

## Distorting History

# Holocaust Denial and Distortion in Germany and in International Comparison

*Conference on 9 September 2024, 13.30 – 19.00*

*House of the Wannsee Conference Educational and Memorial Site  
Am Großen Wannsee 56-58, 14109 Berlin*

In Europe, the crimes of the Nazis are increasingly being instrumentalised by actors from different political camps for their own political agendas, further normalising the trivialisation and denial of the Holocaust in society. This is happening against the backdrop of very different social contexts: During the conspiracy-driven protests against the measures to contain the COVID-19 pandemic in Germany, which extended far into the centre of society, anti-vaccination activists symbolically staged themselves as the 'persecuted of the present' by wearing yellow armbands, and portrayed the German government as the new Nazi dictatorship. Overall, in the first year of the pandemic, over 60% of the antisemitic incidents related to COVID-19 exhibited forms of post-Shoah antisemitism, as analyses of the RIAS reporting offices show. Since the massacres of 7 October 2023, against the backdrop of the war between Israel and Hamas, Israeli actions have repeatedly been equated with those of the Nazis. A third of the almost 2,800 antisemitic incidents between 7 October and 31 December 2023 contained such comparisons. The increase in Holocaust denial and distortion is not a German phenomenon but can be observed internationally.

- What exactly is the situation in Austria, Germany, Italy, Poland and the Czech Republic and what similarities and differences can be observed?
- How do these forms of antisemitism manifest in the context of current events, and from whom do they originate?
- How do the denial and distortion of the Holocaust affect survivors and their descendants?
- And what insights into the denial and distortion of the Holocaust are made possible by the recording of antisemitic incidents by civil society?

These questions will be examined at the "*Distorting History*" conference on the basis of the commonalities and specifics of Holocaust denial and distortion in five European countries. The basis for the comparative analysis is the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance's (IHRA) working definition of Holocaust denial and distortion.

## Conference Details

The conference “*Distorting History*” is public and aimed at experts from education, research, administration, and the media.

Admission is free of charge and is subject to registration at <https://gstoo.de/DistortingHistory> until 6 September 2024

The event will be held in English.

*The conference is organised by the Bundesverband RIAS (the Federal Association of Departments for Research and Information on Antisemitism), part of the European Network on Monitoring Antisemitism (ENMA). ENMA aims to provide internationally comparable data on antisemitic incidents.*

*The conference is funded as part of the project Standardised Recording of Holocaust Distortion in Five European Countries. Since June 2024 the project has been raising awareness for Holocaust denial and distortion on social media as part of the campaign #FACTSMATTER Defend Truth, Defeat Distortion.*

*More information about ENMA and the campaign #FACTSMATTER Defend Truth, Defeat Distortion is available at [enma.eu](https://enma.eu)*

## Conference-Schedule

### Distorting History. Holocaust denial and distortion in Germany and in international comparison

Conference Moderator: **Cord-Heinrich Plinke**, Bundesverband RIAS

- 13:30 – 14:00 Arrival and Registration
- 14:00 – 14:10 Opening Remarks  
**Benjamin Steinitz**, Executive Director of the Bundesverband RIAS
- 14:10 – 14:20 About the Venue  
**Deborah Hartmann**, Director of the House of the Wannsee Conference Memorial
- 14:20 – 14:35 The impact of Holocaust denial and distortion for Holocaust survivors and descendants today.  
**Anetta Kahane**, Writer and founder of the Amadeu Antonio Foundation
- 14:35 – 14:45 Antisemitism in the European perspective. Introducing the European Network on Monitoring Antisemitism.  
**Benjamin Steinitz**, Executive Director of the Bundesverband RIAS
- 14:45 – 15:00 Frameworks for Holocaust denial and distortion: October 7<sup>th</sup>, 2023 and the COVID-19 pandemic.  
**Daniel Poensgen**, Bundesverband RIAS
- 15:00 – 15:30 Q&A
- 15:30 – 16:00 Coffee Break
- 16:00 – 16:30 Panel Discussion: Holocaust denial and distortion in international comparison. Perspectives from ENMA Members  
**Piotr Kwapisiewicz**, Jewish Association Czulent (Poland)  
**N.N.**, Israelitische Kulturgemeinde Wien (Austria)  
**Stefano Gatti**, Center for the Documentation of Contemporary Judaism (Italy)  
**Jiří Tejkal**, Federation of Jewish Communities in the Czech Republic (Czech Republic)
- 16:30 – 16:50 Monitoring Holocaust denial and distortion in Europe? Presenting the ENMA approach  
**Leeor Fink**, Bundesverband RIAS
- 16:50 – 17:10 Q&A
- 17:10 – 17:30 Reflection and Closing Remarks
- 17:30 – 19:00 Reception

*Event organisers reserve the right to exercise their domiciliary rights and to refuse entry to, or exclude from the event, persons who belong to right-wing extremist or Islamist parties or organisations, those associated with the right-wing extremist, Islamist or anti-Israeli scene, or who have previously made racist, nationalist, antisemitic or other inhumane statements.*

## Funding

The project *Standardised Recording of Holocaust Distortion in Five European Countries* and the campaign #FACTSMATTER. *Defend Truth, Defeat Distortion* is funded:

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