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# From Books to the Web: A Comparative Analysis of Holocaust Denial in the Internet Age

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From Books to the Web:  
A Comparative Analysis of Holocaust Denial in the Internet Age

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During World War II, six million European Jews were systematically murdered by the Nazis, an event that is now known as the Holocaust. In the years following the war, the actions committed during the Holocaust were deemed “crimes against humanity,” and many senior members of the Nazi government were brought to justice. Despite the clear historical record, there are some people who choose to deny the Holocaust ever happened. They label themselves “revisionists,” pretending to be part of the legitimate historical practice of revisionism and claiming to be searching for the “truth.” But unlike actual revisionists who genuinely attempt to revise history, Holocaust “revisionists” merely spread false propaganda and are better known as Holocaust deniers. Holocaust deniers are dangerous because they distort information in order to create a lie—effectively inventing their own version of history.

At its core, Holocaust denial claims either that the Holocaust did not occur, or that certain aspects of the Holocaust—i.e. the murder of six million Jews or the use of gas chambers—did not happen. According to Daniela Di Giacomo, “the denial of the Holocaust encompasses a full range of claims, from the argument that it never occurred to the belief that Hitler was justified in his actions.”<sup>1</sup> Someone does not need to completely deny the Holocaust in its entirety to be considered a denier. Simply minimizing the crimes committed during the Holocaust—particularly for anti-Semitic reasons—can be considered denial. She also explains that Holocaust denial is not only an attack on the historical validity of the Holocaust, but also on the Holocaust experience. When deniers deny or minimize the events of the Holocaust, they also minimize the experience of the victims and survivors.<sup>2</sup> Richard Evans describes Holocaust deniers as inhabitants of “an intellectual world that was far removed from the cautious rationality of academic historical scholarship” who are motivated by “a strange mixture of prejudice and

bitter personal experience.”<sup>3</sup> Most Holocaust deniers are anti-Semitic or neo-Nazi supporters, making Holocaust denial a form of anti-Semitism.

To date, Holocaust denial has received varied scholarly attention. Some scholars are concerned that addressing Holocaust deniers provides them with the public stage they desire and therefore promotes denial. Deborah Lipstadt explains that “deniers are quick to pounce joyfully on *any* discussion of their work as evidence of the serious consideration their views are receiving.”<sup>4</sup> The mere acknowledgment of Holocaust denial by academics causes deniers to think their work is being legitimized. Without the attention, deniers might remain less of a threat. Despite these reservations, some historians have researched Holocaust denial in the hopes of raising awareness about the methods of deniers without legitimizing their arguments. They feel educating people on the dangers of denial is vital in helping to prevent the spread of propaganda.

The research on Holocaust denial addresses the deniers, their methodologies and the activities of denial organizations. Notable deniers are authors Austin J. App, Arthur Butz, Thomas Dalton, Robert Faurisson, David Hoggan, David Irving,\* Fred Leuchter, Paul Rassinier, Germar Rudolf, Wilhelm Stäglich and publisher Ernst Zündel. Important denial organizations include the Institute for Historical Review (IHR), run by Mark Weber, and Bradley R. Smith’s Committee for Open Debate on the Holocaust (CODOH).<sup>5</sup>

By researching these deniers, historians have brought attention to their activities and approaches to spreading Holocaust denial. Historians reject the so-called “scholarly” works written by deniers, identifying them as propaganda. One shortcoming in the current historiography of Holocaust denial is the lack of research regarding denial and the internet. Most

\*Although he does not specifically write Holocaust denial literature, David Irving has been labeled by Deborah Lipstadt as “one of the most dangerous spokespersons for Holocaust denial.” He actively promotes denial, and as a well-published war historian he had a strong reputation among historians [Deborah Lipstadt, *Denying the Holocaust: The Growing Assault on Truth and Memory* (New York: Plume, 1994), 181].

books that discuss denial were written before the internet reached its current popularity. As a result, a majority of the research on denial only addresses print literature.

One of the earliest books written about Holocaust denial was *The Holocaust Denial: Antisemitism, Racism & the New Right*, published by Gill Seidel in 1986.<sup>6</sup> In her book, Seidel addresses Holocaust denial and its relationship with neo-Nazis and racism, citing the renewal of Nazi racist ideology as the main concern of *The Holocaust Denial*.<sup>7</sup> An example of the racism of Holocaust deniers given by Seidel is that:

they all purport to show that Jews are liars and tricksters holding the world to ransom and continuing to extract war reparations...the implication is that after all this time Jews are still liars, parasites, extraordinarily powerful, and fundamentally dishonest—and that maybe Hitler was right.<sup>8</sup>

Seidel also contends “that the literature of the Holocaust denial, although produced more than fifty years later, is altogether reminiscent of the czarist forgery, *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*,” which was the ‘proof’ of a Jewish conspiracy to take over the world.<sup>9</sup> She claims that both the *Protocols* and Holocaust denial are part of an unfounded belief in a Jewish conspiracy.<sup>10</sup> Just as the *Protocols* suggest a Jewish conspiracy, Jews have supposedly used the Holocaust to take advantage of the world to earn money and power. Seidel’s book is informative, but is very limited in its conclusions that Holocaust denial is simply a new form of racism. Her research fails to illuminate other aspects of denial.

In 1990, *Truth Prevails: Demolishing Holocaust Denial: The End of the Leuchter Report*, edited by Shelly Shapiro, was published as a direct response to Fred Leuchter’s *The Leuchter Report*. *The Leuchter Report* was Leuchter’s allegedly scientific examination of Auschwitz, and *Truth Prevails* is an examination of Leuchter’s report. Shapiro explains that:

this book is published to negate the attempts to offer a scientific basis for what are in reality age-old anti-Semitic canards. Our goal is to show Leuchter’s lack of

expertise, his purloining of the title of ‘engineer’ to offer an ‘engineering opinion’ and to demonstrate that ‘The Leuchter Report’ is **not** a credible scientific analysis of the murderous gas chambers at Auschwitz, Birkenau and Maïdenak.<sup>11</sup>

*Truth Prevails* is a point-by-point refutation of *The Leuchter Report*, its data and all of Leuchter’s conclusions that proves the report is full of lies. Jean-Claude Pressac discredits *The Leuchter Report* as being “without scientific, legal or historical value,” as well as “based on misinformation and misinterpretation of data” and “written in ignorance of the most straightforward of historical data and foundering in gross errors of measurement and calculation.”<sup>12</sup> The articles in *Truth Prevails* effectively disprove *The Leuchter Report* in its entirety.

Deborah Lipstadt’s book, *Denying the Holocaust: The Growing Assault on Truth and Memory*, published in 1993, is described to by Richard Evans as “the most thorough study of the deniers.”<sup>13</sup> In her book, Lipstadt discusses the origins of Holocaust denial as well as its possible future. She describes in great detail the many Holocaust deniers and denial organizations, as well as their methodologies for promoting denial. Lipstadt emphasizes the danger of Holocaust denial and the importance of educating the public, explaining “the deniers’ window of opportunity will be enhanced in years to come. The public, particularly the uneducated public, will be increasingly susceptible to Holocaust denial as survivors die.”<sup>14</sup> Eventually, the eyewitnesses will be gone and it will be much easier for deniers to spread their propaganda—this must not happen. She also stresses the fact that deniers desire to be perceived as “the other side,” and this is something that should be avoided.<sup>15</sup> Being viewed as one side of a debate gives deniers and their arguments legitimacy—something Lipstadt wants to avoid.

Directly related to *Denying the Holocaust* is Richard Evans’ book, *Lying About Hitler: History, Holocaust, and the David Irving Trial*, published in 2002. Deborah Lipstadt had been

sued for libel by David Irving for calling him a Holocaust denier in *Denying the Holocaust*. Evans was called in as the expert historian for the defense, and his book describes his experience in the trial. He notes that deniers, “unlike genuine historians...were never willing to accept criticism, and stuck to their theses, however convincing the documentary evidence that was thrown at them.”<sup>16</sup> Although Evans concedes the Holocaust denial aspect of the trial was important, he argues the main issue was Irving’s falsification of historical records, and the importance of presenting the truth.<sup>17</sup>

Deborah Lipstadt also recorded her own experience in the trial against David Irving in her 2006 book, *History on Trial: My Day in Court with a Holocaust Denier*. Lipstadt chronicles her entire history with the case, beginning with her own history with Judaism, why she wrote *Denying the Holocaust*, the research involved in preparing for the libel suit up through the trial itself. Initially, she was uncertain about writing a book on Holocaust deniers, assuming denial was not a threat and did not need to be addressed. However, “their conception of denial as an ‘other’ side convinced [her] that it was essential to expose the illusion of reasoned inquiry that concealed deniers’ claims.”<sup>18</sup> Lipstadt realized it was important to shed light on the activities of Holocaust deniers. The trial represents a good example of the dangers of Holocaust denial. Lipstadt notes that *Irving v. Penguin and Lipstadt* was a “battle over historical integrity” and one they “could not afford to lose.”<sup>19</sup> This was a legal battle between the falsification and preservation of history.

Thus far, most research published that addresses Holocaust denial has focused on published books, pamphlets and journal articles. Today, the internet is an important source for information, and deniers have taken advantage of this new tool as a way to spread their propaganda. One work that does address denial on the internet is Daniela Di Giacomo’s master’s

thesis, “The Web of Hate: an Exploratory Study of Holocaust Denial on the Net” published in 2005. Giacomo notes the importance of her study and future research on Holocaust denial, explaining:

This study, though exploratory, demonstrates the need for continued research on Holocaust denial, its motivations, and repercussions. The findings of this study illuminate the arguments and claims made by Holocaust deniers on their websites and the ideology informing such hate literature. This thesis also draws attention and alerts others to the dangers posed by Holocaust denial, especially on the Internet.<sup>20</sup>

Although it addresses the internet and denial, Giacomo’s study is mainly an overview of the ideas presented on Holocaust denial websites rather than an exploration of how denial has been affected by its transition to the internet.

Since the conception of Holocaust denial, deniers have masked their printed literature as “scholarly” works. With today’s rapidly changing technology, Holocaust deniers have updated their methods. Deniers have moved their propaganda from a print medium to the free publishing of the internet, because very few companies will publish denial literature. However, this transition has ultimately harmed the pseudo-scholarship of Holocaust denial. This paper will address an aspect of denial largely untouched by current historiography—the transition from print literature to the internet and its effect. Deniers have attempted to establish print denial literature as scholarly, but the nature of the internet has reduced the “quality” of Holocaust denial propaganda. Although the internet has provided Holocaust deniers with a free and easy mode of publishing, the lack of professionalism of websites and the marginalization of print literature has blunted the impact of denial.

## **Print Literature**



Holocaust denial originally made its appearance in the form of printed literature. Print denial literature can be found in various forms, such as pamphlets, articles and books. However, as Richard Evans explains, “their books were mostly distributed by mail order and could seldom be found on the shelves of respectable bookshops or libraries.”<sup>21</sup> Denial literature has not been something the average person would easily find—a person had to specifically be searching for it. Despite this marginalization, deniers are skilled at mimicking scholarly works and at times are even able to blend into the world of academia. Deborah Lipstadt notes she “was struck by the sophisticated camouflage tactics they had developed,” particularly the “scholarly veneer” of the *Journal of Historical Review*, a “revisionist” journal published by the denial organization, the Institute for Historical Review.<sup>22</sup> Students at leading academic institutions have been tricked into believing denial literature is genuine historical scholarship.<sup>23</sup> Authors of print denial have viewed this as their best chance to be taken seriously and have consistently kept up the scholarly façade over the years. There has been little development in this area of print literature. This illusion of being part of the world of legitimate scholarship is what makes print denial literature dangerous.

Representing the first generation of Holocaust deniers is Paul Rassinier. Rassinier was a former French Communist who became a Socialist and had been interned in the Nazi concentration camps Buchenwald and Dora. He first began publishing Holocaust denial literature in 1948, and in 1977 Rassinier’s books concerning the Holocaust were reissued in *Debunking the Genocide Myth* by Noontide Press.<sup>24</sup> According to the introduction of his book, Rassinier lived in France, where he supposedly “received his formal education in the schools of the area and passed the necessary examinations which allowed him to teach history and geography at the secondary school level and use the title of ‘professor.’”<sup>25</sup> In his writings,

Rassinier contends “that there was no Nazi policy of Jewish genocide, that there were no officially sanctioned ‘exterminations by gas’ and that there were no six million deaths at the hands of the Nazis.”<sup>26</sup> His own experiences in concentration camps left him feeling that his fellow prisoners were more dangerous than the SS guards, which likely resulted in his being prejudice in favor of the Nazis, as well as his resentment toward other concentration camp survivors and disbelief at their stories.<sup>27</sup> Rassinier states “the deportees came back with hatred and resentment on their tongues and in their pens. They were not tired of war; rather they had an axe to grind and they demanded vengeance...they wantonly created a story of horror for a public that always clamored for something more sensational in order the more surely to inspire pity and recognition.”<sup>28</sup> According to Rassinier, the atrocities of the Holocaust were lies told by the Jews as a way to garner attention.

Although, as Deborah Lipstadt explains, “his books are a mixture of blatant falsehoods, half-truths, quotations out of context, and attacks on the “Zionist establishment,” Rassinier is dangerous as a denier because of his personal experiences.<sup>29</sup> Wilhelm Stäglich alludes to this issue when he claims “as a former concentration camp inmate, Rassinier undoubtedly was in the know.”<sup>30</sup> Stäglich may be a denier himself, but his point does contain some validity. When reading about the Holocaust, the average reader would likely be more apt to believe the words of a survivor rather than information found in a secondary source. This makes Rassinier all the more dangerous. Even though Rassinier’s explanations of what happened in the concentration camps differ from the content of the majority of survivor testimonies, Rassinier’s testimonies do unfortunately hold some weight. One might assume his words are true because he claims to have personally experienced it.

The first Holocaust denial book written in English was *The Myth of the Six Million*, which was first published anonymously in 1969 by the Institute for Historical Review and Noontide Press. The original publication stated that the anonymous author, who did not want to reveal his identity, was a college professor who had written the book in 1960 but could not find a publisher who would risk publishing it.<sup>31</sup> This suggests Holocaust denial is not a topic publishers are willing to print. However, in 1969 David Hoggan, a history professor at the University of California Berkeley, came forward to sue Noontide Press and claim authorship.<sup>32</sup> In *The Myth of the Six Million*, Hoggan makes the claim that the Holocaust is a myth, stating that “the unavoidable conclusion about the wartime German treatment of European Jewry is that we have encountered a deliberate defamation and falsification conspiracy on an unprecedented scale.”<sup>33</sup> According to Deborah Lipstadt, Hoggan’s work “consistently mixed truth with fiction, accurate with fabricated quotes, and outright lies with partially correct information.”<sup>34</sup> Hoggan fails to provide proof for many of his conclusions, writing entire chapters without citing any documents or books as sources.<sup>35</sup>

Unlike other “scholarly” works of denial literature, but equally dangerous, is a pamphlet written by the American Holocaust denier Austin J. App. Deborah Lipstadt describes App’s pamphlet as “almost gutter-level anti-Semitism.”<sup>36</sup> App was born to German immigrant parents and was an “ardent defender of Germans and Nazi Germany,” even becoming president of the Federation of American Citizens of German Descent.<sup>37</sup> App did not have training as an historian, but received his M.A. and Ph.D. in English at Catholic University. He then taught English literature at the University of Scranton and LaSalle College—but kept his politics out of the classroom.<sup>38</sup> In 1973, Boniface Press published App’s pamphlet entitled *The Six Million Swindle: Blackmailing the German people for hard marks with fabricated corpses. The Six*

*Million Swindle* is blatantly racist and could not be mistaken for scholarly work like other denial literature. App states that the “swindle of the six million figure must be exposed and exploded, not only because is used to blackmail astronomical indemnities out of the Christian Germans, but because the Talmudists and Communists...used this swindle to make all Christianity feel guilty.”<sup>39</sup> He accuses Jews of being “monstrous, barefaced” liars, as well as “Grand Larcenists and subversives” who enter into countries using “stealth, bribery or pressure tactics.”<sup>40</sup>

In his pamphlet, App includes a list of what he calls the “Eight Incontrovertible Assertions On The Six Million Swindle.”<sup>41</sup> These assertions are as follows:

1. The Third Reich’s plan was emigration, not extermination. If extermination had been the plan, 500,000 concentration camp inmates would never have survived or managed to arrive in Israel where they collect “fancy indemnities” from Germany.
2. The gas chambers did not exist—“absolutely no Jews were ‘gassed’ in any concentration camps in Germany, and evidence is piling up that none were gassed in Auschwitz.” Crematoria existed for the purpose of cremation of corpses of people who had died from any cause, including Germans who were killed in Anglo-American bombing raids.
3. The majority of Jews who remain unaccounted for disappeared or died in territories controlled by the Soviets, not under German control.
4. Most Jews “alleged to have met their death” were “subversives, partisans, spies, and criminals,” and often victims of “internationally legal reprisals.”
5. If there even existed the “slightest likelihood” that the Nazis had murdered six million Jews, Israel would open its archives and files to historians, and “World Jewry” would request subsidies to do research. However, this has not happened. They have persecuted anyone who tries to investigate and label them an anti-Semite. This is very conclusive evidence that the figure of six million is a “swindle.”
6. The Jews and the media who exploit the figure of six million have never offered a “shred of valid evidence” to prove it. The best they can do is misquote Hoettl, Hoess and Eichmann—none of whom are reliable sources.
7. The burden of proof for the figure of six million lies with the accusers, not the accused. However, the Talmudists and Bolsheviks have failed to accept this responsibility, and the ‘brow-beaten Germans’ would rather pay billions than demand any proof.

8. Jewish scholars present “ridiculous discrepancies” in their calculations of the figure of six million—confirming there is no scientific foundation the accusation.<sup>42</sup>

Although App’s pamphlet cannot be mistaken as genuine scholarship, his axioms became the founding principles of the Institute for Historical Review. Nearly all deniers use them as a basis for their arguments, thereby making *The Six Million Swindle* a dangerous piece of denial literature that should not be ignored.<sup>43</sup> Therefore, *The Six Million Swindle* is a dangerous piece of denial literature and should not be ignored.

One of the most notable Holocaust denial works is *The Hoax of the Twentieth Century*, published in 1975 by Arthur Butz. Butz is a tenured associate professor of electrical engineering at Northwestern University who was formally trained in engineering.<sup>44</sup> His book continues to play an important role in Holocaust denial because, as Gill Seidel writes, it “pretends to present a detailed, dispassionate and independent study.”<sup>45</sup> Deborah Lipstadt explains that *The Hoax of the Twentieth Century* could be mistaken for legitimate scholarly work by the untrained eye. She notes that as a tenured professor at Northwestern University, Butz was no stranger to the world of academia and knew exactly how to mask his work as legitimate. However, a trained historian would be able to see through his lies.<sup>46</sup> Butz bluntly states “The thesis of this book is that the story of Jewish extermination in World War II is a propaganda hoax.”<sup>47</sup> He also argues that without evidence collected at the Nuremberg trials, there would be no sources for people to use as evidence the Holocaust actually happened.<sup>48</sup> Because of this, Butz finds it necessary to try and discredit the evidence generated at the trials. He adopts the typical methods of Holocaust deniers and misuses documents to his own end. This book is dangerous, however, due to its academic façade. While a trained historian might immediately recognize Butz’s book for what it is, an uneducated reader might view the book as authentic and believe his lies.

Imitating Butz's pseudo-academic presentation of Holocaust denial is *Der Auschwitz Mythos: Legende oder Wirklichkeit* (The Auschwitz Myth: Legend or Reality), which was published by Wilhelm Stäglich in Germany in 1979.<sup>49</sup> *The Auschwitz Myth* was later published in English in 1986 by the Institute for Historical Review. Wilhelm Stäglich was a judge in Germany who was later dismissed from state employment and had his doctoral title revoked as a result of publishing this book. In his book, Stäglich argues that there had never been a mass extermination of Jews and that the verdicts in postwar trials were incorrect. Richard Evans explains that Stäglich "used minor discrepancies in postwar documents and reports of the extermination to dismiss all such documents as forgeries and falsifications."<sup>50</sup> Stäglich's final conclusion is:

that the Auschwitz legend is rooted not in historical actuality, but in the morass of muddled myth-making. There is not one shred of evidence for its historicity. The main pillars of the legend of the Auschwitz 'extermination camp'—the Cracow Höss memoirs and the Auschwitz Trial—have proved too feeble to support it. What remains is for courageous and honest historians to make this clear to the international public.<sup>51</sup>

Stäglich bases his arguments on his personal experiences. During World War II, he served as an officer in an anti-aircraft unit and was stationed near Auschwitz.<sup>52</sup> He claims to have visited there on more than one occasion and states that "on none of [his] visits did [he] find that inmates—at least the ones present in the camp, for example, inmates employed in the various workshops or on clean-up details—were badly, much less inhumanely, treated...None of the inmates behaved as though they were in fear of mistreatment, let alone death."<sup>53</sup> The lack of fear in the camp clearly led Stäglich to believe nothing terrible could have occurred at Auschwitz, and brought him to the conclusion that the story of Auschwitz is nothing more than a myth. Stäglich begins his work by informing the reader that "the present volume is the work not

of a professional historian, but of a jurist with an interest in recent history. Naturally, [he has] tried to observe the rules of scholarship.”<sup>54</sup> However, by publishing Holocaust denial propaganda, this is something he has failed to do. Stiglich wants his work to be taken seriously, but his subject matter makes this impossible. He is not writing genuine scholarship—he is merely spreading lies and propaganda.

In 1988, Fred Leuchter was commissioned by Ernst Zundel to complete a forensic study of the gas chambers at Auschwitz. That same year, Zundel’s publishing company, Samisdat Publishers, published the results in *The Leuchter Report*.<sup>55</sup> In his report, Leuchter claims to have “expert knowledge of the design criteria for gas chamber operation,” and based on the evidence he collected, Leuchter declares:

***it is therefore the best engineering opinion of the author that none of the facilities examined were ever utilized for the execution of human beings and that the crematories could never have supported the alleged work-load attributed to them.*** [emphasis in original]<sup>56</sup>

Ironically, Fred Leuchter is a trained historian, earning a B.A in history from Boston University. He has had no formal training as an engineer, claiming to be self-taught.<sup>57</sup> Holocaust historian Jean-Claude Pressac describes *The Leuchter Report* as “unacceptable” and based on misinformation. Pressac also states that the report “was researched illegally, ignoring the most straightforward of historical data, and flounders in gross errors of measurement and calculation.”<sup>58</sup>

*The Leuchter Report* is an interesting phenomenon. Its appearance in court is considered an historical event—by both deniers and Holocaust historians. Robert Faurisson claims “the results of the study of the buildings and of the analysis of the samples taken proved spectacular and totally in favor of the revisionist thesis.”<sup>59</sup> Today, *The Leuchter Report* is widely used by

Holocaust deniers as the scientific basis upon which they lay their claims—despite being discredited both in court and by Holocaust historians.<sup>60</sup> This shows that Holocaust deniers are willing to blatantly use misinformation when forming their arguments—making their research even less trustworthy.

Published in 2003 by Theses and Dissertations Press as volume one of the Holocaust Handbook Series is *Dissecting the Holocaust: The Growing Critique of 'Truth' and 'Memory'*, a collection of essays edited by Germar Rudolf. Rudolf states “the purpose of this book is the factual, scientific *debate* about the question of where the truth is to be found regarding the Holocaust.”<sup>61</sup> The book is presented in a scholarly manner, with essays addressing everything from statistics to the gas chambers to photographic evidence. Rudolf suggests there is more at stake than simply denying the Holocaust by claiming, “this book rather goes to the very roots of historiography: document criticism and detailed, interdisciplinary expert analysis of certain (alleged) historical events.”<sup>62</sup> The average reader might be led to believe that *Dissecting the Holocaust* is an honest attempt at analyzing the events of the Holocaust. In the preface, however, Robert Faurisson, one of France’s leading deniers and former professor of literature clearly identifies with the shared views of the authors in the book.<sup>63</sup> Faurisson argues “there was neither an order, nor a plan, nor a budget for the alleged genocide of the Jews;” “‘Wannsee’ was at best only a ‘*silly story*’;” “there existed no specialist’s report on the weapon of the crime concluding that ‘the building (whether intact, ‘*reconstructed*’, or in ruins) served as a homicidal gas chamber’;” and “the figure of four million victims at Auschwitz was only a fiction.”<sup>64</sup> Despite the scholarly attempt, by echoing the arguments of past deniers Faurisson reveals the book for what it really is: anti-Semitic lies.



*Debating the Holocaust: A New Look at Both Sides* published by Thomas Dalton in 2009 is likely the most recent work of Holocaust denial print literature. This recent work is consistent with past denial literature in that it attempts to mask the propaganda as legitimate scholarship. Dalton presents his work as showing “both sides” of the “Great Debate” and claims this is the first attempt anyone has made to address the Holocaust in an unbiased way.<sup>65</sup> However, Dalton fails to present himself as unbiased. He gives attention to “both sides” but fails to remain a neutral party. His beliefs clearly lie with the deniers, and he often adopts the same mocking tone as deniers when discussing the history of the Holocaust. Ironically, he seems to recognize this and attempts to defend himself:

The reader is perhaps concerned that the arguments presented here favor revisionism, and that this somehow compromises my neutrality. I would beg to disagree. The arguments are what they are...The situation presented in this book is simply a consequence of both parties laying out their best charges and countercharges. I have done my best to present the strongest and most complete case on each side. If there appear to be winners and losers, the praise (or blame) goes to the parties themselves, not to me.<sup>66</sup>

Dalton practically begs to be taken seriously as an academic, but any trained historian could easily see through his disguise. Unfortunately, there remains the possibility that Dalton’s setup of the book could likely draw in an unprepared or uneducated reader. On close inspection, the book clearly contains denial propaganda. Nevertheless, it does resemble a legitimate scholarly work and could mislead a person into believing its contents—making it a particularly dangerous piece of denial literature.

One of the more interesting aspects of *Debating the Holocaust* involves the author himself. Dalton claims to be a Ph.D. and a professor of humanities at a prominent university, but the information he provides is very vague and therefore highly questionable.<sup>67</sup> Roberto

Muehlenkamp, an internet blogger who writes about Holocaust denial, questioned Dalton's background and was told Dalton teaches economics at the University of Arizona. A Professor Thomas Dalton does teach economics at the University of Arizona, but Muehlenkamp's blog reveals he is not the author of the book. Muehlenkamp contacted Professor Dalton and received a negative response—Professor Dalton did not write *Debating the Holocaust*.<sup>68</sup> This leaves the reader with no information about who “Thomas Dalton, Ph.D.” truly is. It is possible he lacks the proper credentials to be taken seriously by academics, but lying about his background makes one even less inclined to believe what he writes.

Besides pamphlets and books, denial literature has also been published in fake academic journals, particularly *The Journal of Historical Review*, the revisionist journal printed by the Institute for Historical Review. According to Deborah Lipstadt, the “pseudo-scholarly style of *The Journal for Historical Review* contrasts with the joking, baiting tone of other neo-Nazi leaflets which peddle the same lies.”<sup>69</sup> The *Review* masks itself as an academic journal, publishing articles that appear to be legitimate. She addresses the particular danger of the journal, noting that “students at leading academic institutions who encountered it in their university libraries assumed it a product of genuine scholarship.”<sup>70</sup> One history major at Yale University even submitted his senior essay to the *Review*, assuming it was a legitimate journal dedicated to re-evaluating historical events.<sup>71</sup>

As a regularly published journal, the *Review* provides deniers with a continuous stream of articles as well as a reliable outlet for publishing their ideas and addressing the state of denial from their point of view. One article, “A prominent Holocaust historian wrestles with a rising revisionism,” written by Mark Weber in 1991 (now available online at the website of the Institute for Historical Review), discusses Deborah Lipstadt's disapproval of Holocaust denial

and her concern of it spreading. In typical denier fashion, Weber twists her words to make it appear that she does not know what she is talking about or is deliberately lying. Weber claims “Lipstadt, who is not stupid, must know full well that much of what she says and writes is quite simply not true.”<sup>72</sup> He calls Lipstadt “close-minded” and a “partisan moralist.” Ironically, he finds her words “encouraging,” noting her acknowledgement of the “effective and growing impact of Holocaust Revisionism.”<sup>73</sup> Weber uses Lipstadt’s criticism as a way to promote and justify denial, referring to it as “historical truth.”<sup>74</sup>

Holocaust deniers who publish propaganda in print literature continue to mask their work as the legitimate work of scholars. Unfortunately they seem to believe what they are writing, citing genuine historians as being the ones who falsify history. Denier Wilhelm Stäglich claims “their approach is simply alien to sound historical scholarship”—a comment that more accurately describes denial literature.<sup>75</sup> Germar Rudolf adds, “often it is considered sufficient to cite portions of documents out of their proper context, or arbitrarily select a few documents from many others of relevance”—a common tactic of deniers.<sup>76</sup> Fortunately, this has not helped the spread of denial. Most denial books are published by the same publishing companies, i.e. Noontide Press, Theses and Dissertations Press and Institute for Historical Review. Deniers are unable to find other publishers to produce their work, ultimately making deniers a fairly close-knit group. Books about the Holocaust can be published anywhere, but options for publishing denial literature are fairly limited. Most companies are unwilling to publish denial literature. Holocaust denial is viewed as racist propaganda and publishing companies do not want to tarnish their reputations by publishing it. In the publishing world, Holocaust denial is not becoming part of the mainstream.

## Internet

The internet is a new medium for the spread of Holocaust denial propaganda, and internet denial has gone largely unexplored. Because the internet provides deniers with the ability to publish freely and easily, it needs to be researched and monitored. As a very loosely supervised medium, the internet provides deniers with the ability to publicize their propaganda in any manner they choose. Consequently, denial on the internet lacks the scholarly mask of print literature. Daniela Di Giacomo notes:

these websites also make frequent allusions to the Holocaust as a complete historical fabrication...Such terms and references include, but are not limited to, the following: the Holocaust/extermination legend; the Holocaust story; the most macabre lies of all time; eyewitness and survivor fairytales; the Holocaust Leviathan; the Holocaust fraud/myth; the Holocaust swindle; the Big-Lie; the hoax of the twentieth century; the sinking Holocaust ship; the Holofoax; a gigantic financial-political swindle; and the unifying myth of modern Jewry.<sup>77</sup>

There are many types of Holocaust denial websites. Some are run by publishing companies, while others are run by individuals. Even others include discussion fora and are interactive—these websites wind up being the most hostile of denial sites. These websites are racist, malicious and full of lies designed to promote Holocaust denial propaganda. However, denial websites are also appear as very questionable sources, which can result in internet users doubting their validity.

Several denial websites have been created for revisionist publishing companies. One such website is that of Historical Review press (<http://www.ety.com/HRP>). The website provides the street address of the publishing company and lists the webpublisher as James Buckley, but there is no other information about who runs the site. It is impossible to determine any information about the Historical Review Press or James Buckley by examining the website.

This lack of background information makes the website unreliable, as James Buckley could be anyone. There are numerous links to various topics, including Holocaust denial and a link to the Committee for Open Debate on the Holocaust discussion fora. The site also offers a place to purchase “hard to find rare and controversial books, films and music.”<sup>78</sup> The website’s appearance suggests it is very basic and could easily have been designed and run by the average internet user, making it a questionable source.

Historical Revisionism (<http://vho.org>) is the website for another publishing company, Castle Hill Publishers, and is run by Germar Rudolf. The website claims to be “The World’s largest website for Historical Revisionism!” and it is the goal of Castle Hill publishers “to correct unjust reporting or accounts of events of the 20<sup>th</sup> century,” and “to further public debate about the subject generally described as ‘Holocaust’.”<sup>79</sup> However, Historical Revisionism is different from other Holocaust denial websites in that it is actually a database of revisionist material. On the page titled “How to use this site,” users are informed that:

The internet is full of material authored by dissenting historians (revisionists) on all sorts of historical topics. Perhaps some 10,000 articles and books are available online today, spread over many websites, and this figure is quickly growing...This website's main goal is to make it easy for you to find the material you are looking for. [www.vho.org](http://www.vho.org) is mainly a database of revisionist material. We do not only post a lot of critical historical material on our own site, but we have setup an actual searchable database which currently includes some 4,500 entries of articles and books available online all over the world.<sup>80</sup>

Historical Revisionism also includes links to the Committee for Open Debate on the Holocaust fora and the website for Theses and Dissertations Press. As a Holocaust denial database, Historical Revisionism is particularly dangerous. If an uneducated person found the website, they would instantly have access to thousands of links that address denial and could potentially believe the propaganda they read.

Theses and Dissertations Press is a division of Castle Hill Publishers, and the publishing company has its own website (<http://www.tadp.org>). The site sells “Holocaust Handbooks” which include Arthur Butz’s *The Hoax of the Twentieth Century*, Fred Leuchter’s *The Leuchter Report* and several books by Germar Rudolf and Carlo Mattogno. The description of the website states:

In the year 2000, Theses & Dissertations Press started an ambitious series of scholarly books addressing various topics of the so-called Jewish 'Holocaust' of the WWII era. They all have a highly critical, if not skeptical attitude toward the commonly held views on this topic, and are usually referred to as "revisionist" in nature. These books are designed to have the power to both convince the common reader as well as academics in this field. The final goal is to eventually tip the academic scale, so that academia will start doing its duty: to demand and pursue public scrutiny of this most influential topic of all western societies. Because as long as academics don't do this, the media and politicians certainly will not do it either.<sup>81</sup>

This site offers no information about who runs the website or the publishing company and is also of a very simple design, which means it is impossible to know who created it and is another unreliable source of information.

Both a publishing company and Holocaust denial organization, the Institute for Historical Review has its own website (<http://www.ihr.org>). This is also the website where one can access articles from the *Journal of Historical Review*. There are archived articles from previously printed editions of the journal, and articles written specifically for the website. The Institute for Historical Review also offers the option for readers to download free books or to purchase books that are not available as free downloads. On the “About Us” page, the description reads,

The Institute for Historical Review is an educational research and publishing center that works to promote peace, understanding and justice through greater public awareness of the past, and especially socially-politically relevant aspects of twentieth-century history. We strive in particular to increase understanding of the

causes, nature and consequences of war and conflict...Factually and conscientiously, it [the IHR] informs the public about the Jewish-Zionist grip on America's cultural and political life, World War II lies, distortions of Middle East history, myths about the Israel-Palestine conflict, the corrosive impact of "Holocaust" propaganda, and much more.<sup>82</sup>

To someone who does not know what the IHR represents, the website might appear to be a legitimate website, especially with its inclusion of some non-revisionist articles on its main page. This is what makes IHR dangerous. Unlike most denial websites, IHR actually attempts to mimic genuine scholarship, particularly with the *Journal of Historical Review*. An unsuspecting reader might believe what they read. However, IHR is a denial organization and its website is a denial website.

*Inconvenient History: A Quarterly Journal for Free Historical Inquiry*

(<http://www.inconvenienthistory.com/index.php>) is another Holocaust denial attempt at creating a scholarly journal. Unlike the *Journal of Historical Review*, *Inconvenient History* is strictly an online journal with the mission to “blast our way through the historical blackout and to reveal the truth about modern history, regardless of how inconvenient it may be to this or that regime or political party or ideology.”<sup>83</sup> The website is published by History Behind Bars. Editorial advisors for the journal include Holocaust deniers Arthur Butz and Robert Faurisson, and Thomas Dalton is a columnist. These are authors of print denial literature who attempt to mask their work as scholarly—making it more dangerous. One interesting aspect of the website is the picture of Joseph Goebbels in full Nazi dress, which clearly shows that the authors of *Inconvenient History* support the Nazis.

Unlike the publishing or journal websites, Zundelsite (<http://www.zundelsite.org>), is the personal website of the Holocaust denier Ernst Zündel. Ernst Zündel founded Samisdat

Publications and printed Holocaust denial material and was just released from prison for Holocaust denial activity in Germany.<sup>84</sup> As the website claims:

Breaking news...Ernst Zundel—FREE AT LAST: The world's most famous political prisoner released from a German prison after 7 years of illegal incarceration for questioning zionists' version of the holocaust. Zundel's crime? He reprinted this this band book! **Freedom of speech destroyed by Zionism.** [sic, emphasis in original]<sup>85</sup>

Zündel's website includes many links to other denial websites including the Institute for Historical Review and the Committee for Open Debate on the Holocaust. His site contains animated images and is designed to catch the reader's eye. It is probable this website would mostly attract Zündel's supporters and therefore those who are already Holocaust deniers. However, the statements about freedom of speech might attract people and cause them to believe Zündel's words. By acting as a martyr and defender of freedom of speech, Zündel is a dangerous asset in the promotion of Holocaust denial.

Holohoax 101 (<http://www.newp.org/holohoax101>) is a low-quality website in both its content and presentation of material. The site is from the North East White Pride website, but the only way to trace it is by going into the address of the website. There is no other information provided regarding who runs the website and the basic design of the website suggests it could have been designed by anyone. The website attempts to disprove the Holocaust with various "facts" and outside links. It continues on with "Holohoax 102," "Holohoax 103" and "Holohoax 201: Advanced Holohoax Studies," mimicking a list of college courses—Holohoax 101 is subtitled "The Fundamentals of the Holocaust Hoax." The site makes the claim that "the Jews are making every effort to brainwash the US public to believe the holohoax, and holohoax education is now mandated in many states."<sup>86</sup> There is also an option to open the contents of the



page in pdf format to print as a flier in order to “smash the holohoax.”<sup>87</sup> This is a website that would likely appeal only to those who are already anti-Semitic. The site is extremely racist and unprofessional and it is doubtful that a person who is not anti-Semitic or currently a denier would be interested in reading its content.

Another low-quality site in terms of production value and content is NaziGassings.com (<http://www.nazigassings.com>). The website is not organized very well and NaziGassings.com is, for the most part, a long amount of text interspersed with pictures and flashing words, making it difficult to navigate. One section of the site declares:

The holocaust story is a monstrous hoax for four important reasons: 1) no one was ever killed in gas chambers by the Nazis, 2) the numbers of Jews who died in German-occupied Europe is minuscule compared to what is alleged, 3) forensic evidence to support the holocaust claims is non-existent, and 4) Jews were rather well-treated by the Nazis compared with other minorities such as blacks, hispanics or American Indians in the USA—or non-whites by the British Empire, or Palestinians by Israel.[sic]<sup>88</sup>

These are the same arguments that most deniers have shared. At first glance there appears to be no owner of the website, but the name Friedrich Paul Berg appears in the browser window title. It is difficult to find the name on the website without doing a search. Berg includes an email address ([hoaxbuster@earthlink.net](mailto:hoaxbuster@earthlink.net)), but no other information regarding his identity, suggesting he lacks credentials. This lack of an identity makes the site appear unreliable, and it is clearly a racist website. The name alone is indicative of the loyalties of the author—he is pro-Nazi and anti-Semitic. Berg’s presentation of material would only be persuasive for those who already share some of his opinions.

Yet another denial website is The Holocaust Historiography Project (<http://www.historiography-project.com>). This site is not run by a publishing company nor is

there information listing the name of any individual in charge. The Holocaust Historiography Project claims to be “Dedicated to examining the disparities between ‘the Holocaust’ as it is commonly known, and the actual historiography of ‘the Holocaust.’” The site is filled with various links, including one for cartoons and a section called “Holocaust Satire.” There is even mention of the website’s “6th Annual David McCalden Most Macabre Halloween Holocaust Tale Challenge.”<sup>89</sup> Although The Holocaust Historiography Project is not as flashy as other denial websites, it is extremely anti-Semitic and mocks the Holocaust and its survivors. It is likely this is another website that would only appeal to people who already harbor anti-Semitic thoughts rather than to the average reader.

One website that takes a different approach to spreading denial is Holocaust Denial Videos (<http://www.holocaustdenialvideos.com>). Holocaust Denial Videos contains numerous videos rather than documents. The site advertises itself as having “9 hours of free internet video about how the holocaust is a myth. A Huge Lie which justifies War, Militarism, and Jewish Colonialism.” The only information provided for who runs the website is a YouTube account username: denierbud. Otherwise, no information about the site manager is provided. However, according to his/her manifesto:

I advocate kindness and good vibes toward all Jewish people. I like black people and people of all races, nationalities, religions; and I like gay people. It goes without saying but due to the stigma associated with holocaust denial, it needs to be said. I feel that it was Hitler's belief in military solutions that was primarily responsible for the European disaster that was World War II. I just believe the holocaust is a hoax.<sup>90</sup>

The site bears no academic markings whatsoever and is another website with low-quality content. For example, one video claims to explain “how Treblinka, Sobibor, and Belzec were not death camps, thereby debunking 1/3 of the holocaust. Asks questions like, ‘Would the

Germans have really put a fence made out of tree branches around a deathcamp?’ Answer: ‘Uh, no, that's silly.’”<sup>91</sup> It would be very difficult for one to view this website as the creation of one who has been trained as an historian—the site is very unprofessional. Unfortunately, more than one denier has referred to this website as “sealing the deal” for their belief in denial propaganda. They had been considering Holocaust denial as the truth, and watching these videos merely confirmed their beliefs.<sup>92</sup> Although this amateur website might not be effective at promoting denial to most people, as far as these particular deniers are concerned, it was a dangerous tool. It is likely a person would need to be in agreement with Holocaust denial prior to viewing these videos in order to accept them as the truth.

An even more hostile and offensive form of Holocaust denial can be found in discussion fora. The most well-known forum—among deniers—is located on the website of the Committee for Open Debate on the Holocaust (<http://www.codoh.com>). CODOH was founded by Bradley R. Smith, and he also maintains the website. This website offers links to many Holocaust denial articles and sites as well as the option to download free denial books. The introduction to the statement of purpose states,

“CODOH was founded to encourage intellectual freedom with respect to the Holocaust. CODOH is not a membership organization and is not affiliated with any political party or political group. It is not the purpose of CODOH to prove "the Holocaust never happened," or that European Jews did not suffer a catastrophe during the Hitlerian regime. Those who try to convince you it is want to muddy the waters. While we no longer believe the gas chamber stories (we used to very much believe them) or the "genocide" theory, we remain open to being convinced we are wrong.”<sup>93</sup>

The most notable aspect of CODOH is the discussion forum. The section labeled “Holocaust” debate includes many postings by Holocaust deniers. Examples of thread titles include: “Helpful Hints on how to Deny the Holocaust,” “Making Fuel out of Jewish Fat,” “Elie was NOT even

there until long after the war?” and “Did the Nazis ever make any claims matching the Americans?!” The discussions found in these threads are hostile and offensive, and very different from the academic attempts made by authors of print literature.<sup>94</sup>

Another, less popular discussion forum is called the Real Open-Debate on the Holocaust (<http://www.rodoh.us>). There is no information anywhere on this site to indicate who is in charge, but users can email a “Scott Smith” with any problems. RODOH claims to be the “Real Open-Debate on the Holocaust. For Believers, Deniers, Defenders, and Skeptics.”<sup>95</sup> It also promises to be a “free-speech forum” that is “predicated upon the idea that the other side is worthy of real open-debate, regardless of who the other side is.”<sup>96</sup> Unlike CODOH, RODOH is home to more of a mix of both deniers and their skeptics. Whereas CODOH is extremely hostile to non-deniers, RODOH is slightly more welcoming to people with differing ideas.<sup>97</sup> However, this does not make RODOH a friendly environment. Discussion thread titles include: “Revisionist Humor about the Holy HOAX,” “But these concentration camps didnt exist!!!!,” “The battle for births of good blood, the struggle against bringing more Jews into the world,” and “Elie Wiesel: ‘The Most authoritative Living Witness’ of The Shoah?”<sup>98</sup> Debaters on RODOH have strayed just as far from print literature as those who frequent CODOH. Users on neither site attempt to mask their discussions as “scholarly.” They are more interested in arguing with their opponents rather than genuinely debating a topic.

The internet has steered denial away from its days of mimicking scholarly works. Internet denial is hostile and uninviting, particularly in Holocaust denial discussion fora. Deniers on fora not only lash out at people who defend the history of the Holocaust, but have a tendency to fight amongst themselves.<sup>99</sup> They insult each other and often question the intelligence of other users.<sup>100</sup> It seems odd that people who are spreading lies and propaganda do no support one

another. These fora are by no means judgment free or safe. This may be because anyone can post anything on the internet, or it might be the delicate subject matter. Deniers become angry when discussing the Holocaust. Because of this, the internet has severely degraded the former “quality” of Holocaust denial. While authors of print literature have focused on preserving a scholarly image to their works, authors of websites do not share these goals. Internet deniers are more concerned with spreading propaganda as quickly as possible than with maintaining any quality in their work.

### **Comparison and Findings**

Although the internet and print literature are two very distinct media by which Holocaust denial is presented, they are not entirely separate entities. There are several cases where print literature makes an appearance online. Companies that publish denial literature maintain websites. Historical Review Press (<http://www.ety.com/HRP>), Castle Hill Publishers (<http://vho.org>), Institute for Historical Review (<http://www.ihr.org>) and Theses and Dissertations Press (<http://www.tadp.org>) are all publishing companies with websites. These sites offer both free downloads of certain denial literature as well as order forms to purchase literature. Authors and promoters of denial literature have websites. Ernst Zündel’s Zundelsite (<http://www.zundelsite.org>) promotes denial as well as sells books he has written or published. Arthur Butz and Robert Faurisson are editorial advisors of Inconvenient History (<http://www.inconvenienthistory.com/index.php>), an online revisionist journal. Thomas Dalton is one of the many columnists at the same website. Articles previously published in *The Journal of Historical Review*, a print revisionist journal, can be accessed on the website of the Institute for Historical Review. Some printed books and pamphlets are also available online via non-

publishing sites, such as the Committee for Open-Debate on the Holocaust (<http://www.codoh.com>). In these ways, print denial has been updated to be included in the age of internet denial.

Another important way in which print denial has appeared online is in the continuity of the arguments of deniers. According to Richard Evans, for the most part all deniers follow the same four beliefs. They agree that far fewer than six million Jews were murdered; gas chambers were not used to kill people; there was no official order for a systematic annihilation of Jews; and the Holocaust is a propaganda myth used by Jews for financial gain.<sup>101</sup> Daniela Di Giacomo claims that Holocaust denial on the internet is consistent with published Holocaust denial.<sup>102</sup> She notes that on websites Holocaust deniers claim there had never been an official order for the extermination of Jews; challenge the use of gas chambers, crematoria and diesel exhaust vans; and “the websites speak of this ‘Holocaust industry’ in numerous ways to illustrate their assertions, the most common being that Jews complain about and use the Holocaust as a tool for financial and political gain.”<sup>103</sup> This continuity is important to note, because it shows that although the medium of presentation is changing, the core arguments remain the same—the deniers are not changing their ways.

One notable difference between print literature and denial on the internet is in the writing styles and presentation of information. Authors of print literature attempt to pose as academics and—for the most part—maintain a scholarly style while writing. Richard Evans notes that much of print literature “tried to present its arguments as the outcome of serious historical scholarship, resting on a combination of detailed documentary research and careful scholarly reasoning. Often it was extremely ingenious and required a considerable effort to unpick and to refute.”<sup>104</sup> Deborah Lipstadt explains how Arthur Butz’s *The Hoax of the Twentieth Century*

imitated legitimate scholarship by including “the requisite myriad notes and large bibliography that were the hallmarks of scholarly works, quoting many of the prominent historians who worked in this field and thanking a number of legitimate research centers and archives.”<sup>105</sup> A more recent example is found in Thomas Dalton’s *Debating the Holocaust* where the author “intend[s] to present an objective, impartial look at this debate” and “will discuss the latest and strongest arguments on both sides, examine the replies, and offer an unbiased assessment.”<sup>106</sup> Because authors of print literature want their work to be taken seriously, he also makes the claim that his book “holds to a high standard of scholarship.”<sup>107</sup> Deniers who publish print literature understand that Holocaust denial cannot become publically accepted if it is not considered legitimate among academics, making it necessary for denial literature to mimic a scholarly style. However, these “scholarly works” fail to do so and often adopt a mocking tone, such as writing “holocaust” rather than the Holocaust.<sup>108</sup> Despite his claims to be unbiased, Dalton refers to the “Holocaust Industry” and “Holocaust story.”<sup>109</sup> He claims his use of “alleged” and “so-called” are to indicate he is withholding assessment, but he is clearly not as unbiased as he wants his reader to believe.<sup>110</sup> Due to the nature of Holocaust denial, it is impossible for deniers to maintain the façade of a scholarly image.

With the exception of the website for the Institute for Historical Review and Inconvenient History, most denial websites fail to attempt a scholarly guise and seek instead to catch the reader’s eye with boldness—although Inconvenient History does have a design draped with barbed wire.<sup>111</sup> These websites contain pictures and bright colors—red, black, yellow—and many exclamation marks. They try to jump out at the reader as being the truth. The websites call the Holocaust a “monstrous hoax” and claim to “make a difference.”<sup>112</sup> Some websites include flashing words or moving images to draw the reader’s attention.<sup>113</sup> For the most part,

deniers who run these websites do not seem to be as worried about being taken seriously as “academics” as authors of print denial literature. The main goal of these websites is to appeal to the reader visually and draw them in. Today’s younger generations have grown up in a very visual society, and denial websites attempt to take advantage of this by capturing attention with images. The ultimate objective is to make people want to read the propaganda on the websites. However, while creators of denial websites may successfully lure their readers in, they may be unable to influence their opinions. By neglecting the scholarly aspect, deniers risk turning potential supporters away from Holocaust denial.

Discussion fora present an extreme case among denial websites. The writing found in discussion fora is very different from print literature, and at times even strays from other denial websites. Discussion fora such as RODOH and CODOH are very hostile and lose the mask of scholarship entirely. Users go one step further than the “so-called Holocaust” and refer to the Holocaust as the “Holohoax” or “Holocau\$.”<sup>114</sup> Deniers on discussion fora are particularly hostile toward users who do not agree with denial propaganda. They use offensive language and swear at each other. One denier on RODOH responded to another user who stated they believed in the Holocaust by writing

“Fucking A - another Zionist sock puppet trying to defame honest, legitimate Nazis. You've got it ass backwards sweetheart. Go back to 1955 and join the Ku Klux Klan, chimp. No one states that the Nazis/Ukrainian/Lithuanian/Latvian collaborators butchered Kike scum because they had it coming. How 1955 can you get. That sort of statement makes Holocaust deniers like Moose and me look like flaming retards. Let me set it straight for you, szizlow. It is 2010. Got that? The proper accusation against Jews is that they were Stalinists AND they hoaxed the Holocaust. In other words, Einstein, they deserved to get shot starved and gassed for their general Jewish pissyness, but they fucking only suffered about as much as the average Scandinavian. But because Jews are wieners and complainers, they made up all this Holocaust/Einsatzgruppen bullshit to collect reparations for Israel”<sup>115</sup>



It is not surprising that a denier would be so extremely hostile toward one who does not share his beliefs. However, the vulgarity of the response certainly bears no mark of scholarship. This particular denier seems more concerned with releasing their anger than persuading someone to accept denial propaganda. In the same thread, another denier begins their introduction by writing, ““Hello to all of you mentally ill people at Rodoh; hello to the deniers as well,” suggesting there is something wrong with people who do not agree with denial.<sup>116</sup> These are merely two examples, but the discussion fora are full of the same antagonistic language and writing style, especially toward those who are not deniers.

Much of the lack of scholarship in denial literature can be attributed to the subject matter. Holocaust denial is not based in fact, but is anti-Semitic propaganda. However, the absence of scholarship is also related to who the deniers are. Overall, the background information available on deniers is limited. Deniers often attempt to disguise their backgrounds, and the internet is a publishing medium that can protect anonymity. Many of the websites lack information about who created them, or only offer a name and no description. Users on discussion fora have monikers and are not required to provide personal information. Because of this, deniers are offering their own opinions without having to prove themselves. On RODOH there is a thread where users have the option to “introduce themselves,” and some users opted to provide basic information. As can be expected, they are of all different backgrounds, and very few claim to be educated as historians.<sup>117</sup> But even this is questionable—there are no screening processes and any of the users could be lying about their histories. Holocaust denial is propaganda created by people on the fringe who are unwilling or not required to divulge their identity—possibly because they lack credentials and know people would not trust their judgments. It is also important to

note how few historians actually believe Holocaust denial. This is evidence that the propaganda is not as effective among the well-educated.

In order to judge how dangerous Holocaust denial is, it is important to understand why people are deniers to begin with. Daniela Di Giacomo claims Holocaust deniers seek to exonerate Hitler and the Third Reich. If they can successfully deny the Holocaust, “Hitler and the Nazi regime could once again be praised for their military brilliance and accomplishments, without having negative images of genocide associated with them.”<sup>118</sup> The atrocities of the Holocaust are an enormous stain on the history of National Socialism. With the history of the Holocaust intact, it is impossible for National Socialists to garner support from people who view Nazism as evil. Richard Evans notes, “a good deal of them seemed to be linked to racial hatred and anti-Semitic animosity in the most direct possible way.”<sup>119</sup> However, anti-Semitism and support for Hitler are not the only reasons people fall into denial.

Users on the discussion fora RODOH and CODOH cite several different reasons for becoming Holocaust deniers. Only one user references the exoneration of Hitler, claiming they “became interested in holo' rev a few years ago after recognizing its potential for whitewashing the Nazi record and rehabilitating Hitler.”<sup>120</sup> However, this same user responds in a different thread with a completely different reasoning for becoming a denier, so it is probable this comment was an inappropriate joke. Even so, the ease at which the user can joke about “rehabilitating Hitler” suggests he or she might be sympathetic to the Nazis and possibly desire an exoneration of Hitler. None of the users admitted they were deniers because they are anti-Semitic, but it is possible no one wanted to openly admit to being a racist in any capacity.

Several people referenced print Holocaust denial literature as their introduction to denial:

“This led me to download Arthur Butz's Hoax of the 20th Century. Reading that book had the opposite effect to the one I expected. It was truly an epiphany for me, though it was a long process to internalize revisionist ideas given the relentless bombardment from the Holocaust Industry I had received much of my life.”<sup>121</sup>

“Butz's book 'The Hoax of the Twentieth Century' also played a key role.”<sup>122</sup>

“My introduction to Holocaust Revisionism was Dr. Butz's THE HOAX OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY.”<sup>123</sup>

“I went on to read Mattogno, Graf and Rudolf. I was impressed that it is the "deniers" who write quietly and factually with references to their sources and the other side who play on emotion, and who simply recount dubious eye-witness testimony as fact.”<sup>124</sup>

It is important to note the role *The Hoax of the Twentieth Century* has played in introducing people to Holocaust denial. Unfortunately, Butz's mock scholarship has clearly been effective in convincing some people the Holocaust was a “hoax.”

Other deniers claim the mere fact that Holocaust denial is illegal in some countries made them question the legitimacy of the Holocaust. One user on CODOH asked, “what truth is it that needs to be protected by law? why would someone propose to legislate something that is self evident as state-sanctioned-truth? Who are those supposed hate-monger who are being thrown in jail? What crime have they committed? etc.”[sic]<sup>125</sup> Another CODOH user also admitted to questioning the Holocaust after “Learning it was against the law in several countries and that you could be jailed for simply questioning the official version is what got me started. Learning Zundle was in jail for publishing a 28 page booklet that he didn't write, and that had no anti or hate language in it.”<sup>126</sup> This particular “road to denial” is an unfortunate but very real side-effect of governments trying to protect people and put a halt to anti-Semitic propaganda. Some people have trouble trusting the government; they feel it is a corrupt establishment that keeps secrets

from the public. Placing laws over what one can and cannot talk about causes these people to question the reasons. By conducting research on Holocaust denial, these people feel they are defending their intellectual freedom—something they believe is being jeopardized by the government.

Some users on CODOH and RODOH relate personal experiences which led them to Holocaust denial. One user referenced:

the Iraq war and the aftermath. I felt that the victorious allies were hyping up atrocities that had very poor factual basis to provide justification for a war based on greed. I decided that this was probably a repeating pattern and after being told my questioning aspects of the Anfal and various HRW reports was ‘almost as bad as being a Holocaust Denier’ and after visiting the various sites in Iraq/Kurdistan that such reports were based on and interviewing locals, I decided that I would specialise in the Holocaust.[sic]<sup>127</sup>

Another user referenced 9/11, while yet another “became interested in holocaust denial through having difficulty reconciling the Germany I experienced when I lived there with the one I was familiar with from crappy movies and books.”<sup>128</sup> These deniers then proceeded to research denial and believe the propaganda.

Last but not least, there are deniers who cite the internet as their reason for becoming Holocaust deniers. Two deniers referenced the website Holocaust Denial Videos as “sealing the deal” for their belief in Holocaust denial. This denial video website was not their only reason for believing Holocaust denial, as they also admitted to having denial tendencies previous to watching the videos.<sup>129</sup> One denier did say he “became interested in the Holocaust and HD over the past few years while surfing the web and perusing various CT and extremist websites,” while another:

saw an internet discussion, someone had posted that the sign at Auschwitz was changed from saying the four million were killed to saying that one and a half

million were killed. This was followed by a post calling the OP an anti-semite and a liar. This piqued my interest. From that beginning it took me a few months of internet research to make up my mind. The internet is an invaluable tool as it makes all sort of info available.<sup>130</sup>

In these cases, the denial published on the internet directly resulted in people becoming Holocaust deniers, making it a dangerous asset to Holocaust denial. If it were not for the presence of denial on the internet, it is possible these people might never have become Holocaust deniers. However, these deniers did not mention what websites they were viewing, so it is possible they were not denial websites. This means denial can spread via random internet encounters with deniers.

The core ideas of Holocaust denial have remained the same over the years. In its transition from print literature to the internet, Holocaust denial has continued to be anti-Semitic propaganda with the same arguments. The notable difference between print denial and internet denial is the presentation of the information. Due to the nature of the free publication of the internet, denial published online has become hostile and often uninviting—but somehow manages to spread.

### **Analysis and Conclusion**

Although Holocaust denial is dangerous and a form of anti-Semitism, its presence on the internet is not entirely negative. There are both positives and negatives to denial making its way to the very public sphere of the internet. The positive and negative aspects of the internet and Holocaust denial both help and hurt the quest of deniers. Contrary to popular belief, the rise of the internet and presence of denial has not been as beneficial to Holocaust deniers as one might assume.

There are several positive aspects of Holocaust denial being present on the internet. It is very difficult to ascertain who many of the deniers are. There is little to no information regarding who runs the websites, and users on discussion fora are not required to share any personal information about themselves. The questionable backgrounds of the deniers can lessen the impact of their arguments. If one cannot prove they have proper credentials, the reader may be less inclined to believe what they are writing. This is particularly true for people who have been taught how to identify which internet sources are reliable. Students are often instructed to only rely on trustworthy websites when conducting research for assignments and this is a practice that can carry over into personal investigations. Therefore, it is important for one to have the proper credentials. And if one fails to provide any background information at all, their authority becomes compromised and suspicious.

Another aspect that lessens the threat of Holocaust denial websites is the obvious hostility present on the sites. Many of these sites are clearly anti-Semitic or appear hateful in some way, either in word choice or images.<sup>131</sup> The discussion fora are also extremely hostile. The users are very rude to each other and not very welcoming, particularly toward users who do not agree with denial propaganda. Ironically, deniers in these fora are even rude to other users who share the same basic ideas.<sup>132</sup> They constantly fight amongst themselves rather than support each other in their attempt to spread propaganda. One might think people in this fringe area would be supportive of one another, but that is not a priority of deniers. It is apparent they prefer to argue rather than find anything to agree upon. The hate found on these websites is very uninviting and would likely deter the average reader from wanting to spend time reading and learning more about the subject.

One particularly helpful aspect of the internet is the wealth of information regarding other topics—namely the Holocaust. There are numerous websites available for people to learn about the history of the Holocaust, including the websites for the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (<http://www.ushmm.org>) and Yad Vashem (<http://www.yadvashem.org>).<sup>133</sup> The ability for one to find such a large amount of information about the Holocaust online is extremely helpful for those who want to preserve the truth about the Holocaust, and harmful for promoters of denial propaganda. There are also far fewer denial websites than Holocaust history websites. A Google search for “Holocaust” brings up 16,700,000 results, whereas “Holocaust denial” (without quotes) has 657,000 results, and “Holocaust revisionism” (no quotes) only has 112,000 results.<sup>134</sup> It would be more difficult for one to believe the propaganda when there is so much information available about the history of the Holocaust. A person could do their own research on the Holocaust and learn that deniers are actually spreading lies, not spreading a new version of history.

The vast quantities of information available for the Holocaust relates to another reason not to be overly worried about denial on the internet. A person would need to specifically search for Holocaust denial—or revisionism—in order to find denial websites. Simply searching for “Holocaust” in Google brings up millions of results, but denial websites are not found among the first several pages.<sup>135</sup> Because of this, it is unlikely that a person conducting research on the Holocaust would accidentally stumble upon denial websites, making the presence of denial on the internet less of an active threat than it otherwise could be.

Just as there are reasons to be optimistic about the presence of Holocaust denial on the internet, there are also several reasons to be concerned. The most obvious is the ease with which people can access denial information. It may be more difficult to stumble upon, but if one knows

what to look for, one can easily locate whatever they want. Many sites also sell denial books and offer options to download print literature for free, which results in a spread of literature that people might not have read otherwise.<sup>136</sup> Denial literature can be difficult to find in bookstores, so by knowing who the publisher is a person can order the books online. In addition, a person who may not choose to purchase Holocaust denial literature can download it for free.

Not only is the internet a free and easy way for people to locate information, but it is also a free and easy medium of publication. This benefits deniers who are having difficulty publishing literature, as most denial publishing is either privately done or by a select few denial publishing groups.<sup>137</sup> The internet is a way for deniers to get around this roadblock that prevents them from publishing print literature. Deniers can easily create their own sites and maintain them at a low cost—and often for no expense at all. This allows the possibility of a constant increase in denial information posted online. It is easy and free to do, and deniers are taking advantage of it, as is evidenced by the denial websites currently in existence.

Besides being a cost effective medium of publication, the internet is nowhere near as regulated as print literature. Because of this, anyone can publish anything on the internet. There are not the same barriers in publishing denial on the internet that exist for putting the same information in a book. There are many websites in existence without factual information, and Holocaust denial websites are some of them. Deniers can easily make up any propaganda and post it on a website under the guise of being the “truth,” and there is very little that can be done. With more regulation, internet denial could be slowed down or stopped, but there very few rules at the moment.<sup>138</sup> Internet deniers are able to get away with publishing as much propaganda as they choose.



Unfortunately, not everyone is wise enough to realize that not everyone online is legitimate. Many people assume that if it has been posted on the internet, it must be true. This is why the freedom of the internet is such an issue. A person can knowingly publish falsehoods online and label it the “truth,” and if the wrong person reads it, they might fall for the lie. Ultimately, the most dangerous aspect of internet denial is this unfortunate fact. Too many people believe anything they read online, which gives a large amount of power to denial websites. There may be a lot standing in the way of a person actually reading the information, but if they do come across a denial website, there is always the chance they will take the deniers’ stories as the truth.

However, the central issue is whether or not Holocaust denial is more dangerous now because of the internet. The answer to this question is both yes and no. Denial is more dangerous simply because of the nature of the global, almost limitless reach and free publication of the internet. Anyone can publish anything they want online. At the same time, it is less dangerous because of a lack of “professionalism” on most denial websites. Although many people believe anything they see online, there are also people who are less likely to accept new information if it does not appear reliable.

Even Holocaust deniers share these varying opinions regarding the effect of the internet on denial. Some Holocaust deniers agree that the internet actually poses a problem for Holocaust denial. One denier who posts at RODOH writes:

In essence I think the Internet has probably killed revisionism. The hey day of revisionism was probably the eighties and the early nineties when there was a paper based denial movement. The Internet, aside from providing some superficial advantages in distribution has resulted in a lowering of quality.<sup>139</sup>

His/her fellow RODOH user agrees:

although it is easier to people to read "Revisionist" views by getting it free Online than buying an independently-publishing book, that doesn't do a lot for quality of product and the depth and breadth of the research--in which case you get what you pay for, at least in the short term. The Internet is both informative and marginalizing, and propaganda ain't cheap.<sup>140</sup>

It is interesting that these deniers who frequent a denial website recognize that what they do does not actually help their future goals. If their aim is to spread denial propaganda, they are not going about it in the most effective manner. By lowering the quality of the presentation style of their propaganda, deniers are unable to gain new followers as easily and further marginalize denial.

The other side of this story includes the opinion that the internet has, in fact, helped to successfully promote Holocaust denial. A third RODOH user believes this, stating "The internet has helped the distribution of revisionist ideas tremendously. The quality material is still available as books, only free download versions."<sup>141</sup> CODOH users also support the internet as a medium for promoting Holocaust denial. One user praises the internet, calling it a "tremendous ally," explaining how:

before the Internet, Revisionists printed and mailed newsletters...In addition to newsletters, books were sent mail order. People who bought the books generally didn't discuss the topic because of the emotional reaction they received. Because the mainstream media tended to only rarely mention revisionism and then exclusively for the purpose of disparaging it, Revisionists were early users of the Internet, posting articles on Usenet areas like alt.revisionism. Then Revisionist websites followed. The cost of distributing information dropped. The ability to gain access to revisionist arguments became nearly universal.<sup>142</sup>

The user concludes by claiming "the Internet has been the difference between life and death for Holocaust Revisionism"<sup>143</sup> As suggested by this particular denier, it is possible that without

participation on the internet, the fringe area of Holocaust denial might become even more marginalized.

There is also a third side to the question of whether or not Holocaust denial is more dangerous because of the internet and it neither positively nor negatively affects denial. This claim can be made because the internet is not likely a starting place for people actually becoming deniers. The fact that it would be difficult for a person to accidentally arrive at denial website means a person would need to specifically search for denial websites in order to find them. This means it is more likely that a person already has denial tendencies before they ever approach a denial website. The majority of people who visit denial websites do so because it is a subject that already interests them

Despite the danger of the subject of Holocaust denial, its presence on the internet does not necessarily increase the threat. The nature of free publication both harms and helps denial propaganda. Although some people will believe anything they read, the intense hostility of denial websites and lack of “professionalism” can have the unintentional effect of driving people in a different direction. Therefore, Holocaust denial is harmed by the enthusiasm of its promoters, effectively blunting its impact.

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