

Holocaust Distortions on Social Media After 10/7

The Antisemitic Mobilization

Research Report

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Executive Summary

An analysis of Holocaust denial and distortion on five social media platforms in October 2023 shows the pervasiveness of Holocaust denial and distortion on many of these platforms. The study also sheds light on how these distorted references to the Holocaust are weaponized to promote antisemitism. In the wake of the pogrom by Hamas in Israel, references to the Holocaust were used to accuse Israel of genocide and to call for a mobilization against Israel and Jews, including the murder of Jews.

We examined Holocaust-related content on YouTube, X (formerly Twitter), Truth Social, Gab, and 4chan. The latter two are known for their far-right user base, including neo-Nazis. Utilizing the search function of each platform on six different days in October 2023, we analyzed 900 posts, the first 30 results for the term "Holocaust" on each platform and each day.

Instead of information about the Holocaust and Holocaust commemoration, X/Twitter and Truth Social consistently returned results that included Holocaust denial and distortions. Gab and 4chan, with their predominantly far-right user bases, exhibited an even higher concentration of antisemitic and Holocaust denial messages. By contrast, YouTube employs algorithms that prioritize search results with predominantly informational videos about the Holocaust. However, some of the comments were also antisemitic.

The study found a disturbing trend of increasing radicalism in antisemitic messages throughout October, including explicit calls for violence and mass murder. This suggests that discussions about the Holocaust are now being actively exploited to fuel antisemitic mobilization. A central element of this mobilization is the accusation that Israel is committing genocide or perpetrating a "Palestinian Holocaust."

These findings underscore the urgent need for social media platforms to implement more effective measures to combat Holocaust denial and distortion. The weaponization of these harmful narratives poses a significant threat to the preservation of historical truth and the promotion of tolerance, non-violence, and understanding.

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Holocaust Distortion and Denial - Banned from Social Media Platforms?

Holocaust denial is a conspiracy theory that claims that the vast evidence of research and testimony has been fabricated or exaggerated and that Holocaust remembrance is being used for nefarious purposes. Holocaust distortions are closely related. The International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance offers five examples of Holocaust distortion. “1) Intentional efforts to excuse or minimize the impact of the Holocaust or its principal elements, including collaborators and allies of Nazi Germany; 2) Gross minimization of the number of the victims of the Holocaust in contradiction to reliable sources; 3) Attempts to blame the Jews for causing their own genocide; 4) Statements that cast the Holocaust as a positive historical event. Those statements are not Holocaust denial but are closely connected to it as a radical form of antisemitism. They may suggest that the Holocaust did not go far enough in accomplishing its goal of ‘the Final Solution of the Jewish Question;’ and 5) Attempts to blur the responsibility for the establishment of concentration and death camps devised and operated by Nazi Germany by putting blame on other nations or ethnic groups.”¹ However, engaging in inappropriate comparisons that implicitly trivialize the Holocaust can be viewed as another manifestation of distortion. Such comparisons arise when certain contemporary events, which fall significantly short of genocide, are asserted to be "equivalent" to the Holocaust. This distortion is fueled by the widespread use of the Holocaust as a symbol encompassing all that is reprehensible, contributing to the misrepresentation of historical atrocities and diminishing the gravity of the Holocaust's unique horror.²

Mainstream social media platforms operating in Western countries have taken some voluntary measures to reduce hate speech, including Holocaust denial. After some pressure, YouTube pledged to take down videos that deny the Holocaust and other “well documented violent events” in the summer of 2019.³ META updated its hate speech policy in October 2020 to “prohibit any content that denies or distorts the Holocaust.”⁴ TikTok followed suit a year later, promising to remove Holocaust denial and antisemitism from its

¹ International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance, “What Are Holocaust Denial and Distortion?,” October 10, 2013, <https://www.holocaustremembrance.com/resources/working-definitions-charters/working-definition-holocaust-denial-and-distortion>.

² Alvin H. Rosenfeld, *The End of the Holocaust* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2011).

³ YouTube Team, “Our Ongoing Work to Tackle Hate,” [blog.youtube](https://blog.youtube/news-and-events/our-ongoing-work-to-tackle-hate/), June 5, 2023, <https://blog.youtube/news-and-events/our-ongoing-work-to-tackle-hate/>.

⁴ Monika Bickert, “Removing Holocaust Denial Content,” *Meta* (blog), October 12, 2020, <https://about.fb.com/news/2020/10/removing-holocaust-denial-content/>.

platform.⁵ X's (formerly Twitter) updated policy from April 2023 does not explicitly prohibit Holocaust denial but it prohibits the use of "images altered to include hateful symbols or references to a mass murder that targeted a protected category, e.g., manipulating images of individuals to include yellow Star of David badges, in reference to the Holocaust."⁶ Truth Social does not ban Holocaust denial explicitly but its terms of service prohibit "obscene, lewd, lascivious, filthy, violent, harassing, libelous, slanderous, or otherwise objectionable" contributions and advocating or inciting, encouraging, or threatening physical harm.⁷ Interestingly, 4chan, a platform that is notorious for racist content, says that users must not publish racist content.⁸ Gab on the other hand says that "the First Amendment remains the Website's standard for content moderation" and only illegal content is banned.⁹

However, studies such as the "History under Attack" report published by UNESCO and the United Nations show that Holocaust denial is widespread on all major platforms.¹⁰ And the Anti-Defamation League's 2021 Online Holocaust Denial Report Card and its 2023 update show that platforms often fail to remove Holocaust denial content when reported by ordinary users.¹¹

Antisemitic content increased significantly in October 2023, including on mainstream platforms, such as Facebook, YouTube, X/Twitter, and TikTok. A study of discussions in comment sections of YouTube and Facebook profiles of major news outlets in the UK, France, and Germany found an alarmingly high percentage of comments celebrating, supporting, or justifying the Hamas terror attacks.¹² The Anti-Defamation League reported a significant increase in antisemitism on X/Twitter.¹³ "TikTok faces escalating accusations that it

⁵ TikTok, "Our Commitment to Holocaust Remembrance and Fighting Antisemitism," Newsroom | TikTok, October 13, 2021, <https://newsroom.tiktok.com/en-eu/our-commitment-to-holocaust-remembrance-and-fighting-antisemitism>.

⁶ X, "X's Policy on Hateful Conduct | X Help," April 2023, <https://help.twitter.com/en/rules-and-policies/hateful-conduct-policy>.

⁷ Truth Social, "Truth Social Terms of Service," 2023, <https://help.truthsocial.com/legal/terms-of-service>.

⁸ 4chan, "Rules," 2023, <https://www.4channel.org/rules>.

⁹ Gab, "Terms of Service - Gab Social," January 18, 2023, <https://gab.com/about/tos>.

¹⁰ UNESCO and United Nations, *History under Attack. Holocaust Denial and Distortion on Social Media* (Paris, 2022).

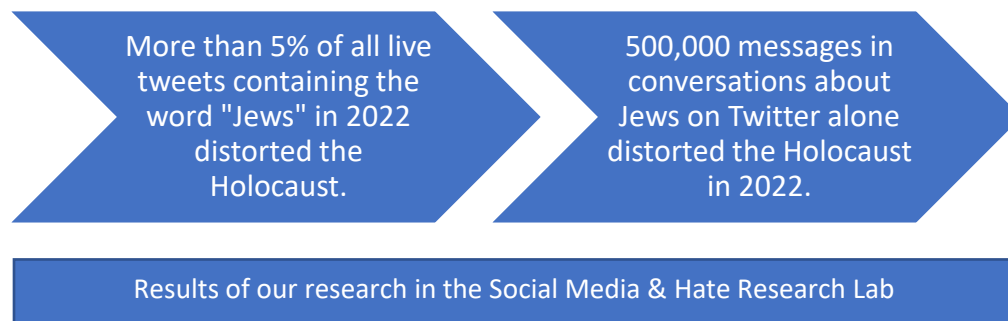
¹¹ Anti-Defamation League (ADL), "2023 Online Holocaust Denial Report Card," 2023, <https://www.adl.org/resources/report/2023-online-holocaust-denial-report-card>.

¹² Matthias J. Becker et al., "Celebrating Terror: Antisemitism Online after the Hamas Attacks on Israel: Preliminary Results I" (Berlin: Technical University of Berlin, Centre for Research on Antisemitism, October 26, 2023), <https://doi.org/10.14279/depositonce-19143>.

¹³ Anti-Defamation League (ADL), "Online Antisemitism Increased after Hamas Attack," November 9, 2023, <https://www.adl.org/resources/blog/online-antisemitism-increased-after-hamas-attack>.

promotes pro-Palestinian, anti-Israel content,” headlined the New York Times in mid-November.¹⁴

In our ongoing research on antisemitism on X/Twitter, we have seen evidence that Holocaust distortion, i.e., minimizing the Holocaust or making inappropriate comparisons, was widespread long before the anti-Jewish mass violence by Hamas. Based on representative samples of data from the full Twitter archive and manual annotation of these samples,¹⁵ we found that more than five percent of all live tweets containing the word Jews in 2022 distorted the Holocaust. With more than 10 million tweets about Jews, this means that well over 500,000 messages in conversations about Jews on Twitter alone distorted the Holocaust in 2022. And that does not include messages that have been deleted. Not all these distortions are clearly antisemitic, at least not according to the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance’s (IHRA) Working Definition of Antisemitism which includes a narrow definition of Holocaust denial. However, we used this definition for our annotation and found that about one-fifth of the antisemitic messages in conversations about Jews were Holocaust-related. Holocaust distortions are thus an important part of today's manifestations of antisemitism.



¹⁴ Sapna Maheshwari, “Jewish Celebrities and Influencers Confront TikTok Executives in Private Call,” *The New York Times*, November 16, 2023, sec. Technology, <https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/16/technology/tiktok-jewish-open-letter-antisemitism.html>.

¹⁵ Gunther Jikeli and Katharina Soemer, “The Value of Manual Annotation in Assessing Trends of Hate Speech on Social Media: Was Antisemitism on the Rise during the Tumultuous Weeks of Elon Musk’s Twitter Takeover?,” *Journal of Computational Social Science*, 2023.

Methods

While we know that Holocaust denial can be found on all platforms, we wanted to find out what users see when they search for references to the Holocaust on major and fringe platforms. What do platforms choose to show users when they search for information about the Holocaust? What kinds of narratives are being presented?

We selected two major platforms, YouTube, and X (formerly Twitter), and three relatively small or fringe platforms, Truth Social, Gab, and 4chan. The latter two are known to be platforms populated by many far-right users, including neo-Nazis. As of October 2023, YouTube had reportedly 2491 million users and X/Twitter 666 million.¹⁶ It is estimated that Truth Social has 2 million,¹⁷ Gab about 4 million,¹⁸ and 4chan 22 million users.¹⁹

We used the search function of the platforms and searched for the term "Holocaust." We conducted the searches with a fresh account, or without an account if possible, so that our queries would not be influenced by previous user history. We had planned to run the searches four times in October 2023, one week apart. This would allow us to see a trend over time. We started our searches on all platforms on Friday, October 6, 2023. However, after the Hamas massacre in Israel on October 7th, we decided to run the searches every day of that weekend and then every Saturday for the rest of the month. Thus, we searched for the term "Holocaust" on each platform on six days, October 6-8, 14, 21, and 28, 2023. We used the first 30 results that the search returned for each query. We manually reviewed 150 posts for each of the dates, for 900 total posts across the seven platforms, describing our observations for each day and platform. In our analysis, we focused on forms of Holocaust denial and distortion. When we saw other forms of antisemitism including anti-Zionist forms of antisemitism, we focused on those with references to the Holocaust.

¹⁶ We Are Social, DataReportal, and Meltwater, "Most Popular Social Networks Worldwide as of October 2023, Ranked by Number of Monthly Active Users (in Millions). Chart" (Statista, October 1, 2023), <https://www.statista.com/statistics/272014/global-social-networks-ranked-by-number-of-users/>.

¹⁷ Matthew Woodward, "Truth Social Statistics 2023: How Does It Compare?," September 20, 2023, <https://www.searchlogistics.com/learn/statistics/truth-social-statistics/>.

¹⁸ <https://www.eurekaalert.org/news-releases/924295>

¹⁹ <https://www.4chan.org/press>

Results

Holocaust denial and distortions are frequently displayed when users search for posts about the Holocaust on most social media platforms, albeit to different degrees. Perhaps unsurprisingly, users will not find much information and empathy for victims of the Holocaust on platforms with a far-right user base, such as 4chan and Gab and Holocaust denial is widespread. While there is more diversity on X/Twitter and Truth Social, it was astonishing to see the amount of Holocaust denial on these platforms, and even endorsing the Holocaust. It might be a sign that X/Twitter is drifting towards the fringes or perhaps even more worrisome, that Holocaust denial is so widespread in the mainstream now that it shows up often in search results on X/Twitter.

The radicalism of antisemitic messages, including calls for violence, increased during the month of October. This is an indication that discussions about the Holocaust are now being used for an antisemitic mobilization, most openly on fringe platforms. The accusation that Israel is committing genocide, or a "Palestinian Holocaust" is an important factor in the antisemitic emotionalization and mobilization.

One positive exception was YouTube, which used algorithms that delivered mostly unbiased videos in search results, which began to change somewhat towards the end of October, three weeks after the pogrom in Israel and the war in Gaza. The YouTube videos were often documentaries produced by traditional media organizations. The videos shown were uploaded several months or years before October 7, 2023. Some of the comments on these videos were recent and some of them were antisemitic.

Twitter and Truth Social's search results primarily displayed recent posts, but not always in chronological order, suggesting that their search algorithms prioritize certain content. Gab and 4chan appear to employ simpler search algorithms, presenting results chronologically.

4chan

On October 6, a day before the 10/7 massacre, more than a third of the top 30 search results about the Holocaust on 4chan openly denied the Holocaust or called for a second Holocaust. One comment read "*Why don't Jews ever feel guilty about lying about the holocaust or about black people? Is it true that absolute power corrupts absolutely?*" and "**STOP DENYING THE HOLOCAUST it needs to happen.**" On October 7, the search results were

similar. None of the messages commemorated the Holocaust, the majority denied the Holocaust, and none expressed any sympathy for Jewish victims. A day after the massacre in Israel, on October 8, three posts related to the attack, none of them sympathetic to the Israelis. One of them expressed existential fear of Jews and discredited Israel by calling it a “Zionist entity.” It read in capital letters, “*Backed into a corner, the Zionist entity will create a nuclear Holocaust to take the whole planet down with them.*” To which another user replied, “[...] *this will be the last straw. You would see normies actually advocate for a holocaust (a real one)*”. But the fresh news of the October 7 massacre was too much even for some of 4chan's antisemites. “*They just beheaded an Israeli soldier... Well, it was fun while it lasted, but I'm out. Fuck those barbarians are isis tier, who the fuck in their right mind supports that?*”

A week later, about two-thirds of the top 30 threads included some form of Holocaust denial. Almost all of the comments were antisemitic. Two-thirds were related to Israel and almost all of those were antisemitic. However, one post expressed sympathy for babies killed in the Hamas massacre, which was met by antisemitic comments, and one post included a positive, albeit sexualized image of an Israeli female soldier, which was also met with an antisemitic comment. Shockingly, one post celebrated the killing of an Israeli by Hamas with “Allah Akbar” and included the link to a tweet showing a video of this murder. The post also included a meme of a frog-man paraglider flying over “Palestine” (Figure 1). Users of the political far right have adopted the Pepe-the-frog image for themselves. The meme can be read as an identification of a white nationalist with the Hamas terrorists who infiltrated Israel with paragliders and killed Jews.

File: [20231007_132334.jpg](#) (162 KB, 1024x1024)



/pol/ Anonymous 10/14/23(Sat)21:13:43 No.444833632 [Reply]

Alqassam div. of Hamas shooting a high ranking Israeli officer with a single bullet to the head, then finishing him with 2 more rounds

Allah Akbar

<https://twitter.com/Roaastudies/status/1713233385953325542?t=EV8kilGBirH0SaHaqcsDAw&s=19>

>> Anonymous 10/14/23(Sat)22:32:00 No.444842710

>>444842286

>numbers were approximations

Just like the holocaust and dead babies? Fuck you. Jews don't have 120 IQ and Arabs aren't 62

Figure 1: Post on 4chan identifying with Hamas terrorists.

Another post called even more directly for the mass murder of Jews. “By typing in this thread you denounce Israel as a legitimate state, denounce the Talmud and endorse TKD (Total Kike Death),” was one of the phrases that accompanied an image showing a white female fighter with a green Hamas headband killing an Israeli soldier, surrounded by the slogan “CHIP - Comfy Happening in Palestine.” The “CHIP” meme is part of a wider campaign on 4chan with hundreds of similar “CHIP” memes that are used to start threads, each including the above sentence and updated links related to news about the war, using sources such as Al-Jazeera, RT, and al-Mayadeen, a pro-Hezbollah news network.²⁰

On October 21, 2023, endorsing the Holocaust (see Figure 2) or Holocaust denial was part of more than a third of the threads on 4chan. All but two threads contained antisemitic tropes. One of the two non-antisemitic threads was overtly racist against black people, and the other praised the far-right politician Javier Milei from Argentina. Interestingly, however, at least one user seems to want to challenge antisemites on the platform, including challenging the Great Replacement theory that says that Jews are responsible for the immigration policies of Western countries, repeatedly posting “Question for all you anti-semites. Why would Jews want increased islamic immigration?” and voicing concern about the rise of antisemitism.

File: [1667624451692918.jpg](#) (81 KB, 1024x820)



/pol/ Anonymous 10/21/23(Sat)15:42:59 No.445769092 [Reply]

It's time.

>> Anonymous 10/22/23(Sun)00:13:16 No.445819254

>>445769092

Good news = a lot less likes and we'll see a golden age. Bad news, Jews will use the victim card again in like 50 years or so. I guess we can hope our grandchildren will be smart enough for Holocaust 3.0

Figure 2: Post on 4chan calling for another Holocaust.

²⁰ World Jewish Congress, “How Hamas Fueled the Adversarial Information Ecosystem on Social Media,” October 2023, https://wjc-org-website.s3.amazonaws.com/horizon/assets/Jb32GfTy/wjc-slamstudio_a-flood-of-hate_v4.pdf. The meme is modeled on the pro-Russian meme “chug/ (Comfy Happening in Ukraine General)”. Phillip Stenmann Baun et al., “Let’s Play War. Inside 4chan’s Intergroup Rivalry, Contingent Community Formation, and Fandomized War Reporting” (Digital Methods Initiative, 2022), <https://wiki.digitalmethods.net/Dmi/SummerSchool2022chugginguhg>.

We found some of the most outrageous comments on October 28 on 4chan. A majority of posts denied the Holocaust, mocked it, or showed some form of admiration for Hitler or the SS, including Hitler portraits. One post cheered the killing of an Israeli soldier by Hamas and another one called for the murder of Jews while denying the Holocaust. *“Even the most pro-Israel retards are learning to hate the Kikes. Hope you're ready for a real holocaust,”* it read. Another post was part of the “CHIP” memes, similar to the one on October 14, again including the sentence, *“By typing in this thread you denounce Israel as a legitimate state, denounce the Talmud and endorse TKD (Total Kike Death),”* accompanied by an image showing a Palestinian fighter in a wheelchair throwing rocks with a sling, surrounded by the slogan *“CHIP - Comfy Happening in Palestine”* (Figure 3). Another post made fun of Jews and Muslims in the Middle East and advocated for killing both Jews and Muslims, adding *“The world would be better off.”* However, interestingly, some posts called out Holocaust denial, showed admiration for female Israeli soldiers, and one post even displayed a *“We stand with Israel”* image by the ADL with the text *“Why do you guys take out your childhood bullying trauma on jews? bit pathetic, unless this place is infested with shitskin sandniggers, hating jews is irrational.”* Despite the overtly racist message, such posts, including some similar posts a week earlier, may have been used to troll the neo-Nazis and antisemites on 4chan.



Figure 3: Meme on 4chan endorsing Palestinian terrorism.

Gab

Before the pogrom in Israel, more than a third of the top 30 posts on Gab openly denied the Holocaust or called for a second Holocaust, such as the comment *"Six is the favorite number of satan. Ask yourself, why do they prosecute anyone who questions the holocaust? Because it's a LIE!!!"* However, many posts contained references to news events. A day later, on October 7, the number of posts that denied the Holocaust rose to two-thirds of the posts, including a video promoting well-known Holocaust denier Ernst Zundel. The posts that did not deny the Holocaust made some distasteful comparisons that diminished the Holocaust or endorsed the Holocaust. One post suggested that a flooded parking lot of Ferrari cars was worse than the Holocaust because of the damage to the cars. We also found an endorsement of the Hamas massacre and the Holocaust. *"5,999,700 to go until we're onto holocaust part 2!"*, commented one user on the news at the time that the reported Israeli death toll in the pogrom had risen to 300 (Figure 4). Another user blamed Jews for the pandemic under the headline *"Covid Jab Holocaust."*

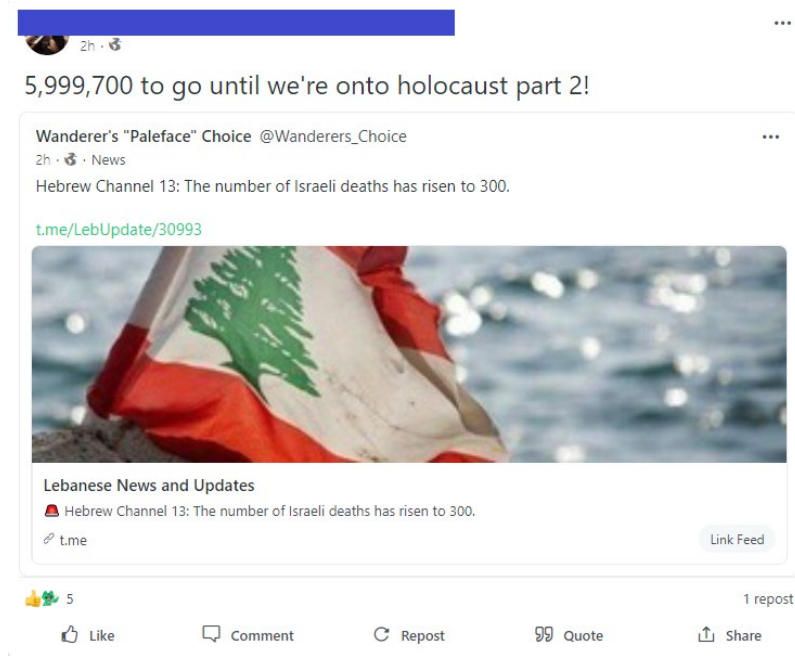


Figure 4: Post on Gab endorsing a second Holocaust.

On October 8, the results on Gab were dominated by posts of an article from the far-right fake news site The Gateway Pundit accusing the Biden administration of supporting terrorism by giving Iran \$6 billion. However, the

top 30 posts returned by the search still included at least eight messages denying the Holocaust and three endorsing the killing of Israeli civilians or making fun of the massacre, in addition to messages of antisemitic conspiracy theories. One user claimed that the Hamas attack was orchestrated by the Israeli Prime Minister *“to create an excuse for the mass slaughter of the Palestinian people.”* Another post, unrelated to the Hamas massacre, called for an end to the *“Covid-Holocaust.”*

A week later, the search results were dominated by comments on three news stories. The first was a video from BitChute that can be seen as promoting the Great Replacement Conspiracy Theory by claiming that members of the Jewish community in San Diego are responsible for bringing illegal aliens into the United States. The second was a report from the Gateway Pundit about an instructor at Stanford University who made Jewish students stand in a corner and accused Israel of colonialism.²¹ Most of the users who shared the story seemed to condemn it. The third was a story in the New York Post about a West Bank pizzeria that created an ad mocking a Holocaust survivor captured by Hamas. This story was shared mostly without comment. However, the top 30 results included eight posts denying the Holocaust. One of them read *“The ‘holocaust’ is (unfortunately) a lie”* and included a link to a Holocaust denier video on the online video platform Rumble. Seven posts promoted conspiracy theories about Jewish power or Zionist control of the United States. About half (17) were related to the war in Israel, one of them denying the massacre (and also the Holocaust) and another supporting the killing of Jews. The latter was a response to a post with a picture of a handcuffed Jesus surrounded by Israeli soldiers and the headline *“Jesus Christ VS The synagogue of satan”*. The reply read, *“Lol this time Christ will holocaust them off the earth. Good times.”* Some users' antisemitic attitudes are so strong that they advocate the killing of Jews and take sides with Hamas. Others are more conservative and less antisemitic, using current events to denounce people on the political left or the Democrats. Even the Stanford instructor may stand for much that some of these conservatives dislike. But there was a complete lack of empathy for the victims of the pogrom against Israeli civilians or, for that matter, for Palestinians, among Gab users.

On October 21, 2023, the proportion of Holocaust denial was high, with more than one-third of posts denying the Holocaust and two-thirds of posts being antisemitic. The majority of posts were related to the war in Israel, and most

²¹ This was widely reported in major news outlets. The report by The Gateway Pundit was published at <https://www.thegatewaypundit.com/2023/10/stanford-university-instructor-made-jewish-students-stand-corner/>

of them were anti-Israel. Five posts were pro-Israel or pointed out the brutality of the massacre. The widespread accusation of genocide against the Palestinians was combined in at least one case with the accusation of genocide against the Russians during the Russian Revolution. The respective post included the sentence *"What the Jews did to the Palestinians in 1948 and Christian Russia in 1917 is what awaits the rest of us if they achieve the world domination that they seek."*

By the end of the month, the majority of posts on Gab denied, belittled, or mocked the Holocaust, such as saying that some allergies, a pimple, or stomach issues were worse than the Holocaust (see Figure 5). Two posts accused Israel of weaponizing the Holocaust, but a few posts also called out Hamas or Hamas supporters. Calling out Hamas supporters, however, was used to advance a political agenda, either by condemning prominent Democrats, including the "Squad," for their alleged support of Hamas, or by pointing out that much of the antisemitism in Europe comes from immigrants.

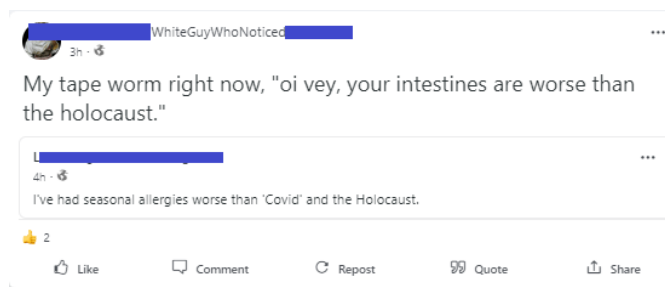


Figure 5: Post on Gab belittling the Holocaust.

Truth Social

Holocaust deniers on Truth Social appeared prominently in the first 30 search results on October 6. *"This is why it's healthy to question the Holocaust,"* one user commented on his own post, *"Lies are important to combat, especially trauma inducing ones. You will gain peace of mind when you realize the monster under your bed was just a teddy bear the whole time."* There were also comparisons between the Holocaust and the Holodomor, as well as the situation of Border Patrol agents on the southern U.S. border who are threatened by cartel rings, using references to the Holocaust to highlight issues that are important to many far-right users.

Search results on October 7 included many of the posts from the previous day's search results, nearly half of the posts denied, questioned, or made fun

of the Holocaust. However, a day later, on October 8, Holocaust-related conversations on Truth Social were largely influenced by the Hamas attack, either in reference to the Holocaust survivor hostage or the severity of the attack, which reminded users of the Holocaust.

A week later, most posts displayed by Truth Social were related to events in Israel. Two-thirds were pro-Israel and only three were anti-Israel, two of which linked to a video of a Holocaust survivor, Gabor Maté, accusing Israel of ethnic cleansing (Figure 6). Another denied the Holocaust in passing. The message read, "*The real holocaust is going to be the Gaza Strip if the Israeli government's X feed and official statements are to be believed. Oh the irony*". Five messages either mocked or denied the Holocaust. Two users denounced what they called the "*hospital Holocaust*" in the United States.



Figure 6: Post on Truth Social using a video by Holocaust survivor Maté to accuse Israel of ethnic cleansing.

On October 21, 2023, two weeks after the massacre of Israeli civilians, five posts denied the Holocaust, including the comment, "*What if I told you the Holocaust did not gas 6 million people of Jewish faith....*" Only one post, a

report of a meeting with a Holocaust survivor, was directly related to the Holocaust and not denying it. In other posts, the Holocaust was used as a reference, mostly in denouncing the massacre in Israel but in two cases to Canadian Holocaust survivor Gabor Maté and his accusation against Israel of ethnic cleansing.

At the end of October, while a third of the top 30 posts on Truth Social were positive about Israel and two even called out antisemitism, a quarter contained Holocaust denial and distortion, and one post called for a Holocaust, that is, the murder of Jews in America. *"We need a holocaust,"* commented one user on an antisemitic post that claimed that 89% of dual citizens in Congress are Israeli and that the U.S. government works for Israel (Figure 7). Two posts diminished the Holocaust through inappropriate comparisons, such as a video billed as *"Covid Style Holocaust"* that included a clip of Hitler and his staff with (obviously) false subtitles saying that Hitler tricked the population into taking the vaccine. Three posts questioned the Holocaust in ways that qualify as Holocaust denial or distortion, including a misleading quote from former Israeli minister Shulamit Aloni, saying that the Holocaust is *"a trick we always use."* One post was part of the far-right campaign #TheNoticing, which asked *"Did the holocaust really happen?"* Two posts included antisemitic conspiracy theories about Soros, and some were anti-Israeli, including accusing Israel of committing a genocide against the Palestinians. *"Jews are performing a Holocaust on Palestinians,"* said one Truth Social user.



Figure 7: Post on Truth Social calling for “a holocaust” in response to the alleged control of the U.S. government by Israel and Israeli Americans.

YouTube

Search results on YouTube displayed mostly documentaries about WWII and the Holocaust and testimonies of Holocaust survivors. In addition, YouTube provided a link to the Encyclopedia Britannica entry before displaying search results. This was true for searches on all six days.

A few exceptions are worth mentioning. On October 6, the day before the Hamas massacre of Israeli civilians, the search result displayed in second place was a video from the satirical newspaper The Onion that showed statements by Holocaust deniers in response to the question "*Why do you think the*

Holocaust never happened?". It showed the absurdity of the Holocaust deniers' arguments, but some users mistakenly took them at face value, as the comments showed.

References to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict first appeared on October 14. At the top of the list on that day was a recently uploaded video entitled "*Hell is here again': Jewish Holocaust Survivor Reflects on Hamas Attack in Israel*" (Figure 5). Three of the four videos in the additional "People also watched" category were related to the pogrom in Israel on October 7th, including two testimonials from relatives of victims and an AFP soundbite of Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu briefing American President Biden on the attack, "*whose savagery, I can say, we have not seen since the Holocaust*". The fourth of these suggested videos was about Netanyahu's alleged claim that the Holocaust was the idea of the Mufti of Jerusalem.



Figure 8: Post on YouTube about a Jewish Holocaust Survivor Reflecting on the Hamas Attack in Israel.

By the end of the month of October, YouTube showed a few more search results that were related to Israel, including some that were biased. One video focused on an incident in which Orthodox Jews in Jerusalem were filmed spitting at Christian pilgrims. Another video showed an Israeli Holocaust survivor who was shocked by the Hamas massacre. Most of the comments on this video were sympathetic, but some accused Israel of genocide. One emotional comment blamed all Jews in Israel for oppressing the Palestinians and expressed solidarity with their "struggle": "*my heart goes out to the palestenian people against their struggle with their oppresor the jewish people of israel.*" We found similar comments on the video "*Netanyahu vows to 'destroy the enemy' as Israeli offensive in Gaza intensifies*", "which was shown in the "People also watched" section. The same section featured the video "*A Textbook Case of Genocide': Israeli Holocaust Scholar Raz Segal Decries Israel's Assault on Gaza*," which can be read as an antisemitic

accusation and Holocaust inversion. At the time, the video had been viewed more than 400,000 times.

X/Twitter

Search results on X/Twitter about the Holocaust frequently included Holocaust denial. However, it displayed accounts of relevant organizations under “People” before displaying the search results. On most days, it displayed the accounts of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum and other organizations, such as the British Holocaust Educational Trust or the United Nations Outreach Program on the Holocaust. However, it also prominently displayed the account of “Toxic Holocaust,” an American thrash metal band, and the account of the British newspaper The Guardian.

On October 6, two of the top 30 results included the argument that Jews forced Holocaust remembrance on American society. One said that *"America's entire political discourse is shaped by the Holocaust"* and promoted a video by US neo-Nazi Nick Fuentes in which he railed against Holocaust remembrance and the “Jewish media” (Figure 9). The other tweet rejected the Holocaust denial label for *"disagreeing with any part of the Holocaust"* and pointed out that there are more Holocaust museums in the U.S. than museums about the genocide of Native Americans. The latter point was also made in a tweet by British politician George Galloway.



Figure 9: Post on X/Twitter featuring Fuentes railing against Holocaust remembrance and the “Jewish media.”

These two messages were still in the top 30 search results a day later, on October 7. The first message that appeared attacked Israel and claimed, "*One Holocaust does not justify another Holocaust,*" referring to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict (Figure 10). A similarly anti-Israel post came from the account Torah Judaism. The account, with 164k followers, is from a radical anti-Zionist group of Orthodox Jews, that is often cited by users seeking to vilify Israel. The tweet read: "*Our grandfathers did not die so that you Zionists could easily kill people in Palestine.*" However, there were also many tweets calling out Holocaust denial, and a few posts commemorating aspects of the Holocaust, such as a post by Anthony Blinken commemorating the Babyn Yar massacre.



Figure 10: Post on X/Twitter accusing Israel of committing a Holocaust against Palestinians.

One day after the massacre in Israel, many posts referred to the kidnapping of a Holocaust survivor by Hamas or pointed out that Hamas terror was inflicting unprecedented suffering on Jewish civilians not seen since the Holocaust. But there were also virulently anti-Israel posts. One user responded to Bernie Sander's condemnation of Hamas and Islamic Jihad violence by accusing him

of "*condoning another Holocaust*" and accusing Israel of apartheid and genocide against the Palestinians. Unrelated to the conflict, there were Holocaust denial messages, including the 2015 video "*The Holocaust Debunked Once and For All*," and a white nationalist user mocking the Holocaust with a clip from a video of a Holocaust survivor.

A week later, on October 14, the search using the term "Holocaust" returned mostly posts about the situation in Israel, mostly hostile to Israel, including accusing Israel of Nazi policies, genocide, apartheid, colonization, or claiming "*Gaza is now a concentration camp. What Israel is doing to Palestinians is a holocaust.*" One post questioned the severity of the massacre. Another implied that there is an alleged obligation to deal with the Holocaust in any game about World War II, which can be seen as an endorsement of the conspiracy theory that Holocaust remembrance has been imposed on society by nefarious Jewish actors. This came from a user who frequently posts screenshots from 4chan. Only four tweets were related to actual Holocaust remembrance or historical events related to the Holocaust. However, the first three tweets were all sympathetic to the victims of the pogrom. The first was a post that mentioned the kidnapping of Holocaust survivors and promoted a "*Hamas is ISIS*" video by the producers of the popular Israeli series *Fauda*. The second post was by Hananya Naftali, a social media journalist known for posting crude images of atrocities committed against Israelis to call attention to them. The post included a short video of him reporting from one of the villages attacked by Hamas. The third condemned a pro-Palestinian rally in London that accused Israel of being a terrorist state. The fourth post, however, quoted Norman Finkelstein approvingly, claiming that the Holocaust is being used as an ideological weapon and a "*pretext to humiliate, degrade and torture the Palestinians*," again with an embedded video.

Two weeks after the attack, discussions on X/Twitter were still dominated by the war in Israel and Gaza. About half of them were attacking Israel, mostly with accusations of genocide and comparing Israel to Nazi Germany. One tweet even endorsed the Holocaust with a false Hitler quote "*I could have killed all the Jews of the world, but I left some of them to know why I was killing them.*" The tweet included hashtags that mention Hamas, GazaHospital, and PalestineGenocide. It can be read as a call to murder Jews. However, other posts called out such narratives and antisemitism at various rallies or denounced the brutality of the massacre against Israeli civilians by Hamas terrorists.

By the end of the month, two-thirds of the top 30 posts were antisemitic and/or accused Israel of genocide and two tweets denied the Holocaust. One

of them referred to the war in Gaza as “*the greatest crime in history and the real genocide of the Holocaust.*” The other one was more indirect. It posted a survey asking users “*Are you a holocaust survivor?*” This was from someone with a history of openly antisemitic comments on X/Twitter, such as “*Never trust a Jew. Period.*” Only five posts were positive about Israel, some refuting the accusation that Israel is committing genocide against the Palestinians. Notorious Jewish critics of Israel, such as Norman Finkelstein (Figure 11), Gabor Maté, and Jane Hirschmann were repeatedly used to accuse Israel of ethnic cleansing and genocide, often with embedded videos.



Figure 11: Post on X/Twitter using antisemitic critic of Israel Finkelstein to compare Zionists to Nazis.

Conclusions

The amount of antisemitic and Holocaust denial content that we find on platforms depends on two factors. Firstly, on the user base and the kind of content they post and like, and secondly it depends on the respective platform’s algorithm that curates what we get to see in the top results.

When people search for information and posts about the Holocaust on social media, chances are high that they see antisemitic content, including Holocaust denial. That certainly applies to fringe websites like Gab and 4chan,

whose user base is known to lean extreme right. But that also applies to Truth Social and increasingly X/Twitter.

A notable difference is YouTube where content that denies or distorts the Holocaust was unlikely to appear in the top results, including during the month of October 2023, when users on many platforms made inappropriate comparisons between the Holocaust and the war in Gaza. Search results change obviously if users search for other terms such as "Gaza Holocaust."

Platforms can also make recommendations before displaying search results. YouTube displayed a link to an informational website, the Holocaust entry of Britannica. X/Twitter displayed accounts of relevant organizations under "People" before displaying the search results. On most days, it displayed the accounts of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum and other organizations, such as the British Holocaust Educational Trust or the United Nations Outreach Program on the Holocaust. However, it also prominently displayed the account of "Toxic Holocaust," an American thrash metal band, and the account of the British newspaper The Guardian.

It was shocking to see how widespread Holocaust denial is on X/Twitter and Truth Social, and that there appears to be no effective attempt by these platforms to reduce such content, including in search results. The prevalence of Holocaust denial on Gab and 4chan came as no surprise.

It was also shocking to see that there was not much empathy for the Jewish victims of the Hamas massacre, especially in the context of the posts examined in this study, all of which made some reference to the Holocaust, i.e., the systematic mass murder of Jews. However, some empathy was expressed in the immediate aftermath of the pogrom, in reference to the kidnapping of a Holocaust survivor and in response to the news that the massacre had inflicted unprecedented suffering on Jewish civilians not seen since the Holocaust.

But on the day of the massacre, while Israel was still assessing the scale of the atrocities against its civilian population in the south of the country, Israel was already being accused of committing genocide against the Palestinians and of perpetrating "another Holocaust". In the weeks that followed, this accusation grew louder on social media, sometimes (mis)using a quote from a Holocaust survivor to support the claim. It is worth noting that according to the United Nations definition of genocide, the Hamas massacre is genocide, while the Gaza war is not. The U.N. definition reads: "[G]enocide means any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group as such: (a) Killing members of the

group; (b) Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group," and it concludes with "(e) Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group." The intent to destroy the group and to take action to do so is essential. Hamas officials have repeatedly made it clear, including in their founding charter, that they intend to wipe out Israel and that they intend to kill all Jews, and they have put this into practice as best they can.

By the end of October, antisemitic comments had become more frequent and more radical, and empathy for Jews had continued to decline. Accusations of genocide committed by Israel also became more frequent. Users on the far-right spectrum even cheered the Hamas massacre of Jews or called for another Holocaust, whether on Gab, 4chan, or Truth Social. We can confirm previous findings that far-right users share Hamas content and cheer the death of Jews.²²

Other users on the political right used the news of the massacre to blame the Biden administration, for example, for making \$6 billion available to Iran in the summer of 2023, implicitly condemning the massacre. Similarly, some users pointed to the antisemitic rallies in many countries to denounce liberal immigration policies.

As Imran Ahmed, director of the Center for Countering Digital Hate, said,²³ we are in a moment of mobilization. In terms of Jew-hatred, antisemites are no longer just spreading false accusations, they are increasingly calling for action, which is the murder of Jews, and Hamas's war against Israel seems to be a factor in this radicalization of antisemites.

²² World Jewish Congress, "How Hamas Fueled the Adversarial Information Ecosystem on Social Media," October 2023, 13, https://wjc-org-website.s3.amazonaws.com/horizon/assets/1b32G1Ty/wjc-slamstudio_a-flood-of-hate_v4.pdf.

²³ In a conversation at an online event on November 7, 2023, "Understanding and Countering Online Hate During the Israel-Gaza Conflict," organized by the Jewish Council for Public Affairs.