Facebook shares took a serious hit in the last week of July, after the company announced it would miss revenue targets amid declines in usage growth and increased expenditures on security and privacy. The social media behemoth lost around US$120 billion in one day and CEO Mark Zuckerberg’s personal net worth fell $17 billion in hours. Amid security breaches and accusations that it fuels the fake news industry, Facebook is facing a serious lack of trust among users. And there are serious reasons to doubt it can allay these concerns.

Case in point: two weeks before Facebook’s stock market stumble, Zuckerberg sat down for an interview with the tech site Recode, and the topic of Holocaust denial came up. He acknowledged that people indeed use his site to deny the Shoah, and that he is personally offended by it, but argued against Facebook taking down such material.

“At the end of the day, I don’t believe that our platform should take that [Holocaust denial] down because I think there are things that different people get wrong. I don’t think that they’re intentionally getting it wrong,” he said.

“It’s hard to impugn intent and to understand the intent,” Zuckerberg added. “I just think… the reality is also that I get things wrong when I speak publicly. I’m sure you do. I’m sure a lot of leaders and public figures we respect do too, and I just don’t think that it is the right thing to say, ‘We’re going to take someone off the platform if they get things wrong, even multiple times.’”

There is so much wrong here. Most significantly, of course people who deny the Holocaust, on Facebook or otherwise, are intentionally getting it wrong. Sure, people make mistakes, they get things wrong all the time. But that’s not what’s going on here. Holocaust denial is about a concerted effort to deny history – and, based on that, to advocate hatred and violence against Jews. Getting it wrong on purpose is precisely the whole point. It is astounding that Zuckerberg and Facebook cannot see that.

Besides, as many experts have pointed out, Facebook already suppresses Holocaust denial on its platform in parts of Europe where it is a crime. This is achieved with geotagging technology, which blocks such posts in places like Germany and France. There is no reason Facebook can’t use the same technology in North America and around the world. It seems like a no-brainer, but it hasn’t happened.

Following the backlash from his Recode interview, Zuckerberg attempted to clarify those comments. “I absolutely didn’t intend to defend the intent of people who deny [the Holocaust],” he wrote. “Our goal with fake news is not to prevent anyone from saying something untrue – but to stop fake news and misinformation spreading across our services.”

That’s a bit better, but really not much. Sure, no one wants to have to scroll past an anti-Semitic post on their news feed, but that doesn’t take away from the fact that such offensive material is freely available on Facebook. When you realize that you’re sharing space with Holocaust deniers, you might stop to wonder whether it’s time to move on. — YONI

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**From the Archives | Girls Club**

The Herzl Girls’ Zionist Society, likely visiting Toronto Island in 1906. Identified is Ida Siegel, back row, second from the left. From the Betty Goldstick Lindgren collection. Betty Goldstick Lindgren (1892-1984) was a prominent member of several Toronto Jewish social service organizations including the Herzl Girls’ Zionist Society.

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**SeeJN | Hot Air**

Israelis enjoy the annual International Hot Air Balloon Festival at the Harod Spring National Park, in the Gilboa region in northern Israel on Aug. 3, 2018.