The ideology of hate: Understanding the EFF's hatred of Whites

Credit: Written and compiled by Tony Stone

What are the 4 types of hate?

Philosophical and psychological frameworks generally categorize hate into four primary types based on its origins, targets, and intent. Understanding these distinctions helps identify why and how hostile emotions develop.

The four distinct types of hate include:



- **Normative hate:** Directed at individuals or groups who violate established social rules, moral codes, or trusted behaviours. This is driven by a reaction against those who breach expected norms or community standards.
- **Ideological hate:** Deep-seated hostility stemming from opposing belief systems, politics, or cultural views. It targets entire groups perceived as threats to one's own in-group, way of life, or core ideologies
- **Retributive hate:** A targeted, revenge-driven hostility directed at specific individuals who have caused personal injury, betrayal, or harm to the person doing the hating.
- **Malicious hate:** Hostility stemming from envy, resentment, or a sense of inferiority. This occurs when someone hates another individual out of spite, typically because the other person possesses a desirable trait, skill, or success.

For a broader, sociological look at how these feelings can escalate into harmful actions, the Anti-Defamation League outlines how unchecked bias escalates into discrimination and violence. Hate does not have a single biological or psychological origin; rather, it is a complex, learned response rooted in the following core pillars:

- **Fear and perceived threat:** Humans instinctively group people into "in-groups" (people like us) and "out-groups". When an out-group is perceived as a threat to a person's survival, values, or resources, fear can quickly transform into aggression and hate.
- **Issues of power and control:** Hate often stems from the desire to dominate or marginalize others. Throughout history and in various societies, hateful ideologies have been used by certain groups to maintain systemic dominance or to scapegoat others during times of crisis.
- **Projection of insecurity:** Psychologically, people often project their own unacknowledged flaws, shortcomings, or fears onto a targeted group. By hating others, individuals attempt to elevate their own self-worth and distance themselves from their internal fears.
- **Social conditioning:** Unlike primary emotions like basic fear or joy, hate is a learned behavior. It is shaped by cultural environments, upbringing, and systemic propaganda that teaches individuals to devalue or fear specific characteristics or beliefs.

Because hate is learned rather than instinctive, it can be unlearned through education, exposure to diverse perspectives, and empathy-building.

An "ideology of hate" refers to organized systems of belief that justify the dehumanization, discrimination, or violence against specific groups based on characteristics like race, religion, or orientation. These ideologies operate by dividing the world into a hostile "us versus them," exploiting societal fears, and institutionalizing prejudice to maintain power.

How ideologies of hate function

- **Dehumanization:** Stripping the "other" of their humanity to make discrimination or violence morally acceptable to followers.
- **Scapegoating:** Blaming a marginalized group for complex societal, economic, or political crises.
- **Us versus them mentality:** Cultivating an in-group identity based on superiority and an out-group identity viewed as an existential threat.

Common frameworks and drivers

1. **White/Black racism and supremacy:** Belief systems asserting the inherent superiority of one racial group, historically used to justify slavery, segregation, and systemic oppression.

   Supremacy is the belief or socio-political system that posits white people are naturally superior to other races and should therefore dominate society, its institutions, and its culture. It manifests on multiple levels, ranging from overt hate groups to systemic inequalities.

   Here are a few examples across different contexts:
   Extremist ideology: Groups like the Ku Klux Klan and Neo-Nazis openly advocate for racial segregation or the eradication of minority groups, sometimes acting through targeted violence and hate speech.

Systemic and legal oppression: Historical systems of institutional control—such as Apartheid in South Africa or Jim Crow laws in the United States—legally restricted where people of color could live, work, and attend school, strictly enforcing white political and economic dominance.

Cultural and social normalcy: Sometimes referred to as white supremacy culture, this involves the subtle normalization of white, Eurocentric standards as the "default" or "ideal" in society. This can appear as the underrepresentation of non-white histories in education, or societal biases where lighter-skinned individuals receive preferential treatment in hiring or the justice system.

Understanding these different scales helps identify how supremacist ideologies shape societies, both overtly and covertly.

2. **Xenophobia and antisemitism:** Deep-seated prejudice and hostility directed toward Jewish people or foreigners, often driven by conspiracy theories and fear of the unfamiliar.

Xenophobia and antisemitism are both forms of prejudice, but they target different aspects of a person's identity.

Xenophobia is a broader term that refers to a deep-rooted, irrational fear, hatred, or mistrust of that which is perceived to be foreign or strange. It typically targets immigrants, refugees, or people of different nationalities and cultural backgrounds. Protesters physically blocking asylum seekers or immigrants from entering a newly established local shelter or community. Publicly stating that immigrants are "stealing our jobs" or bringing disease and crime into the country without any factual evidence. A business owner refusing to hire a qualified applicant simply because they have a foreign-sounding name or an accent.

Antisemitism refers specifically to prejudice, hatred, or discrimination directed against Jewish people. It can manifest in religious, cultural, or racial forms. Example of an Action: Painting a swastika or antisemitic slurs on the wall of a synagogue, a Jewish community centre, or a visibly Jewish person's home. Promoting conspiracy theories that Jewish people possess secret power and control global banking, the media, or governments. Passing over a qualified Jewish employee for a promotion because a manager assumes they "will not work on Saturdays" due to the Sabbath.

3. **Extremist nationalism:** Hyper-nationalism that frames minority groups or neighbouring populations as internal enemies undermining the state.

Extremist nationalism—often referred to as ultranationalism—is an ideology that promotes absolute devotion to one's own nation, race, or cultural group while actively excluding, marginalizing, or showing hostility toward perceived "outsiders." It prioritizes the perceived interests of the dominant group above all human rights, democratic norms, and international laws, and frequently uses intimidation or violence to achieve its goals.

Specific historical and modern manifestations highlight how this ideology operates in practice:

1. Nationalism and supremacy: This ideology asserts that a specific race is superior and that the nation exists to serve that race exclusively. It often aims to create a segregated, race-based state. Groups operating under this ideology, such as Neo-Nazi networks, target minority communities, immigrants, and progressive institutions. It has historically incited severe violence, including acts of mass terrorism.

2. Radical religious-nationalist movements: Some movements merge extreme nationalist goals with a strict, fundamentalist interpretation of religion, claiming that a nation must be cleansed of secularism and different faiths to achieve its true potential. Various ideologically motivated groups worldwide have used violence and terrorism to establish states governed entirely by their specific interpretation of religious law, seeking to forcibly displace or eliminate opposition.

3. **Expansionist Ultranationalism**: This extreme form of nationalism goes beyond the desire to protect a nation's culture or borders and argues that the state has the right to expand its territory to encompass a greater historic or biological homeland, often through warfare and conquest. State-sponsored militarism and imperial ambitions have driven devastating global conflicts throughout history, justifying the invasion of foreign territories and the subjugation of other populations in the name of national glory.

Common Traits: Regardless of the specific group, extremist nationalism consistently relies on:

- **Scapegoating**: Blaming minority groups, immigrants, or political enemies for the nation's social or economic problems.
- **Rejection of democracy**: Operating outside of lawful, democratic processes or actively attempting to overthrow democratic institutions.

- **Glorification of violence**: Viewing force and intimidation not as crimes, but as necessary tools for achieving national supremacy or "purifying" the nation.

You can explore these themes further through the Institute for Economics and Peace analysis or academic definitions compiled by the United Nations Development Programme on preventing violent extremism.



According to psychoanalytical research like that detailed on Project MUSE, hate can serve as a defence mechanism against anxieties caused by proximity, dependency, or a loss of social control. Hatred and bias are typically socialized, often passed down through families, media, peer groups, or political rhetoric rather than being innate.

Societal Response

Understanding and dismantling these ideologies requires recognizing them not just as private opinions, but as constructed narratives that legitimize social exclusion. Resources and frameworks for countering hate speech and protecting human rights are actively maintained by global organizations like the United Nations Human Rights Office

Various individuals, political figures, and vigilante groups have faced legal action or public condemnation in South Africa for promoting hate speech and inciting violence. These incidents frequently divide along the lines of racial animosity, xenophobia, and political intolerance. Prominent groups and incidents include:

1. Political figures and controversial statements

Political leaders (Julius Malema) have repeatedly faced Equality Court and South African Human Rights Commission (SAHRC) complaints for inflammatory rhetoric. This includes public singing of the song "Kiss the Boer" (referencing historical white farmers) and targeted remarks directed at various demographic groups. Courts have previously defined similar lyrics as hate speech.

Former leadership, such as Andile Mngxitama of Black First Land First (BLF), drew national outrage and SAHRC investigations for racially polarizing statements, including urging supporters to take retaliatory, violent actions against white citizens, and their pets.

Individuals like Velaphi Khumalo and Nhlamulo (Nota) Baloyi were found guilty of hate speech by the Equality Court after comparing the purging of white people to Hitler's treatment of Jewish people.

2.Xenophobic and anti-immigration rhetoric

Anti-immigrant (Operation Dudula, March and March, Action4SA) sentiments have been heavily promoted by various civic movements and vigilante groups. These organizations are frequently cited by human rights groups for using scapegoating, intimidation, and violence to target foreign nationals residing in South Africa.

3.Religious and personal hate speech

Figures like Jon Qwelane and Oscar Bougardt have been subject to Equality Court interdicts and contempt of court prosecutions for sustained, harmful, and homophobic commentary.

South African law

Hate speech is recognized as a specific criminal offense in South Africa under the Prevention and Combating of Hate Crimes and Hate Speech Act. Making, publishing, or distributing statements that intentionally demonstrate a clear intention to be harmful, incite harm, or promote hatred based on protected characteristics is a criminal offense.

Race, gender, sex, sexual orientation, religion, culture, language, birth, disability are protected characteristics. First-time offenders face a fine or up to 3 years in prison (or both). Subsequent convictions carry a fine or up to 5 years in prison.

The National Prosecuting Authority (NPA) prosecutes hate speech under the Act. Simply sharing hateful social media posts can also be considered a criminal offense if you know it constitutes hate speech.

Victims can also pursue cases through the South African Human Rights Commission or the Equality Courts to seek damages, a retraction, or a public apology.

The law allows for freedom of expression and excludes acts done in good faith, such as academic/scientific inquiry, artistic creativity, and the fair and accurate reporting of public interest.

International law

Internationally, hate speech laws vary significantly. Strict Laws (e.g., UK, Germany, Canada), similar to South Africa, and many other countries, restrict and criminalize speech that incites hatred or violence against protected groups. However, the U.S. generally offers broad constitutional protections for hate speech. Under the First Amendment, speech cannot be criminalized simply because it is offensive or hateful, unless it constitutes direct incitement to imminent lawless action or "true threat

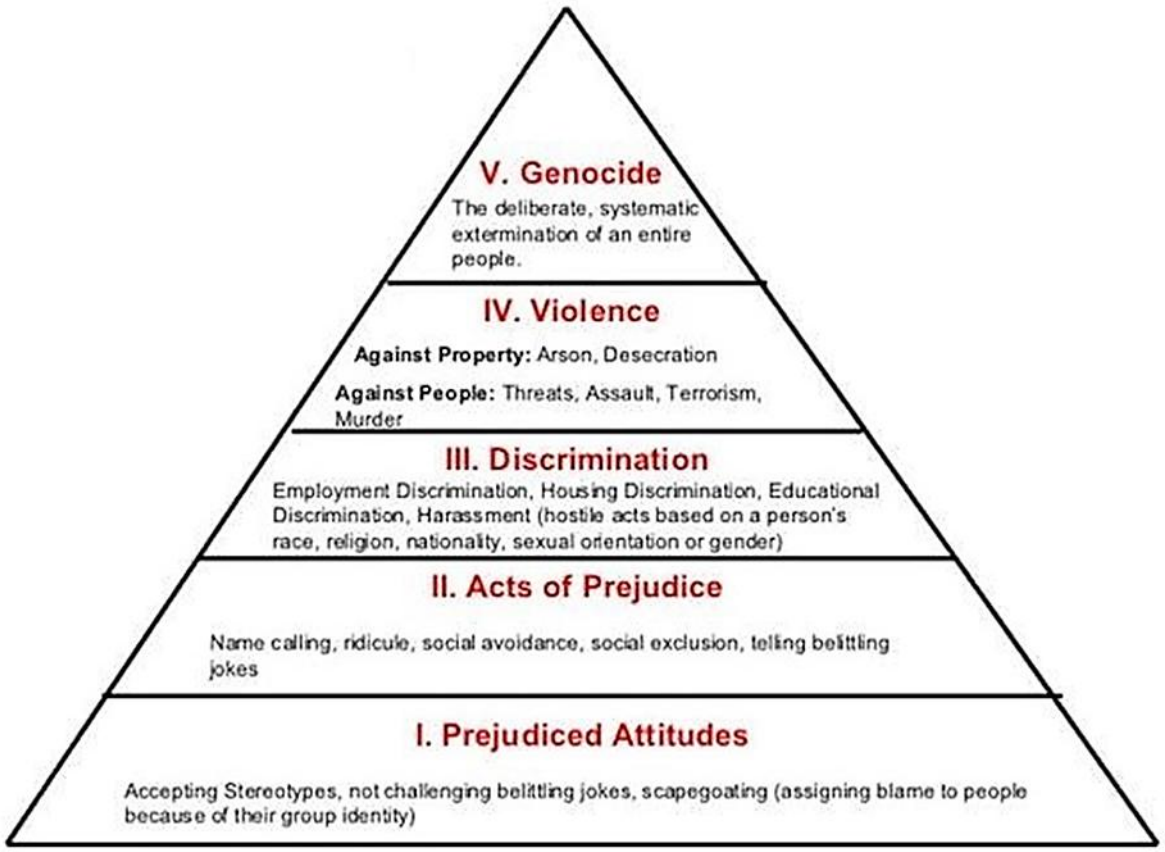
Genocide

Genocide is the ultimate and most extreme manifestation of an ideology of hate. It represents the fatal endpoint of an escalating process where systemic prejudice and dehumanization are weaponized by political leaders or regimes to justify the total physical destruction of a targeted group.

Understanding how genocide fits into this continuum involves looking at several core dynamics:

The Continuum of hate

Scholars and human rights organizations, such as the UN and the Holocaust Memorial Day Trust, visualize this progression using the Pyramid of Hate (below), where mass violence is built upon foundational layers of everyday bias and discrimination. Genocide does not occur in a vacuum; it requires a systemic, long-term ideological campaign to normalize violence.



2. The stages of escalation

An ideology of hate transforms into genocidal action through well-documented phases, as illustrated in the Pyramid of Hate above. The targeted group is stripped of their humanity and compared to animals, diseases, or vermin (e.g., Tutsis referred to as "cockroaches" in Rwanda, Jewish people called "vermin" in Nazi Germany, whites in South Africa are called “pink pigs”). This overcomes the natural human aversion to killing.

State propaganda, hate speech, and disinformation are used to spread fear, portraying the targeted group as an existential threat or a scapegoat for societal problems.

The ideology is turned into state policy. Weapons are procured, militias are trained, and infrastructure is established for mass extermination.

When ideologies of hate mature into genocidal intent, perpetrators rely on specific psychological and moral justifications. These include:

- **The "Self-defence" narrative:** Convincing the dominant group that they must destroy the "threat" before they themselves are destroyed (don’t vote DA because they want to bring back apartheid).
- **Moral imperative:** Framing the eradication of the minority group as a necessary, heroic act to purify society, secure national resources, or ensure a utopian future.

Julius Malema, leader of the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF), states that his political struggle is against systemic white supremacy and privilege, not white people as individuals. However, his rhetoric—including controversial chants like "Kill the Boer" and refusal to rule out future violence—has drawn widespread allegations of hate speech and inciting racial hatred.

Malema's messaging regarding white people is highly contested and multifaceted:

- **Systemic Focus vs. Personal Hatred:** Malema has repeatedly maintained, "We are not fighting against white people. We are fighting against white privilege. We are fighting against white arrogance." He frequently argues that he does not have an issue with white individuals, but rather with the historical systems of land dispossession and economic inequality that leave Black South Africans disadvantaged.

- **Controversial Chants and Rhetoric:** Malema frequently leads crowds in the liberation-era chant "Kill the Boer, Kill the Farmer" (referring to white Afrikaans farmers). While civil rights organizations like AfriForum have pursued him in court for hate speech, South African courts and the Human Rights Commission (SAHRC) have historically ruled that these protest songs are not to be taken literally, though the rhetoric remains deeply divisive.
- **Future Violence and Uprising Warnings:** In some interviews, Malema has made more alarming remarks. During a BBC interview, he warned that if wealth inequality and quality of life are not addressed, South Africa faces an "unled revolution" where "the first target is going to be white people." In ongoing court battles, he has also testified that he might someday call for the slaughtering of white people.
- **Land and Wealth Redistribution:** A central pillar of his platform is the expropriation of white-owned land without compensation. He argues that this wealth must be returned to the Black majority to correct historical injustices, though he has also stated that white people will not be forced out of South Africa and are as "natural to SA as trees and mountains."

Human rights organizations remain critical of his language, viewing his comments as a threat to peaceful coexistence. Conversely, supporters see his rhetoric as a necessary, radical critique of ongoing post-apartheid inequalities. The following report was published in the BBC's world report:

South Africa's firebrand MP found guilty of hate speech

By Pumza Fihlani, BBC World News

South African opposition politician Julius Malema has been convicted of hate speech by the country's equality court, following remarks he made at a rally in 2022. Malema, leader of the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) party, often sparks controversy in a nation where, 31 years after apartheid ended, racial tensions still linger.

After an incident where a white man allegedly assaulted an EFF member, Malema said: "No white man is going to beat me up... you must never be scared to kill. A revolution demands that at some point there must be killing."

The equality court ruled that these remarks "demonstrated an intent to incite harm", but the EFF said they were taken out of context.

Two complaints had been made against the 44-year-old MP - one by South Africa's Human Rights Commission and another by a person who alleged they had been threatened because of the politician's remarks. In its ruling, the court said: "Whilst calling out someone who behaves as a racist may be acceptable, calling for them to be killed is not.

"And calling for someone to be killed because they are a racist who has acted violently, is an act of vigilantism and an incitement of the most extreme form of harm possible."

In a subsequent statement, the EFF said the ruling "is fundamentally flawed and deliberately misreads both the context and the meaning of the speech".

"It assumes that the reasonable listener is incapable of understanding metaphor, revolutionary rhetoric or the history of liberation struggles," the EFF added.

In June, Malema, whose party came fourth in last year's parliamentary election, was denied entry to the UK. The Home Office said he had been deemed "non-conducive to the public good".

In a letter released by the EFF at the time, the Home Office cited his vocal support for Hamas, including a speech he made after the 7 October 2023 attack on Israel in which Malema said his party would arm the group if it came to power.

The Home Office said Malema had also made "statements calling for the slaughter of white people [in South Africa] or hinted that it could be an acceptable option in the future".

The EFF condemned the UK's decision as "cowardice" and said it would stifle democratic debate.

Malema were also criticised by US President Donald Trump in a confrontational meeting with South Africa's President Cyril Ramaphosa in May.

Trump played a video of the EFF leader singing an anti-apartheid song which refers to white farmers.

Malema often chants the song - which includes the lyrics "kill the Boer (Afrikaner); kill the farmer" - at his political rallies.
Afrikaner lobby groups have tried to get the song banned, but South Africa's Supreme Court of Appeal has ruled that a "reasonably well-informed person" would understand that when "protest songs are sung, even by politicians, the words are not meant to be understood literally, nor is the gesture of shooting to be understood as a call to arms or violence".
White-minority rule ended in South Africa in 1994, with anti-apartheid icon Nelson Mandela's rise to power.

South Africa spans multiple levels of the ADL Pyramid of Hate, from normalized individual biases at the base to institutionalized inequalities and frequent acts of prejudice and violence higher up. The country's unique sociopolitical landscape heavily informs these placements:

Level 1: The Biases (Stereotyping, fear of differences): Prevalent biases are historically rooted in the deep social and economic divisions left by apartheid. They manifest in tribalism, polarization, and racial or ethnic stereotyping.
Level 2: Individual Acts (Hate speech, harassment): Explicit racism, xenophobia, and antisemitism are frequently documented on South African social media and in public discourse. Derogatory terms historically used to dehumanize people are declared hate speech by the courts.
Level 3: Discrimination (Employment, housing, education): Systemic inequality persists across the country. Despite the dismantling of legally mandated apartheid 30+ years ago, deep structural disparities continue to marginalize a large majority of Black South Africans in terms of wealth distribution, employment, and housing.
Level 4: Violence (Hate crimes, xenophobia): South Africa grapples with significant bias-motivated violence. This is frequently directed at farmers, foreign nationals (xenophobic violence, particularly in poorer townships and informal settlements), along with high rates of farm murders, gender-based violence and LGBTQ+ targeted attacks.

While the country is not at the top tier of the pyramid (systemic genocide), unchecked biases, socioeconomic marginalization, and scapegoating present ongoing challenges.

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