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Holocaust Denial: The Conspiracy of Ignorance

By: Morgan Nelson (Advisor: Prof. Christoph Schiessl, HONORS 3030)

What is Holocaust Denial? Why? Who?

Holocaust denial means claiming that the intentional mass extermination of the Jewish population during World War II by the Nazi regime did not happen. Holocaust denial is motivated by many factors, including anti-Semitism, racism, extremism, and nativism. Anyone can be a denier. They refuse to acknowledge that the Holocaust happened. Many think of themselves as historians. Holocaust deniers have found acceptance among radical groups such as neo-Nazis and skinheads.



<https://www.ushmm.org/online-calendar/event/VEFBSTAYCONDENIAL0920>
This photo is from a protest in 2006 in Iran by a group of Muslim extremists.



https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/David_Irving
David Irving, British author and Holocaust denier.

David Irving: Author Turned Denier

One famous example of a Holocaust denier is the author David Irving. He has published over thirty books, the most popular being *Hitler's War*, published in 1977. He studied at London's Imperial College of Science & Technology and University College. After college, he worked at a steel mill in Germany for a year, learning the German language. The first edition of *Hitler's War* focuses on Hitler's point of view of WWII. It earned good reviews, but later editions were criticized for his questioning the validity of the Holocaust.

Common Denier Claims

Deniers make many claims, attacking and latching onto specific parts of the Holocaust to prove something is incorrect or inconsistent to prove the Holocaust was a hoax. Some central claims are: gas chambers were not used to kill Jews, and most deaths in the camps were caused by starvation and disease, the number of Jews that died was much less than six million, closer to 300,000 to 1 or 2 million, there was no intentional Nazi plan to annihilate the Jews, only to deport them.

Refuting Those Claims

The usage of gas chambers evolved from earlier Nazi euthanasia programs. There are written orders for Zyklon-B and architectural blueprints, Zyklon-B traces in the chambers, eyewitness accounts, and aerial and ground photographs. Six million is an estimate, but evidence from population demographics throughout Europe at various stages of the war support it. The Nazis began deporting Jews in 1939. From 1941 to 1945, the Nazis implemented the "Final Solution," where Jews were systematically deported, put into ghettos and camps, and then murdered. The intention to kill Jews was clear.



<https://www.jmhum.org/en/news-list/689-this-day-september-3-1941-zyklon-b-used-as-a-weapon-of-mass-destruction-for-the-first-time>
Can of Zyklon B, the chemical used in the gas chambers.

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