 1999:



17 people were killed in hate crimes in 1999. Racial/ethnic bias motivated 12 of the murders.

SOURCE: 1998 FBI HATE CRIMES REPORT

Ages of HATE

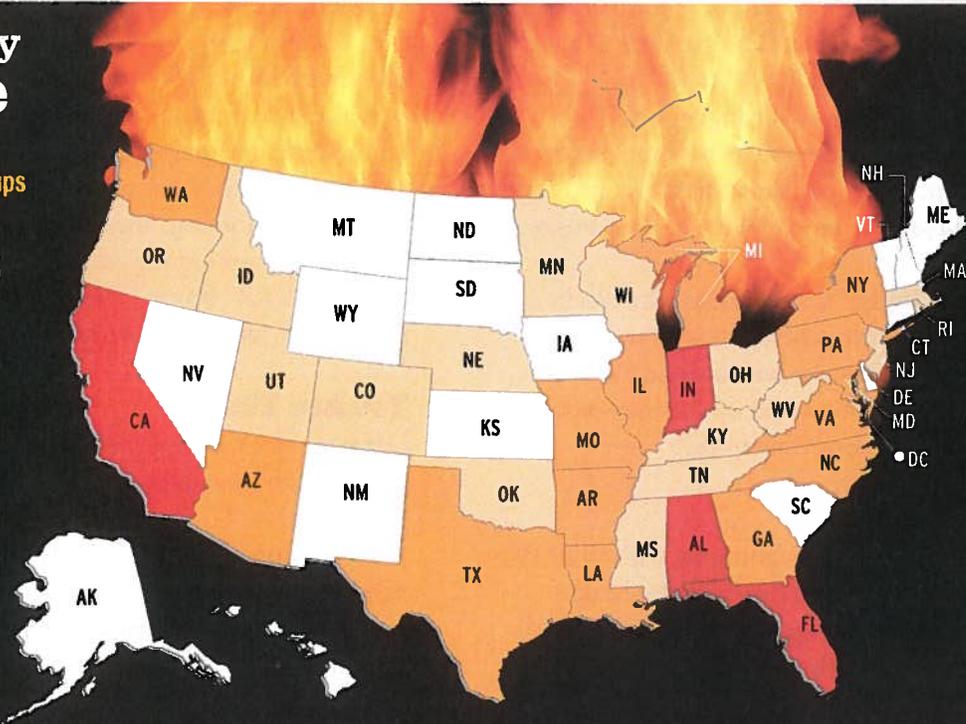


? Do young people commit more or fewer hate crimes than you would expect, given their population? Why might that be?

SOURCE: 1998 FBI HATE CRIMES REPORT; U.S. CENSUS BUREAU

HATE by State

The number of known hate groups in each state:



? Are you surprised by the category your state falls in? Why or why not? Do you think a complete count of hate groups is possible? Why or why not?

SOURCE: SOUTHERN POVERTY LAW CENTER

When Hate Happens

Every hour: Someone commits a hate crime somewhere in the United States.

Every day: Eight African Americans, three whites, three homosexuals, three Jews, and one Hispanic American become victims of hate crimes.

Every week: A cross is burned somewhere in the U.S.

SOURCE: SOUTHERN POVERTY LAW CENTER