



Policy Analysis Exercise  
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# MEASURING HOLOCAUST DENIAL IN THE UNITED STATES

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This study is dedicated to the mission of preserving the memory of those who suffered or were killed during the Holocaust. May we forever heed the lessons of this dark period in history and extend to our brothers and sisters the dignity and respect due to every human being.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report attempts to assess the level and location of Holocaust denial in the United States and provides a snapshot of the situation in 2010. It is intended to inform and support the recent efforts of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (USHMM) to more strategically and directly address the problem of Holocaust denial.

A wide variety of methods were used to accomplish this task, including the analysis of existing survey research on perceptions of Americans toward the Holocaust, as well as a study of antisemitic hate groups, crimes, incidents, and attitudes over the past decade. Content analysis was used to determine trends in the level and type of coverage Holocaust denial receives in American newspapers, and various web-based tools were employed to determine the prevalence of Holocaust denial on the Internet, specifically with respect to the organized activity of deniers on social networking sites and the relative popularity of websites and search activity related to Holocaust denial.

The results from this study suggest that knowledge of the Holocaust is relatively low in the U.S., and that, over the past decade, the number and concentration of organized antisemitic hate groups has risen (especially in the South and Mountain West), while the number of antisemitic incidents and level of antisemitic attitudes has been on the decline. States with a larger and more concentrated Jewish population tend to experience more antisemitic incidents, while organized hate group activity is most heavily concentrated in states with the smallest and least concentrated Jewish population; foreign-born Hispanics, African Americans, and those with low levels of education are particularly prone to harboring antisemitic beliefs. There is strong evidence to suggest that Holocaust denial has garnered an increasing amount of U.S. media coverage over the past decade and continues to grow in prevalence on the Internet. Though media coverage of domestic incidents of Holocaust denial is gradually on the rise, the subject is still predominantly considered in a foreign context, especially in light of the high-profile denial activity of Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad. Holocaust-related terms are also found to be used in the American print media at a significant rate to draw comparisons to people or events that are unrelated to the Holocaust and which could potentially trivialize its historical significance.

Though important findings, these results are limited in their ability to explicitly quantify the magnitude, location, or trajectory of Holocaust denial in the U.S. As such, this report issues a few recommendations for measuring Holocaust denial in a systematic and multi-faceted manner in the future, including the implementation of a public opinion survey on the subject of Holocaust denial and the enhancement of existing measurement tools to better capture denial activity, apart from other manifestations of antisemitism.

## **PURPOSE**

The purpose of this project is to assist the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (USHMM) in its efforts to better understand the nature and magnitude of Holocaust denial in the United States. Specifically, this report attempts to assess the level and location of Holocaust denial in the U.S. and recommends possible improvements for measuring Holocaust denial in the future.

The USHMM is undergoing a strategic shift in the way it addresses the problem of Holocaust denial. Previously, the USHMM did not engage Holocaust deniers, believing that to do so offered them an undeserved platform for their illegitimate and dishonest claims. Today, deniers' claims are no less illegitimate or dishonest, yet the global increase in the visibility of Holocaust denial and the greater accessibility of denial on the Internet has led the USHMM to reconsider its approach. The Museum has begun to confront Holocaust denial more publicly and hopes to help other individuals and organizations address it in their own communities (Fishman and Sobel, 2009). As a living memorial to the victims of the Holocaust and as the central Holocaust awareness organization in the United States, the goal of the USHMM is straightforward: "The Museum has a responsibility to the past – to history and memory – and it has a responsibility to future generations whose lives it could influence" (USHMM, 2005). Holocaust denial not only threatens the dignity of the memories of those who perished, but attempts to undermine the ability of others to learn about genocide, democratic values, human rights, and the power of the human spirit from one of the darkest periods in world history.

## INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Today, two alarming and sobering trends demand a greater commitment to Holocaust education and confronting Holocaust denial. The visibility of Holocaust denial is increasing, at the same time that the number of living Holocaust survivors is dwindling. Recent events have raised the profile of Holocaust denial, including statements from the President of Iran, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, that Israel should be “wiped off the map” and that the Holocaust is a “myth,” as well as a state-sponsored conference held in Iran in December 2006 to proliferate Holocaust denial views (ODIHR and Yad Vashem, 2007 and USHMMb, 2009). Furthermore, in the United Kingdom, the leader of the British National Party and a Member of Parliament, Nick Griffin, has recently received significant news coverage for having previously denied the Holocaust (Burns, 2009). In the Middle East, the Palestinian terrorist organization Hamas has committed itself to “obliterating” Israel (USHMMb, 2009), and a recent poll conducted by the University of Haifa found that 40.5 percent of Israeli Arabs believe the Holocaust never occurred (Eyadat, 2009). As for the continuing loss of the survivor generation, there is no question that first-hand accounts are among the most powerful transmitters of history. Steven Spielberg, director of *Schindler’s List* and founder of the USC Shoah Foundation, estimated fifteen years ago that the number of living survivors at that time was fewer than 350,000 (Spielberg, 1994). It has certainly fallen since, but an estimate of the number of current living survivors is unknown.

As a result, Holocaust remembrance and education is facing a turning point, one in which those who saw and experienced the indignity and horrors of the Holocaust will no longer be able to interact with students in person, and those coming into the world are likely to encounter more public displays of Holocaust denial and antisemitism on the Internet and elsewhere. How will future generations respond? Will denial increase or be rejected? Will Holocaust indifference take root instead, due to increased trivialization of its historical importance and the emotional difficulty of its subject matter? These answers are unknown, but the responsibility bestowed upon the current generation to honor the memory of the Holocaust is great, and the time to act in its defense is now.

Historian Robert Wistrich defines Holocaust denial as: “A phenomenon at whose core lies the rejection of the historical fact that close to 6 million Jews were murdered by the Nazis during World War II.” He notes that, in addition to outright denial, it includes, “the minimization, banalization, and relativization of the relevant facts and events, in order to cast doubt on the uniqueness or authenticity of what happened during the Shoah” (Wistrich, 2001).

Though Holocaust denial has been the subject of only a moderate amount of academic work, Wistrich, Deborah Lipstadt, Michael Shermer, Alex Grobman, and a few others have written prominently about the topic, including providing a clear description of the types of claims deniers make. Among their claims, deniers assert that the Nazis (and Hitler, himself) never made it their policy to exterminate the Jewish people. They also claim that far fewer than six million Jews were killed and that those who did die were simply wartime casualties. In addition, they assert that the use of gas chambers by the Nazis is a myth, and that there was no state-sponsored or systematic apparatus used to kill Jews and other targeted groups (Lipstadt, 2005; and Lipstadt, 1994). According to Lipstadt, deniers allege that “Jews have perpetrated this hoax about the Holocaust on the world in order to gain political and financial advantage...” (Lipstadt, 2005). The array of Holocaust evidence—including written documents by perpetrators, survivors, and victims, as well as eyewitness testimony, photographs, inferential evidence about population trends, and the presence of the concentration camps themselves—refutes these claims and many others (Grobman and Shermer, 2000). As the American Historical Association noted in its 1991 statement on Holocaust denial, “No serious historian questions that the Holocaust took place” (AHA, 1991).

Currently, academics and Holocaust organizations, including the USHMM and Yad Vashem, approach Holocaust denial as a manifestation of antisemitism, which can be described as “prejudice against or hatred of Jews” and which includes “...hate speech, violence targeting Jews or Jewish institutions, and denial, minimization, and distortion of the facts of the Holocaust” (USHMMc, 2009). Indeed, one of the most serious forms of degradation of the Jewish people would be to deny the suffering of their ancestors during the Holocaust. Although several organizations around the world track antisemitic incidents, the study of Holocaust denial and even the study of public perceptions toward the Holocaust in general has been limited.

## **METHODOLOGY**

In order to attempt to measure a relatively under-studied concept such as Holocaust denial, a number of methods were used to paint as full a picture as possible of the magnitude, trajectory, and location of Holocaust denial in the United States. Some of these measurements aim to quantify a particular aspect of Holocaust denial, while others provide indicators of states, regions, or individuals where or who might be susceptible to facing or exhibiting Holocaust denial. The findings may also simply suggest trends or areas in need of further measurement and exploration. The following methods were used for this study.

### **Analysis of Existing Public Opinion Surveys on Americans' Perceptions of the Holocaust**

First, given the lack of any single survey conducted in the last ten years on the subject of Holocaust denial specifically, the best alternative method to studying Americans' views toward Holocaust denial is to explore their perceptions toward the Holocaust in general. Understanding not only the level of public knowledge of the Holocaust, but also views about whether the Holocaust should be taught in schools or memorialized in society, as well as the relationship between Jews and the Holocaust, can be valuable in determining the portion of society who may be unfamiliar with and/or perhaps less supportive of Holocaust remembrance.

The primary source used for this purpose was a 2005 public opinion survey conducted for the American Jewish Committee (AJC) entitled, "The Holocaust and Its Implications: A Seven-Nation Comparative Study." This was found to be the most comprehensive survey data within the last decade that measured Americans' perceptions toward the Holocaust. The survey was conducted by TNS Sofres in seven countries – Germany, Austria, Poland, France, Sweden, England, and the U.S. Specific field dates in the U.S., on a random sample of 1,005 Americans, were March 22 to April 6.

Additionally, responses by Americans to a question appearing on surveys conducted by the Anti-Defamation League in 2007 and 2009, regarding their feelings on whether "Jews talk too much about the Holocaust" were also examined. The purpose and specifications of this "Survey of American Attitudes Toward Jews" are discussed on the following page.

### **Measurement of Antisemitism in the U.S.: Hate Group Activity, Incidents and Crimes, and Attitudes**

Next, given that Holocaust denial is considered one manifestation of antisemitic attitudes or beliefs, a number of methods were used to determine the magnitude and trajectory of antisemitism in



America, as well as the states/regions or demographic groups that tend to exhibit a high concentration of antisemitic activity (and would, thus, potentially be more prone to accept or currently possess denial beliefs).<sup>1</sup> These methods included:

- Analyzing data on hate groups in the U.S. between 2000 and 2008\*<sup>2</sup>, as compiled by the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC) Intelligence Project.
- Reviewing national data on antisemitic hate crimes, as compiled by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, between 2002 and 2008\*.
- Examining data on the number of antisemitic incidents that occurred each year in the United States between 2002 and 2008\*, as released in the annual “Audit of Antisemitic Incidents” by the Anti-Defamation League.
- Studying the prevalence of antisemitic attitudes in the United States between 2002 and 2009\*, using the ADL’s long-running public opinion poll entitled, “Survey of American Attitudes Toward Jews.”

Taken collectively, these measurements are designed to assess the strength of organized antisemitic activity, individual antisemitic beliefs, and the discriminatory outward expression of antisemitism toward others.

As for source information, the SPLC defines hate groups as organizations that “have beliefs or practices that attack or malign an entire class of people, typically for their immutable characteristics,” and the Intelligence Project’s annual map of active U.S. hate groups is “compiled using hate group publications and websites, citizen and law enforcement reports, field sources, and news reports” (SPLC, 2009).

The ADL’s annual “Audit of Antisemitic Incidents” is created using official crime statistics, as well as “information provided to ADL’s regional offices by victims, law enforcement officers and community leaders.” The Audit separates incidents into three categories – physical assaults, vandalism, and harassments (ADLa, 2009).

FBI hate crime statistics are compiled using uniform crime reports, under which roughly 17,000 law enforcement agencies collect and contribute data to the FBI. A hate crime is defined as, “A criminal

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<sup>1</sup> As will be discussed in further detail later, antisemitism is considered a precursor to Holocaust denial, according to Emory University historian Deborah Lipstadt, a leading scholar on Holocaust denial (Lipstadt, 1994).

<sup>2</sup> The most recent year for which data is available

offense committed against a person or property which is motivated, in whole or in part, by the offender's bias against a race, religion, disability, sexual orientation, or ethnicity/national origin" (FBI, 1999). In the category of religious-bias hate crimes, there is a sub-classification termed "anti-Jewish."

The "Survey of American Attitudes Toward Jews" was fielded four times in the past decade – in 2002, 2005, 2007, and 2009. Each survey was conducted by Marttila Communications, with 1000 adults surveyed between April 26 and May 6 in 2002, 1600 adults surveyed between March 18 and March 25 in 2005, 2000 adults surveyed between October 6 and October 19 in 2007, and 1200 adults surveyed between September 26 and October 4 in 2009. The margin of error for the survey varies by sample size and ranges from  $\pm 2.19$  percentage points in 2007 to  $\pm 2.8$  percentage points in 2009.

These sources were selected because they represent a mixture of reputable and relevant measurements of antisemitic activity in the United States, and in each case, were able to provide multiple consistent measurements throughout the past decade.

### **Breakdown of Holocaust Denial Coverage in the American Print Media**

In addition, content analysis through LexisNexis was used to explore the way in which Holocaust denial has appeared in United States newspapers. To determine the magnitude of Holocaust denial coverage, a count was determined of all those news, opinion, and feature articles in U.S. newspapers and on U.S. newswires that contained references to Holocaust denial. This was done for 1999, 2001, 2003, 2005, 2007, and 2009 to depict the trend in the amount of Holocaust denial coverage over the past decade. A random sample of articles was drawn from the 2001, 2005, and 2009 sets, and each article was coded as either addressing an incident of domestic Holocaust denial, an incident of foreign Holocaust denial, denial unrelated to a particular incident but in a foreign context, denial unrelated to a particular incident but in a domestic context, denial used simply as a reference to Iran or its president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, denial used as a comparison to another unrelated phenomenon, or denial used miscellaneously (in passing, or without being tied to any particular domestic or foreign context). In 2001, the sample size used was twenty-five percent of the total universe of articles, or 50 articles.<sup>3</sup> In 2005 and 2009, the sample size used was ten percent of the total universe of articles, or 55 and 126 articles, respectively.

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<sup>3</sup> The 2001 random sample was drawn only from articles appearing in U.S. newspapers prior to the terrorist attacks of September 11<sup>th</sup>.

Content analysis was also used to determine the extent to which certain Holocaust-related terms were used in the news media to draw comparisons to unrelated people or events, potentially trivializing the historical significance of the Holocaust. Methodologically, a random sample of all the articles appearing in US newspapers that contained the word “Holocaust,” “Nazi,” or “Hitler” was drawn in 2001, 2005, and 2009, and each article in the sample was coded as either using these Holocaust-related terms in a historically accurate manner or using these terms to make a comparison to an unrelated person or event.<sup>4</sup> The sample size for each year was 1% of the total universe of articles, or 141 articles, 223 articles, and 175 articles, respectively.

### **Assessment of the Prevalence of Holocaust Denial on the Internet**

Finally, given the expansiveness and dynamic nature of the Internet, as well as the way in which people increasingly rely on the Internet for news, information, and social interaction, the measurement of Holocaust denial on the web is well-suited for its own exhaustive study. However, in the absence of such a study, this paper presents the results of three methods that provide a strong indication of the level of Holocaust denial on the Internet. These methods included:

- Using the online tools Google Suggest, Google Trends, and Google Insights to examine the current and past relative popularity and volume of Internet searches related to Holocaust denial.
- Determining the number of Facebook groups that currently exist for the sole purpose of spreading Holocaust denial, as well as the number of members of each of these groups.
- Measuring the monthly Internet traffic to seven selected Holocaust denial websites (using the online tool Compete.com), as well as examining the search terms that most often lead users to each website. To put the traffic of these sites in perspective, their monthly visitor totals were compared to the traffic of a selected group of mainstream websites.

The combined use of these four categories of methods represents an important initial endeavor in the effort to comprehensively understand and describe the extent to which Holocaust denial has taken root in the United States.

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<sup>4</sup> Again, the 2001 random sample was drawn only from articles appearing in US newspapers prior to the terrorist attacks of September 11<sup>th</sup>.

## RESULTS

**FINDING SET #1:** Survey research on the perceptions of Americans toward the Holocaust is very limited and provides little data about the magnitude or location of Holocaust denial in the United States. However, results suggest that as much as one-fifth of the American population could possess some indifference toward the remembrance of the Holocaust and negative attitudes toward Jews in relation to the Holocaust. In addition, relative to European countries, knowledge of the Holocaust in the U.S. is quite low.

In 1992, the world was shocked to learn of a public opinion survey, conducted by Roper Starch Worldwide, Inc. on behalf of the AJC, which indicated that an astounding twenty percent of Americans felt it was possible that the Holocaust never occurred (Kagay, 1994). The seemingly impossible result prompted a re-examination of the question that was asked in the survey, which read:

*“Does it seem possible or does it seem impossible to you that the Nazi extermination of the Jews never happened?” (Kagay, 1994)*

The double-negative in this question was thought to have caused confusion among the survey’s respondents and certainly led to embarrassment on the part of the Roper researchers, who re-fielded the question in a 1994 survey as the following:

*“Does it seem possible to you that the Nazi extermination of the Jews never happened, or do you feel certain that it happened?” (Kagay, 1994)*

This more straightforward question led to only one percent of respondents indicating their doubt about the veracity of the Holocaust, ninety-one percent stating that the Holocaust certainly happened, and eight percent answering “I don’t know.” Tom W. Smith, the Director of the General Social Survey at the National Opinion Research Center at the University of Chicago, who analyzed the survey results, remarked of the findings, “Committed or consistent deniers of the Holocaust make up only a small segment of the population, about 2 percent or less” (Kagay, 1994).

This small number – two percent or less – has remained the United States’ best estimate from survey research of the magnitude of Holocaust denial within its borders. Since 1994, there have been no similar efforts to study Holocaust denial through survey research, perhaps due to the sensitive nature

of the subject (having seen the outcry over the 1992 Roper survey) or because it has been assumed that the percentage of people who openly deny the Holocaust has remained quite small.

Likewise, survey research on the perceptions of the American public toward the Holocaust in general is also quite limited; the most recent comprehensive survey was fielded in 2005 by the AJC, in a project entitled, “The Holocaust and Its Implications: A Seven-Nation Comparative Study.” Though the survey did not specifically address the issue of Holocaust denial, it did attempt to measure the attitudes of Americans (and others) toward the Holocaust, and in conjunction with responses to ADL survey questions from 2007 and 2009, a number of relevant findings surfaced. However, before presenting these findings, it is important to reiterate that segments of the population who have limited knowledge of the Holocaust, who express ambivalent views toward Holocaust remembrance, or who feel that Jews either talk too much about the Holocaust or exploit the event for their own purposes should not be assumed to be questioners of the historical fact of the Holocaust. Instead, such responses or beliefs serve to illuminate the presence of a group of individuals who deserve further and deeper study, especially regarding their receptivity to claims that the Holocaust has been exaggerated or did not occur, which cannot currently be found in the limited public opinion survey research that exists today.

First, of the seven nations surveyed (Sweden, the United States, Austria, Poland, France, Germany, and the United Kingdom), Americans were found to have the lowest level of knowledge about the Holocaust. Respondents were asked to correctly identify Auschwitz, Treblinka, and Dachau as concentration camps and to select from a list of numerical values the number of Jews who were killed in the Holocaust - approximately 6 million.

The results in Table1 show that only forty-four percent of Americans correctly identified Auschwitz, Treblinka, and Dachau as concentration camps (or any close variant to “concentration camps”), and less than one-third correctly selected 6 million as the number of Jews who died in the Holocaust. Indeed, it appears that a number of respondents in other countries missed one or the other question, but not both; in the U.S., however, 37.5% of respondents answered both questions “I don’t know” or incorrectly.

Perhaps this outcome is understandable, given that Americans are located much further from the affairs of the Holocaust than their European counterparts during World War II, but this does not alter the importance of the finding that Holocaust knowledge, at least when measured on these dimensions, is relatively low in the United States.

**TABLE 1. Knowledge of the Holocaust**

Country	Correctly Identified Auschwitz, Treblinka, and Dachau	Correctly Identified Number of Jewish Victims	Answered Both Questions Incorrectly or with the Response, "I don't know"
Sweden	91%	55%	3.4%
Austria	88%	41%	6.2%
Poland	79%	30%	6.8%
France	78%	49%	7.2%
Germany	77%	49%	9.2%
UK	53%	39%	19.7%
United States	44%	33%	37.5%

Source: AJC Survey, "The Holocaust and Its Implications: A Seven-Nation Comparative Study." N = approx. 1000. (Smith, 2005)

According to the survey, however, the U.S. was among the strongest supporters of Holocaust remembrance and education. Seventy-eight percent of Americans felt it was very important to know and understand the Holocaust, and eighty percent supported remembrance efforts and mandatory teaching of the Holocaust in schools. This leaves roughly twenty percent of the population opposed or ambivalent to these goals. In response to a question that asked whether the respondent felt Jews were "exploiting the memory of the Nazi extermination of the Jews for their own purposes," the U.S. had the smallest percentage of any country agree with the statement – twenty-three percent. Similarly, in 2007 and 2009, Americans were asked in a survey conducted by the ADL whether they felt Jews talk too much about what happened to them in the Holocaust. In both years, one-quarter of all respondents said yes.

Therefore, as the AJC poll concludes, attitudes and sentiments toward Jews and the remembrance of the Holocaust may be most positive in the U.S., but there remains a portion of the population – anywhere from between twenty to twenty-five percent of adults - who either express ambivalence or opposition to the remembrance of the Holocaust or feel that Jews either talk too much about the Holocaust or exploit the event for their own purposes. Again, this report does not imply that this segment of the population doubts the veracity of the Holocaust, but it does call for further research to determine whether this sizeable group of individuals is potentially more receptive to deniers' claims.

Given the imprecise measurement of the attitudes of Americans toward the Holocaust and its historical authenticity, it is essential to also try to measure the prevalence of antisemitic individuals and activities in the U.S. As noted earlier, Holocaust denial is considered to be an antisemitic attitude, and if levels or trends of antisemitism in the U.S. can be determined, it might offer clues as to the magnitude of Holocaust denial or location of those who would be most inclined to deny the Holocaust.

**FINDING SET #2:** Efforts to measure antisemitism in the United States yielded relatively inconclusive evidence about the level or trajectory of Holocaust denial, specifically. Over the past decade, antisemitic hate groups have been on the rise (including a small, emerging category of Holocaust denial hate groups), while the number of antisemitic incidents (such as harassment, vandalism, and assault), as well as antisemitic attitudes or beliefs within the general public, have been on the decline. However, these measures did identify regions and states with a high concentration of antisemitic activity, as well as demographic groups prone to antisemitic attitudes. States with a larger and more concentrated Jewish population tend to experience more antisemitic incidents, while organized antisemitic hate group activity is most heavily concentrated in states with the smallest and least concentrated Jewish population (especially in the South and Mountain West regions). Foreign-born Hispanics, African Americans, and those with low levels of education are particularly prone to harboring antisemitic beliefs.

### **Antisemitic Hate Groups**

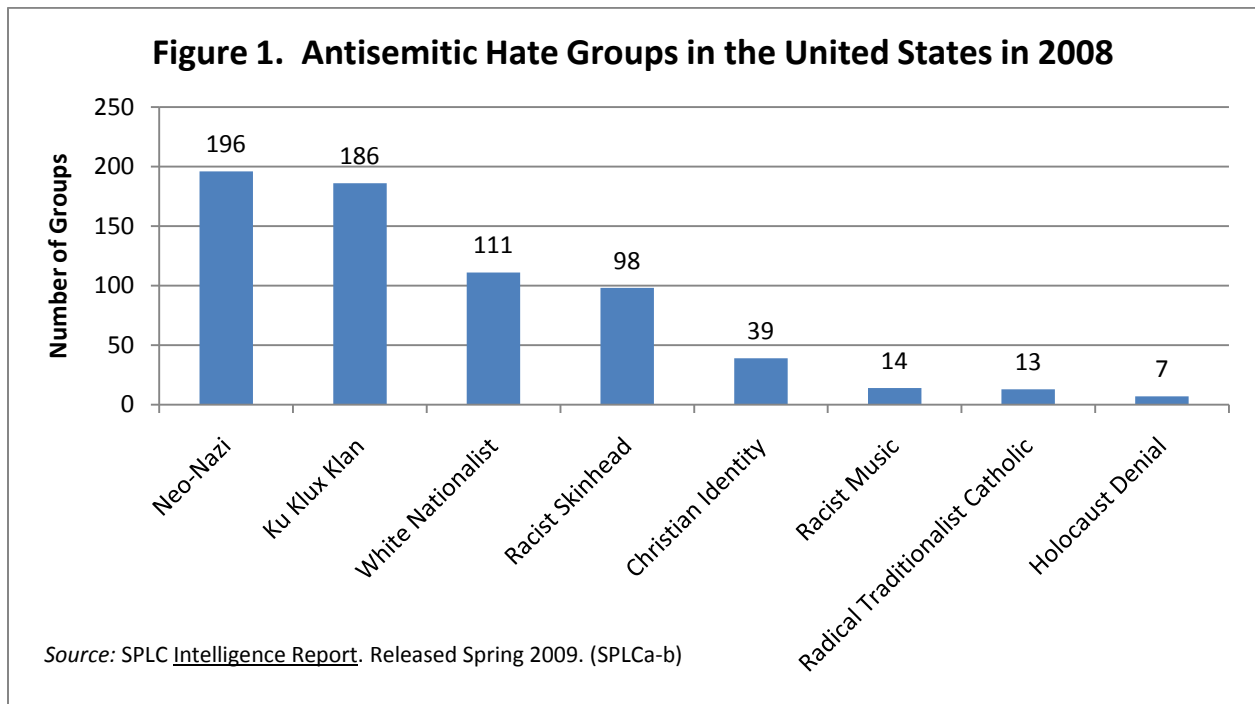
According to the Southern Poverty Law Center Intelligence Project, eight categories of hate groups in the U.S. today engage in antisemitic behavior or tend to harbor antisemitic attitudes (Beirich, 2010). The eight categories of antisemitic hate groups, shown in Figure 1 on the following page, totaling 664 groups in 2008, comprise seventy-two percent of the total number of hate groups operating in the United States.<sup>5</sup> Categories of hate groups not generally considered to be antisemitic include black separatists, neo-confederates, anti-gay, and anti-immigrant groups, among others. Figure 1 identifies each of the categories of antisemitic hate groups and indicates their prevalence within the United States in 2008 – the most recent year for which data is available.

The emergence of the “Holocaust Denial” hate group category, comprised of groups specifically organized for the purpose of questioning the veracity of the Holocaust, is a relatively recent occurrence, having only been tracked by the SPLC for less than a decade. Currently, there are seven groups throughout the country that fall into this “Holocaust Denial” category:

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<sup>5</sup> This does not imply that antisemitism is a more serious problem than racism in America today, nor should it infer that antisemitic individuals tend to organize more readily than others. Evidence for either of these statements does not exist in this study. Instead, such a large percentage of hate groups are said to be antisemitic because many hate groups do not restrict their hatred to one group of people. For example, the Ku Klux Klan is one category of hate groups that has not only historically engaged in racist activity against African Americans, but also tends to engage in antisemitic activity as well.

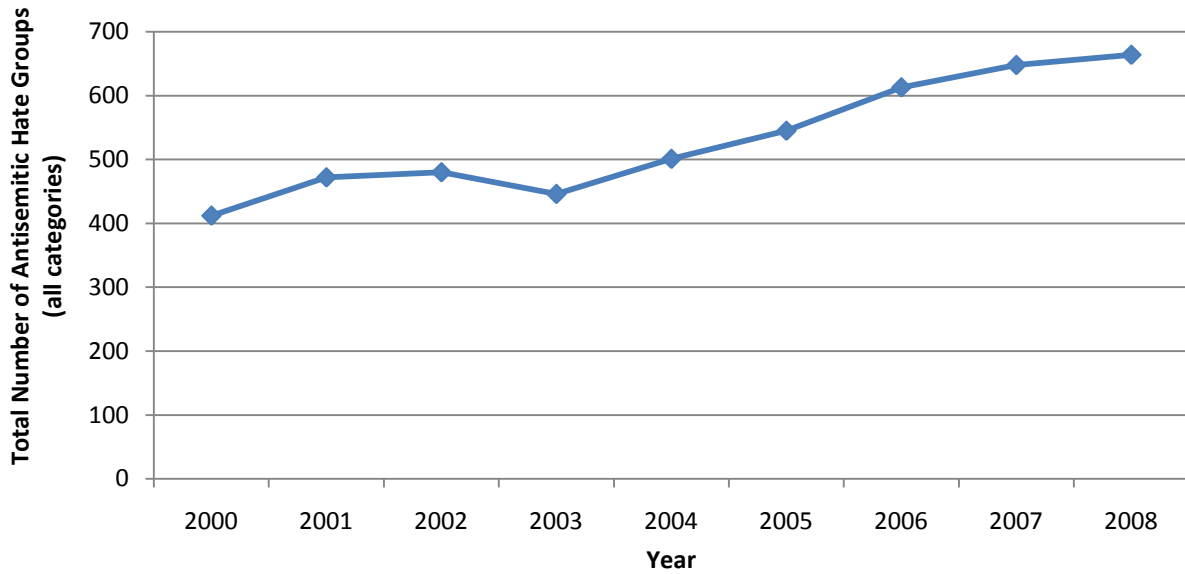
- Institute for Historical Review (Newport Beach, CA)
- Noontide Press (Newport Beach, CA)
- Barnes Review/Foundation for Economic Liberty, Inc. (Washington, D.C.)
- Campaign for Radical Truth in History (Coeur d’Alene, ID)
- The International Conspiratological Association (Coeur d’Alene, ID)
- Castle Hill Publishers (New York City, NY)
- Eagle Publications (Corpus Christi, TX)



As Figures 2, 3, and 4 on the following pages depict, the number of antisemitic hate groups operating in the United States has risen between 2000 and 2008 (an over sixty percent increase during this time period), with Neo-Nazis overtaking the Ku Klux Klan in 2006 as the largest antisemitic hate group category in America. Appendix 1 contains a description of each of these eight categories of hate groups, as compiled by the SPLC, as well as a listing of the names of some of the individual groups which comprise each category. Since 2000, the number of identified Racist Skinhead and White Nationalist groups has more than doubled, and three new categories emerged and gained attention – Racist Music, Radical Traditionalist Catholic, and Holocaust Denial.

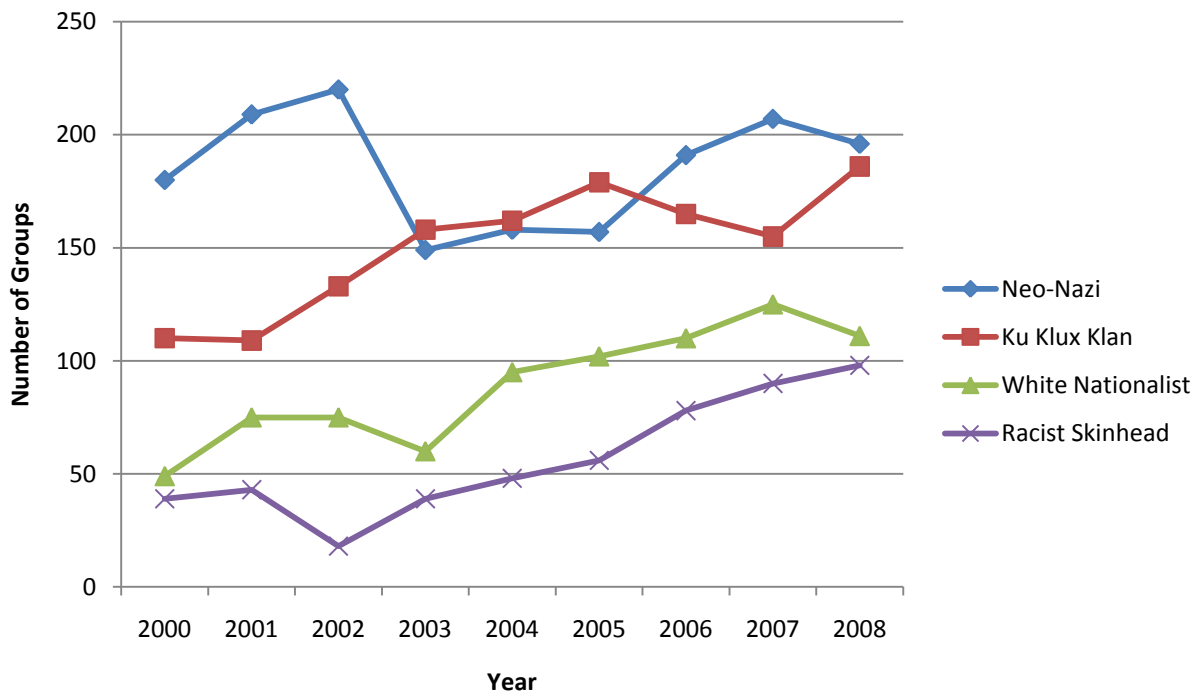


**Figure 2. Antisemitic Hate Groups in the U.S. (2000 - 2008)**



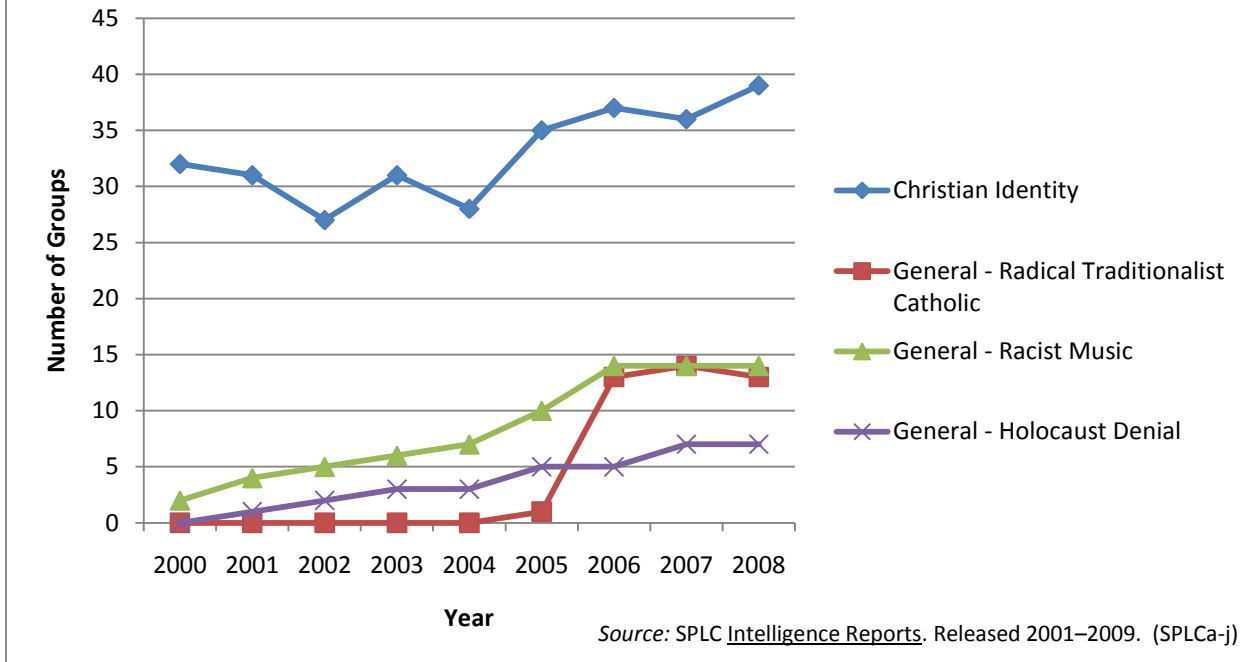
Source: SPLC [Intelligence Reports](#). Released 2001–2009. (SPLCa-j)

**Figure 3. Antisemitic Hate Group Trends**



Source: SPLC [Intelligence Reports](#). Released 2001–2009. (SPLCa-j)

**Figure 4. Antisemitic Hate Group Trends**



At the regional level, as can be seen in Table 2 on the following page, using the regional and sub-regional dividing lines set forth by the U.S. Census Bureau, the Southern Region (comprised of the South Atlantic, West South Central, and East South Central sub-regions) is home to the largest number of antisemitic hate groups. Based solely on numerical counts, nearly half (forty-seven percent) of all antisemitic hate groups in the U.S. are located in the South. Twenty percent are located in each of the West and Midwest regions, and only thirteen percent of all antisemitic hate groups are found in the Northeast.

Table 2 also notes the concentration of antisemitic hate groups, calculated as the number of groups per 100,000 people, in each of the nine sub-regions of the United States. Examined in this fashion, antisemitic hate groups are most heavily concentrated in the East South Central sub-region – nearly twice as heavily as in the South Atlantic sub-region, which is home to the greatest number of groups. All three Southern sub-regions remain among the top five in terms of greatest hate group concentration, but they are joined by both the Mountain sub-region in the Western United States and the West North Central sub-region in the Midwestern United States, two regions that appear relatively low on the list when simply examining aggregate counts.

**TABLE 2. Antisemitic Hate Groups in the United States, by Region, in 2008**

Sub-Region	Number of Antisemitic Hate Groups	Percentage of Nationwide Total	Concentration of Antisemitic Hate Groups (groups per 100,000 people)
South Region: South Atlantic (DE, MD, DC, VA, WV, NC, SC, GA, FL)	136	20.48%	0.24
South Region: West South Central (OK, TX, AR, LA)	91	13.71%	0.26
South Region: East South Central (KY, TN, MS, AL)	86	12.95%	0.48
Midwest Region: East North Central (WI, MI, IL, IN, OH)	82	12.35%	0.18
West Region: Pacific (AK, WA, OR, CA, HI)	79	11.90%	0.16
Northeast Region: Mid-Atlantic (NY, PA, NJ)	71	10.69%	0.18
West Region: Mountain (ID, MT, WY, NV, UT, CO, AZ, NM)	52	7.83%	0.24
Midwest Region: West North Central (MO, ND, SD, NE, KS, MN, IA)	49	7.38%	0.24
Northeast Region: New England (ME, NH, VT, MA, RI, CT)	18	2.71%	0.13

Source: Data from SPLC [Intelligence Report](#). Released Spring 2009. (SPLCa-b)

Delving deeper, state-level analysis confirms that areas with the greatest concentration of antisemitic hate groups tend to be located in one of the three Southern sub-regions, and secondarily, in the Mountain West sub-region of the United States. Table 3 ranks the top fifteen states in terms of their concentration of antisemitic hate groups, and eight of the top fifteen hail from the South, including six of the seven states with heaviest concentration. West Virginia was found to have the highest concentration of antisemitic hate groups, followed by Mississippi, Arkansas, and Tennessee. However, as would be expected, given the previous regional analysis, joining the top ten highest-concentrated states were four Mountain West sub-region states – Montana, Idaho, Nevada, and Wyoming.

One can also see from Table 3 that, not only do states with a high concentration of antisemitic hate groups tend to be located in the South and Mountain West regions, but they also tend to have incredibly small Jewish populations. For example, Mississippi is ranked 50<sup>th</sup> in size of its Jewish population, Arkansas is ranked 49<sup>th</sup>, West Virginia is ranked 44<sup>th</sup>, and Montana is ranked 45<sup>th</sup>, just to name a few of these high-concentration states. Indeed, eleven of the top fifteen states with the highest

concentration of antisemitic hate groups are ranked 34<sup>th</sup> or lower in terms of the percentage of Jews living in the state. Notable exceptions to this pattern include New Jersey and Nevada, which are ranked 2<sup>nd</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup>, respectively, in terms of the size of their Jewish population.

<b>TABLE 3. US States with the Highest Concentration of Antisemitic Hate Groups</b>		
State (groups per 100,000 people)	Region	Jewish Population
1) West Virginia (0.77)	SOUTH – South Atlantic	0.13% - Rank 44
2) Mississippi (0.65)	SOUTH - E. South Central	0.05% - Rank 50
3) Arkansas (0.57)	SOUTH - W. South Central	0.06% - Rank 49
4) Tennessee (0.54)	SOUTH - E. South Central	0.31% - Rank 35
5) Montana (0.52)	WEST – Mountain	0.09% - Rank 45
6) Alabama (0.52)	SOUTH - E. South Central	0.19% - Rank 41
7) Delaware (0.46)	SOUTH - South Atlantic	1.57% - Rank 15
8) Nevada (0.43)	WEST – Mountain	2.73% - Rank 9
9) Idaho (0.40)	WEST – Mountain	0.07% - Rank 47
10) Wyoming (0.38)	WEST – Mountain	0.08% - Rank 46
11) South Dakota (0.38)	MIDWEST - W. North Central	0.04% - Rank 51
12) S. Carolina (0.36)	SOUTH - South Atlantic	0.25% - Rank 39
13) New Jersey (0.35)	NORTHEAST - Mid-Atlantic	5.55% - Rank 2
14) Louisiana (0.35)	SOUTH - W. South Central	0.37% - Rank 34
15) Missouri (0.34)	MIDWEST - W. North Central	1.01% - Rank 20

Source: Data from SPLC [Intelligence Report](#). Released Spring 2009. (SPLC a-b)

Note: Source for Jewish population estimates is Jewish Virtual Library, “Jewish Population of the United States by State.” (JVL, 2010)

The study of antisemitic hate groups provides a glimpse into the activities of those who not only possess antisemitic feelings, but whose hatred is also strong enough to compel them to organize with others in the expression of such feelings. Therefore, it is reasonable to believe that members of these groups would be among the most likely to deny or question the truth of the Holocaust. As Lipstadt notes in *Denying the Holocaust*, “Holocaust denial found a receptive welcome in the United States during the 1950s and 1960s – particularly among individuals known to have strong connections with antisemitic publications and extremist groups. Their Holocaust denial was preceded by their antisemitism” (Lipstadt, 2009, p. 65). This analysis indicates that the number of antisemitic hate groups is growing within the United States and appear to be most heavily concentrated in the Southern and Mountain West regions, especially in areas that tend to have relatively small Jewish populations.

It is important to note that these data do not capture or indicate the size or strength of membership of these antisemitic hate groups. Thus, though it is clear that the number of hate groups has been increasing over the past decade, we have no way to tell whether overall membership in antisemitic hate groups is growing, declining, or remaining constant.

**Antisemitic Crimes and Incidents**

The organizational activity of people who are antisemitic is only one dimension upon which the prevalence of antisemitism in America can be measured. The beliefs of antisemites can also be translated into actions or behaviors directed toward those they hate. The Federal Bureau of Investigation tracks the annual prevalence of antisemitic hate crimes, data which is based on reports made by law enforcement agents from more than 17,000 agencies throughout the nation (FBI, 1999). However, as Table 4 shows, very little information about the trajectory of these antisemitic hate crimes can be gleaned by studying the annual national totals between 2002 and 2008.

<b>TABLE 4. Anti-Jewish, Religious-Bias Hate Crime Offenses in the United States (2002-2008)</b>				
Year	Total Hate Crime Offenses	Religious-Bias Hate Crime Offenses	Portion of Religious-Bias Hate Crime Offenses that are anti-Jewish	Religious-Bias, anti-Jewish Hate Crime Offenses
2008	9,160	1,606 (17.5%)	65.7%	1,055
2007	8,999	1,477 (16.4%)	68.4%	1,010
2006	9,076	1,597 (17.6%)	64.3%	1,027
2005	8,380	1,314 (15.7%)	68.5%	900
2004	9,021	1,480 (18%)	67.8%	1,003
2003	8,706	1,489 (16.4%)	68.8%	1,024
2002	8,825	1,576 (17.9%)	65.9%	1,039

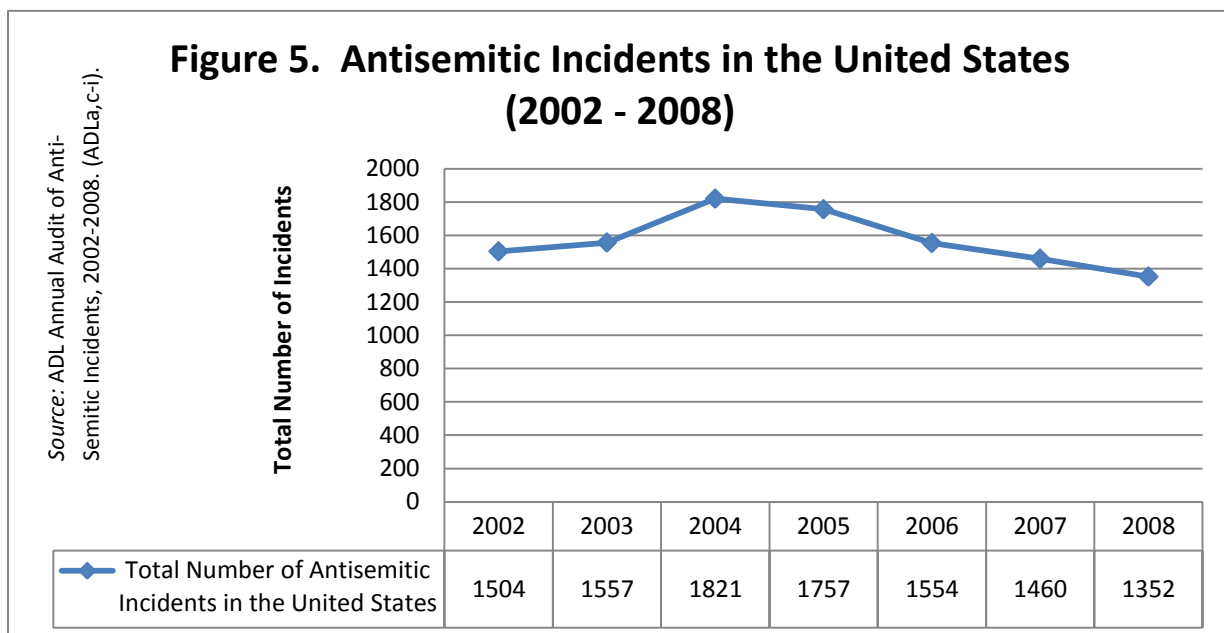
Source: Federal Bureau of Investigation. UCR Hate Crime Statistics, 2002-2008. (DOJ-FBIa-g)

These data indicate that, during this period, between fifteen and eighteen percent of all hate crime offenses were deemed to be motivated by a religious-bias, and of these religious-biased offenses, anti-Jewish hate crimes comprised the largest percentage (ranging from between sixty-four and sixty-eight percent). Therefore, aside from relatively small fluctuations between 2002 and 2008, the number

of anti-Jewish hate crime offenses in the United States has remained relatively constant at just over 1,000 hate crimes per year. The 2008 total of 1,055 anti-Jewish hate crime offenses is, however, the largest total for any year during this period.

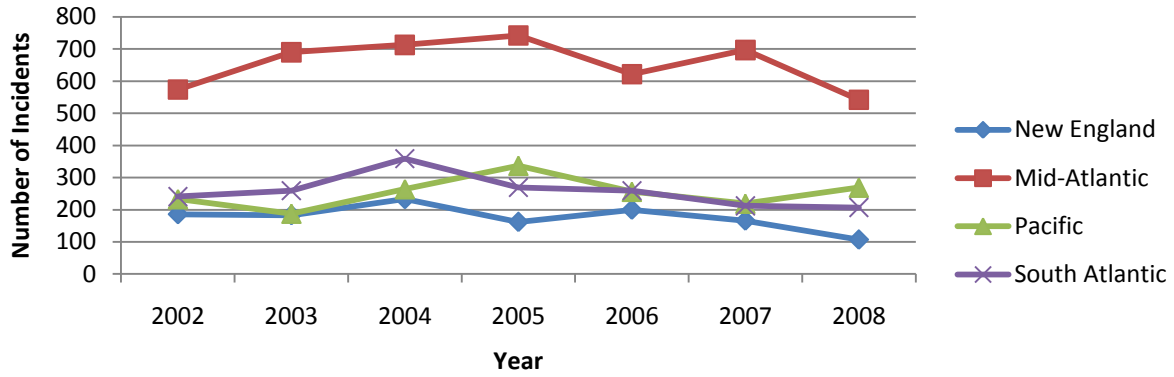
Though this analysis of FBI hate crime data may provide a very limited glimpse of antisemitic activity in the United States, the “Annual Audit of Antisemitic Incidents” conducted by the Anti-Defamation League produces some useful and intriguing findings. As noted in the methodology section, the ADL constructs its audit by combining a wide variety of incident reports each year and codes each antisemitic incident that occurs as falling into the categories of physical assault, property damage/vandalism, or harassment. Unlike the upward trend that was seen with regard to antisemitic hate group activity, the ADL has found that, since 2004, there has been a downward trend in the number of antisemitic incidents that have taken place in the United States, and the 2008 total of 1,352 incidents is the lowest point of the past decade. Figure 5 depicts this recent downward trend.

Figures 6 and 7 show that the national decrease in number of antisemitic incidents appears to be the result of large drops in the Mid-Atlantic and South Atlantic sub-regions; in other areas, including two sub-regions in the South (West South Central and East South Central) and the Pacific West region, the number of antisemitic incidents over the past year increased and are currently on an upward trajectory (more will be mentioned about this later).<sup>6</sup>



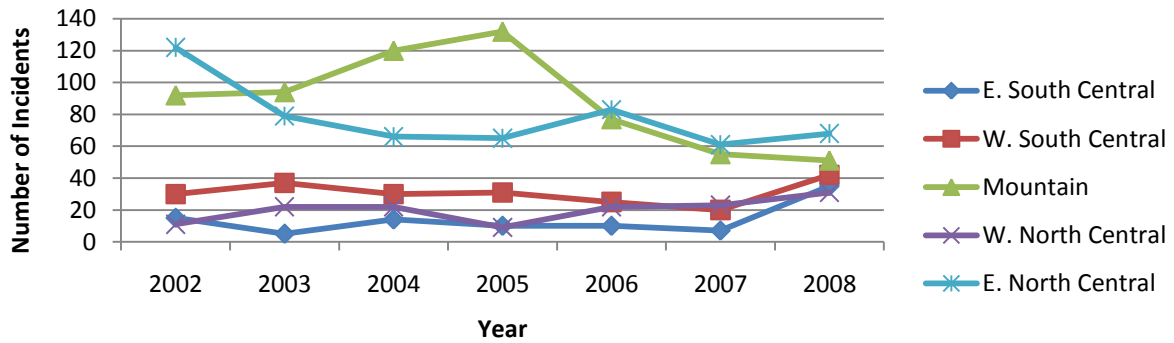
<sup>6</sup> Data from both the SPLC and ADL Audit were analyzed using the same regional and sub-regional breakdown from the U.S. Census Bureau.

**Figure 6. Antisemitic Incident Trends by Sub-Region, 2002 - 2008**



Source: ADL Annual Audit of Anti-Semitic Incidents, 2002-2008. (ADLa,c-i).

**Figure 7. Antisemitic Incident Trends by Sub-Region, 2002 - 2008**



Source: ADL Annual Audit of Anti-Semitic Incidents, 2002-2008. (ADLa,c-i).

At the regional level, in 2008, the greatest number of antisemitic incidents were reported in the Northeast region, including the Mid-Atlantic and New England states, accounting for forty-eight percent of the national total. The West accounted for 23.7 percent of the nation's incidents, roughly half of the Northeast region total, and twenty-one percent were found in the South. Only seven percent of the nation's antisemitic incidents took place in the Midwest.

Table 5 not only shows the number of antisemitic incidents by sub-region in 2008, but also the Jewish population (expressed as a percentage of the total population) and concentration of antisemitic incidents (number per 100,000 people) in each sub-region. Again, as with the SPLC data, there appears to be a close relationship between the concentration of antisemitic incidents and the size of the sub-

region’s Jewish population. However, unlike the data regarding hate groups, where more concentrated activity was found in the South and West, and in areas with smaller Jewish populations, antisemitic incidents were most highly concentrated in the Mid-Atlantic, New England, and Pacific sub-regions – the top three sub-regions in terms of Jewish population.

State-level data confirms a similar pattern. In Table 6 on the next page, the top fifteen states are ranked according to the concentration of antisemitic incidents within each state. As is easily seen, these states with the most antisemitic incidents are found to be in the Northeast region (both Mid-Atlantic and New England sub-regions), as well as in the South Atlantic and Pacific sub-regions. And, unlike with hate groups, where states with high concentrations of hate groups tended to have very small

<b>TABLE 5. Antisemitic Incidents in 2008, by Sub-Region</b>				
Sub-Region	Total Incidents	% of National Total	Concentration: (Incidents per 100,000 people)	Jewish Pop.
Mid-Atlantic	542	40.09%	1.34	5.89%
Pacific	269	19.90%	0.55	2.63%
South Atlantic	207	15.31%	0.36	2.07%
New England	107	7.9%	0.75	3.02%
East North Central	68	5.03%	0.15	1.2%
Mountain	51	3.77%	0.24	1.28%
West South Central	42	3.11%	0.12	0.44%
East South Central	35	2.59%	0.20	0.23%
West North Central	31	2.29%	0.15	0.69%

Source: ADL Annual Audit of Anti-Semitic Incidents, 2008. (ADLa,c)

Jewish populations, these states are among the highest in Jewish population. For example, nine of the top ten states with highest Jewish populations (including New York, New Jersey, Washington D.C., Massachusetts, and others) all experienced a relatively high concentration of antisemitic incidents.

North Dakota seems to be a notable exception to this pattern, but this is likely due to the combination of its small population and a 2008 incident total that was uncharacteristically high. In 2008, North Dakota reported eight antisemitic incidents; never before had the state reported a number higher than three.



<b>TABLE 6. U.S. States with the Highest Concentration of Antisemitic Incidents</b>		
State (incidents per 100,000 people)	Region	Jewish Population
1) New Jersey (2.75)	NORTHEAST - Mid-Atlantic	5.54% - Rank 2
2) District of Columbia (2.04)	SOUTH - South Atlantic	4.76% - Rank 3
3) North Dakota (1.25)	MIDWEST - W. North Central	0.07% - Rank 47
4) Connecticut (1.09)	NORTHEAST - New England	3.20% - Rank 8
5) New York (1.07)	NORTHEAST – Mid-Atlantic	8.33% - Rank 1
6) Vermont (0.81)	NORTHEAST - New England	0.89% - Rank 21
7) Massachusetts (0.80)	NORTHEAST - New England	4.25% - Rank 4
8) Pennsylvania (0.78)	NORTHEAST - Mid-Atlantic	2.29% - Rank 10
9) Florida (0.67)	SOUTH - South Atlantic	3.59% - Rank 6
10) California (0.62)	WEST – Pacific	3.28% - Rank 7
11) New Hampshire (0.61)	NORTHEAST - New England	0.76% - Rank 25
12) Maryland (0.48)	SOUTH - South Atlantic	4.19% - Rank 5
13) Oregon (0.46)	WEST – Pacific	0.85% - Rank 23
14) Washington (0.40)	WEST – Pacific	0.67% - Rank 26
15) Arizona (0.38)	WEST – Mountain	1.67% - Rank 13

Source: ADL Annual Audit of Anti-Semitic Incidents, 2008. (ADLa,c)

These findings, though possibly intuitive, appear to tell an interesting story. Organized antisemitic hate groups tend to operate more heavily in areas away from Jewish populations; perhaps, it is easier for members of these groups to express hatred toward a group of people with whom they have little contact in their daily lives. On the other hand, antisemitic incidents tend to be more heavily concentrated in areas with larger Jewish populations; after all, in these areas, it may be easier for those who harbor antisemitic beliefs to find Jews or Jewish institutions toward whom they can direct their hate. Regardless, the Southern and Mountain West states, as well as the Mid-Atlantic, New England, and Pacific sub-regions appear to present two clusters of states in which Holocaust denial might be more prone to take root, for very different reasons.

Another interesting trend, alluded to earlier, deals with the trajectory of antisemitic incidents for particular sub-regions in the United States. It is certainly true that antisemitic incidents across the nation declined over the past year – especially in the Mid-Atlantic and New England sub-regions where they had been so prevalent; however, the increases mentioned earlier that were seen in the South were

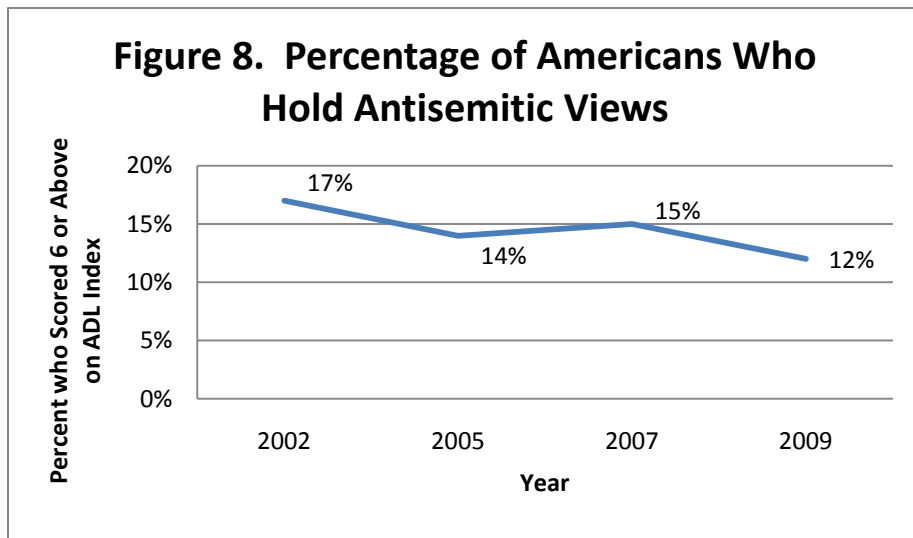
stark. In the West South Central region, antisemitic incidents more than doubled in the past year. And, there was a five-fold increase seen in the East South Central region – in just one year! Therefore, despite the fact that the concentration of antisemitic incidents has been relatively low in the South in the past, this recent and dramatic upward trend will be important to monitor in the future.

### **Antisemitic Attitudes**

One final method by which to measure antisemitism in the United States is to survey American adults to determine the percentage of individuals who harbor anti-Jewish beliefs or attitudes, a group that would be more susceptible to believing the claims of Holocaust deniers. As Lipstadt argues, Holocaust denial is a “...phenomenon that is rooted in one of the oldest hatreds, antisemitism,” and as noted earlier, her work has found that beliefs about Holocaust denial are often preceded by antisemitic views (Lipstadt, 2009, pgs. xvii and 65).

According to a public opinion survey entitled, “Survey of American Attitudes Toward Jews,” fielded by the Anti-Defamation League in 2002, 2005, 2007, and 2009, antisemitic attitudes in the U.S. have declined and currently match the lowest level of antisemitism ever recorded by the ADL, in 1998. Figure 8 shows that, in 2009, twelve percent of Americans held antisemitic views, compared to seventeen percent seven

years earlier, in 2002. To calculate these figures, the ADL uses an antisemitism index that consists of eleven statements about Jews, embedded randomly in a longer list of positive and negative statements



Source: ADL Survey of American Attitudes Toward Jews. (ADLj-m)

about Jews. The 2009 figure implies that twelve percent of Americans agreed with six or more of the antisemitic statements about Jews on the index. Table 7 shows each index statement, along with the percentage of respondents in each year of the survey who agreed with the statement. Virtually all indicators have fallen over time, although the

percentage of Americans who say that Jews are more loyal to Israel than America has remained remarkably constant at approximately thirty percent.

Index Statement	2002	2005	2007	2009
Jews stick together more than other Americans	50%	50%	50%	43%
Jews always like to be at the head of things	35%	32%	31%	26%
Jews are more loyal to Israel than America	33%	33%	31%	30%
Jews have too much power in the U.S. today	20%	15%	15%	13%
Jews have too much control and influence on Wall Street	20%	17%	18%	15%
Jews have too much power in the business world	24%	19%	20%	16%
Jews have a lot of irritating faults	20%	16%	13%	16%
Jews are more willing than others to use shady practices to get what they want	19%	15%	17%	13%
Jewish business people are so shrewd that others don't have a fair chance at competition	17%	15%	16%	13%
Jews don't care what happens to anyone but their own kind	16%	12%	14%	12%
Jews are not as honest as other businesspeople	14%	12%	14%	12%

Source: ADL Survey of American Attitudes Toward Jews. (ADLj-m)

These surveys are also able to capture certain demographic characteristics of those who are most likely to harbor antisemitic beliefs. Just as the analysis of hate groups and antisemitic incidents indicated certain regions in which these activities are more prone to appear, the ADL surveys find that foreign-born Hispanics, African Americans, and people with lower levels of educational attainment are particularly prone to harbor anti-Jewish attitudes (ADLj-m).

Table 8 shows that, in 2009, thirty-five percent of foreign-born Hispanics were considered to hold antisemitic feelings. This figure is nearly twice as high as the rate of antisemitism among U.S.-born Hispanics and more than four times as high as the rate of antisemitism among whites. Twenty-eight percent of African Americans were found to hold antisemitic beliefs, though this number represents a seven percentage point decline since 2002.

	2002	2005	2007	2009
US born Hispanics	20%	19%	15%	18%
Foreign born Hispanics	44%	35%	29%	35%
African Americans	35%	36%	32%	28%
White	N/A	9%	10%	8%

Source: ADL Survey of American Attitudes Toward Jews. (ADLj-m)

It is also apparent, as shown in Table 9, that the more highly educated a person is, the less likely he/she is to hold antisemitic views. Eight percent of college graduates and seven percent of those with post-graduate degrees held antisemitic beliefs in 2009, compared to over thirty percent of those with some college or less.

Examined collectively, the findings from this section’s analysis of antisemitic hate groups, antisemitic crimes and incidents, and antisemitic attitudes present relatively inconclusive evidence about the magnitude or trajectory of Holocaust denial in the United States today. On one hand, the most virulent antisemites in the U.S., who would be most prone to denying the Holocaust, appear to be organizing in hate groups at a higher rate than ever before. On the other hand, incidents of antisemitic violence or harassment of Jews, as well as general antisemitic attitudes, appear to have fallen throughout the past decade. However, a few things are certain. If twelve percent of Americans are considered antisemitic, this translates into over thirty million people. If roughly thirty percent believe that Jews are more loyal to Israel than the United States, this represents nearly ninety million people. And, if twenty-three percent of Americans believe that Jews exploit the Holocaust for their personal or financial gain, this totals over sixty-five million people.<sup>7</sup> In other words, the pool of individuals who possess a tendency toward negative views of Jews in America is rather large, and thus, the propensity for Holocaust denial to take root is ever-present. Also, according to this analysis, there are clearly certain regions and demographic groups in which antisemitism appears to be stronger and more heavily concentrated than others; this should serve as valuable information when undergoing more precise future measurements of Holocaust denial or targeting interventions and programs to combat Holocaust denial in the years to come.

	2005	2007	2009
Some College or Less	35%	35%	30.5%
College Grad	13%	10%	8%
Post Grad Degree	5%	8%	7%

*Source: ADL Survey of American Attitudes Toward Jews. (ADLj-m)*

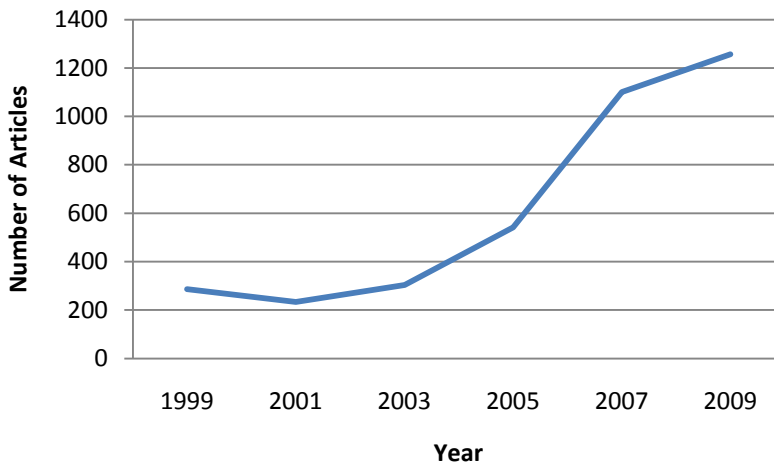
Ultimately, one must recognize that Holocaust denial is only one attitude or action, among many, which fall under the larger category of antisemitism. As a result, it is difficult to parse out the current magnitude of Holocaust denial in the United States simply by looking at trends in antisemitism.

<sup>7</sup> These statistics are provided simply to approximate the general magnitude of people in the United States who hold a particular anti-Jewish attitude. It is likely that these three figures represent somewhat similar or overlapping groups of people.

**Finding Set #3:** There is evidence to suggest that Holocaust denial has garnered an increasing amount of U.S. media coverage over the past decade. Furthermore, coverage of domestic incidents of Holocaust denial is gradually on the rise, although the subject is still predominantly considered and covered in a foreign context; indeed, the affairs of certain nations abroad, such as Iran, have played a particularly powerful role in elevating the position of Holocaust denial within the public discourse in America. Finally, Holocaust-related terms are being used in the media at a significant rate to draw comparisons to people or events unrelated to the Holocaust, which could potentially trivialize its historical significance.

Figure 9 and Table 10 below depict the results of a content analysis effort, conducted using LexisNexis, to gauge the amount of print media coverage in the United States in which the subject of Holocaust denial is raised. In 1999, 287 news, opinion, or feature articles that mentioned or referenced Holocaust denial appeared in U.S. newspapers or newswires. By 2005, that number had risen to 542, more than doubled to 1,100 in 2007, and continued to rise to 1,256 articles in 2009. These results clearly indicate that Holocaust denial has become a more widely covered and discussed subject within the American print media over the past decade and, as such, is a concept that has grown in the public consciousness.

**Figure 9. Number of News, Opinion, or Feature Articles Containing the Subject of Holocaust Denial (1999 - 2009)**



**TABLE 10. Articles Referencing Holocaust Denial in U.S. Newspapers and Newswires**

Year	Count
1999	287
2001	233
2003	303
2005	542
2007	1,100
2009	1,256

Source: LexisNexis Content Analysis of Newspapers and Newswires. Search term - Holocaust AND denial OR deny OR denier. Conducted January, 2010.

Given this increase in the coverage of topics related to Holocaust denial, it is important to determine whether the subject matter of these articles might indicate an increase in the incidence of domestic Holocaust denial, or whether it continues to be a subject that is covered predominantly in a foreign context.

A random sample of articles from each of the years 2001, 2005, and 2009 was drawn, and each article’s subject matter was categorized, largely according to whether the article addressed a particular incident of Holocaust denial and whether the context in which denial was raised was domestic or foreign in nature. Table 11 shows the results of these efforts and indicates that 11.1 percent of all articles that referenced Holocaust denial in 2009 were about specific incidents of domestic Holocaust denial, an increase over 2005 and 2001. Among numerous other incidents both large and small, these included articles about a Las Vegas, Nevada, school teacher who denied the Holocaust; an advertisement that ran in *The Harvard Crimson* at Harvard University that promoted Holocaust denial; and a Reston, Virginia, citizen who, as a write-in candidate for his local citizens association board, referred to himself as a Holocaust “revisionist.”

Likewise, there has been a large increase in the percentage of articles devoted to specific instances of foreign Holocaust denial since 2001. In 2009, Holocaust denial appeared in newspapers in relation to specific foreign incidents forty-two percent of the time, compared to twelve percent in 2001 and 36.4 percent in 2005.

<b>TABLE 11. Content Analysis Results for Random Sample of Articles that Referenced Holocaust Denial (2001, 2005, 2009)</b>						
Year	Domestic Denial Incident	Foreign Denial Incident	Other Mention Foreign	Other Mention Domestic	Comparison to Unrelated Concept	Misc. <sup>8</sup>
2001	6%	12%	30%	16%	4%	32%
2005	3.6%	36.4%	20%	11%	7.3%	21.8%
2009	11.1%	42%	30.1%	3.2%	3.2%	10.4%

Source: LexisNexis Content Analysis of U.S. Newspapers and Newswires. Conducted January, 2010.

<sup>8</sup> Articles were coded as miscellaneous if the subject of Holocaust denial was mentioned neither in relation to a specific incident of denial, nor in either a particularly domestic or foreign context. In these articles, denial was typically mentioned in passing, either by the writer of the piece or within a quote from someone in the story (such as a Holocaust survivor, as part of his/her presentation to students).

It is quite clear that Holocaust denial continues to be more often presented and discussed as a predominantly foreign problem, especially in the Arab world, rather than as a domestic problem. In 2001, forty-two percent of articles were about a foreign denial incident or referenced Holocaust denial in a foreign context; that number rose to 56.4 percent in 2005 and to 72.1 percent in 2009.

Therefore, two interesting trends appear to be occurring, with regard to U.S. print media coverage of Holocaust denial. First, coverage of domestic Holocaust denial incidents has risen, albeit slightly, between 2001 and 2009. At the same time, Holocaust denial continues to increasingly be presented in a foreign context, a finding that can be largely attributed to the high profile statements of Iranian President and Holocaust denier, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad. In fact, roughly half of the foreign Holocaust denial incidents covered in 2005 were perpetrated by Ahmadinejad, who had just become the nation's president, and in 2009, sixty-three percent of the articles in the category of "Other Mentions – Foreign" referenced Ahmadinejad or an aspect of Iranian foreign policy in relation to his being a denier of the Holocaust.

Finally, when thinking about the future of Holocaust denial in the United States, one of the factors that could potentially foretell future increases in denial beliefs or activities is an understanding of the extent to which the Holocaust – as a singular and historically important event of extraordinary scope and scale – is being trivialized within society. Content analysis, again using LexisNexis, was conducted on a random sample of articles appearing in newspapers from 2001, 2005, and 2009 that contained the word "Holocaust," "Nazi," or "Hitler." This analysis attempted to determine the percentage of articles in which one of these Holocaust-related terms was used to draw an inappropriate and trivializing comparison to another individual, concept, or event. To be categorized in this manner, such a comparison was either made within the news, opinion, or feature article itself, or the article referenced, reinforced, or discussed such a comparison having been made by someone else. Either way, the Holocaust-related term, for any reader of the particular article, would not have been used in its appropriate historical context.

The results of this analysis appear in Table 12 and show that, in each year, these three Holocaust-related terms were used outside of their accurate historical context, in order to make an inappropriate and trivializing comparison to another person or event, roughly eighteen percent of the time (2005 was only slightly lower, at seventeen percent). Using 2005 as an example, 22,289 articles containing the word "Holocaust," "Nazi," or "Hitler" appeared in U.S. newspapers. Therefore,

approximately 3,789 of these articles displayed these terms outside of their historical context, in comparison to an unrelated person or event (an average of just over ten articles each day!).

<b>TABLE 12. Content Analysis Results Concerning the Use of Holocaust-Related Terms in Newspaper Articles in 2001, 2005 and 2009</b>		
Year	Term Used in Accurate Historical Context	Term Used to Draw a Potentially Trivializing Comparison to a Person or Event
2001	81.5%	18.5%
2005	83%	17%
2009	81.7%	18.3%

*Source:* LexisNexis Content Analysis of U.S. Newspapers. Search term - Holocaust OR Nazi OR Hitler. Conducted January-February, 2010. Based on random sample of articles for each year. n=141 in 2001, 223 in 2005, and 175 in 2009 (10% of total).

The individuals, events, or concepts to which Holocaust-related terms were compared in the print media were wide-ranging. The word “Holocaust” was often used for added effect in an effort to draw a comparison to the plight of others in a far-different scenario. For example, the Holocaust was, at times, compared to Palestinian suffering at the hands of Israelis, Israeli suffering at the hands of Palestinians, the U.S. health care system, the way in which gay and lesbians are treated in America, and survivors of Hurricane Katrina, among other comparisons.

The word “Hitler” was, at times, used in comparison to Kit Carson, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, Vladimir Putin, Barack Obama, Nancy Pelosi, Osama bin Laden, George W. Bush, Republicans, Democratic politicians, military leaders in Japan in World War Two, a communications official in Haiti, Tom Delay, the Pittsburgh School Board (deemed “Hitleristic”), Saddam Hussein, and Philip Morris, among other comparisons.

And, the word “Nazi” was, at times, used in comparison to Wyoming Department of Transportation officials, police officers, John McCain and Sarah Palin, the concept of love (made by Marilyn Manson during a concert), health care reform and top Democratic lawmakers, death panels, Barack Obama, Iran, the Fox News Channel, Jesus Christ, athletic coaches, Taliban leaders, the confederate flag, feminists, the 1992 Republican National Convention, people working in the World Trade Center at the time of 9/11, the Abu Ghraib scandal, Republican leadership in the U.S. Senate, Michael Schiavo and doctors in the Terri Schiavo case, and U.S. military members, among other comparisons.



**Finding Set #4:** Measuring the level of Holocaust denial on the Internet, a medium that lacks boundaries and is both ever-expanding and continually changing, is a complex task. However, there is strong evidence to suggest that a significant and worrisome level of Holocaust denial exists on the Internet, and that discourse about the topic of Holocaust denial (as well as about the claims deniers make) is on the rise. Certain Holocaust denial websites generate a high level of readership; there are at least 31 Facebook groups organized predominantly for the purpose of spreading Holocaust denial (among countless others that are virulently antisemitic); and since 2004, there has been an increase in the volume and popularity of Google searches on the subject of Holocaust denial, relative to all other search items. “Denial” has also become the seventh most popular Holocaust-related subject to explore on the Internet. These results suggest that Holocaust denial will continue to be a rising problem on the worldwide web, demanding much further study and more systematic measurement in the future.

Given the nature of the Internet, it is difficult to determine the level of Holocaust denial content that is produced or viewed by those within the U.S., specifically. Therefore, unless otherwise noted, the figures and statistics presented in this section describe findings related to global denial activity.

### **Search Results and Volume**

As 2010 begins, the term “denial” is the 7<sup>th</sup> most Google-searched term related to the Holocaust, ranking ahead of terms such as “concentration camps,” “quotes,” and “poems.” (The term “museum” is the most searched term related to the Holocaust, followed by “pictures,” “facts,” and “survivors.”)<sup>9</sup> Additionally, a simple Google search for the terms “deny the Holocaust,” “Holocaust denial,” and “Holocaust denier” produce 2.4 million, 538,000, and 199,000 search results respectively. Realizing that those seeking to embrace the claims of Holocaust deniers would not likely refer to the practice as “denial,” it is also helpful to note that the search term “Holocaust never happened” produces 2.5 million results, “Holocaust is a lie” produces 200,000 results, “Holocaust is a myth” produces 143,000 results, and “Holocaust revisionist” produces 95,600 results.

Taken as a snapshot in time, these numbers appear to be large, but one is extremely limited in drawing conclusions from them, as it is difficult to determine whether these figures depict an increase or decrease in the amount of Holocaust denial activity on the Internet.

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<sup>9</sup> This list was gathered using the Google Suggest tool on February 20, 2010.

However, using the tools Google Trends and Google Insights, it is easy to see that, in a relative sense, the volume of searches for the term “Holocaust denial” has not only increased since 2004, but the subject is also no longer being searched purely in response to high-profile instances of denial in the news media. In previous years, such as 2005 and 2006, the search volume of “Holocaust denial” remained relatively low until ignited by singular events, such as the Holocaust denial conference held in Tehran in December, 2006. In 2009, especially, the volume of searches for Holocaust denial not only increased over previous years, but became much more constant throughout the year.

Unfortunately, a significant limitation of examining search volume is the inability to provide clearer, quantitative data on the number of searches taking place for a given topic, leaving trends in the volume and relative popularity of a particular topic (as compared to all other search terms) as the best and most accessible information that can be captured.<sup>10</sup>

Indeed, while the relative popularity of searches of the term “Holocaust” has trended downward since 2004, the relative popularity of searches of “Holocaust denial” is on the rise. Specifically, over the past year, the use of “denial” as a related search term to the Holocaust has increased by seventy percent. In the United States, it has increased by sixty percent.

### **Social Networking – Facebook**

Next, the Internet is a communication tool that allows for a much easier exchange of ideas and beliefs than at any point in history. In addition, the Internet provides a cost-effective and simple means by which people can connect with one another across previously intractable geographic or social boundaries. On the popular social networking site, Facebook, users create “groups” around issues of interest to them, which are then joined by other Facebook users, who become official “members” of the group. The level and type of activity that occurs in these groups varies, but they each exist primarily in order to create a social forum for discussion, banter, and the exchange of information or materials.

Using at least ten different search terms, including “Holocaust myth,” “Holocaust denial,” “Holocaust never happened,” and others, 31 Facebook groups were found that have the denial of the Holocaust as their central or predominant purpose. These groups range in membership from the single digits to the thousands, with 4,853 members among them all. Appendix 2 provides the full list of Holocaust denial groups that were found on Facebook, and Table 13 on the next page shows the name,

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<sup>10</sup> A number of tools can be purchased that continually monitor the relative popularity of search terms in order to provide more precise and longitudinal information than is able to be provided in this report.

membership size, and stated purpose or mission of five of these groups (which were selected to provide a representative depiction of the range in missions/purposes). As can be seen, these groups range from being explicit in their claim that the Holocaust did not occur (such as the group “Holocaust is a myth”) to being much more coy and deceptive by suggesting that the Holocaust has been exaggerated and should be subjected to what deniers call ‘historical revision’ (such as the group that makes claims about forged Holocaust photos or the group “For the Promotion of an Inquisitive View of the Holocaust”).

**TABLE 13. Information Regarding a Selection of Five Holocaust Denial Groups on Facebook**

Facebook Group Name	Membership Size	Description of Purpose/Mission
<i>“Holocaust is a myth”</i>	490 members	“Holocaust is the biggest academic deception”
<i>“holocaust is a fake history”</i>	347 members	“...Germany took advantage of the defeat of the Zionist invading invented the Holocaust and the gas chambers, especially Germany, to blackmail the West in general and for the provision of financial support and political and military of the Zionist entity on the land of Palestine...”
<i>“The problem of forged holocaust photos”</i>	555 members	“...This group does not deny the fact that there were thousands of innocent people (including Germans, Ukrainians, Russians, and Jews) who were murdered during the course of the war. However, the prisoners who died in the concentration camps died mostly from starvation, famine, and disease due to the dire conditions in Germany caused by the allied air raids, this made it impossible to supply all the concentration camps with medical supplies and food. But to claim that 6 million were gassed by ‘evil’ ss guards as part of a government ‘extermination program’ with signed orders from Hitler is an exaggeration without conclusive evidence, using forged photos like these as ‘evidence’ is deceptive.”
<i>“Jewish Genocide Is the BIGGEST LIE in the world”</i>	26 members	“Jewish people still call themselves victims of the holocaust, there’s no material evidence to prove that this holocaust happened and I personally don’t believe it what about you?”
<i>“For the Promotion of an Inquisitive View of the Holocaust”</i>	77 members	“We hold reason and inquisition in high regard, and therefore find laws that demand a specific historical outlook – commonly accepted or otherwise – to function contrarily to a rational worldview.... Therefore, we assert that legislation relevant to the prohibition of ‘Holocaust Denial,’ more neutrally termed ‘Holocaust Revisionism,’ to be unreasonable and abhorrent, and encourage historical inquiry to be conducted thoroughly on this event as with any other of significance...”

## Web Traffic to Denial Websites

In addition to studying search volume and the organization of Holocaust denial groups on a social networking site like Facebook, seven Holocaust denial websites were selected and the site profile tool at Compete.com was used to determine the level of monthly Internet traffic experienced by each of these websites.

The seven websites chosen for analysis are listed below. They were not selected in a scientific manner; rather, they were chosen because they represent a diverse cross-section of the types of denial websites that exist on the Internet. Some of the sites correspond to the list of Holocaust denial hate groups tracked by the SPLC, others are the official websites of particularly notable deniers, some were found using an Internet search (as might be done by anyone examining the subject), and one of the sites, Stormfront, is an online social forum, in which members of the site engage in a significant amount of Holocaust denial.

- Castle Hill Publications ([www.vho.org](http://www.vho.org)) – Located in New York City, this organization is one of the seven Holocaust denial hate groups identified by the SPLC and referenced earlier in this study. It touts itself as the “World’s Largest Website for Historical Revisionism,” and states that its goal is to “...further public debate about the subject generally described as ‘Holocaust,’” as well as “...to oppose, with all available legal means, those persons, institutions and organizations who denounce, charge, convict, or otherwise inflict harm on Revisionists for not believing in the existence of gas chambers.”
- The Campaign for Radical Truth in History ([www.revisionisthistory.org](http://www.revisionisthistory.org)) – Located in Co’eur d’Alene, Idaho, and also one of the seven Holocaust denial groups identified by the SPLC, this organization is the official website for noted Holocaust denier Michael Hoffman.
- Focal Point Publications ([www.fpp.co.uk](http://www.fpp.co.uk)) – This is the official website for Holocaust denier David Irving, one of the most notorious deniers in the world. Irving has written books and articles sympathetic to Adolf Hitler, and he claims that Hitler never ordered the annihilation of European Jews, that there were no gas chambers at Auschwitz, and that most Jews died of typhus or other illnesses. Lipstadt, whose work on exposing Holocaust denial has been referenced multiple times in this report, was sued for libel by Irving, following her identification of Irving as a Holocaust denier in her book, *Denying the Holocaust: The Growing Assault on Truth*

*and Memory*. Irving lost the lengthy legal battle and continues to deny the Holocaust in speeches given in the United States and throughout the world (Lipstadt (b), 2005).

- Stormfront ([www.stormfront.org](http://www.stormfront.org)) – This website is an online social forum for white supremacists, headquartered in West Palm Beach, Florida. It describes itself as, “...a resource for those courageous men and women fighting to preserve their White Western culture, ideals and freedom of speech and association...”
- Institute for Historical Review ([www.ihr.org](http://www.ihr.org)) – Located in Newport Beach, California, this is one of the seven Holocaust denial organizations identified by the SPLC. Founded in 1978, IHR calls itself “a not-for-profit research, educational and publishing center devoted to truth and accuracy in history.” The organization has published numerous books and essays by Holocaust deniers, and though it claims, “The Institute does not deny the Holocaust,” it asserts that, “...a growing body of documentary, forensic, and other evidence shows that much of what we’re told about the ‘Holocaust’ is exaggerated or simply not true.”
- Holocaust Denial Videos ([www.onethirdoftheholocaust.com](http://www.onethirdoftheholocaust.com)) – This website boasts that it provides, “9 hours of free Internet video about how the Holocaust is a hoax,” and appears to be operated by a single individual.
- Zundelsite ([www.zundelsite.org](http://www.zundelsite.org)) – This website is dedicated to broadcasting the claims of Ernst Zundel, a Holocaust denier who was arrested in Germany and will soon be released from prison. It calls Zundel a “prisoner of conscience in Zionist-controlled Germany” and refers to Zundel as a “revisionist researcher.”

Table 14 shows that the number of users who visit these websites varies greatly, between the roughly 233,600 unique visitors per month to Stormfront and the 971 unique monthly visitors to the website “Holocaust Denial Videos.” Again, depending upon one’s familiarity with the subject matter or frame of reference, these numbers may appear to be dramatically high or reasonably low. However, when compared to a wide array of mainstream websites (which is shown in Table 15), the user traffic being generated by these Holocaust denial websites provides cause for concern.

<b>TABLE 14. Internet Traffic to Seven Selected Holocaust Denial Websites</b>				
Denial Website	Average number of unique visitors per month in 2009	Highest monthly total of unique visitors in 2009	Lowest monthly total of unique visitors in 2009	Number of unique visitors in January 2010
Stormfront ( <a href="http://www.stormfront.org">www.stormfront.org</a> )	233,602	318,450	174,889	291,717
Focal Point Publications – David Irving ( <a href="http://www.fpp.co.uk">www.fpp.co.uk</a> )	21,746	50,549	10,737	18,849
Institute for Historical Review ( <a href="http://www.ihr.org">www.ihr.org</a> )	20,241	25,697	10,870	19,547
Castle Hill Publishers ( <a href="http://www.vho.org">www.vho.org</a> )	7,172	12,465	4,053	7,082
Campaign for Radical Truth in History (CRTH) ( <a href="http://www.revisionisthistory.org">www.revisionisthistory.org</a> )	7,053	11,338	4,479	4,166
Zundel ( <a href="http://www.zundel.org">www.zundel.org</a> )	2,435	5,107	965	2,348
Holocaust Denial Videos ( <a href="http://www.onethirdoftheholocaust.com">www.onethirdoftheholocaust.com</a> )	971	2,457	333	2,423

Source: Compete.com “Site Profile” Tool

Table 15 not only displays the number of unique visitors to these seven Holocaust denial websites in January 2010 (the most recent month for which data is available), but it also shows the traffic during this same month for an assortment of non-denial websites, drawn from other areas of life – including government, entertainment, think tanks, and Holocaust awareness and tolerance organizations. Specifically, the comparison websites include the USHMM, the ADL, the U.S. Department of the Interior, the Brookings Institute, the rock band Journey, AIPAC, the City of Springfield, Missouri, and the Lions Gate Independent Film Studio. These sites were not chosen in a scientific manner, but rather selected to provide a diverse range of comparison, and hopefully, additional perspective on the relative popularity or use of certain Holocaust denial websites.

As the table shows, most of these selected Holocaust denial websites have lower Internet traffic than the comparison websites, though the social denial forum Stormfront eclipses all of them by a large margin. Still, it seems rather unexpected, for example, that the Institute for Historical Review and David Irving’s official site would command over twice the number of visitors as the city government of Springfield, Missouri, or the American Israel Public Affairs Committee.

<b>TABLE 15. Internet Traffic to Selected Holocaust Denial and Comparison Websites</b>	
Website (Holocaust Denial) and (Comparison)	Number of Unique Visitors in January 2010
Stormfront	291,177
United States Holocaust Memorial Museum	177,498
Anti-Defamation League	89,643
U.S. Department of the Interior	88,948
Brookings Institute (think tank)	69,281
Journey (rock band)	28,066
Institute for Historical Review	19,547
Focal Point Publications – David Irving	18,849
American Israel Public Affairs Committee	9,324
Springfield, MO City Government	8,467
Castle Hill Publications	7,082
The Center for Revisionist Truth in History	4,166
Lions Gate Films	2,781
Holocaust Denial Videos	2,423
Ernst Zundel	2,348

Source: Compete.com “Site Profile” Tool

As noted, there is need for a much more precise and systematic study of the presence of Holocaust denial on the Internet, but this analysis confirms, at the very least, that Holocaust denial websites are capable of drawing a significant number of visitors. It is reasonable to believe that a socially undesirable attitude such as Holocaust denial would be more easily explored, manifested, embraced, and encouraged over the Internet than in the traditional public square. For this reason, especially, monitoring the level of attention given to Holocaust denial websites is a vital component of any set of measurements used to determine the prevalence of Holocaust denial on the Internet in the future.

Holocaust denial on the Internet becomes an especially concerning problem when well-meaning people (possibly students or curious adults) search for the answers to straightforward, factual questions about the Holocaust and end up finding websites devoted to Holocaust denial. For example, a number of search terms led Internet users to find Castle Hill Publishers in January 2010, but the fourth most popular search term was the question: “When did the Holocaust start?” Likewise, nearly twenty-six percent of those who viewed the site dedicated to Ernst Zundel found the page by searching, “victims of the Holocaust.” (This was the second-most popular search term that led users to Zundel’s page; the most popular term was “What is the truth about the six million?” and the third was, “did Hitler kill six million Jews?”)

The search term “Israeli crimes against humanity” was the fourth highest rated search term driving traffic to The Campaign for Radical Truth in History, an indication that a large number of people searching for an anti-Israel or more antisemitic subject found a website devoted to Holocaust denial in the process. Prominent search terms used to reach the Institute for Historical Review included “Anne Frank diary fraud” and “concentration camp detainees Germany;” the fifth most used search term to find David Irving’s website was “evidence against Holocaust.”<sup>11</sup>

Without question, the Internet appears to be the newest frontier in the spread of Holocaust denial. Its lack of boundaries ensures that Holocaust denial activities anywhere in the world can be seen by people living in the United States, and its random, chaotic nature allows for the rapid exchange of claims and information that would not be possible through any other mechanism. In addition, antisemitic beliefs, and specifically, the denial of the Holocaust can find a safer home on the Internet, allowing them to be expressed anonymously if need be and out of the traditional glare of the public square. Deniers can organize and disseminate information over the Internet with minimal disruption to the daily lives of most Americans. As such, the future of the measurement of Holocaust denial, as well as the way in which it is addressed, must undoubtedly focus on understanding its strength and position on the Internet.

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<sup>11</sup> The “Site Profile” tool at Compete.com was used to determine the search terms that led Internet users to find the Holocaust denial websites referenced in this section.



## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Without question, Holocaust denial is a complicated concept to measure, particularly in the United States, where it is considered a socially undesirable attitude or belief. In order to gain a full understanding of the magnitude and location of Holocaust denial in the future, a multi-pronged approach to measurement will be necessary. This approach would likely include, as has been attempted here, the study of individual attitudes, beliefs, and perceptions toward the Holocaust; the organized activities of antisemitic individuals and groups who deny the Holocaust; the public reporting of denial incidents in the media and denial activity on the Internet; and, an accounting of how Holocaust denial manifests itself as antisemitic crime, vandalism, or harassment incidents.

Sadly, there are a number of factors that currently point to the possibility of future growth in Holocaust denial in the U.S., and which make measuring Holocaust denial in a precise and systematic manner more important than ever.

First, though Holocaust denial still appears to be more widely accepted and practiced outside of the U.S., the boundary-less Internet and the activities of high-profile Holocaust deniers, such as Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, have led to a wider proliferation of deniers' claims and elevated the position of Holocaust denial in the consciousness of Americans.

Second, the continued use of Holocaust-related terms – in popular culture and in the news media - to draw trivializing comparisons to other individuals or events has the potential to erode the historical significance of the Holocaust.

Third, as seen in the surveys conducted by the American Jewish Committee and the Anti-Defamation League, increased level of education and knowledge about the Holocaust typically leads to greater sympathy for Jews, fewer antisemitic beliefs, and greater enthusiasm for Holocaust remembrance. Though perhaps explained by America's distance from Europe during World War II, general knowledge of the Holocaust is relatively low in the United States, and teaching about the Holocaust in American classrooms is both emotionally and practically challenging, and has become increasingly difficult over time (ODIHR and Yad Vashem, 2007).

Fourth, many of the more notable Holocaust deniers continue to portray their work as an academic quest for truth in history -- so-called "revisionism." These deniers ask for nothing more than for their claims to simply be considered and often seek to chip away at the historical truth of the

Holocaust by suggesting that its scope and scale (as well as the intentions of its perpetrators) have been exaggerated. As Lipstadt states, “The deniers hope to achieve their goal by winning recognition as a legitimate scholarly cadre and by planting seeds of doubt in the younger generation” (Lipstadt, 1993, p. 29). According to the ADL, “Holocaust deniers seek to plant seeds of questioning and doubt about the Holocaust in their mass audiences. While Holocaust denial has become an article of faith among the militants and followers of the contemporary hate movement, its success does not depend upon conversion to that faith among the general public. The spread of skepticism about the scope and historicity of the Holocaust among a critical mass of public opinion would be considered to be a significant ideological triumph in and of itself” (ADLb).

Fifth, the Holocaust remains a subject that is simply unfathomable and defines a period of history that most people wish had never occurred. Lipstadt says, “We would prefer the deniers to be right. Moreover, there is a part in everyone – including living survivors – that simply finds the Holocaust beyond belief” (Lipstadt, 1993, p. xvi). The difficult task of emotionally acknowledging that Nazi Germany orchestrated the systematic execution of six million Jews for the purpose of total genocide will never go away. Accepting that the presence of such hatred is possible within humanity will always be an initial hurdle to learning about the lessons of the Holocaust.

Finally, no one currently knows how Holocaust attitudes and beliefs will change as a result of the continually decreasing number of Holocaust survivors who are able to speak in person about the Holocaust. Tom Smith has suggested that, “...the testimony of the Holocaust may be facing a greater challenge from the combination of the passage of time and the waning of collective memory about the Nazi attempt to exterminate the Jews” (Smith, 2005). Without question, with each passing day, the work carried out by institutions like the USHMM becomes ever more important, as the memories of those who survived the Holocaust must be carried and shared by a new generation today.

Taken together, these factors provide Americans with little reason to believe that the prevalence of Holocaust denial in the United States is on either a flat or downward trajectory. Consequently, as with any important societal problem, it is imperative to establish an understanding of the problem’s dimensions in order to address it in an effective and efficient manner. This study has employed a wide array of measurement tools to better understand the magnitude and location of Holocaust denial in the U.S., with the hope that future uses of replicable and valid measurements might lead to interventions in targeted areas of the U.S. where Holocaust denial is found to be strongest. However, there are a number of ways in which the measurement of Holocaust denial in the United

States can be enhanced in the near future and performed in a more precise, reliable, and systematic manner, which are presented as recommendations for future action below.

**RECOMMENDATION #1:** Conduct a Public Opinion Survey to Carefully Study the Receptivity of Americans to Holocaust Denial (Suggested Roster of Questions Provided in Appendix 3)

The most immediate need in the quest to understand the level and location of Holocaust denial in the United States is a carefully-worded public opinion survey that aims to, at a minimum, capture and benchmark both the percentage of Americans who currently deny or question the Holocaust and the percentage of Americans who are receptive to and/or tolerant of deniers' claims. Ideally, the survey would also attempt to capture the extent to which the historical significance of the Holocaust is being learned, trivialized, or lost. Holocaust denial is an attitude or belief before it becomes manifested in other ways; as such, a public opinion survey would naturally serve as the best and most complete estimate of Holocaust denial in the U.S.

Ideally, the survey would be fielded every two years and would be implemented either solely by the USHMM or in conjunction with a small group of partnering organizations, for the following reasons. First, as the nation's central Holocaust awareness organization, the USHMM is uniquely positioned to take the lead in monitoring and understanding the perceptions of the American public toward the Holocaust. Furthermore, with regard to Holocaust denial, specifically, unless a survey is fielded by the USHMM, it does not appear that any other organization or entity in the U.S. would do so. After all, it has been roughly fifteen years since the last attempt at measuring Holocaust denial through a public opinion survey was made.

Second, by implementing the survey itself, the USHMM would be able to ensure that common questions and measurements would be used from year to year, allowing the Museum to determine trends and patterns in the level of Holocaust denial or receptivity to deniers' claims over time.

In addition, the USHMM would be able to control not only the way in which the survey was constructed, but would also receive and be able to use the cross-tabulated breakdowns of the survey's findings. For example, in selecting the size of the sample to survey, the USHMM could oversample states that have been found to have a high concentration of antisemitic activity (incidents, hate groups, attitudes, etc.) in order to gain even richer information about the motivations of those who deny the Holocaust and to identify local communities within these states in which denial levels are strikingly high. Once the analysis reaches this community-level, the USHMM could strategically target its educational

programs and other interventions toward these particular communities, in an effort to more efficiently extract the greater level of hatred existing in these areas. Thus, information from the survey could serve as an informative guide for the Museum's educational efforts.

Finally, such a survey would also allow the Museum to measure other relatively under-studied aspects of the Holocaust in which it may be interested. The mission of the USHMM is to continually educate and provide information to people throughout the country about the Holocaust; therefore, the survey could also attempt to measure the public's knowledge of the Holocaust, gauge the public's exposure to the Museum's activities, or determine the questions about the Holocaust to which members of the public would most like to have answers. Regardless, it would be valuable for the Museum to know where its message and efforts might not be reaching, whether on a geographic, demographic, or other basis.

Naturally, using a survey to capture socially undesirable beliefs is difficult, but not impossible; surveys are often employed to determine levels of racism and prejudice in society. The key is to not only determine which respondents will actually admit to their socially undesirable beliefs, but to ask additional questions that draw out the respondents' tolerance of such beliefs. In the sample roster of questions for a hypothetical survey on Holocaust denial, which were drafted for this report and are provided in Appendix 3, this goal is achieved by asking respondents how they would feel if they heard someone else make a particular denial claim about the Holocaust.

**RECOMMENDATION #2:** Improve the Incorporation of Holocaust Denial into Existing Measurement Tools

There are a few important ways in which the efforts currently undertaken by the Southern Poverty Law Center and the Anti-Defamation League to measure antisemitic activity in the U.S. could be enhanced to provide valuable insight into the magnitude, trajectory, or location of Holocaust denial.

- A. Capture Holocaust Denial Activity in SPLC Research on Hate Groups: It would be highly beneficial for the Intelligence Project team at the SPLC, comprised of researchers who have a deep understanding of hate groups in America, to begin adding Holocaust denial activities or beliefs into the profiles they draft of antisemitic hate groups. This would provide one method of disentangling Holocaust denial from the broader category of antisemitism and would indicate which specific hate groups, within larger categories or classifications, are believed to deny the Holocaust.

*Goal of this measurement:* To be able to determine the level of organized hate group activity that exists around Holocaust denial or is carried out by known deniers (as opposed to simply knowing the number of antisemitic hate groups, whose members are believed to be among the most prone to denying the Holocaust).

- B. Collaborate on the Measurement of Hate Group Membership: The SPLC and USHMM could possibly collaborate on a study that would explore ways to determine the strength in membership of antisemitic hate groups, especially within the emerging Holocaust Denial category. As noted in the Findings section, strength of membership in U.S. hate groups is not currently measured by the SPLC.

*Goal of this measurement:* To be able to estimate the number of Americans engaged in organized Holocaust denial activities each year.

- C. Add Holocaust Denial to the Coding of Antisemitic Incidents by the ADL: The Anti-Defamation League analyzes reports of antisemitic incidents from a variety of sources to create their annual audit of antisemitic incidents. During this process, each incident is currently coded as falling into the category of vandalism, harassment, or assault. Ideally, the ADL could begin determining whether Holocaust denial played a role in these incidents during the coding process, noting whether the incident was itself an expression of Holocaust denial or that it was perpetrated by a Holocaust denier. Alternatively, the USHMM could ask to receive the incident reports from the ADL each year and conduct its own coding to determine the number of antisemitic incidents each year that are related to Holocaust denial.

*Goal of this measurement:* To be able to track the trajectory of denial-related antisemitic incidents, apart from those which do not have an apparent relationship to Holocaust denial.

**RECOMMENDATION #3:** Engage in Continual Content Analysis of U.S. News Media and Use Rapid Response Teams to Decry and Discourage the Inappropriate Use of Holocaust-Related Terms

As noted earlier, in 2009, nearly one in five articles in U.S. newspapers used a Holocaust-related term to make a potentially trivializing comparison to an unrelated person or event. Institutionalizing the use of content analysis on an ongoing basis--of news articles, opinion columns, letters to the editor, and feature stories in news media throughout the U.S.--could provide valuable information about how and where Holocaust terms are being misused. A rapid response unit, likely comprised of communications

staff, could publicly dispute the use of such mal-comparisons of Holocaust terms wherever they happen to be made - whether in a letter to the editor of a small town newspaper or on a national television program.

In conclusion, the importance of addressing Holocaust denial – in the United States and throughout the world – cannot be understated. As Lipstadt has correctly remarked, “If this history can be denied any history can be denied” (Lipstadt, 2005). By definition, the Holocaust was characterized by extraordinary scope and scale, and was the result of state-sponsored terror and brutality, driven by an incomprehensible hatred. Indeed, if the intense losses suffered during the Holocaust can be made a fraud, the rest of history is truly in peril. Exposing Holocaust denial and overcoming it through education is a worthy cause and calling, as to do so will ensure that subsequent generations will learn the lessons of the Holocaust and prevent such terror and brutality from happening again.

## **APPENDIX 1: SPLC Descriptions of Eight Categories of Antisemitic Hate Groups**

The following are descriptions of the eight categories of hate groups deemed by the Southern Poverty Law Center to be antisemitic in nature (SPLC, 2009).

### **NEO-NAZI**

“Neo-Nazi groups share a hatred for Jews and a love for Adolf Hitler and Nazi Germany. While they also hate other minorities, homosexuals and even sometimes Christians, they perceive “the Jew” as their cardinal enemy, and trace social problems to a Jewish conspiracy that supposedly controls governments, financial institutions and the media. While some neo-Nazi groups emphasize simple hatred, others are more focused on the revolutionary creation of a fascist political state. Nazism, of course, has roots in Europe, and links between American and European neo-Nazis are strong and growing stronger. American neo-Nazi groups, protected by the First Amendment, often publish material and host Internet sites that are aimed at European audiences --- materials that would be illegal under European anti-racism laws. Similarly, many European groups put up their Internet sites on American servers to avoid prosecution under the laws of their native countries.”

Groups Include: American National Socialist Workers Party, Knights of the Nordic Order, National Socialist Movement, Aryan Nations, White Revolution, and many others.

### **KU KLUX KLAN**

“The Ku Klux Klan, with its long history of violence, is the most infamous – and oldest – of American hate groups. Although black Americans have typically been the Klan’s primary target, it also has attacked Jews, immigrants, homosexuals and, until recently, Catholics. Over the years since it was formed in December 1865, the Klan has typically seen itself as a Christian organization, although in modern times Klan groups are motivated by a variety of theological and political ideologies.”

### **WHITE NATIONALIST**

“White Nationalist groups espouse white supremacist or white separatist ideologies, often focusing on the alleged inferiority of nonwhites. Groups listed in a variety of other categories – Ku Klux Klan, neo-Confederate, neo-Nazi, racist skinhead, and Christian Identity – could also be fairly (sic) described as white nationalist. The groups below range from those that use racial slurs and issue calls for violence to others that present themselves as serious, non-violent organizations and employ the language of academia. For many years, the largest white nationalist group in America has been the Council of Conservative Citizens, a reincarnation of the old White Citizens Councils that were formed to resist desegregation in the 1950s and 1960s.”

Groups Include: AZ White Pride, White Boy Society, Women for Aryan Unity, Iron Rain Nationalists and many others.

### **RACIST SKINHEAD**

“Racist Skinheads form a particularly violent element of the white supremacist movement, and have often been referred to as the “shock troops” of the hoped-for revolution. The classic Skinhead look is a shaved head, black Doc Martens boots, jeans with suspenders and an array of typically racist tattoos. Racist Skinheads in the U.S., like those in other countries, often operate in small ‘crews’ that move from city to city with some regularity.”

Groups Include: United Society of Aryan Skinheads, Western Hammerskins, Supreme White Alliance, Volksfront, Blood and Honour, and many others.

### **CHRISTIAN IDENTITY**

“The Christian Identity religion asserts that whites, not Jews, are the true Israelites favored by God in the Bible. In most of its forms, Identity theology depicts Jews as biologically descended from Satan, while non-whites are seen as soulless “mud people” created with the other Biblical “beasts of the field.” Christian Identity has its roots in a 19<sup>th</sup>-century English fad called British Israelism, which asserted that European whites were descended from the ten “lost tribes” of Israel and were thus related to Jews, who were descended from the other two Hebrew tribes mentioned in the Bible. But British Israelism, which was initially friendly to Jews, was adopted and transformed in the 20<sup>th</sup> century into a rabidly anti-Semitic creed by a number of racist preachers in the United States. For decades, Identity has been one of the most important ideologies for the white supremacist movement. In its hardest line form, it asserts that Christ will not return to earth until the globe is swept clean of Jews and other “Satanic” influences.”

Groups Include: Aryan Nations Revival, American Reformation Ministries, Covenant People’s Ministry, New Beginnings, Weisman Publications, Church of the Sons of Yhvh, and many others.

### **GENERAL HATE – RADICAL TRADITIONALIST CATHOLIC**

“Radical Traditionalist Catholic groups are organizations that embrace anti-Semitism and whose theology is typically rejected by the Vatican and mainstream Catholics in general.”

Groups Include: Tradition in Action, The Remnant/The Remnant Press, In the Spirit of Chartres Committee, Catholic Counterpoint, and others.

### **GENERAL HATE – RACIST MUSIC**

“Racist Music groups are typically white power music labels that record, publish and distribute racist music in a variety of genres.”

Groups Include: White Devil Industries, Old Guard Records, Final Stand Records, and others.

### **GENERAL HATE – HOLOCAUST DENIAL**

“Holocaust denial groups insist that Nazi Germany did not engage in a conscious attempt to commit genocide against European Jews.”



## APPENDIX 2: Holocaust Denial Groups on Facebook

TABLE 16. Holocaust Denial Groups on Facebook*	
Search Term	Facebook Group Name
<i>Holocaust hoax</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Holocaust Hoax (13 members)</li> <li>• the holocaust was a hoax (3 members)</li> <li>• Holocaust Deniers Society (3 members)</li> <li>• Removed Holocaust Denial Groups Never Existed (18 members)</li> <li>• Worldwide Zionist Conspiracy (20 members)</li> </ul>
<i>Holocaust myth</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Holocaust is a myth (490 members)</li> <li>• Holocaust is a Myth (114 members)</li> <li>• f*** the myth of the Holocaust (2 members)</li> <li>• F*** ISRAEL AND THEIR HOLOCAUST MYTH BULLS*** (63 members)</li> <li>• holocaust is a fake history (347 members)</li> <li>• Mahmoud Ahmadinejad: Brave politician in the world (123 members)</li> </ul>
<i>Holocaust fake</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The holocaust and 9/11 was fake and didn't happen (29 members)</li> </ul>
<i>Holocaust never happened</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Holocaust NEVER happened (22 members)</li> <li>• Holocaust Never Happened (2 members)</li> </ul>
<i>Holocaust didn't happen</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Holocaust Didn't Happen!?! (38 members)</li> </ul>
<i>Deny Holocaust</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I deny the holocaust (34 members)</li> <li>• I deny the holocaust (2 members)</li> <li>• I Also Deny the Holocaust – Longhorn Creationists (3 members)</li> <li>• I DENY Holocaust its jst a Propaganda thats ma view...proof me wrong (1 member)</li> <li>• The problem of forged holocaust photos (555 members)</li> </ul>
<i>Holocaust lie</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Holocaust: a lie (29 members)</li> <li>• The Holocaust is a LIE!!!!!!!!!! (17 members)</li> <li>• Holocaust is a lie or truth? (63 members)</li> <li>• Jewish Genocide is The BIGGEST LIE in the world (26 members)</li> </ul>
<i>Holocaust denial</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• holocaust denial group (23 members)</li> <li>• HOLOCAUST DENIAL IS THOUGHTCRIME, ALL THOUGHTCRIME IS EVIL? (84 members)</li> <li>• f*** the holocaust (12 members)</li> <li>• For the Promotion of an Inquisitive View of the Holocaust (77 members)</li> </ul>
<i>David Irving</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• David Irving Fanclub (387 members)</li> </ul>
<i>Ahmadinejad Holocaust</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I Support Ahmadinejad (20 members)</li> <li>• Mahmoud Ahmadinejad is the man! (2,233 members)</li> </ul>

\*Note: This list contains a substantial number of the Holocaust denial groups on Facebook. However, other search terms related to Holocaust denial (outside of the ten used here) would likely generate additional groups.

## **APPENDIX 3: Suggested Schedule of Questions for a Survey on Holocaust Denial**

**BELIEF ABOUT THE VERACITY OF THE HOLOCAUST IN GENERAL** (this question is intended to develop a baseline concerning those who are willing to admit or entertain the idea that the Holocaust is fabricated or exaggerated)

**Q1.** The Holocaust has been described as the extermination of approximately 6 million European Jews by the Nazis in World War Two. Please tell me which of the following statements comes closest to how you feel:

STATEMENT 1: I believe that the Holocaust did occur.

STATEMENT 2: I believe there are aspects of the Holocaust that have been exaggerated.

STATEMENT 3: I do not believe the Holocaust occurred..

**BELIEFS ABOUT THOSE WHO DENY THE HOLOCAUST AND VARIOUS CLAIMS OF DENIAL** (these questions are intended to more subtly determine if there are certain claims of denial that people are susceptible to buy into and ascertain their general tolerance for those who might make such claims)

**Q2.** If, during a private conversation, someone told you that they do not believe the Holocaust occurred, how would that make you feel?

- A. I would agree with the person
- B. I would disagree with the statement, but not feel any differently about the person
- C. I would be offended by the statement
- D. I would potentially become angry with the person
- E. I wouldn't care one way or another

**Q3.** If, during a private conversation, someone told you that they believe the number of innocent Jews who died in the Holocaust has been grossly exaggerated, how would that make you feel?

- A. I would agree with the person
- B. I would disagree with the statement, but not feel any differently about the person
- C. I would be offended by the statement
- D. I would potentially become angry with the person
- E. I wouldn't care one way or another

**Q4.** If, during a private conversation, someone told you that they believe Adolf Hitler did not plan to exterminate the Jews during World War Two, how would that make you feel?

- A. I would agree with the person
- B. I would disagree with the statement, but not feel any differently about the person
- C. I would be offended by the statement
- D. I would potentially become angry with the person
- E. I wouldn't care one way or another

**Q5.** Finally, if, during a private conversation someone told you that they believe Jews have made up significant facts about the Holocaust as a way to gain political or financial advantage in the world, how would that make you feel?

- A. I would agree with the person
- B. I would disagree with them, but not feel any differently about the person
- C. I would be offended by the statement
- D. I would potentially become angry with the person
- E. I wouldn't care one way or another

**Q6.** Have you ever met or do you know someone who does not believe the Holocaust occurred?

- A. Yes
- B. No
- C. Don't Know

**Q7.** If yes, what is their relationship to you:

- A. Family member
- B. Friend
- C. Co-worker
- D. Acquaintance
- E. Other

**PERCEPTIONS OF CERTAIN INDIVIDUALS AND PLACES** (these questions are intended to capture the extent to which Hitler, the Nazis, Jews, and Palestinians are viewed favorably or unfavorably. The second set of individuals contains people to whom Nazis or Hitler were often inappropriately compared in my media content analysis. So, for example, if people assign a very low number to Hitler, and then assign an even lower number to Barack Obama (having already answered the Hitler question), this may be a sign of the extent to which the Holocaust is being trivialized).

**Q8.** I would now like to ask your opinion about some particular people or groups of people. For each of the following, please assign a ranking between 1 and 100 to the person(s) I read to you. A "1" would indicate that you view the person(s) very unfavorably, and a "100" would indicate that you view the

person(s) very favorably. A “50,” for example, would indicate that you feel neither favorably nor unfavorably toward the term. If you are unfamiliar with the person or group of people, please just say so.

- A. Adolf Hitler
- B. Nazis
- C. Jews
- D. Palestinians

**Q9.** I’m going to read just a few more. Using the same scale, please assign a ranking between 1 and 100 to the person I read to you. Again, a “1” would indicate that you view the person very unfavorably, and a “100” would indicate that you view the person very favorably. A “50” would indicate that you feel neither favorably nor unfavorably toward the person. If you are unfamiliar with the person, please just say so.

- E. Barack Obama
- F. George W. Bush
- G. Joseph Stalin
- H. Saddam Hussein
- I. Mahmoud Ahmadinejad

**Q10.** How would you characterize your views of the state of Israel?

- A. Highly Favorable
- B. Somewhat Favorable
- C. Somewhat Unfavorable
- D. Highly Unfavorable
- E. No Opinion/Don’t Know

### **PERCEPTIONS TOWARD AND FAMILIARITY WITH HOLOCAUST EDUCATION**

**Q11.** Do you agree or disagree that American students should be required to learn about the Holocaust in school? Would you say you agree/disagree strongly or just somewhat?

- A. Strongly Agree
- B. Somewhat Agree
- C. Somewhat Disagree
- D. Strongly Disagree
- E. No Opinion/Don’t Care

**Q12.** Have you ever heard a survivor of the Holocaust speak in person or met a survivor in person?

- A. Yes
- B. No
- C. Don't Know

**Q13.** When you were growing up, do you feel that you were taught too much about the Holocaust, too little about the Holocaust, or just the right amount?

- A. Too much
- B. Too little
- C. Just the right amount
- D. Don't know/No opinion

**Q14.** (For those respondents with children only): Today, do you feel that your children are taught too much about the Holocaust, too little about the Holocaust, or just the right amount?

- A. Too much
- B. Too little
- C. Just the right amount
- D. Don't know/No opinion

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